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CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY

BOOK REVIEW

SUPPLEMENT

Autumn 2000



Issue 12

Frances Fitzgerald, **Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars, and the End of the Cold War** (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), \$43.50, 592 pages, ISBN 0-684-84416-8.

Misha Glenny, **The Balkans, 1804-1999: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers** (London: Granta Books, 1999), £25.00, 726 pages, ISBN 1-8607-050-4.

Karl E. Meyer and Shareen Blair Brysac, **Tournament of Shadows: The Great Game and the Race for Empire in Central Asia** (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1999), \$52.95, 646 pages, ISBN 1-5843-028-4.

John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, **A Future Perfect: The Challenge and Hidden Promise of Globalization** (New York: Crown Business, 2000), \$39.95, 386 pages, ISBN 0-8129-3096-7.

Patrick Tyler, **A Great Wall: Six Presidents and China – An Investigative History** (New York: PublicAffairs, 1999), \$40.00, 476 pages, ISBN 1-89160-1.

The *Economist* recently ranked the \$50,000 Lionel Gelber Prize as the most important non-fiction book prize in the world. First awarded in 1990, it recognizes the year's most distinguished achievement in generating enlightened debate and discussion on foreign affairs and international relations. Previous winners include Michael Ignatieff, Eric Hobsbawm, and David McCullough.

This year's winner, announced in Toronto in October 2000, was Patrick Tyler's comprehensive and engaging discussion of Sino-American relations after the Second World War (although the book is far broader than the title suggests, for it has much to say about relations with the Soviet Union and its successor states, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh). One of its greatest strengths is its characterizations – Tyler does an excellent job of getting inside the heads (as much as possible) of the major players. The fact that not too many of them emerge entirely unblemished merely adds to the book's appeal. Furthermore, this is a story in which personality is crucial. As Tyler describes so expertly, so much of what has occurred in Sino-

American relations hinged on the personality quirks of the major players. An underlying theme is the continuing attempt to resolve the problem of Taiwan without having to resort to a military solution. Ironically, while Taiwan was always the most important issue on the public front, this was largely a smokescreen, and Sino-American relations so often turned on other issues; for example, one of Nixon's major motivations for trying to normalize relations with China was so Mao might help the US find a graceful way out of the war in Vietnam.

The other four short-listed books cover a broad range of topics in strategic studies and international relations. Frances Fitzgerald's superb book is very strong from a traditional international relations perspective, in its elucidation of the machinations of summit diplomacy and great power manoeuvring. But its real strength is in the discussion of Ronald Reagan's personality and its impact on American foreign policy. Other writers have tried, with varying degrees of success, to analyze the foreign policy exploits of the B-actor-turned-leader of the

free world, but none have been as convincing as Fitzgerald. Her description of how Reagan constantly re-invented events (like his visit to the NORAD base in Colorado or his pool-side chat with Gorbachev) to suit his own ideas of how history should have happened, and of his tendency to let fact and Hollywood mingle together, is fascinating.

Misha Glenny is to be complimented for tackling the tortuous paths of Balkan history; there is perhaps no other region on the globe which packs such diverse and complicated issues into such a small geographic area, and which has had, for its size, such a significant impact on world affairs. And his achievement is all the greater because he makes it all make sense. It is by no means easy to sort out the different varieties of nationalism with which the Balkans have been blessed (cursed?), nor is it easy to separate all the different factions and interest groups which have come to blows in the region. But Glenny does a masterful job of weaving together a range of narratives into one coherent whole. His overarching theme, the Balkans as an unwilling meeting place for great power politics, lends a real coherence to the story and makes it possible to discern consistent refrains in the history of the region. His cogent analysis of the Balkans during the First World War era is particularly impressive.

Meyer and Brysac's *Tournament of Shadows* grabs the reader from the first page. It covers the broad sweep of history from the first British and Russian incursions into central Asia in the Napoleonic era, through to the post-Second World War years. It is beautifully written and filled with fascinating and compelling characters, from William Moorcroft, the horse master in India who refused to take no for an answer when he requested permission from his superiors to venture into central Asia, to Brooke Dolan, the American naturalist and OSS operative in Tibet.

The theme is the evolving struggle between Russia and Britain

(and, later, other world powers) for control of central Asia. For more than a century, the region was sort of a holy grail for politicians, strategists, and traders, who assumed that there must be great riches locked somewhere within it. The irony of the situation, as the authors argue, was that the Great Game was waged for very limited rewards; after all the campaigning, which continued right up to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, central Asia provided very little of value to the powers which struggled to control it. Indeed, had the Soviet leadership read their histories of the First and Second Afghan Wars, they would have known exactly what they had in store for them when they invaded Afghanistan over a century later – not riches or geo-strategic advantage, but a terrain and populace that easily broke larger, more “sophisticated” armies.

Despite its title, *A Future Perfect* is also a study of international relations. Global economic forces have always been central to international relations, and it is no longer possible to discuss a nation's foreign policy without making reference to global economic factors. Micklethwait and Wooldridge make no attempt to hide their enthusiasm for globalization, but they never come across as proselytizers; on the contrary, their narrative is remarkably balanced. They never dismiss out of hand the concerns of people who oppose globalization, nor do they regard their fears as unfounded. They admit that many of those fears are justified, but argue that globalization must be judged in a broad sense; every negative outcome is more than compensated for by positive outcomes. Furthermore, they write in a breezy, entertaining style, with lots of real-world anecdotes that readers can relate to; this is a book that any non-specialist can pick up and immediately become absorbed in. It's not a study of international relations in a classical sense, but it may well point the direction to a new way of conceiving of international relations – or, given

their discussion of Keynes and the thinkers he valued, maybe it's a return to an old way of conceiving of international relations.

The Lionel Gelber Prize was created by Lionel Gelber, a veteran of the RCAF, former special assistant to the Canadian government, and a long-time advocate of improved international relations. It is presented annually by the foundation that bears his name.

JFV

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David M. Glantz, **Stumbling Colossus: The Red Army on the Eve of World War** (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), \$39.95 US, 392 pages, ISBN 0-7006-0879-6.

This book examines the state of readiness of the Soviet Army at the outset of the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. Glantz's underlying thesis is to challenge the “theory of preemptive war” expounded by Viktor Rezun's *Icebreaker* which accepted Joseph Goebbels's argument “that Germany was fighting a preventive war when it invaded the Soviet Union”(2-3). The underlying assumption of the theory of preemptive war is that “the Soviet Army was both powerful and ready for war in 1941,” an argument which Glantz believes to be totally unfounded.

Since the 1920s, the Soviet military had undergone a series of purges including the execution of some 54,000 officers between 1937-41. This not only deprived the troops of well trained and experienced officers, but it also damaged morale. Even more significant than the purges, Soviet troops lacked adequate training and equipment. For instance, many tank drivers were sent into battle with only three to five hours of training, and there is at least one example of a motorized rifle regiment, comprised of six hundred recruits, which was not armed due to a shortage of firearms. Combined with officers who were both incompetent and indifferent

towards the welfare of their troops, the result was an appalling military casualty rate of at least 29 million soldiers. Although Soviet troop strength had increased from 1.6 million in 1939 to 5.3 million in 1941, only partial troop mobilization had been undertaken by the time of the German invasion on 22 June 1941. Of these 5.3 million, it was estimated that 60% would be captured or killed within six months. Casualty rates increased at such an astounding rate that by 1942 the Commissariat of Defence no longer issued identifying tags (dog tags) to new recruits and ceased to register casualties individually by name. Clearly, the Soviet military was in no position to invade Germany.

Glantz observes that since the 1930s, Soviet military planning reflected the poor strategic position of the country due to its geographic vastness and its social, economic, and technological deficiencies. It was also based upon the premise that a German attack was inevitable. Yet, Stalin could not agree with senior military commanders (Timoshenko/Merestkov) as to where a German invasion would come from and what would be the best response. Soviet artillery was superior to German artillery in numbers, but the former lacked adequate training, communications, and fire control, making it an inept instrument of defence. Similarly, the Soviet Union lacked adequate anti-aircraft defences, out of the erroneous belief that the German air power would be directed to smaller states that lacked an adequate military force and economic infrastructure.

According to Glantz, Stalin's lack of response to the numerous warnings of impending attack that preceded the German invasion, his decision not to pass this reports along to Zhukov or Timoshenko, and his failure to deal with intrusions of German aircraft and agents in Soviet territory are justifiable. They reflected a political and military leadership which "judged that the Red Army

was not ready for war in June of 1941 and acted accordingly"(260).

Stumbling Colossus makes excellent use of archival sources, and presents a large quantity of statistical data. However, Glantz should have exercised better judgement in stating that "enunciation of this theory [preventive war] further condemns the Soviet regime and, more importantly, justifies the German invasion and absolves Germany of blame for the ensuing human suffering. Quite naturally, a host of German historians have gravitated to this view" (xiii). Contrary to what is inferred by this statement, German historians do not have some sort of natural predisposition to justify Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. Nor do they have any desire to excuse the gross violations of human rights that stemmed from Barbarossa. It should be pointed out that Stalin had partitioned Poland with Hitler, ordered the execution of some 15,000 Polish officers in the Katyn Forest, and deported thousands of Poles to Siberia. Red Army troops were also sent to occupy (and later annex) the Baltic republics and invade Finland. While Soviet troops may not have been combat ready to launch an invasion, it is clear that Stalin had territorial ambitions and may have acted more aggressively given the military capability to do so.

PE

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Shirlee Smith Matheson, **Flying the Frontiers: Aviation Adventures Around the World**, volume 3 (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1999), \$29.95, 288 pages, ISBN 1-55059-176-2.

The third installment in this series includes a number of adventures with a military theme. Cedric Mah, from Prince Rupert, British Columbia, spent some time in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan as an instructor in Winnipeg before joining the China National Aviation Corporation Transport Group to fly supply missions over the Hump in Burma.

Barry Davidson of Calgary joined the RAF in July 1939 and was shot down over France a year later. He spent nearly five years in German prison camps, and was involved in the Great Escape of March 1944. Dan McIvor spent five years in the RCAF during World War II, primarily in instructional and ferry duties, and Steve Villers spent three years in the RAF; he was destined to join a long-range bomber group in Burma but the war ended before he got there. Most of these fellows (and the other fliers covered in the book) had long careers in aviation after the war, making this a most interesting collection for flying and military buff alike.

AF

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Arnold R. Isaacs, **Vietnam Shadows: The War, Its Ghosts, and Its Legacy** (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), \$25.95 US, 236 pages, ISBN 0-8018-3657-3.

Vietnam Shadows discusses the continuing social and political influence of the Vietnam War in the United States. Isaacs argues that the Vietnam War has had the greatest influence, "more than any other event of the era [ie. the 1960s]" on contemporary America, including both the civil rights struggle and the women's movement. *Vietnam Shadows* chronicles the controversies surrounding the war, seeking to dispel many widely held myths.

According to Isaacs, support for the war was greater among blue-collar workers than white-collar workers. Further, opinion polls clearly demonstrated that "support for the war was highest among those under thirty and lowest among those fifty or older" (53-4). Indeed, contrary to contemporary popular opinion, the Woodstock generation was not indicative of the overwhelming majority of people who grew up in the sixties. Relatively few young adults actively protested the war. As popular support dwindled, most Americans tried to

avoid the draft and go about their daily lives. Isaacs distinguishes between those who opposed the war on ideological or moral grounds from the majority who believed it was time that America should cut its losses and withdraw its troops from Vietnam.

While public support for the war effort was higher among the working classes, those from blue-collar families were at a disadvantage by a draft system that favoured the well-to-do. Astonishingly, it is pointed out that many American high schools had more graduates killed in Vietnam than Harvard University. Likewise, prominent figures on the national political stage – including Quayle, Clinton, Gingrich, and Gramm – were able to avoid military service in Vietnam.

According to Isaacs, it is also erroneous to associate the Civil Rights movement with organized opposition to the war. He notes that both the *Civil Rights Act* (1964) and the *Voting Rights Act* (1965) were passed at a time when widespread public support existed for America's intervention in South-East Asia. This included the majority of African-Americans who continued to support the war until 1969.

