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## Tannenberg: Clash of Empires

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virtually impossible to study Manstein's counteroffensive without acquiring a profound admiration for Germany's finest strategist. Additional maps and an order of battle would also have greatly facilitated the reader's comprehension of the campaigns that Sadarananda describes in detail.

However, despite these criticisms, *Beyond Stalingrad* makes a valuable contribution to the historiography of World War II. Although some readers may find the cost of the book prohibitive, Sadarananda admirably succeeds in his quest to stimulate interest in discovering the individual engagements and operations conducted on the Eastern front.

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Showalter, Dennis E. *Tannenberg: Clash of Empires*. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1991. 419pp. \$42.50

Dennis E. Showalter, professor of history at Colorado College, has provided a competent, engaging, and often incisive examination of the first major battle of World War I. In four distinct segments, Showalter has examined the diplomatic failures that led to war; the initial orders of battle, deployments, and skirmishes leading to the Battle of Gumbinnen; the successes and failures which permitted the German double envelopment at Tannenberg; and the consequences of that German victory.

Almost a third of the book is devoted to an examination of the origins of World War I. It is not an original examination, neither is it seriously flawed. The title of Chapter 3, "War Finds A Way," aptly captures the difficulty one encounters when assigning blame for its outbreak. Although the author acknowledges Austria's desire for war with Serbia, he is a bit too sympathetic towards the former. Showalter has, correspondingly, little sympathy for the Fritz Fischer school of thought, which primarily assigns to German designs the blame for altering the European balance of power. Consequently, Showalter ignores the German "blank check" which emboldened Austria-Hungary, and has underemphasized the former's desire to neutralize Russia before she grew too powerful. Knowing quite well that a rout of Serbia by Austria would demolish Russia's stature as a great power, Showalter nevertheless places primary responsibility on Russia for the outbreak of war.

Narrowly speaking, Showalter is correct to cite Russia's mobilization for the outbreak of World War I. But Russia mobilized because its leaders thought war was inevitable and, given the cult of the offensive in the context of a short war, attempted to defend itself as completely as possible. If Russian mobilization automatically brought Germany into the war, so too did implementation of the Schlieffen Plan (especially the attack on Belgium) guarantee Great Britain's entry and, consequently, world war. Great

Britain might have prevented war in August 1914 by giving an earlier warning (before that of 29 July) to Germany, which in turn might have checked Austria. Such action, however, might have emboldened Russia. Because these matters elude resolution even today, one might sympathize not only with the diplomats who failed to prevent the war but also with scholars today who believe that war simply found a way.

Professor Showalter's study of the war suffers from a different deficiency—one he intended. Because "one of the major reasons for undertaking this study was a desire to evaluate the kaiser's fighting men as they made the transition from peace to war," Showalter has paid considerably less attention to Russian operations. This becomes apparent when reading his account of the Russian victory at Gumbinnen. The moderate success of flanking attacks by the German generals Francois and Below, as well as the dismal frontal assault by General Mackensen, are portrayed in detail. On the other side, however, one finds little about the intentions or reactions of Rennenkampf's corps commanders, Generals Smirnov, Yepantschin, and Aliuev. Consequently, one keeps looking for evidence which would support Showalter's conclusion that Rennenkampf's "delay gave the Germans a golden chance to disengage and move south. In their dream of decisive victory, the Russians set the stage for their crushing defeat."

Showalter's perspective, however, also has its benefits. His focus upon German operations facilitates an examination of mistakes (e.g., German artillery far too often shelled its own men) as well as an appreciation of the responsiveness and initiative of German officers. The case of often-insubordinate General Francois is particularly illuminating as an example of "how to win battles the wrong way while his superiors were losing them the right way." Nevertheless, the German encirclement of Samsonov's 2nd Army was as much a consequence of the latter's "commitment to a strategy of maneuver" (characterized by Showalter as an attempt to use a "broadsword"—i.e., the Russian army—as a "rapier") as of German initiative. Professor Showalter is at his incisive best when examining the role played by "friction" in such monumental victories.

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Smith, Perry M. *How CNN Fought the War: A View from the Inside*. New York: Birch Lane Press, 1991. 223pp. \$18.95

Television news coverage during the Gulf War, with Cable Network News (CNN) in the lead, has drastically changed the nature of war. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin L. Powell, stated in a recent *New York Times* interview, "If a commander in Desert Shield [Storm] sat around his tent and mused with a few CNN guys and [media]