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CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY

BOOK REVIEW SUPPLEMENT

Autumn 1998 Issue 8

James Chace, **Acheson: The Secretary of State who Created the American World** (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), $42.00, 512 pages, ISBN 0-684-80843-9.

David S. Landes, **The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some Are So Rich and Some So Poor** (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998), $39.99, 650 pages, ISBN 0-393-0417-8.

Leon V. Sigal, **Disarming Strangers: Nuclear Diplomacy with North Korea** (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), $29.95 US, 321 pages, ISBN 0-691-05797-4.

The Lionel Gelber Prize, one of the world's richest literary prizes, awards $50,000 annually to the year's best book in the field of international relations. It seeks to widen the readership for important works pertaining to global issues, and to generate enlightened discussion and debate on foreign affairs. Among the past winners of the prize are Donovan Webster (*Aftermath: The Remnants of War*), Eric Hobsbawm (*Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century*), Michael Ignatieff (*Blood and Belonging: Journeys Into the New Nationalism*), and David McCullough (*Truman*).

Three of this year's five short-listed books deal directly with military matters, and run the gamut from classic political biography to more theoretical and polemical treatises. Chace's biography of Dean Acheson, American Secretary of State from 1949 to 1953, is the former, in the mould of McCullough's prize-winning biography of Harry Truman. Chace notes that Acheson's policies played a large part in winning the Cold War, but argues that he was not himself a Cold Warrior at first. On the contrary, he recognized the validity of Soviet concerns about its security and only hardened his attitude when Soviet demands threatened Turkey. At the same time, Acheson was not a fan of Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalists on Taiwan and hoped that the United States would recognize the Communist regime of Mao Tse-tung. The outbreak of the Korean War, however, altered his views of Communist China. He was one of the few in Washington to defend Alger Hiss when he was accused of being a Communist, and became a favourite target of the McCarthyites, who maintained that Acheson was responsible for "losing" China and for sabotaging General Douglas MacArthur's operations in Korea.

David Landes, author of the classic history of technology, *The Unbound Prometheus*, here retells the story of Western Civilization to explain "why some nations are so rich and some so poor." Landes shows (a) how the West developed a spirit of enterprise and (b) how prosperity and power are fleeting. The states that fostered enterprise gained wealth and power (as did Japan), while the others fell by the wayside. Spain fell because it failed to invest in its own economy, buying whatever it needed with American gold and silver; England because it failed to reinvest in research and development. But Holland rebounded on the wave of the Second Industrial Revolution (electrical technology) after being

edged aside by England in the seventeenth century. In global terms Landes' concern is with the Western wannabes. China saw a powerful central state emerge due to the need for large irrigation projects. This state consolidated a conformist culture that stifled individualism and initiative, and communism continued the pattern. So did the Soviet Union, so that today only the criminals know how to get things done. The key problem areas for Landes are the Islamic world, where fundamentalism suffocates enterprise while the rich elites spend and invest abroad; and the developed West, where complacent democratic societies and bottom-line-oriented corporations prefer consumption and overseas investment, at a cost of jobs, technology, and industry. The answer lies in education, research and development, and selective investment in key sectors; either that,or we learn to use chopsticks – the key to Asian technological dominance in Landes' view.

Sigal's lively and engaging volume argues that the United States is becoming progressively more reluctant to throw huge amounts of resources at international trouble spots, and so will be forced to retreat from its tendency to act unilaterally and instead work in conjunction with other nations. In some ways, he sees the North Korean crisis (a modern-day equivalent to the Cuban missiles crisis) as a turning point. The Americans were determined to use coercion, a strategy that ultimately failed and brought in its train a frightening round of sabre-rattling. The situation was only rescued by Jimmy Carter's personal intervention in striking a deal with the North Korean government (much to the chagrin of some American officials, who had already steered another course). Sigal concludes that this episode, which proved once and for all the utility of cooperation over coercion, must force the United States to alter its approach to international relations. "The American aversion to cooperating in order to prevent proliferation," he writes, "is perverse" (254) Criminalizing proliferation and demonizing so-called rogue states is at best unhelpful and at worst dangerous; the only safe course is to work with them to reduce the threat they pose.

The winner of the 1998 Lionel Gelber Prize was Robert Kinloch Massie's *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid Years* (Toronto: Nan A. Talese / Doubleday).

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Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, **The Origins of the Present Troubles in Northern Ireland** (London: Longman [distributed in Canada by Addison-Wesley], 1997), $33.95 paper, 204 pages, ISBN 0-582-10073-9.

The title of this book is somewhat misleading, for it does not confine itself to just the origins of the Troubles. Instead, it is a broad survey of the conflict which focuses on the role of the British Army from the late 1960s up to the summer of 1996. It is a convoluted subject, but Kennedy-Pipe handles the policy twists and turns with aplomb. She begins with the roots of the current crisis which led to the initial deployment of the British Army, and then traces the frequently changing strategies of the army in Northern Ireland, which have included peacekeeping, containment, and Ulsterization. She also tackles some of the army's more controversial tactics, such as its much debated shoot-to-kill policy (often linked to the SAS) and the use of "supergrasses," or informers. Through it all, she argues that British military policies have had a double-edged impact on the situation in Northern Ireland. Yes, they have provided an important stabilizing peacekeeping element, but at the same time they have prolonged and escalated the violence. This fact is in no small part due to the difficult position in which the army has been placed: as a prisoner of policy decisions which give soldiers very little room to manoeuvre.

Kennedy-Pipe fully admits that the problem in Northern Ireland often seems insoluble, and it is not yet clear to what degree last spring's referendum will clarify things. And her conclusion to the book is not optimistic: until the two Irish nationalisms (Catholic and Protestant) are reconciled, "the British military will continue its historic role of being both part of the Irish problem and yet central to the underwriting of any solution" (180).

CT

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Myles Dungan, **Irish Voices from the Great War** (Dublin: Irish Academic Press [distributed in North America by International Specialized Book Services], 1995), $39.50 US, 219 pages, ISBN 0-7165-2573-9.

When Corporal E. Thomas of the Royal Irish Dragoon Guards fired upon a group of Germans at Mons on 22 August 1914, it was the first shot fired in battle by a soldier of the British Army on the European continent for almost a century. Over the next four years, up to half a million Irishmen (unionists and nationalists) joined up, many eventually serving in one of the three Irish divisions, or the Irish regiments of the old Regular Army. Sadly, two of those divisions (the 16th, originally comprised of nationalists, and the 36th, originally comprised of unionists) virtually ceased to exist during the German spring offensive of March 1918. They took the brunt of the assault and were wiped out within days, spawning a persistent but unfair characterization of Irish troops as fine attackers but poor defenders.

Dungan's book, rather than being an exhaustive record of Ireland's war, focuses on specific engagements which involved the

Irish units, like Gallipoli, Suvla Bay, and the Somme. To do this, he has drawn from some fine primary source materials; particularly notable is the 600-page journal of Captain N.E. Drury of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, which serves as the basis of a fascinating chapter. Of course, it might be argued that the voices of Drury and others are not markedly different than the voices of soldiers from other countries, but in fact Ireland was in a unique position: the coming of war brought a truce between unionists and nationalists, who had been on the verge of civil war over home rule. Indeed, there are echoes of the Canadian situation in the hopes of many Irishmen that the war experience would allow unionists and nationalists to bridge their differences and reach a lasting peace. Again just like Canada, it was not to be, and the war became another obstacle to accord in Irish history. Indeed, many veterans were targeted as spies by the IRA during the postwar years; as Dungan implies, the place of the veterans in the Ireland of the 1920s would make a fascinating study.

Dungan is a television journalist who has written on other aspects of Irish military history. His occasionally sarcastic tone and strange epithets (surely he is the first to refer to generals as "braided neanderthals") are the only weaknesses of this otherwise compelling account.

