

THE ROYAL CANADIAN ARMOURED CORPS: AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY

by John Marteinson and Michael R. McNorgan,
with Sean Maloney

Toronto: Robin Brass Studio and The Royal Canadian Armoured
Corps Association 446 pages. \$69.95.

Reviewed by Lieutenant-Colonel (ret'd) Brian Reid

Ignore the price! This is the best corps history since Nicholson's *The Gunners of Canada* appeared more than three decades ago. The research and preparation of a corps history is perhaps the most difficult task that can face a team of military historians. Not only must they capture the broad theme, but they are expected to recognize the contributions of as many individuals and units as possible. Furthermore, if they are honest to the tenets of their profession, they must identify and dissect both the successes and the failures dispassionately and objectively. Last, they must operate under the oversight of the senior members of the corps — almost invariably individuals with fierce loyalties, strong opinions and forceful personalities — who are overseeing the project and paying the bills. In balancing these requirements, the authors have succeeded admirably.

The book begins with the antecedents of the Armoured Corps. The history of the cavalry in Canada is traced from its earliest days, through the frustrations of the Fenian Raids and the North West Rebellion, to the triumphs of the South African War. The First World War, characterized by machine guns and barbed wire, generally saw the misuse and waste of horsed cavalry, but new forms of mounted troops — motorized and mechanized forces — had begun to emerge. Most readers will probably not be aware that a Canadian Tank Corps was taking shape in the waning days of the Great War.

After the war, the Canadian Army entered a period of retrenchment and stagnation that lasted for nearly two decades. The cavalry was able to begin to move away from the horse, and a limited number of light armoured carriers were purchased in 1931 and 1932. Discussion about the employment of armour in *Canadian Defence Quarterly* raised awareness of the changing face of war and played a part in developing a nascent armoured community. In 1936, the Canadian Tank School opened in London, Ontario, moving to Camp Borden and changing its name to the Canadian Armoured Fighting Vehicles School in 1938.

The chapters on the Second World War, as might be expected, provide the heart and soul of the book. The story of the RCAC in the war was one of rapid expansion with its attendant fits and starts, organization and

re-organization, tragedies and, ultimately, triumphs. By 1943, the Corps had assumed the form it would take into action. It was made up of well-motivated and technically proficient officers and men, but it had serious deficiencies when first going into battle — being equipped with a tank outgunned by the opposition, having very little realistic training above unit level, with the consequent lack of all but the most basic knowledge of all-arms cooperation, and a near-total lack of combat experience. It says much for the tenacity and adaptability of the regiments of the Corps that they were able to prevail, in Italy and in North-West Europe, against some of the best troops the Germans could deploy. The authors have done an excellent job of describing the involvement of the armoured formations and the individual tank and recon units in the important battles in both European theatres, while not turning a blind eye to the occasional battlefield failure.

The chapters on the post-war armoured corps are in many ways a separate study. The lessons about combat arms cooperation, tactics and training learned the hard way in war motivated a very hard look at the Corps and its relationship with the other arms and services. The advent of the Cold War and the invasion of South Korea forced the Army to come to grips with the challenges of war in the nuclear age. Later, a combination of radical military social engineering and a series of brutal fiscal restraints led to a prolonged period of wandering in the wilderness. The authors chronicle all these events with candour.

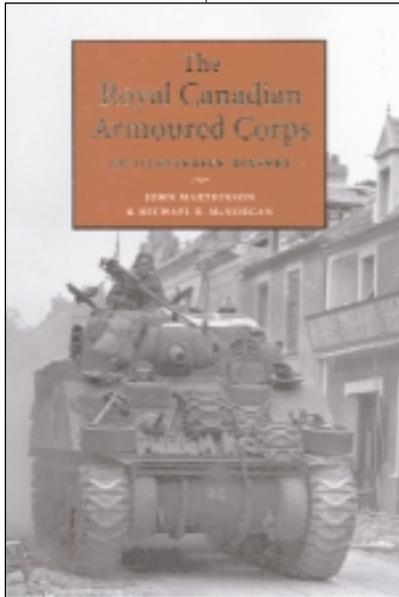
To reach as wide an audience as possible, a book must be more than a printed and bound manuscript. The RCAC Association wisely chose Robin Brass to transform the manuscript and an extensive collection of well-selected illustrations into a work of art. If I have a criticism of the format, it is that the absence of source notes will make the task of serious