Vietnam veterans returning home not only faced open hostility from anti-war protesters, but found their friends and neighbours to be indifferent. Many veterans felt alienated, finding that few Americans were interested in discussing their combat experiences. While many Vietnam veterans opposed the war, others would protest with equal vigour. President Jimmy Carter's decision to pardon those who evaded the draft. Contrary to depictions in film and television, the majority of American soldiers in Vietnam were concerned about the welfare of civilian populations, often risking their own personal safety to protect these individuals.

Vietnam Shadows shows how the Vietnam experience continues to influence American foreign policy, specifically foreign military

intervention, from Beirut to Bosnia-Herzegovina. There is also a convincing argument made against the existence of any surviving American MIA-POWs in Vietnam. Recognizing that the Vietnam War has been studied almost exclusively as a backdrop for American foreign affairs, Isaacs chronicles the social-political transformation of Vietnam in the past two decades and the plight of the Vietnamese boat people.

The only criticism of this book, and it is minor, is the absence of any discussion concerning the thousands of Amerasians (those whom the Vietnamese have termed *bui doi* or "the dust of life") children born to Vietnamese mothers but fathered by American servicemen. Even with this omission, *Vietnam Shadows* (with its excellent bibliographical essay as a guide for further reading on the issues discussed by Isaacs) is a valuable corrective to much previous work.

PE

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James Tertius deKay, **Monitor: The Story of the Legendary Civil War Ironclad and the Man Whose Invention Changed the Course of History** (London: Pimlico, 1999), £9.00 paper, 247 pages, ISBN 0-7126-6539-0.

It would be difficult to find a military engagement that was at once so revolutionary in its import, and so inauspicious in its particulars. When the Confederate vessel the *Merrimac* (actually a captured Union warship that had been converted into an ironclad) entered Hampton Roads, Virginia, in March 1862, it would change the course of history in a matter of hours. The *Merrimac* (officially known to the Confederate States Navy as the *Virginia*) inflicted on the US Navy its greatest defeat until the attack on Pearl Harbor nearly eighty years later; as deKay writes, it "totally reversed the strategic balance along the eastern coast of North America, threatened the permanent dislocation of the blockade, and [gave] the South a

new and potentially permanent stature among the nations of the world" (172). Enter the *Monitor*, the creation of a Swedish engineering genius named John Ericsson. On the 9th of March, the *Monitor*, the Union's own ironclad, and the *Merrimac* met in Hampton Roads in a damp squib of a battle. For the better part of the morning, the two lumbering vessels bounced shot off each other, without causing a single fatality and without inflicting mortal damage on either ship. Shortly after noon, both ships withdrew, with both the Union and the Confederacy claiming victory. In hindsight, the Union interpretation of the battle was closer to the truth, for the standoff effectively neutralized any gains the Confederacy might have made from the *Merrimac's* remarkable success the day before. On a grander scale, the battle brought to a close, in a single stroke, the age of the wooden warship.

DeKay describes all of this with skill and energy. It is a fascinating book that moves with the pace of a novel, something that is helped by a cast of colourful and unusual characters. There are other books on the battle of the ironclads which are more comprehensive or in-depth, but there can be none more readable.

CA

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D.P. Stephens, **A Memoir of the Spanish Civil War: An Armenian-Canadian in the Lincoln Battalion**, ed. Rick Rennie (St. John's, NF: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 2000), \$24.95 paper, 119 pages, ISBN 1-894000-02-1.

Many fine memoirs of the Spanish Civil War have been published in recent years, and Stephens' is in the same tradition. Unlike many Canadian volunteers who served in the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion, Stephens went into the predominantly American Lincoln Battalion, served in many of the war's most significant engagements, and also spent a short

period as a supply officer in Albacete. Though written many years after the events, his story retains its immediacy, and the author retains his ideological commitment to the cause. The most striking aspect of the book, however, is its revelation of the woeful lack of preparation of soldiers in the International Brigades. When Stephens and his fellow new arrivals reached the Jarama front, they were sent into the lines with no training whatsoever. Many of them had never touched a weapon before, and their rifle "training" consisted of firing a few rounds at the enemy lines. Grenade training was the same – each new arrival received one grenade to throw, and was then consider to be trained in the art of grenade throwing. Furthermore, according to Stephens' memoir, the Republican leadership left much to be desired; many of the generals were clearly not up to the task and even a good many battalion commanders, though ideologically reliable, were less useful in battle. All things considered, it's a wonder that the International Brigades did as well in battle as they did.

The memoir ends on a sad note for Stephens. On the very day that he and his fellow brigaders reached England on their way home, they read the news reports that Barcelona had fallen to the fascists. "That was the end of my romantic attempt to make the world safe for democracy," he concludes (117).

CT

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Marc Milner, **Canada's Navy: The First Century** (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), \$45.00, 356 pages, ISBN 0-8020-4281-3.

This volume on the origins and development of the Royal Canadian Navy, termed by Milner as "Canada's Cinderella Service," is meticulously well researched. In addition to examining the pertinent secondary sources, there is effective incorporation of both archival material and interviews

undertaken with the naval personnel "who made the history itself."

Divided chronologically into three parts, *Canada's Navy* examines the origins, development, and contributions of the Royal Canadian Navy as they have been influenced by political and technological developments both at home and abroad. The first section, entitled "The Orphan Service," chronicles the precursor to the RCN in the late nineteenth century, its formal establishment by the Laurier Government in 1910, and its near abandonment during the 1920s (if not for the efforts of Walter Hose and William Lyon Mackenzie King). This is followed by "Finding A Role," which examines Canada's rapid naval expansion during the Second World War that would lead to the RCN becoming the third largest navy by war's end. However, the provision of naval escorts for the protection of the Atlantic convoys would be the primary function of the RCN during the course of the war. The opening of the Cornwallis training centre and the Royal Roads Naval College, together with the acquisition of the aircraft carrier *Magnificent*, were means by which the RCN wished to establish its independence and legitimacy from allied navies. Canada's dreams for a large modern navy in the post war years were dashed, as it transferred its supporting role from the British (against Nazi Germany) to the United States and NATO (against the Soviet Bloc). Part three, "Securing a Place," describes the role of the RCN during the cold war, the devastating effect on morale that resulted from the unification of the armed forces, and the cutbacks it faced during the early Trudeau years. These times of uncertainty would be followed by increased government funding, the acquisition of new equipment, and the return to the old naval uniforms. The collapse of cold war has given the RCN a new international role, largely under the auspices of the United Nations.

Somewhat disappointingly, Milner undertakes no examination of the navy's role in asserting national sovereignty over the far north. Indeed, Canada's territorial claim over much of the Arctic Ocean (especially the Northwest Passage) has been challenged by the United States during the *Manhattan* (1969-1970) and *Polar Sea* (1985) incidents. Both *Defence in the 70s* (1971) and the *1994 Defence White Paper* emphasized the need to assert national sovereignty through the use of Canadian Armed Forces. *Defence in the 70s* places the surveillance and protection of coastlines and territory so as to preserve national sovereignty as the first of four national aims of the Canadian military. Further, despite Milner's assertion that the 1980s constituted a "renaissance," which he seems to equate with the reintroduction of the traditional naval uniform, the Canadian Navy still does not possess the necessary military hardware to effectively monitor the movements of American and Russian nuclear submarines trespassing through Canadian waters under the arctic ice. Ironically, it is still dependent on the United States to protect and defend Canadian sovereignty of its Arctic waters.

Notwithstanding this shortcoming, Milner provides an excellent historical synthesis of a topic which has not received its proper due in the literature. Well researched and logically structured, *Canada's Navy: The First Century* is serious scholarship that belongs on the bookshelf of every student of Canadian military history.

PE

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Scott A. McLean, ed., **From Lochnaw to Manitoulin: A Highland Soldier's Tour Through Upper Canada** (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 1999), \$18.95 paper, 96 pgs, ISBN 1-896219-56-X.

Andrew Agnew was a member of the Scottish gentry who enlisted in the 93rd Highlanders in 1835 and

came to Canada when the unit was posted here at the time of the Rebellions of 1837-38. He fought at the Battle of the Windmill in 1838, and performed aid to the civil power during the 1844 elections in Canada East and the 1854 Griffintown Fire in Montreal. In 1839, he joined the gift-giving expedition to native settlements on Manitoulin Island in Georgian Bay that is described in this most interesting account. It is not terribly forthcoming about military affairs in general in Canada during the nineteenth century, but it certainly says a lot about Agnew as a person and a soldier. For example, he certainly had an eye for the ladies, and often described the native women who attracted his attention along the way. He was also very class conscious, occasionally commenting on the lack of refinement in colonial society. The character of his own regiment also bothered him, so much so that after leaving Canada, he transferred to the 4th Light Dragoons, which he believed was of a higher social order than the 93rd and so more suitable to his own feelings and aspirations. Profusely illustrated and with excellent explanatory notes, this slim volume is a fine contribution to the social history of the British Army in nineteenth-century Canada.

CA

Jocelyn Coulon, **Soldiers of Diplomacy: The United Nations, Peacekeeping, and the New World Order** (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), \$35.00, 231 pages, ISBN 0-8020-0899-2.

Soldiers of Diplomacy is a translated and revised version of *Les casques bleus*, first published in 1994. Jocelyn Coulon, one of Canada's most distinguished francophone journalists, examines the successes and failures of recent United Nations peacekeeping missions and their implications for future operations.

After a brief discussion of the origins of the UN peacekeeping

force during the Suez crisis under the leadership of Lester B. Pearson, Coulon examines the four major peacekeeping operations of the 1990s: Cambodia, the western Sahara, Somalia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. He lays blame on the "great powers" for peacekeeping failures, since "they are the ones who refuse to grant the UN the human and financial resources it needs to fulfil the mandates that they so generously bestow in votes in the General Assembly and Security Council" (191). This was the criticism expressed by UN commanders in the field, including Canadian generals Lewis Mackenzie and Roméo Dallaire and French General Jean Cot. Despite limited manpower and military equipment, these men acted courageously trying to prevent the slaughter of innocent civilians.

In the final section of the book, Coulon addresses the debates that have resulted from the failure of recent peacekeeping missions, most notably those in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, and Rwanda. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in *An Agenda for Peace* (June 1992), proposed the establishment of a military force under exclusive UN command to implement Security Council mandates as a means to remedy the fragmented command and control structure that has compromised the success of peacekeeping operations. Interestingly, in an interview with Coulon, Boutros-Ghali insisted that such a force would not constitute an "army," nor could it forcibly impose peace. Coulon dismisses the likelihood of such a proposal being accepted by the great powers, commenting on the underlying motivation behind their agreement to participate in certain peacekeeping operations: "their massive participation is never without a price; ulterior political and military motives can be seen behind their every effort" (189). Thus, such a proposal could not be successfully implemented without the forfeiture of some national sovereignty by those nations that contribute troops to peacekeeping

missions. For Coulon, this is the price that would have to be paid in order to achieve success: "If the countries of the world want the UN to succeed in its peacekeeping operations, they will have to relinquish a part of their sovereignty over their soldiers" (181-2). He concludes that the only viable solution by which peacekeeping can succeed is a return to the great principle on which the Blue Helmets were created: "To keep the peace when this is what the parties concerned really want" (195).

Soldiers of Diplomacy addresses some of the most pertinent issues surrounding peacekeeping that face the United Nations today. It should come as no surprise that Coulon, a journalist, undertook extensive interviews in researching this book. He interviewed soldiers, diplomats, and experts involved in peacekeeping operations while travelling to twelve countries and seven peacekeeping missions. *Soldiers of Diplomacy* provides an excellent starting point for those interested in learning about the United Nations and international peacekeeping.

PE

George S. MacDonell, **This Soldier's Story (1939-1945)** (Nepean, ON: Hong Kong Veterans Commemorative Association, 1999), \$24.00 paper, 109 pages, ISBN 1-894439-02-3.

Nick Mustacchia, **Prisoner of War and Peace** (Raleigh, NC: Pentland Press, 1999), \$20.95 US, 175 pages, ISBN 1-57197-143-2.

MacDonell and Mustacchia were two very young men who found themselves in the most unenviable of circumstances during the Second World War: both were forced to endure captivity in enemy prison camps. MacDonell was an Ontario native who joined the Royal Canadian Regiment in 1939 and eventually transferred to the Royal Rifles of Canada, becoming one of

the youngest sergeants in the Canadian army. He and his unit joined the ill-fated expedition to Hong Kong, and MacDonell spent the rest of the war in Japanese hands. Mustacchia was about the same age, and was drafted early in 1942, despite the fact that he had survived a serious bout of tuberculosis. He trained as aircrew and served as a waist gunner on B-17s, flying only a handful of missions before he was shot down over Germany on 22 February 1945.

