



## Gordon: Victorian Hero (Military Profiles)

*C. Brad Faught*

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Charles George Gordon was the preeminent military hero of the late-Victorian British Empire. A lifetime officer in the Royal Engineers, he served in several theaters of war and imperial contest, most notably China and the Sudan. His last assignment took him back to the dusty Sudanese capital, Khartoum, where he supervised the overmatched Anglo-Egyptian garrison's evacuation in the face of imminent attack by Islamic extremists. He was killed there in January 1885, just two days before a British relief expedition arrived.

In this new biography of General Gordon, C. Brad Faught looks afresh at the life of one of the most famous Victorian military men. Although a later age would come to reject Gordon's record and the values by which he lived, he has remained an enduring figure in the British Empire's late-nineteenth-century heyday and an important means by which to examine its contemporary issues: abolitionism, territorial conquest, and the rule of dependent peoples. Faught traces Gordon's life from his childhood in England and Corfu to his youth and training as an engineer at the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich and his subsequent military and proconsular service in the Crimea, eastern Europe, China, India, Mauritius, South Africa, and the Sudan. Throughout his varied career Gordon was guided by his staunch, conventional Christian faith—despite his critics' best efforts to suggest otherwise—and remained devoted to the best features of imperial rule. Whether as a key opponent of the Arab slave trade or a leader of troops in battle, Gordon was usually successful in his undertakings but always controversial. This biography gives an up-to-date rendering of an important British imperial figure whose demise at the hands of a Muslim extremist is both resonant and potentially instructive for the era in which we live today.

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