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# CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY

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# BOOK REVIEW

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# SUPPLEMENT

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Summer 2002



Issue 15

## Feature Review

Brereton Greenhous, **The Making of Billy Bishop**  
(Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2002), \$29.95, 232 pages,  
ISBN 1-55002-390-X.

The media was recently ablaze with news of a controversial book about the career of Great War ace Billy Bishop. The description of this book in an industry periodical noted that Bishop's reputation is "put through the wringer by revisionist historian Brereton Greenhous," and that "German records do not corroborate Bishop's claims, which were taken at face value by Allied authorities desperate for a hero."<sup>1</sup> About a month later, the headline of a Toronto-based newspaper caught my attention: "Billy Bishop a liar, book claims."<sup>2</sup> For days the news media circulated stories about Bishop, his career, and the provocative new biography. People were aghast that the author, a former historian with the Department of National Defence, made such accusations about one of our nation's military heroes.

This is not the first time that Bishop's war record has come under attack. In 1982 the National Film Board released a documentary entitled *The Kid Who Couldn't Miss*. Rather than portraying Bishop

as the hero we all had learned about in history class, director Paul Cowan painted a different image of Bishop's life. Most notable was the thesis that the 2 June 1917 mission (which won Bishop the Victoria Cross) never occurred. While Greenhous' book may not raise the same patriotic fervour as *The Kid Who Couldn't Miss*, its thesis parallels that of the film. Some might go as far as to say that this work is an attempt to vindicate the NFB production. As well, it is worth noting that Greenhous has addressed this topic before; over a decade ago he wrote an article for the *Canadian Historical Review* highlighting flaws in Bishop's record and commenting that the record was largely composed of unsupported claims.<sup>3</sup> *The Making of Billy Bishop* carries on with this theme, claiming that Bishop's career was a combination of flukes, lucky breaks, high-society manipulations, and propagandistic desires. Greenhous further argues that higher levels of command sanctioned Bishop's imagined exploits,

be it for the creation of a hero analogous to the Red Baron or for the purposes of acknowledging the Canadian contribution to the air war.<sup>4</sup>

As most people will recall from their history lessons, Billy Bishop was the British Empire's greatest scoring ace in the Great War. Of special note was the daring dawn attack in June 1917. On that fateful morning he departed from his squadron's base, crossed enemy lines, and attacked a German aerodrome single-handedly. During this attack he destroyed three aircraft, and his own machine took substantial damage before he began his flight back to base. The reason for the dawn attack was to strike the aerodrome at its most vulnerable time, as the aircraft were being prepared for the day's missions. Bishop was flying alone that morning, despite attempts to persuade colleagues to join him.

Bishop filed a Combat Report after his return that morning, identifying as accurately as possible the location of the attack, the damage inflicted, and the enemy aircraft engaged. This report, along with a recommendation for the Victoria Cross from his squadron commander, would make its way to the higher echelons of the Royal Flying

Corps for review. Senior officers in the British command investigated the matter fully, reviewing the Combat Report, Squadron records, and other supporting documentation. The Victoria Cross was finally awarded to Bishop on 11 August 1917 after roughly two and a half months of investigation. King George V presented Bishop his Victoria Cross on 30 August at Buckingham Palace. Also presented at this time were the Distinguished Service Order and Military Cross that Bishop had previously been awarded.

Greenhous attempts to establish that Bishop's Great War military career, and in particular the daring dawn attack, was a mixture of propagandistic inventions, embellishments, and elaborate yarns. He focuses on this dawn attack as a central point of his thesis, stating that this mission did not occur the way that the Combat Report indicates. What is ironic is that the author himself supports portions of this same Combat Report, spending several pages investigating various paths Bishop might have flown that morning. This leads to a simple question: if Greenhous feels that the mission never occurred and the subsequently filed Combat Report was a complete fabrication, why try to identify a flight path that supports it?

Greenhous also spends a considerable amount of space (two chapters) examining Bishop's seventy-two career victories. During this review he raises questions about eyewitness accounts (or the absence of same). What is impressive about this section is that most books simply rattle of the list of victories like a laundry list of facts. Greenhous acknowledges the work of historians Christopher Shores, Norman Franks, and Russell Guest in this area and refers to it repeatedly throughout the book.<sup>5</sup> Greenhous himself acknowledges with regret that there is a lack of accurate records from the period he is investigating.

The book does, however, raise some interesting questions. For example, Bishop wore, as part of

his military medals, the 1914-15 Star, awarded to military personnel who fought in France during those years. Bishop, however, did not arrive in France as part of the Royal Flying Corps until two weeks into 1916. The fact that Bishop was not awarded this medal is supported by documents at the National Archives of Canada.<sup>6</sup>

Is there enough information to support Greenhous' main thesis? He does make extensive use of Bishop's original Combat Reports and letters home to various members of his family, as well as information from some German Weekly Air Activity reports from the period. The lack of corroborating information from the German reports is, for Greenhous, a key piece of evidence to support his claim that Bishop could not have achieved the victories he claimed. Strangely, he cannot identify the origins of these Activity Reports, which have made their way into Canadian archives.<sup>7</sup>

This lack of information was evident in many of the reports and war diaries of the Great War. Certainly those who were serving in 1917 could appreciate the context in which reports like Bishop's were written and filed. It is not inconceivable that many of the participants of the Great War exaggerated or diminished aspects of their reports or memories. As well, nearly all of the participants who wrote, compiled, or filed these original reports have passed on, leaving their content and the mysteries of their lack of existence to conventional interpretation.

The inconsistency of information does not account for the errors and omissions in the book. In reviewing the sources used, some errors were noted. Greenhous identifies Bishop's squadron commander during his last days of service in 1917 as Major W.J.C. Kennedy-Cochran-Patrick. The periodical *Cross and Cockade* identifies the Commanding Officer of 60 Squadron who succeeded Major Jack Scott as Captain 'Pat' Cochrane-Patrick, subsequently promoted to Major as a result of his posting and appointment. The

periodical's version is confirmed in *Above the Trenches*.

Despite such faults, the book is a good read. It raises some interesting questions and introduces a different interpretation of the actions of one of our nation's heroes. In the end it will be up to the reader to decide if Greenhous has proven his case. After reading and reviewing his work, I can honestly say that I am not convinced. Just as there is insufficient information to prove Bishop's claims, so too is there insufficient evidence to support the thesis Greenhous puts forward.

Greenhous does concede one point which was mirrored in an editorial in the Kitchener-Waterloo newspaper in this statement: "The hard historic facts, the ones that are beyond dispute, show that Bishop was a daring, courageous flyer who risked his life every time he took his plane over enemy lines."<sup>8</sup>

Steven Dieter

1. *Quill & Quire*, March 2002, p.26.
2. *Toronto Star*, 16 April 2002, p.A1.
3. Brereton Greenhous, "The Sad Case of Billy Bishop, VC," *Canadian Historical Review* 70/2 (1989), pp.223-227.
4. Greenhous, *The Making of Billy Bishop*, pp.26-27.
5. Christopher Shores, Norman Franks and Russell Guest, *Above the Trenches: A Complete Record of the Fighter Aces and the units of the British Empire Air Forces 1915-1920*. (London: Grub Street, 1990).
6. Greenhous, *The Making of Billy Bishop*, pp.40-41.
7. Greenhous, *The Making of Billy Bishop*, p.219.
8. "Billy Bishop remains a hero," *The Record*, 16 May 2002, p.A8.

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Lita-Rose Betcherman, **Ernest Lapointe: Mackenzie King's Great Quebec Lieutenant** (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), \$60.00, 426 pages, ISBN 0-8020-3575-2.

Unable to speak French, and seemingly ignorant of Quebec's political culture, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King entrusted to his "soulmate" and loyal Quebec lieutenant, the Minister of Justice, Ernest Lapointe, the task of ensuring the government's policies would not agitate Quebecers

and divide Canadians. Lita-Rose Betcherman's study of Lapointe's political career is not surprisingly fixated on the French/English dichotomy in Canadian federal politics. Several domestic crises, including Duplessis's Padlock Law and Aberhart's legislation restricting civil liberties, displayed Lapointe's inconsistency in dealing with this potentially divisive dichotomy. Readers of this journal and scholars of the British Empire will find Betcherman's account of Lapointe's active involvement in Canada's foreign policy development informative. As a compact theorist and Canadian nationalist, Lapointe was actively engaged in pursuing greater political autonomy for Canada. With the lessons of the conscription crisis of 1917 always in mind, Lapointe was determined to prevent Canada from becoming torn apart by another European imperialist war.

The combination of Lapointe's determination to keep Canada united during the Second World War and his unwavering loyalty to King (which King, as Betcherman convincingly demonstrates, was willing to manipulate selfishly in order to take pressure off himself), left Lapointe emotionally and physically exhausted in the last years of his life. After a successful federal campaign in 1940, which followed the brutal Quebec provincial election of 1939, Lapointe had won Quebeckers' support and loyalty on the promise that King's government would not impose conscription. The combination of Lapointe's death, increasing casualties, a lengthy war, and a decreasing number of volunteers left King vulnerable to the pro-conscription camp's demands. Betcherman hypothesizes that Lapointe would not have allowed the conscription plebiscite to take place across the country and leave Quebeckers at the mercy of the English majority.

By focusing on Lapointe's loyalty to King and his attempts to keep the French/English dichotomy from becoming too divisive, Betcherman's triumphant analysis of Lapointe's political career leaves

several questions unanswered. For instance, Betcherman never fully explains the complexities behind the *Globe and Mail's* criticisms and reserved praise in their obituary to Lapointe. Although Lapointe was a consistent contributor on King's western campaigns, it is never quite clear how or if Lapointe felt compelled to sell his nationalist views to English Canadians. Did Lapointe's French-speaking Canadian nationalism differ from English-speaking Canadian nationalism? To what extent, if any, did Lapointe's nationalist policies alienate the rest of Canada from Quebec? Lastly, given Lapointe's authoritative-like influence on King's decisions and his constant appeals to leave office, why did Lapointe not firmly establish his own predecessor? These questions arise only because of Betcherman's skilful analysis of Lapointe's dominant influence on Quebec politics and King. SBW

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Clive M. Law, ed., **Making Tracks: Tank Production in Canada** (Ottawa: Service Publications, 2001), \$24.95 paper, 55 pages, ISBN 1-894581-06-7

To compile this brief history of tank manufacturing in Canada, Clive Law has drawn material from a number of authoritative government reports, particularly a post-war report by the Army Historical Section, an eight-volume history of vehicle production by the Army Engineering Development Board, and Kennedy's *History of the Department of Munitions and Supply*. The result is a fascinating and well illustrated account of a manufacturing program that yielded 5794 tanks over five years, a small number compared to the 65,000 produced in the United States but impressive nonetheless. As Law so nicely puts it, the story can be read either as a glass half-empty or a glass half-full: "The generous reader can take comfort in the fact that Canadian manufacturers created an industry where none existed before ... A more pessimistic reader may note that Ca-

nadian production seemed unable to deliver the right goods at the right time and, as a result, Canada's army in North-West Europe used primarily US-produced tanks." CA

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Dale McClare, ed., **The Letters of a Young Canadian Soldier During World War I: P. Winthrop McClare of Mount Uniacke, N.S.** (Dartmouth, NS: Brook House Press, 2000), \$19.95 paper, 194 pages, ISBN 1-896986-02-1.