students of military affairs more difficult. On a different note, this book will do much to establish Chris Johnson as the foremost military cartographer in Canada, a claim he is far too modest to make for himself.

In summary, in documenting the history of the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps and its predecessors, the authors have also catalogued the rise and fall of the Canadian Army as a serious fighting force. I recommend this book without reservation.

Lieutenant-Colonel Brian Reid, a retired Artillery officer, is a noted military historian. He is the author of *Our Little Army in the Field*, a History of Canadians in the South African War.

Editors Note: Because of the Editor's obvious association with this book, this review was edited by a member of the *Journal's* Editorial Board.



CITIZEN-SOLDIERS AND MANLY WARRIORS: MILITARY SERVICE AND GENDER IN THE CIVIC REPUBLIC TRADITION

by R. Claire Snyder

Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, Paperback \$22.95, Hardcover \$48.00.

Reviewed by Dr. Isabel Campbell

This work merits the attention of members of the Canadian Armed Forces and civilian members of the Department of National Defence who are concerned with personnel policies.

Claire Snyder's book, based upon her doctoral thesis on political theory, is logical, dry, erudite and contains a huge number of references to theoretical studies of Machiavelli and Rousseau. It is also limited to an analysis of the American political and military traditions which are so different from those of Canada. Why then does this academic study, which does not mention Canada or its armed forces, warrant careful reading here?

The central premise of Snyder's book is that one becomes a Citizen-Soldier by performing certain rituals and actions, developing bravery, selflessness, patriotism and civic virtue through these activities. The concept of the Citizen-Soldier is, of course, based upon Machiavelli: citizens must perform both civic and military duties as a condition of citizenship. Snyder carefully dissects the notion of *armed masculinity*, noting that although men have exclusively filled the role of Citizen-Soldier, the mere fact of their gender does not give them ideal characteristics for this role. In fact, not all men are suitable for this role; those that are require much training and continued service to achieve the characteristics required of the Citizen-Soldier. The emphasis here is on action and the qualities produced through action.

Snyder not only provides the intellectual tools for accepting women as soldiers, she also creates an ethical framework which integrates traditional military values with the values of a rapidly changing modern world. Women, like men, require much training and continued service to develop essential soldierly qualities, and not all will succeed. In her view, Citizen-Soldiers protect the values of their society and are distinguished by their willingness to put the common

good ahead of individual self-interest. By emphasizing such common values of courage, camaraderie and selflessness, and by recognizing that intense training and continued service are required to reinforce these values, Snyder shows that it is through actions which benefit the nation that a successful military is created.

Tremendous discipline is required to produce a soldier. She fully recognizes the difficulty of integrating females, gays and others into the American military, and she explicitly discusses hazing, rape, sexual harassment and similar problems which have arisen in the process. Both virtues and vices are associated with soldierly traditions. In her view, one cannot eliminate all the vices associated with the military, but one can discourage them. She recommends eliminating and changing those rituals and practices which degrade females, such as calling new recruits "pussies" or "girls". By recognizing that bravery, selflessness, cohesiveness and civic virtue may be displayed through actions on the part of soldiers regardless of their sex, Snyder places the focus of our attention upon performance, where it should be.

