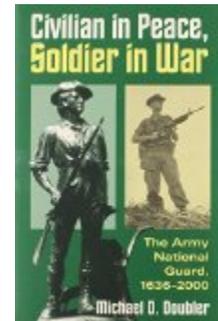


H-Net Reviews

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Michael D. Doubler. *Civilian in Peace, Soldier in War: The Army National Guard, 1636-2000*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003. xxiv + 460 pp. \$17.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-7006-1249-9.

Reviewed by William Donnelly (U.S. Army Center of Military History)
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Evolution of an American Institution

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Michael D. Doubler is a retired U.S. Army officer who graduated from West Point, earned a Ph.D. in history from Ohio State University, and served in the National Guard Bureau before his retirement. Doubler's dissertation, published as *Closing With the Enemy: How GIs Fought the War in Europe, 1944-1945* (1994), was widely praised and is one of the major revisionist works on the performance of the U.S. Army in World War II. *Civilian in Peace, Soldier in War* is a paperback reprint, with a new preface, of *I Am the Guard: A History of the Army National Guard* (Washington: Office of the Director, Army National Guard, 2001), the first official history of the Army National Guard. The new preface combines the introduction of the hardcover edition with a brief discussion of the Army National Guard's activities from the September 11, 2001, attack to July 2002.

Civilian in Peace, Soldier in War fills a great hole in the historiography of the Guard. There have been a number of good dissertations, monographs, and journal articles about the militia and the Guard, particularly on the period before the Root reforms of the early twentieth century, but the subject has lacked a good general history. Two previous works have attempted to provide a general history of the militia and the Guard, but both are dated and flawed. Army National Guard Major General Jim Dan Hill's *The Minute Man in Peace and War* (1964) presented a vigorous defense of the Guard at the expense of scholarship. John K. Mahon's *History of the Militia and*

the National Guard (1983) is a better work of scholarship, but its coverage of the Guard in the twentieth century is not much more than a sketch and it uses few archival sources.

Clearly written and well organized, *Civilian in Peace, Soldier in War* accomplishes all the objectives Doubler set for it. Although it is not a work of advocacy like *The Minute Man in Peace and War*, Doubler's purpose in writing his book was not to provide a detailed, critical analysis of the Army National Guard's nearly four hundred years. Rather, it is to "help to inform and educate the American people about the significant accomplishments of their nation's oldest military institution" (p. xvii). His hope is that the book will heighten awareness "among the American people of the Army National Guard's long and proud service and its crucial role in the common defense" (p. xxi). Additionally, Doubler makes it clear in the preface that the book "is not a history of the National Guard in the several States, but a centralized view of the Guard's overall development and contributions at the national level" (p. xx). Therefore, the Guard's actions in state service are examined only if they have affected the institution's "standing in American society" (p. xx). This emphasis on narrative is reinforced by the use of relevant anecdotes to begin each chapter and insets providing more details on key figures in the Guard's history.

The book does not avoid controversial subjects in the Guard's history such as readiness difficulties, its use in suppressing domestic disorder, racial integration, and the

question of political influence. Doubler's objectives and the constraints of space, however, work against detailed discussions of examples, particularly the uneven performance of Guard units after World War II in suppressing domestic disorder. There are also some surprising omissions; there is no discussion of Maj. Gen. Kenneth F. Cramer, one of the most controversial post-World War II heads of the National Guard Bureau, and no discussion of the opposition within some Guard units to mobilization in 1968.

Doubler uses four themes to frame his work. The first, and, he states, the most important, is that the Guard "has provided valuable service to the nation." Second, the Guard "is a dynamic institution that constantly adapts to the political, social, and economic conditions that shape American society." The third is the usually uneasy and often quarrelsome relationship between the Guard and the Regular Army. Fourth is a summary of the failures and successes of Guard and Regular soldiers during national crises (pp. xviii-xix). The book's concluding chapter, "The National Guard in Review," is a well-done summary of the Guard's history organized around these themes.

The book is divided into three parts: the militia, 1636-1897, which receives 123 pages; the National Guard, 1898-1945, which receives 89 pages; and the Army National Guard, 1946-2000, which receives 182 pages. Historians have by far paid the most attention to the period before 1898, and Doubler rightly relies heavily on these secondary works in this section. In the second part, Doubler discusses the key events of these forty-seven years—reform efforts, major legislation, and the world wars—relying mainly on published official and unofficial sources. The first chapter of the book's third part, taking the story of the Army National Guard up to 1970, is like the preceding chapters. The next three chapters, which cover the period 1970-2000, are the book's most

important contribution to the historiography of the National Guard. These chapters are the best account now available of a period of great change in the Army Guard's history: the military's shift to an all-volunteer force, the arrival of minorities and women in large numbers, the total force concept, the counter-drug campaign, the Persian Gulf War, the post-Cold War military reductions, and the growing use of Guard units in overseas operations. While Doubler again relies mainly on official and unofficial published sources, these chapters are enhanced by his interviews of some key participants in events from this era, and some National Guard Bureau records.

Because of Doubler's objectives, and the constraints of time and funding, the book makes no use of archival sources. While the use of some of these sources, particularly key twentieth-century ones such as the papers of Ellard A. Walsh ("father of the modern National Guard Association of the United States") and the records of the National Guard Bureau, would have provided more detail, their absence does not prevent the book from achieving the objectives Doubler set for it. Their absence does, however, point out that historians can use *Civilian in Peace, Soldier in War* as a guide to locating the many topics in the history of the Army National Guard, especially its twentieth-century history, that still need detailed, archive-based research.

Civilian in Peace, Soldier in War now provides the best introduction to the history of the Army National Guard. It is also quite a timely book, given the extensive use of Army Guard units in operations since September 11, 2001, and the recent Department of Defense announcements that almost 40 percent of the troops rotating into Iraq and Afghanistan during early 2004 will be from the reserve components, including three Army National Guard combat brigades. Hopefully, someday Doubler will add their stories to a new edition of the book.

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