

Letter to the Editor

I enjoyed the article “*Famous Monocular Warriors*” by Schwartz and colleagues (*Hist Ophthalm Intern* 2018;2:161-167).

Here are three other monocular generals of historical significance.

The first is Antigonus Monophthalmus (382-301 BCE), a Macedonian general who loyally served Philip II, and then his son, Alexander the Great, in the wars against the Persians in the fourth century BCE. The details of his loss of one eye in battle are based on a story in Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives*. After the death of Alexander, he was a major figure in the Wars of Alexander’s Successors. He was the first of the Successors to declare himself a king in 306, establishing the Antigonid dynasty which ruled Macedonia and Greece until conquered by the Romans in 168. He was a successful strategist and general in many battles, but was finally defeated and killed by an alliance of other Greek generals at the Battle of Ipsus in 301.¹

Quintus Sertorius (c. 123-72 BCE) was a Roman noble and general. The main source for his life is also found in Plutarch. He was recognized as a successful soldier and in 91 BCE was elected as a quaestor, the lowest rank of public officials in Rome. Although now a military commander, he continued to fight in the front line of his troops and he sustained a severe facial wound and lost one of his eyes. He was proud of this injury and the facial scar, as it proved he was a man of courage. During the civil war between Marius and Sulla, he joined the popular faction of Marius against the patrician dictator Sulla. With the defeat of Marius, Sertorius went to Spain where he continued to lead the popular faction of Rome against the regime of Sulla in a continuation of the civil wars. Sertorius led a coalition of Romans and Spaniards in what was called the Sertorian War which lasted from 80 to 72. Sertorius was a very successful general employing tactics of guerrilla warfare. Eventually he was assassinated by his subordinates.²

The last example is Field Marshal Archibald P. Wavell, the First Earl Wavell (1883-1950). He entered the British Army in 1901 as a lieutenant in the famous Scottish regiment the Black Watch. He lost his left eye at the Second Battle of Ypres in 1915 in World War I. In spite of this disability, he rose to the top rank, Field Marshal, of his profession. During World War II, he held several important positions. He served as Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in the Middle East from 1939 through 1941 in which role he led the British forces to victory over the Italians in Africa but was then defeated by the German army in the north African desert. He was transferred to be the Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in India until 1943 and then became the Governor General and Viceroy of India until his retirement in 1947.³

1. Billows RA. *Antigonos the One-Eyed and the Creation of the Hellenistic State*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1990
2. Spann PO. *Quintus Sertorius and the Legacy of Sulla*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1987
3. Connell J. Wavell: *Supreme Commander*. London, Collins, 1969

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