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Andrew Syk, ed. *The Military Papers of Lieutenant-General Frederick Stanley Maude, 1914-1917.* Stroud: Army Records Society, 2012. xv +312 pp. Maps, illustrations. ISBN 978-0-7524-8619-2.

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Sir Frederick Stanley Maude: A Case Study of Command in the Great War

This edited collection of Sir Frederick Stanley Maude's official correspondences, war diaries, and private letters to his family provides an invaluable lens through which to nuance several important elements of the Great War historiography. Since posterity has most readily recognized Maude for his role in turning around the fortunes of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force (MEF), this volume offers readers unprecedented insight into the direction of one of Britain's relatively unexplored fronts in the First World War. Maude's papers, as Syk notes, enhance "our understanding of the experience of command during the First World War," since he commanded forces in France, Belgium, and Gallipoli, before becoming the commander in chief of the MEF (p. 4). Syk does an admirable job of placing Maude in context with his peers in the senior ranks of the British army and, in doing so, utilizes Maude's papers to further refine our perceptions of "command" in World War I.

Syk rediscovered Maude's papers while conducting research for his doctoral thesis and is clearly comfortable with the source base.[1] As the author notes, Maude's papers had been in the custody of his family, having seemingly disappeared after excerpts appeared in Major General C. E. Callwell's 1920 biography of Sir Frederick Stanley.[2] Beyond Maude's diaries, letters, and official communications, Syk's commentary is well supported by archival materials from British National Archives, the British Library's Indian Office Collections, private papers housed predominantly at the Imperial War Museum and the Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives at King's College London, and an extensive bibliography of published memoirs and secondary literature.

This volume is broken out into five chronological chapters, separated in accordance with Maude's assignments. Though Syk includes early entries while Maude was the training directorate in the War Office at the time of Britain's mobilization, he is more interested in Maude the commander. Thus, the first chapter documents his time on the western front as commander of the 14th Infantry Brigade/5th Division/II Corps. It is clear that Maude was a hands-on commander, visiting the trenches regularly, with a keen eye on their condition and, thus, the protection and comfort of his soldiers. Syk notes that his subordinates often became irritated with Maude's close supervision. To that end, he was repeatedly ordered to move his headquarters further from the front, since at times it had come under German artillery fire.

Maude also frequently gave voice to his frustrations with Britain and its government, particularly over shortages in ammunition, trained officers, and manpower. In a particularly bitter entry, Maude complains that "we simply sit down day after day and do nothing. Lack of fighting material is, of course, the cause but what a terrible record of bungling and maladministration and what needless loss of life has and will come of it. No doubt the guilty parties will be whitewashed in due course, as usually happens" (p. 81). At the same time, Maude regularly comments on his satisfaction with the command and his love for the brigade. This dedication was recognized through his elevation to division commanding officer.

In June 1915, Sir Frederick Stanley took command of the 33rd Division on the western front, but was quickly reassigned to the 13th Division in Near East. Chapter 2 documents Maude's time on the Gallipoli front and the shambles in which he found British circumstances on the peninsula. He consistently reiterates the poor organization of the staff work, and the sloppy, dilapidated state of British defenses. Maude regularly complains that the lack of ammunition, equipment, and supplies, as well as means of transporting provisions limited the offensive capabilities of Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. At the same time, the political vacilla-

tion over whether Britain should abandon the Gallipoli campaign altogether left the formations there languishing in extreme weather and under the duress of Turkish artillery and sniper fire. "We are truly a nation of muddlers. But surely the procrastination of the last 4 months and the scandal which must necessarily result therefrom must wake the Government up.... It is all too lamentable and has cost many valuable lives that might have been saved," Maude complained on December 2, 1915 (p. 101). Days later, the British War Cabinet passed down its final decision to evacuate the peninsula; Maude's forces would be amongst the last to leave.

January 1916 found the 13th Division reassigned to the MEF. Chapter 3 follows Maude and the 13th to Mesopotamia, where the protection of the British assets in the Middle East–the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, India, and Egypt–underpinned the directives of MEF strategy. As Syk notes, "The Tigris provided the most reliable line of communication, and thus the principal operations after mid-1915 were concentrated in the vicinity of this river" (p. 120). Such a limited capacity for transportation prevented newly arriving troops from reinforcing the Tigris Corps' relief efforts of Major-General Charles Townshend's forces besieged at Kut-al-Amara. Maude's diary repeatedly emphasizes the crippling effects of high casualty rates and having too few men and trained officers to replace them–both of which contributed significantly to operational failures of the MEF all the way up to the summer of 1916. In July 1916, Sir Frederick Stanley was appointed commander of the Tigris Corps over two division commanders who were senior to him–a reflection of his competence as a commander and an indictment of the rather poor quality of the commanders assigned to the Mesopotamian theatre of operations.[3] However, his time as corps commander was brief; a month later, Maude was promoted once more, this time as commander of all forces in Mesopotamia.

