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Overall, John Mullen has demonstrated that it is possible to produce high quality research in a subject area which can be intimidating in terms of its plethora of disparate sources. *The Show Must Go On!* will be of interest to the specialist and general reader alike, and Mullen has forged a path which will inspire more work to be done in this fascinating area of First World War history.

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**Matthias Strohn (ed.), *The Battle of the Somme*. Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2016. Index. 272pp. ISBN 978-1-47-281556-9. Price £25.00.**

The surge of publishing timed to coincide with the centenary of the Battle of the Somme threatens to crush readers beneath a tidal wave of writing on the subject. Yet within this flood there remains room for valuable new work. This book is one such example. The editor, Matthias Strohn, deserves great credit for assembling an impressive line-up of international authors including writers from Austria, France, Germany, New Zealand and the United States, as well as the United Kingdom - the book consists of twelve individual and concise essays. The chapters are assembled in a thematic fashion, with early chapters examining the strategic context of the Somme, with particular reference to the German and French perspective, before moving on to operational and tactical considerations of the battle. The book closes with a discussion of the 'Long Shadow' of the Somme. The work is supported by an interesting selection of images and a handful of maps.

The strength of the book lies in its accessibility. Although it is inevitable that within an edited collection there will be a certain unevenness of tone and style, exacerbated by the fact that some contributors are writing in a non-native language, in general the chapters are clear, concise and readable. There is an air of considered detachment from the subject which lends the work gravitas, but which may come as a surprise to a reader who has developed their interest through emotive popular histories. Taken as a whole the chapters combine to reveal the complexity of the battle of the Somme and its place within the wider war. It is especially refreshing to read contributions from international scholars, as the latest research in France and Germany is often slow to reach British military history circles due to language barriers.

There are some mistakes that have crept into the chapters. James Corum, in his chapter 'Air War over the Somme' repeats the common error that 8,000 British airmen died in training accidents alone (p.83). This is simply incorrect. Official figures given in the appendices volume of *War in the Air* list a total of 6,166 deaths from all causes. On a similar theme, Georges-Henri Soutou lists French casualties at the Somme as 350,000

## REVIEWS

men (p.67). This too is incorrect. Total French casualties at the Battle of the Somme were officially 202,567 men. This lower figure was due to their smaller commitment to the battle relative to the British Army, and also their superior tactical methods – this later point being strongly emphasised by Jonathan Krause in his chapter in this book.

It should be noted that the volume presents a summary and synthesis of the latest academic thought on the battle rather than a completely new set of interpretations. This is evident from the content of the chapters themselves and is further reinforced by an examination of the endnotes, which reveals a reliance on secondary sources. This, however, should not be taken as a criticism. The book serves a timely refresher for those familiar with the Somme and would make a fine introduction to the latest academic thought on the battle for general readers or undergraduates. Indeed, it is for this very reason that the work was chosen as key background reading for the British Army's Staff Ride to the Somme in September 2016.

Finally, Strohn and his authors are to be commended for the bold decision to publish with a 'popular' press in the form of Osprey, a company best known for its illustrated battle studies. A recurring complaint amongst military historians, made ever louder as the anniversaries of the centenary roll past, is the failure of academic interpretations to reach or influence the general public. There are a number of reasons for this problem, but one of the most obvious is the fact that most academic studies of the First World War are published at an inflated price point far beyond the means of the general reader. This is not the case with *The Battle of the Somme*, which is produced in a handsome volume and priced competitively.

Strohn and his contributors have carried out a valuable service in making the latest academic thinking on the Battle of the Somme available to a wider audience. Broad in scope yet concise and readable, this is a fine volume which deserves to be read widely.

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**Andrew C. Rath, *The Crimean War in Imperial Context 1854-56*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. xxiv + 301pp. ISBN: 978-1-137-54451-3. Hardback. Price £60.00.**

Wars frequently have unintended consequences and too often writing about specific wars is skewed by the desire to write national histories of a particular conflict. The Crimea War of 1854-56 has suffered much in this sense with a concentration on the events at Balaclava, particularly the siege of Sevastopol, to the exclusion of all else.