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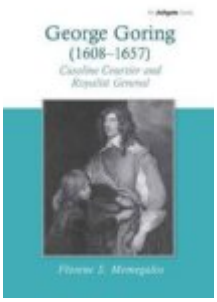
Florene S. Memegalos. *George Goring (1608-1657): Caroline Courtier and Royalist General.* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. 250 pp $99.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-7546-5299-1.



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It is said that victors write history. Sadly for Lord George Goring survivors also write history, even when they are defeated. Such was the case for Sir Edward Hyde, 1st Earl of Clarendon. From the moment Clarendon began writing the history of the rebellion, he painted Goring as one of the villains who cost the Royalists victory in the English Civil War, castigating him as a selfish, ambitious drunkard and gambler. That Clarendon's contention would also exculpate the writer from blame in the disasters the Royalists endured in southwest England was seemingly hidden by the narrative voice. One might expect Clarendon to have harbored and expressed negative views about his opponents, the Parliamentarians; it would take Florene S. Memegalos's detailed research and analysis to unearth his prejudices toward his comrades. Goring has suffered almost from the moment of defeat in 1646; the disappearance of any exculpatory papers following his exile in 1646 and death in Spain in 1657 has meant that the easiest thing for historians was to accept Clarendon's condemnation of a hard drinking and incompetent commander as the truth. Memegalos has gone to considerable lengths to delve not only into the situation in southwest England in 1645, but also into the military activities of Goring that explain why the king thought him suitable for independent command there in the first place.

Although labeled as a study of Lord Goring, the book also serves as a biography of his father, George Goring, 1st Earl of Norwich. The author justifies this double study on the grounds that his father's career explains how his son rose to the positions he held under Charles I and why the younger Goring remained loyal to the king's cause. The father became a courtier in the 1580s (remaining one into the 1640s), and began acquiring appointments and property as he attempted to reduce the load of debt left to him by his father in 1594. The arrival of James led to the senior Goring's ascendancy into the inner circles of the court (as the manager of the king's fools), which was also accompanied by ambassadorial missions (including Prince Charles's ill-fated Spanish trip) and

surveyorship of the soap works. As a client of Buckingham, James's death in 1625 failed to interrupt his career, which included his appointment as vice-chamberlain of Queen Henrietta Maria. That post tied him to the new king and queen, leading to his ennoblement in 1628 as Lord Goring of Hurstpierpoint. Financially secure as a monopolist, he ensured his heir George's attachment to the court by sending him to the Earl of Carlisle's embassy that year. Unfortunately, the example of the wealthy ambassador only encouraged the younger Goring's improvident financial nature. Fortunately for Goring, his father arranged a marriage with a daughter of Robert Boyle, 1st Earl of Cork, one of the wealthiest English landowners in Ireland. After the wedding, the younger Goring amassed thousands of pounds of debt through extravagant living and gambling. The intimacy Lord Goring's son developed with the royal family could not solve his financial insolvency. In an action of desperation, the father arranged the purchase of Lord Vere's foot regiment in the service of the Prince of Orange. Devoid of prior military experience or training, the act seemed to destine the young man for failure.

Contrary to expectations, military service transformed Goring from a wastrel into a military professional, whose services would be valued for a quarter of a century. Goring served with the Dutch army from 1633 to 1637. He earned a reputation as a brave soldier and competent leader. Consequently, when Charles determined to crush the Scottish covenanters, he selected Goring as a cavalry commander. More important, he received the appointment as captain and governor of Portsmouth, one of England's few fortress towns, in January 1639. In the First Bishops' War he served as lieutenant general of horse for the army outside Berwick, which led to his inclusion in a poem by Richard Lovelace. Before the Second Bishops' War, Goring vainly sought the exalted title of colonel general, which would have given him precedence over Sir Jacob Astley, another professional soldier. Instead, he became a horse brigade and regimental commander. Serving in northeast England failed to hamper his election as a member of Parliament for Portsmouth. His political career was short-lived and unimportant compared with his recruitment to the Army Plot.

Memegalos makes the valid point that Goring's one departure from loyalty to the king occurred in 1641 when he revealed the Army Plot to John Pym's opposition faction in the House of Commons. Given Charles's inability to protect his closest advisors, the Earl of Stafford and the archbishop of Canterbury, from the negative consequences of legal proceedings, the author states that Goring forsook the king to survive where his military skills and his father's reputation at court could not serve to save him. By autumn, the queen had sufficient trust of Goring that she considered using Portsmouth as a refuge, indicating only a momentary deviation from Royalist sympathies. Outwardly, he remained so compliant with the Parliamentarians' requirements that he received the commission in their army as major general of horse. His refusal in early August 1642 to join the army and his declaration of loyalty to the king alone led to the siege of Portsmouth. While Goring's defense proved short-lived and led to the Parliamentarians first major military victory, Memegalos explains that his resistance assisted the king while he mustered his forces by tying the Parliamentarians on the Channel coast away from the Royalist recruiting grounds in the Midlands. Unfortunately, for Goring, many of those he betrayed by revealing the Army Plot received posts in the Royalist army, which presented him with internal foes while he served with the field armies. In saving himself from legal proceedings and potential death, Goring's revelations created disharmony whenever he encountered the conspirators who had remained silent.