Hattie E. Perry, **Soldiers of the King** (Barrington, NS: ), \$25.00, 177 pages, ISBN 0-9691458-6-1.

These two books complement each other nicely. One focuses on the life of a young Nova Scotian, the other contains stories of servicemen from one part of the province. Winthrop McClare of Mount Uniacke enlisted in the Halifax Rifles on 26 April 1915, at age seventeen. On 6 February 1917, he joined the 24<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Victoria Rifles of Canada) in France, went into the trenches two months later, and died in action east of Vimy just after his nineteenth birthday. He has no known grave: Winnie's is one of the names on the Vimy Memorial.

*The Letters*, a book better in its parts than the whole, reveals the thoughts and describes the actions of a naive young man suddenly thrust into a wider world far from Nova Scotia. He writes about life on McNab's Island in Halifax Harbour, Upper Dibgate, Kent, Shoreham, Sussex, and France. Winnie's spelling is atrocious, but he gives an unvarnished account of life in the Canadian Corps. He yearned to go into action, but spent most of his time in camps in England. On 6 November 1916, he writes to his brother, "I am having a pretty good time just now, but I don't know how long it is going to last." Winnie found England cold and noted the number of loose women who thronged the Strand in London: "An awfull lot of fellows that go to London come back in bad shape and are sent to V.D. hos-

pitals." His last letter describes his part in the battle for Vimy Ridge: "...it was Hell. I got a small splinter through the fleshy part of my shoulder. It was very slight and I went through it all with it." A few weeks later, on 5 May, German artillery enfiladed the trenches of the 24<sup>th</sup> Battalion, killing McClare. The book also contains two letters written by Roy McClare, Winnie's cousin. One reflects the feelings of many ordinary soldiers about the war. The other, dated 11 November 1918, is a vivid description of how a lightly wounded soldier, another cousin of Winnie's, simply faded away in hospital. Both are unique contributions to the literature on the Great War.

Hattie Perry's book puts faces to the names she saw on local war memorials. *Soldiers of the King* contains long and short biographies of men from Barrington Municipality and Clark's Harbour who served in the First World War, many of them in the Purple Feather Brigade, the 219<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Just before embarkation, almost the whole battalion went AWOL, but only one man failed to turn up in time to board RMS *Olympic* on 12 October 1916. Of the sixty-seven men from the Barrington area who went overseas with the First Contingent, eighteen died overseas.

The letters in the book echo the sentiments of Winnie McClare. Several have a fatalistic tone. One soldier, buried for three days in a crater on Vimy Ridge, writes, "I wasn't in the best of shape, but I was spared. I've a strong belief that no one dies until their time comes." Warren Nickerson gives a detailed description of the blood lust that comes over soldiers as they charge: "...you are almost insane for the moment." He mentions encountering German soldiers aged thirteen and fourteen, and a woman and four children hiding in a front-line dug-out. Norman Smith went to sea at age twelve, and did forty-two trips across the Atlantic as the captain of ships carrying explosives; he was known as Dynamite Smith and Cussin' Norman. He survived the war. Captain Horatio Brennan was

less lucky. He brought his tug, the *Stella Maris*, close to the *Mont Blanc* just as it blew up in Halifax Harbour on 6 December 1917; he was decapitated. Walter Nickerson, a member of his crew, lived to tell his story. Courtney Smith threw himself on a grenade on 5 November 1917, saving the lives of his comrades but losing his own. On the day the war ended, a sniper shot Clarence Sholds as he succoured wounded soldiers. The book contains many photos, and it is easy to see why British soldiers were impressed with the physiques of the "colonials." They were fine looking men, all gone now. But at least some of their stories have been saved for all time, thanks to the dedication of a local historian.

JL

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Richard Holmes, ed., **The Oxford Companion to Military History** (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2001), \$79.95, 1048 pages, ISBN 0-19-866209-2.

There is an Oxford Companion to almost everything these days; one needs an Oxford Companion to Oxford Companions to sort them all out. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. A good reference book is a treasure trove for casual readers and professional historians alike.

This hefty and expensive volume boasts 1,300 entries by 150 specialists, and editor Richard Holmes (author of several superb popular works on twentieth-century warfare) has done a splendid job assembling it all. Reference books are supposed to save time, but readers should be forewarned that this one is not likely to. Searching one day for quick information on Kosovo, I was utterly waylaid by the Ks: Kabul, Kalashnikov, Kasserine, Kissinger, Korea, etc.

I have a few reservations: the book is poorly illustrated (it is hardly illustrated at all) and surprisingly weak on economic aspects of warfare. Moreover, the editors at Oxford saw fit to vandalize the back cover with a photograph of

Holmes that looks like a rejected driver's license picture. Readers who spend this much on a book can reasonably expect decent cover art. These quibbles aside, put away the junk and make room on your reference shelf for this impressive work of scholarship.

A final aside: I note on the inside flap that Oxford has already produced companions to Australian and New Zealand military history. I am tempted to cry out, in the manner of the famous recruitment poster, "Come on, Canada!" or perhaps, "Allons-y, Canadiens!" Surely it's time for our own companion. GB

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William O. Bryant, **Cahaba Prison and the Sultana Disaster** (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press [distributed in Canada by Scholarly Book Services], 2001), \$32.95, 180 pages, ISBN 0-8173-1133-5.

War is full of tragedy, but some tragedies are more poignant than others. A case in point is the fate the befell a significant portion of the 5000 Union soldiers incarcerated in Cahaba prison in Alabama during the US Civil War. Cahaba had all the hallmarks of a typical Civil War prison: organized in a rush, established in a less than desirable location, overcrowded, inadequate sanitary provisions, a brutal commandant. Nevertheless, its death rate was considerably lower than the most notorious of Confederate prison camps, Andersonville, a fact which can be put down to the assistance of some local philanthropists, a guard commander who did his best to improve conditions in the camp, and the existence of a spring near the camp which provided fresh water. Still, it was a ragged and bedraggled group of former POWs who filed out of Cahaba in the spring of 1865 to begin the return journey to their homes in the north. They would travel up the Mississippi River by steamboat to Cairo, Illinois, where the captives would be officially released. When it left Vicksburg, the

paddle-wheeler *Sultana*, only two years old, was desperately overcrowded with as many as 2200 passengers (mostly former prisoners of war) on board; indeed, they almost capsized the boat at Helena, Arkansas, when they rushed to one side of the decks to have a picture taken. Many of these unfortunate men would not see home, for early on the morning of 27 April 1865, not far from Memphis, Tennessee, the boilers on the *Sultana* exploded, and the ensuing fire and panic claimed as many as 1600 lives; it was the largest maritime disaster of its kind in American history.

Bryant brings the tale of Cahaba and the sad fate of its inmates to life with great story-telling skill in this absorbing, if a little disjointed, book. He has a lyrical turn of phrase, and nicely captures both the despair and the dignity of these soldiers who suffered so much and then lost it all when freedom seemed so near at hand. The *Sultana* disaster, one of the little-known episodes of the US Civil War, deserves to be remembered. Bryant points out that, because of the shifting Mississippi, it is not known exactly where the steamboat came to grief and where its remains lie. Until the wreck is discovered, this book will stand as a remembrance of the tragedy.

LT

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Gerald Astor, **The Bloody Forest: Battle for the Huertgen: September 1944 - January 1945** (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 2000), \$29.95 US, 393 pages, ISBN 0-89141-699-4.

The battle to clear the fifty-square-mile Huertgen Forest, south of the German city of Aachen, is one of the least known actions of the campaign in north-west Europe. Overshadowed by the airborne landings at Arnhem (which occurred near the beginning of the Huertgen fighting) and the Battle of the Bulge (which occurred near the end), it was nevertheless one of the costliest actions: it resulted in 24,000 American casualties due to enemy

action, and another 9,000 to frost-bite or trenchfoot (fewer casualties than the German defenders sustained). Indeed, there is more than a passing resemblance to the battles of the Western Front in the Great War; in the first month in the Huertgen, almost continuous fighting by the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division gained only about 3,500 yards of enemy territory, at a cost of some 4,500 casualties.

It was also, as Astor argues in this compelling and fast-paced book, one of the most ill-conceived and badly-directed campaigns of the war. Again, the comparisons with the First World War are striking; an operation which, on a strategic level, was based on flawed assumptions; senior commanders who had little appreciation of the tactical challenges faced by the troops; schedules which were so finely balanced that they left no room for the kind of normal delays which beset any military operation; mid-level officers who exaggerated the success of their units in action reports to avoid being blamed when things went wrong; heavy losses among company grade officers and NCOs; and poor communication between various levels of command. Even more serious, as far as Astor is concerned, is that no one in the American forces showed much inclination to learn from the mistakes of the Huertgen; they were repeated in the Bulge, and later in the Rhine crossings. This, perhaps, is the most unfortunate aspect of a campaign filled with misfortune, so Astor ends with a plea: just as they expect accolades when things go right, senior military commanders must also be held accountable when things go wrong.

CA

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C.J. Jeronimus, ed., **Travels by His Highness Duke Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach through North America in the Years 1825 and 1826**, trans. William Jeronimus (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), \$63.00 US, 557 pages, ISBN 0-7618-1970-3.