JFV

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Dave McIntosh, **Terror in the Starboard Seat: 41 Trips Aboard a Mosquito** (Toronto: Stoddart, 1998 [1980]), $22.95, 176 pages, ISBN 0-7737-3089-3.

It is nearly twenty years now since Dave McIntosh's memoir was first published, and it more than holds its own against the many personal recollections which have appeared in print since 1980. McIntosh brought all of his skill as a journalist and raconteur to the story of his operations with a Mosquito intruder squadron, and brought all of his frankness as well. The title is to betaken quite literally: McIntosh fully admits that he lived in an almost constant state of extreme fear while flying, and that occasionally he found himself paralysed with fright. This, of course, gave great delight to his pilot, the American-born Sid Seid, and the passages relating Seid's various "line-shoots" about the crew's operations are some of the funniest in the book. Nevertheless, it was Seid's skill as a pilot (McIntosh, by his own admission, was not the best navigator) that brought the crew safely home from 41 operations.

Dave McIntosh died in 1995 after a long career as a journalist and writer. *Terror in the Starboard Seat* was not his last book, but it is easily his best.

LF

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Steven Weingartner, ed., **A Weekend With the Great War: Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Great War Interconference Seminar** (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Publishing, 1997), $24.95 US paper, 296 pages, ISBN 1-57249-068-3.

The Cantigny Military History seminar brought together the Western Front Association and the Great War Society for a weekend of papers and discussion on a variety of topics. The bulk of the papers presented have been collected here, along with transcripts of the question-and-answer periods which followed each presentation. Some of the foremost scholars of the First World War participated, including Paul Fussell, Tim Travers, Desmond Morton, and Dennis Showalter, and the range of topics is broad and interesting: Richard Spence on master spy Sidney Reilly; Dale Wilson on Patton, Eisenhower, and American armour, Robert Cowley on the "unreal city" of the Western Front, and Viktor Mal'kov on Russian historiography of the war, to name but a few. Philip Markham's investigation of the death of Manfred von Richthofen is an interesting counterpoint to Norman Franks and Allan Bennett's recent book on the subject (see Book Review Supplement #7), while Gerard Demaison's study of French forts around Verdun is a useful introduction to the architecture of war. All in all, the variety of essays and the quality of the contributors makes this a most worthwhile volume.

JFV

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Jeffrey Dennis Stephaniuk, **The Late War: Poems by a Veteran's Son** (privately published [available from the author at Box 37, Norquay, SK, SOA 2VO], 1998), $16.95 paper, 118 pages, ISBN 0-9683424-0-X.

This volume is a product of the 1997 Royal Canadian Legion Pilgrimage of Remembrance, in which the author participated as the representative of Saskatchewan. His father had served with the Princess Louise's Dragoon Guards and the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, and Stephaniuk saw the pilgrimage as a way to understand what his father's generation had experienced during the war. As he writes, poetry seemed a good way to express that understanding: "Through poetry I want to convey an emotion, about men being soldiers, about seniors looking back in time to find meaning in the years of their youth, and about being a young Canadian free to go places impossible for the Canadian soldiers to visit in safety." The poetry itself can be roughly situated in the modernist tradition; a stanza from "Observation Point," one of the better poems, is representative: "An infantryman stumbles / and falls, a crumble of clothes / A last word / not always possible." It is worth mentioning that the poet shares a modernist disdain for punctuation, which in

this case makes some of the verse rather difficult to follow.

Nevertheless, what it lacks in skill of execution it makes up for in depth of feeling. Stephaniuk was obviously very moved by the pilgrimage, and by the desire to come to terms with his father's past. He is to be commended for sharing the products of his labour with a wider audience.

JFV

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James C. Lovelace, **The Flip Side of the Air War** (privately published [available from the author at #203-5770 Spring Garden Road, Halifax, NS, B3H 4J8], 1996), $12.00 paper, 166 pages, ISBN 0-9681077-0-2.

Jim Lovelace joined the RCAF in Halifax on 17 June 1940, on his third attempt, and became one of the first Canadian WOp/AGs [Wireless Operator / Air Gunner] to serve on operations over Europe. His memoir of his time in and out of combat is better in its parts than in the whole. It is a gripping story of how a Cape Bretoner survived two tours in Wellingtons, those tough, two-engined bombers. The writer captures well the chaos of the early days as Canada geared up for war, and the loneliness of Canadians in the RAF, made worse by the frosty reception the "colonials" received from the pukka types.

Lovelace tells some hilarious tales about culture conflict between Canadian airmen and British bullies. He describes his first trip with 103 Squadron of Bomber Command, and his last one with 150 Squadron, when he survived the crash of his Wimpy and won the DFC. WOp/AGs played a vital role in the ZOO [Zone of Operations], standing in the astrodome directing the pilot and the gunners when attacked by fighters. Lovelace's team trained hard and worked well together. And so they survived – with some luck on their side.

The writer gives many revealing insights into his colleagues and adds some curious footnotes to the history of the Second World War. In the winter of 1942, Lovelace served with 458 (RAAF) Squadron on a supply mission to North Africa. He returned to Britain via West Africa, losing his clothes and his identification papers, and thereby disappearing from RAF records. Lovelace ended his war service as a squadron leader at the RCAF Selection Board in Bournemouth. The book has a striking cover, but a competent editor would have made it easier to read. Nevertheless, it's a hard book to put down once you begin reading it, offering a unique record of a brave airman who beats the odds of survival in Bomber Command.

JL

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Ronald J. Drez, ed., **Voices of D-Day: The Story of the Allied Invasion Told by Those Who Were There** (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), $24.95 US, 312 pages,ISBN 0-8071-1902-4.

This book comes from the Eisenhower Center's D-Day Project at the University of New Orleans. In 1983, historians Stephen E. Ambrose and Ronald J. Drez began collecting interviews from men who had landed on the Normandy beaches. It is not an exaggeration to say that their work of oral history – which forms the core of this book – has changed forever the way we will look at 6 June 1944.

Editor Drez introduces us to the men of D-Day in the opening chapter; they briefly explain why they enlisted, how they trained, and how they steeled themselves for the invasion. Then comes the day, and the chapters well reflect the invasion sequence. The airborne troops and airmen tell their stories first; then Drez guides his readers across the beaches, chapter by chapter, from Utah to Sword.

Drez provides some insightful, though brief, commentary but he does not interfere with the remarkable stories the men relate. Here is the chaos of the day, the sounds, the horrific scenes, the remarkable courage. Occasionally, Drez inserts a German voice to provide a grim perspective from the pillboxes on shore.

As would be expected, this is mainly an American view of D-Day. Canadian readers may be relieved to find a chapter on "Gold and Juno Beaches" but it is by far the shortest of the book. A few Canadian interviews are supplemented by Ross Munro's memoirs and some War Diary entries from the Royal Winnipeg Rifles. Considering that 3rd Canadian Infantry Division was one of six divisions that went ashore, the chapter smacks of tokenism.

This is still an excellent book. It is revealing that so much material for the film *Saving Private Ryan* was gleaned from the oral history collection that Ronald Drez helped organize here so well. The soldier cannot tell us everything about that remarkable day, but he can relate something of how ordinary men endured that extraordinary challenge.

GH

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Jerry E. Strahan, **Andrew Jackson Higgins and the Boats That Won World War II** (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), $29.95 US, 382 pages, ISBN 0-8071-1903-2.

John A. Hutchinson, **Bluejacket** (New York: Vantage Press, 1995), $29.95 US, 628 pages, ISBN 0-533-11182-X.

With the partial exception of the German-Soviet front, the Second World War was a conflict in which command of the sea was paramount. Even the air war in the European and Pacific theatres could not have been fought without the cargo vessels and their escorts bringing the shorter-ranged fighters and medium bombers to their designated combat areas (the four-engined "heavies" could usually get

there under their own power). Above all, soldiers and marines had to be landed on hostile shores and their beachheads expanded through exploitation of local command of the sea.

