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Painting the Map Red: Canada and the South African War, 1899–1902 by Carmen Miller [Review]

Sidney Allinson

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military acumen, which has grown great through his patients, but simply because the book points out and underlines the evil and horror which men are capable of inflicting on each other. This is apparent in Yugoslavia, Somalia and Rwanda today.

Dr. Shay is a practising psychiatrist who, as a member of the Veteran's Improvement Program in Cambridge, Massachusetts, treats American combat veterans of the Vietnam War who are afflicted with severe chronic post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He points out in the introduction to the book how, several years ago, he was struck by the similarity of the war experience of Vietnam combat veterans to Homer's account of Achilles in *The Iliad*, although *The Iliad* was written about 2,700 years ago. Written with the encouragement of Professor Gregory Nagy of Harvard University, a leading scholar of classical Greek literature, this is a very important and timely book.

No one should shy away from reading this book for fear that it is a psychiatric textbook, too complex to be understood. Though providing insights into the human character and its workings not easily found elsewhere, it is also an extremely well-written, clear, concise and accurate description of the trauma created in formerly rational human beings, through their continual involvement in deadly combat. In a sense, by juxtaposing the experiences of his patients with those of Achilles in *The Iliad*, Dr. Shay has demonstrated that "there is nothing really new under the sun." What is new, however, is the intensity, magnitude and seeming interminability of the conflict as well as the severity and longevity of the subsequent psychological illness which can

cripple the soldier who finds himself embroiled in it as easily and as permanently as a round from a rocket-propelled grenade launcher.

Dr. Shay's great contribution, however, is his emphasis on, and description of, the failure of leadership and the development of the "berserk" state. Both of these facets seem to be particularly endemic in the Vietnam war, and both are confirmed by the statement and/or actions of his patients over and over again. The nature of the combat in which these men found themselves engaged has, of course, occurred in war before; one immediately thinks of the siege and horror of Verdun, of Stalingrad, of the battles of Kursk and Kohima. All of these had their particular horrors, as did Vietnam.

Dr. Shay makes many penetrating observations with regard to the leadership of the Vietnam soldier, and perhaps the most important of these in relation to the failure of command is the lack of time to mourn. He points out that, after the death of a close friend in action that "thwarted, uncommunalized grief is a major reason why there are so many severe, long-term psychological injuries from the Vietnam war," and he ably demonstrates this with the observance of their respect for their own and enemy dead. He also contrasts the lack of contempt for the enemy displayed in *The Iliad* with the active contempt, rooted in racism, that occurred among American soldiers in Vietnam.

It is difficult to review a book from the galley-proofs; however, if the published editor is cognizant of the corrections made and revises accordingly, the technical quality of this text will be high. Dr. Shay's writing style is superb,

and he has a talent to grip and hold the reader from the beginning of his text until the very end. Liberally interspersed with anonymous but appropriate quotations from his tape recordings of treatment sessions with his patients, and incorporating wisely chosen and appropriate solutions from *The Iliad* in illustration of his points, this book is less of a text and more a work of literature that cannot help but be of benefit to all those who take the time and trouble to read it. It is one which reminds me very much of Guy Sajer's *The Forgotten Soldier* about the Russian front in World War II, and it certainly can proudly stand alongside John Keegan's *The Face of Battle*.

James C. Lawless
Curriculum Developer
Directorate of Professional
Development & Language
Training, National
Defence Headquarters
Ottawa, Canada

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Painting the Map Red Canada and the South African War, 1899-1902

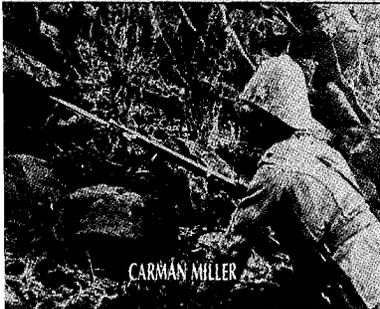
Carman Miller. *Painting the Map Red: Canada and the South African War, 1899-1902*. (McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993) 540 pages, \$44.95.

Here it is, at last; the definitive book about Canada's role in the Boer War. Such a long delay is almost inexplicable, considering what a tremendous social, military and political effect that far-off African conflict had on Canada. However, as Carman



PAINTING THE MAP RED

CANADA AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR
1899 - 1902



Miller has done such a good job, he has made the wait all the more worthwhile.

The South African War has always been an interest of this reviewer, though previously having had to rely largely on British sources. So it is satisfying now to be given a look at the whole story of the over 7,000 Canadians who volunteered to fight in Britain's cause in southern Africa at the turn of the century. Perhaps the lack of major reference works is why our nation's part in the war receives scant attention in history class curriculums. Or, there could be some squeamishness about our country's enthusiastic role in what has been described as Britain's last colonial war.

The Anglo-Boer conflict foreshadowed events of only a few years later, during the 1914-1918 Great War. As in that much larger conflict, the Boer War brought first an enormous surge of patriotism for King and Empire, droves of eager volunteers, followed by a manpower crisis after sobering news of heavy casualties from bullet and

disease (270 Canadian soldiers died there). There was the same florid political arguments, regional disagreements, national navel-gazing about the wisdom of Canadian participation, and a quite strong anti-war movement.

Thoroughly covering civilian events, Miller's main emphasis is on the war front: the generally valiant combat experiences of our troops, despite having been hastily trained. Battlefield accounts follow individual officers and soldiers in action, including a superb description of the Royal Canadian Regiment's victory at Paardeberg. In addition to detailing famed conventional regiments, Miller also tells of "Howard's Canadian Scouts," a colourful bunch of rough-riding irregulars. The photographs and numerous maps in Carman Miller's extensively-researched book are particularly useful in helping understand the course of Canadian operations during the South African war. Highly recommended.

Sidney Allinson
Victoria, B.C.

The Cherry Beret

Colonel Ashton L. Kerr, MD. *The Cherry Beret: Distant recollections of World War II as remembered by one of the first Canloan officers.* published privately, 125 pages.

Dr. Kerr has written a light 125 page story of how he became a Canloan officer to the British Army, and thereafter what happened to him during the Second World War.

In 1941, on the day after finishing his internship, and

although he had already been accepted in a neurosurgery residence, Dr. Kerr decided to forgo it all and joined the Canadian army. Soon after, he was on the Volunteer "Q" list of 43 Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps officers on loan to the British, and on his way over to Europe.

A hand-drawn map and over 25 black and white photographs are used to enliven and enlighten us about Colonel Kerr's travels. The assignments and duties took him to North Africa and England where he trained. Afterwards, he participated in the invasions of Italy and Southern France and in the liberation of Greece. His final assignment prior to returning to Canada was in Palestine, where he was involved in the peace keeping.

During his stay in Europe, he managed to come in contact with several famous personages such as Evelyn Waugh, Ambassador John Winant and Daphne du Maurier. These meetings are always presented with modesty and Dr. Kerr's characteristic sense of understatement. He concludes this autobiographical sojourn with several brief vignettes of other Canloan medical officers.

There are many history books about World War II filled with statistics and analyses of various campaigns. This book has none of that. Rather, it reminded me of a grandfather talking to his grandchildren trying to highlight the more humane aspects of being a soldier.

Indeed, this is a book with a gentle spirit which should be read by any and all ages.

Lt-Colonel Markus C. Martin
Commanding Officer
51st Medical Company