

REVIEWS

Stephen Summerfield and Susan Law, *Sir John Moore and the Universal Soldier, I: The Man, the Commander and the Shorncliffe System of Training*. London: Ken Trotman, 2016. 274pp. ISBN: 978-1-907-41771-9. Hardback. Price £25.00.

Both victor and victim of the battle of Corunna of 16 January 1809, Sir John Moore is a subject of endless fascination to students of the British army of the nineteenth, twentieth and even twenty-first centuries - as the author of the light-infantry training regime developed at Shorncliffe Camp in the period 1803-1805, he is, after all, regarded as its founding father - and it is therefore slightly surprising to discover that no biography of him has been published since 2001. Even more surprisingly, perhaps, there has never yet appeared a more analytical work of the 'Sir John Moore as military commander' variety, this being a want that has now in part at least been satisfied by the work under consideration here. Thus, in the first volume of what is planned as a two-part work, Summerfield and Law have attempted to lay out, as the dust-jacket puts it, the 'moral compass, principals and experiences that created [Moore's] philosophy and internal discipline', to do which they have eschewed a straight narrative approach, and rather written a series of short chapters in which they examine him as a young man, as a regimental officer and as a brigade commander, whether on campaign in the West Indies, Holland and Egypt, or in the home-defence and training role at Shorncliffe that earned him his greatest fame. Included along the way are many interesting contemporary maps and other illustrations whilst the authors have made extensive use of numerous printed primary sources.

So far, so good. Yet, it has to be said that, if the intention of this work is good, its execution leaves much to be desired. In fairness to the authors, writing an analysis of a general is a difficult task before which several more famous pens than theirs have quailed: turn the pages of Michael Glover's *Wellington as Military Commander* and James Marshall-Cornwell's *Napoleon as Military Commander*, and they will quickly be found to be mere potted histories of their campaigns. For the most part this trap has been avoided and yet it is still difficult to be satisfied with the result. In the first place, far too much of the rather skimpy text consists of either long extracts from such works as the travelogue written by Moore's father or the general's own well-known diary, or what is little more than padding, and, in the second, no attempt has been made to make use of manuscript sources such as court-martial records or, for that matter, Moore's own papers. On top of this, much of the text reads almost like raw notes, and it would have been much more effective had it been put into continuous prose in the context, perhaps, of a single volume.

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To conclude, then, there are serious problems with this work. However, for those who have little knowledge of Moore's background and want to read something other than a biography, the numerous extracts do form a useful compendium of material that would require a good deal of trawling to obtain from other sources. Let us hope that the second volume, which we are told will deal with the controversial expeditions to Sweden and Spain, will be written with some of these caveats in mind.

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Brian Hughes, *Defying The IRA: Intimidation, Coercion and Communities during the Irish Revolution*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press 2016. xi, 222pp. ISBN: 978-1-781-38297-4. Hardback. Price £75.00.

This is a timely and valuable book given current problems in Syria and Iraq since it deals with the effects of insurgent violence against civil populations. Ordinary people invariably suffer the most in times of violent political upheaval, whether under the so-called ISIL or in the 1920 Irish republican shadow state. Brian Hughes's book is part of the *Reappraisals in Irish History* series edited by Enda Delany and Maria Luddy that includes new work on Irish women, the famine and the treatment of Irish soldiers who served in the British army in World War One.

Defying the IRA's focus is narrow, a 'grass roots' study of republican intimidation of Ireland's civil population during the war of independence, 1919-1921. The aim of the book is to analyze the success or failure of IRA political violence in persuading the Irish population to accept the independence of Ireland along republican lines. So clear a focus inevitably precludes discussion of state violence against civilians, however, the definition of civil population is extended to include the Royal Irish Constabulary, (RIC) Magistrates, Civil Servants and anyone economically connected with the British administration in Ireland. Interestingly, opposition to the IRA cannot simply be equated with Protestant loyalism. In Ulster, the Northern Command complained bitterly about Hibernians, (Catholic nationalists) who refused to support the republican shadow state, despite IRA claims to be protecting them from loyalist violence during the war of independence.

Divided into six chapters *Defying the IRA* examines a number of different aspects of resistance to republican violence, including intimidating Crown servants, opposition to Sinn Fein's shadow state, especially its tax gathering, the ambivalence of the IRA's