

CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY

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CANADIAN MILITARY HISTORY



Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, N2L 3C5, CANADA

Phone: (519) 884-0710 ext.4594; Fax: (519) 886-5057

Email: mbechtho@wlu.ca Website: www.canadianmilitaryhistory.com

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Editor-in-Chief Terry Copp
Editors, Autumn 2002 issue Chris Madsen
Whitney Lackenbauer
Managing Editor Mike Bechthold
Canadian War Museum Editor Cameron Pulsifer
Book Review Supplement Editor Jonathan F. Vance
Business Manager Ev Jones
Layout & Design Mike Bechthold

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Canadian War Museum

General Motors Court
330 Sussex Drive
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The Canadian War Museum, the national military history museum, is a living memorial to those men and women who served in Canada's armed forces. It is also a centre for research and dissemination of information and expertise on all aspects of the country's military past from pre-contact era to the present. It preserves the artifacts of Canadian military experience, interprets them for present and future generations, and advances the professional study of Canadian military history, including the effects of war and conflict on the nation and all its citizens.

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From the Editors

Academic military history faces an "embattled future," American military historian John Lynn suggested in a provocative 1997 *Journal of Military History* article. What are the prospects for military history at Canadian universities? Recent trends suggest cause for both hope and fear. The popular demand for military history and examinations of the societal impacts of war is strong and growing in the wake of current events such as the campaign against terrorism and looming conflict with nations developing weapons of mass destruction. Daily newscasts, schedules on History Television, and bookstore shelves reflect a steady audience for this type of history. Furthermore, heavy enrollments in university survey courses and seminars dealing with war-related issues reaffirms the tremendous amount of student interest in military affairs.

The popularity of military history, however, has not translated into growth at Canadian academic institutions, and the changing face of history departments in recent years indicates a more disillusioning trend. The proportion of Canadian academics that focus on military history appears to be sharply declining as older faculty retire and leave, and their positions - if not eliminated outright - are filled by more specialized historians with little to no interest in military matters. Large military history classes are often taught by sessional or part-time instructors, who do not enjoy the departmental and institutional support required to sustain the development of the military history field in universities across the country. This situation has the potential to undermine seriously the military history field's ability to renew itself from generation to generation. Without full-time professors to mentor students across the country, Canadian military history will gradually fade away as a serious academic discipline.

What does this all mean for morale amongst emerging military historians who aspire to a faculty appointment? For many emerging scholars, the future appears bleak indeed. But should morale be so low, given the quality of scholarship and publishing opportunities in military history and university student demand? The reality is that senior military historians openly acknowledge that they are without the political clout to guarantee that even their most outstanding students will get jobs. Does this indicate a 'failure in the high command' in which prominent, established military historians, who have largely cut their ties with the

'mainstream' academic history profession in Canada, have abdicated their responsibility to future generations of academic military historians by removing themselves from departmental politics and focusing on external endeavours? By conceptualizing military and political history as a 'casualty' of new methodologies and fields of historical inquiry, have high-profile spokesmen undertaken a premature post-mortem on a thriving body of scholarship that only appears fated because *they* no longer wish to fight for it amongst *their* peer group? If emerging military historians with recent degrees or still pursuing graduate work accept such pessimistic appraisals as a *Jait accompli*, they have ensured that Canadian military history will die as a national, academic field. The excellent scholarship that we read in the pages of *Canadian Military History* reinforces that this would be a tragic loss indeed.

There is a danger in military historians too easily adopting the mantle of 'victimization' to plea for recognition. Simply stated, it can serve to 'marginalize our own discourse.' Is Canadian military historiography inexorably detached from that of the historical discipline as a whole? Perhaps not so much as we typically think, but that is partly how we choose to define 'military history' these days. More "conventional" operational and command-and-control topics continue to generate interest, and certainly are worthy of further research and re-appraisal. Angelo Caravaggio's re-evaluation of Major-General George Kitching's generalship in Normandy challenges prevailing assessments of his failure in Normandy and instead pins responsibility on Lieutenant-General Guy Simonds - Canada's most renowned Second World War commander who generally emerges unscathed in damning indictments of the "high command." But the canvas of "Clio's art" has indeed expanded since W.A.B. Douglas and B. Greenhous reflected on the state of Canadian Second World War historiography in 1974. Studies in war and society abound, and Keeganesque examinations of front-line soldiers' experiences refine our understandings of the many experiential layers of conflict. Wady Lehmann's personal reflections on his time with the No. 1 Canadian War Crimes Investigation Unit provides interesting insights into the Kurt Meyer war crimes trial that will assist future scholars who try to understand this important benchmark in Canadian legal, political and military history. Furthermore, explorations into the social, cultural,