While the big ships guarded the convoys and supported the landings, it was the multitude of landing craft – with their flimsy hulls of plywood and steel – which made it possible for the Allied armies to meet their Axis enemies and defeat them on land. More than anyone else, New Orleans entrepreneur Andrew Jackson Higgins was responsible for the design and production of those specialized vessels which could run up on enemy shores and pierce the outer walls of the German and Japanese defences. Jerry Strahan has performed a long overdue service in showing us just how important were Higgins' boats to ultimate victory in the war. He deals not just with the numbers – Higgins' factories produced more than 20,000 landing craft and PT boats for the Allies – but also goes into the broader themes of design and development problems and the political struggles over war finance and procurement.

Andrew Jackson Higgins is also a fine piece of business history: Higgins' innovations in production techniques, his relations with his labour force, and his problems with company financing are treated in detail. Sadly, by the 1950s Higgins Industries Inc. fell victim to bad business decisions, a lack of customers, and uncertain financing, and Andrew Higgins' contribution to the war effort was forgotten. Strahan's book is a worthy memorial to someone who, as an organizer of war production, ranks with Henry Kaiser or Lord Beaverbrook.

One American sailor who didn't ride into battle in a Higgins boat was Radioman First Class John A. Hutchinson. His book *Bluejacket* is a lengthy, rambling memoir of his service in the Pacific war aboard battleships and destroyers. At over 600 pages, it could have used the services of a strong-willed editor. It is, nevertheless, an entertaining personal account (incorporating many unfamiliar paintings, drawings, and photographs) of the war from Guadalcanal to Okinawa, crammed with information on the duties and hardships of navy life away from "officer country."

GDK

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Dianne Graves, **A Crown of Life: The World of John McCrae** (St. Catharines: Vanwell Publishing, 1997), $35.00, 300 pages, ISBN 1-55068-091-9.

John McCrae is one of the most appealing characters of early twentieth-century Canada. A doctor, poet, soldier, and teacher, he was very popular in Montreal society for his engaging personality and great wit. It is somewhat surprising, then, that McCrae has until now been the subject of only two slim and unsatisfactory biographies, neither of which adequately covers the life of the man. Even *A Crown of Life*, admirable though it may be, does not fully fill the gap.

Graves is adamant that her book does not constitute a biography of McCrae, but rather is an attempt to place his life in the context of its time. As a result, the book brings in some of the other leading characters of the era, including Rudyard Kipling, Sir William Osler, Stephen Leacock, and Leo Amery, and also describes the significant events which unfolded during McCrae's lifetime. This fact does make for some less than graceful segues (for example, "As the Canadian winter held the country in its customary icy grip, across the sea in Portsmouth dockyard, work had been proceeding at record pace to build the first of Admiral Jacky Fisher's new ships."). Still, it is a well researched book, written from a wide range of McCrae's personal papers held in public and private collections. Graves obviously has deep regard for her subject, and has done a wonderful job of recreating the milieu in which he moved.

Earlier biographies of John McCrae by Sir Andrew Macphail and John Prescott were inadequate in a variety of ways, and Graves' book surpasses them both in scope and detail. Nevertheless, a full biography of McCrae remains to be written, one which critically assesses his contribution to the medical profession, his poetry, and his work in treating wounded soldiers.

JFV

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Ernest F. Motton and Mary Ann Motton, **"Right On, You Got the Elbow Out!": Wartime Memories of the RCAF** (Toronto: Natural Heritage / Natural History, 1990), $12.95 paper, 96 pages, ISBN 0-920474-63-2.

There is no question that this could have been a very interesting book. The late Ernest Motton was a Radio Telephone Operator with 143 Wing RCAF in northwest Europe, and remained with the occupation forces in Germany until late 1945. These experiences could have provided a window into a little known but immensely important job in the air force. However, although there are many good anecdotes about Motton's off-duty activities, there is very little about his actual responsibilities as an RTO. It is never made clear exactly what an RTO did, how his duties were crucial in the running of the wing, or how those duties changed after VE-Day. Unfortunately, there are also a lot of factual errors which weaken the book. On a more positive note, there are some lovely photos and the book has very high production values. But one is left with the feeling that a more knowledgeable interviewer might have coaxed a more substantial account out of Motton.

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Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, **The Generals' War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf** (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), $36.95, 551 pages, ISBN 0-316-32172-9).

This account of the 1990-91 Gulf War should be required reading for all students of contemporary warfare. Relying heavily on interviews with senior officials, it examines in detail the personalities, structures, and doctrines that led to Coalition victory, especially the conduct of military operations by H. Norman Schwarzkopf's United States Central Command (CENTCOM). The authors concede the obvious, that Operation Desert Storm was a resounding success, but they qualify it in important ways.

It is not mere carping. *The Generals' War* makes a convincing case that there were serious problems on the allied side. One was the difficulty of coordinating multiple military planning cells in Saudi Arabia and the United States, many of which acted as de facto command staffs for senior officials. Another was Schwarzkopf's tendency to let subordinates plan their operations more or less independently. A third was the allies' failure to establish clear objectives for the cessation of hostilities. US officials were adamant early in the war that the destruction of Iraq's elite Republican Guard was the offensive's primary military objective, but bomb damage assessment was ambiguous enough for commanders, intelligence agencies, and politicians to draw different conclusions. While analysts pored over the data, more than half the Republican Guard skipped over the Euphrates to fight another day.

CENTCOM's greatest military error was permitting the Marine divisions opposite Kuwait to attack before the Army's VII and XVIII Corps launched their sweeping offensive in the west, an unfortunate result, the authors contend, of Schwarzkopf's deliberately loose style of leadership. Rather than fixing the Iraqis in Kuwait, as CENTCOM had intended, the Marines routed the badly mauled Iraqis, driving them north and out of the envelopment area before the encircling left hook had even commenced. Schwarzkopf moved up the Army's start time, but the fleeing Iraqis had a valuable head start and the Army's senior generals were not sufficiently aggressive to make up for lost time. The retreating Iraqi formations might still have been caught if television images of the "Highway of Death" had not created the impression that the victorious Allies were "piling on," in the words of Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Almost immediately, pressure built in Washington for a quick, clean end to the fighting so the Army's final push never materialized. As Coalition guns fell silent, thousands of Iraqi troops and hundreds of armoured vehicles streamed north across their front. Within days, they were busy pounding anti-Hussein rebels, restoring the regime George Bush once claimed was more evil than Adolf Hitler's.

This provocative, accessible volume will remain a standard text on the Gulf War for years to come. Its emphasis on leadership, bureaucratic politics, training, and doctrine is a welcome corrective to the techno-fixation that followed the campaign. All revisionist medicine should taste so sweet.

DFO

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Chester E. Baker, **Doughboy's Diary** (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 1998), $19.95 US, 138 pages, ISBN 1-57249-100-0.

Like many Americans in 1916, Chester Baker (or Zeb, as he was known in the army) was motivated to enlist by Pancho Villa's raid into the southern United States. On 7 July 1916, Baker and 122 other recruits from around Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, entrained for El Paso, Texas, where they spent eight months doing a variety of menial military duties but never once catching a glimpse of Villa. Returning to Pennsylvania in February 1917, they were just in time to be shipped overseas when the United States entered the war. Baker's unit, as part of the 28th (Pennsylvania) Division, entered the lines in July 1918 near Chateau-Thierry and fought for the remainder of the war, although Baker himself missed the unit's last action; taken ill, first with fever and then with the mumps, he greeted the 11th of November from a French hospital bed.

Baker recorded his memoirs in 1979, at the age of 86 because he was "obsessed with telling what I remember of my fallen comrades." When he died in 1980, only two other veterans of his company survived him. Baker obviously had very clear memories of the men with whom he served; there are many interesting characters who emerge from the pages of this book, and he was obviously deeply affected by the friends he made (and lost) during the Great War. The book's one weakness is the absence of maps; one is often forced to refer to other reference works to follow the movements of Baker's unit. Still, for its battle accounts and for its description of the problems faced by American units as they waited in France to be returned home (Baker's regiment did not leave France until April 1919), *Doughboy's Diary* is a very good read.

