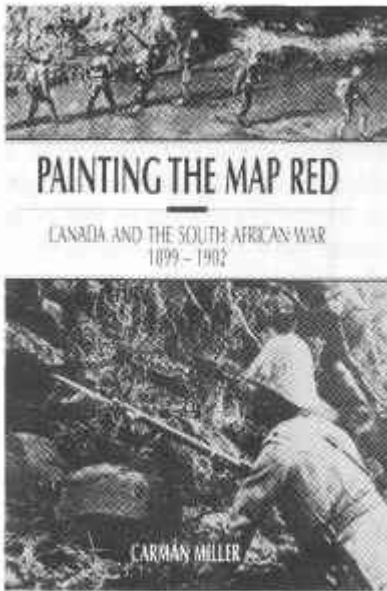


**Painting the Map Red  
Canada and the South  
African War, 1899-1902**

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Sidney Allinson  
Victoria, B.C.