Both men experienced the same tribulations while in captivity: lack of food, illness, terrible living conditions, vicious guards, and emotional despair. To these agonies were added, for MacDonell, punishing slave labour, and, for Mustacchia, a brutal forced march in appalling conditions. The difference was, of course, that MacDonell had already endured these privations for three years when Mustacchia was captured. However, postwar studies revealed that the intensity of privation was more significant than the duration, and both men clearly suffered terribly as a result of their wartime experiences. Indeed, Mustacchia writes of the long-term impact of captivity in detail; he suffered significant impairment of health, which often prevented him from working and which left him an emotional wreck.

Both of these books are very worthwhile reading, but MacDonell's also supports a worthy cause: the proceeds from the book will be going to the Baie-des-Chaleurs Military Museum in Richmond, Quebec.

JFV

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John W. Dower, **Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II** (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), \$42.00, 676 pages, ISBN 0-393-04686-9.

Embracing Defeat is a study of a civilization in transition. Dower makes a detailed examination of the metamorphosis

that took place in Japanese thought, society, and institutions from Japan's surrender in 1945 until the end of the American occupation in 1952. The book chronicles the Japanese people as they come to terms with their first military defeat and occupation of their homeland by a foreign power. The American occupation was responsible for transforming Japan from an imperial and military power to a constitutional monarchy with pacifist and democratic foundations. Surprisingly, the Japanese came to accept and even embrace this transition.

Governmental corruption and an incompetent bureaucracy hindered the distribution of foodstuffs and other aid to a population in danger of mass starvation, suffering from epidemics of disease, and lacking adequate housing. As a net importer of food, Japan experienced a serious food crisis resulting from the loss of agricultural imports provided by its former colonies, primarily Korea, Formosa, and Manchuria. Even as late as 1949, it was reported that Japanese civilians were still dying from malnutrition. In order to survive, many had to buy food and other necessities at the gang-controlled "blue-sky" black markets. Those who could not afford the grossly inflated prices of the underground economy were forced to adopt desperate measures which included the consumption of sawdust, mice, grasshoppers, and frogs. Still others entered Japan's domestic sex trade, whose "panpan" girls catered to the occupying US servicemen in the establishments of the Recreation and Amusement Association which functioned as bawdy houses. The Japanese Home Ministry initiated and financed the establishment of these "comfort facilities," with the assistance of several Tokyo "entrepreneurs" in the belief that it would protect Japanese women from mass rapes by the soon-to-arrive occupying troops who would demand sexual gratification.

An underlying theme of this book is the cordial personal relationship that developed between General MacArthur and Emperor Hirohito. Dower argues that "the emperor and the general had presided as dual sovereigns through the years of defeat and occupation" (555). While they met in person only eleven times, there was a high level of mutual respect. MacArthur acted as the emperor's advocate to Eisenhower, making personal appeals to the American president and others that the Emperor should not be tried for war crimes nor required to abdicate (granted, the underlying motivation for protecting the Emperor was the maintenance order in Japan). MacArthur believed that the trial and possible execution of Hirohito would be akin to trying Jesus Christ in the West, since the Japanese revered their emperor as a living deity. Hirohito and the Japanese people held MacArthur in high respect, bestowing many gifts and honours upon him during his tenure as the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Japan. MacArthur's dismissal by President Truman on grounds of insubordination in April 1951 was received with shock and sadness in Japan. However, upon return to the United States, MacArthur's public comment that "measured by the standards of modern civilization, they [the Japanese] should be like a boy of twelve as compared with our development of 45 years" (551) destroyed his standing in Japan. MacArthur's comments accurately reflected the prevailing ethnocentric perceptions held at that time; he, and Americans in general, saw it as their "Christian mission" to "civilize" the Japanese through the occupation.

Attention is also given to a plethora of postwar issues, including the prosecution of Japanese war criminals, the implementation of constitutional democracy, literary and artistic interpretations of defeat, domestic reaction to "democratization" and political restructuring, the rights of women, censorship, communist

purges, and the road to economic recovery. Dower's book is first rate scholarship that is accessible to the scholar, student, and the lay reader of history.

PE

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Major Tony Clunn, MBE, **In Quest of the Lost Legions: The Varusschlacht** (London: Minerva Press, 1999), £18.99, 363 pages, ISBN 0-75411-068-0.

As a military historian with absolutely *no* interest in ancient history, I nevertheless succumbed to extreme curiosity when a friend excitedly described Tony Clunn's masterful account of the utter destruction of three Roman legions in the boggy western German countryside in 9 AD.

The pursuit of historical accuracy owes much to the talented amateur who, fueled by an unshakeable curiosity, delves into the unaccessed nooks and crannies of times past without the academic's certainty that the historical record is more times immutable than not. I have long operated on the principle that history is a moving target, that the pursuit of historical truth is ongoing, that we have all the time in the world to get to the bottom of things. I think my friend felt I would enjoy *In Quest of the Lost Legions* on those bases alone, for by sheer persistence (and good luck), Tony Clunn has turned the foundation of German national history on its ear.

The English edition of *In Quest of the Lost Legions* is somewhat shorter than the original German edition, and it suffers – albeit slightly – from a lack of transitions where material was cut. Thus a crucial turning point in Clunn's understanding of the Varus battlefield never quite pays off, and the reasons for Clunn's numerous quests much farther afield in Germany go unexplained. Despite these two flaws – which are minor and would no doubt go unperceived by most readers – Clunn's twin tales are absolutely compelling from the first page to the last. I

found myself immediately engaged in both the modern and ancient tales, and I found my understanding of battlefield archeology and comprehension of the Roman occupation of Germany advancing painlessly at a comfortable rate.

As it turns, out this dual history – one that focuses upon the first stirrings of German nationhood and the beginning of the decline of the Roman Empire in Europe, and the other that is an incredible detective story – has been utterly pivotal in the way Germans have come to view their history in only a very few years. The writing style employed in both stories is both measured and vivid, so carefully conceived that a person as ignorant of both aspects of the book as I was can be brought along in thoroughly digestible phases to a keen comprehension of the underlying history and the inner workings of Clunn's efforts to pinpoint the underlying truths that are now accepted throughout the academic circles that monitor such breathtaking historical revisionism. The beauty of Clunn's own tale is that he is right and that he is acknowledged as being right by the usually closed circles of experts that tend to stultify historical inquiry by even the most talented and best informed "outsiders."

In Quest of the Lost Legions is two great stories for the price of one – the history of an immense historical coup and the haunting two-millennia-old tale woven from the threads Clunn himself has laboriously and painstakingly dug out of the peat bogs of Kalkriese.

EH

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Tom Spear, with Monte Stewart, **Carry On: Reaching Beyond 100** (Calgary: Falcon Press, 1999), \$24.95 paper, 192 pages, ISBN 0-9685465-0-1.

Anyone who has seen any of the media coverage in commemoration of the First World War over the last decade will know Tom Spear, the remarkable centenarian and one of the few

surviving Canadian veterans of 1914-1918. Spear is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit, and his story makes inspirational reading on a number of levels. Of most interest to military historians is obviously his recollections of the First World War (although it should be mentioned that Spear also served during the Second World War, rising to the rank of wing commander in the RCAF – he was responsible for organizing the ferrying of aircraft around British Commonwealth Air Training Plan bases). He joined up in 1916 and, because he had been a telegrapher with the Canadian Pacific Railway, he was trained as a signaller; his brother Will became a sapper. His memories of the front are still strong, eighty years after the fact: the smell of decomposing bodies, the crash of artillery shells, the great Canadian Corps sports competition of Dominion Day 1918, and the pain of learning that his brother had died of wounds sustained in September 1918 (a loss that Spear still feels deeply). He is also very candid about the ways in which the war changed him as a person.

Tom Spear is one of the few people who can claim to have lived in three centuries. He is a link to history, and this excellent memoir provides a window into a world that is long past.

JFV

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Malcolm Brown, **Tommy Goes to War** (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 1999), £18.99, 192 pages, ISBN 0-7524-1772-X.

There seems to be no end to the market for illustrated popular histories of the First World War. Morton and Granatstein's *Marching to Armageddon* set the standard for the genre in Canada, and Malcolm Brown made an early contribution in 1978 with the publication of the first edition of *Tommy Goes to War*. This re-issue is a distinct improvement over the original, in large part because it is a more handsome book.

The general format of the original book remains unchanged, although the text has been streamlined a little. Drawing heavily on the letters, diaries, and recollections of soldiers, Brown weaves a history of the war that is evocative and compelling. Indeed, the material is so good that Brown has to do very little with it. He provides contextual and linking paragraphs where necessary, but in most cases is content to let the men and women of the war speak for themselves.

The illustrations are also noteworthy. The original edition contained many excellent photographs, but since 1978 many of them have been reproduced so often that they are becoming a bit stale. Mindful of this, Brown returned to the Imperial War Museum collection and selected a whole new range of photos to accompany the text; they are every bit as good as the classics, but some have rarely been reproduced before. Even better is the fact that the book now includes a section of art from the IWM collection; again, Brown has chosen works which are not frequently reproduced.

Tommy Goes to War is a book that will appeal to both the general and the expert reader; it is comprehensive enough to suit the neophyte, but includes enough new material to be of interest to the specialist.

JFV

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David M. Glantz, **Zhukov's Greatest Defeat: The Red Army's Epic Disaster in Operation Mars, 1942** (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1999), \$39.95 US, 422 pages, ISBN 0-7006-0944-X.

Col. David Glantz, editor of *the Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, has emerged as one of the most prolific military historians in recent years. His large body of work on the Second World War in the east has considerably enhanced our knowledge of that protracted and terrible conflict which broke the back of the *Wehrmacht* and left Eastern Europe in Stalin's grasp.

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This book brings a single campaign, Operation Mars, into microscopic focus. Planned by Marshal Georgi Zhukov and launched in tandem with Operation Uranus, which enveloped the German 6th Army at Stalingrad, Mars, an assault on Germany's Army Group Centre west of Moscow, was a catastrophic defeat. The Red Army suffered 350,000 casualties in three weeks of futile attacks on the entrenched Germans. The campaign, Glantz argues, has been largely forgotten not only because it has been overshadowed by the Red Army's great victory at Stalingrad, but also because of a conscious effort on the part of the Soviet government to bury the history of Zhukov's only major defeat.

While Glantz dedicates the book to "the memory of the tens of thousands of German and Soviet soldiers who fought and died," he has nonetheless written a bloodless history. It is as if unit numbers perished but not people. One follows his accounts of battles the way that an investor would read an indifferent day's stock market report. Unlike Anthony Beevor, whose recent *Stalingrad* conveyed the horror (and, indeed, the thrill) of battle, Glantz has no "ear" for narrative prose. His efforts to inject some narrative sweep into the book ("regaining his frayed composure, von Kluge looked at the stacks of intelligence and operational reports on his desk," p.70) are perfunctory, fleeting, and buried in an avalanche of unfamiliar names, unit numbers, and statistics. Truman Capote's famous admonishment of James Michener, "that's not writing, it's typing," seems to apply here as well.

Glantz sheds very little new light on the personalities of Stalin or Zhukov, and we learn nothing novel about the Soviet people and their war effort. Is there a thesis? I suppose it is that Zhukov's reputation is built on his victories, but not on his forgotten losses, like Operation Mars. But that, by itself, is hardly surprising.

In his earlier and much more impressive *When Titans Clashed*,

Glantz corrected the notion that the Red Army blundered to victory by virtue of its sheer size, arguing instead that the Soviets slowly and painfully learned the lessons of modern warfare. The result was that, by 1944, the Red Army exhibited a higher level of operational and tactical skill than is usually attributed to it. *Zhukov's Greatest Defeat* uses the historical equivalent of the leadership methods which Glantz argues that the Soviet officer corps eventually learned: it is competent and methodical, calculated to achieve measured goals. The reader, however, may wonder whether this particular goal was worth the effort.

GB

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David G. Hermann, **The Arming of Europe and the Making of the First World War** (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), \$17.95 US paper, 307 pages, ISBN 0-691-01595-3.