JFV

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Greig Stewart, **Arrow Through the Heart: The Life and Times of Crawford Gordon and the Avro Arrow** (Whitby: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1998), $29.99, 240 pages, ISBN 0-07-560102-8.

Crawford Gordon was "a hard hitting blunt businessman" – it is typical of Greig Stewart's book that the best insight into Crawford

Gordon comes from a *Saturday Night* article – who gained fame through his wartime association with C.D. Howe and the Avro Arrow. Whether Gordon actually did anything to deserve this attention remains a mystery, even after reading this book.

Crawford Gordon was born 26 December 1914, some two years after his mother survived the sinking of the *Titanic* and married banker Crawford Gordon Sr. After spending his early childhood in Jamaica, our Crawford enrolled in Appleby College, an elite prep school near Toronto. He did well in school, setting the tone for his career: doing whatever the situation required. In 1931 Crawford moved to Montreal to attend McGill University, where he majored in Commerce and minored in carousing with his Zeta Psi frat brothers (which also set the tone for his later career). In 1942 Gordon joined C.D. Howe's team in Ottawa, where his mentor's reputation as a no-nonsense decision maker inspired him. Gordon returned to industry briefly, then turned to Howe again, who appointed him to run A.V. Roe. There "Canada's leading industrialist" ran the Arrow straight into the ground, and himself as well. Like other once-great businessmen Gordon tried to drink and gamble his way to the top, and failed. He died a broken man in New York on 26 January 1967, one month after his 52nd birthday.

Although Greig Stewart has written a previous book on the Arrow, this biography of the man who destroyed the Arrow is remarkably thin on Gordon's time at A.V. Roe – although we do learn eventually that while the Arrow was running into problems at Malton Gordon was drying out at Mayo. The book is based on interviews, letters, published speeches, and press clippings. The result is not so much a biography as an extended gossip column; we learn more about Crawford's drinking habits – drinking was his habit – than about whatever made him "Canada's leading industrialist." The titbits and quotes are no substitute for archival research on the problems associated with A.V. Roe and the Arrow which were apparent long before Sputnik preempted the maiden launch of the Arrow on 4 October 1957. Gordon's presence made a difficult situation impossible. We learn a lot about Gordon's difficult side in this book, but very little on why such a difficult man was in his position in the first place.

JW

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Kenneth K. Blyth, **Cradle Crew, Royal Canadian Air Force, World War II** (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1997), $19.95 US paper, 197 pages, ISBN0-89745-217-8.

The title of this book is derived from the nickname given to the seven men who flew Halifax EQ-J for Johnny with 408 Squadron RCAF; because their average age was only a little over 18 years, it seemed an apt moniker. They flew their first operation as a crew on 14 February 1945, when they targetted the German industrial city of Chemnitz; their 17th and last op came on 31 March 1945. The daylight raid on submarine pens at Hamburg should have been "a piece of cake," according to Blyth, but they had to switch aircraft not once but twice because of mechanical problems. Even their third aircraft was experiencing mechanical problems but Blyth elected to press on and attempt to catch up with the bomber stream. It was a fateful decision. The master bomber was just leaving the target area when Blyth's Halifax arrived, so they were left in the unenviable position of having to bomb alone. The outcome was almost inevitable: their aircraft had the undivided attention of German fighters, and shortly after closing the bomb-bay doors the Hallie was set alight by an Me-262. All seven crew members escaped, only to be captured and spend the last few weeks of the war as POWs.

Blyth writes candidly and lucidly of his experiences in the RCAF. He admits that his yarns have been embellished over time, but they do not appear so; there is little in the book that bears the hallmarks of being told one too many times. The book's major weakness is its organization: the first dozen or so chapters alternate between training and captivity, a disorienting characteristic that makes the early parts rather difficult to follow. Readers would be advised to read the even-numbered chapters first, and then go back to the odd-numbered chapters! Still, it is a very interesting memoir written from someone who experienced the dying days of the strategic bombing campaign.

JFV

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William R. Westlake, **For Heroism or Extraordinary Achievement While Participating in Aerial Flight: The American Distinguished Flying Cross Awarded to United Kingdom and Commonwealth Forces for the Korean War** (privately published [available from the author at 1444 West La Jolla Drive, Tempe, Arizona, USA, 85282-4457], 1997), $25.00 US paper, 128 pages, ISBN 0-9641533-5-1.

In 1995, William Westlake published a register of the British and Commonwealth soldiers who were awarded the American Bronze Star during the Korean War. Now, he has followed up that very valuable research guide with this directory of recipients of the American DFC. One hundred and ten DFCs were awarded to British and Commonwealth servicemen, including 13 to Canadians (5 men from the Canadian Army, one from the Royal Canadian Navy, and seven from the Royal Canadian Air Force). Among the Canadian winners are

such well known names as Ernie Glover (the only Commonwealth pilot to shoot down three MiG-15s) and Omer Levesque (the first Commonwealth pilot to shoot down a MiG-15), as well as lesser known heroes like Lieutenant Joseph J. MacBrien, the only member of a Commonwealth naval force to receive the DFC, awarded for an attack on Pukchong on 1 February 1953. Another interesting story concerns Captain J.H. Howard of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, who was awarded the DFC on 16 February 1952 but could not officially accept it because Canadian regulations prevented servicemen from accepting more than one foreign decoration (Howard had already been awarded the United States' Air Medal).

Westlake has included the citation for each award (where available), as well as photographs of many of the recipients and of the aircraft they flew. Well organized and handsomely produced, the book is an extremely handy reference guide to students of the Korean War.

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Eric Hammel, **Air War Europa: America's Air War Against Germany and North Africa, 1942-1945** (Pacifica, CA: Pacifica Press, 1994), $19.95 US paper, 571 pages, ISBN 0-935553-25-8.

Eric Hammel, **Air War Pacific: America's Air War Against Japan in East Asia and the Pacific, 1941-1945** (Pacifica, CA: Pacifica Press, 1998), $59.95 US, 848 pages, ISBN 0-935553-26-6.

At last we have a set of reference works to place alongside the Bomber Command War Diaries which put any aspect of the United States' air war effort at one's fingertips. These excellent reference books provide a day-by-day account of aerial operations, with each day divided into smaller geographic areas. The detail is sparse, but it is more than enough to give a clear idea of the operations undertaken. Here, for example, is the entry for 27 July 1945:

"China: Thirteen 341st Medium Bombardment Group B-25s and more than 50 14th Air Force fighter-bombers attack road, rail, and river traffic throughout northern French Indochina and southern and eastern China. Chinese Army ground forces recapture Tanchuk Airdrome.

"East Indies: XIII Bomber Command B-24s attack Borneo/ Pontianak Airdrome.

"Japan: More than 60 FEAF B-24s attack marshalling yards at Kagoshima, and their 50 P-51 escorts attack numerous targets of opportunity in the Kagoshima area; and more than 150 FEAF P-47s attack bridges, a tunnel, a power plant, and numerous industrial and communications targets across Kyushu. Lt. Cleveland L. Null, a VF-16 F6F pilot, achieves ace status when he downs three Ki-84s over Ozuki at 0845 hours. During the night of June 27-28, 24 504th Very Heavy Bombardment Group B-29s sow mines in Shimonoseki Strait, Fukawa Bay, and off four port cities."

Both volumes are very user-friendly, each having an excellent comprehensive index (running to well over 100 pages in the Pacific volume) which makes it easy to find individuals, units, air bases, and targets. Good maps are provided, as well as short but serviceable bibliographies. Hammel has also written good introductory narratives to set the chronologies into context.

LF

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Frances H. Early, **A World Without War: How U.S. Feminists and Pacifists Resisted World War I** (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997), $22.95 US paper, 265 pages, ISBN 0-8156-2764-5.

