

2-15-2017

Four princes: Henry VIII, Francis I, Charles V, Suleiman the Magnificent and the obsessions that forged modern Europe, John Julius Norwich (book review)

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Recommended Citation

McCallister, Kathleen, Four princes: Henry VIII, Francis I, Charles V, Suleiman the Magnificent and the obsessions that forged modern Europe, John Julius Norwich (book review) (2017). *Library Journal*, 142(3), 100.

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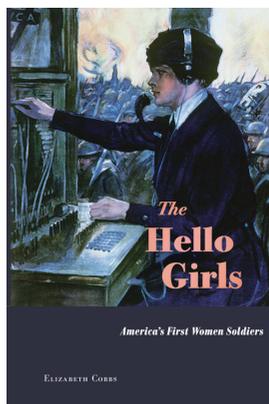
Women & War

★ Cobbs, Elizabeth.

The Hello Girls: America's First Women Soldiers.

Harvard Univ. Apr. 2017. 400p. illus. notes. index. ISBN 9780674971479. \$29.95. HIST

Cobbs (history, Texas A&M Univ.; *American Empire*) shines a new light on the history of suffrage and women's rights in the United States, using as a lens the servicewomen enlisted in the U.S. Army Signal Corps during World War I. Dubbed the Hello Girls, these women operated the telephone switchboards that facilitated communication between Allied forces and worked, in President Woodrow Wilson's words, "wherever men have worked and on the very skirts and edges of the battle itself." In this groundbreaking work, Cobbs weaves the trials and triumphs of America's first female soldiers (although they wouldn't win the right to claim that distinction until 1979) with the fight for women's rights and the rising waves of feminism. Although presenting a story of national interest and international impact, the author manages to keep the story personal and relatable by focusing on the experiences of the women in the Signal Corps. **VERDICT**



Clearly well-researched and well-written in a tone that both scholars and armchair historians alike will find engaging, this book is highly recommended to readers seeking new material on World War I, American history, military history, women's history, and gender studies.—Crystal Goldman, Univ. of California, San Diego Lib.

★ Moore, Kate. **The Radium Girls: The Dark Story of America's Shining Women.** Sourcebooks.

May 2017. 480p. photos. notes. bibliog. index. ISBN 9781492649359. \$26.99; ebk. ISBN 9781492649366. HIST

Moore (*Roses Are Red...*) details the tragic stories of dozens of young women employed as dial painters during World War I. Often

the daughters of immigrants, these women were lured to these prestigious and well-paying jobs unaware of the dangers of the radioactive paint present in their workplace—which caused their bodies and clothes to glow, even outside of work. With America's entry into World War I, demand for painted dials and painters skyrocketed. Soon, many employees suffered aching teeth and jaws, sore joints, and sarcomas. As their ailments worsened, many sought answers from their employers. They were met with denials and misinformation even as evidence mounted that radium poisoned these women. After nearly 20 years, several trials, and thousands of dollars in doctor and attorney fees, the women won a small measure of justice, but for some, it was too late. Moore's well-researched narrative is written with clarity and a sympathetic voice that brings these figures and their struggles to life. **VERDICT** A must-read for anyone interested in American and women's history, as well as topics of law, health, and industrial safety.—Chad E. Statler, Lakeland Comm. Coll., Kirtland, OH

a combination of self-promotion and accusations of communist subversion within the U.S. government. President Dwight Eisenhower has often been portrayed as ineffectual or idle in his actions, refusing to confront the senator. Columnists at the time castigated Eisenhower for not directly opposing McCarthy. In his latest work, historian Nichols (*Eisenhower 1956*) maintains that Eisenhower, instead, organized an effective campaign behind the scenes, using trusted aides and confidants. The results of this campaign led to McCarthy being reduced from arguably the most powerful member of the Senate to censure and disgrace within 18 months. Part of the strategy was to refuse to mention the senator's name in public. Many books on Eisenhower concentrate on his war experiences, but Nichols shows how his quiet, effective crusade against a demagogue turned the nation away from a domestic threat. Heavily annotated with both primary and secondary sources, this day-to-day narrative is detailed and telling. **VERDICT** Nichols offers an excellent example of revisionist history that will be welcome in all collections. [See Prepub Alert, 9/26/16.]—Edwin Burgess, Kansas City, KS

Norwich, John Julius. **Four Princes: Henry VIII, Francis I, Charles V, Suleiman the Magnificent and the Obsessions That Forged Modern Europe.** Atlantic. Apr. 2017. 304p. illus. maps. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780802126634. \$26; ebk. ISBN 9780802189462. HIST

In his introduction to this book, Norwich (*The Popes: A History*) admits to it being a project of personal interest, born out of the coincidence that the four titanic personalities on which it focuses—Henry VIII of England, Francis I of France, Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire, and Suleiman I of the Ottoman Empire—were by some miraculous chance alive to dominate the landscape of Europe and western Asia during the same period during the first half of the 1500s. By necessity of space, the information on each man is streamlined into key points, touching when possible on their spouses, relatives, hangers-on, and most especially their shifting alliances and enmities with each other. Norwich's long career as a historian has given him a definite assurance of style, which allows him to present historical detail in a thoroughly engaging manner without sacrificing clarity. **VERDICT** An entertaining history covering the highlights of four of the most significant rulers of the 16th century, although the author's fervor for his subjects sometimes sweeps ahead of the facts.—Kathleen McCallister, Tulane Univ., New Orleans

Romer, John. **A History of Ancient Egypt: From the Great Pyramid to the Fall of the**

cross moral lines. Jacobsen exposed much of this progress in her previous work, *The Pentagon's Brain*. Her latest book reveals how U.S. military agencies investigated and applied paranormal phenomena for defense. The author uses declassified information and interviews to weave a compelling narrative and support her research. Paranoia about Soviet research into this realm led to the creation of these programs, some of which cost millions to develop. This is an excellent read that gives ample evidence on both sides of the argument that extrasensory perception (ESP) and psychokinesis exist, complement-

ing such works as W. Adam Mandelbaum's *The Psychic Battlefield* and Ann Finkbeiner's *The Jasons*. **VERDICT** Highly recommended for those interested in the military and the paranormal.—Jacob Sherman, John Peace Lib., Univ. of Texas at San Antonio

★ Nichols, David A. **Ike and McCarthy: Dwight Eisenhower's Secret Campaign Against Joseph McCarthy.** S. & S. Mar. 2017. 400p. notes. index. ISBN 9781451686609. \$27.95; ebk. ISBN 9781451686623. HIST

In the mid-1950s, Sen. Joseph McCarthy (1908–57) made a name for himself through

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