Though Canadian traditions and ideals are certainly not based in the republican tradition discussed by Snyder, there is no doubt that the Canadian military might consider how their traditions, training and service are also intended to uphold soldierly ideals. Many may applaud her contention that women and men, by rigorous training and service, may become courageous, selfless, cohesive and virtuous, as these are universal soldierly ideals which Canadians might claim to share.

My guess is that Claire Snyder would have us celebrate the changes and the controversies which have come about as result of gender integration in the Canadian Armed Forces. From the framework of her analysis, the changes show that the Canadian military reflects the values of a diverse Canadian population, and the controversies illustrate that members express their opinions and views and participate in the process of change. This is a controversial book and not an easy read. Nonetheless, I strongly recommend it to anyone concerned about ethical values and gender integration in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Dr. Isabel Campbell is the Chief Archivist at the Directorate of History and Heritage in the Department of National Defence.

THE BLOODY BATTLE FOR TILLY:
NORMANDY 1944

by Ken Tout

Sutton Publishing Limited (in Canada, Oxford University Press),
246 pages, \$55.95.

Reviewed by Major Michael McNorgan

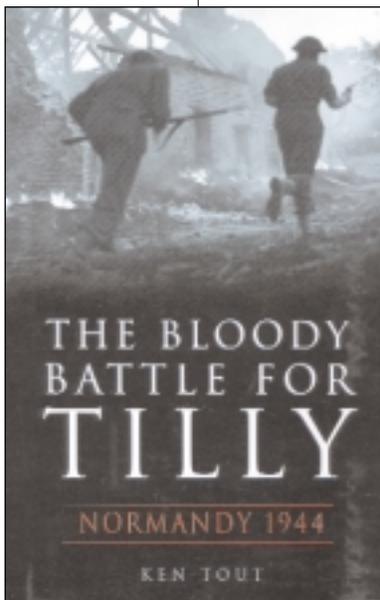
On 5 August 1944, Lieutenant General Harry Crerar briefed the senior officers of First Canadian Army on Operation *Totalize*. This armoured attack, scheduled to take place during the night of 7/8 August, had as its aim: “To break through the enemy positions to the south and south-east of Caen, and to gain such ground in the direction of Falaise as will cut off the enemy forces now facing Second Army and render their withdrawing eastwards difficult — if not impossible.” Crerar concluded his address with, “...and I have no doubt that we shall make the 8th of August 1944 an even blacker day for the German Armies than is recorded against that same date twenty-six years ago”.

Crerar was, of course, referring to the 1918 Battle of Amiens — a battle that had marked the beginning of the end for the German armies in France, primarily because it broke the fighting spirit of their field commander, General Erich von Ludendorff. The formation that had been shown to best advantage at Amiens had been the Canadian Corps, and Amiens, in Canadian military circles at least, stood for operations carried out in a completely professional and ultimately victorious fashion. To compare *Totalize* to Amiens would be to place the former in very exclusive company indeed.

In the event, *Totalize* was only partially successful. The German line was penetrated, and ground was gained in the direction of Falaise just as had been planned. However, “the enemy forces now facing Second Army” were not cut off, and so *Totalize* has never been seen in the same light as Amiens. It has become just another of the many sanguinary battles on the way to Falaise, remarkable only for the innovative plan conceived by the commander of II Canadian Corps, Lieutenant General Guy Simonds. Simonds’ plan used tactical night bombing attacks, introduced the armoured personnel carrier, and utilized unique armoured tactics coupled with electronic guidance devices. The first stage of the plan succeeded brilliantly, but the entire plan was overly complex, and each subsequent stage relied too heavily on its predecessor. Mistakes were thus multiplied. In the inevitable and ultimately pointless comparisons between the II Canadian Corps of August 1944 and the Canadian Corps of August 1918, Simonds’ formation comes out second best. The reasons for this have nothing to do with the bravery of the soldiers or the intelligence of the generals, but rather stem from the different

circumstances each corps faced, including the level of experience and training of the corps staffs.

