

David Randall. *English Military News Pamphlets, 1513–1637*.

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The advantages of a modern edition of texts that are otherwise readily available in Early English Books Online may include ease of consultation, careful editorship, and thorough indexing. David Randall's selection of English military news pamphlets from 1513 through 1637 is so strong in the first two aspects that we are inclined to forget the absence of the third. Sites of battle are always outside England: from Scotland to Ireland to Flanders to Russia to the American colonies, with some of the major encounters occurring in the revolt of the Netherlands, the French Wars, the Thirty Years War, and the Nine Years War. Texts are provided with copious notes explaining names and clarifying the sense; and each is preceded by an editorial preface suggesting probable authorship in the case of uncertainty, citing possible sources for information and indicating the significance. There are some gems here; for instance, George Gascoigne's account of the sack of Antwerp by the Spaniards in 1576, where the victors' barbarity in the event was only comparable (says the author) to their inhuman activities on other occasions. An account of the Battle of Kinsale in 1602, possibly by Fynes Moryson, the Lord Deputy's secretary,

witnesses the last gasp of Irish resistance, where the hopeless pusillanimity alleged on one side only minimally obfuscated the glory achieved by the extreme courage alleged on the other. An account by Anthony Nixon of the experience of English mercenaries joining the Swedish attempt to meddle against Russia in the Time of Troubles, presents a vast array of cruelties committed mainly with a hatchet (pictured in an accompanying illustration). An account of the lifting of the siege of Bergen op Zoom, 1622, bears impressive testimony to the use of heavy artillery against a walled town. In another example, the Puritan polemicist Hugh Peters discerns Divine Providence in the strategic and tactical errors of the Spanish invasion of Zeeland in 1631. In yet another, Paul Vincent considers the attractions of New England after the elimination of the indigenous population in the Pequot War. As Randall points out in the extended introduction, the employment of such sources for discovering what actually may have occurred requires careful sifting and comparing, where the biases of the writers are so eloquently exposed to view.

The introduction situates the entire genre of battle pamphlets in the larger context of news writing at the time, drawing on the editor's 2008 article in *Past and Present*. In any case, work by Otto Lankhorst, Mario Infelise, and others suggests that manuscript newsletters emerged in Europe around the early fifteenth century and became regular by the sixteenth century, in private and public forms. The occasional pamphlet literature regarding single historical events dates almost to the origins of the printing press and continued to exist in spite of the newspaper publishing that began to emerge around 1605 in Germany and the Netherlands and soon everywhere else. In England, the editor points out, the onset of regular translating and reprinting of Continental serials from the 1620s was met by a decline in the news pamphlet, which accelerated with the development of the English newspaper *per se*. Therefore, the pamphlets collected here represent a particular form of news in its heyday before being replaced by newer forms.

The pamphlets also record a particular moment in European warfare sometimes denominated the "military revolution," and variously dated, depending on the different interpretations, from the early or the late sixteenth century and running through the beginning of the eighteenth. Finding traces of this development in this anthology is, however, left entirely up to the reader, since the introduction enters into no discussion of the accompanying episodes. Indeed, for the main accomplishments, we must venture elsewhere, and consult *The bataille fought betweene Count Maurice of Nassaw, and Albertus Arch-duke of Austria*, printed by P. Short in 1600, to find the effects of the new Dutch technique of using machine-like volleys from rows of musketeers; or *The German History Continued*, printed by newspaper printer Nathaniel Butters in 1634, with its account of the Battle of Nordlingen, to clarify the events behind the ongoing debate between military historians Michael Roberts and Geoffrey Parker concerning the timing of the supposed revolution. A welcome addition to some future reedition of this useful volume would be an attempt to draw from the contents of the pamphlets a picture of change and continuity in the experience

of the European footsoldier, as well as an appreciation of the military history of Europe as a whole in this remarkably tumultuous period.

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