

these questions, which are key issues for the study of the Red Army in Soviet affairs.

Despite the glossy production virtues of the book, these serious shortcomings invalidate it as a serious and useful account of the period under review and this is a great pity. Recent works by Roger Reese, David Glantz, David Stone, and others have shown the nature of the Red Army under Stalin, and the onset of the militarization of the Soviet economy as a whole. But since the pioneering work of John Erickson, which stands alone despite having been composed over fifty years ago when evidence was scarce, we have not had a systematic analysis of the Soviet High Command to use Erickson's title. Without such an analysis, it really is impossible to answer the questions posed above and others that may be of important analytical value for historians and students of the Red Army. If we take into account the centrality of the army as an institution to both Tsarist and Soviet rulers alike as well as the militarization of the Soviet economy, described by Oskar Lange as a *Sui Generis* war economy, we cannot understand either Stalin or the system in their totality.

Of course, in the absence of such an analysis, it would be virtually impossible to determine what expectations Moscow actually had during the thirties of the imminence of a European war, whether it would involve Russia and, if so, under what circumstances. Neither is it possible to guess at, let alone analyze, Soviet war aims without such an evidentiary and analytical foundation. Inasmuch as the Cold War, and possibly Operation Barbarossa, were triggered by Stalin's efforts to realize his war aims, these are not purely academic questions. Unfortunately for the serious reader looking for evidence or answers to these questions, those things are not found here. And that is everyone's loss.

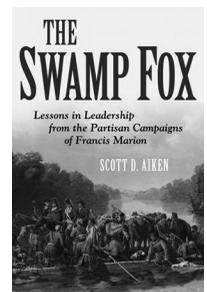
The Swamp Fox: Lessons in Leadership from the Partisan Campaigns of Francis Marion

By Scott D. Aiken

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One approaches works on military leaders written by their lifelong fans with a sense of dread. Often, these works cannot escape the bounds of hero worship to provide commentary more useful than laudatory. Colonel Scott Aiken has managed to avoid the pitfalls of his inspiration on the way to crafting a really fine piece of scholarship on General Francis Marion's leadership and campaigns.

This is a work of two narratives. The first, and predominant one, covers the history of General Marion and his role commanding a partisan formation in the campaign to defeat the British in South Carolina. The second argues the relevance of this history to contemporary issues of war. Mastering the primary historical narrative, the work misses excellence for the relative weakness of its attention to the contemporary story. I am at pains to remind readers the critiques and issues brought out in this review are, in part, the result of how deeply engaged with the



Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2012
384 pages
\$42.95

narrative I felt; because it was interesting and challenging, it made me think.

This is not a book for novices to military affairs or the history of the American Revolution. The first is true because the military content is referenced according to technical and professional standards. The second is because the historical content is tightly concentrated in time, place, and type of activity. For the right audience, however, the work is valuable.

The book is dense and focused; anything more than a brief synopsis would exceed the bounds of this review. The primary argument of the work is that the strategic, tactical, and procedural choices made by Marion were successful and bear consideration in contemporary military practice. Taking a methodical approach to Marion's military career from the fall of Charleston in 1780 to the departure of the British from Charleston in December 1782, Aiken maintains attention upon this theme. Both independently and in support of the Continental Army under Generals Horatio Gates and Nathanael Greene, Marion is shown to make the best use of the skills and local knowledge of his irregulars against the enemy's critical and vulnerable points in South Carolina. The chapters provide detailed narrative, assessment and explication of the relevant concepts of military affairs while exploring the contours and content of Marion's campaign and his leadership and direction thereof, and could stand alone as independent case studies for classroom or research. Overall, it is well and interestingly written, relying on comprehensive sources and citations by way of endnotes.

One minor problem with the narrative concerns the role and relevance of the militias and partisan formations in the American Revolution. Within recent scholarship there is far greater scepticism regarding the utility of these forces than Aiken acknowledges. That is understandable given his argument relies on opinions attributing decisive importance to the militias and irregulars in that war. Furthermore, from the experience of Marion and his unit, there is certainly a case to be made for their unique value and effectiveness. However, whether this case can sustain a general assessment on the value of the military forces beyond the Continental Army is debatable. At minimum, the opinions of many senior leaders at the time regarding the reliability and costs of militias and irregular forces should have been a matter for Aiken's professional consideration. It would have been better to frame Marion's case as an outlier within the universe of the irregular forces in that war, as this would have made more impressive his military and leadership achievements.

Reminding readers that I think this is a very strong work and comfortably recommend it, I cannot ignore that the lurking contemporary narrative Aiken suggests, but has largely neglected, is the great flaw of the book. Although contemporary examples regularly appear, their use too often seems disjointed within the Marion narrative. In most of the chapters these nuggets of information appear as appended to the ends of paragraphs and sections, almost as if bolted on as an afterthought. This is a shame, because they are sound and thought provoking. It is simply the case that they are too often undeveloped, either in detail or analysis. The exception is in the second part, with the chapter on "Information Warfare," in which the author examines contemporary

examples in detail. However, there is no explanation for this deviation from his practice in the other chapters, which leaves the reader at a bit of a loss. These are important comparatives, and they deserve the rigorous treatment the author applies to Marion's history.

A full chapter on the contemporary correlates is necessary because reading the narrative and taking into account the examples Aiken provided, one is irrevocably driven to certain conclusions. If it is critical to learn from the positive example of Francis Marion, then the British Army and Loyalist militias offer a negative lesson—what and how not to be. And, from the American perspective, one must then ask in whose image we have fought the last ten years. Or, concerning the tactics and operations of the enemy, nothing which has confronted American and allied forces in Iraq or Afghanistan should surprise. The means and targets of the insurgency, the use of the weight of our own operations and logistics against American forces, have been predictable and sensible according to the Marion narrative. Do we need to respect the enemy in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere more? Can we ever expect to win? And these questions don't even touch on the Vietnam example.

The problem is not that these issues must be proven. There is a deeper and more serious relevance to the history of Francis Marion, partisan genius. Rather, one sincerely wants to see the book completed, the entire narrative delivered, and particularly how Aiken would deal with the correlations to contemporary experience. Given that they run contrary to so much of the conventional and comfortable wisdom on the subjects, it would be useful for an author of his background, an infantry officer and veteran, to put these thoughts to a wider audience. Like Nixon in China, one needs a trusted figure to offer the radical as reasonable.