

BOOK REVIEWS

90 Years of the Indian Air Force – Present Capabilities and Future Prospects by Sanjay Badri-Maharaj, Helion & Company Asia at War Series, sb 2022, 70 pages, profusely illustrated, mainly in colour, and with one map and several tables, £16.95. This is an interesting approach to a Service history, with the emphasis being on ‘Present Capabilities and Future Prospects’. The historical focus is on the many different launch platforms and associated systems that have gone into the building of the Indian Air Force. It also covers the early successes and failures of India’s indigenous aircraft production capability through Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), though much of this early work was based on an extensive licence-production programme and not all development opportunities were successfully followed, partly because of the prioritisation of resources. The author regards some of the IAF equipment choices as “questionable”, dictated as they were by the political climate of the day and whether they were buying from the British, French, Russians or others. A problem that the Indian Air Force has faced and continues to face is to modernise and rationalise its many different systems. This book explores those choices in depth, with much technical data that will appeal to the enthusiast interested in the subject. The book also explores India’s Ground-Based Air Defence system, its role as a nuclear power and the IAF role in the developing tri-service Defence Space Agency. The author clearly understands his subject well, writes clearly, and provides an easy-to-read account that should appeal to many, not just the aviation specialist. Highly recommended.

Tony McClenaghan

Badges and Insignia of The King’s Own Scottish Borderers also Associated Volunteer and Militia Units from 1689 until 2006 by Hiram Dunn, published by The KOSB Regimental Museum 2022, 136pp, sb, profusely illustrated in colour with items drawn from the Regimental Museum and other collections, £30 including p&p, available from the Museum. MHS Member and former Borderer Hiram Dunn has had a lifelong passion for the badges and insignia of his Regiment and this A4 booklet is the result of over forty years research and may be considered the ultimate and definitive work on the subject. The quality of the high definition, full colour illustrations and the very detailed specifications of each badge are outstanding. The Appendices include a most informative and superbly illustrated history of Regimental headress, a comprehensive Regimental lineage and a section on sealed patterns, the process for which has regrettably been sacrificed in recent years on grounds of economy with the consequent reduction in the quality of our military badges and insignia. In Appendix G the author provides a clear summary of the hallowed “golden thread” of tradition which ran through the Regiment from raising in 1689 to 2006 when, after 317 years of unbroken and loyal service to The Crown, the Regiment was amalgamated with The Royal Scots. Despite promises to the contrary, the “golden thread” was finally and irrevocably broken with the removal of Scottish affiliation in November 2021 when the 1st Bn The Royal Regiment of Scotland was disbanded and re-formed as the 1st Bn The Ranger Regiment which bears no Scottish insignia nor any of the battle honours of the KOSB. In recent years this painful experience has been keenly felt by many “cap badges” lost with the reduction in the size of the British Army and Hiram Dunn has done “his” Regiment a great service in capturing their badges in meticulous detail before

they are lost in the mists of time. It was particularly good to see that MHS member Major Martin Linaker, himself a former Borderer, played a big part in the proof reading of the book. Hiram Dunn has produced a book which is an exemplar of its type and it is most highly recommended.

Civilian Specialists at War – Britain’s Transport Experts and the First World War by Christopher Phillips, Royal Historical Society Institute of Historical Research, University of London Press, 2020, 424pp, sb, with 4 bw line drawn maps, 14 bw figures, 13 detailed tables and comprehensive 25pp bibliography. £35. The scale of effort required to deploy, sustain and maintain the vastly expanded Armed Forces of Britain during the First World War was unprecedented and only possible because industry was able to manufacture and transport vast quantities of supplies and war material to the front. In this remarkably detailed, yet very readable, academic study, Professor Christopher Phillips examines the development of logistic concepts, methods and capabilities throughout the War against the background of the key professional pre-war relationships between the military, the Government and industry. He explains the industrial and technological developments which contributed to the War effort and the key role of British transport experts, such as Sir Eric Geddes, who served as both Director General of Transportation (DGT) and Director General of Military Railways (DGMAR). Working in partnership with Government and the Military, the way in which the Army was sustained by road, inland waterways and rail transport was revolutionised and the vast bureaucratic organisations and complex, integrated supply systems which were created, no doubt led directly to success on the battlefield. The author provides compelling evidence that transportation was central to the conduct of the War and that Britain’s senior political and military leaders recognised the value of industrial expertise and technology to the conduct of war long before August 1914. It has been said that “tactics is the art of the logistically possible” yet the study of logistics as a key component of success or failure in war is frequently overlooked, even by students of military history. There are many lessons for 21st Century military logisticians in this authoritative, clear and masterful account which is highly recommended to all who wish to gain a true understanding of the fundamental and war-winning contribution military and civilian logisticians played during the First World War.

The Tank Corps in the Great War. Volume 1 – Conception, Birth & Baptism of Fire, November 1914 – November 1916 by Stephen Pope, Helion 2022, 416 pages, hb, profusely illustrated in colour and bw with four bw sketch maps with a separate booklet of 10 maps in full colour which support the text. Following his *The First Tank Crews*, published to much acclaim by Helion in 2016 and reviewed in our *Bulletin* 269 of August 2017 p51, Stephen Pope has now embarked on a new multi-volume history of The Tank Corps during the First World War. In this the first Volume the author examines the birth of the tank, selection and training of crews, the early development of concepts and doctrine for this revolutionary weapon of war and the tactics which emerged for its employment on the battlefields of France and Flanders. As a former professional soldier and logistician the author does not gloss over the huge challenges inherent in the maintenance and logistic support of tanks in the field which were considerably magnified as soon as they went into action. From concept to rapid deployment within nine months and then tank by tank,