

points of the war, or craft a more accurate representation of a vessel than was previously possible.

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David H. Lyman. *Seabee 71 in Chu Lai. Memoir of a Navy Journalist with a Mobile Construction Battalion*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland Publishing, www.mcfarlandbooks.com, 2020. x+230 pp., illustrations, appendices, index. US \$35.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-4766-7844-3. (E-book available.)

Started in 1955, and lasting more than 19 years, the Vietnam War is considered one of the most expensive wars ever fought, both in economic and human terms. It represented one of the most controversial moments in American society, and numerous Vietnam veterans' stories have enriched American cinema and literature.

David H. Lyman reports his memories of service at Seabee 71 battalion in Vietnam in 1967. His *Memoir of a Navy Journalist with a Mobile Construction Battalion* is important as a document about the life of American shore-based sailors and their activities, rather than a classic war diary. Although the author is a professional photographer, the pictures included in this book do not relate to any combat operation in Vietnam. Lyman's point of view is based on a genuine curiosity for many aspects of Vietnamese society and on his admiration for all infrastructure works built by Navy Seabees, a battalion founded by Ben Moreell in 1942, with the purpose of creating infrastructure and facilities for US forces in war zones.

During the Vietnam War, many young Americans were anxious to be sent to Vietnam to fight on the front lines. For this reason, Lyman, twen-

ty-two and freshly graduated in journalism from Boston University, decided to anticipate the upcoming draft by enlisting in the Naval Reserve. After four years, he was sent to Chu Lai, in the south of Vietnam, with Seabee Battalion 71 as a photojournalist. During this time, Lyman proved his photographic skill and caught the attention of *Life* magazine. They bought his iconic photo of Yeoman Chris Johnson while fishing, who was misidentified, ironically, as US President, Lyndon B. Johnson, due to his striking resemblance.

Lyman's book is an interesting document about Navy Seabees, and gives many details about their history, structure, and activities in Vietnam. Battalion 71, to which Lyman belonged, was divided into five companies, with different functions. Alpha company was comprised of truck drivers, rock drillers and cement plant operators, whose task involved building roads, landing strips for planes, drainage systems, and foundations for structures. Bravo, Charlie, and Delta companies were made up of builders and steel workers. Their task was to erect buildings, while H company operated in the administrative sector.

Lyman's main task in Chu Lai was to manage the battalion's newspaper *The Transit*, collecting all the most interesting stories from Chu Lai camp, taking pictures, and writing most of the articles. Further duties involved laying out the newspaper and proposing stories to the censorship commission, located at the MACV Press Center, in Da Nang, 87 kilometers north of Chu Lai. He summarizes his role as: "We were not real journalists. We were more like public relations flunkies, restricted to producing positive stories and photographs that showed the military in a good light for the folks back home" (152).

After editing, the newspaper was printed in Japan, and Lyman had the

opportunity to visit Tokyo many times and discover many aspects of Japanese culture that are well documented in this book.

Although he does not report on any wartime operations, Lyman records two interesting and dangerous encounters he shared with his comrades. The first was the explosion of a land mine as a convoy of cars he was in was travelling south on dusty Highway One. The lead truck passed over a mine, and Lyman's driver quickly swerved his jeep off the road. As the author reports, the explosion killed two young marines, who were found in a rice field. The second dramatic event occurred during a rescue operation to recover a lost squad in the Tra Bong River, using a special floating tank. Lyman's group was soon under fire, but after the Americans fought back, the enemy ceased shooting.

Other significant passages describe local villages, where groups of children used to surround the soldiers and try to sell them something. The US forces in Vietnam understood that to reduce the local population's distrust, they had to give them a hand through Civic Action projects, such as building schools, churches, and orphanages or providing villagers with health care. Many soldiers were involved in these projects, but one figure who stands out is John Murphy, a former construction company owner, who spent most of his time in Vietnam helping the Vietnamese rebuild what the war had destroyed.

Unlike other war diaries, Lyman's memoirs do not express any negative judgement towards the enemy or the local population. The common thread of this book is the sense of friendship among many young soldiers, sent to a previously unknown part of the world, to fight a war no one wanted, and the curiosity and sorrow for the Vietnamese people involved in what is now consid-

ered a Cold War era proxy-war. In Lyman's words: "I felt we could do more for these people, or less – if we'd just give them the money the military was spending on this war effort and let the Vietnamese sort their differences themselves" (167).

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David Ormrod and Gijs Rommelse (eds.) *War, Trade, and the State. Anglo-Dutch Conflict, 1625-89*. Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, boydel-landbrewer.com/, 2020. xxi+324 pp., illustrations, figures, maps, tables, index. US \$39.95, UK £30.00, hardback; ISBN 978-1-78327-324-9. (E-book available.)

The Anglo-Dutch conflict of 1652 through 1682 was the high-water mark of Dutch naval power and global influence. For the English, it was an era of great internal political upheaval from Cromwell to the arrival of William III of Orange. For the English navy, it was a period of slow awakening as the result of Dutch victories. David Ormrod and Gijs Rommelse edited and contributed to this collection of papers that explore in depth the financial, naval, political, and diplomatic developments during this period. This book is the result of two conferences in 2017, held in Amsterdam and Chatham, to mark the 350th anniversary of the Second Anglo-Dutch War, 1665-67, and the Dutch raid on the Medway, 1667. It provides a deeper understanding of the changing context during the period and the impact of the wars on England and the Netherlands.

There were three Anglo-Dutch wars, 1652-54, 1665-67 and 1673-74. The first war began largely over English ambitions to destroy Dutch superiority