

Emperor's coronation' (p. 240), the Serbian army crumbling on the Kolubara might not have held out. Radomir Putnik, the chief of Serbia's high command, emerges with as much credit as Potiorek does opprobrium. Accordingly, the story of Serbia and the Balkan Front in 1914 comes down to leadership, with Serbia's operational experience from the Balkan wars enabling Putnik and his generals to exploit the terrain through 'daring, energetic, and innovative' (p. 244) manoeuvres. Exhaustion and disease, and the high death toll on which post-1918 national narratives of sacrifice would rest, made the battlefields of 1915 a different place. Readers interested in the Habsburg occupation, the opening up of the Bulgarian front, the Serbian retreat to Corfu, the political questions around the cause of Yugoslav unification that would emerge after the publication of Serbia's war aims, or even the politics of Habsburg government and diplomacy in 1914 itself, will need to consult other works on Serbia, Austria-Hungary and the South Slav question, but none will cover the Serbian campaigns of 1914 in as much detail as *Serbia and the Balkan Front*.

CATHERINE BAKER  
University of Hull

**Christopher L. Scott, *The Maligned Militia: The West Country Militia of the Monmouth Rebellion, 1685*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. 333pp. ISBN: 978-1-4724-3771-6. Hardback. £80.00.**

This is a book with a mission: Scott sets out to reassess the nature and value of the militia in England in the seventeenth century by exploring its role in the defeat of the Duke of Monmouth when he attempted to wrest the throne from his uncle, James II. The militia was immediately condemned for its inefficiency by an ungrateful king: he was not alone, and had set the tone for later commentators and historians and thus the militia has been defined or maligned as ineffective and a liability to the professional commanders who were 'saddled' with militia units. In many ways it has been a contagion the militia or trained bands of forty years earlier were similarly frowned upon. Yet both they and their successors did not deserve such odium. The failures of the trained bands of 1642 were political not military: the part-time members of the county-focussed militia were divided by politics into Royalist, Parliamentary and neutrals. Both sides sought to use them as a resource, and apart from the London trained Bands which identified Parliament's cause with London's and performed formidably in battle, the trained bands fragmented and abandoned their weapons to those who were chose to fight for king and/or Parliament. In 1685 the political loyalties were less fragile and the relative unexpectedness of Monmouth's rebellion had reduced the tendency for political fragmentation and Scott's argues that the militia can be judged militarily. To do this, Scott explores the nature of the militia in terms of history, development and organisation, in general and specifically in the southwest.

## REVIEWS

It is the depth of study which makes the book important. The tone is exploratory and it is far more than an attempt to put the record straight as it is perhaps the most thorough study of the English and Welsh militia to date. Chapter Six – ‘Fit for Service’ is particularly important as it explores the nature of service in the militia; the state of training and the effectiveness of that training. Interestingly Scott who has held organisational roles in re-enactment or living history draws upon that experience to add comment on the timings of parts of militia drill. Scott shows that the militia could be proficient at aspects of their drill and several militias were more than competent at volley fire during inspections in 1684 for instance. On the other hand, there were a few collapses of discipline (and morale) during the campaign – elements of the Somerset militia panicked at Axminster and the Red Regiment of the Wilshire militia did so at Bradford upon Avon in June.

The succeeding chapter contains an exploration of the uniforms worn by the militia and the colours they carried, the semi symbolic facets which gave the militia a sense of self and the ensign was a clear and visible rallying point. Having assessed the nature of training and equipment the book turns to the central issue where the performance of the militia is subject to analysis via a range of indicators: marching, campaigning, fighting and the aftermath of combat. There were the problematic events at Axminster and Bradford upon Avon which were at the root of the criticism levelled at the militia in the wake of the rebellion. However, these were not typical and nor were they representative. Scott’s analysis is fair and balanced and goes beyond simply suggesting that the criticism of militia was misplaced. Scott argues that militia were quick off the mark, able to assemble and train at the beginning of the campaign and moreover they were disciplined. The militia remained loyal and when it came to the shooting, they were effective: fighting hard and winning a range of small scale actions during the campaign.

In his well-balanced conclusion Scott contends that the militia made an effective contribution to containing Monmouth’s rebellion and played an important secondary role in defeating it. This is an important study of an under researched aspect of English and Welsh military history. Moreover, it is also an important examination of the militia’s role in defeating Monmouth and as such an important contribution to studies of the rebellion itself. It provides a firm rebuttal of the notion that the militia was ‘not sufficient’ and argues that it has been much and unfairly maligned.

MARTYN BENNETT  
Nottingham Trent University