Duke Bernhard was one of the greatest soldiers of his day. A veteran of the battles of Linz, Wagram, Quatre Bras, and Waterloo, Inspector of the Infantry of the Third General Command, divisional commander during the Belgian Revolution, Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch East Indies Army, Bernhard was also a cosmopolite (he declined to accept the Crown of Greece when it was offered to him in 1829) and world traveller. He spent many months travelling through Europe as guest of various monarchs (many of whom were his relatives), and in 1825-26 made an extended tour of North America. He landed in Boston and eventually visited most of the major cities of the eastern seaboard (including stops in Upper and Lower Canada). Because his primary interest was in military history and fortifications, this diary will be a boon to students of the period. He comments at length on the military history of the places he visited, the naval and military strength of the various garrisons, and the strengths and weaknesses of the defences. He was, for example, rather critical of one of Colonel MacGregor's battalions of the Montreal garrison ("not quite first class") but complimented them on their intricate drill, and was also most impressed by the skill and accuracy of Major Wallace's artillery unit. He was less impressed with the fortifications of Fort Lennox on Ile aux Noix, and carefully described how they *should* have been erected for maximum effectiveness. Through it all, Bernhard comes across as an exceptionally knowledgeable man, deeply interested in the military arts and always alive to the possibilities of improvement or greater efficiencies. A keen observer, he recorded detailed accounts of his impressions of the people he met (his comments on natives and African-Americans are particularly interesting), making this book a fascinating read on a variety of different levels.

AF

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Fred L. Edwards, Jr., **The Bridges of Vietnam: From the Journals of a U.S. Marine Intelligence Officer** (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2000), \$39.95 US, 288 pages, ISBN 1-57441-123-3.

This book begins with the statement that there is an unbridgeable gulf between the combat veteran and the soldier who has not seen combat. Edwards, who enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps as a seventeen year old in 1949, found himself on the wrong side of that gap. He tried desperately to get himself reassigned to combat duty during the Korean War, but was constantly rebuffed. In 1961 he tried again to get into action with the Marines in Vietnam, but was again stonewalled. Finally, in 1966, he bridged the gulf by getting to the lines in Vietnam as an intelligence officer; at last, Edwards thought, he was doing his job.

The core of this book are the journals that Edwards sent home to his wife to keep her informed of his experiences. He has added explanatory endnotes to clarify certain references, and has included some contextual paragraphs to provide background to the events he describes, or to tie up any loose ends in the story. These are very useful additions because Edwards had to be somewhat circumspect about the events he described. He was able, however, to sketch some very vivid portraits of the soldiers he met in Vietnam, both the good and the bad (there are some interesting anecdotes about corruption in the American supply lines). And his reflections on the war are particularly useful. He learned "that national interest could be turned on and off like a faucet" and that "donning leaves, eagles or stars does not automatically confer a minimum level of knowledge and integrity upon an officer." More importantly, he accepted that it was "the duty of the living to give meaning to the dead." This, for Edwards, was the most vital lesson to be learned in crossing his bridges in Vietnam.

DAR

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Mark Moss, **Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War** (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2001), \$24.95 paper, 216 pages, ISBN 0-19-541594-9.

Duty, patriotism, peer pressure, boredom, and unemployment are several of the factors used to explain the apparent enthusiasm that young men felt for war in August 1914 and their subsequent rush to the colours. Another factor, and perhaps the most important in Ontario, argues Mark Moss, was a pervasive "cult of manliness." Young boys, Moss maintains, were educated and conditioned to regard war as an exciting adventure and the supreme test of manhood. This attitude was fostered and encouraged by governments and educators anxious to counter the degenerative effects of urbanization and industrialization. Drill became part of a curriculum that was infused with imperialism and militarism. Sports provided appropriate role models because they promoted the ideals of toughness, courage and, above all, obedience. The popularity of the works of Kipling and G.A. Henty was matched by that of magazines like *Boys Own Paper* and *Chums* which emphasized military and masculine virtues. Scouting, hunting, cadet movements, and a host of martial toys and games also served to reinforce these values. Thus when war came, it was eagerly embraced by young men raised to believe in its romance and adventure; they enlisted by the thousands. Nearly half of all volunteers for the Canadian Expeditionary Force hailed from Ontario.

Moss's findings for Ontario are, however, at odds with some recent European scholarship. Niall Ferguson and Jeffrey Verhey have challenged the myth of widespread enthusiasm for war in 1914, pointing out that the initial reaction in Britain and Germany was more mixed than previously assumed. Moss's conclusion that "most aspects of young men's lives were orientated towards the military" also seems a bit of an overstatement.

Equally puzzling is his casual dismissal of pre-war pacifism and peace movements as hopelessly overwhelmed and ineffective in the wake of a powerful middle-class militarist discourse. Despite this, Moss offers a compelling and well-written account of the intellectual and cultural climate in which young boys in Ontario were raised prior to the First World War.

WG

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Gunther E. Rothenberg, **The Army of Francis Joseph** (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press [distributed in Canada by Scholarly Book Services], 1998), \$24.95 US, 298 pages, ISBN 1-55753-146-3.

The title sets the tone. Franz Josef became emperor through the action of the army after the ruling emperor Ferdinand resigned during the 1848 revolution, and henceforward identified himself with the army. Likewise, the army identified itself with the dynasty, becoming the only institution holding the multi-national empire together. When Franz Josef died in the middle of the First World War, the army and the empire lost their *raison d'être*.

The empire was shaped by, and suffered from, the Habsburg tradition of accumulating territories willy-nilly through marriage, treaty, and occasionally war. After Napoleon, such dynastic conglomerations fell victim to the strains of nationalism, while Austria's uneven economic development hindered the modernization of the army in weaponry, strategy, tactics, and logistics. One early result was that Prussia, later Germany, pushed them all over the map. So did everyone else.

War in Italy started the decline. Austria lost significant territory and prestige in 1859, and even more in 1866 when Bismarck kicked them out of his Germany. Each time the army tried to question what had gone wrong, but the structure of the army was tied firmly to the "structure" of the empire, and Franz Josef was afraid of

structure (past attempts to create a strong central state had failed, and the only alternative was to build a nation state, but which nation?). So, the only result of defeat was scapegoating: 135 generals cashiered after Solferino, more after Koniggratz.

After 1871 the fate of Austria lay in the Balkans, yet that region was now the hotbed of nationalism in Europe. The newly acquired (1878) and annexed (1908) province of Bosnia became the focus of tension between Austria and the Balkan States, which demonstrated their military effectiveness in the two Balkan Wars of 1912-13. In turn the Balkan hostilities got caught up in the alliance rivalries of all the Great Powers. For Austria the external problems were compounded by internal nationality crises with the Czechs and the Hungarians (seldom has an imperial army comprised so many peoples). Yet the imperial and royal (K und K) army remained functional and loyal until the very end of the war.

The First World War did not go well for Austria; they were defeated at the outset by Serbia. Concern for its own internal unity and security led Austria to defer initiative on the Eastern Front to a better trained and equipped German army which, however, pursued a German strategy. As the war dragged on the only thing holding the empire together was fondness for Franz Josef. Everyone had grown up with the emperor, and his grandfatherly qualities mitigated his government's policies. Even after his death in 1916 the momentum of loyalty continued until the situation became hopeless. But the army was not actually defeated; it simply began to fragment into national units, like the empire itself.

The imperial army raised 8 million soldiers for the war; 1 million died in action, 2 million were wounded, and 1.7 million were taken prisoner, of whom one-third died in captivity. When emperor Charles finally agreed to leave Vienna in November 1918 he forgot to say goodbye to his army – a fitting *faux pas* for a Habsburg, and

possibly a clue to what had gone wrong for so long. JW

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Richard Butler, **The Greatest Threat: Iraq, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the Crisis of Global Security** (New York: PublicAffairs, 2000), \$26.00 US, 304 pages, ISBN 1-89162-053-3.

Butler is the experienced and respected Australian diplomat who was appointed to head UNSCOM and monitor possible Iraqi violations in the areas of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. It is a fascinating story, but also a textbook example of an author being too close to the material.

Indeed, there is a comic-book aura about *The Greatest Threat* that, if the subject matter were not so serious, would make it vaguely amusing. It begins with a scenario that is straight out of Hollywood: terrorists (from the Middle East, of course) with a lethal chemical (carried in something like a small Windex bottle) that they spray over New York City at rush hour, sending thousands of people to a painful death. How would the United States react? Would there be war? Who would call Arnold Schwarzenegger? The rest of the book proceeds in the same vein. There are Good Guys and Bad Guys, and everything is painted starkly in black and white. The Iraqis are, of course, the Bad Guys, and Butler quickly runs out of adjectives sufficient to describe the depths of their evil. Saddam Hussein remains in the shadows of the narrative, so the lead Bad Guy role goes to Tariq Aziz, who blusters and shouts and bullies and acts in a generally objectionable fashion. The Good Guys are Butler and his team of inspectors who are frustrated at every turn in their attempts to hold Iraq accountable – frustrated by some other Bad Guys, Russia, France, and China, who are so keen on trade, oil, and other advantages that they sabotage all efforts to cripple Iraq's chemical and biological weapons industries.

Somewhere in the middle is Kofi Annan (Misguided Guy?), whose heart is basically in the right place and who tries to do right, but is ineffectual and too willing to defer to the Iraqis for the sake of temporary peace.

All of this might well be true, although I'm not convinced that the sort of demonization Butler engages in is particularly helpful to an understanding of the issues at hand, or to finding a way around them. We now know all too well that the sort of terrorist act Butler describes is certainly possible. There are important issues here, and Butler is probably right when he argues that the world needs to sit up, take notice, and devote more attention to global survival than to their own national interests.

LT

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Kathryn Spurling and Elizabeth Greenhalgh, eds., **Women in Uniform: Perceptions and Pathways** (Canberra: Australian Defence Force Academy, 2000), \$25.00 AUS paper, 275 pages, ISBN 0-7317-0385-5

The conference "Women in Uniform: Perceptions and Pathways," held at the Australian Defence Force Academy in May 1999, brought together academics, policy makers, serving officers, and journalists to discuss and debate issues surrounding the employment of women in uniformed security roles, both in the military and in other services, such as intelligence agencies, the police, and the firefighting forces. The conference was interdisciplinary and, more importantly, comparative, including papers on Canada, the United States, Great Britain, South Africa, Namibia, and the NATO forces. Some of the papers are not terribly probing and sound a little like press releases (the Canadian contribution, for example, concludes with the promise that "the end of the tribunal period serves as a milestone for a process [of gender integration in the Canadian Forces] that is not yet complete, but for which the Cana-



dian Forces has a commitment to finish”), but others are refreshingly new and interesting. E.C. Ejiogu provides a fascinating glimpse at the women who served in combat roles in the wars of national liberation in South Africa and Namibia, an essay that should be read after Hugh Smith’s useful thought-piece entitled “Debating Women in Combat” and Amanda Dines’ most interesting article on physiological competencies for combat roles in the Australian Defence Force. Sarah Garcia provides some illuminating statistics from 1998-99 on women’s participation in various NATO countries’ armies. Interestingly, the United States led the way in this regard, with women making up 14.4% of the total force. Canada placed second at 10.8%, and bringing up the rear was Italy, which, at the time the statistics were compiled, had not yet passed legislation enabling women to serve in the armed forces. A bibliography or reading list would have been a welcome addition to the book, but it nevertheless serves as a valuable source of information and opinion.

