

individual nations and their experiences in the Second World War. Lumans, a Latvian-American and the son of immigrants who fled the initial Soviet invasion in 1941, engages with many of the questions that post-Soviet Latvia continues to have trouble facing today. The Latvian experience during the Second World War, much like those of its Baltic neighbours, was about dictatorship, occupation, and colonialism. Latvia suffered the collapse of democracy and the erection of a dictatorship prior to the Second World War. Secondly, Latvia experienced both Soviet and then Nazi occupation before the final Soviet advance in 1944. Finally, with the Nazis' defeat and the West's acquiescence, the three Baltic states became Soviet colonies lasting until August 1991. Traditionally a military historian, Lumans dissects the complexities of this very small state in a very big war with a thorough analysis, a plethora of research and an insightful discussion.

As well as portraying the ebb and flow of the war in Latvia, Lumans also objectively engages with three contemporary contentious issues. Firstly, did the Germans "liberate" Latvia following Soviet occupation? Details of the racial categorization and how it changed over time pours cold water on any intention of the Germans to "liberate" Latvia. Secondly, Lumans makes a thorough investigation of the Holocaust in Latvia. He establishes beyond doubt that many Latvians were willing participants in the killing of Jews in Latvia and through antipartisan activities in Belarus. At the same time, the author also illustrates how the mass murder of Jews was directed by the Nazis and rarely happened outside the direction of the SS. As Lumans highlights, what is saddest for Latvia is the fact that it appears that so few Latvians attempted to help those Jews that were attempting to escape genocide. Finally, the book deals with the question of collaboration. In other words, where did German compulsion begin and Latvian cooperation end? There were generally three types of Latvians. There is little doubt that some were prepared to take up arms against those who had terrorised Latvia in 1941. At the same time, many Latvians thought that by working with the Germans, they would be able to reclaim the state that the Soviets had taken away. Finally, there were those Latvians who were trying to stay out of the army and work brigades established by the Nazis. However, in the end the Latvians in general had very little choice especially as the war steadily worsened for Nazi Germany. Overall, the answers to these questions are important as Latvians "resurrect their state and decide which features of their wartime legacy to accept as part of their common, Latvian national experience and which to discard as incongruous anomalies or even as un-Latvian" (p. 263). In this regard, Lumans has offered an instructive history to Latvia and the wider community.

David Galbreath

University of Aberdeen
Aberdeen, Scotland, United Kingdom

An American Heroine in the French Resistance: The Diary and Memoir of Virginia d'Albert-Lake. Edited by Judy Barrett Litoff. New York: Fordham University Press, 2006. ISBN 0-8232-2581-X. Maps. Photographs. Appendixes. Notes. Index. Pp. xxxviii, 270. \$29.95.

This is a tale of quiet heroism, most of it in the heroine's own words, of

Journal of Military History
71 (Jan. 2007)

an American girl, a doctor's daughter born in Ohio and brought up in Florida. She married a Frenchman whose mother was English; was with him in Paris when the world war against Hitler began; and stayed with him when he started to help the "Comet" escape line, in which she became a courier. By mere bad luck, she was arrested by the Germans in western Normandy in mid-June 1944 in the company of an evading American airman; and just managed to survive Fresnes and Ravensbrueck. She kept a diary, till she was arrested, which is here reprinted. In the winter after her rescue, she wrote a long account of her prison and concentration camp experiences, in the form of a letter to her recently dead mother. The original memoir seems to have vanished; this too is reprinted, from a typescript in the family's hands. More than sixty years on, both documents have a ghastly immediacy: they bring back Hitler's war at its worst.

The diary has been neatly edited by Professor Litoff, who also writes a long introduction; she footnotes events, well known at the time, which may not be readily remembered by today's readership. It presents a straightforward picture of life under Vichy France for someone who disliked it. The male SS guards left most of the immediate care of the prisoners to *kaapos*, who were prisoners themselves. Woman's inhumanity to woman has seldom been as well described: witness the Polish woman *kapo*, without whose say-so no captive could reach the camp hospital, who kept an iron bar to hand with which she used to strike every other prisoner who came within arm's reach, as she did not want to catch their lice. In the closing stages, several hundred captives were crammed together in a vast marquee, most of them suffering from dysentery and many of them unable to stir to the latrine to relieve themselves. The stench alone must have been all but unbearable—yet they bore it.

Virginia Lake's private motto was "never give in": she hung on. Efforts by her American family eventually got through to her, just in time. She and General de Gaulle's niece, Genevieve Anthonioz, were removed from Ravensbrueck to Liebenau near Lake Constance, in a six-day nightmare journey through ruins, late in February 1945. There she slept in sheets, was decently fed, was out of earshot of gunfire, and was liberated late in April. She was reunited with her husband in Paris after the war's end; she recovered her health, they had a son and settled near Dinard. The British gave her an MBE, the Belgians the Medal of King Leopold, and the French the Liberation Medal of Honor, a *croix de guerre*, and, eventually, the Legion of Honour. She died in 1997 aged eighty-seven.

She had simply done what she thought she ought to do. Her story, movingly well told, was well worth putting into print.

M. R. D. Foot

Nuthampstead, England

Spain during World War II. By Wayne H. Bowen. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006. ISBN 0-8262-1658-8. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. x, 279. \$39.95.

This book draws on what is now a large body of published work dealing with the early years of the Franco dictatorship and applies it to Spain's shifting international allegiances during the Second World War. The diplomatic