



**STEAMPUNK
SOLDIERS**

**UNIFORMS & WEAPONS
FROM THE AGE OF STEAM**

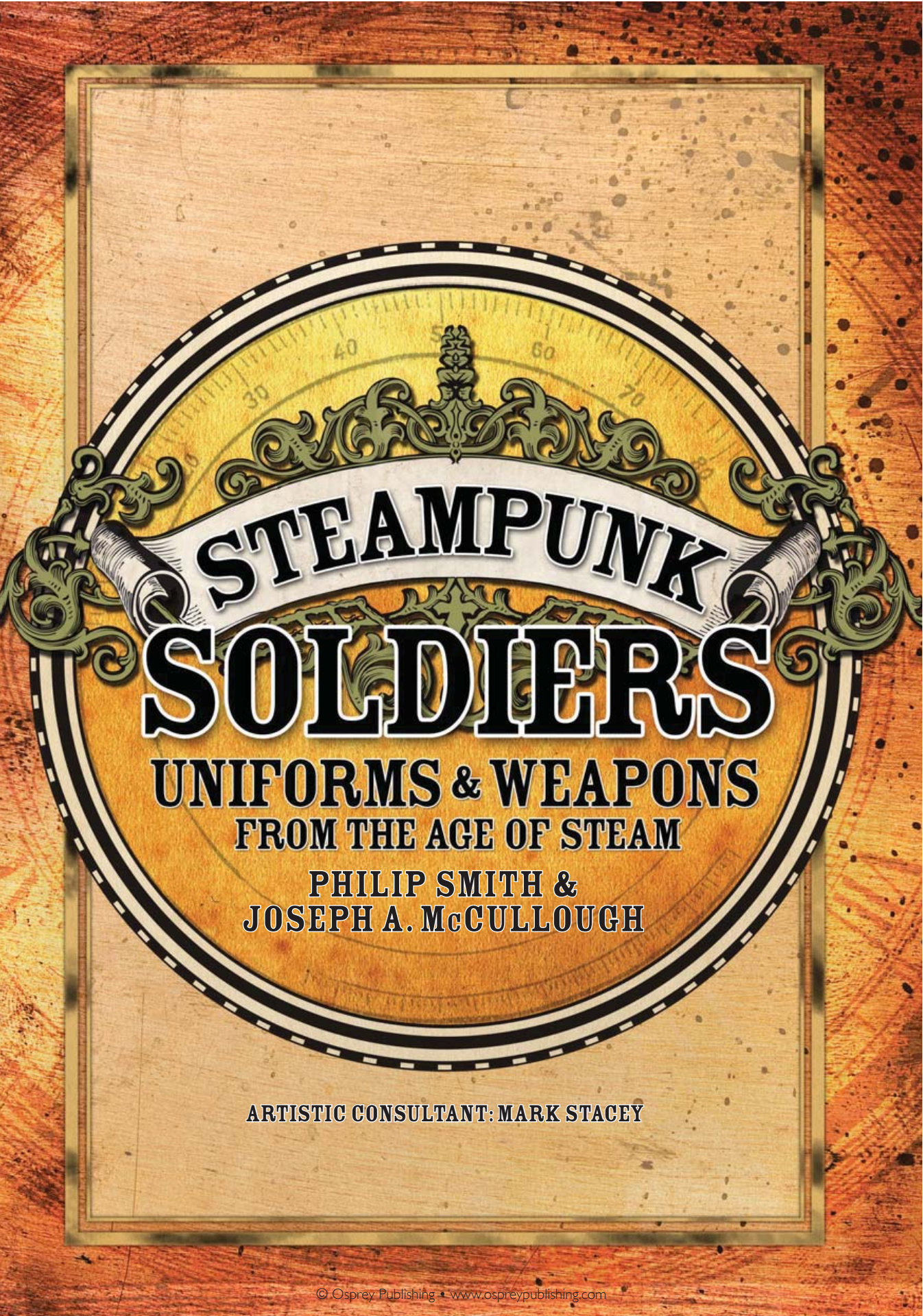
PHILIP SMITH & JOSEPH A. McCULLOUGH



The title graphic features the word "STEAMPUNK" in a bold, black, serif font, arched over a white banner with a black border. The banner is flanked by two rolled-up scrolls. Below the banner, the word "SOLDIERS" is written in a larger, bold, black, serif font. The entire title is framed by ornate, green, Art Nouveau-style scrollwork. Below the main title, the subtitle "UNIFORMS & WEAPONS FROM THE AGE OF STEAM" is written in a smaller, bold, black, serif font.