SL

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Ralph Keefer, **Grounded in Eire: The Story of Two RAF Fliers Interned in Ireland during World War II** (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), \$24.95, 268 pages, ISBN 0-7735-1142-3.

The story of Irish internment is surely one of the most curious of the Second World War: German and Allied pilots interned (the term is used loosely, since the parole arrangements were very liberal) in adjacent compounds, held for having transgressed on the republic’s highly idiosyncratic neutrality laws. RAF pilots who crashed on training missions were not generally interned, but those who landed in Eire during operational flights were (although the definition of what constituted a training mission became rather more elastic as the war progressed). American crews, regardless of the kind of mission they were flying, were not usually in-

terned, an indication of the importance of the United States in Irish government policy. Irish opinion about the internment policy was mixed. Hatred of Britain ran deep, and there was a certain amount of sympathy for the Germans in nationalist quarters as well. But there was also the wealthy and influential Anglo-Protestant upper classes in Eire, who were pro-British and did what they could to assist the RAF internees to escape (despite the fact that rendering such assistance was an offence under Irish law). On top of it all was Irish president Eamon de Valera’s sobering realization that, if he maintained the internment policy, there was a chance that he would one day have to imprison one of his own citizens, for many thousands of Irishmen had joined the RAF.

All of these threads enter into the story of Ralph Keefer’s father, the pilot of a Wellington that crash-landed in Eire after getting lost on the way home from Frankfurt in October 1941. His internment was typical of the experience: clashes with the guards over Irish neutrality, dances and picnics with locals, fishing in the Liffey near the camp, trips to Dublin, semi-comical attempts at escape. Keefer ultimately made a successful escape in August 1942, but his pal Jack Calder (a reporter who wrote about life in Eire for various Canadian newspapers) had to resort to the rather less romantic tactic of feigning insanity to win his release. All of this makes for hugely entertaining reading, and Keefer tells of his father’s life in internment with wit and panache. He seems to have somehow par-taken of Calder’s skill as a storyteller, for he is able to convey both the joys and the miseries of a less-than-challenging theatre of operations.

Unfortunately, the author has been rather less well served by his publisher, for the book is full of typographical and other errors which are irritating and disconcerting. Names of famous people are spelled incorrectly, acronyms are improperly translated, photographs are misidentified (there is one

which is identified as a Loughheed Hudson, but it bears no resemblance to an actual Lockheed Hudson), and the names of characters change (a Mrs. Maudlins at the top of one page has become Mrs. Mullens by the bottom). *Grounded in Eire* is a wonderful story, but one wishes that the press had elected to have it proof-read.

JFV

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Dan Bessie, ed., **Alvah Bessie’s Spanish Civil War Notebooks** (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky [distributed in Canada by Scholarly Book Services], 2002), \$36.25, 156 pages, ISBN 0-8131-2214-7.

One of the best books to emerge from the Spanish Civil War was *Men in Battle*, by journalist and blacklisted Hollywood screenwriter Alvah Bessie. It is a searing account of combat with the International Brigades, those foreign volunteers who flocked to Spain in 1936 and 1937 to fight fascism. With this volume, we get a chance to read the real history behind that memoir.

Many memoirs from former members of the International Brigades are characterized by high idealism and principle; after all, these were men who divined the threat of fascism before most others and who defied their governments to fight for the republican cause. Bessie paints a rather different picture of his comrades. His notebooks cover the waning months of the International Brigades’ existence, when foreigners were being replaced by Spaniards and when discussions were underway to disband the Brigades for political reasons. With their future in doubt, the Brigades began to experience growing problems with discipline. His comrades were not the idealistic, committed volunteers that we would expect, but tired, disgruntled, disillusioned soldiers who had long since lost any interest in the struggle that they may once have had, and only wanted to get home. There were exceptions, obviously; Bessie himself clearly retained a high de-

gree of ideological commitment. But many others did not, and the picture we get is that the International Brigades had become mere shadows of their former selves. Once the elite fighting forces of the republican armies, by the end they were hobbled by desertions, insubordination, and indiscipline.

Aside from the journal entries, there are a number of other interesting elements to this book: letters from Bessie's ex-wife, raising their two children in New York City; constant rebukes of Bessie by the Spanish censor, who was disturbed by Bessie's tendency to include sketch maps of the front in his letters; and songs (some of them quite bawdy) which were popular with International Brigaders. This, then, is a valuable record which offers a useful corrective to the sometimes hagiographic literature of the Spanish Civil War. JFV

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Kathleen Kennedy, **Disloyal Mothers and Scurrilous Citizens: Women and Subversion During World War I** (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), \$27.95 US, 170 pages, ISBN 0-253-33565-5.

Supporters of American entry into the First World War characterized their efforts as a battle to preserve freedom, while the government attempted to quash dissent at home with the Espionage and Sedition Acts. Approximately twenty of the 800 people convicted under these Acts were women. Kathleen Kennedy focuses on three of the most famous, Katie Richards O'Hare, Emma Goldman, and Rose Pastor Stokes, as well as several lesser known women targeted for prosecution. These cases, she argues, demonstrate the relationship between gender and subversion in the wartime political culture.

Kennedy addresses the importance of patriotic motherhood in the pro-war ideology, but her exclusive focus on women charged under the Acts, only two of whom were mothers, impedes her arguments. Undoubtedly there were mothers who dissented against the war in acts

large and small but they are beyond the focus of this work. Only a small element of women's subversive behavior appears here. Kennedy notes that protesters from some women's organizations were charged under local rather than federal law but she does not address why. What made one group of women a threat to patriotic motherhood and not the other? Without a continuum of dissent we lose sight of how gender interacted with factors of class, ethnicity, and political affiliation in defining subversion. Kennedy points to some interesting links between the rhetoric of gender and radicalism, but does not fully analyse how these shaped the understanding of those involved, and how they were shaped by the context of the time. In the trials Kennedy presents, and in her own analysis, other issues and conflicts seem to outweigh gender or maternal concerns. Ultimately this is more a case study of the persecution of women on the Left than a study of the relationship between gender and subversion during the First World War. VLK

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David J. Bercuson, **The Patricias: The Proud History of a Fighting Regiment** (Toronto: Stoddart, 2001), \$34.95, 347 pages, ISBN 0-7737-3298-5.

The PPCLI has been in the news again recently because of its operations in Afghanistan, operations that will necessitate the writing of another chapter in the regimental history. But for now, Bercuson's new history is an admirable addition to the growing historiography on Canada's most famous infantry regiment. We have Ralph Hodder-Williams two-volume chronicle of the unit in the First World War and G.R. Stevens' history of the PPCLI from 1919 to 1959. Jeffery Williams has written a general history of the Princess Pats, as well as a biography of Hamilton Gault, the regiment's founder. But Bercuson's is the first to take the story right up to the UN peacekeeping opera-

tions in Kosovo and the eighty-fifth anniversary of the unit's founding, observed in Edmonton in 1999.

It is of necessity less detailed than some of the earlier accounts, but that does not mean that it is any less satisfying. On the contrary, Bercuson has done a fine job of condensing the unit's disparate engagements into a cohesive and immensely readable narrative. He does not shy away from some of the more controversial episodes in the historical record, such as the difficulties over changes in command towards the end of the First World War, when Hamilton Gault's wishes clashed with those of officers who had spent more time in action with the unit. There is also an excellent survey of the unit's stints in Cyprus, one of the longest and most difficult of UN peacekeeping missions. But the bulk of the chapters focus on the Patricias' operations during the First and Second World War, when the unit won the majority of the battle honours that now adorn its standard, known affectionately as the Ric-a-Dam-Doo. It was during those engagements that the PPCLI sustained most of its fatal casualties (which are listed in an honour roll at the back of the book). The book itself is dedicated to Hamilton Gault, but the fallen are also central to the regimental memory, and to this excellent history. CA

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Robert P. Grathwol and Donita M. Moorhus, **Berlin and the American Military: A Cold War Chronicle** (New York: New York University Press, 1999), \$50.00 US, 200 pages, ISBN 0-8147-3133-3

The US Mission remained in Berlin from 1945 to 1994. From the very beginning US soldiers mingled with the people – at first out of necessity, later out of Cold War cooperation, and eventually out of mutual respect. Soldiers and conquered civilians alike helped clean up the mountains of rubble after the war (literally mountains: the ruins of Berlin created a hill

high enough to mount el-int detection equipment that scanned all the way to Moscow. Today the Teufelsberg makes a nice ski park.)

In the early postwar years the Americans found it easier to deal with Berliners than with their supposed "Allies." This special relationship intensified after the Berlin Blockade as local residents worked side by side with Americans to keep the airlift running smoothly. (Tensions were so high that Bob Hope had to visit the troops at Christmas.) Once the Cold War set in, American military personnel who crossed into the Russian Zone for espionage took their lives in their hands; several never made it back alive.

The US persuaded West Germany to contribute some of its Marshall Plan funds to West Berlin, which started the policy of making West Berlin the showplace of capitalism face to face with the showplace of communism. The result was an exodus of East Germans to the West until East Germany cut the border with West Germany in 1952, and the border with West Berlin in 1961 – with no US opposition (something the Berliners had trouble understanding; it stemmed from the fact that the US Mission was there to defend the rights of the United States as an ally with a stake in the fate of Berlin and Germany, and not to protect either West Berlin or West Germany).

Willy Brandt's series of treaties in the early 1970s eased relations between the two Germanies and the two Berlins, but the rush towards reunification in 1989-90 caught everyone off guard – so much so that during the hardline soviet coup against Gorbachev a number of Berliners called the US Mission "just to be sure you Americans are still here." But the inevitable result of reunification was the withdrawal of the Mission in 1994. Four years later the reunited city of Berlin, capital of a reunited Germany, dedicated the Allied Museum on Clayallee, named after General Lucius Clay, first US military governor in postwar Germany. Clay was

so well regarded in Berlin and Germany that President Kennedy sent him back to Berlin during the crisis over the Wall to reassure Germans that the US would not abandon them (although that was an option under consideration – briefly – in Washington).

Although written by two historians, this book originated in the "Cold War Project" of the Resource Management Program of the US Department of Defense. This is an engaging retrospective account of the US military mission in Berlin that illuminates some hidden corners of Cold War Europe. It is heavily illustrated, and features oral history reminiscences by Berliners and Americans that testify to the "special relationship" that developed between the two sides during a period that lasted longer than anyone could have anticipated.

JW

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John Horne and Alan Kramer, **German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), \$40.00 US, 608 pages, ISBN 0-300-08975-9.