Ken Tout, a veteran of *Totalize*, has written several books on armour in Normandy, including *Tank!* and *A Fine Night for Tanks: The Road to Falaise*. In his latest work, *The Bloody Battle for Tilly: Normandy 1944*, he has again looked at the events of that long ago August. Tout suggests that one reason *Totalize* was not a total success was that it had been rushed, primarily because Montgomery, himself under pressure to move more quickly, pressed hard on his subordinates, Crerar and Simonds. The Canadian commanders also rushed to meet the anniversary date of 8 August, a date that held no significance to the men fighting the battle, but which was important to the generals for publicity purposes. While there may well be some truth to that supposition, a more important requirement, I would argue, was that it had to be co-ordinated with the fast moving operations on the American front.



Like Operation *Totalize*, this book is both interesting and flawed. Interesting in the many details of the actions in and around Tilly of which this reviewer had not previously been aware. This detail reflects Tout’s extensive research into the action through contact with veterans. The book’s most serious problem is the lack of maps. There is only one — showing the whole of Normandy — in the entire work. Although the text contains extensive descriptions of which unit was where and at what time, a map with this information would have been far better than the most detailed prose. Then too, there are numerous tiny errors, probably inevitable given that the author is writing about another nation’s army. The South Saskatchewan Regiment, for example, is described as coming from the Canadian ‘mid-west’ instead of the prairies, and II Canadian Corps would no doubt have been surprised to know that it held a 6th Armoured Brigade on its order of battle.

This is not just another account of Normandy, however; this is a book with a mission. Tout subscribes to the viewpoint that Canadian military historians, from Colonel C.P. Stacey on down, have short-changed the Canadian veteran of Normandy. He devotes a fourteen-page chapter to arguing that the traditional method of measuring military success, comparing final results against original objectives, needs to be overthrown. “The battle should be judged not on the stated proposals of the planners but in relation to an expectation of failure.” What this argument means will be left to the reader.

The Bloody Battle for Tilly is not the best book written on the Canadians in Normandy, but it is well worth a read and should not be overlooked by anyone with a serious interest in that most interesting of campaigns.

Major Michael McNorgan is serving with the Directorate of History and Heritage in NDHQ.

CANADIAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS
U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN CANADA

two books by John Clearwater

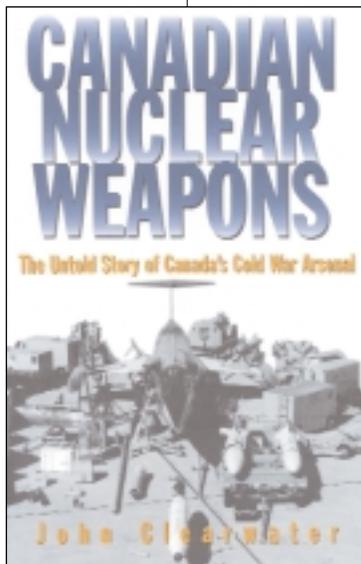
Toronto: Dundurn Press, 309 pages, \$23.95, and 298 pages, \$27.99 respectively.

Reviewed by Captain Andrew B. Godefroy

With his two books, John Clearwater has made a serious dent in the traditional myth of Canada as a benign middle power and peace broker. In *Canadian Nuclear Weapons: The Untold Story of Canada's Nuclear Arsenal*, he provides detailed descriptions of Canada's half dozen nuclear-related programmes, including the controversial Bomarc, the Genie Rocket, and the CF-104 Starfighter squadrons. His follow-on volume, *U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Canada*, provides a detailed look at the nuclear-related activities of the United States Air Force in Canada, in particular at such places as Goose Bay, Harmon and Argentia Naval Station.

Frankly, the information revealed in Clearwater's two books is nothing short of astonishing, and it makes one wonder how such events have thus far largely escaped Canadian military historians. Clearwater reports, for example, that there had been more than thirty-five separate accidents involving nuclear-armed aircraft in Canada between 1950 and 1969, many of which involved the loss of the nuclear weapon itself or the deaths of aircrews. More chilling, perhaps, is that at least five of these weapons were classified as "Broken Arrow", meaning that they were in danger of exploding or had been lost.

