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### The Civil War: A Narrative, Vol. I: Fort Sumter to Perryville; Vol. 11: Fredricksburg to Meridian; Vol. Ill: Red River to Appomattox

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to the U.S. military forces serving there. The title of this work implies a study of the U.S. military role in the broad sweep of Sino-American relations. This is not the case. Instead, the work gives a rather narrow if fascinating view of the U.S. military's involvement in China for over thirty-seven years.

Dennis L. Noble is a part-time instructor at Peninsula College and the author of a number of articles and books about the U.S. Coast Guard. In this work he has examined the social aspects of the American military experience of serving at a distant station during peacetime. This book, he writes, "offers the student of American military history the chance to learn about the people within the ranks, rather than the larger issues of tactical doctrine, strategy, or even war plans." He has included a statistical analysis of the officers and men in the China service, a profile of the duty day, off-duty hours, American servicemen's perception of China and the Chinese, servicemen who remained in China, and incidents that required a show of force.

The author has employed a rather tiresome method of developing both his chapters and what we learn about the military forces by using what most small unit leaders learn in their first months in command. Each chapter opens with a description of a stereotype or a myth that relates to each topic. This becomes the chapter research question, which is invariably answered with both a confirmation and a refutation. For example, to

conclude that there were good and bad men in the China service, that commanders make the difference between good and mediocre units, or that living in an enclave in a foreign land does very little to increase cross-cultural understanding, is less than surprising, it is stating the obvious.

The author's assertion that "in many ways, the American military wasted its China experience, [that] U.S. military personnel should have learned as much about China as possible, in order to recognize incorrect estimates of its leaders and events later on," is off the mark. The U.S. Army's 15th Infantry, the 3rd Marine Brigade, and the 4th Marine Regiment produced a number of capable China experts and senior officers with a good understanding of China and the Chinese; these included Generals George C. Marshall and Matthew B. Ridgway and Colonel David D. Barrett, to name a few.

Despite its shortcomings, Noble's book is an interesting one for those interested in China. It does provide useful impressions of military service in culturally different lands; more importantly, however, it is an informative (if impressionistic) glimpse of China during a time of ferment.

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Foote, Shelby. *The Civil War: A Narrative*. Volume I: *Fort Sumter to Perryville*, 840pp. Volume II: *Fredricksburg to Meridian*, 988pp. Volume III: *Red River to Appomattox*, 1106pp. New York: Vintage, 1963

(Paperback Vintage Books Edition, 1986). Each volume \$21.95

Shelby Foote has brought to life the major and the minor figures on both sides of this conflict. The reader shares in the triumph of George Thomas as he prevented the destruction of the Union Army at Chickamauga, and the frustration of the Confederate general, Richard Taylor (Zachary Taylor's son), when his dream of victory was snatched from him by the irresolution of his superior at Red River, and the curious trajectory of George McClellan, who emerges as simultaneously a villain and a hero.

Neither the Union nor the Confederates had a corner on the supply of vanity, ambition, or lapses of judgment. Shelby Foote expertly documents how costly this was; this is an invaluable aid to understanding the abilities and the shortcomings of the leadership on both sides, and it reveals their common characteristics.

The individual interested in naval matters should find much new, relevant, and informative material in Shelby Foote's treatment of the Confederate and Union navies. Both sides used their navies as "strategic forces" inasmuch as the campaigns and forays always had the governing "Grand Strategy" in view. The activities of both navies provide illustrations of the power of the "fleet in being" articulated by Alfred Thayer Mahan. In particular, the important role played by the ironclads on the Mississippi demonstrate that concept.

The United States Navy is justly proud of its reputation as a "blue water

navy" which it gained in the Spanish-American War and the First and Second World Wars, and burnished in the many naval aspects of the Cold War. The Civil War reminds us of the U.S. Navy's equally proud tradition as a "brown water navy." The visits Foote provides to Port Royal, Hampton Roads, Vicksburg, and along the Mississippi allow one to see the naval "battlefields." It is a good reminder that the opposing force on the ground was not the only enemy. The author's vignettes of the "brown water" campaigns has captured something of the ingenuity, determination, bravery, resourcefulness, and horror of this forerunner to riverine warfare as experienced later in Vietnam.

Combined, there are over 53,000 books, monographs, reports, songs, and published letters on the Civil War. It is tremendously difficult to discern from all this a true definition of what really happened. Shelby Foote, through meticulous research combined with great narrative skill, has managed to create an epic of tremendous influence.

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Cogar, William B., comp. *Dictionary of Admirals of the U.S. Navy, 1862-1900*, Volume I. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1989. 217pp. \$36.95

A most welcome reference series, this first volume establishes an authoritative list of biographical data that was