Overshadowed by its more well known relative, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Bureau of Legal Advice slipped into obscurity after 3 years of providing assistance to conscientious objectors, enemy aliens, socialists, and others who were deemed to be enemies of the American war effort. From 1917 to 1920, the Bureau and its leading lights, Frances Witherspoon, Tracy Mygatt, and Charles Recht, toiled on a shoe-string budget and under the watchful eye of the government to ensure the survival of civil rights in wartime. In this wonderfully researched book, Early tells their story with sympathy and grace. She adeptly recreates both the milieu in which they worked and the difficulties they faced as near pariahs in their own society, and carefully charts their efforts to use the checks and balances of a democratic state to mitigate its worst anti-democratic excesses. In the end, she concludes that the Bureau made a real difference, not simply to the nascent American peace movement but to the lives of the men and women who came to it for help.

Because of the quality of the research, it is to be regretted that Early did not engage some of the more general questions her book raises. For example, she accepts Charles Recht's glib assertion that the First World War was "strictly a male affair" rather than testing its validity. Certainly there was a gendered division of roles, but it is difficult to argue that there were separate male and female responses to the war. We shall never know how many young men were bullied into enlisting by a pack of society matrons brandishing white feathers, but we do know from contemporary literature that women were every bit as hawkish and bloodthirsty as men when it came to prosecuting the war against the Kaiser. Furthermore, Early is entirely justified in praising these committed idealists in fighting for peace and freedom, but her view of those people who held opposing views is somewhat one-dimensional. They certainly tended

towards super-patriotism, but they, too, firmly believed that they were fighting for peace and freedom, and to rid the world of militarism. Even 80 years after the event, it is impossible to say which side was misguided.

JFV

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Paul F. Braim, **The Test of Battle: The American Expeditionary Forces in the Meuse-Argonne Campaign** (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Books, 1998), $35.00 US, 247 pages, ISBN 1-57249-085-3.

Since 1918, one of the problems which has bedevilled military historians is the impact of the American entry into the war. What role did the AEF play in the eventual defeat of Germany? Was it really the weight of American numbers which finally turned the tide in the Allies' favour? Was the Meuse-Argonne campaign, as commanders and staff of the AEF believed, the most decisive campaign in the war? These are the questions that Braim tries to answer in this detailed and workmanlike account which brings a refreshing objectivity to a debate which has seen precious little of that.

Braim concludes that the AEF was hampered by some serious flaws when it went into action on the Western Front. Communications and artillery coordination were both lacking. Training had been woefully inadequate, so many doughboys were ill-equipped to face the modern battlefield. Leadership at various levels was also suspect, particularly in that Pershing adhered to an outdated and dangerous (at least in the context of the Western Front) tactical doctrine. Rather than heed the lessons which had been painfully learned in earlier campaigns (by the time the AEF went into action on the Meuse-Argonne, the Canadians and Australians had essentially solved the tactical conundrum of the Western Front), AEF commanders returned to the non-tactic of hurling tens of thousands of troops against heavy defences in a narrow corridor. The results were the same as they had been on the Somme or at Passchendaele: ground was gained, but only at a terrible cost.

In the end, Braim makes a convincing case that the Meuse-Argonne was an important campaign, but certainly not a decisive one. Furthermore, he argues that had the war continued into 1919, then the Americans could have claimed that their intervention was responsible for the Allied victory. However, the war ended before it was possible to make that claim. In the end, the US military intervention was significant but it was hardly the war-winner that many polemicists have claimed it was.

JFV

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James S. Corum, **The Luftwaffe: Creating the Operational Air War, 1918-1940** (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1997), $39.95 US, 378 pages, ISBN 0-7006-0836-2.

It has long been argued that the German Luftwaffe of the Second World War lacked clear strategic goals, and thus did not effectively utilize long-range heavy bombers in the manner of the American and British air forces. James Corum makes a strong case for a sharply contrasting perspective. Strongly researched in Luftwaffe documents in the United States and Germany, as well as numerous German primary (interview) and secondary sources, Corum offers an extensively detailed analysis of the ideas and practices of aerial operational concepts as generated and adopted by Germany's air force, beginning with the lessons of Great War, through lean times as a clandestine organization in the late 1920s (after being banned in the Versailles Treaty), to the days as the darling service of the Third Reich, especially after its official recognition as an arm of the military in 1935. Corum strafes the popular myths that have presented the Luftwaffe command as inept, countering instead, through an analysis of their extensive training programme, that it was both highly trained and intelligent, manned by veterans, staff-trained officers, and the best of Germany's young men. In the interwar era, Hermann Göring had little say in the strategic and tactical planning of the force.

Another armour-piercing salvo is fired through the belief that Luftwaffe tactics were based upon terror bombing, as "invented" by the Condor Legion at Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. The number of casualties and the costs of damage have been greatly exaggerated. What the Spanish experience really taught the Luftwaffe was that bombers were vulnerable to fighters, and that bombing civilians actually raised the morale of those being targeted! Instead, the force practiced close support and poor weather flying.

The Germans learned from their experiences, and experimented where contemporary theory, such as the mass-bombing concepts of Italian Guilio Douhet (as adopted by the Allies), was wanting. Despite a failure to create a strong naval branch of the service (little is said about big bombers), in the first year of the Second World War "their conception of a future air war and the training and equipment required for such a war was far more accurate than their opponents' air power vision" (287). It was not overwhelming numbers that spelled the early success of the Luftwaffe, but training, planning, experience, and the willingness to experiment (producing innovations such as paratroops). German bombers failed to win the daylight encounters of the Battle of Britain not because the Heinkels and Junkers were at fault, but because they lacked suitable long-range escort. The showing was remarkable despite the fact that the island nation was not even considered a target until 1938 (256), and that pilots were

exhausted from continuous action in Poland and the Low Countries (283)!

In the final sweep, both the strategy and tactics of this controversial book are sound, well escorted, discernable, and valuable to novice historian and "ace" theorist alike. Corum's effort is indeed a successful sortie.

SPS

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Hubert C. Johnson, **Breakthrough: Tactics, Technology, and the Search for Victory on the Western Front in World War I** (Novato: Presidio, 1994), $24.95 US, 322 pages, ISBN 0-89141-505-X.

Since the late 1980s there have been a number of good analyses of the war on the Western Front, particularly in the work of Tim Travers, who focused primarily on high command, technology, and tactics during the final stages of the war. Hubert C. Johnson takes a similar approach, but concentrates on the entire war. While claiming that he was unable to see Travers' *How the War was Won* (1992) before the publication of his own book, Johnson has admirably filled a gap in the chronology by addressing the subject throughout the war. Like Travers, Johnson is not overly harsh on the high commanders. Using a blend of First World War official documents and the diaries and memoirs of those in the "sharp end," Johnson presents a year by year account of tactical changes and technological innovations. First World War tactics can be delineated into a number of stages: the open warfare of 1914; stalemated trench warfare of 1915-16 (dominated by artillery); technological specialization and the German perfection of defense in 1917; and the combined arms open warfare tactics from Cambrai (1917) to the close of the war, including the primacy of supply to achieve and sustain a breakthrough.

Luck, skill, technology derived from tactical changes, arms cooperation, enough mid-ranking officers thinking flexibly, and other intangibles (such as politics) contributed to the final Allied success in 1918. In the interwar years only the German army learned the lessons, while the British re-instituted cavalry and the French turned to a 1915 mind-set and built the static defensive line of Maginot. It would not bode well for the Allies in 1939-42.

The strength the book lies in comparative analysis of the Allies (including the Americans) and the Central Powers. The reader is able to "look down" upon a battle and see how it is fought, a luxury that a few rickety observation craft could not provide the high command. Maps and photographs help to illustrate the picture even more clearly. A weakness of the book is over- repetition of points, and only a thin wiring of notations. Nonetheless, with Travers, Rawling, Schrieber, and others, Johnson has brought the analysis of tactics on the Western Front to near completion. What is now needed is work on the Eastern Front, that anomaly of sustained open warfare.

