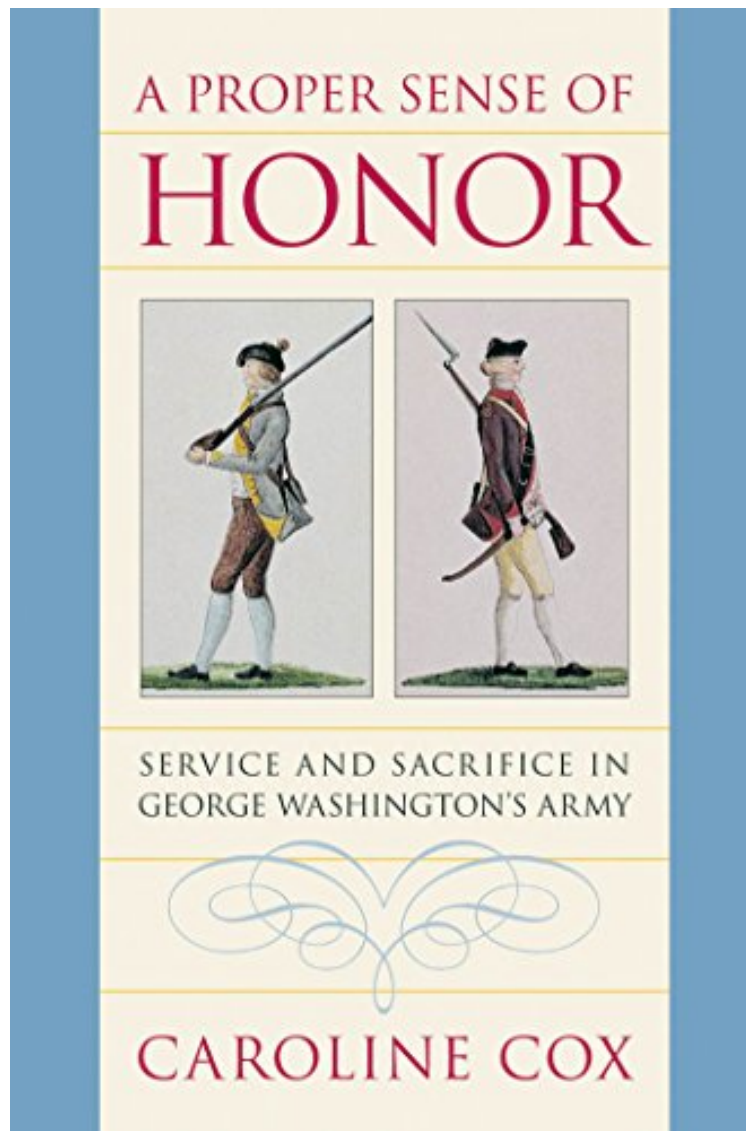


(Free) A Proper Sense of Honor: Service and Sacrifice in George Washington's Army

A Proper Sense of Honor: Service and Sacrifice in George Washington's Army

Caroline Cox

*ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#1186823 in Books The University of North Carolina Press 2007-08-27 2007-08-27Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.20 x .91 x 6.10l, 1.16 #File Name: 0807858617368 pages | File size: 76.Mb

Caroline Cox : A Proper Sense of Honor: Service and Sacrifice in George Washington's Army before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Proper Sense of Honor: Service and Sacrifice in George Washington's Army:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Class History of the Revolutionary ArmyBy Keith C.As others have said the book is well-researched, but like other "social" histories of the period, it takes many words to say very little,

