

done an admirable job expanding the "causes" (origins) of the Civil War from the traditional political explanations to include social, intellectual, economic, cultural, and even geographic factors. Such breadth of interpretation enables the book to interest a wider audience than more monofaceted "political" studies. The reader is presented myriad points throughout the text and footnotes that virtually demand further research. The book, therefore, is not only an excellent source of information but also a platform to launch further inquiry.

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Lee Kennett. *G.I.: The American Soldier in World War II*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997. Pp. xiii, 265. Paper, \$16.95; ISBN 0-8061-2925-5.

Lee Kennett's book is a new paperback edition of a book originally published in 1987. With information from new sources, the author has produced a first rate social history of the American G.I. during World War II. He has detailed the "collective portrait" and the "collective experience" of the G.I. from his draft and induction to his return to civilian life. In doing so, Kennett based his story primarily on the noncombatant experiences of the G.I., the letters and memoirs of the G.I.s themselves, the thoughts of their commanding officers, the statements of fellow Allies and enemies, those who were liberated and conquered, and the historical literature of the Second World War.

According to Kennett, the 1940 peacetime draft created an Army that represented the ethnic and racial diversity of America despite the racial and ethnic problems associated with, for example, draft evasion and those who managed to get deferred. Most inductees, however, accepted their draft status and participated in the processing aspect of induction and service without much complaint. For black inductees Army adjustments were made more difficult and complicated than for their white counterparts because Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, some politicians, and other top military brass felt that their usefulness was limited due to their lack of education and their inferior intelligence level.

Based on statements from both the Allies and the enemy, both the black and white G.I. was nevertheless the best trained in the war. As Kennett suggested, the American G.I. was a "complete soldier," second to none in Europe and in the Pacific.

In terms of location, Kennett showed that the American G.I. preferred the European theater of war. There the climate and the conduct of war matched the training and experiences of the G.I. The G.I. in the Pacific arena dreaded the jungle climate and diseases such as malaria and dengue fever. He also suffered greatly there because the Japanese refused to observe the Geneva rules of war.

Kennett claimed that the G.I. just wanted to go home. This was true of most white G.I.s. For the black G.I., Kennett pointed out, without much scientific proof, that "while abroad he had often found an acceptance and had been accorded a dignity and respect he had never known before, [and] the conditions black servicemen returned to 'engendered a bitterness that propelled many into the civil rights struggle.'"

As a teaching tool, Lee Kennett has produced a solid, lucid, and well-researched social history of the American soldier in World War II. For teachers in the social sciences and indeed in the humanities, *G.I.* provides them with the opportunity to engage students at the high school and college level in discussions and written assignments of the G.I. based primarily on the testimony of the G.I.s themselves. The book is also an excellent tool for teachers to use in developing lectures on WW II without getting bogged down in discussions of great battles, military strategies for victory, and the exploits of medal winners. Lectures and assignments on WW II race relations are also possible with this book.

My only regret after reading *G.I.* is that Kennett only scraped the surface of the noncombatant and collective experiences of the black G.I.

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