SPS

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David Horner, **General Vasey's War** (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press [distributed in North America by Paul & Company], 1996), $24.95 US paper, 364 pages, ISBN 0-522-84690-4.

William B. Breuer, **MacArthur's Undercover War: Spies, Saboteurs, Guerrillas, and Secret Missions** (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, 1995), $34.95, 257 pages, ISBN 0-571-11458-8.

Australian military history in the twentieth century shares a certain similarity with that of Canada. In both World Wars, Australian and Canadian commanders served under British senior officers, and their troops in communiques and in the press were usually subsumed in the blanket description "British forces." The Aussies in World War II had another strike against them: not only did they have to serve under British generals of varying quality, but they achieved their greatest victories under the American supremo, Douglas MacArthur, who was frequently suspicious about their military competence when he wasn't blatantly downplaying their achievements.

In the past few years, Australians have been turning out excellent biographies of the soldiers who halted the Japanese advance in the South-West Pacific, and spearheaded the Allied campaigns in New Guinea against an enemy, a terrain, and a climate which gave the huge island the well merited description of "Green Hell." While public attention, particularly in the United States, was fixed on the epic naval battles and the US Marines' ground campaign at Guadalcanal,a largely Australian force was the first to defeat a Japanese amphibious landing (at Milne Bay in eastern New Guinea), while simultaneously turning back their attempt to capture the key Allied base at Port Moresby on the island's southern coast. The Australian counter-attack along the Kokoda Track, and their hard-won victories at Gona and Sanananda, were the finest achievement of George Vasey, one of the best soldiers to emerge from the Royal Military College at Duntroon.

General Vasey's War, written by David Horner, the dean of Australia's military historians, traces Vasey's career from his service as an artillery officer in World War I, through peacetime postings in Australia and India, to his outstanding contributions in World War II. Vasey distinguished himself commanding Australian troops in the Middle East, and in the disastrous campaigns in Greece and Crete, before returning to Australia in 1941 to help organize the defence of an almost defenceless country. From October 1942

onward, Vasey commanded the 7th Division and played a leading part in the Allied campaigns to drive the Japanese from northern New Guinea. By 1944, Vasey was under consideration to replace Sir Thomas Blamey as Commander-in-Chief. Tragically, he died in an air accident in Northern Queensland in March 1944.

Horner's biography is not a simple "life and times." Much of the book is devoted to Vasey's correspondence with his wife, and the letters provide us with an unusually intimate portrait of a man as well as a professional soldier, someone who could maintain his sense of proportion even when dealing with the erratic Blamey and the vain MacArthur ("the great white chief" in Vasey's description). *General Vasey's War* is essential reading for anyone who still thinks that the New Guinea campaign was MacArthur's, Eichelberger's or Kenney's. As great as the accomplishments of these American commanders and their soldiers and airmen were, the fact remains that until 1944, the majority of the fighting troops and many of the aircrew in the Green Hell of New Guinea were Australians.

Apart from their role as Coastwatchers in the Solomon Islands and the Bismarck Archipelago, Australians are under-represented in William Breuer's *MacArthur's Undercover War*, a readable, popular account of clandestine military operations in the South-West Pacific and the Philippines. The book is aimed, naturally enough, at an American readership and makes no attempt at a comprehensive, balanced account of Allied undercover operations in the Pacific Theatre. Readers looking for scholarly treatments of the subject should consult Edward J. Drea's *MacArthur's Ultra* and Alan Powell's *War by Stealth*.

GDK

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R. Bruce Porter with Eric Hammel, **Ace!: A Marine Night-Fighter Pilot in World War II** (Pacifica, CA: Pacifica Press, 1995), $19.95 US paper, 279 pages, ISBN 0-935553-31-2.

In this fascinating memoir, Porter describes what must be the ultimate terror for a pilot: landing a heavy and high-powered fighter aircraft on the pitching deck of an aircraft carrier in total darkness. "I found myself unforgivably apprehensive for the first time in my flying career," he writes of his first night launch and landing. "The prospect of first combat had not come as close to terrorizing me as this flight." Nevertheless, Porter did his circuit, picked the dim shape of the carrier out of the darkness, located the controller's coloured paddles, and plopped the Hellcat on the deck for a perfect landing.

Porter also introduces any interesting irony to the story. Despite having become an ace while flying night Hellcats from Okinawa, he questions the whole point of the Marine Corps' night-flying programme. Porter himself trained intensively for 14 months to learn the craft of a night-fighter pilot, yet all that training netted him only two kills while on night-fighter duties; many of his squadron pilots went through the same training without achieving a single aerial victory. This lack of success had nothing to do with the pilots' skill; there simply were not that many Japanese aircraft operating at night around the home islands. For example, from 12 May 1945 until the end of the war, Porter flew many night missions but was vectored onto enemy aircraft on only two occasions; both times he shot down the bogey. It is this infrequency of contact with the enemy which moved Porter to reconsider the usefulness of the night-fighter programme.

There is much more to Porter's story than night-fighter operations, however. He joined the Marine Corps in January 1940, trained on Wildcats, and flew Corsairs in the Solomon Islands (where he picked up his first kills). He had a long and varied career in the Pacific theatre, and describes his experiences with skill and verve.

CT

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Robert E. Denney, **Civil War Medicine: Care and Comfort of the Wounded** (New York: Sterling Publishing [distributed in Canada by Canadian Manda Group], 1995), $27.95 paper, 400 pages, ISBN 0-8069-0880-7.

What sustains men in battle? Military historians have suggested various responses, but one must certainly include the medical services in such a discussion. In *Civil War Medicine: Care and Comfort of the Wounded*, Robert E. Denney takes us deep into the American Civil War. Well known battles such as Antietam, Gettysburg, and Sherman's March to the Sea come alive, but this time through the perspective of the medical men and women who were also present during these now legendary events. Denney transports the reader to a world before antiseptics and a time when disease killed more men than wounds. In what is largely an anthology of excerpts from letters, diaries, and Reports of the US Sanitary Commission, we learn how the war both affected and was affected by the medical services as the days, months, and years unfolded. Indeed, the book reads much like a personal diary, with events arranged chronologically, at times with some dates missing. Although it contains excerpts from the diaries and letters of such prominent medical figures as Jonathan Letterman, Clara Barton, "Mother" Mary Ann Bickerdyke, and Louisa May Alcott, the stories and experiences of countless other less well known men and women are documented as well. *Civil War Medicine: Care and Comfort of the Wounded* is not a book for the squeamish. Graphic accounts of

wounds abound, yet they nonetheless remind the general reader and the scholar of the true horrors of war. That may be the most important medicine of all.

AVL

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Norman Hillmer, Robert Bothwell, Roger Sarty, Claude Beauregard, eds., **A Country of Limitations: Canada and the World in 1939** (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War [available from 22 Downing St., Ottawa, ON, K1S 2W1], 1996), $15.00 paper, 295 pages, ISBN 0-660-59970-8.

These papers, originally presented at a conference convened in Elora, Ontario, in November 1989, examine a year which the editors characterize as "a junction, linking peace and war, domestic and foreign, an unhappy recent past with an uncertain future." The collection first lays out the international context, and then examines the country through studies of the regions and the various arms of the government. Doug Owram and Paul Marsden argue that, in terms of the bureaucracy and economic planning, Canada was ill-prepared for the challenge that lay ahead. Angelika Sauer turns to Mackenzie King, interpreting his machinations in the House of Commons in September 1939 as "the last triumph…of Victorian liberalism over the modern notion of national interest." Roger Sarty also writes of the Prime Minister, suggesting that "he proved to be a more committed proponent of military expansion than anyone had suspected." The regional studies are just as strong as these examinations of central government policy. Particularly interesting is Terry Copp's paper on Ontario on the eve of war which contends that there was broad public support for a war which many people believed was just and necessary. Despite the fact that Copp's position was distinctly unpopular and controversial at the time, his conclusions have since been supported by further studies.

