

The result was not a formula for 'revolutionary war', but for partisan operations as part of a wider strategy combining overt with covert force. The difference becomes particularly clear in a short passage comparing Gubbins' theories of guerrilla warfare with Mao's. Gubbins certainly knew about what was happening in China in the 1930s, but there is no evidence of any influence upon him doctrinally: Gubbins loathed communism and was concerned with the practicalities of guerrilla warfare, while Mao sought an all-encompassing theory of 'people's war' rooted in the agitated masses, and while Mao's aim was eventually to escalate the guerrilla struggle to conventional warfare, Gubbins always believed that being too big and too organised was a liability for resistance forces, who could never take on the Wehrmacht or Imperial Japanese Army on even terms. Instead, he envisaged small bands of saboteurs, raiders and ambushers recruited from the local population with Allied personnel attached in to provide logistical and staff support, liaison with friendly regular forces in theatre and, although not stated explicitly, a degree of conformity with Allied strategic aims. There is much interesting material on how these personnel were organised and trained (William Fairbairn at last gets his fair measure of credit, although Michael Calvert perhaps deserves more) and how lessons were passed on, particularly to the Americans, strong evidence being presented showing just how much Wild Bill Donovan based the Office of Strategic Services on SOE and just how much SOE contributed to OSS training at 'Camp X'.

While there are some passages which can be questioned – Linderman takes issue with the idea that SOE was 'Churchill's brainchild' though this has long since been dispersed, at least in the academic literature, and very few serious authorities now pay attention to John Keegan's opinions on anything – this is, on the whole, a serious contribution to the literature on the history of SOE and covert military operations, and should be in the core reading of any courses teaching these things as well, perhaps, as being recommended to anyone claiming to see new forms of war where perhaps there aren't any.

SIMON ANGLIM  
King's College London

**James Lyon, *Serbia and the Balkan Front, 1914: The Outbreak of the Great War*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. Notes, Bibliography, Index. 328pp. ISBN 978-1-4725-8004-7. Paperback. £19.99.**

For all that the path to war during the July Crisis seemed – on the face of things – to turn on whether the Kingdom of Serbia would accept every demand in Austria-

## REVIEWS

Hungary's famous ultimatum, studies of Serbia and attention to the Balkan Front are curiously absent from most of the literature on 1914. Few historians outside the region, as James Lyon notes in his introduction, have mastered the necessary languages to conduct this research, and the region's own historical scholarship is regrettably rarely translated (Andrej Mitrović's *Serbia's Great War, 1914–1918*, an intellectual grandparent of *Serbia and the Balkan Front*, took 23 years to be translated from Serbian to English). Perhaps the skipping over of Serbia and the Balkan Front also reveals something about the position of Austro-Serbian relations in the greater diplomatic history of 1914 as it has been built up: if the ultimatum was a pretext that Serbia was never meant to accept, and the 'real' origins of the First World War lie on a grander stage, would the Balkan Front matter at all? Yet, as the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War approached, Serbia has been brought into focus by the translation of Mitrović's *Serbia's Great War*, the publication of Jonathan Gumz's *The Resurrection and Collapse of Empire in Habsburg Serbia* (on Serbia under Austro-Hungarian occupation), and the centrality of Serbia in the opening part of *The Sleepwalkers*, Christopher Clark's recent reassessment of 1914.

Lyon would agree with Clark that an understanding of Serbia's diplomatic and military position in 1914 is essential for appreciating the wider course of the Great War, but follows Mitrović rather than Clark in characterising Austro-Hungarian foreign policy as 'aggressive[ly] expansionist' (p. 35). Although the book begins with a narrative of the Sarajevo assassination and the ultimatum crisis (seen through the lens of Serbia's relationship with its allies and opponents from the Balkan Wars of 1912–13 as well as its position vis-à-vis Austria-Hungary), and disentangles the relationships between politicians and conspirators that had led Serbia to be blamed, *Serbia and the Balkan Front* is not primarily an 'origins' book. For the most part it is, instead, a military history of Serbia's mobilisation, planning and defence in July–December 1914, including Serbia's (and the Entente's) first victory at Mount Cer, the Austro-Hungarian advance on Belgrade, and the 'abject and utter defeat' (p. 234) inflicted on Habsburg forces, with enormous costs, on the Kolubara. This is a history where the Great Powers only appear when they affect the Balkans, rather than vice versa, and where the first skirmish of the war involves the Habsburg tugs and barges that attempted to launch an amphibious assault on Belgrade's Kalemegdan fortress on the night of 28–29 July 1914.

The level of detail with which Lyon is able to describe Serbian and Habsburg strategy permits every operation to be seen within the wider question of whether the battles of 1914 were Austria-Hungary's to lose or Serbia's to win. Without the Austro-Hungarian army suffering the burden of a general like Oskar Potiorek, who, his prestige tarnished by his failure to prevent the Sarajevo assassination, '[r]ather than allow his armies the rest and resupply they so badly needed [...] looked to the political consequences of capturing Belgrade in time for the anniversary of the

Emperor's coronation' (p. 240), the Serbian army crumbling on the Kolubara might not have held out. Radomir Putnik, the chief of Serbia's high command, emerges with as much credit as Potiorek does opprobrium. Accordingly, the story of Serbia and the Balkan Front in 1914 comes down to leadership, with Serbia's operational experience from the Balkan wars enabling Putnik and his generals to exploit the terrain through 'daring, energetic, and innovative' (p. 244) manoeuvres. Exhaustion and disease, and the high death toll on which post-1918 national narratives of sacrifice would rest, made the battlefields of 1915 a different place. Readers interested in the Habsburg occupation, the opening up of the Bulgarian front, the Serbian retreat to Corfu, the political questions around the cause of Yugoslav unification that would emerge after the publication of Serbia's war aims, or even the politics of Habsburg government and diplomacy in 1914 itself, will need to consult other works on Serbia, Austria-Hungary and the South Slav question, but none will cover the Serbian campaigns of 1914 in as much detail as *Serbia and the Balkan Front*.

CATHERINE BAKER  
University of Hull

**Christopher L. Scott, *The Maligned Militia: The West Country Militia of the Monmouth Rebellion, 1685*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. 333pp. ISBN: 978-1-4724-3771-6. Hardback. £80.00.**

This is a book with a mission: Scott sets out to reassess the nature and value of the militia in England in the seventeenth century by exploring its role in the defeat of the Duke of Monmouth when he attempted to wrest the throne from his uncle, James II. The militia was immediately condemned for its inefficiency by an ungrateful king: he was not alone, and had set the tone for later commentators and historians and thus the militia has been defined or maligned as ineffective and a liability to the professional commanders who were 'saddled' with militia units. In many ways it has been a contagion the militia or trained bands of forty years earlier were similarly frowned upon. Yet both they and their successors did not deserve such odium. The failures of the trained bands of 1642 were political not military: the part-time members of the county-focussed militia were divided by politics into Royalist, Parliamentary and neutrals. Both sides sought to use them as a resource, and apart from the London trained Bands which identified Parliament's cause with London's and performed formidably in battle, the trained bands fragmented and abandoned their weapons to those who were chose to fight for king and/or Parliament. In 1685 the political loyalties were less fragile and the relative unexpectedness of Monmouth's rebellion had reduced the tendency for political fragmentation and Scott's argues that the militia can be judged militarily. To do this, Scott explores the nature of the militia in terms of history, development and organisation, in general and specifically in the southwest.