

British. Cassels himself was given the job of running the election and obtaining a result that would be satisfactory to pro-British Libyans and to the British government, 'using any means short of murder'. This last phrase was presumably said as a joke, but Cassels was not completely sure. I will say no more, other than that this story had a happy ending and Cassels acquitted himself without blame.

Richard Syngé is to be commended for skilfully assembling the various elements of this story and he has done an excellent job of complementing the three primary sources with his own historical research. All in all, a very good read about a period of Libyan history that has, until now, been neglected.

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**WAR'S NOMADS: A MOBILE RADAR UNIT IN PURSUIT OF ROMMEL DURING THE WESTERN DESERT CAMPAIGN, 1942–3.** By Frederick Grice, edited by Gillian and Colin Clarke. *Casemate, Oxford, 2015. ISBN 978-1-61200-288-0, pp. 214, 21 photographs, 9 maps, and 1 pen and ink sketch. Price: £19.99 (Hardback).*

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This book is based on the diaries and notebooks of Frederick Grice, who was recruited into the Royal Air Force in 1941 and served in North Africa as a member of a small mobile radar unit of the Eighth Army. The editors are Grice's daughter, Gillian, and her husband Colin Clarke. The latter, a retired professor of geography at Oxford, wrote the Introduction.

The book's great strength is the superb writing of Frederick Grice, a grammar school master and aspiring author from the north of England. The story of El

Alamein and the British pursuit of the Germans out of Egypt and Libya have, of course, been told many times, not least by the great war correspondents such as Alan Moorhead and (especially) Alexander Clifford. Grice's personal details and his place in the drama make this text original: his eye for detail and knack for insightful expression; his being of low rank and new to military life and to the desert; his not being on the front line, but usually off to the side or in the rear, with time to observe and write. Unfortunately, Grice's work as a radar operator was 'top secret' and he avoided writing about it both in the diaries and the memoir. Colin Clarke has attempted to fill this gap in the story through his research at the National Archives. The section of his Introduction subtitled 'What was Unit 606 up to in the desert?' is useful but, with its profusion of military acronyms, not easy to read.

The first half of *War's Nomads* covers Grice's departure from England and journey by sea, via South Africa, to Egypt; only the second half deals with his experiences in the North African Campaign. If the reader is interested in the life of Frederick Grice, the two halves sit together comfortably. If he is interested only in a new perspective on the military campaign, the first half is virtually irrelevant. For members of The Society for Libyan Studies, it should be mentioned that there are fewer than 70 pages that actually deal with Libya, and that section is likely to be of interest only to military historians. Grice had little to say about the Libyans and, while he was interested in the country's history, he missed visiting Cyrene and Apollonia as his unit raced past on the way to Benghazi. 'Behind me were the Greek Pentapolis, the basilicas of Cyrene, and the caves and tombs of the early Christians who lived there. But the Axis forces were retreating at record speed . . . Already well behind them, we had no time for sightseeing.'

Despite there being relatively little on Libya, this is a charming book and well worth publishing.

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