Chapter 4, through family and official correspondences, picks up where Maude's war diaries end, and provides the reader an equally penetrating view of Maude as commander in chief of Mesopotamia. One of his first orders of business was the reorganization of the Tigris Corps, breaking it out into two corps with two divisions each, allowing for greater operational flexibility. As Syk and others have emphasized, the projection of British imperial power in the Middle East had become a fundamental tenet shaping British strategy in Mesopotamia by the autumn of 1916. Senior British commanders, including Maude, feared that if British military power continued to appear weak–especially after the disastrous Gallipoli campaign and Townshend's loss at Kut-al-Amara–it would harm Arab alliances and encourage a Turkish invasion of Persia.

In order to revive British military prestige in the region, Maude focused his attention on improving lines of communication; the development of viable land transportation was particularly critical. Maude oversaw the construction of several interconnecting railways that would help alleviate the dependence on waterways.[4]. Additionally, as Maude notes, a steady stream of steamers and barges entered service almost weekly, accelerating the movement of provisions and replacements to the front lines. As a result, the MEF was finally able to effectively transport and distribute the men, materials, and supplies the force had needed. At the same time, Turkish forces were becoming weaker as replacements dried up. All of these elements combined enabled the British capture of Kut in February 1917. "The Turkish Army that was recently before us has ceased to exist as a fighting force owing to its casualties, prisoners, demoralization and the loss of a large proportion of its artillery and stores," Maude wrote in his telegram to the chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir William Robertson (p. 216).

With the Turkish 6th Army all but destroyed, the MEF seized Baghdad. The defeat of the Turkish 6th Army meant the end of large-scale military operations in the Baghdad region As Syk outlines in chapter 5, the remainder of Maude's command consisted of aborted attempts at joint operations with the Russian Caucuses Army and planning for the potential threat posed by German military intervention (in the form of the Yilderim Army Group). On November 16, 1917, staff physicians diagnosed Maude as having contracted cholera two days prior; he died two days later, on November 18.

In sum, the diaries and letters of Sir Frederick Stanley Maude reveal how indispensable he was in revitalizing British operations in Mesopotamia. Maude consistently demonstrated an indomitable dedication to his command, frequently commenting how thoroughly he enjoyed his work. The documents reveal him to have been confident in his abilities as a commander, having an innate ability to quickly assess the crux of a matter. As an excellent organizer with meticulous attention to detail, Maude effectively managed his forces in all facets of his assignments. Contrary to traditional interpretations that portray World War I commanders as caring little for the lives of their soldiers, Sir Frederick Stanley frequently expressed concern for the well-being of his men in the trenches, fully appreciating their hardships. Maude's consistent criticism of the staff work of peers

and subordinates reflects the high standards of professionalism he maintained and expected from his subordinates. Often frustrated by politically motivated directives from the Imperial War Cabinet, Maude was an aggressive commander who believed military imperatives on the ground should supersede political maneuvering. Indeed, as Lord Curzon said of Maude in 1918, "War ... is a great discoverer of merit; and it is not too much to say that General Maude was one of the discoveries ... of the present war. At the beginning of the war he was only a Lieutenant-Colonel" (quoted, p. 8).

Notes

[1]. Andrew Syk, "Command and the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, 1915-18," (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2009).

[2]. C. E. Callwell, *The Life of Sir Stanley Maude* (London: Constable and Company, 1920).

[3]. The two divisional commanders Maude skipped for promotion were major generals Henry Keary and Granville Egerton. In the April 10, 1916, entry in his diary, Maude claims that Keary was "rather an old woman, a regular Indian with a liver," while Egerton was a "freak" "who used to go about in galoshes and complain that he was too old to go to war" (p. 143). Maude later describes Keary as a "hard tough fellow," perhaps having won a measure of respect (p. 170).

[4]. The railways Maude discusses are the Sheikh Sa'ad-Sinn railway, the Nasiriyah line, and the Qurnah-Amarah line, as well as an extension connecting the Amarah and Sheikh Sa'ad lines (p. 167). He later comments on how well the "little" rail lines worked in provisioning the MEF (p. 198).

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