**I**n the early years of the First World War, Allied propagandists had a field day with stories of war crimes committed against French and Belgian civilians by invading German units. In short order, these stories became the centrepiece of the Allied justification for the war; in everything from recruiting posters to church sermons, it was argued that the Kaiser's armies had to be stopped, or they would carry their campaign of murder, looting, and rapine to every other country in the world. The vigour with which propagandists took up these tales has long convinced historians to take them with a grain of salt; it was assumed that a few minor incidents had been blown out of proportion as part of the campaign of misinformation directed at a credulous public.

As Horne and Kramer demonstrate in this fascinating and persuasive book, nothing could be further from the truth. With rigorous

and impeccable scholarship (they have consulted every conceivable primary source, from victim testimonies to the diaries of German soldiers involved in the operations, to shed light on the German campaign against the civilian population in France and Belgium in 1914), they conclude that the Allied propagandists were in fact right, in the main. The story of French and Belgian children having their hands hacked off by invading soldiers might have been a myth, but atrocities committed against civilians in the path of the German offensive were widespread and systematic. There were summary executions (all told, over 6000 civilians were killed by invading units), rapes, arson (Catholic churches and their clergy were particularly targeted), pillage, mass deportations, torture, and instances of civilians being used as human shields – in short, virtually everything that had long been dismissed as inventions of Allied propagandists. The authors attribute this campaign of terror to a strange case of mass delusion in which the invading armies were swept by waves of paranoia about resistance by *francs-tireurs*. The German army became obsessed with the thought that French and Belgian civilians were all guerilla fighters who were sniping at German soldiers from church towers and homes. It was a powerful phobia that ran through German units like some kind of disease, but in fact Horne and Kramer conclude that there were very few instances of the civilian population taking up arms against the invaders. On the contrary, when minor fire-fights began in the newly occupied areas, they could almost always be traced to panicky German troops firing on each other. In most such cases, it was civilians who were blamed, and who were made to pay with their lives.

*German Atrocities, 1914* is sure to cause a controversy, particularly among historians who argue that Allied protestations of coming to the aid of defenceless civilians were just a blind to divert attention from their own nefarious

war aims. But it is difficult to find any holes in Horne and Kramer's analysis. The book is a model of scholarship, and should put to rest the notion that the German armies which descended on Belgium and France in August 1914 were paragons of virtue.

JFV

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N.G.L. Hammond, **The Genius of Alexander the Great** (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press [distributed in Canada by Scholarly Book Services], 1997), \$49.50, 220 pages, ISBN 0-8078-4744-5.

The city states of classical Greece were much like the nation states of Modern Europe – always fighting for (or against) a precarious balance of power; always prey to powerful land-based empires like Persia and Rome. Not surprisingly Plato spoke for many Greeks who longed for a lasting peace, while Isocrates found the saviour in the form of Philip of Macedon, Alexander's father.

By the time Philip became king in 357 BCE, Macedonia had pulled itself together thanks to a well-oiled military machine based on heavily armed infantry formations and professional cavalry. He contributed his own statesmanship to the equation: as he conquered state after state he offered them all equal citizenship with Macedonians. Alexander would extend this generous policy across half of Asia.

After the assassination of Philip, young Alexander was elected king and continued his father's plans to gain control of the Aegean-Black Sea-Western Mediterranean region, uniting the area of Greek influence (while extending that influence through the founding of new cities like Alexandria), and denying ports to the Persian navy. He then headed east, to fight it out with Darius for control of Asia. In rapid succession Alexander conquered the fabulously rich province of Babylonia, then Persia itself. From there he pressed north, into Afghanistan and Central Asia.

By this time Alexander, continuing his practice of accepting all peoples who surrendered into his new Kingdom of Asia, started acting like an oriental king himself, basking in the riches of his new empire. All of this was a departure from Macedonian tradition and his troops grew restive at the changes in behaviour. Yet Alexander continued to act like a Greek ruler among his Greek soldiers. When his men refused to follow him on a "quick" campaign against India, he gracefully accepted the auguries of a sacrifice and headed back west with his army. They all agreed on an attack against Arabia, the last outpost in western Asia not under his control. But before he could strike he fell victim to malaria at the age of thirty-two.

Hammond's book is based on a careful reading of ancient texts. Unfortunately it reads like an ancient text – a literal statement of the facts about the battles: the preparations, the marching, the flanking, the fighting, and the peacemaking. There is no sense of adventure, no excitement, no grandeur – nothing to help the reader understand why another successful conqueror, Julius Caesar, wept at his own lack of accomplishment at age thirty, when Alexander had conquered the world and was preparing for still more campaigns.

JW

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Robert Irwin, **Good God, How Gorgeous!** (Toronto: Lugus Publications, 2001), \$18.95 paper, 460 pages, ISBN 1-896266-94-0.

John A. Marin, **My Army Days: A Soldier's Memoir** (Privately published [available from the author at P.O. Box 97, Cardinal, ON, KOE 1EO], 2000), 130 pages, ISBN 0-9686875-0-4.

These two memoirs give us very different perspectives on the Second World War, from a tank officer and an infantry rider. Irwin was an officer with the Governor-General's Horse Guards who served with the unit throughout the

Italian campaign (with the exception of a spell away from the front after he was wounded in action on the Gothic Line) and also went with the Guards to the Netherlands in 1945. Marin was a ranker, posted to the Queen's Own Rifles after the invasion of Normandy to serve as the despatch rider attached to the well known Captain Ben Dunkelman. He remained with the QOR throughout the campaign in north-west Europe, leaving the Netherlands in November 1945 to return to Canada.

Both authors provide useful and interesting insights into the campaigns in which they participated. From Marin, we learn about the actions of the QOR from the point of view of someone whose job was to do something other than to carry a rifle. He took part in most of the regiment's engagements after early August 1944, and was acquainted with many of the unit's more well known members, including Charlie Martin, whose recollections of the campaign were published some years ago. Irwin's book is useful because there are so few accounts written by tankers who served in Italy or north-west Europe. Aside from the descriptions of the actions of his own troop, he has much to say (not all of it flattering) about the officers of other tank regiments which fought alongside the GGHG. These reflections will be particularly interesting to readers who are familiar with the personalities of the Italian campaign.

It is worth mentioning that both books (Irwin's much more than Marin's) are characterized by a marked preoccupation with the sexual exploits of their authors. As enjoyable as these incidents must have been to participate in, they are not particularly interesting to the general reader. The first description of an opportunistic sexual encounter is amusing; the tenth, fifteenth, and twentieth are tiresome and tedious. Still, if you can wade through these passages, both of these books have much to recommend them.

DAR

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Richard Holmes, **The Western Front: Ordinary Soldiers and the Defining Battles of World War One** (New York: TV Books, 2000) \$26.00 US, 224 pages, ISBN1-57500-147-0.

This companion to the BBC documentary of the same name stands alone as an excellent one-volume history of Western Front. Readers seeking to learn more about other fronts and the naval war should look elsewhere, but Holmes has produced a first-rate study of the west.

The book begins with a superb examination of the revolution in military affairs that preceded events of August 1914. Here Holmes sides with those of us who have always been skeptical of the claim that no one knew what to expect when war erupted in the late summer of 1914. It seems incredible that generals schooled in shadow of the American Civil War and the Russo-Japanese war could not have known that frontal attacks on fortified positions would reap horrendous casualties. Holmes says that most of the planners did predict very heavy casualties and even a period of stalemate in trenches, but that they deluded themselves into believing that they could nonetheless defeat their enemy through sheer force of will. They believed that the courage and national character of their troops would carry the day, as it apparently had for the Japanese when they defeated the Russians. The endless casualty lists of the Western Front were viewed as a mark of national resolve and a nation's fitness to be a great power rather than catastrophes.

Holmes gives a surprisingly balanced appraisal of the men who orchestrated these disasters. While agreeing that very few of the senior British and French generals were likeable characters, he acknowledges that they faced a military problem of staggering complexity: an entrenched army could not move, but an unentrenched army could not survive. What is surprising, in the author's view, is how many victories the more seasoned HQs of 1917

and 1918 were able to plan against a foe as determined and tactically proficient as the German army.

Military histories of the First World War tend to fall into the same grisly patterns that the battles themselves did, but Holmes renews our interest in these battles by skillfully weaving together the most recent scholarship on command-level decisions with first-person accounts of infantrymen on the front lines. Accounts of war through the eyes of ordinary men are all the rage these days, but seldom are they so effectively coordinated with an analysis of strategic-level decision making.

The book is well illustrated with rare photographs and many excellent maps. My only quibble is with the lack of any accompanying documentation. As the sophistication of popular military histories increases and their debt on scholarly sources grows, surely it is time for popular authors and their publishers to start to acknowledge those debts properly.

GB

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Paul A. Shackel, ed., **Myth, Memory and the Making of the American Landscape** (Gainesville: University Press of Florida [distributed in Canada by Scholarly Book Services], 2001), \$104.95, 286 pages, ISBN 0-8130-2104-9.

This fascinating collection sheds light on the contested nature of memory with respect to military sites, and the degree to which commemoration can become highly politicized. The US Civil War looms large in the American consciousness, and over certain parts of the American landscape, and so it is hardly surprising that a number of the essays deal with that conflict. For example, Erika Martin Seibert argues that the Manassas Battlefield Park in Virginia enshrines a version of the two battles which occurred there that largely excises the involvement of African-Americans. Martha Temkin examines a similar process at work in the struggle to maintain the Antietam National Battlefield Park, while editor Shackel

looks at the memorial to Robert Gould Shaw, who led the African-American 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteers. Laurie Burgess' essay on Arlington National Cemetery is also instructive, in part because Arlington has become the symbolic heart of military commemoration in the United States. As other essays reveal, similar forces have influenced the commemoration of other wars. Janice Dubel documents the process of creating Manzanar National Historic Site, which commemorates the internment of Japanese nationals and Japanese Americans during the Second World War, and Gail Brown does the same for the Battle of Wounded Knee. And for those readers interested in baseball, there is an illuminating essay on the contested history behind Baltimore's Camden Yards. LT

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Colonel R.D. Camp with Eric Hammel, **Lima-6: A Marine Company Commander in Vietnam** (Pacifica, CA: Pacifica Military History, 1999), \$19.95 US paper, 295 pages, ISBN 0-935553-36-3.

This superb memoir about the ground war in Vietnam details Richard Camp's eight-month experience leading Lima Company of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 26<sup>th</sup> Marines, between June of 1967 and January of 1968. During this period, the author led his company on operations throughout I Corps, the northern military sector of South Vietnam. As Camp and his men discovered, the region was a beehive of activity as the Communists prepared for the coming Tet Offensive and the siege of Khe Sanh.