The majority of the book (208 pages of 369 pages) portrays Goring's role as a successful cavalry commander of the Royalist armies in north-

eastern, midland, and southwest England. With the exception of his defeat by Sir Thomas Fairfax at Wakefield (when the Royalist was bedridden with illness), Goring had a successful career until after Naseby. Goring earned a solid reputation as cavalry commander from both sides. He inspired loyalty among his officers and enlisted men, and maintained the military cohesiveness of his horsemen in the face of adversity. No small feat for the chronically under-resourced Royalists. Had he served in a victorious army he would be regarded with Joachim Murat, J. E. B. Stuart, and Philip Sheridan as the quintessential cavalry general.

While the Royalists had made strategic blunders before Marston Moor, in 1645, they, with the king at the lead, made a fateful decision when he allowed Prince Rupert and Goring to serve separately. As the Parliamentarians concentrated their forces for a final decisive moment, Charles divided his best troops--an elementary military error. When one realizes, as the author mentions, that only Goring defeated Cromwell in cavalry actions, the negative consequences of this decision gain further weight. Perhaps Goring's presence at Naseby could have altered the battle's result, which could have reignited the peace factions. Moving beyond counterfactual history, the king's continued division of his two best commanders in summer 1645 reveals the extent of strategic blindness in the Royalist decisions. That the policy, as the author observes, suited the two generals' ambition and honor is immaterial, since it undermined the Royalists' military chances. Allowing Goring to have a seemingly independent command in southwest England, when the crucial zone of conflict lay further north on the Oxford-Bristol-Wales axis was simply inexcusable. In August, Charles scored one of the few Royalists successes in England by forcing the Scots to lift the siege of Hereford; Goring's presence further north with his cavalry regiments could well have enabled Rupert to hold the crucial port of Bristol.

The author does not deny that Goring, during the second half of 1645, suffered from a drinking problem that may have been alcoholism. She explains how the general reached that point due to chronic pain following a wound that permanently damaged his left leg at the siege of Breda in 1637. With few options for pain management in early modern Europe, Goring's recourse to the bottle had medical justification. Campaigning ceaselessly in the humid climes of southwestern England, his physical state could have only deteriorated, leading to more frequent drinking sessions. Still Goring, if he indeed was an alcoholic, had a degree of control that some of his subordinates, such as Commissary General George Porter (whom he dismissed), lacked. Despite Clarendon's constant negative tone toward Goring, he never criticized him for making poor or no decisions due to drinking or failing to do his duty. A more moderate commander might have considered the impact of his example on his fellow officers and enlisted soldiers who might have lacked the fortitude to spend a night imbibing and then saddle up at dawn break for another day of military service. As Royalist fortunes declined precipitously, his soldiers' recourse to alcohol might have derived not only from following the example of their general, but also to escape the unthinkable conclusion that defeat was only a matter of time.

After Goring's retirement to the continent for reasons of health in November 1645, the historical record validates his skills as a military commander, and not Clarendon's condemnation of the general. In 1646, the Royalists used him to recruit English and foreign reinforcements for the war. The next year, the Spanish gave him command of all English troops in the Army of Flanders. If not for the early defeat of the English Royalists in the Second Civil War, Goring would have led troops in the Duke of Lorraine's contingent. In 1650-53, he held a command in the campaign against Catalonia. Afterward, health problems kept him stationary in Madrid, where he was a Royalist ambas-

sador. In the year of his death, the Royalists and Spanish hoped he would recover to take command of Royalist soldiers in the Army of Flanders.

Memegalos has produced an impressive study of two men of early Stuart England. Her research is impeccable. Given the scope of the work, it is not free of errors, yet they rarely give one reason to pause except for the constant use of "ordinance" for "ordnance." The details of the senior Goring's career provide a good example of how courtiers could rise in prestige and wealth, as well as lay the foundation for the success of their children. Still, the junior Goring holds center stage for more than two-thirds of the work.

Previous academic work has concentrated on the senior commanders, such as Charles, Rupert, and Cromwell. Stanley D. M. Carpenter's (2005) analysis of the military efforts of Lord Fairfax, John Lambert, Marmaduke Langdale, and David Leslie has broadened the scope of analysis. F. T. R. Edgar's (1968) biography of Sir Ralph Hopton and John Adair's (1997) on William Waller shows that secondary commanders, such as Goring, can produce important insights in the course of the wars. That Goring, a charming, but drunken, brave, and strategically limited soldier, has not inspired early study is regrettable. Memegalos has allowed Goring to regain his reputation as one of the first English Civil War's most competent and brave cavalry commanders. Since the book covers court and family history, in addition to military affairs, it should attract and hold the attention of readers averse to the stories of armies. In addition, it serves as model of how thorough research can overcome centuries of prejudice.

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