

discipline eroded the will to resist and bureaucrats were unwilling to jeopardize their positions. When the centralized economic system atrophied under Brezhnev, observers on various sides of the political spectrum were concerned. However, they lacked both the power and the will to act. It was Gorbachev with his use of *glasnost* who opened the floodgates of reform. Although he had hoped a revitalized Communist Party would be the agent of change, there was no revolutionary commitment to its goals. The failure of the Bolshevik experiment ever to win genuine support among Soviet citizens was ultimately its undoing.

Read is clearly a Gorbachev supporter. He takes great pains to delineate the restraints under which Gorbachev was forced to act, given the divisions between reformers and conservatives whose support he needed to bring about change. The implication is clear that Gorbachev is not responsible for the ultimate failure of his efforts. On the other hand, the author is critical of Yeltsin for taking a "bull-at-a-gate approach" to Russia's problems without having any long-term plan in mind. The reader is left with little hope that things will improve in the foreseeable future.

While Read's ideas are thought-provoking and well argued, they will be challenging for the undergraduate student. If used as a textbook for a course on the Soviet period and supplemented by other readings (such as *The Collapse of the Soviet Union*), undergraduate students might be able to handle the material. Certainly graduate students and faculty will find useful information here. The layout of the text is uninviting, however, with solid pages of small print often organized into nearly page long paragraphs. The book does include an extensive list of suggested reading that includes a number of post-Soviet works.

Both works provide useful contributions to the on-going debate over why the Soviet Union collapsed and who should take the credit/responsibility. While Winters's book might be profitably used by the typical undergraduate student, Read's requires a greater degree of sophistication.

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Steven E. Woodworth, ed. *The Loyal, True, and Brave: America's Civil War Soldiers*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2002. Pp. xii, 222. Cloth, \$60.00; ISBN 0-8420-2930-3. Paper, \$18.95; ISBN 0-8420-2931-1.

Paul Ashdown & Edward Caudill. *The Mosby Myth: A Confederate Hero in Life and Legend*. Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2002. Pp. xxxvi, 231. Paper, \$17.95; ISBN 0-8420-2929-X.

Clearly, there is no shortage of source material when studying the American Civil War. Where does a teacher or student begin to sort through the thousands of volumes that have been published on America's most-studied conflict? Steven E. Woodworth, associate professor of history at Texas Christian University, has assembled a collection

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of essays intended to serve as an introduction, "to present the Civil War to both formal and informal students of the conflict and to select brief excerpts from some of the numerous books that have been written about the soldiers."

Woodworth's work is organized into eight chapters, each devoted to specific aspects of the war and with reflections from common soldiers North and South. He begins his study by examining the recruitment of soldiers, drawing a comparison between the U.S. Army of the 1860s, "hometown companies that kept friends together and today's bureaucratic army, that is drilled into the interchangeable human parts that are distributed throughout a huge organization." Individuals such as Wimer Bedford of Illinois, John C. Reed of Georgia, and Abner R. Small of Maine come to life in these pages. Veterans returning from the war wrote their memoirs well into the early twentieth century when Bell Wiley's landmark studies, *The Life of Billy Yank* and *The Life of Johnny Reb*, appeared. According to Woodworth, Wiley's works would "set the standard for historians who would seek to write straightforward accounts of what a soldier's life was like."

I have often wondered how teachers explain the confusing environment of combat to students, particularly those teachers who come to the classroom without the benefit of military service behind them. How does one explain the fear of facing combat for the first time, the deaths of comrades, or the perceptions of those placed in charge of leading young men into battle? Chapter 2 helps to fill in this gap by presenting excerpts from soldiers' memoirs. We learn from Rice Bull of the 123rd New York Infantry that "new and untried soldiers had to deal with their own doubts about how they would behave in battle. This inner struggle with doubts and fears meant that sometimes the most frightening part of the soldier's existence was not the time of greatest physical danger."