Similar to other Vietnam War military biographies, Camp structures his book chronologically. Upon arrival in June 1967, he spent the first half of his tour leading Lima Company. Following a short leave, he returned to finish his work with Lima before being appointed Assistant Battalion Operations Officer, and later, a general's aide. The book, however, centers on Camp's time leading soldiers, offering just

brief mentions of his staff assignments.

Camp is at his best detailing life for a Marine Company operating in and around the Khe Sanh area before and during the 1968 Tet Offensive. The author leads readers down steep jungle valleys for nerve-racking searches of empty, but newly constructed, North Vietnamese bunkers. The strain of patrolling through the harsh Annam Mountain weather is particularly well covered. In addition, Camp serves up a great deal of action. The book explains the complexities of patrolling, ambushes, and Marine camp culture without losing the narrative's momentum. Interestingly, Camp shows a great deal of respect for the North Vietnamese, while showing little regard for their Southern cousins. Throughout, the author spices the story with anecdotes ranging from the grotesque to the humorous, and always with an honesty the reader comes to respect.

Its unfortunate that Camp chose not to detail the last months of his tour spent as a general's aide. A macro view of the post-Tet fighting, and his personal political views of the war, would have nicely rounded out his foxhole level account. Still, this career officer has produced a lively memoir of his time leading a Marine infantry company, and as such, offers a useful contribution to the combat literature of the Vietnam War.

BC

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Gil Murray, **The Invisible War: The Untold Secret Story of Number One Canadian Special Wireless Group, Royal Canadian Signal Corps, 1944-1946** (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2001), \$24.99 paper, 302 pages, ISBN 1-55002-371-3.

Gil Murray's memoir of Number One Canadian Special Wireless Group of the Royal Canadian Signal Corps (ICSWG) describes the career of the only complete Canadian signals unit sent to the war in the Pacific. Because the thirty-year secrecy ban had long been lifted on

the ICSWG, Murray was perplexed as to why historians had not uncovered what he believes was the unit's vitally important role in winning the Pacific campaign.

As a teenager working at a local St. Catharines, Ontario, radio station, Murray enlisted in the infantry, only to be asked later to volunteer for a top-secret mission in the Pacific. Unaware of his future role in the army, Murray accepted the mission to find upon arriving at a shabby training base in the thick forests on the northern part of Vancouver Island's Saanich Peninsula that he had volunteered for ICSWG. The majority of Murray's book evolves around the daily activities and life in ICSWG, and his recollections of life in Canada's only signals unit sent to the south-west Pacific provide a truly unique and personal account. The unit's career was an adventurous one to say the least. Murray's lively account is dominated by drunkenness, prostitutes, late nights in the red light districts of Vancouver and San Francisco, life in unsanitary living conditions, and more drunkenness. There are, however, scattered insights on such topics as relations among the Allied troops, divisions within the signals unit, military discipline, regional identities in Canada, further reasons why innocent Japanese were forced into internment camps, and a reiteration of the defence for the use of the atomic bomb on Japan.

Once his unit arrived at its base near Darwin, Australia, Murray has surprisingly little to say about the role it played in intercepting and decoding Japanese radio communications. While there are short descriptions of instances where the ICSWG undoubtedly performed a crucial role in aiding the Allies operations, Murray did not satisfy this reviewer's curiosity. He does, however, provide the reader with insight into the essential workings of ICSWG and its place in operation "Magic." More importantly, Murray not only identifies a weakness in Canadian military historiography, but he also pro-

vides an invaluable starting point for addressing this weakness.

SBW

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Antulio J. Echevarria II, **After Clausewitz: German Military Thinkers Before The Great War** (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), \$39.95 US, 346 pages, ISBN 0-7006-1071-5.

When one thinks of pre-1914 military thought, blind adherence to the "cult of the offensive" leaps to the fore. However, as the director of national security studies at the U.S. Army War College, Lieutenant-Colonel Antulio Echevarria argues, this view is coloured by the horrific slaughter of the First World War, which has led many historians to hastily and unfairly condemn prewar military thought as simplistic and misguided. Through a detailed discussion of the published writings of prominent German military theorists of the period 1870-1914, such as von Bernhardi, von der Goltz, and the civilian historian Hans Delbrück, Echevarria contends that *fin-de-siècle* military thought addressed and solved the tactical, strategic, and cultural crises in warfare of the era. These crises, spawned by technological innovations such as the breech-loading rifle, the belt-fed machine gun, and longer ranged field artillery, shifted the balance in favour of the defender and made a Napoleonic decisive victory increasingly improbable. Adding to the dilemma was the apparent decline in health and moral quality of the average soldier due, as many believed, to the pernicious influence of technology and urbanization.

German military thinkers, along with their counterparts throughout the Western world, sought to locate a means of returning manoeuvre to warfare with the hopes of achieving decisive victory in the next general war. Their solution, as developed through close study of the Boer and Russo-Japanese Wars, was to emphasize fire and movement with combined arms

and decentralized execution of operations to cope with the increased tempo of operations. Yet, as Echevarria concedes, these two objectives were in opposition to each other, a dilemma resolved only by a doctrinal shift to an increased emphasis on individual judgement and initiative by junior officers. It is here and not with the body of military thought that Echevarria locates the root of the strategic and tactical paralysis and resulting slaughter of the armies of the First World War. The theorists did their part, he asserts, by addressing the *fin-de-siècle* crisis of warfare; the events of the Great War were the result of incomplete training and a pervasive anti-intellectualism among junior officers which led them to ignore the doctrinal solutions and instead rely upon the more dashing "spirit of the offensive." Although this is a novel explanation of the failures of First World War strategy and prewar doctrines, Echevarria does not prove that junior officers wilfully ignored the works of military thinkers, leaving his conclusion at the level of hypothesis. Given the detail in which he describes the various theoretical perspectives, it is odd that the point which would complete his rehabilitation of prewar German military thought would be dealt with briefly and vaguely in under four pages. That being said, Echevarria's book is a useful synthesis of the German contribution to a largely neglected and misunderstood era of military thought.

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Belinda J. Davis, **Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin** (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press [distributed in Canada by Scholarly Book Services], 2000), \$90.75, 349 pages, ISBN 0-8078-2526-3.

**B**elinda Davis' *Home Fires Burning* is a unique addition to the growing literature on the effects of war on the home front. Davis uses a gendered analysis to explore the

civilian war experience on a local level, namely the female-led battle over food in wartime Berlin. Using police and military reports on civilian morale in conjunction with contemporary public and private documents, Davis examines the increasingly severe impact of the British blockade on the availability of food for Berliners while also attempting to provide a fresh perspective on the nature of politics and class relations. She argues that the experience of economic warfare in Berlin created a temporary solidarity among the working and lower-middle classes on the basis of their common experience as deprived consumers. At the core of this confluence of interests was the symbolic rallying point of "women of lesser means" whose increased militancy during the war served as a socially acceptable means of expressing discontent and common demands on the state for intervention in the provision of food.

From initial opposition to perceived profiteering and favouritism in the distribution of food, the discontent of Berliners increased as the blockade tightened, escalating to street protests and bread riots by 1916. Davis believes that the Imperial Government did not crack down on these protests due to their gendered nature, although their attempts to placate the women of lesser means with a variety of ill-conceived policies led only to a wholesale rejection of the state by early 1918, thereby opening the way for revolution. This is the weakest element of Davis' analysis as she overstates the role played by the internal "food war" in the collapse of the German Empire in November 1918. In part, this is the result of her case-study approach, which does not permit a broader discussion of factors such as national war-weariness or military factors such as the American entry into the war and the plummeting morale of the German Navy by 1918 as contributors to the collapse.

Of greater concern is that the women of lesser means and indeed the working classes generally lack a voice in Davis' narrative. By rely-

ing upon police reports, Davis presents a male, lower-middle class view of the food war. Although she provides evidence that as the blockade took hold many officers began to identify with the concerns expressed by the working classes, the women of lesser means appear as a faceless, voiceless mass who appear to be acted upon by others instead of assuming the role of leadership which Davis ascribes to them. Indeed, Davis' conclusion that the food war created popular expectations which not only contributed to the downfall of the Kaiser but also shaped the Weimar Republic (for better or worse) is difficult to prove, particularly when the working class' own political goals remain unclear. This is a common problem faced by social historians which weakens Davis' argument. Overall, however, *Home Fires Burning* is a thought-provoking consideration of women and class in wartime.

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G.R.T. (Bob) Willis, **No Hero, Just a Survivor** (privately published [available from the author at 19 Rectory Lane, Emley, Huddersfield, HD8 9RR, England], 1999), £18.00, 318 pages, ISBN 0-953-7178-0-1.

**T**he title of Bob Willis' fine, understated book reflects how many of those who served at the sharp end of the Second World War felt after it ended. Willis piloted Beaufighters and Mosquitos (his spelling) with 47 Squadron in the Mediterranean and Burma between 1943 and 1945. He and his navigator Tommy Thompson survived through skill, experience, and luck. Willis missed death half a dozen times, but writes about his operations in modest, undramatic terms. The book combines his personal story with a history of 47 Squadron – Raymond Collishaw commanded it during the civil war in southern Russia in 1919, and other Canadians served in the squadron as well. Now based at Lyneham in Wiltshire, 47 Squadron flies C130s in a transport support role.

Willis, a Yorkshireman, tells his tale in plain, simple language with occasional wry asides concerning Goolie Chits, the problems with Mosquitos in tropical climates, and the perils of flying planes during the monsoon. After training in Rhodesia, Willis flew from Gambut, in Libya, shooting up anything that moved in the eastern Mediterranean. Transferred to India, he provided support for the 14<sup>th</sup> Army as it advanced through Burma where he was also stationed. Willis reflects on the fate of civilians caught in these attacks and shows his appreciation for the ground crews that kept the planes in the air. The writer appears to have almost total recall of his time in the services, and particularly remembers people like Flight Lieutenant Al Scott, a Canadian and “probably the most skilful pilot on the squadron,” who was hit by small arms fire while strafing Toungoo airfield in Burma – Scottie and his navigator bailed out, but the Canadian died from loss of blood – and Wing Commander H.D.L. Filson-Young, CO of 47 Squadron, who went on “one ‘Op’ too many” and crashed after surviving 232 sorties.

One great value of this book lies in its very detailed account of what life and air combat were like in forgotten theatres of war. Willis “clocked up 274 hours in 64 sorties,” earning a well-deserved DFC. A friend in the squadron wrote that “47 was pretty clued up and all in all did a good job.” The same can be said of Bob Willis and his book.