Edward E. McCullough, **How the First World War Began: The Triple Entente and the Coming of the Great War of 1914-1918** (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1999), \$28.99 paper, 346 pages, ISBN 1-55164-140-2.

The causes of the First World War continue to attract the attention of historians, far more than the causes of other wars do. These new books both add different dimensions to the already immense historiography on the subject.

McCullough rejects one of the conventional wisdoms of the coming of the Great War, that Germany was the aggressive, expansionist power that dragged the world into conflict. Instead, he argues that France and Russia were the troublemakers in Europe, with France being the worst offender. Determined to get revenge for the embarrassing Franco-Prussian War, France set about trying to undermine Germany, most significantly by drawing Italy away from the Triple Alliance and by coaxing Britain into an alliance. The latter was perhaps the crucial event,

in McCullough's eyes, for once the Triple Entente had been created, conflict with Germany was virtually inevitable, or would be made inevitable by French policy.

McCullough is particularly critical of Fritz Fischer and his school, whom he sees as being responsible for creating a myth of a devious and designing Germany, which was guided by a vision of dominating Europe, facing the hapless France, Britain, and Russia, drawn into war against their will and better judgement. He never argues that Germany was completely blameless, only that a much better case can be made to put the blame for war on France or Russia.

Hermann is less overtly revisionist, but also looks at a new dimension of the drift to war. Instead of focusing on the naval arms race, which has occupied scholars for decades, he analyzes the land war. Implicitly disagreeing with McCullough, he argues that Russia's defeat at the hands of Japan, which marked the eclipse of the largest military machine in Europe, fed German bellicosity and moved the German government to use the threat of war as a diplomatic tool. This in turn pushed the governments of Britain, France, and Russia closer together, as they created joint war plans to meet the possible German threat. Through all of this manoeuvring, war ceased to be the worst possible outcome, and most governments began to see a short, limited European war as a means to reach a desired end. The acceptance of the belief that there was much to gain and relatively little to lose by a short, sharp war moved European governments to expand their armies, not to provoke war, but to increase the threat they could pose to their neighbours. According to Hermann, their success in rearming for the land war was varied: Germany was most effective European power, Italy the least effective.

Clearly, these books differ in their treatment of Germany: Hermann emphasizes German aggression and culpability, while

McCullough argues that the blame lies as heavily on other governments. Given what is at stake with respect to German history following 1914, there seems little doubt that the debate on Germany's role in precipitating the Great War will continue.

DR

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Elizabeth Richardson-Whealy, ed., **Pilot's Log: The Log, Diary, Letters and Verse of Lt. Leonard A. Richardson, Royal Flying Corps, 1917-1918** (St. Catharines, ON: privately published [available from P.O. Box 4058, St. Catharines, ON, LR 7S3], 1999), \$19.95 paper, 257 pages, ISBN 1-895-258-15-4.

It is to the historian's great delight that new collections of primary-source materials are constantly becoming available, to give lie to the old adage that there is nothing new in history. This volume is a case in point. Leonard Richardson was a student at Acadia University in Nova Scotia when the war began, but was turned down by both the 85th Battalion and the RNVR Motor Boat Patrol on account of his poor eyesight. Through a lucky coincidence, he was able to wangle his way into the RFC for pilot training in 1917, eventually going overseas in November. In March 1918, he was posted to 74 Squadron, commanded by New Zealander Keith "Killer" Caldwell and comprised of legendary fliers like Mick Mannock and "Taffy" Jones. Richardson was designated the spare pilot, so he saw limited action for the first month, but thereafter he was on patrol virtually on a daily basis until he was wounded in action on 21 July 1918. His arm in tatters, he saw no further service during the war.

When Richardson died in 1968, his family concluded, quite rightly, that his personal papers deserved to be published. The result is this fascinating collection of diary and log entries, letters, poems, and photographs, introduced by Richardson himself (he wrote a brief foreword in 1936 when he

organized his diaries). The editing and explanatory footnotes have been kept to a minimum, so that the reader gets a clear glimpse of the author's character: a rather romantic young man who went to considerable lengths to enlist and who grew deeply attached to his squadron mates. We learn as much about life on the base in quiet times as we do of aerial fighting, and as much about the social relations between squadron members as we do about their piloting skills. This makes for a compelling document that cuts through some of the mythology surrounding the air aces of the First World War.

DR

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Neil J. Stewart, **Steel My Soldiers' Hearts** (Victoria, BC: Trafford Publishing, 2000), \$19.95 paper, 242 pages, ISBN 1-5512-439-8.

In this most interesting memoir, Neil Stewart has some choice words to pass on about some senior Canadian commanders of the Second World War and their conduct of the campaign in north-west Europe. And there is no question that Stewart knows what he is talking about, for he had an eventful war. He landed on D-Day with the Fort Garry Horse, and had his first Sherman shot out from underneath him during the battle for Carpiquet. Transferring to the Canadian Grenadier Guards, he got through Operation Totalize, only to be blown out of another Sherman in Operation Tractable. Then it was third time unlucky for Stewart, when his Sherman was destroyed in the Hochwald Forest. This time he was the only survivor, and he was quite understandably moved to question how long his luck would hold. It held for the rest of the war, and he survived to be demobilized in Calgary in 1946.

The book is slightly fictionalized. Stewart gives himself a nom de guerre (a few of the other names have been changed as well), and some of the dialogue has been invented, and consequently seems a little stilted. But it remains a

fascinating record, one of the few first-hand accounts we have of Canadian tankers in action in north-west Europe.

SL

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Peter Mansoor, **The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions** (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), \$35.00 US, 344 pages, ISBN 0-7006-0958-X.

In December 1941, the US Army ranked 18th in the world in size, but within three years it grew to be the largest army organization in the world, with 8.2 million personnel (including 2 million in the US Army Air Force). Mansoor's readable account describes how a small cadre of regular army and national guard officers helped to forge millions of citizen soldiers into an effective, exceptionally competent fighting force. After suffering a terrible defeat at Kasserine Pass and near disaster at Salerno in 1943, Mansoor contends that the army learned from its mistakes and rapidly adapted to the conditions of modern warfare. By the late summer of 1944, Mansoor argues, American infantry divisions had attained a level of operational excellence equal to the German army at its peak in the summer of 1941.

Mansoor follows the general trend in recent historiography by challenging the widely-held notion that the US Army stumbled to victory in the Second World War, overwhelming the more skillful *Wehrmacht* with an abundance of men and materiel. In the real world of small unit actions, the margin of American numeric superiority was often much smaller than proponents of the "brute force" argument have claimed. In any case, victory required not just material resources but the ability to put them to effective use in battle.

Mansoor finds much criticize in the army's organizational structure. Half of the army's combat strength was marshalled in non-divisional combat support units

(independent tank battalions, combat engineers, artillery, etc.) under the assumption that every division did not need these assets all the time. This undermined unit cohesion and often deprived infantry divisions of immediate support when they needed it. In addition, Mansoor criticizes the decision to cap the army at 89 divisions (although he does not make it clear where personnel for additional divisions would have come from). The shortage of divisions meant that rotating units out of the front lines often proved impossible. As a result, many infantry divisions were in almost constant contact with the enemy and suffered appalling losses: 19 suffered over 100 percent losses, and four suffered more than 200 percent losses.

This in turn leads to Mansoor's discussion of the individual replacement system, which will strike many readers as the most controversial portion of the book. This system has been widely condemned for undercutting primary group cohesion and inserting soldiers into the thick of combat before they were ready; Stephen Ambrose remarked that the US Army could not have adopted a worse system if the Germans had chosen it for them. Mansoor, however, argues that the system worked much better than its critics have said. Division-level training centres helped to teach new recruits what they needed to survive in combat, and the individual replacement system helped the army to maintain its fighting strength even as the *Wehrmacht* disintegrated.

Unfortunately, there is very little here that Michael Doubler did not do better in his recent *Closing with the Enemy*. But *The GI Offensive in Europe* shares that earlier book's major flaw: like Doubler, Mansoor is never fully able to convince us that the US Army attained the level of tactical proficiency which he says it did. Part of the problem is the inherent difficulty in establishing a means of determining a unit's combat

effectiveness. Mansoor is, quite justifiably, sceptical of attempts to determine combat proficiency through the methods of quantitative analysis as favoured by S.L.A. Marshall and Martin van Creveld, but in their absence he relies on a body of anecdotal and observational evidence that is not entirely convincing. What *The GI Offensive in Europe* does do, however, is add weight to the growing body of evidence that the young men of democratic societies, when called upon, proved to be as tough, smart, and brave as the young men produced by dictatorships.

GB

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Thomas M. Johnson and Fletcher Pratt, **The Lost Battalion** (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000 [1938]), \$17.95 US paper, 338 pages, ISBN 0-8032-7613-3.

This is a story that should be better known than it is. In October 1918, at the height of the American offensive in the Argonne forest, elements of the 77th Infantry Division, numbering some 600 men, pushed far into German lines and established themselves in defensive positions. Unfortunately, the units covering their flanks were less successful in their advance, and before long the Germans had closed the gap in their line, cutting off the American path of retreat. For six days, the Americans held on, awaiting the relief force that never seemed to come. Airplanes attempted to drop food and ammunition to them (most of the supplies landed in German positions), scouts and runners sent with messages failed to break through German lines, and, as a final insult, the survivors were heavily bombarded by Allied artillery (contrary to their nickname, the unit was never really lost – everyone knew where they were, but getting to them was another matter). In the end, only 194 of the battalion remained unwounded when they were finally relieved. They became instant

celebrities, but the finger-pointing and accusations would continue for years. The controversy over the Lost Battalion would eventually claim the life of the detachment's commander, Major Charles W. Whittlesey, who killed himself by jumping from an ocean liner in 1921.

This account, originally published in 1938, shares some of the flaws of war writing from that era. The prose is somewhat disjointed, and there is a sprinkling of some unfortunate ethnic epithets throughout the text. But it is a great drama that perhaps deserves a more modern historian. It certainly deserves to be more widely known. A film of the episode was made in the early 1920s, but it quickly slipped into oblivion – can another screen adaptation be far behind this reprint?

AF

Martyn R. Ford-Jones and Valerie A. Ford-Jones, **Oxford's Own: Men and Machines of No. 15/XV Squadron Royal Flying Corps / Royal Air Force** (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Military History, 1999), \$59.95 US, 352 pages, ISBN 0-7643-0954-4.

Last year, we reviewed Laurence Motiuk's *Thunderbirds at War*, arguably the best RCAF squadron history to cover the Second World War period. *Oxford's Own* is slightly different in format, but every bit the equal of Motiuk's book.

No. 15 Squadron was first formed in March 1915 as a fighter unit, serving with distinction in most of the major campaigns fought on the Western Front. Included in its ranks were such illustrious names as W.G. Barker, Philip Joubert de le Ferte, and Edgar Ludlow-Hewitt (Barker would go on to win the Victoria Cross, while Ludlow-Hewitt and Joubert de le Ferte would go on to hold senior command positions in the RAF). Disbanded in December 1919, the squadron was re-formed in March 1924, eventually to become a day bomber squadron. It converted

from Fairey Battles to Bristol Blenheims early in the Second World War, and later moved up to Wellingtons, Stirlings, and finally Lancasters. Like most RAF bomber squadrons, it suffered grievous casualties (nearly a thousand dead), particularly in the early stages of the war. The unit survived postwar defence cutbacks, and last fired shots in anger during the Gulf War, when it also suffered its last fatal casualty, FL Stephen Hicks, who was killed in action over Iraq.

This gallant history is described in the text, but equally effectively in the photographs (colour, as well as black and white) which are packed into the book. Many of them are from the squadron or private collections, and are being published for the first time. More than a dozen appendices list casualties, honours and awards (significantly, five members of the squadron went on to win the Victoria Cross), aircraft flown, etc. This is a substantial and handsomely produced book that will complement the bookshelf of any aviation historian.

SL

Joanna Bourke, ed., **The Misfit Soldier: Edward Casey's War Story, 1914-1918** (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999), IR£8.95 paper, 77 pgs, ISBN 1-85918-188-0.

