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The Capture of Louisbourg, 1758

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In addition, his use of nonstandard notations can render specific citations a little fuzzy. This is a minor issue, however, as Anderson's synthesis is superb, his analysis is sharp, and his writing style is engaging. All in all, this is a very useful contribution to the body of work, one that helps foster a better understanding of the dynamics shaping today's Arab Spring and beyond. Given America's track record in the region, anything that helps broaden our understanding of the Middle East can only be a good thing.

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Boscawen, Hugh. *The Capture of Louisbourg, 1758. Campaigns and Commanders*. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 2011. 504pp. \$39.95

The British amphibious operation to capture the French fortress at Louisbourg in Canada during the Seven Years' War was the largest joint operation undertaken by British forces in that period. This major event in naval history has not been overlooked by historians, but no one until Colonel Hugh Boscawen, British Army (Ret.), has been able so effectively to combine the skills of an experienced army officer with those of an insightful modern historian in analyzing this campaign and its commanders.

A direct descendant of the British naval commander at the capture of Louisbourg, Admiral the Honorable Edward Boscawen, Colonel Hugh Boscawen brings his own experience of thirty years of active military service in the Coldstream Guards to bear on the subject, with his knowledge of modern-day campaign planning and execution. Such

credentials might have led an author in the wrong direction, resulting in an anachronistic and hagiographic tale full of modern military jargon. However, in Hugh Boscawen's hands they have led to a model of careful historical scholarship informed by professional military understanding, experience at sea as a yachtsman, and access to family papers. Starting out from the key conceptual point that campaigns and commanders should be seen in the context of the aims, ways, and means of their own day, Boscawen has carefully and judiciously examined the subject. Over many years, he made a thorough study of both the published English- and the published French-language scholarship. Going much farther and deeper, he examined in detail the extensive public and private records in four French and eight British archival depositories, as well as other primary-source materials in Canada, the United States, and private hands.

Colonel Boscawen opens his study with an overview of the strategic situation that the competing powers of Britain and France faced in the period immediately leading up to 1758, and of the contrasting organization of those governments and their leaders. Boscawen goes on to examine the background to the construction of the French fortification at Louisbourg, ranging from the reorganization of the defense of New France following the Peace of Utrecht in 1713 to the perception on both sides that Louisbourg had become an important trading point, the key bastion in the defense of the Saint Lawrence River and Quebec, as well as the French fisheries on the Grand Banks. When war broke out again between the two countries in 1755, neither was immediately prepared to react decisively.

Colonel Boscowen traces the initial planning for the Louisbourg campaign up to August and September 1757, when the Select Committee of the Privy Council in London began to look at priorities for the next campaigning season. By December a campaign plan had emerged and operational planning had begun; meanwhile, the French were taking their own action to strengthen their position in Canada. The British assault force began to gather at Halifax in April, while snow was still on the ground. By 2 May Admiral Boscowen had arrived, immediately selecting key land and sea officers to form a joint staff to plan the landing. Such a staff was a remarkable innovation, for which the need had already been made clear in earlier eighteenth-century British experience. Among several initiatives this group took were joint operational training and a system of operational control for the landing boats. In eighteen days in May 1758 at Halifax, fourteen British regiments, artillery, rangers, and the fleet were transformed into a cohesive expeditionary force.

Colonel Boscowen provides a detailed description of the initial assault landing, under the command of the newly arrived Major General Jeffery Amherst.

Once ashore, Brigadier James Wolfe was able to gauge the range of the fortress's guns and to locate the initial position that Amherst would use for the first parallel in the siege that ensued. Turning to the French side, Boscowen follows the French as they defended their position. He then traces the action in two parts—the siege, between 1 and 15 July, and the bombardment, from 16 to 27 July.

As Colonel Boscowen points out, British success at Louisbourg marked the beginning of the end of New France, and it also began a series of British joint amphibious operations during the remainder of the war. It also showed early signs of the coming changes in military affairs, marked by increasingly organized industrial and agricultural support for larger armed forces. Boscowen's study is a model of historical analysis, judiciously dealing with both sides of this joint operation in military and naval dimensions. It is a major contribution to understanding an eighteenth-century amphibious operation.

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