gender, and administrative aspects of war make meaningful contributions to Canadian historiography in all its richness and diversity. Laurel Halladay demonstrates how the federal government created army, air force and navy entertainment units to bolster the morale of service personnel and civilian audiences, with important legacies for the cultural development of the country. Her article transcends several history fields, and indicates how much recent scholarship into military topics is difficult to categorize neatly - and will be difficult for non-military historians to ignore.

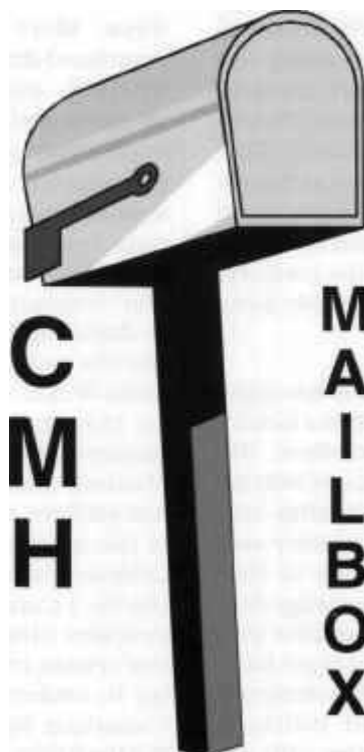
Newer generations of military historians still face a formidable task in gaining respect and changing attitudes at Canadian universities. Undergraduate students will register for courses and graduate students will undertake theses on military-related topics, if given the chance. This is our position of strength. John Lynn posited that "the future of academic military history is bound to be embattled, but it can survive through a creative adaptation to the best of recent historical currents."

Dear Sir,
Once again I eagerly awaited the Summer edition of *Canadian Military History* and I was not disappointed. Whatever you are doing, keep it up as I feel that you are the finest Canadian publication of its type on the commercial market.

"Death at Licourt" by Cameron Pulsifer particularly caught my eye, especially the photographs. Researching photographs depicting casualties is an area that has not been researched. Although the topic is slightly morbid, it appears to me that there are proportionately few photographs of battlefield casualties. I may be totally out in left field on this, and perhaps there are large numbers of casualty photographs squirreled away in archives that have just never been declassified or published; but I tend to think that there are relatively few out there. The photographs of heaps of American Civil War casualties do come to mind, but when I think of 20th Century conflicts, I can only recollect relatively few.

If there are so few photographs of casualties, then why is this so? Obviously, as the technology of

publishing and disseminating these photographs improved during the 20th Century, there was a need to make sure that the next of kin did not have the tragic misfortune of seeing the



This process has already been underway for some time now, to the benefit - not the detriment - of the field of Canadian military history. We agree that some of the most exciting scholarship in this country relates to war and society and military subjects. The challenge remains to re-integrate military history into other fields of historical study without succumbing to forlorn disillusionment and defeatism. All is not lost, and the military historian's seat in the 'ivory tower' must not be abandoned. (After all, the elected co-chairs of the graduate committee of the Canadian Historical Association are both military historians.) It is not time to concede defeat, but rather to keep our 'chins up' and press forward. The academic military historian has an essential role to play as teacher, scholar, and commentator. War is too serious a business to be left to the generals.

P. Whitney Lackenbauer
and Chris Madsen
Co-editors

photographs. But what other reasons would there be to discourage the taking of casualty photographs? Perhaps human decency, the respect for the dead or just a code of ethics in the military, these are all areas that could be studied. Culture may also be a foundation for study. Some cultures have no respect for the fallen and the bodies are looked on as trophies where as in other cultures the fallen are revered. Now that mankind has moved from the 20th to the 21st Century, perhaps this is an area to study.

Looking at the three photographs of Battersby's car after it had been disabled and the crew killed reveals little superficial damage. Small arms or indirect fire may well have killed the crew, but the vehicle and its contents show no signs of internal explosions. Not being trained in these matters, my initial assessment is that all photographs show various stages of looting and not the effects of explosions.

These photographs, though tragic in their subject, certainly give all of us a more personal look into the human cost of war.

Ed Storey
Nepean, ON