

pulling 55 percent casualty rate as a result — the highest of any regiment in the battle. *Fields of Blood* is an excellent study of an important but often overlooked campaign and is a welcome addition to the literature on the Trans-Mississippi Theater.

The American Military Frontiers: The United States Army in the West, 1783–1900, by Robert Wooster. *Histories of the American Frontier*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009. xvi, 361 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

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During congressional debates to determine army appropriations in 1878, Montana's territorial delegate, Martin Maginnis, spoke favorably of the U.S. Army's contribution in advancing the nation westward, while U.S. Representative Auburn L. Pridemore of Virginia thought otherwise. "It has been the tiller of the soil," countered the former Confederate soldier, "who stood with loaded gun in his own field who has made his way through the savage land" (274). Pridemore's argument bore the memory of a Yankee army ruling over the South during Reconstruction, but it reflected other long-standing values: the Revolutionary generation's discomfort with maintaining a large standing army, the Jacksonian desire for a limited government, and the American belief in self-reliance and individual opportunity. Such ideas minimized a federal role, and the dispute appeared time and again, yet as Robert Wooster makes clear, the army became the "government's most visible agent of empire" (xii). Militias and state-sponsored volunteers contributed to American expansion, fighting at Tippecanoe with William Henry Harrison in 1811 and following Alexander Doniphan into Mexico in 1847, but despite a parsimonious Congress and a tradition limiting the army's numbers, primary responsibility fell to regulars led by officers trained at West Point.

This imperial thesis is hardly new, having been established a generation ago by Robert G. Athearn, Francis Paul Prucha, and Robert Utley, but recent historians have continued to refine it, and this volume employs a remarkable depth of scholarship and primary sources to describe the army's role from the earliest days of the nation to the end of the nineteenth century. During that time, soldiers explored and mapped the West, built forts and roads, protected the borders and "participated in over eleven hundred combat operations against Indians" (273).

Wooster begins with the push to secure the Ohio Valley from the Miami. His narrative tracks the principal Indian wars that followed, but this is not a simple rehash of battles lost and won. Instead, Wooster tells a wider story of political squabbles, economic opportunity, institutional reforms, and policies that left the army and its officer corps whipsawed by public expectations. In 1836 Brevet Major General Edmund P. Gaines, an expansionist and as ethnocentric as anyone on the frontier, disagreed with the decision "to break up the Indians, take their lands and throw together twenty tribes speaking different languages." He preferred to treat them humanely. "Otherwise we *must annihilate* them. This we cannot do without forgetting what is due to our own interests, and our own self-respect" (63–64). The popular insistence on Indian defeat and displacement caused the army to keep nearly one-third of its forces in Florida fighting Seminoles during the period 1821–1835, and it encouraged a series of shameful depredations in the post–Civil War West. After troops under Major Eugene M. Baker attacked a friendly Piegan village and killed a large number of women and children in 1870, the reformer Wendell Phillips derided Baker along with Generals Philip H. Sheridan and George A. Custer as the true "savages upon the Plains" (209).

A military presence anywhere on the frontier guaranteed an influx of capital because the army needed supplies for its soldiers, forage for its horses, and a civilian work force to be construction laborers, teamsters, and woodcutters. This financial relationship engendered regional development, a persistent theme among imperial historians, and Wooster recognizes its importance for understanding the army's ultimate contribution. J. M. D. Burrows, a merchant in Davenport, Iowa, began supplying Fort Crawford in 1841. "I always considered this as the best and most successful operation I ever undertook," he remembered, "and it benefited Scott County as much as it did me, as the money I obtained was scattered all over the county paying for produce" (72). Fifty years later, editors of the *San Antonio Express* welcomed "over a million dollars annually" from troops in its city (271).

Wooster's study covers a lot of ground, and while his text can seem overstuffed, it is readable, thoughtful, and informative. He includes an extensive bibliography, thorough notes, and seven maps that help readers follow his discussion. Overall, this is a fine work; anyone interested in the military in the American West can either build a sizable library or simply read this book.