



*After D-Day: The U.S. Army Encounters the French* by Robert Lynn Fuller.

Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2021. Pp. xii, 301. ISBN 978-0-8071-7495-1.

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Historian Robert Lynn Fuller's *After D-Day* explores military-to-military and US military-French civilian interactions during the Second World War. Its title notwithstanding, its initial chapters trace US diplomatic dealings with the Free French from 1940 on, and the American bombing of French targets in 1942–44. Fuller (PhD, Univ. of Virginia) surveys American interactions with the French in military operations, diplomacy, and civil affairs officers' attempts to reopen roads and clear fields.<sup>1</sup> His intent is to put "the French population back into the history of the liberation" (7) and explain the diverse reactions of French civilians to American forces at various times and places during the Liberation. He relies on a range of primary sources, including memoirs, archival sources, and press accounts, in an account meant for non-specialists as well as scholars. Its clarity and close attention to context make it suitable for undergraduate students.

Fuller proceeds chronologically, beginning with two introductory chapters on American interactions with the French before D-Day. The first chapter chronicles American views of the Free French and the US government and military's complex relations with Charles de Gaulle's movement and Philippe Pétain's Vichy Regime. Other concerns are the problematic politics of Operation Torch and Gen. Dwight Eisenhower's dealings with Adm. François Darlan, which caused de Gaulle to mistrust the United States. Chapter 2 explores the American strategic bombing campaign before the Normandy landing. The author concentrates on a string of individual raids, juxtaposing American officers' goals with the costs inflicted on French civilians. In the first two chapters, Fuller focuses on high-level diplomacy and politics and tactical level analyses of bombing raids rather than life on the ground in France.

Fuller hits his stride in chaps. 3–6, on the Normandy landing. Weaving together memoirs, official histories, and archival sources, Fuller exposes the bureaucratic complexities and daily struggles of British and American officers and French government officials as they tried to maintain or restore a functioning civilian economy behind the front lines. All while having to solve complicated diplomatic issues created by a dependent French state's efforts to assert its legitimacy against Allied military forces it so depended on for support. These chapters, the heart of the work, make a powerful case for the contribution of junior American officers and local French officials in reforming the French state in recently liberated territory.

Chapter 7 introduces the French Forces of the Interior (FFI) as an unstable, sometimes dangerous element in liberated France. Armed, but not always under any clear chain of command, the FFI could be valuable partners for Allied forces and French administrators. But they also caused havoc in the rear among newly liberated civilians who fell afoul of pillaging FFI members or simply possessed things they coveted.

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1. He is also the author of *The Struggle for Cooperation: Liberated France and the American Military, 1944–1946* (Lexington: U Pr of Kentucky, 1919).

Chapters 8–11 concern French-Allied interactions during and after the Normandy breakout. Fuller parses the crucial effect of regional differences in interactions between French civilians and Allied forces and how their relations changed with time.

Fuller maintains that French civilians' responses to American forces hinged on the length and severity of the violence they suffered at the hands of Allied forces before their liberation, including bombing runs and land battles. French civilians accepted that violence was the inevitable price of expelling the Germans. That said, the intensity and duration of Allied violence had an effect on French relations with Allied forces. This created regional and local differences. Towns in the Loire valley that suffered relatively little at Allied hands celebrated their liberation and embraced American soldiers as reliable partners. By contrast, people in especially war-ravaged Norman villages distrusted British and American forces. Thus, after Operation Cobra broke through German lines,

GIs encountered French civilians who had so far escaped living on the front lines, who lived in peaceful houses untouched by war, and whose livestock had not been slaughtered by artillery fire and fighter-bombers. These Normans were delighted to see Americans at last, though an old lady farmer perhaps expressed a common sentiment: she was happy to meet U.S. paratroopers until she learned there might be fighting simply because they were there. She then seemed less pleased to see them. (79-80)

Interactions also changed over time. Fuller's chapters on Lorraine and Paris trace how initially friendly relations between French civilians and American forces became more fraught as the war dragged on and both sides became more frustrated. This was true when the Allied advance ground in Lorraine a halt and frontlines cut through the province, but it was also true in Paris despite its distance from active military operations.

The book's great strength is the thoroughness of its demonstration that each side interacted with the other in many, sometimes contradictory ways. Fuller places French civilian officials at the heart of the liberation story, while only intermittently showing how ordinary French women and men viewed and related to Allied forces. The lack of attention to gender and class differences among French civilians represents a missed opportunity to move beyond a mostly institutional history. This was a result of Fuller's heavily reliance on the writings of French officials, which give a better view of the French government's actions and concerns than they do of ordinary people.

In addition to his principal arguments, Fuller shows that the reconstructed French state was the fruit of Charles de Gaulle's Free French government's dogged insistence on French sovereignty and the ability of local leaders to cooperate with Allied armies in mutually beneficial partnerships. De Gaulle did not get everything he wanted, but both sides carefully managed the inevitable conflicts of powerful military forces operating in the territory of a newly liberated nation. Eisenhower and Churchill's opposition to Pres. Franklin Roosevelt's desire to form a temporary Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories precluded any new occupation. Instead, Free French leaders asserted French sovereignty and the lower-level Free French administrators and British and American officers cooperated in instituting a legitimate and effective French government in liberated zones.