Abner Small of the 16th Maine Regiment reflects on the utter confusion of battle: "After the first volley of musketry, he is a rare man who theorizes, or speculates on the actions of his comrade, or of his regiment, much more on that of the commanding general, three miles distant. The inequalities of the ground, the wooded slopes and deep ravines, the fog, the dense smoke, and the apparent and often real confusion of troops moving in different directions under different orders, utterly preclude the possibility of a correct detailed observation of a battle of any magnitude."

Woodworth's attempts to balance arguments regarding the issue of courage on the battlefield by examining the writings of the post-Vietnam era historian Gerald F. Linderman, who advanced a controversial argument that "high casualty rates had, by the middle of the war, so eroded the soldiers' faith in the value of courage that the men experienced an overall sense of disillusionment."

While other chapters cover the daily life of the Civil War soldiers in the camps, hospitals, and prisons, Woodworth's chapter on the service of African-American troops is most informative and deserves special notice. Included are two wonderful essays by James M. McPherson and Joseph T. Glatthaar, both of whom have written extensively on the war. Woodworth's choice of McPherson's classic *Battle Cry of Freedom* is

highly appropriate in revealing the dilemma of African-American troops serving the North. According to McPherson, the true impetus for using black troops was "the need for labor battalions to free white soldiers for combat." Also, McPherson points to President Lincoln's reluctance to use black troops for combat assignments: "To arm the Negroes would turn 50,000 bayonets against us that were for us." Glatthaar argues, "The failure or success of black troops was largely dependent on the attitudes and approach to training adopted by their white officers." In one of his later essays titled *Why the Confederacy Lost*, Glatthaar gives black troops credit for "arriving in great numbers at the critical moment, and their contribution on and off the battlefield, in conjunction with those of whites, were enough to force the enemy to capitulate." Woodworth's book is a fine introduction to the Civil War for the casual reader, in addition to being a great supplement to a history textbook on the Civil War era.

Among the most studied leaders of the Confederacy, Colonel John Singleton Mosby (1833–1816) will be forever etched in the memory of Civil War students and scholars as the fabled Gray Ghost. Paul Ashdown and Edward Caudill, both journalism professors at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, have produced a new biography that brings the famed partisan ranger alive for twenty-first century students of the Civil War. Mosby's life and myth are examined through the memoirs of the people who rode with him as well as through the eyes of the news media, popular literature, art, and television. Thus, Ashdown and Caudill have assembled a work that addresses the issues of history versus memory.

They frame their work in the life and legend of Mosby, calling to mind not only his achievements in the Virginia theater of the war, but also how he was remembered by future generations of Civil War scholars and buffs. After all, Mosby himself did not pass from the scene until 1916. Ashdown reflects on his own perception of Mosby, as portrayed in the 1957 television series *The Gray Ghost*. The show was cancelled after its first season, perhaps due to poor timing. The mid-1950's was the era of civil rights activism, particularly *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), and it was considered somewhat insensitive to have such a show on national television.

Ashdown and Caudill tell us that Mosby the soldier "seemed to be everywhere and unbeatable. His brilliant and unconventional tactics were exaggerated in the press, and his ability to elude Union troops seemed uncanny. And so the seeds of a myth were planted in press accounts that reflected the bewilderment and frustration of Northern military leaders, or the fleeting glory and enduring belligerence of the Confederate States of America." In 1909 Mosby donned his old gray butternut uniform of the Confederacy to attend a movie preview of *The Old Soldier's Story*, based on some of his military exploits against General Grant. As Caudill puts it, "Mosby is not only a window on his times but also on our own. In Mosby, one can see the paradoxes in the conflict that eventually tore the nation apart—loyalty to state or nation, but not to both. He fought for the South and after the war went to work for the Federal government he had opposed. He personifies regional pride, grounded in emotion and mythology, which is set against the cold, logical, industrial work that was emerging."

Ashdown and Caudill's work is thoroughly researched, each chapter concluding with a series of detailed notes. The book makes a fine addition to the library of any Civil War scholar or amateur buff.

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