We are used to seeing memoirs from gallant or average soldiers, but it is not often that we come across the recollections of a soldier who would have been considered by the army as an incorrigible. Edward Casey (he used the pseudonym John William Roworth in the original manuscript) was just such a soldier. A semi-literate Irish cockney, he enlisted in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers to escape the grinding poverty of east-end London. He did not find army life particularly congenial, and spent most of the war trying to evade battle. Indeed, we hear very little of the engagements in which his unit participated, and quite a lot about his experiences while

absent without leave, in the jug, or in hospital feigning shell-shock; he is also quite frank about his sexual experiences.

It is a very rough memoir (edited from a manuscript held by the Imperial War Museum) that is full of slang and vernacular language, and Bourke has done an excellent job of making it readable without spoiling Casey's style of writing; this job was made more difficult by the fact that Casey sometimes refers to himself in the first person, but often in the third. That it was written so many years after the war (when Casey was 82, long after he had emigrated to New Zealand) makes one wonder how much of it has been coloured by hindsight, and how much Casey was playing up the role of the incorrigible. Nevertheless, its very roughness makes it a fascinating memoir, especially when it is recalled that there were a good number of Edward Caseys in the armies of each nation.

LF

David J. Bercuson, **Blood On the Hills: The Canadian Army in the Korean War** (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), \$35.00, 269 pages, ISBN 0-800-0980-8.

Bercuson's study is not only an examination of Canadian participation in the Korean War, but a study of Canadian firsts. It was the first Asian land war in which Canada participated and the first war that saw its troops under United States military command. But most significantly, the 25,000 Canadian soldiers who fought in the Korean Peninsula did so under the mandate of the United Nations. The Korean War would be the genesis of Canadian participation in international peacekeeping missions in the following decades.

He argues that many Canadians were apathetic towards the war in Korea, caught up in the unprecedented economic boom and suburban sprawl of the 1950s. Few people could relate to a conflict in the remote Far East country that

many considered to be backward. Furthermore, few of those who volunteered to fight in Korea came from "the middle-class mainstream of Canadian society"(46); the middle-class veterans of the Second World War had more immediate concerns such as providing for their new families, completing their education, and starting their civilian careers. Yet, while showing what the volunteers for Korea were not, Bercuson neglects to indicate what they were: how did the Korean volunteers as a group differ from those who enlisted in the First and Second World Wars?

There are other interesting comparison with earlier wars in the book. In contrast to the First and Second World Wars, there were few disruptions on the home front that would indicate that Canadian soldiers were fighting and dying in Korea. While correctly observing the absence of rationing, bond drives, or price controls, Bercuson fails to mention what is perhaps the most important distinction: Canada did not experience any significant English-French tensions like those which had fractured Canada during the Boer War and both World Wars. And, just as they had been in 1914 and 1939, the first Canadian forces sent abroad were ill-equipped, lacking in adequate training, and grossly undermanned at the outset of what Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent called a "policing action." For instance, while Canadian troops were supplied with the bolt-action Lee-Enfield (used in both world wars), their American counterparts were equipped with the M2 carbine. Canadians would replace much of their outdated ordnance with the new American weaponry, including the bazooka and the 75 mm recoilless rifles.

This book, along with official recognition of Korean War veterans by the Canadian government, has not come soon enough. *Blood On the Hills: The Canadian Army in the Korean War* provides the reader with a greater understanding of the conditions encountered by troops both on and off the battlefield, and a greater respect for those

Canadians who served their country in Korea.

PE

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Paul A.C. Koistinen, **Mobilizing for Total War: The Political Economy of Modern Warfare, 1865-1919** (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), \$45.00 US, 496 pages, ISBN 0-7006-0860-5.

Paul Koistinen's *Mobilizing for Total War* is among the most interesting and useful studies on the economic aspects of military conflict published since Paul Kennedy's widely-read *Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* sparked renewed interest in that topic in the late 1980s. It is Koistinen's thesis that the methods used in the United States to organize for the First World War emerged in the decades following the American Civil War, when a combination of government and business leaders created a kind of early "military industrial complex."

Prior to 1861, military requirements for armaments and provisions could for the most part be met by expanding civilian production. However, with the coming of the Civil War, the need for increasingly sophisticated weaponry produced in large numbers resulted in the development of a new defense industry which became a permanent part of America's political economy. In particular, Koistinen points to the construction of a steel-hulled navy in the 1880s and 1890s as evidence of an emerging symbiotic relationship between business, government, and the military. The result, in Koistinen's view, is that American industrial leaders came to associate national defense with their own business interests.

In some ways, Koistinen's argument here follows Russell Weigley's in *The American Way of War*. Weigley famously argued that since the 1840s, the United States has always employed its superior material, industrial, and technical resources to fight capital intensive

wars so as to suffer as little human cost as possible. But while Weigley's focus is on the battlefield, Koistinen is primarily interested in the impact that the collusion between government, industry, and the military has had on government policy and the private sector's industrial practices.

Written for military and economic historians, this book will also be of considerable interest to students of Progressivism. Here Koistinen's views place him firmly alongside Robert Wiebe and more directly Samuel Hays in what David Kennedy has called the "organizational" school of scholars of Progressivism, who argue that Progressive initiatives in fact served to insulate big business from democratic reform.

This is the second in a projected five-volume series on the economic aspects of American mobilization for war; future volumes will consider the inter-war years, the Second World War, and the post-war era. Far too little attention has been given to these matters. If it is true that modern wars are fought not only on battlefields but also on factory floors, then surely a great deal remains to be written on how nations mobilize their human and economic resources in times of war. Koistinen makes a strong contribution to the study of how the greatest industrial and military power in modern history has done just that. GB

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Arnold Hague, **The Allied Convoy System, 1939-1945: Its Organization, Defence and Operation** (St. Catharines, ON: Vanwell, 2000), \$39.95, 208 pages, ISBN 1-55125-033-0.

This book had its genesis in the Naval Historical Branch at the Ministry of Defence (Navy) in London, which asked Hague to compile a record of convoy operations to be used when answering enquiries from the general public. The database he put together, and the short text he wrote

to accompany it, were never intended for publication, but students of naval history will be delighted that the record has made it into print.

Drawing on British, Canadian, and American archival records, the book provides a most comprehensive history of convoy operations, including the control of shipping, variants to the convoy system, defensive vessels and weapons (from escorts to depth charges to Catapult Aircraft Merchant Ships and Merchant Aircraft Carriers), intelligence matters, the enemy threat, and casualties. The largest single section of the book is a complete listing of every North Atlantic convoy (arranged by the designated letter codes), its ports of departure and arrival, size, and casualties. Russian and Malta convoys are covered as well. The many photographs are carefully identified (Hague has even corrected errors in the original captions of a number of photographs), and many of the illustrations from private collections are being published for the first time. Handsomely produced, *The Allied Convoy System* will be invaluable to the historian of the Allied naval effort during the Second World War.

DG

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Col. A.F. Duguid, **A Question of Confidence: The Ross Rifle in the Trenches**, ed. Clive M. Law (Ottawa: Service Publications, 2000), 48 pgs, ISBN 1-894581-00-8.

One of the many appendices included in Duguid's *Official History of the Canadian Forces in the Great War* was appendix 111, which carried the rather uninspiring title "The Ross Rifle, Monograph." Like everything else in the official history, it is a carefully researched and judiciously written account of Canada's most famous, and perhaps its least successful, infantry weapon. As Ron Haycock points out in an excellent introduction, there are a number of drawbacks to Duguid's

account. There is no comparative element which would allow the reader to judge the Ross against other contemporary weapons, nor is there any real context provided. Furthermore, despite Duguid's passion for accuracy, the report was written within the framework of postwar myth-making, and should be read accordingly. However, Law's version has a number of advantages over the original, including a list of suggested readings and some excellent photographs of the Ross and the men who used it. So, even allowing for its weaknesses, the account is an important document, vital reading for anyone interested in the Ross specifically or defence production generally.

CA

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Christer Bergström and Andrey Mikhailov, **Black Cross / Red Star: The Air War Over the Eastern Front**, vol. 1, **Operation Barbarossa, 1941** (Pacifica, CA: Pacifica Military History, 2000), \$39.95 US, 307 pages, ISBN 0-935553-48-7.

The Eastern Front was the scene of the largest, longest, and most intense aerial campaign in history, involving numbers of aircraft and personnel which dwarf the statistics for other campaigns. During the period covered by this book (June to December 1941), the Red air force alone lost an astonishing 21,200 aircraft, both in aerial combat and on the ground. *Luftwaffe* losses (2093 aircraft destroyed, 1362 damaged) were also high, and represented roughly three-quarters of all the German aircraft lost during the period. Nevertheless, as the authors persuasively argue, *Barbarossa* contained the seeds of the *Luftwaffe*'s defeat in the east. The Red air force may have lost more aircraft than the *Luftwaffe*, but the Soviets were better placed to make good those losses with replacement aircraft. This was simply because the *Luftwaffe* had adopted a tactical support role, rather than mounting

intensive bombing attacks on Russian industry. As a result, the Red air force in 1941 was more and more able to achieve aerial superiority over the battlefields in the east, forcing the *Luftwaffe* to react to local crises rather than attempting to achieve its own goals. Indeed, as its numbers declined, the *Luftwaffe* found it increasingly difficult to meet the demands of the battlefield; as Adolf Galland put it, they were "attempting to blot out an anthill by stamping on one ant at a time." But eventually, the *Luftwaffe* would come to perfect some of the Red air force's own tactics, which would set the scene for even bloodier air battles in the middle years of the war.

In spite of the scale of the campaign, the air war in the east is imperfectly understood. The historical record on both sides has been dramatically distorted, so that, as the authors note, "when comparing Soviet/Russian literature with corresponding Western accounts, one wonders if they at all describe the same war." It is to correct these misconceptions that the authors have written the first in a four-volume history of the air war in the east. They have returned to the archival sources in Germany and Russia to produce what is arguably the best, most comprehensive account of the aerial campaign. Lavishly illustrated with many rare photographs from Russian and German sources, *Black Cross / Red Star* belongs on the bookshelf of any serious student of aerial combat.

LF

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J. Tracy Power, **Lee's Miserables: Life in the Army of Northern Virginia from the Wilderness to Appomattox** (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press [distributed in Canada by Scholarly Book Services], 1998), \$55.95, 463 pages, ISBN 0-8078-2392-9.

Ken Burns' immensely popular PBS documentary *The Civil War* spurred interest in the history of that conflict from the perspective

of rank-and-file soldiers. A recent entry in this genre is J. Tracy Power's *Lee's Miserables*, which tells the story of the Army of Northern Virginia in its last year through the letters and diaries of its soldiers. Power has conducted exhaustive research in dozens of archives and private collections, and successfully conveys some sense of the misery and hardship of life in Lee's army as it faced the Army of the Potomac for the last time.

In spite of the disaster at Gettysburg in the summer of 1863 and the harsh winter that followed, "Lee's Miserables" looked forward to the coming year's campaign, confident that the Union armies would batter themselves to pieces against the defenses which they had spent the winter preparing. Although the book focuses on rank-and-file Confederate soldiers, one senses through their writing that Robert E. Lee was never far from their thoughts, and they took heart in hearing instances of his personal courage under fire.

A good deal of recent scholarship, such as Edward Bonekemper's *How Robert E. Lee Lost the Civil War*, has sought to cut Lee down to human proportions. Some readers will therefore be sceptical, and justifiably so, over the fact that Power was apparently unable to unearth so much as one harsh word about Lee in all the thousands of letters and diaries he examined. Surely, somewhere in the Army of Northern Virginia, there was at least one private who grumbled about Lee and the murderous charges he was given to ordering his men into?

Nevertheless, based on Power's account, there is no mistaking the fact that the Army of Northern Virginia was Lee's army, and for much of the army, Lee became the Confederacy itself. Most of the rank-and-file retained an almost devotional belief in Lee's leadership even in the bleakest days of the war, and his importance to them actually grew as their own company-level officers were struck down at a frightening rate in the

Battle of the Wilderness and thereafter. But even Lee's hold over them was not total. Unable to meet the day-to-day needs of its soldiers, the Army of Northern Virginia disintegrated as tens of thousands of men deserted in the winter of 1864.

Most of this book consists of an expository sentence or two from Power followed by an excerpt from a diary or a letter. Readers who tire of this formula will be thankful that Power had the good sense to conclude the book with an historiographical overview of the Army of Northern Virginia's last year. Nevertheless, it is the personal accounts that make up the core of Power's book. They are at once fascinating, stirring, and heartbreaking. They serve to remind us that for soldiers on the "sharp end" of combat, very little has changed over time.

