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“Vincere!”: The Italian Royal Army’s Counterinsurgency Operations in Africa, 1922–1940

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faced regarding the true extent of the killings and Turkish motivations. Some of the accounts from survivors of the mass killings and rapes are not for the faint of heart, and underscore the sense of powerlessness felt by the commanders of the Black Sea Fleet, who, despite their possession of state-of-the-art weapons of war, could do little to stop the chaos.

That is not to say that USN officers stood by and did nothing. The war diaries provide several portraits of heroism by officers attempting to avert further bloodshed and the great professional risks some destroyer captains incurred. One account in particular highlights the power one officer can have when compelled by humanitarian virtue. Captain Arthur L. Bristol Jr. of USS *Overton* risked his future career prospects by sending a well-timed letter to compel his commanding officer, Admiral Mark Bristol (no relation)—who had a well-known affinity for the nationalist government—to issue a formal complaint to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk over the planned forced removal of noncombatants. This likely spared the lives of twelve thousand Greek women and children. In multiple accounts, we see naval commanders struggling to define actions and concepts for which they had no words: *genocide*, *ethnic cleansing*, and a nascent sense of *the responsibility to protect*. We witness in these accounts the internal struggle of U.S. naval officers caught between the promise of America's new global role and the limits of that promise. *The Greek Genocide in American Naval War Diaries* is a compelling, primary-source resource for scholars seeking to understand the human face of sea power in the twentieth century.

MICHAEL IMBRENDA



"Vincere!": The Italian Royal Army's Counterinsurgency Operations in Africa, 1922–1940, by Federica Saini Fasanotti. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2020. 224 pages. \$44.

Most military historians are familiar with the colonial histories of Spain, France, Italy, and Great Britain on the North African littoral (along with Belgium in the Congo, as well as Germany and Portugal in southwest and southeast Africa). This recent work considers in detail the experience of one of these participants as it appears from eighty years of retrospection. With a title that can be read as *conquest* or *victory*, the book deals with the timely topic of low-intensity conflict in Africa in the first part of the twentieth century by a European power: Italy's Royal Army in Libya and Ethiopia (or the Kingdom of Abyssinia). These were campaigns fought to pacify the coastal regions and interior. It is not a surprise—with success in the global war on terrorism and the "Long War"—that something is familiar in these colonial campaigns fought within the same locations, terrain, and populations as today's. Yet while tactics, techniques, or procedures might be similar, the policy and strategic goals were very different, as were the actual results of the conflicts.

The study divides logically into two stand-alone parts, the 1922–31 campaign in Libya and the 1936–40 campaign in Ethiopia. Introductions and conclusions provide context for each campaign; sections on acronyms and personalities, as well as glossaries and notes, support the narrative. The well-written narrative also provides after-action lessons that are of interest to current efforts in the region. One theme

from these campaigns is that the army and air force units that conducted initial offensive operations had to be replaced by locally raised forces to perform subsequent pacification and occupation duties. This required leaders with language and cross-cultural skills prepared for a long commitment to their assigned theater. In both campaigns, firm defensive bases and mobile columns were used in conjunction with rudimentary mechanization and air support that matured as the campaigns continued—all experiences similar to those of the U.S. Marines in the small-war era.

Saini Fasanotti earned a PhD at the University of Milan and is a senior

visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution, Washington, DC. This is her fifth book, here translated (with only a few anomalies) from the Italian by Sylwia Zawadzka. Based on Saini Fasanotti's ten years of study in Italian archives and on-the-ground research, "*Vincere!*" provides original insights that even now will be of interest to those responsible for these regions. It serves as an example of applied history that can be a practical tool to inform policy, tactics, procedures, and techniques in more-contemporary operations.

CHARLES D. MELSON

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Charles D. Melson is the former U.S. Marine Corps chief historian and editor of *The German Army Guerrilla Warfare Pocket Manual* (Casemate, 2019).

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