While Clearwater has certainly revealed an impressive and noteworthy skeleton in Canada's military history closet, he has done so with so much sloppiness that it detracts from the overall value of the work. The first book, *Canadian Nuclear Weapons*, is little more than a stack of transcribed government documents and unidentified diagrams slapped between two covers. One gets the impression that there was a sense of urgency to publish the material and, if so, it was done at the expense of



the significant value a book on this subject could have provided. Clearwater defends his nonchalant approach to historical analysis by indicating that he has left the documents in their near-original form to assist the reader in getting a feel for the subject. Unfortunately, in the end one only feels pain and resignation in wading through disjointed theses, no chronology, vague assumptions and poor grammar. Finally, throughout the entire book, Clearwater demonstrates that he has an axe to grind about access to information, a bureaucratic adversity that all historians have faced in their research.

The second book, *U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Canada*, is better organized and easier to read, despite the reappearance of Clearwater's 'axe' and the subtle hint of a Canadian government conspiracy to hide the truth about nuclear weapons in Canada. While presenting a more chronologically sound and descriptive history, his personal biases often overshadow an objective presentation and analysis of the subject. Perhaps most distressing is that after lamenting through two books about the "unconscionable" actions of the Federal government to dissuade the public from requesting documents, Clearwater's own citations of his sources are cryptic at best. His endnotes make no mention of the archive source, record group, volume or file from which he derived his information, and, if one wanted to locate a particular file or page referenced by Clearwater, the task would be nearly impossible without combing through entire archive holdings or his

special nuclear fond at the Directorate of History and Heritage.

These two works are certainly welcome additions to any Canadian military library, at least until a real history of this period comes along, for they fill a currently vacant post and therefore are reluctantly recommended to the fortified reader.

Captain Andrew B. Godefroy is the Commander of the Canadian Forces Joint Space Support Team. He is also currently completing his doctorate in War Studies at the Royal Military College.

THEORY, DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE
OF CONFLICT DE-ESCALATION IN
PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

by David M. Last

Clementsport, Nova Scotia: Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, 1997, 144 pgs.

Reviewed by Major (ret'd) Jean Morin

Canada has been involved in peacekeeping for more than fifty years and, according to statistics compiled for the awarding of the Canadian Peacekeeping Service Medal, some 125,000 Canadians have played a part in one capacity or

another. Yet, despite widespread international recognition, very little has been written by Canadians about the practice and methods of peacekeeping – of how soldiers go about doing the necessary job amidst armed factions in conflict. Available accounts are mostly anecdotal, and war diaries — however methodically written — reveal little about peacekeeping techniques. Ten studies on peacekeeping carried out over the past thirty years — including the most searching, the Somalia Inquiry — have provided little information about these skills. In short, the Canadian peacekeeping 'culture' is based on word-of-mouth information, passed along informal unit channels.

Major David Last, PhD, has been working in this field for the last fifteen years. While he was a battery commander with 1 RCHA in Cyprus in 1992, he made a careful study of how the many tasks related to peacekeeping were actually done on the ground. His study of Canadian documents related to UNFICYP sparked a far wider search for information about peacekeeping wherever it was practised or discussed. In 1994, he participated in a study headed by Dr. Kenneth Eyre, now research director at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre. Intensive research continued while he was a student at the US Army Command and General Staff College. In 1997, David Last published *Theory, Doctrine and Practice of Conflict De-Escalation*, a ground-breaking study that deserves widespread recognition.

