

service entertainment extends our understanding of queer sexualities in the British armed forces, investigating the connections between 'queer identity and cross-dressing' (p. 49). Florence Tamagne also addresses the topic of same sex relations in wartime, pointing out that the question of male homosexuality within the French Resistance 'remains a blindspot in historical research' (p. 155).

In her chapter on American Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP), Sarah Myers unpicks the gendered assumptions surrounding female pilots, ending with the wonderful observation that the post-war exclusion of women pilots 'left high altitudes as spaces literally for men' (p. 19). Through an examination of bigamy cases, Helen Steele beautifully illuminates the chaotic post-war world of Vienna and demonstrates the impact of the war on the citizens of the Austrian capital. She points out how defeated soldiers returning home with 'feelings of worthlessness' (p. 105) were part of a wider community of 'lost and forgotten people', displaced by war (p. 107). The final two chapters complement each other, addressing the issue of 'comfort women' in South Korea, Japan and China. Sachiyo Tsukamoto critiques the development of a transnational 'comfort women' justice movement whilst Danke Li shows how visual representations of the Second Sino-Japanese War have preserved the imagery of public memories of the war. Li points out that whilst relatively little attention has been paid to the Japanese military's sexual violence against non-comfort Chinese women, these crimes were clearly recorded in Chinese political cartoons and wood-cut prints. In turn, the latter send an important message that ordinary women were 'a significant part of China's War of Resistance' (p. 217). Kate Darian-Smith's chapter, which recovers the memories of US marines posted to Melbourne in 1943, underlines the value of oral history interviews undertaken in earlier decades which now act as a significant driver of memory work about the 'Pacific Partners' of America and Australia. Indeed, Darian Smith's observation that commemorative representations of the Second World War are 'becoming increasingly prominent in national understandings of its cultural and political impact' (p. 137) serves as a fitting justification for this engaging and thought-provoking volume.

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Isla Forsyth, *Second World War British Military Camouflage: Designing Deception*. London: Bloomsbury, 2017. Notes, Bibliography, Index, pp.229. ISBN 978-135-008-664-7. Hardback. Price £28.99.

Second World War British Military Camouflage: Designing Deception offers a cultural-historical geography of military camouflage that spans the first half of the twentieth

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century. Camouflage is usually characterised as the passive, defensive, or even humorous counterpart to the weaponry of war. Author Isla Forsyth suggests that existing histories of the subject — in which discussions of camouflage are usually framed within the individual disciplines of art, science or militarism — have sustained this image by concealing the darker, more complex history of camouflage. In *Designing Deception*, the history of camouflage is told primarily through the biographies of those men that developed and utilised the technology. It simultaneously recognises the artistic, scientific and militaristic roots of camouflage and addresses the problems that arise from developing an inherently interdisciplinary technology. Perhaps most significantly, Forsyth discusses camouflage not only as a tool of defensive warfare but also as a tactical and offensive weapon; thus, addressing the ‘indirect bloodletting’ so often excluded from other studies.

The book is structured primarily around the career of Dr Hugh Cott, renowned zoologist and a key figure in the development of military camouflage. The first chapter offers a pre-history of camouflage in the First World War period and includes biographies of three other significant proponents of camouflage: artist and naturalist Abbott H. Thayer, embryologist John Graham Kerr, and artist Solomon J. Solomon. The second chapter introduces Cott, outlining his meticulous approach to field work and increased interest in military camouflage in the late 1930s. Chapters three and four follow Cott through his involvement with the short-lived Camouflage Advisory Panel (CAP) of 1939 and Camouflage Committee of 1940, both the cause of much frustration and dissatisfaction, and then to a more fruitful period at the Camouflage Development and Training Centre at Farnham Castle. Finally, chapter five moves with Cott to the desert, and the North Africa Campaign of 1941-1943. It is at this point that we see the ‘camofleurs’ in action and come to understand the product of the research and training recounted over the previous chapters. Forsyth discusses the evolution of camouflage from a protective tool to a form of tactical and offensive warfare and ends with a consideration of the darker side of camouflage and its legacy on those who used it.

In *Designing Deception*, war is defined ‘as a process as well as an event’; a continually shifting and evolving activity that both shapes and is shaped by science, culture and technology. This perfectly contextualises the discussion of the complicated and fluid relationships between camouflage, war, and the various non-militaristic disciplines from which it was born. The work deals with rivalries, false-starts, tensions and failures as much as successes, and Forsyth is convincing in her argument that to truly understand the history of camouflage the losses must be considered as well as the wins. The accounts of collaborative work (successful or otherwise) between scientists, artists and military personnel, as well as magicians, engineers, politicians, film-makers and even a surrealist poet, are one of the real strengths of this book, demonstrating

the remarkably interdisciplinary nature of a seemingly simple technology. The work is founded on extensive archival research, which gives a real sense of the labour and creative thinking — as well as the personalities — that founded modern military camouflage.

Designing Deception is not a comprehensive account of the evolution of camouflage in the twentieth century, but an insightful and revealing study of an interdisciplinary technology with a darker, more complicated past than immediately meets the eye. Forsyth's geographical approach does, as she suggests, reveal something new and unexpected about a subject that has sometimes been dismissed as 'benign' (Those with an interest in camouflage who are unfamiliar with the field of historical-geography should not be put off, but may find it useful to start with the justification for this approach on page 166). The use of micro-history in the form of individual biographies makes for an engaging read, provides new and valuable insights into the life and work of Dr Hugh Cott, and also allows 'for a different narrative of camouflage to be told, one which exposes a darker history of aggression, violence and death'. This is not a book only for military historians, but for anyone interested in the interplay between war and culture, as well as the very human stories that are so often hidden behind military technologies.

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