Subsequent conferences were convened annually, on the 50th anniversary of each year of the Second World War. Perhaps one day those papers will also appear in print.

DR

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Carman Miller, **Painting the Map Red: Canada and the South African War,1899-1902** (Ottawa and Montreal: Canadian War Museum and McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998 [1993]), $22.95 paper, 541 pages, ISBN 0-7735-1750-2.

According to Carman Miller, Canada's participation in the South African War has been neglected by historians. Indeed, his book begins with a poignant reflection from Canadian author Margaret Atwood on the statues from the war, wondering whether anyone even notices them anymore. Yet, from 1899-1902, the experience of Canadians both at home and abroad was bound up tightly with the South African War.

Miller traces the experience of the over 7000 citizen soldiers from mobilization in Canada to their engagements in South Africa and eventual return home. However, he also clears up some misconceptions. Miller points out that francophones were not the only Canadians to voice opposition to the war. Indeed, several groups in English Canada took issue with imperialism and the war as well. Miller also refutes the conspiracy theory which contends that the Laurier government went to war because of the actions of Lord Minto, E.T.H. Hutton and Joseph Chamberlain. In the end, Miller argues, the Canadian government "capitulated to the demands of pro-war advocates." Especially well done in this book are the descriptions of life aboard the troop ships during the passage to South Africa, as well as the accounts of the unsanitary conditions in the camps. In a war in which disease was a greater threat to life than rifle wounds, Miller justifiably includes the role of the medical services. While his descriptions of the routines of army life are of great interest to the general reader, Miller's intensely detailed battle accounts and accompanying maps are a battle enthusiast's dream. Combined with some rare photographs of our troops at war, Miller leaves very little to the imagination in his comprehensive, yet accessible account. Perhaps as we approach the one hundred year anniversary of the war, Canadians will take more interest in this nation's other forgotten war.

AVL

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Lieutenant-Colonel E.G. de Domenico, **Land of a Million Elephants: Memoirs of a Canadian Peacekeeper** (Burnstown, ON: General Store Publishing, 1997), $18.95 paper, 131 pages, ISBN 1-896182-80-1.

Now that peacekeeping operations have started to occupy the interests of historians and writers, it is high time that we hear more from the peacekeepers themselves. This volume fits the bill, because it provides an excellent personal window into one of Canada's earliest peacekeeping operations. De Domenico served with the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Laos, and writes frankly of the challenges and rewards of that early operation. He was plucked from a job organizing the training of militiamen in anti-aircraft artillery in Ontario and told that he would be shipped out to Indochina within the month. For the next year, he was based at a variety of locations (from large cities like Vientiane to small villages like Sam Neua) and engaged in monitoring the observance of the 1954 Geneva agreement which

ended the hostilities in Indochina. The author regards the whole experience as a positive one on a personal level, although he is less certain about what the mission achieved. They investigated and reported on many situations, but rarely learned of the results of their efforts because the Commission was not accountable to them. Still, de Domenico concludes that "while I can find no hard proof, I have this warm feeling that we did do some good, as much as could have been done in those troubled times."

Canadian troops have been involved in many other peacekeeping operations over the decades. Let's hope we see more memoirs like de Domenico's which can help put a human face on these difficult but fascinating missions.

RK

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Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor, eds., **Hollywood's World War I: Motion Picture Images** (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1997), $19.95 US paper, 304 pages, ISBN 0-87972-756-X.

The current popularity of Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* has turned the film-viewing public's attention back to the subject of war, a trend that is likely to continue with forthcoming remakes of classics like "The Thin Red Line." As a result, this timely collection of essays is likely to have particular significance. It charts the evolution of the Great War as a subject for Hollywood, from the initial avoidance of the theme to a realization that the war could be a source for great epic motion pictures (like "The Big Parade" in 1925 or "What Price Glory?" in 1926) to an emphasis on the agony and futility of war, with films like "All Quiet on the Western Front" and "Hell's Angels," both of which appeared in 1930. As war loomed again in the late 1930s, the Great War again became an object lesson in civic duty and the nobility of the soldier in such classics as "The Fighting 69th" (1940) and "Sergeant York" (1941). Among the more notable of the post-1945 offerings were "Paths of Glory" (1957), "Oh, What a Lovely War!" (1969), and, most recently, the screen adaptation of Pat Barker's *Regeneration*.

Many of these films are treated in some detail in individual essays; other articles deal with the portrayal of First World War veterans in American film, the CBS series "World War I," produced in the 1960s, and a comparative filmography of Great War motion pictures through the decades. Whether you are a student of war and culture or simply a fan of the war movies shown on History Television, you will find much of interest in this volume.

WS

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Benjamin S. Parsons, **Relieved of Command** (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1997), $20.95 US paper, 190 pages, ISBN 0-89745-204-6.

In this fascinating volume, Parsons assembles the stories of a number of American soldiers who were linked by a common factor – they were all combat-command general officers who were relieved while commanding brigades, divisions, or corps. It is not an exhaustive account of all individuals who suffered this fate; rather, the author has selected a number of cases which he deems to be particularly significant. And so we read of Brigadier-General John J. Bohn, head of Combat Command B of the 3rd Armoured Division in Normandy, who was relieved in July 1944 when he questioned (in a louder voice than was necessary) the use to which his tanks would be put in an attack near St. Lo. For his anger, Bohn was busted all the way down to colonel. Another interesting case involved Major-General Eugene M. Landrum, commander of the 90th Division (known as the "Tough Ombres"), who was sacked by Bradley because his division had the poorest record of any in VIII Corps in Normandy, taking very heavy casualties for very little gain. We also read of Major-General Alan W. Jones, who was made the scapegoat and fired when his 106th Division was wiped out in the Battle of the Bulge.

Parsons is also not shy about making forthright conclusions. He argues that a commander cannot abide a subordinate who is too greatly loved by his men, and has little good to say about Omar Bradley. His observations about Bradley's treatment of his subordinates serves as a good summary of the book's thrust: "Those commanders who have not smelled cordite…are more likely to be a sacker than those who have been in battle…Omar Bradley, who had never commanded a division in combat, never commanded any real fighting force in combat, was the worst sacker of World War II."

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Donald J. Young, **First 24 Hours of War in the Pacific** (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press,1998), $24.95 US, 178 pages, ISBN 1-57249-079-9.

During the first day of the Pacific war, Japanese military units launched attacks over an area covering nearly one-quarter of the earth's surface. Key targets included Malaya, Hong Kong, Guam, the Philippines, Wake and Midway Islands. In those first 24 hours, Japan scored amazing successes and, even in places like Malaya and the Philippines, where conquest took rather longer to achieve, the seeds of that eventual conquest were sown in the first day of battle.

Young sets out to dissect that fateful day by looking at each of these attacks in turn. He also examines the sinking of the *Cynthia Olsen*, a lumber transport out of Honolulu, by a Japanese submarine, the loss of American

and British river patrol boats on the Yangtze at Shanghai, the capture of US Navy and Marine detachments in north China, the sinking of four Japanese transports by a Dutch submarine off the Netherlands East Indies, and air operations flown by pilots from the American aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise*. Young concludes with the situation in Washington, DC, when American politicians voted almost unanimously (a Montana representative who had also voted against war in 1917 was the only dissenter) to declare war.

The tone of the book is workmanlike throughout; Young sticks to a straightforward narrative, clarifying the course of events by emphasizing the time each occurred. The maps and photographs, though not of the best quality, are certainly serviceable enough. All in all, it is an interesting blow-by-blow account of one day that changed the course of the Second World War.

WE

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Herbert A. Werner, **Iron Coffins: A Personal Account of the German U-Boat Battles of World War II** (New York: Da Capo, 1998 [1969]), $20.95 paper, 329 pages, ISBN 0-306-80842-0.