Peacekeeping is discussed in the book in standard military operational concepts and terminology. The author, for example, talks about conflict de-escalation ‘campaigns’, with all that implies. He discusses ‘defensive’ and ‘offensive’ aspects of peacekeeping and, carrying the analogy to all levels of command, encompasses peacekeeping activities within the classical strata of strategy, operations and tactics. This is because Last, quite in opposition to the Pearsonian notion of absolute neutrality, is convinced that an ‘enemy’ does indeed exist in peacekeeping, and that the enemy is violence itself. Soldiers assigned to contain violence in a particular sector must confront this ‘enemy’ using a form of ‘fire and movement’ transformed into an equally dynamic process of ‘defence and negotiation’. Post cease-fire peacekeeping initiatives should be conducted like flank attacks with covering fire: negotiation should be used at ever increasing levels to break down the resistance of the parties, attacking the precise point that led to violence; thus ‘taking the hill’. This method will seem familiar to soldiers, but it encompasses an entire array of refinements and methods which the author describes in step-by-step form. Transposing wartime military techniques to peacekeeping might appear simplistic, but the reader quickly comes to appreciate the clarity and precision this permits.

The first three chapters provide the theoretical base, after which the author tackles the more practical issues. The theoretical chapters study each question methodically and in considerable depth. If the explanations are sometimes rather ‘heavy’, Last makes a commendable effort to illustrate them with telling anecdotes and pertinent examples. Whether the text is giving an account of effective work in the area of negotiating techniques, an analysis of the many factors affecting levels of vio-

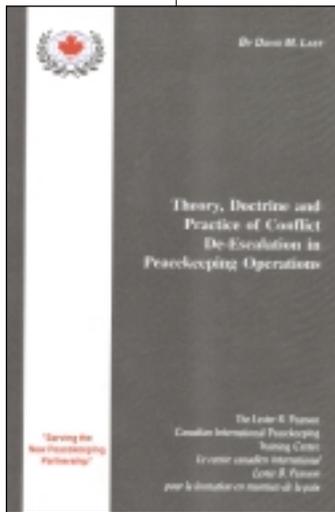
lence, or when it lists the components of the specific skills being discussed, the experienced reader recognizes that it is ‘right on the money’.

The three more practical chapters — which still show the interrelationship between theory and practice — constitute a wealth of sound information which could replace most of the teaching materials that have been used for the last forty years — that more or less informal instruction that was passed from one peacekeeper to another. It is now possible to explain to novice peacekeepers, clearly and analytically, what is expected of them in a type of operation that differs significantly from anything encountered in their military training. With the charts, tables and briefing notes, Major Last has produced detailed and highly useful training material which is applicable to the differing requirements and perspectives of all levels of the military hierarchy. The notion that a ‘good peacekeeper’ must first be a soldier well trained for war no longer holds. David Last’s analysis of the need, at all levels, for highly-developed skills, in terms of both interpersonal contact and combat-related performance, is irrefutable. For the first time we have an instructional tool that tightly links these two aspects.

Theory, Doctrine and Practice of Conflict De-Escalation is in many ways the cumulative wisdom of the Canadian peacekeeping experience passed down primarily by word of mouth for over forty years indeed the main elements of this indeed ought to have been recorded in the early seventies when Canada was at the forefront of peacekeeping, but, in the absence of a coherent national doctrine, the author had to draw on foreign research to understand what had been going on in Canada. The book, of course, goes further than that. Last’s thoughts on the necessity of using advanced techniques in peacekeeping is highly innovative, and pushes military peacekeeping toward a new level of expertise.

Major David Last’s work is evidence of the growing impact of the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre. By publishing research such as this, the Centre can now be considered to be at the cutting edge of international efforts or relating to the multi-disciplinary aspects of peacekeeping. Canada is now well able to export its wealth of experience. At very least, when in our humble Canadian way we proclaim that we wrote the book on peacekeeping, there will now be one to show.

Major (ret’d) Jean Morin is an historian at the Directorate of History and Heritage in NDHQ.