GB

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Cecil E. Law, **Kamp Westerbork, Transit Camp to Eternity: The Liberation Story** (Clementsport, NS: Canadian Peacekeeping Press, 2000), \$24.95 paper, 179 pages, ISBN 1-896551-35-1.

I took an interest in Kamp Westerbork because of my interest in the South Saskatchewan Regiment. Others will be drawn to the book because of the larger topic of the Holocaust. A preface by a survivor of the camp and a chapter on "German Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust" situate the work of the Canadian Second Division within this context, and then the author sets about the task of answering the question, "Who were the first Canadians to liberate Kamp Westerbork."

It is an account by a Second World War veteran who renewed an interest in a particular part of Holland and a particular, if brief, point of contact with an overwhelming legacy of that war, because of a visit made as part of the celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the war in Europe. A visit to the Kamp

Westerbork Remembrance Centre led him to pose the book's main question. The reader is then introduced to the several regiments of the Second Canadian Infantry Division which were involved the liberation of the camp, including the South Saskatchewan Regiment, the 8th Reconnaissance Regiment, and the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry. *Kamp Westerbork* is also a veterans story inasmuch as the author traces the post-war lives of several of the soldiers, in addition to describing the chance meeting of a veteran and one of the camp survivors many decades later.

The value of the book for the general reader lies in how the author, a former Captain with the SSR, still thinks like a soldier, even after decades of civilian life. His interest in maps, war diaries, chronologies, and precise identification of military equipment and positions helps the reader get inside the world of the First Canadian Army of the Second World War. In addition, the sequence of approximately a dozen photographs illustrating the advance of a section of SSR troops along the Orange Canal on 12 April offers a glimpse of deployment under battle conditions. In some ways the book is a primary document in itself, and a unified narrative is abandoned at the end in favour of excerpts from diaries, both private and regimental war diaries, operational and intelligence logs, and maps that took some detective work and luck to uncover.

Kamp Westerbork is the first publication of the Canadian Peacekeeping Press (the publishing arm of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre) to deal with the Second World War. The mission of the PPC is "to support and enhance the Canadian contribution to international peace, security, and stability through the provision of quality research, education and training in all aspects of peacekeeping."

JS

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Christina K. Schaefer, **The Great War: A Guide to the Service Records of All the World's Fighting Men and Volunteers** (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1998), \$22.50 US, 189 pages, ISBN 0-8063-1554-7.

This book will be a real boon to military historian and genealogist alike, and will become an essential tool for research into personnel who were involved in the First World War. It covers every combatant nation, and provides the researcher with information on the kinds of records that are available, how they are organized, what (if any) records have been destroyed over the years, and addresses to write for further information (an appendix covers resources available via the internet). For example, if you had a relative who served in the Portuguese forces, you will learn that compulsory military service was in place for Portuguese males over the age of 21, and that five separate archives maintain personnel records relating to the First World War. Useful details in other sections relate to the draft records of all US states (with microfilm reel numbers for ordering from the National Archives), British Army records destroyed by German bombing in 1940, and the dizzying array of collections which hold records covering the armies of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

LF

Lee Heide, **Whispering Death: My Wartime Adventures** (Victoria, BC: Trafford Publishing, 2000), \$22.50 paper, 243 pages, ISBN 1-55212-387-X.

This is another small-press memoir that brings us a dimension of the air war that is not widely known. The author, a Vancouver native, flew overseas in a Hudson bomber in 1941 and then, after further training in England, was posted to the Middle East, where he flew as a navigator on Beaufort and Beaufighter torpedo

bombers over the Mediterranean (the title refers to the nickname given to the Beaufighter). He spent a year operating from Malta and, after conversion to Beaufighters, survived two forced landings. The first, in the sea, resulted in a five-day ordeal before he and his pilot washed ashore on the island of Elba, from which they escaped to Corsica. This was followed by instructional duties on Cyprus, which lasted only until a pilot friend convinced him that it was better to be killed on operations than be killed by a student pilot. Heide and his pilot were posted to an operational squadron at Tobruk, and then went through a second ditching. On this occasion, they managed to reach land, but it was neutral Turkey and they were interned (albeit in quite pleasant conditions) for a short period of time before returning to the squadron. The war in the desert wound up in late 1944, and Heide was back in Canada, newly demobilized and with a DFC and a British wife, by the spring of 1945. A keen observer, Heide spins a good tale; *Whispering Death* is an informative and entertaining book with lots of good anecdotes and local colour.

CT

Tony Le Tissier, **Zhukov at the Oder: The Decisive Battle for Berlin** (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), \$65.00 US, 327 pages, ISBN 0-2759-5230-4.

Operation Berlin ended the Russo-German War of 1941-45 with massive destruction of property and a huge toll in human lives and suffering. Perhaps it was only proper that this phase of the Second World War should end in the same way that it had been fought for four years.

It is a comprehensive work that focuses primarily on Red Army Marshal G.K. Zhukov and Operation Berlin, and embodies the best tradition of the narrative in historical writing. No reader should be overwhelmed by the

material, because it is so well presented; the book is dense in terms of the amount of information included, but it reads very easily.

Le Tissier ranges from large-scale strategic plans and operations, to minor but important facts about the respective armies, leaders, and other aspects too numerous to detail. As a measure of his attention to detail, he provides a succinct explanation of the difference between Soviet Army divisions ("regular", "guards", and "shock" divisions) and, in an appendix, attempts to estimate the size, strength, and composition of a German infantry division during the last battle (270). Thus, he makes it clear that the German Army was in a shambles during its fight for the capital of the Third Reich; a German infantry division in 1945 was not the same force it was in 1941 or even 1944. The sources employed are solid and extensive, from Führer Orders to battlefield communications at the regimental level. Throughout the book, there is a refreshing lack of bias; the armies of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union are treated objectively and fairly.

Zhukov at the Oder will appeal strongly to readers interested in the Russian Front of the Second World War, but also to anyone interested in reading a well written battle narrative.

SM

Jonathan F. Vance, **A Gallant Company: The Men of the Great Escape** (Pacifica, CA: Pacifica Military History, 2000), \$29.95 US, 329 pages, ISBN 0-935553-47-9.

I recall reading as a young man the story of a movie buff who paid to see *Ben Hur* over a hundred times, each time hoping that it might end more happily. I have had much the same experience, over the years, watching John Sturges' classic film *The Great Escape*. I have always felt somewhat uneasy about the way that Steve McQueen's character returns to captivity at the end with a smirk and a shrug, in spite of

knowing that his compatriots have just been gunned down, as if a sanguine disposition alone could defeat the Nazis. I felt a similar sense of unease having read *A Gallant Company*, not because the book shares the glib finale of Sturges' film (far from it), but because I felt so guilty about having enjoyed Jonathan Vance's book so much.

Reading *A Gallant Company*, one can hardly avoid the sense that the planning and execution of the escape was a game of wits between the Allied airmen at Stalag Luft III and their German captors. I found myself enjoying the drama of the year-and-a-half long preparations for the break, only to be reminded in the most shocking way that the "Great Escape" ended in tragedy when the Gestapo tracked down and murdered fifty of the escapees.

This was no mere prison break, but in effect a major covert operation hatched from captivity. The Allied airmen at Stalag Luft III not only planned the escape, but dug elaborate tunnels, gathered intelligence, produced specialized equipment, and forged documents whose exceptional quality sometimes revealed them as fakes. The story of the escape itself is the most engrossing part of the book. The fate of one recaptured airman, Jimmy Catanach, who had been making for Denmark with three others, is particularly chilling. Catanach's captor, a Gestapo officer named Johannes Post, drove Catanach about the countryside for a time, showing him the sights, before informing him plainly, "We must get going – I have to shoot you."

A Gallant Company reads like a novel. Vance is a fine writer, although the occasional cliché creeps in ("word of the shootings spread like wildfire"). By necessity, some of the book's subjects, like the key escape planners Roger Bushell and Harry "Wings" Day, are more prominent in the story than others. But it is to Vance's great credit that he does not fail to quickly and sharply draw each of the fifty who were murdered. The fact that this is popular history in no way

diminishes the enormous scholarly achievement of having assembled so fine a narrative. Having said that, some curious readers might have appreciated the inclusion of a note on sources.

Vance stresses that those who planned and carried out the escape were ordinary men, but the reader can surely be forgiven for choosing to believe that they were anything but ordinary. I prefer to think that history drew together this most extraordinary and gallant company for a purpose: to continue the war against the Third Reich even from captivity.

GB

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David M. Glantz and Jonathan M. House, **The Battle of Kursk** (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1999), \$34.95 US, 496 pages, ISBN 0-7006-0978-4.

The Battle of Kursk is essentially a standard narrative dealing with the largest tank battle in history; however, there are elements of this book that set it apart. For example, the authors introduce some interesting notions in the introduction, such as the idea that Marshal Zhukov of the Red Army was a "fixer" (27) who was rushed from one crisis to another; it is often the German Army in the latter years of the war, not the Red Army, which is associated with the use of such "fixers." Another interesting interpretation relates to Zhukov's apparent inability to destroy the German Army Group Center at the gates of Moscow in the winter of 1941-42 (27). Many would argue that Zhukov succeeded in his main task of saving Moscow from the clutches of the Third Reich, but Glantz and House instead characterize his inability to destroy the German invader as a failure.

The main body of *The Battle of Kursk* is not an easy read; the style and structure of this work is not well suited to conveying in a readable fashion the massive amount of detailed information contained within it. However, the

book is strengthened by its numerous clear and detailed maps, and by the many appendices that are loaded with detailed information, ranging from very detailed Orders of Battle to the division of tanks in the various formations present at Kursk. Given Glantz's interests, it is hardly surprising that there is a greater reliance on Russian than German sources.

The book's strong conclusion draws many threads together. For example, Glantz and House challenge the traditional practice of blaming all that went wrong for Germany in the Second World War on Adolf Hitler (263), and provide a new interpretation of the disposition of the German Army in Operation Citadel (264). In both instances, Glantz and House argue that the Wehrmacht was not as opposed to Hitler's strategic plan for a massive offensive in the East as is often assumed. This is a strong book that would have been stronger had the entire text been as engaging as the conclusion.

SM

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Andria Hill, **Mona Parsons: From Privilege to Prison, from Nova Scotia to Nazi Europe** (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 2000), \$24.95 paper, 181 pages, ISBN 1-55109-293-X.

Mona Parsons grew up in the small town of Wolfville, Nova Scotia, attended Acadia Ladies Seminary, took courses in elocution and music in the United States, and then tried to break into show business in New York. After spending time as a chorus girl and nurse, this vivacious woman met and married Willem Leonhardt, a rich Dutchman whose family owned a plumbing supply business, in September 1937. During the Second World War, the couple sheltered two downed British airmen. Betrayed and imprisoned, Mona and her husband survived the war. Willem died in 1956, and Mona returned to Nova Scotia where she married Major-General Harry Foster. She died in Wolfville in

1976, a bright young thing who became a *grande dame* at the end of her days.

Andria Hill has done a fine job of reconstructing the life of this remarkable Canadian. She gives details of how she tracked down those who knew her, and the book reads like a novel at times. Mona, posing as a demented woman, escaped from a women's prison in Vechta, Germany, in March 1945 after a bombing raid. Wendelien van Boetzelaer, a baroness, went with her. Together they stumbled across north Germany, where Mona finally met up with members of the North Nova Scotia Highlanders. Hill provides a rounded picture of this Canadian woman; she appears to have been a victim of bad luck and of forces beyond her control. Vain, frivolous, accustomed to an affluent life, Mona showed grace under pressure at her trial and kindness to others in prison. Her companion Wendelien took a wounded German soldier to a Polish aid post. The Poles were destroying every building in north Germany, and the medics told her she should let him die. The Dutch woman replied, "If I am able to forgive him, you should be able to treat him." And they did. Insightful anecdotes like this enliven the book.

Through the prism of one Canadian woman's life, the author reveals a great deal about life in wartime Europe and in Nova Scotia, a cosy, innocent world. At times the book is overburdened with details, such as descriptions of who wore what at Mona's wedding, and the author speculates overmuch about what Mona might have been thinking at certain times. But this is a good read which picks up pace as it tells of life in the Netherlands. Hill has a neat way with language. After retiring from the army, Harry Foster could find no useful role in Nova Scotia. As Hill notes, "there's nobody like a former somebody." She has made a significant contribution to our understanding of how people behave when confronted by the worst the world can throw at them. Mona Parsons had the best and worst of life in

Europe, and somehow survived with her dignity and identity intact. Given what she went through, this was no mean feat.