JL

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George Davies, **The Occupation of Japan: The Rhetoric and the Reality of Anglo-Australian Relations, 1939-1952** (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press [distributed in North America by International Specialized Book Services], 2001), \$31.95 US paper, 391 pages, ISBN 0-7022-3209-2.

The dominant Western memory of the post-1945 occupation of Japan is that of American dominance with General MacArthur and

his forces of occupation remaking a malleable Japan in the image of the United States, both culturally and politically. However, as George Davies argues, such a picture neglects the modest yet significant contribution of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force [BCOF], “a military force sent on a political errand,” to the reconstruction and refashioning of Japan. Despite the lack of a military role and the predominance of the United States, Davies believes the significance of the BCOF rests upon its long-term impact upon considerations of politics, security, trade, and relations with the Commonwealth and with Japan.

Davies, who served as a dentist in the New Zealand contribution to the BCOF (and retired as Vice-chancellor of the University of Queensland), traces the full history of the Force, from its roots in the Second World War contributions of Australia and New Zealand and their desire to be treated as ‘parties principal’ by the Great Powers in the making of the peace with Japan, to the BCOF’s formation, composition, and mission in Southern Honshu and Shikoku. As well, he explores the Force’s public image in Japan and in the Commonwealth and its slow disintegration during the late 1940s as a result of political squabbling among the contributing partners. Davies believes that the BCOF suffered from a series of ultimately intractable problems which hindered its effectiveness and contributed in large part to its relegation to the dustbin of history. These ranged from the high-level rivalry between Australia and Great Britain for control of the BCOF to tactical considerations such as the ill-conceived policy of no fraternization which limited the force’s influence with the Japanese civilian population and contributed to serious morale-related issues such as the widely publicized VD problem in the force which irreparably tarnished the BCOF’s image on the home fronts of the contributing Commonwealth nations and in Japan.

Davies’ narrative is well-supported (often too well) with evidence gathered from careful consideration of archival sources. Indeed, Davies is at his best in his detailed discussions of the composition and mission of the BCOF. However, the first third of the book is devoted to a lengthy discussion of the diplomatic and military histories of Australia and New Zealand during the Second World War based largely upon secondary sources and thus revisiting well-trod ground. Davies asserts that he rewrote his draft upon the appearance of Laurie Brocklebank’s *Jayforce: New Zealand and the Military Occupation of Japan* (1997) and James Wood’s *The Forgotten Force: the Australian Military Contribution to the Occupation of Japan 1945-1952* but one wonders why he chose to leave this largely extraneous contextual component intact. This is even more confusing given that Davies seems to be very reluctant to include any autobiographical elements in his discussion which not only would have enlivened the text but would have also provided a valuable nuance to his argument.

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Mark Connelly, **Reaching For the Stars: A New History of Bomber Command in World War II** (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), \$70.00 US, 206 pages, ISBN 1-86064-591-7.

The popular memory of the Royal Air Force’s strategic bombing campaign against Germany and the image of Bomber Command’s wartime commander, Air Marshal Arthur “Bomber” Harris, remains highly controversial. Indeed, this was seen in Canada and Britain in 1992 with the storm of outrage which followed the screening of the McKenna brothers’ portrayal of the campaign in their three-part television documentary *The Valour and the Horror*. Mark Connelly, Reuters Lecturer in Media and Propaganda History at the University of Kent and the author of *Christmas – A Social History*, embarked on an ambitious project



with his new history of Bomber Command viewed through the revisionist prism of myth, memory, and meaning. Connelly seeks to understand what the British people were told during the war about Bomber Command's efforts and what beliefs they have developed since. He argues that this collective memory of Bomber Command is confused, having been partly forged during the first half of the war when the government could not decide what to tell the public and when Bomber Command searched desperately for a mission it could actually accomplish within the limits of contemporary technology.

Using a mix of historiography and narrative, Connelly traces the history of Bomber Command from its Trenchardian roots to its struggle to develop an effective doctrine throughout during the Second World War in order to yield the results envisioned by strategic bombing advocates during the interwar period. Connelly's narrative hits upon all of the major elements of the campaign (which have been exhaustively explored) but he is at his best when exploring the construction of Bomber Command's image during the war and the postwar memory of its exploits. Using a wide variety of sources such as wartime propaganda films and press coverage, Connelly argues that these shaped popular perceptions of Bomber Command by presenting a mix of "truths, half-truths and outright lies." In a controversial contention, he asserts that despite this incomplete picture, the British public deluded themselves as to the nature of Bomber Command's area bombing campaign. As a corollary, he contends that it was not Dresden that tarnished Bomber Command's image but governmental post-facto squeamishness regarding the bombing campaign during the immediate postwar era. Connelly's argument reaches the level of polemic with this point, for he does not cite specific governmental evidence to support his assertion, reducing his argument to an overstated conspiracy theory in which the government served as a

moulder of the memory of Bomber Command which an unquestioning populace readily accepted. If, as he believes, the British public knew the "real" nature of Bomber Command's campaign and chose to accept it during the war, why then did they embrace the contradictory "official" line in the postwar era? Conscience may be part of it, but a more detailed assessment of this interesting aspect of social memory (and forgetting) would have provided increased clarity.

As well, despite emphasizing the public's horror of bombing during the 1920s and 1930s, Connelly does not do the same for the nuclear age. This may have shed some light on the postwar public's unfavourable view of Bomber Command, shaped by a fear that the next Battle of Britain may not turn out in their favour. A broader discussion of the postwar era would have more clearly illuminated the nature of Bomber Command's memory. Still, Connelly's book is a valuable and overdue addition to a crowded historiography which goes a long way to correcting the strange neglect by historians of the making and consumption of the image of a remarkably media conscious military organization.

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Eric Hammel, **Carrier Strike: The Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands, October 1942** (Pacifica, CA: Pacifica Military History, 1999), \$29.95 US, 409 pages, ISBN 0-935553-37-1.

A sequel to Hammel's earlier book *Carrier Clash*, about the Battle of the Eastern Solomons in August 1942, *Carrier Strike* looks at the engagement that was a victory for the Japanese, but only in the short-term. The Imperial Japanese Navy could claim victory in October 1942 because the American carrier fleet withdrew from the battle after losing the *Hornet*, the eighth and newest of the US Navy's fleet carriers, the destroyer USS *Porter*, and eighty of the 175 carrier aircraft which were committed

to the battle. The Japanese, although they lost almost half of the aircraft committed and suffered heavy damage to two carriers, were in control of that patch of ocean when the battle drew to a close at the end of October. However, the IJN was never able to use its carrier force again as a strategic weapon. The two damaged carriers, as well as an undamaged flattop, were withdrawn to Japan, leaving only the inadequate *Junyo* on duty in this active theatre. It played no further role in the Solomons campaign (although it was the only survivor of the Santa Cruz battle remaining afloat at war's end), and the destruction of most of the rest of Japan's carrier fleet in the Philippine Sea in October 1944 put paid to Japan's ambition of projecting force through carrier-based aircraft.

Like all of Hammel's book, this one is a delight to read – gripping, fast-paced, and full of action. He has a knack for this kind of writing, and has emerged as one of the preeminent chroniclers of the Pacific War.

SL

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Col. A. Jalali and Lieut. Col. L.W. Grau, **The Other Side of the Mountain: Mujahideen Tactics in the Soviet Afghan War**, vol. 1-3 (Milton Keynes, UK: Military Press, 2000), £59.57, 400 pages, ISBN 0-85420-365-6 (vol. 1), ISBN 0-85420-375-3 (vol. 2), ISBN 0-85420-311-7 (vol. 3).

It would be difficult to conceive of a more timely academic work than this three-volume study of the tactics, techniques, and procedures used by Mujahideen forces during their guerrilla war against the Soviet Union from 1979 to 1989.

In the mid-1990s the United States Marine Corps sponsored the authors' study to enhance the body of knowledge of Mujahideen tactics and techniques. The authors traveled to Pakistan where they interviewed a large number of Mujahideen. The book consists entirely of case studies where first-hand accounts of individual actions

are retold, followed by brief commentary by the authors. The battles are described briefly over two to three pages. A colour map accompanies every account. The quality of the maps is excellent, and they facilitate a fuller understanding of the battle space. Be warned that the authors utilize the former Soviet map symbols, which may require some adjustment for those used to NATO symbology.

All students of asymmetrical warfare will find this set extremely valuable. In particular, those with an interest in guerilla warfare at the lowest tactical levels will delight in this material. These are first-hand accounts that, for the most part, are free of third-party opinion or interpretation. The facts are presented simply and concisely, with the analysis and commentary by the authors clearly labeled as such. This makes excellent fodder for scenario-based tactical problem-solving exercises at both the NCO and officer level.

The book is organized into a number of subjects including ambush, raids, attacks on strong points, dealing with counter-guerilla tactics, and urban combat. The relevance of this material to the current conflicts in Afghanistan and elsewhere is self-evident. This book is highly recommended and should be prerequisite reading for all military leaders deploying into a theater where guerrilla warfare will be encountered.

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David Stafford, ed., **Flight from Reality: Rudolf Hess and His Mission to Scotland, 1941** (London: Pimlico, 2002), \$34.95, 182 pages, ISBN 0-7126-8025-X.

Hugh Thomas, **The Strange Death of Heinrich Himmler: A Forensic Examination** (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001), \$38.95, 276 pages, ISBN 0-312-28923-5.

Two of the most enigmatic figures of the Third Reich are covered in these fascinating studies,

one of which attempts to put old myths to rest, the other to stir up an old orthodoxy. Much confusion has surrounded the flight to Scotland of Rudolf Hess, Hitler's deputy, with conspiracy theorists arguing, among other things, that Hitler had foreknowledge of the flight and that the pilot was not really Hess at all (and, by extension, it was not really Hess who languished in Spandau prison for so many years). These theories have all rested on a number of dubious details, including Hess's cryptic letters which he left behind to be delivered to friends and family, his skills as a pilot, and alleged discrepancies between the serial numbers of various aircraft which might have been involved in the flight. To refute these theories, David Stafford has assembled a panel of international experts to analyse specific aspects of the story: Len Deighton on Hess the aviator, John Erickson on the Soviet implications, Warren Kimball on the American angle, and Hugh Trevor-Roper on "Hess the corrigible intruder." Taken together, these essays represent an effective demolition of the mythology surrounding Hess, and tell the story for what it really was: the attempt by a credulous and deluded man to take action into his own hands by flying into the heart of enemy country to try to destabilize Britain and thereby save Germany from a two-front war.