and what it does say is already generally known to students of the period or, in fact, common sense. Unless you are fascinated by the topic of class, you will find more interesting volumes about the Continental Army elsewhere, and even those books will provide the same information presented as part of a larger context. 8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. A Proper Sense of Honor: Service and Sacrifice in George Washington's Army By Eric Williams A Proper Sense of Honor: Service and Sacrifice in George Washington's Army by Caroline Cox. 2007. 368 pages. Everyone now and then you read a book which perfectly dovetails with other things you are thinking about, a book which takes you by surprise and wallops you. This book did that for me. The book is much more than a study in colonial class relations. This book is a study in organizational formation and structure. The author has chosen as the core of the book the human body. All of the chapters generally revolve around how the human body is viewed and treated. The chapters look at the human body in terms of existing societal norms, evolving societal norms and the formation, promulgation and memory of service in the Continental Army. The author takes us through the formation of the army in 1775 with its necessary hierarchy and how it was imposed using existing models both Colonial and European. It also discusses how the notions of rank, prerogatives, and duty and obligation were viewed, imposed and evolved. The third chapter was a very informative if uncomfortable chapter as it covered the issues of law and order, punishment and reform. It provides a very quickly understandable view of the concepts of honor and deferment in 18th century society. It also provides a greater understanding of the society from which the Continental Army was formed from and formed to protect. Though the methodologies of the time, this is before the notion of penitentiary and reform had influenced practices, were brutal it did show the degree of leniency that the Continental Army practiced when compared to other armies of the time. Three interesting observations though can be made. The first observation is that Colonial society outside of the military had very few punishment options between whipping and capital punishment. Executions for even repeat petty criminals were quite common. This lack of degrees was a constant complaint of George Washington and yet he was as tied to traditions of the times as most. The issue of whippings or floggings presents an interesting notion of societal structure. Officers were not whipped and NCO's rarely so. Officers were generally saved the hangman's noose and could expect, if they transgressed to be either reprimanded or cashiered. To 21st century norms and values this seems grossly unfair in terms of the weight of punishment for similar transgressions being ameliorated by social standing. This is where the whole notion of honor enters into the picture. At the bottom rungs of society a person had no reputation and no property to lose or risk, essentially all they had was their own flesh and so in order to impact them you had to impact their flesh. Moving up to middle class you had a degree of reputation and a greater degree of real property or wealth which could be leveraged by fines or confiscation or through public reprimand the reputation could be sullied to the point where the person would be unable to conduct business. In the upper reaches honor and reputation had a huge degree of face to it. The anguish caused by the loss of face or honor was societally equivalent to a whipping for some one who had nothing else. It is a tale of hitting a transgressor where it hurts the most. A very illuminating study in relations and values. The third issue is how Washington most often dealt with his men. Reading his letters and edicts you quickly get the sense of 18th century notions of humility and honor when dealing with subordinates. Washington repeatedly admonished his men to their better natures. He attempted to impart honor and value by the way he formed his displeasure. Rather relying totally on fear and negation i.e. don't do this, this is forbidden, do this and you will pay etc... Washington most often tried to tell his men not what he did not want but rather what he wanted. Instead of saying don't do this he would implore them to be good soldiers, remember their honor and do this. He did not spend his time telling them what he did not want but rather what he wanted. This methodology is also the methodology behind the androgogy practiced by von Steuben. The book also covers the issues of medical treatment, funerals, and prisoners of war. These issues cover the thoughts and reasons behind the structures and methods as well as how they were carried out and the impact that they had on the participants. This book is a well written, well researched, and well thought out text. The book provides valuable context into understanding societal and military structures and, operations, and aspirations. To the even the casual reader it will provide valuable insight into our structures and operations at work, church, civil society and even our families. It is a very thought provoking and deep, but easily digestible tome. 7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Excellent discussion of the double standard of the day By Bobby Newman Dr. Cox has written a very well-researched account of the differing lifestyles, and attitudes towards, officers and enlisted person during the American War of Independence. Without the historical background, it is nearly impossible for people with today's sensibilities to understand the dichotomy. We have long left behind the life when a "commoner" was expected to doff a cap in the presence of a gentleman, or the fact that such individuals were really not held to be as "equal" as some of our documents from the periods would seem to indicate. "All men are created equal" clearly did not apply to everyone. In fact, the breaking down of the distinction between the gentry and "the common herd" was something that many revolutionary leaders neither anticipated nor advocated (see S. Gordon Wood's *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* or *Revolutionary Characters*, for example). Washington himself, as Cox notes, was a huge proponent of the distinction and believed that the accepted superiority of the character and intelligence of "gentlemen" was necessary for military order. Cox makes this accepted distinction crystal clear and shows the implications for how the troops were treated and were considered by the population at large. To our eyes, the distinctions between how officers and

enlisted persons were treated seems arbitrary and most unfair. Cox's careful historical analysis allows us to understand this better by understanding the thinking of the day regarding the make-up of the people involved. I would recommend Freeman's *Affairs of Honor* as excellent supplemental reading.

Starting with the decision by patriot leaders to create a corps of officers who were gentlemen and a body of soldiers who were not, Caroline Cox examines the great gap that existed in the conditions of service of soldiers and officers in the Continental army. She looks particularly at disparities between soldiers' and officers' living conditions, punishments, medical care, burial, and treatment as prisoners of war. Using pension records, memoirs, and contemporary correspondence, Cox illuminates not only the persistence of hierarchy in Revolutionary America but also the ways in which soldiers contested their low status. Intriguingly, Cox notes that even as the army reinforced the lines of social hierarchy in many ways, it also united soldiers and officers by promoting similar conceptions of personal honor and the meaning of rank. In fact, she argues, the army fostered social mobility by encouraging ambitious men to separate themselves from the lowest levels of society and giving them the means to enact that separation. At a time when existing social arrangements were increasingly challenged by war and by political rhetoric that embraced the equal rights of men, Cox shows that change crept slowly into American military life.

