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Editorial

**Sam Edwards & Andrew Sanders**

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## EDITORIAL\*

Much like the first decades of the twentieth century (an era which witnessed what the historian Thomas Otte has called a veritable ‘cult of commemoration’), it seems that ours is also the age of the anniversary. A decade ago, the centennial of the First World War drew widespread international attention, whilst ‘major’ D-Day anniversaries (such as the 80<sup>th</sup> last year) have likewise garnered significant popular and political interest. For military historians, 2025 similarly has been marked by several important milestones, perhaps most notably the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary (in June) of the establishment of the United States Army, and the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary (in May and August) of the end of the Second World War. It is eminently fitting, then, that this issue of the *British Journal for Military History* includes articles shedding new light on various aspects of the 1939-45 conflict as well as one which revisits the British ‘Southern Strategy’ during the American Revolution.

In addition to a number of book reviews (covering scholarship on subjects as diverse as the Thirty Years War, to nineteenth century naval history, to the Korean War) the issue is rounded out by a Research Note and an Article dealing with a connected subject – casualty statistics. The former focuses on the Italian Royal Army casualties between 1940 and 1943, and the latter engages directly with a subject which emerged in the aftermath of the 1914-18 centennial: what the authors refer to as ‘historical inequalities’ in the ‘commemoration of the dead of the British Empire’.

Through painstaking attention to the available evidence, the article’s authors thus offer a new estimate for ‘the number of soldiers and carriers raised from across East Africa who died in British Imperial service during the East Africa campaign of the First World War’. To be sure, whilst detailed statistical information of this sort cannot on its own make right prior commemorative neglect, it can, nonetheless, help to ‘return some dignity and individual recognition to every one of the 88,285 East Africans who lost their lives in British military service’ during the First World War. Indeed, as the article explains, it is hoped that the existence of an ‘accurate and meaningful figure’ will better enable the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) to ‘find ways to recognise and fittingly commemorate’ those whose service has to date often been overlooked, marginalised, or diminished.

ANDREW SANDERS  
De Montfort University, UK  
SAM EDWARDS  
Loughborough University, UK

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