STEAMPUNK
SOLDIERS
UNIFORMS & WEAPONS
FROM THE AGE OF STEAM

OSPREY  ADVENTURES



STEAMPUNK
SOLDIERS

UNIFORMS & WEAPONS
FROM THE AGE OF STEAM

PHILIP SMITH &
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

6

GREAT BRITAIN

8

FRANCE

34

GERMANY

52

UNITED AND CONFEDERATE
STATES OF AMERICA

70

RUSSIA

92

AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE

110

ITALY

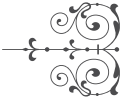
120

JAPAN

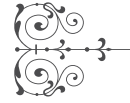
130

THE MINOR POWERS

138



INTRODUCTION



In this modern world of personal computers, cybernetic prosthetics, and supersonic train travel, where wars are as often fought in cyberspace as in the real world, it can often be hard to imagine a past where machines were loud, clunky, and inefficient. And yet, that was exactly the case in the first four decades after the great meteor shower of 1862, which gave the world the miracle of hephaestium. This new element, which burned hotter, longer, and brighter than anything previously found, launched a new age of invention. The Great Powers of the northern hemisphere, who bore the brunt of the meteor shower and thus reaped the rewards of vast hephaestium deposits in its aftermath, embraced the new sciences and technologies made possible by this strange and wonderful element. Many of these advances proved to be impractical or hopelessly flawed, but others, quite literally, changed the world. Of course, such a valuable new resource also gave the nations of the world, the Great Powers and the smaller states seeking to survive alongside them, a new reason to take up arms. In this 'early steam era' numerous conflicts, from small skirmishes to full-scale wars, flared up all over the globe, and this fighting only pushed development further.

It was a wondrous age, not only for military invention, but also for military pageantry. Soldiers marched in bright and colourful uniforms, enhanced by the gleaming steel and brass of their weaponry and equipment. They were supported by new evolutions of war machines: landships, walkers, submarines, and dirigibles. The European press glorified these new wars and their combatants, publishing lurid accounts of dashing heroics and far-flung adventures. Although the reality of war as a brutal, violent affair had not changed, since most of it happened in faraway places with strange names, the man on the street delighted in reading all about it. One such man was Miles Vandercroft, a name that, until the spring of 2012, was consigned to history.

In the time that we have worked for Osprey Publishing, we have been contacted by hundreds, if not thousands, of people purporting to have discovered unpublished manuscripts that could turn our understanding of history on its head. Most are simply over-enthusiastic, though some are outright charlatans, claiming to have found Rommel's secret diary or the plans for the British invasion of Iceland. A few, however, really have unearthed something special.

Such was the case with Samantha Callaghan, who sent Osprey a message regarding a collection of military paintings by her great-great-uncle, Miles Vandercroft. She did not seem to really know what the collection was, describing it as 'pretty' and 'beautiful' – words that are not often heard in the world of military history publishing. Intrigued,

but not expecting anything of great value, we agreed to meet her. As it turned out, Samantha presented us with something truly unique. The collection consisted of a chaotic mass of papers, canvasses, and notebooks. Almost immediately, we realized that it was a true treasure trove, page after page of gloriously detailed illustrations of soldiers from the late 19th century and hand-written notes indicating that these studies had been made from first-hand experience.

Further research and consultation with experts in early steam era warfare confirmed that nothing else quite like this collection was known to exist. Alongside depictions of some of the famous regiments of the period, some of the technology and uniforms that Miles Vandercroft had illustrated were previously unknown, or only associated with vague historical references or broken artefacts. For the next year and a half, we devoted ourselves to researching Miles Vandercroft and the soldiers he had painted. Of the artist himself, we discovered disappointingly little. We know that he was born in Sheffield in 1866, the son of a civil engineer. In 1885, he attended the Portsmouth and Gosport School of Science and Arts but, although he studied there for several years, he does not seem to have completed his course. Instead, in 1887, he boarded a boat bound for France. For the next eight years of his life we know nothing about Miles, save what can be gleaned from the notes accompanying his illustrations. In 1895, he returned to England and apparently lived a quiet life as a landscape painter (though we have been unable to locate any of these paintings), before dying in a train crash near Crewe in 1903. He never married, and what few possessions he owned passed to his younger brother and, through him, down to Samantha.

In the century since his death, history has almost completely forgotten Miles Vandercroft – until today. Now, we are proud to present this collection of his works. Aside from placing the images into a logical order, and providing a brief introduction to each section, the work remains entirely that of the artist, including the notes that accompany each figure. We encourage readers to remember that these paintings seem to have originally been created for nothing more than the artist's own interest over a period of eight years, with little thought for consistency or comprehensiveness. Even so, we hope you will all agree that he created something of lasting value, and something for which we, especially those of us in the field of military history, owe him our gratitude.

Philip Smith & Joseph A. McCullough
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