When the motion picture "Das Boot" was released, audiences were struck by the degree to which it seemed to capture the experiences of German submarine crews. Particularly effective was the way the film captured the terrifying claustrophobia as the boat tried to outwit Allied sub-hunters. With this re-issue of Werner's memoirs, readers can now experience that feeling again. Werner served on U-boats from 1941 until the end of the war, rising in rank from ensign to captain, so he is definitely a man who knows of what he writes. He was also among the minority of men who survived service in the U-Boat fleet (28,000 of the 39,000 men in the force lost their lives during the Second World War). So, Werner is almost uniquely qualified to write of the U-boat experience, and he does not disappoint. The memoir is fast-paced and grippingly written, and the reader is carried along with the crew's rising panic as the boat tries to evade the hundreds of depth charges released by Allied corvettes and destroyers lurking above it. Indeed, readers will feel the same sense of claustrophobia that became overpowering when watching "Das Boot." Werner also describes the mental state of U-boat crews, who, as the war dragged on, came increasingly to regard their missions as suicidal; Werner himself increasingly took refuge in a world of fast living and alcohol whenever he was on shore.

More than simply a great read, *Iron Coffins* is also a fascinating glimpse at the Battle of the Atlantic from the other side of the periscope; interesting in this regard is how the crews coped with Allied technological advances, including the addition of escort carriers and longer-range aircraft that tipped the balance away from the *Kriegsmarine*. For both the historian and the general reader, this book is hard to put down.

WE

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Bert S. Hall, **Weapons and Warfare in Renaissance Europe** (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), $29.95 US, 300 pages, ISBN 0-8018-5531-4.

At the centre of this book is a substance that has become inseparable from the conduct of war: gunpowder. Invented by the Chinese, perhaps as early as 800 AD, it came to Europe in the thirteenth century and in time became essential to the arsenal of any king or prince. Still, in opposition to the received version of events, Hall argues that gunpowder did not transform European warfare overnight. Tactics were already undergoing fundamental changes when gunpowder arrived on the scene, so it acted more as an accelerant than a catalyst for change. Furthermore, Hall details the often overlooked problems encountered by Europeans as they tried to make use of the new technology; perhaps the most significant among these was a lack of naturally occurring saltpetre (one of the principal ingredients of gunpowder) in Europe, and the problems involved with manufacturing firearms which had reasonably predictable firing characteristics. Thankfully, Hall discusses both of these matters in such a way that the novice is able to follow the processes. For example, his account of experiments done in the eighteenth century to measure deviations in the paths of musket balls after firing is particularly informative.

Weapons and Warfare in Renaissance Europe was a finalist for the 1997 Wallace K. Ferguson Prize, awarded by the Canadian Historical Association for the year's best book in a field other than Canadian history. For a book so well written, and so well researched from a wide variety of sources, the honour is richly deserved.

WS

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Kent Fedorowich, **Unfit for Heroes: Reconstruction and Soldier Settlement in the Empire Between the Wars** (Manchester: Manchester University Press [distributed by UBC Press], 1995), $95, 243 pgs, ISBN 0-7190-4108-2.

With the current popularity of Jack Hodgins' new novel *Broken Ground*, which recounts the experiences of a group of soldier-settlers in British Columbia in the 1920s, it is a good time to return to the historical record and understand the motivations which lay behind the soldier-settlement movement as it evolved through the First World War and into the interwar years. The author covers the situation in South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, but readers of *Canadian Military History* will be most interested in his discussion of the Canadian

context. In many ways, he fleshes out the conclusion which has already been drawn by Desmond Morton and others: that Canada's soldier settlement policy was a disappointing failure. Fedorowich maintains that this was not entirely the government's fault, and that high wartime wheat prices led many non-farmers to the false assumption that farming was easy money; the bureaucrats who drew up the plan believed that, with commodity prices as they were, the programme was established on a firm and prosperous footing. As the author puts it, "the brave few who warned that high prices were no substitute for actual farming experience were unfortunately ignored."

If there is any cold comfort for Canadians, it is that the scheme worked no better in the other dominions, and here we should be grateful for Fedorowich's comparative approach. Ethnic considerations in South Africa, an immature federal system in Australia, and a lack of good quality crown land in New Zealand almost foredoomed the soldier-settlement schemes to failure. A decade after the end of the war, of the 80,000 veterans who had been settled in one of the dominion plans, fewer than half remained on their land, and many of the survivors were hanging on by the skin of their teeth. A sad end to a proud dream.

RK

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Kenneth R. Ramsden, **The Canadian Kangaroos in World War II: The Story of 1st Canadian Armoured Carrier Regiment** (Cavan, ON: Ramsden-Cavan Publishing Company (1701 Stewart Drive, RR3 Cavan, ON, L0A 1C0, 1997), $16.95 (+$3 s&h), 203 pages, ISBN 0-96996-97.

In the summer of 1944 the western allies came ashore in Normandy. After years of following a British argued policy of attacking the German Armed Forces on the periphery Operation "Overlord" brought the bulk of British, American and Canadian ground forces into direct combat with the Wehrmacht. Casualty reports immediately revealed that the front line rifle regiments, the infantry, were by far sustaining the heaviest losses. As the Normandy campaign progressed this pattern would grow to alarming rates. The problem was simple to understand but difficult to address; how to attack well dug in infantry positions defended by a variety of support weapons such as the mortar, artillery, machine gun and anti-tank gun?

Terry Copp and Bill McAndrew, in their ground breaking study *Battle Exhaustion*, detailed the peril faced by the infantry soldier both physical and mental. Utilizing Operational Research reports they noted the devastating effect mortars alone had on attacking infantry, causing close to 75 per cent of all physical injuries. If the rifle regiments were not to be bled dry some way had to be found to increase their odds of survival; enter the Kangaroo. As the name suggests the Kangaroo served as an armoured personnel carrier, ferrying an infantry section across open ground in relative safety from small arms fire and shrapnel. The first such vehicles put to this use were surplus 105 mm Priest self-propelled guns with the slightly scandalous nickname of "Unfrocked Priests." They made their debut on the night of 7 August 1944 in Operation "Totalize," fulfilling Lieutenant-General Guy Simonds' directive that "the infantry shall be carried in bullet and splinter proof vehicles to their actual objectives" where they would then "depouch" and begin their attack. Later variants of the Kangaroo would come from the hundreds of surplus Canadian-built Ram tanks sitting in England. With their turrets removed Rams became Kangaroos and the transformation marked the beginning of greater infantry-armour cooperation and a significant drop in infantry casualties on the offensive where the armoured carriers were used.

Kenneth Ramsden, a former member of the 1st Canadian Armoured Carrier Regiment, has written a history of this revolutionary vehicle and the men that employed them. *The Canadian Kangaroos in World War II* follows the creation of the first ad hoc unit in the summer of 1944 to their final "stand to" on the 20 June 1945. Sprinkled throughout the straightforward narrative are several fascinating bits not the least of which is his description of Kangaroos being used to hold portions of the front line, in essence, going far beyond their initial purpose of battlefield taxi.

This book was long overdue and finally gives voice to an innovative and vital component of Commonwealth infantry operations in the latter portion of the Second World War.

CE

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George Bradford, editor, **AFV News**, RR 32, Cambridge, ON N3H 4R7.

Published three times a year for an annual subscription cost of $15, this 24-page journal has been around since 1965. As the title suggests the content is specifically oriented to armoured fighting vehicles. The issues often carry a very strong Canadian content. The most recent issue (Sept-Dec 1998, Vol.-33, No.3) features an article detailing the service of the Centurion tank in the Canadian army, providing minute detail on many aspects. Each issue also contains many black and white photographs along with line drawings and technical data, often on very rare vehicles, such as the Second World War Canadian anti-aircraft tank, the Skink.

Armoured vehicles have played a role in virtually every conflict of the 20th century. With AFV news the reader gets a chance to delve a little deeper into the rumbling world of dust and diesel and find out just what made a Tiger tick or a Merkava unique.

CE

General

Pre-1914

1914-1939

1939-1945

Post-1945

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