JL

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Denis & Shelagh Whitaker with Terry Copp, **Victory at Falaise: The Soldiers' Story** (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2000), \$35.00, 288 pages, ISBN 0-0020-0017-2.

With the beachheads of Normandy secured, the Allied forces shifted their attention to the pursuit of the two remaining German army groups. The battles that ensued proved to be horrifically savage as the Allies were continuously forced to adapt their tactics to overcome the obstacles that the Germans hurled at them in the wake of their retreat. The story of the Allied warriors and of their heroic journey towards victory at Falaise has traditionally been recounted in such a way to leave the impression that the Allied efforts at Falaise were more of a defeat than a victory.

Armed with an arsenal of diaries and letters to the home front, the authors set the record straight by countering the traditional view that the Allied forces relied upon sheer firepower, instead of a well led and executed plan, to overwhelm the outgunned and outnumbered German forces. Instead of focusing on the statistical evidence, they recount stories of the raw courage displayed by the volunteer soldiers and airmen on both sides who fought with skill and initiative. Their saga is brought to life by capturing the elements of reality that are not found in tables or statistics: the loneliness, the stress of combat, the pranks, the itch, and the sheer terror of being wounded or killed.

As can be expected the reader is taken through the valleys and hedgerows of Normandy through the eyes of the Allies, the Germans, and the occupied villagers with such vivid description that one can almost hear the crash of shells as the forces collide in the battle that ultimately cut off and destroyed the

German army at Falaise. Moving in tandem with the action that it depicts, *Victory at Falaise* offers a gripping interpretation, from the soldier's point of view, of the campaign which brought the liberation of Europe one step closer.

DL

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Felix (LeRoy) Perry, **Red Soil! A PEI Soldier's Life at the Front** (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 2000), \$14.95 paper, 86 pages, ISBN 1-55109-354-5.

Felix Perry joined the Prince Edward Highlanders in 1940 at the age of 31, and served through the Second World War, seeing action in Italy and the Netherlands. His son has now told his story, providing a unique record of what war looked like to an ordinary soldier. A good soldier, who obeyed orders and cherished the friendship of his comrades, Perry came from a hardscrabble farm on the red soil of the Island. The fields in Europe also became red with the blood of the slain, and yet Perry found meaning and purpose in his time in the Canadian army as he struggled to survive and to do his duty.

With the West Novas, Perry moved to Chatwood in Newfoundland, where he met and married a local girl. Arriving in England in November 1943, he moved to Italy to join the 3rd Canadian Division. He saw men praying and crying and "smelled the general fear" as he went into the line. Perry captures the feel of what it means to be in battle, thoroughly confused, seeing friends cut down, wondering where the enemy is. He had no hatred of the Germans: "They were just men who had fought for their cause as we were fighting for ours." At the end of the war, Perry stayed with a Dutch family, and his account of the time spent with them reveals a kindly man trying to do his best for others in a time of chaos.

The book is weakened by errors and a lack of context. It is

impossible to tell where the West Novas were in Europe although Perry mentions being in action in the Ariella Valley and in the "Lira" Valley. He claims that the Canadians fought the enemy "up through Italy, until they withdrew to Messina." The impression is given that an RSM was an officer, and the information on Allied air drops to Dutch civilians in April 1945 is not correct.

More careful editing would have made this excellent memoir by an ordinary Canadian soldier more rewarding. Felix Perry was only 5'3" tall, but to his family he was a giant. *Red Soil!* will keep his memory fresh in the years to come. As his son notes, "our father and mother, although living [on the borderline of poverty] always managed to keep us fed, clothed, and provided us a house to live in." This book reflects the fundamental decency of those many Canadians who served in the Second World War but who left no record of their service.

JL

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James H. Hallas, ed., **Doughboy War: The American Expeditionary Force in World War I** (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), \$55.00 US, 346 pages, ISBN 1-55587-855-5.

William S. Triplet, **A Youth in the Meuse-Argonne: A Memoir, 1917-1918** (Columbia: University of Missouri Press [distributed in Canada by Scholarly Book Services], 2000), \$49.50, 326 pages, ISBN 0-8262-1290-5.

Perhaps films like *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Thin Red Line* have heightened interest in the American military experience generally, or maybe the passing of the last of the United States' Great War veterans has been a motivating factor. For whatever reason, there is a burgeoning crop of new books describing the American contribution to the First World War. *Doughboy War* is a carefully edited collection that relies heavily on the soldiers' own voices. Using an

impressive range of memoirs and unit histories (interestingly, many of the sources were published in the 1920s and 1930s and are now increasingly hard to find), Hallas has knit together an evocative tapestry of the experiences of the AEF, from the earliest call-ups to the return of the soldiers to the United States (the last doughboy got home from occupation duties in early 1923). One expects to read descriptions of the horrors of battle, and they are certainly there aplenty, but Hallas has not neglected the lighter side, and has found some wonderful little anecdotes that capture the spirit of the doughboy. One fellow took the old adage "there's a shell with your number on it" quite literally when he dug out of the mud a chunk of metal from an artillery round that had exploded near him. Incredibly, a serial number on the metal matched his own service number, thereby convincing him that he had dodged his own bullet and that he was safe for the rest of the war! In another vignette, a smartly turned out regiment waits patiently at attention while their commander-in-chief relieves himself at the edge of the parade ground. Stories like this bring a refreshing balance to Hallas' book.

One of the soldiers quoted by Hallas is William Triplet, from a short book he published in 1943. Triplet was only seventeen years old when he enlisted in the US Army, in large part because a recruiter who came to his high school in Sedalia, Missouri, promised that any student who joined up would receive a high school diploma upon returning to the United States. Triplet never got his diploma (his principal blamed it on a misunderstanding), but he did get a couple of wounds, a wealth of experience, and a career in the army that lasted until his retirement in 1954.

He based his memoir (which is much more detailed than the 1943 book) on a diary he kept during the war, fleshing it out with later reflections and information he gleaned from research at the US

Army Military History Institute in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. It retains the immediacy of a contemporary memoir, and yet has the organizational clarity of someone who has thought carefully about their experiences. He has much to say about relations with the French in the Meuse-Argonne region, and writes of the Americans' initiation into the live-and-let-live system of trench warfare. He also has harsh words for many of his officers, some of whom he regards as barely competent to lead men into battle. The losses suffered by his 140th Infantry Regiment (part of the 35th Division) suggests there is definite merit in Triplet's charges. The one weakness of the book is the author's fondness for writing in dialect. Triplet probably adopted the practice to provide a greater sense of realism, but the reader quickly tires of paragraph after paragraph of phonetically-rendered English or French accents. Still, even skipping over these passages, one is left with a fascinating account by a teenager who grew up very quickly at the front.

JFV

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Nathan N. Prefer, **Patton's Ghost Corps: Cracking the Siegfried Line** (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 2000), \$24.95 US, 243 pages, ISBN 0-89141-646-3.

Nathan Prefer follows his 1995 study of General Douglas MacArthur's campaign in New Guinea with this study of the Saar-Moselle Triangle escapade led by another colourful general, George S. Patton. Prefer has become one of the premier historians in the recent movement to rehabilitate the image of the US Army of the Second World War as an effective fighting force. Recent historians, led in Canada by Terry Copp, have sought to illustrate that the Allied armies were victorious in Europe not only because they had more men and materiel than Germany. While the Germans often had superior equipment, it is wrong to over-emphasize the strength of the

German soldiers in north-west Europe to the point that they are mythologized. Prefer argues that, “when the odds were even,” the American infantryman was every bit as good, or better, than his German counterpart (2).

To illustrate this point, Prefer follows XX Corps of Patton’s Third Army during the first three months of 1945 as it fought to break the Siegfried Line and eventually drive across the Rhine. The Corps, and particularly the 94th Infantry Division that led the spearhead, earned the moniker “The Ghost Corps” because of its ability to turn up where the Germans least expected them.

Prefer’s book is an interesting read, and a solid discussion from the American side of a hitherto unstudied military operation. The author is very successful in his recreation of the combat that occurred, particularly the confrontation between the “Ghost Corps” and the “Ghost Division,” the German 11th Panzer Division, a unit so named because it had been destroyed so many times during the war (particularly after fighting in Russia for three years) but always appeared, rejuvenated, for the next big action. Through the narrative, Prefer is able to show that air power and sea power were unable to play a role in the operation, thus supporting his sub-thesis that these branches of the military cannot win a war on their own. After all the bombing and shelling, there was still no substitute for the foot soldier.

Unfortunately, the narrative is somewhat uneven. On many occasions, the author is prone to repeating himself, particularly in describing the origins and previous actions of the American infantry divisions. More importantly, Prefer really fails to support his overarching thesis. The advance through the Saar-Moselle Triangle is portrayed as a series of nibbles and retreats, with “friendly fire” incidents thrown in, that causes great losses in men and materiel. While he briefly mentions the history of the German units facing

the Americans, Prefer does not go into detail on their true fighting strength. Many of these units had fought on the Eastern Front, and by 1945 were effective divisions only on paper. The author also stresses frequently (and rightfully) that the German Panzer forces were extremely short on petrol, making it even more difficult to take his argument at face value.

Extensive research went into this book, particularly from the papers of Major General Harry J. Malony of the 94th Infantry Division. Although not referred to in the text, the book concludes with a number of interesting appendices on the ages, ethnic origin (including 14 from Canada), and levels of formal education of the men in the 94th during 1943-44 (even though Prefer’s book only covers the period of January-March 1945). As Prefer notes, many of the limitations in the work are due to a lack of sources, primarily from the German perspective. Without such perspective, however, *Patton’s Ghost Corps* is best as a narrative history, rather than evidence to support the claim that “the campaign of the Saar-Moselle Triangle and the resulting Saar-Palatinate Campaign were fine examples of the U.S. Army at its best”(208).

SPS

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James Srodes, **Allen Dulles: Master of Spies** (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2000), \$34.95 US, 624 pgs, ISBN 0-89526-314-9.

Although he never laid claim to the title, historical judgement of Allen Welsh Dulles (1893-1969) as “the father of US Intelligence” is probably accurate. Certainly in the years after the Second World War, as British influence in geopolitics declined, the successes and failures of western intelligence – and western foreign policy – were identified to a marked degree by the operations of Dulles’s burgeoning (and sometimes wayward) Central Intelligence Agency.

Dulles’s rise in government service, like that of his brother, John Foster Dulles, was helped immeasurably by family and social connections. Although born a son of the manse, Allen’s family circle was much wider and more influential than that of the average Presbyterian minister. His grandfather, General John Watson Foster, was a prominent Republican who served several US presidents in the post-Civil War decades, and his mother was related to Robert Lansing, who became Secretary of State in the cabinet of Democratic president Woodrow Wilson.

Allen’s career in the US foreign service began in 1916 with a posting to Vienna, where he combined the formal job of visa clerk with the less formal task of gathering intelligence on the crumbling Habsburg Empire. From that point until his resignation over the Cuban Bay of Pigs disaster in 1961, Dulles’s career was less that of a diplomat than of a pioneer and guiding force in the development of the American “intelligence community” – which was by no means confined to the CIA. Throughout the Second World War, when US intelligence operations were overshadowed by those of the British, and in the dangerous bipolar geopolitical world of the early Cold War, Dulles was at the centre of an increasingly complex and frequently uncontrollable universe of intelligence-gathering and covert operations which was eventually to lead to his resignation as Director of Central Intelligence.

James Srodes, a Washington-based journalist, has written a workmanlike account of Dulles’s life and times, and does not skirt around Dulles’s darker side – his playing of favourites, his often tyrannical treatment of employees, and his sometime spectacularly disordered personal life. This biography is a worthwhile addition to the growing library on the shadow world of espionage and its role in twentieth century global politics.

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Eric Hammel, **Marines at War: 20 True Heroic Tales of U.S. Marines in Combat, 1942-1983** (Pacifica, CA: Pacifica Military History, 1999), \$19.95 US paper, 288 pages, ISBN 0-935553-40-1.

