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Review of: James W. Cortada, ed. *Modern Warfare in Spain: American Military Observations on the Spanish Civil War*

Wayne H. Bowen  
Bowen@fake.com

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James W. Cortada, ed. *Modern Warfare in Spain: American Military Observations on the Spanish Civil War*. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2012. 334 pp.

It has long been a truism in books on the Spanish Civil War that the conflict was a proving ground for new weapons, tactics and logistics, many later employed by the Great Powers during World War II. In James W. Cortada's new edited collection of primary sources, there is ample evidence of this. Even more, Cortada's volume, which publishes for the first time the official reports of US military attachés in Spain, attests to the efforts by US and other nations to use the war to collect intelligence on the capabilities of the very weapons, tactics and logistics being tested in the Spanish Civil War. In gathering, editing, and commenting on these reports, essential and objective primary sources created in the midst of the conflict, Cortada has made accessible and comprehensible some of the most important documents ever produced on the Spanish Civil War, the most consequential conflict fought in Europe between the World Wars.

Given the tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of unpublished records held by the US government related to the Spanish Civil War, what distinguishes these materials so greatly so as to make them worthy of publication? Cortada, one of the most significant historians of modern Spain in the United States, has made available through this work essential reports produced during the Spanish Civil War by professional military observers of the conflict.

From the major battles of the war, to the employment of new weapons, to the relative performance of the German and Italian expeditionary forces, to the rising competence of the International Brigades, to the political objectives of the Soviet Union, to conflicts between the factions on each side, these reports are not only compelling sources, but remarkably accurate, even more than seven decades since the beginning of the Spanish Civil War.

The US Army officers responsible for writing the reports in this book were professional, highly-trained, and capable; the accounts reflect their interest in the weapons, tactics and capabilities of Spanish Republican and Nationalist forces, as well as the foreign personnel assisting each side. From the beginning of the war in July 1936, to the final military victory by the Nationalists in April 1939, the first-hand accounts, analysis and corroborating evidence provided to the US War Department by their representatives in and around Spain remain impressive. The leader of the US military team in Spain, Colonel Stephen O. Fuqua, was a veteran

of the Spanish-American War and World War I, and had risen to the rank of major general before voluntarily accepting a demotion to continue in service. During the Spanish Civil War, he remained on station in Spain, often seeking first-hand evidence about the conflict on the front lines himself. Unlike the US Ambassador to Spain, Claude Bowers, who evacuated himself to France to observe the Spanish Civil War from a safe distance, Col. Fuqua and his team remained in the midst of the war, to provide the clearest and most accurate accounts to the US government. Fuqua's risk-taking, which on several occasions endangered his life, yielded remarkable insights in his reports.

If there is any criticism of this book, it would be that Cortada is somewhat vague in his explanation of how he selected which reports to exclude from the volume; however, the availability of these complete materials on microfilm at the National Archives as well as other repositories, makes accessible the entirety of the collection for historians interested in them. It would also have been helpful for the book to contain a complete map, including at least the major battlefields and locations referenced in the main reports.

Aside from these relatively minor concerns, this is a significant addition to the list of published primary sources on the Spanish Civil War, and by far the most comprehensive volume published in English. This book should find a place in all college libraries, as well as in the collections of historians and general readers interested in the history of Spain, modern warfare, or interwar Europe. "Modern Warfare in Spain" could also be useful for courses in European and world military history, providing immediately accessibility and utility for students.

Wayne H. Bowen  
Southeast Missouri State University