"A Proper Sense of Honor" brings us closer to the inner life of the Continental Army than any previous book."On Point" This is an intriguing, logically organized, and well-written book. Fred Anderson, University of Colorado at Boulder This is an excellent study, highly original in its approach. Don Higginbotham, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill A well-crafted study. . . . Cox provides a vast amount of useful and fascinating information.--"Journal of American History" This is a very good book indeed. Cox's writing is concise and graceful throughout, her organization is admirably clear, and her argument is compelling.--"American Historical "" [Illuminates] the cultural and political assumptions of those Americans who did not or could not leave written accounts of their experiences and beliefs. . . . Challenges the image of the American Revolution as an engine of social and political change that liberated Americans from Old World conventions and constraints." -- "William and Mary Quarterly" "A very important study of the Continental Army's social organization. . . . Effectively bridges 18th-century military and civilian societies to produce a better view of Revolutionary War America. Highly recommended." -- "Choice" "A Proper Sense of Honor" depicts the Continental Army's officers and men as being united not only in a common struggle for liberty, but also in their shared understanding and acceptance of conceptions of personal honor and status. . . . It stands as an original and frequently engrossing contribution to the social history of that army." -- "Army History" Cox's writing is concise and graceful throughout, her organization is admirably clear, and her argument is compelling. . . . The entire volume represents deep and convincing scholarship, matching genuinely exhaustive original research with a thorough command of the literature of the patriot armed forces. It is no stretch to call this book one of the most compelling and significant works on the revolutionary military to appear in the last decade.--American Historical A very important study of the Continental Army's social organization. . . . Effectively bridges 18th-century military and civilian societies to produce a better view of Revolutionary War America. Highly recommended.--Choice This is a very good book indeed. Cox's writing is concise and graceful throughout, her organization is admirably clear, and her argument is compelling. Moreover, she has a fine appreciation of the grim irony inherent in the disconnect between the popular myth of a yeoman soldiery and the harsher realities of the social status of the Continental Army regulars. The entire volume represents deep and convincing scholarship, matching genuinely exhaustive original research with a thorough command of the literature of the patriot armed forces. It is no stretch to call this book one of the most compelling and significant works on the revolutionary military to appear in the last decade.--American Historical [Illuminates] the cultural and political assumptions of those Americans who did not or could not leave written accounts of their experiences and beliefs. . . . Challenges the image of the American Revolution as an engine of social and political change that liberated Americans from Old World conventions and constraints.--William and Mary Quarterly A thoughtful, challenging book that reckons with major social assumptions and cultural constructions as they applied to Continental forces in Revolutionary America. . . . Represents a valuable edition to our ever expanding comprehension of the realities of fighting, as well as of those who fought, for independence during the American Revolution.--Journal of Military History A well-crafted study. . . . Cox provides a vast amount of useful and fascinating information. . . . A Proper Sense of Honor will be essential reading for other historians and general readers interested in the early American military experience.--Journal of American History An instructive cultural history of the army and of revolutionary America, revealing a society intensely aware of class distinctions and committed to the preservation of class stratification.--William and Mary Quarterly Cox has written a very important study of the continental Army's social organization. Her wide-ranging chapters cover soldiers, concepts of honor, punishment, illness, burial, and the treatment of prisoners of war, all within the framework of status differentiation. . . . This book effectively bridges 18th-century military and civilian societies to produce a better view of Revolutionary War America.--Choice A pathbreaking book, perhaps the most conceptually up-to-date of its type in American military historiography.--Journal of the Early Republic A Proper Sense of Honor depicts the Continental Army's officers and men as being united not only in a

common struggle for liberty, but also in their shared understanding and acceptance of conceptions of personal honor and status. . . . It stands as an original and frequently engrossing contribution to the social history of that army.--Army History

A Proper Sense of Honor brings us closer to the inner life of the Continental Army than any previous book, and it should be must reading for all students of the War of Independence and the American soldier.--On Point

This is an excellent study, highly original in its approach. No previous historian has attempted to show us in detail the social and cultural differences between the officers and men of Washington's army and how those differences played out in terms of their daily interactions.--Don Higginbotham, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Cox's book offers an eye-opening look at the reality behind the heroic mythology of the Revolutionary soldier.--Stockton Record

Cox has written a thoughtful, challenging book that reckons with major social assumptions and cultural constructions as they applied to Continental forces in Revolutionary America. . . . A Proper Sense of Honor represents a valuable addition to our ever expanding comprehension of the realities of fighting, as well as of those who fought, for independence during the American Revolution.--Journal of Military History

Although a good many scholars have examined the creation of the Continental Army and have written about its disciplinary regime, Caroline Cox is the first to describe the creation of the army as a self-conscious act of cultural construction. Thus she not only contributes her own account of the Continentals' origins and behavior, but also usefully contextualizes such disparate approaches as Charles Royster's reconstruction of the army's political culture in *A Revolutionary People at War* and Charles Neimeyer's class analysis of soldier behavior in *America Goes to War*. This is an intriguing, logically organized, and well-written book.--Fred Anderson, University of Colorado at Boulder

From the Inside Flap

This book examines the decision of the Revolutionary leadership to create a gentlemanly officer corps and the effects of the decision as the Continental Army's ranks came to be made up of society's poorest men. The differing standard of physical treatment for soldiers and officers in punishment, sickness, and death is the prism through which Caroline Cox studies social relations both within the army and between it and the larger society. The army was an organization that both reinforced order and rank but also offered some social mobility.