With nearly thirty books to his credit, Eric Hammel is the most prolific popular chronicler of the exploits of the US Marine Corps. In this work, Hammel has culled his many publications and compiled a collection of short excerpts and articles that typify the experiences of Marines during and after the Second World War. Most of these stories are in their second or third incarnation, having appeared in *Leatherneck Magazine* or the *Vietnam Magazine* and then in Hammel's books.

Accessible to the most uninformed reader, the book commences with a useful glossary

of terms, and maps to illustrate each of the 20 stories. Arranged chronologically, these excerpts – ranging in length from five to thirty-two pages – include ten accounts of Marine action in the Pacific Theatre during the Second World War, three stories from the Korean War, six about combat in Vietnam, and a final account of the horror in Beirut following the bombing of a Marine barracks in October 1983. When necessary, Hammel provides a contextual preface or postscript for the events to be discussed in each section of the book.

Through both first-hand accounts and third-person narrative, this showcase of Hammel's work exposes and glorifies the role of the Marine. The strength of this collection is Hammel's old standby: the leathernecks of the Second World War, and, of particular note for their action sequences, the

autobiographical accounts of Marine aviators. The only previously unpublished section of the text is Chapter 6, "The Choiseul Raid, October 28-November 3, 1943." In this well written chapter on a rather unrecognized action, the author traces the exploits of coast watchers Charles "Nick" Waddell and C.W. Seton and painstakingly re-enacts the first and only time the 2nd Marine Parachute Battalion saw combat. The diversionary raid on Choiseul, a large island in the Solomons, was used to occupy Japanese forces from reinforcing Bougainville; while "a minor success of limited strategic value," the raid was nonetheless "a good show"(73).

Overall, *Marines at War* is a successful showcase of the variety of Eric Hammel's publications. It is largely anecdotal, personalized history that should enjoy a wide readership. SPS

Briefly Noted

Manuel A. Ribiero Rodrigues, **300 Anos de Uniformes Militares do Exercito de Portugal 1660-1960** (Lisbon: Exercito Portugues [available from Arquivo Historico Militar, Largo do Caminhos de Ferro, 1500 Lisbon, Portugal], 1998), 13,000 escudos, 388 pages, ISBN 972-9326-2319.

Some 465 colour illustrations, most from original manuscripts, are reproduced in this volume, which covers Portuguese army dress in Europe, but also in Brazil, Africa, India, and Macau, whose often exotic uniforms fills over a third of the work. There are also about a hundred black and white photos and line drawings, these last mostly taken from dress regulations. The text deals mostly with organization but some of it reproduces various dress regulations. This first major work on Portuguese uniforms is an outstanding source book on this army both at home and overseas.

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Mary Mortimer and Gilbert Croome, eds., **Quiet Courage: Wartime Memories of the Congregation of Carleton Memorial United Church, Ottawa** (Ottawa: Carleton Memorial United Church, 1999), \$12.50 paper, 60 pages, ISBN 0-9685189-0-7.

This collection of forty-odd short vignettes covers a wide range of Second World War experiences, including life in wartime London, the air war, in both the European and Pacific theatres, the campaigns in north-west Europe and Italy, war brides, and the Women's Division - RCAF. Self-published by Carleton Memorial, it fulfils the dual purpose of providing a record for future generations of the congregation, and raising money for the church's organ fund.

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Francesco Paolo Favarolo, **L'Esercito Veneziano del '700 Ricerche e schizzi** (Venice: Filippi Editore, 1995), 43,000 lire, 148 pages, no ISBN.

This fine study describes in detail the organisation, service,

arms, uniforms, and colours of the Venetian army in the eighteenth century. These troops, who were almost perpetually in a state of war against the Ottoman Turks, were stationed not only in Venice but also on the Croatian and Albanian coast and in the Greek islands. Venetian ships and galleys were still western Europe's first naval line of defence in the eighteenth-century eastern Mediterranean. The fourteen colour plates by the author competently show many uniforms, including the exotic dress of some of the Croatian units, naval uniforms, and the colours.

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David J. Freeman, **Canadian Warship Names** (St. Catharines, ON: Vanwell, 2000), \$35.00, 367 pages, ISBN 1-55125-048-9.

This book, the product of years of painstaking research and professional interest (Freeman served as advisor to the Ships' Names Committee from 1988 to 1999), is a comprehensive listing of all ships' names, the procedures for selecting names, and the origins and classes of names that have been

used by the RCN since 1910. It includes many appendices covering interesting subjects like names that were chosen but never used, names that did not quite make the grade, and names of vessels operated by other services. Well organized and easy to use, it is a valuable reference work for naval historians.

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Jean-Paul Morel de La Durantaye, **Louis-Joseph Morel de La Durantaye, Seigneur de Kamouraska** (Sillery, PQ: Septentrion, 1999), \$18.00, 140 pages, ISBN 2-89448-141-1.

A good biography of the seigneur of Kamouraska who was also an officer of the colonial troops in New France, and also of his son who took part in the battle against Rogers Rangers in March 1758. The book skillfully explains the colonial society of the seigneurs, many of whom were officers, in eighteenth-century Canada.

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Russel Bouchard, **Les Armes à Feu en Nouvelle-France** (Sillery, PQ: Septentrion, 1999), \$18.95, 178 pages, ISBN 2-89448-140-3.

A fine survey of the various types of firearms used in New France by the acknowledged expert in this area of study. Many illustrations trace the evolution of trade and military weapons as well as their bayonets and accessories.

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Courtney Browne, **Tojo: The Last Banzai** (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998 [1967]), \$19.95 paper, 260 pages, ISBN 0-306-80844-7.

General, minister of war, prime minister, and unrepentant nationalist, Hideki Tojo was the most powerful leader in the Japanese government during the Second World War. From October 1941 to July 1944, he had full control of Japan, advocating and initiating the attack on Pearl Harbor and the offensives in China, south-east Asia, and the Pacific islands.

The author examines Tojo's life against the backdrop of increasing Japanese militarism, and uses exclusive interviews with Tojo's widow to illuminate the spartan, single-minded, incorruptible personality of the man who chose war rather than succumb to what he perceived as the west's determination to strangle Japan economically.

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Ernst Rodin, **War and Mayhem: Reflections of a Viennese Physician** (Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 2000), 346 pages, ISBN 1-55212-290-5.

The memoirs of Rodin, a prominent neurologist, cover the roots and aftermath of the Third Reich, but the most interesting section deals with his own experiences in Austria from the *Anschluss* to the American occupation. He entered the Hitler Youth at age fourteen, later transferred to the labour service, and finally ended up as a tanker with an armoured unit stationed near Budapest. By April 1945, his unit was in Vienna tasked with defending it against the Red Army, but against orders they retreated out of the city and "discharged themselves" from the German Army. An interesting perspective on the fighting in the east.

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Miguel Alia Plana and Jesus Maria Alia Plana, **Historia de los Uniformes de la Armada Espanola (1717-1814)** (Madrid: Ministerio de Defensa, 1996), 6,000 pesetas, 428 pages, ISBN 84-7823-479-9.

This is a hefty study on the uniforms of the officer corps, the sailors, the marines, and the administrative corps of the Spanish navy. Amply illustrated in colour and quotes period documents at length. Certainly the most extensive study yet on the topic. Also very valuable for all its data on the organization of the Spanish navy.

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J.H. Harper, **A Source of Pride: Badges of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, 1914-1919** (Ottawa: Service Publications, 1999), \$29.95 paper, 152 pages, ISBN 0-9699845-8-8.

This is likely to become the definitive source for information on Canadian badges of the First World War. It covers every conceivable variant, right up to badge struck for the 1934 Canadian Corps reunion, and every part of the process, from the submission and approval of a design to the manufacture of the badge. Many illustrations and a full list of sources round out this very useful volume.

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Julio Mario Luqui Lagleyze and Antonio Manzano Lahoz, **Las Realistas (1810-1826)** (Barcelona: Quiron Ediciones, 1998), ISBN 84-87314-35-X.

A lot has been written about the South American liberation armies of San Martin and Bolivar but little on their royalist opponents. This study concentrates on the royal troops in Chile, Peru, and Rio de la Plata (Argentina, Uruguay) and provides good data on the organisation, uniforms, weapons, and colours of all regular, volunteer, and militia units on the Spanish side. It is amply illustrated, notably with sixty-two colour plates by Ahoz which certainly show that the royalist camp had its share of colourful uniforms.

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Maria M. Alonso and Milagros Flores, **The Eighteenth Century Caribbean and the British Attack on Puerto Rico in 1797** (San Juan, Puerto Rico: National Park Service, 1997), \$14.95 US, 350 pages, ISBN 1-881713-20-3.

A good account of the events leading up to the British failed attack on San Juan, Puerto Rico, and the attack itself, which British histories don't mention much. After

reading this, one understands better why British contemporaries were rather discreet. A fine defence was put up by the small and motley Spanish garrison. The book contains many extensive excerpts from various journals from both sides, as well as excellent appendices.

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David Meyler and Peter Meyler, **A Stolen Life: Searching for Richard Pierpoint** (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 1999), \$19.95 paper, 141 pages, ISBN 1-896219-55-1.

Commonly known as Captain Dick, Richard Pierpoint was an African warrior from Senegal who was captured while a teenager, sold into slavery, and lived out his remaining years in rural Ontario. He fought with Butler's Rangers in the 1780s, came to Upper Canada as a Loyalist, and then fought with the Coloured Corps during the War of 1812. Reconstructed from disparate sources, this is an excellent biography that reclaims the history of African Loyalists and their contribution to the development of Upper Canada.

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Robert C. Black III, **The Railroads of the Confederacy** (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press [distributed in Canada by Scholarly Book Services], 1998 [1952]), \$30.50 paper, 360 pages, ISBN 0-8078-4729-1.

First published nearly a half-century ago, Black's book was the first to examine in detail the impact of rail transportation on the US Civil War, and the first to argue persuasively that the failure of the Confederacy to utilize its rail resources fully and effectively played a major part in its ultimate defeat. Rail barons who were unwilling to sacrifice their own business interests to the war effort and a government that was reluctant to impose a broad transportation policy combined to ensure that the

South did not adequately exploit the most modern means of transportation. Other historians have studied these matters in recent years, but Black's remains the seminal work.

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William F. Slater and Holger Herwig, **The Grand Illusion: The Prussianization of the Chilean Army** (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), \$50.00 US, 248 pages, ISBN 0-8032-2393-5.

In this fascinating study, Slater and Herwig argue that the Chilean army adopted only the most superficial aspects of the German military ethos, which eventually led to the creation of a large but ineffective army in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. German institutions and policies did not suit Chile, and political infighting, greed, and corruption also hampered the attempted transfer of technology and doctrine. The Chilean army still wears the *Pickelhaube* for ceremonial occasions and goose-steps to the Kaiser's marches, but any positive structural changes that the Germans introduced came at a cost that was too great to Chile's treasury and morale.

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John Abbott, Graeme S. Mount, and Michael J. Mulloy, **The History of Fort St. Joseph** (Toronto: Dundurn Group, 2000), \$14.99 paper, 192 pages, ISBN 1-55002-337-3.

Built in the aftermath of the American Revolution, Fort St. Joseph (at the northern end of Lake Huron) played an important role in the defence of Canada: when the War of 1812 began, the fort's garrison pulled off a remarkable feat, capturing the American Fort Mackinac. For the remainder of the war, the British retained control of the Upper Great Lakes. This book covers not only the construction and history of the fort, but its rediscovery and transformation

into a living history museum and tourist attraction in the 1960s.

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David G. Haglund, ed., **Pondering NATO's Nuclear Options: Gambits for a Post-Westphalian World** (Kingston, ON: Queen's Quarterly, 1999), \$9.50 paper, 208 pages, ISSN 0033-6041.

With the end of the nuclear stand-off between the Soviet Union and the United States, nuclear weapons have lost much of their immediate relevance for international security. Yet the old doctrines are still largely in force, not much new thinking has penetrated the faculties of nuclear theology, and the weapons are still around in large numbers. This volume of papers re-examines the nuclear wisdom of old in light of what is new. While nuclear issues are currently not in the forefront of public concern, they have a habit of re-appearing when governments and the public are least prepared for them. This collection of essays provides valuable help in that preparation.

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Supplement Editor**

Jonathan F. Vance

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