A HISTORY OF WOMEN IN THE CANADIAN MILITARY

by Barbara Dundas

Montréal: Editions Art Global, 157 pages, \$39.95.

Reviewed by Lieutenant-Colonel Susan F. Beharriell

Congratulations to the Directorate of History and Heritage for producing this richly illustrated popular history of women in the Canadian military. This long overdue book chronicles the services of Canada's nursing sisters in the Northwest Rebellion in 1885, the Yukon Field Force of 1898 and the South African and First World Wars. It continues by telling of the nearly 50,000 women who served overseas and at home during the Second World War and in the Korean conflict. And it covers the key events of the post-war era — the uncertain times after demobilization, the Cold War, unification of the three services, and the ever-widening role of women in the military. Discussions of human rights legislation, significant policy changes, difficulties integrating women and the reality of widespread harassment bring the story into the present.

A major strength of the book lies in its extensive illustrations. A selection of paintings by Molly Lamb Bobak, the only woman to be an official war artist during the Second War, are superbly reproduced in full colour. Ranging from depictions of basic trainees on the parade square and parachute riggers at work, to life in the barracks and women repairing aircraft, these paintings present a unique look at the daily lives of servicewomen during the war.

The book is also well illustrated with a broad range of photos. Early shots include, for example, nurses in action in South Africa circa 1900 and rifle-toting members of the St. John Fusiliers 'Amazon Battalion'. The photo coverage of women's service during World War II is comprehensive and well balanced, but the pictorial representation of recent times — showing women as full and equal members of the Forces engaged in real operations — is less than adequate. Where are the photos of servicewomen hard at work during the Oka situation, the Winnipeg flood, the famous ice storm or the huge airlift into the former Yugoslavia? What about the Peacekeeping Monument in downtown Ottawa which includes the figure of a servicewoman? One would expect that a 'popular history' would include events with which the Canadian public is familiar. And, unfortunately, the photo coverage seems to stop in the early 1990s — which is hardly an accurate reflection of present reality.

A series of paintings and photos shows the evolution of women's uniforms from wartime to the present, but it is incomplete. The green 'unified' uniform worn between the late 60s and the mid-80s is not included. Neither are mess kits, work dress or any uniforms that include slacks.

A further quibble is that the author has glossed over examples of recent accomplishments and concrete evidence of the full integration of women. The nameless photo of the navigator from 1987 turns out to be the first woman to command an operational flying squadron, a significant accomplishment that deserves recognition. Also, why ignore the important work done by the Provost Marshal — a woman — in revamping the entire CF military justice system following the Somalia Inquiry? It seems that as the personnel system's production of reports and analyses of the role of women slowed in the early 1990s, so too did the author's treatment of the subject. The result is incomplete coverage of the last decade: the evidence of full and equal integration of women simply is not shown.

For the general reader, however, the book is a clear and accurate chronicle of the service of Canada's military women over the years. Regrettably, it never truly 'comes alive' to tell the exciting stories of the women who have been pioneers in so many ways. For the scholar, it contains little analysis and fails to provide assistance for further research. A list of 'related readings' — half a dozen texts dealing mainly with the Second World War — is not a satisfactory bibliography.

Undoubtedly, the author had to live within tight restrictions as to length of the book and preparation time, and indeed this reviewer recognizes that one simply cannot include everything that is relevant. Let us hope that the decision to produce a light, 'pop history' coffee table book does not mean that the Department believes that this is all that the subject deserves. Perhaps we should consider this book to be a good first step in examining the experience of Canada's military women. Their story has only just begun to be told.

As the Commander in Chief, the Governor General, wrote in her preface to the book, "Anyone who is interested in the ever-evolving role of women will deeply appreciate this book that chronicles an important part of their full and equal inclusion in our society and our national institutions." We look forward to Volume Two.

Lieutenant-Colonel Susan F. Beharriell is serving at NORAD Headquarters in Colorado Springs.

