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**Book Review: John J. Pershing and the American Expeditionary  
Forces in World War I, 1917–1919: April 7-September 30, Volume  
1**

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## — PARAMETERS BOOKSHELF —

### **JOHN J. PERSHING AND THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES IN WORLD WAR I, 1917-1919**

**APRIL 7-  
SEPTEMBER 30,  
1917**  
**VOLUME 1**

**EDITED BY  
JOHN T.  
GREENWOOD**

Reviewed by Dr. Nathan K. Finney, lieutenant colonel, US Army, Indo-Pacific Command,  
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**T**his hefty book, the first volume of a projected eight-book series, is a remarkable tool for World War I historians. Going above and beyond most published primaries, *John J. Pershing and the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I* creates a holistic network of documents linked and sequenced for the most effective use possible.

The series is collected and edited by John T. Greenwood, a retired historian who held positions with the US Army and the US Air Force for almost half a century. He has edited multiple books, including Pershing's *My Life Before the World War, 1860-1917: A Memoir* (University Press of Kentucky, 2013), from which Greenwood derived much of the research for this book.

The primary purpose of this new series, aside from providing a resource for documents, is to expand the understanding of Pershing beyond his role as the leader of the American Expeditionary Forces. Greenwood's intent is clear—for readers to grasp how Pershing's work shaped American and coalition political, strategic, and institutional choices during and following World War I.

Unlike many published primaries, this compilation of sources from Pershing's pen or addressed to Pershing also includes other documents referenced, or perhaps read, by Pershing that might have informed his thoughts and choices. Greenwood researched personal papers and official records from the Library of Congress, the National

Archives, key university archives, and France's official military history of the war, as well as cablegrams between the American Expeditionary Forces and the War Department. The book's introduction provides a valuable narrative of what was—and was not—present in the archives and what both might mean for understanding Pershing and the history of the conflict. It also provides context for the US entry into the war and illuminates key aspects of Pershing's personality, such as his detailed management (or, as Greenwood states, "micromanagement") of his headquarters, demanding nature, and obstinacy in the face of foreign civilian and military leadership.

The book covers the first five months of the war, from April to September 1917, and is structured chronologically, with each chapter representing a single month. Greenwood presents the material in each chapter by day, beginning with Pershing's personal diary entry—if the material was not too mundane. Following the diary entry is a variety of material produced that day, whether to or from Pershing or related to daily issues he would have seen. Each entry has a source citation and annotations of related correspondence (such as replies with dates and locations) for ease of research.

Where appropriate, Greenwood includes contemporaneous maps and photographs. He also includes two appendices that provide insights into American relations with the British and French. The first appendix, an excerpt from Pershing's final report, covers major issues between France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, especially the American

Army's independence and Pershing's battle against amalgamation. The second appendix is a never-before-published, exceedingly critical personal appraisal of Ferdinand Foch, the French generalissimo. Finally, Greenwood provides a robust and detailed index, for easy access to particular topics or issues over time which facilitates navigation of the chronological arrangement.

Given Greenwood's care and comprehensiveness, there are few negative critiques to be made of the book. It would have been useful if Greenwood had included in the introduction a discussion on why Pershing was chosen as the commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, though the issue is covered in other secondary analyses of the general. An entry in the index detailing racial issues in the sources would have also been a welcome addition, though this topic will likely be addressed more adequately in subsequent volumes, given that most policy and operational issues regarding race did not come fully to the fore until 1918.

*John J. Pershing and the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I* is not a narrative history that imparts quick knowledge to readers. It is a tool for researchers of World War I and is an invaluable resource for military officers in professional military education with limited access to primary source material.

Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2021 • 656 pages • \$65.00

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**Keywords: World War I, American Expeditionary Forces, John J. Pershing, professional military education**

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