Thomas' book is rather different, although the thesis should come as no surprise to anyone who has read his earlier works *The Murder of Rudolf Hess* and *The Murder of Adolf Hitler*. Thomas' subject this time is the Reichsführer-SS, and the picture he sketches of the young Himmler is at once alarming and fascinating: an unbelievably priggish fustpot with a remarkable memory and an infinite faith in his own moral superiority over virtually anyone else around him, he first ingratiated himself with Hitler through his naive loyalty, but more importantly because he owned a motorcycle at a time when the National Socialists found it difficult to scrape together

funds for transportation. He parlayed those humble beginnings into perhaps the second most powerful, and certainly most feared (even by many seniors Nazis) position in the Nazi state. It has long been assumed that Himmler committed suicide shortly after his capture by British forces in north Germany in May 1945, but Thomas contends that the SS chief was one step ahead of things. Convinced that the Nazis would lose the war, he set about feathering his own nest and making private arrangements (usually through trusted allies) with Swedish, Soviet, and British intelligence that were intended to secure him a haven after the war. It was a double who died in British hands, not Himmler, a contention that is supported by the forensic evidence introduced by Thomas: the fact that the British were desperately keen to have Himmler's body buried quickly, without allowing the Soviets (who possessed the only set of Himmler's dental records) to examine the body; the exhaustive British autopsy made no mention of the facial scar of which Himmler was inordinately proud; the fact that the corpse did not really look like Himmler, even allowing for facial contortions caused by the poison; and a number of other factors. Thomas is too careful to be dogmatic, and admits that he cannot prove the body was not Himmler's, but the evidence he introduces is suggestive – enough that the book will likely provoke debate for some time. CA

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Jonathan F. Vance, **High Flight: Aviation and the Canadian Imagination** (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2002), \$35.00, 338 pages, ISBN 0-14-301345-9.

With this book, the author of the award-winning *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning and the First World War* turns his hand to a different subject, the impact of the airplane on public attitudes in Canada. It is an approach that has interested historians in Europe and the United States, so Vance has the

benefit of some solid studies to use as models. The result is an absorbing and beautifully written account of why flying has maintained such a hold on Canada's imagination.

Vance begins with the balloon age, but quickly moves into the early days of heavier-than-air flying machines, when hucksters and pioneers alike tried to demonstrate the capabilities of the airplane. In doing so, they came up against a public which saw the new technology as a gimmick that would soon pass, and governments which saw no useful purpose in taking to the air. Not until the interwar era was flying embraced by business, government, and by the general public; even then, it took the Second World War to transform flying from a pursuit of the few to something that touched the lives of many.

Understandably, much of the focus is on military aviation. Vance describes the "knights of the air" image which evolved during the

First World War, arguing that it so captured the imagination because it allowed this most modern war to be interpreted in a comforting traditional framework. The strategic bombing campaign, the first in history, could be interpreted in the same way, as a kind of medieval morality play in which evil German bombers and zeppelins were met by Allied scout pilots who acted as avenging angels. But even with the horrors of the Great War, the interwar era saw the airplane become an instrument of peace; opposing aviators like Billy Bishop and Ernst Udet became new comrades, and the zeppelin became a symbol of international amity. This comforting delusion lasted until the Spanish Civil War, when the destruction of Guernica convinced Canada (and the world) that the bloom was off the airplane. Suddenly, air raid precautions became a concern of every Canadian community, and when the Allied air forces finally

developed the capability to strike back at Germany from the skies, the Canadian public was enthusiastic, revelling in the fact that the Allies now had the technology to flatten German cities. In another section, Vance discusses the increasing technological sophistication of airplanes that was fostered by the Second World War, and the degree to which other aircrew members grew in importance and the pilot increasingly became simply a driver of an airborne bus.

For anyone who has marvelled at an air show, spent hours building model airplanes, or simply been fascinated by aviation without really knowing why, this book will be a delight. It conjures up the magic of early flying, and would be a wonderful way to pass a few hours in the airport when you're waiting for a cancelled flight or looking for your lost luggage. DAR

## Briefly Noted

Bruce Catton, Charles P. Roland, David Donald, and T. Harry Williams, **Grant, Lee, Lincoln and the Radicals: Essays on Civil War Leadership** (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press [distributed in Canada by Scholarly Book Services], 2001), \$21.50 paper, 117 pages, ISBN 0-8071-2742-6.

In 1964, four preeminent scholars of the US Civil War presented papers at Northwestern University to mark the centenary of the conflict. Those essays were collected into a volume which subsequently became one of the landmarks in Civil War history. Reprinted here for the first time, they are accompanied by a new introduction and preface which describe why the essays have stood the test of time, and why they remain essential reading for anyone interested in the Civil War, or in military leadership generally.

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Sharon Grant Wildwind, **Dreams That Blister Sleep: A Nurse in Vietnam** (Edmonton: River Books, 1999), \$17.95 paper, 218 pages, ISBN 1-895836-70-0

Sharon Grant left her home in Louisiana to find freedom, but ending up finding much more on her year-long tour of duty as a nurse in Vietnam. This searing memoir, which mixes entries from the author's diary with reflections written long after the fact, gives a frank picture of what it was like to minister to the wounded in south-east Asia. It is not *M\*A\*S\*H\** or even *China Beach* – but rather an honest and often brutal account of the wounds of war and of one human spirit that coped with them to the best of her ability.

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David Batten and Bob Kennedy, **To the Trace: Imagery of Soldiering** (Toronto: Spadina Rhetoric, 2000), \$50.00, 227 pages, no ISBN.

David Batten served as the staff photographer while serving

with the reconnaissance squadron of The Royal Canadian Dragoons in Cyprus in 1989, and five years after leaving the Army, a course in photography behind him, he spent some time with The Queen's York Rangers, a reserve reconnaissance unit. The Commanding Officer gave him full access to document the unit's training exercises and daily life, and in return Batten produced this fine collection of photographs which portray the texture of the life of a modern reservist. The black-and-white photographs are uncaptioned (short introductory essays by Bob Kennedy open each chapter), but they really need no captions because the images are so powerful. Anyone who has spent any time in the military will be familiar with the scenes – cleaning the machine gun after fire exercises, the first time in the gas hut, constructing an observation post, the new recruit's first day. They have a dignity and strength about them that is compelling, and they show a side of today's soldiers that most people never observe in the twenty-sec-

ond sound bytes that grace the nightly news.

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Thomas D. Cockrell and Michael B. Ballard, eds., **A Mississippi Rebel in the Army of Northern Virginia: The Civil War Memoirs of Private David Holt** (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press [distributed in Canada by Scholarly Book Services], 2001), \$29.75 paper, 370 pages, ISBN 0-8071-2734-5.

After David Holt retired as an Episcopal minister, his son persuaded him to fill his idle hours by recording his recollections of his experiences during the Civil War. By the time of his death in 1925, Holt had written some fifty short chapters, covering everything from his early childhood on a Mississippi plantation to his capture in 1864, when his company attempted to retake a section of railway line that was a vital supply route for Confederate forces. It is an illuminating and often humorous account of an affluent young man's journey through some of the fiercest battles of the war: Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, the Wilderness. Concluding the volume are excerpts from Holt's 1865 diary, covering his experiences after being released from captivity.

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Bernd Horn, ed., **Forging a Nation: Perspectives on the Canadian Military Experience** (St. Catharines, ON: Vanwell, 2002), 416 pages, ISBN 1-55125-090-X

Yves Tremblay, ed., **Canadian Military History since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century: Proceedings of the Canadian Military History Conference, Ottawa, 5-9 May 2000** (Ottawa: Directorate of History and Heritage, 2001), 591 pages, no ISBN.

For the sheer breadth of material covered, it's difficult to beat these two collections. Horn's book contains nineteen essays and Tremblay's boasts an impressive fifty-seven articles (albeit most quite

short). Together, they surely address every conceivable aspect of conflict in Canadian history, from "French Strategic Ideas in the Defence of the Cod Fishery, 1663-1713" (F.J. Thorpe) to "Glued to its Seat: Canada and its Alliances in the Post-Cold War Era" (Joel Sokolsky), and include the work of the country's best military historians. What's more, there is very little overlap between the two books, either in terms of subject matter or authorship, so that the reader who buys both can be confident of not reading the same material twice. It is always possible to quibble with trifles – *Forging a Nation*, for example, contains just a single article on the First World War, the conflict that is usually understood as having forged the Canadian nation – but the collections confirm that military history in Canada is in fine fettle.

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John C. Fredriksen, **Green Coats and Glory: The United States Regiment of Riflemen, 1808-1821** (Youngstown, NY: Fort Niagara Publications, 2000), \$12.95 US paper, 80 pages, ISBN 0-941967-22-0.

Lamenting that the historiography of the US Army in the early nineteenth century is "intolerably stagnant," Fredriksen has responded with this brief but well researched history of the Regiment of Riflemen. Authorized by Thomas Jefferson in 1808, the unit had its baptism of fire at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811 and served in the Patriot War in Florida before coming north to fight in the War of 1812. Perhaps its greatest successes were the ambush at Sandy Creek in May 1814 and the defense of Conjockta Creek in August. The following year, the four regiments were down-sized into one, and in 1821 the unit was disbanded altogether. It was a sad end for what Fredriksen aptly calls the most effective US infantry formation in the War of 1812.

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George Rollie Adams, **General William S. Harney, Prince of Dragoons** (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), \$60 US, 389 pages, ISBN 0-8032-1058-2.

Few nineteenth-century American soldiers had the breadth of military experience that William Harney did. He commanded troops in almost every conflict between the War of 1812 and the Civil War: operations against the Lafitte pirates in Louisiana, the Black Hawk War, the Second Seminole War, the Mexican-American War, campaigns against the Plains Indians, peace-keeping in Kansas and Utah. Adams characterizes him as bold, ambitious and innovative, but also vindictive, impulsive, and violent, and notes that he lived by a philosophy he recorded in his diary in 1868: "The power of the sword in a free country is never to be invoked but to repel invasion, quell insurrection, & to enforce the law."

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Tonie and Valmai Holt, **My Boy Jack?: The Search for Kipling's Only Son** (Barnsley, UK: Leo Cooper, 2001), £12.95 paper, 236 pages, ISBN 0-85052-859-3.

On 27 September 1915, John, the son of the world famous author Rudyard Kipling, was reported missing in the Battle of Loos. Having pulled every string to get his myopic son into the Irish Guards, Kipling was devastated by the loss and determined to find his final resting place. Despite his influential position and a life-long search, he never succeeded in his quest. The Holts, better known for their series of battlefield tour books, take up the search, beginning with the 1992 decision of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to alter a previously unidentified grave to denote that it held the remains of John Kipling. They argue that the decision was mistaken, and note that the matter is still before the British Ministry of Defence.

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