

**FIGHTING SAIL ON LAKE HURON AND GEORGIAN BAY: THE WAR OF 1812 AND ITS AFTERMATH**

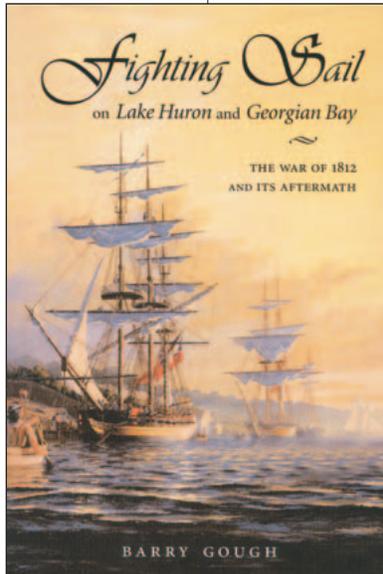
by Barry Gough

Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press. 215 pages, \$US 32.95.

(Distributed in Canada by Vanwell Press)

Reviewed by James Pritchard

Anyone who has visited the charmingly restored buildings of the Royal Navy establishment at Penetanguishene, Ontario and wondered what ever moved the British to build them can now have a clear answer. This book is the fourth written during the last half dozen years that has transformed our knowledge and understanding of the maritime and military struggle for the Great Lakes during the War of 1812, that curious contest that both Canadians and Americans believe they won and that the British view as an embarrassment. The other titles are Robert Malcolmson, *Lords of the Lake: The Naval War on Lake Ontario, 1812-1814*, (Toronto, 1998), David Curtis Skaggs and Gerard T. Altoff, *A Signal Victory, The Lake Erie Campaign, 1812-1813*, (Annapolis, 1997), and John Sugden, *Tecumseh, A Life*, (New York, 1997).



two chapters, clearly outlining the British strategy to defend Upper Canada and the fur trade in the North American interior. He recounts briefly the daring initiatives and desperate measures carried out by British commanders who captured Detroit and Fort Michilimackinac in 1812 and the failure of the same aggressive forward strategy on Lake Erie in 1813. Gough devotes the remainder of his narrative to the 1814 campaign and its aftermath. The four main chapters include accounts of the escape of HMS *Nancy*, the creation of Fort Willow between Lake Simcoe and the forks of the Nottawasaga River which flows into Georgian Bay, the building of a fort near the mouth of the same river, the British-led Canadian-Indian attack deep into present-day Wisconsin and the capture of Prairie du Chien on the Mississippi River, the successful American attacks at Nottawasaga and Sault Ste. Marie, and Lieutenant Worsley's daring cutting-out expedition that netted the British two American schooners when they had no sailing craft at all on the Upper Lakes. Gough's final three chapters are devoted to the war's aftermath, the search for security, the changing strategy that led to building the naval establishment at Penetanguishene and the eventual demilitarization of the Great Lakes. The story is well told throughout.

The maps provide excellent aids to comprehension. Gough's account is balanced and the details are always related to the big picture of international diplomacy and military strategy. This book should appeal to anyone interested in daring deeds by small forces, Canada's military and naval history, and the military strategy of an earlier day.

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**AVOIDING ARMAGEDDON: CANADIAN MILITARY STRATEGY AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS 1950-63**

by Andrew Richter

Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press. 214 pages, \$85.00

Reviewed by Major J.C. Stone

In *Avoiding Armageddon*, Andrew Richter challenges the notion that Canada had no interest in, or was incapable of, examining issues of strategy during the Cold War. He attempts to demonstrate that Canadians did in fact articulate and identify strategic interests that were independent of its allies, and particularly those of the United States. Richter looks at a series of assumptions that he argues have gone largely unchallenged in Canadian security literature. Using documentation from the Departments of National Defence and External Affairs (now Foreign Affairs) that until recently remained classified, he demonstrates that Canadian officials approached defence and security issues from a uniquely Canadian perspective. More important,

Richter notes that Canadian officials also identified and wrote about some of the main conceptual theories of the period dealing with nuclear strategy and deterrence.

Organized into six chapters, the book discusses the key issues and developments that arose between 1950 and 1963, a period that Richter considers is a decisive phase of the Cold War. Chapter 1 establishes the historical context of the study by examining the domestic and international environments after the Second World War. Richter correctly argues that the 1945-1949 period was critical in setting the broad framework for post-war Canadian defence and security policy. It was in this immediate post-war period that Canada made a conscious decision not to produce nuclear weapons and decided to join an alliance of Western states for whom an attack against one would be regarded as an attack against all. These are decisions that remain relevant and topical in 2003.

Chapter 2 examines developments in air defence and, more specifically, how officials from DND and DEA approached the air defence issue. Richter looks at three important developments: the NORAD agreement, the Avro Arrow fighter aircraft, and the

relationship of air defence and nuclear strategy. The most important point that Richter makes in this chapter is the differences in how DND and DEA defined Canada's interests. DND stressed the common air defence interests, while DEA stressed the need to protect Canadian political interests. Although officials often disagreed about the nature and scope of a problem, they offered analysis that they believed would further Canada's larger strategic interests from their respective viewpoints. The significant point is that officials offered analysis that furthered Canada's interests, and not those of the US or other allies.

Chapters 3 and 4 address the nuclear weapons issue both conceptually and within the domestic context of actually acquiring them for Canadian Forces weapon systems. Chapter 3 highlights some of the important Canadian writings on deterrence, strategic stability and nuclear doctrine. The chapter discusses the key concepts in post-war nuclear strategy that were distinct from the US appreciation. To support his arguments, Richter reviews a number of DND studies that examined nuclear strategy and deterrence issues. Canada, for example, rejected the early military arguments that the atomic bomb was just another weapon. Richter notes that Canadians viewed the bomb as the ultimate weapon, and this was the basis of its use as a deterrent. Chapter 4 examines the nuclear weapons acquisition for Canada's NATO forces, US requests for storage and overflight of nuclear weapons in Canada, and Canada's own deployment of nuclear weapons. Once again, the significant differences between DND's and DEA's views are important to forming an understanding of this volatile time in Canadian foreign and defence policy. External Affairs believed that Canada could not acquire nuclear weapons at the same time that Canadian officials were playing a leading role in disarmament negotiations. On the other hand, DND considered the acquisition of nuclear weapons important for core Canadian security interests, particularly within the NATO context.

Chapter 5 continues with the nuclear theme, but looks at Canadian thinking on arms control and disarmament. Richter focuses on the Canadian view of arms control and how Canada's views differed from the American approach. Canadian officials in DND considered that measures designed to reduce or eliminate weapons systems might transform the nuclear balance, a view that contrasted with the stable environment that arms control supporters believed would result from agreements.

Finally, Chapter 6 addresses how Canadian strategic thought was either reflected in or influenced the development of defence policy. Richter argues that the Canadian Cold War defence policy was consistent with Canadian strategic thought, and that defence officials who formulated policy were not just working on a bureaucratic exercise.

*Arming Armageddon* is a well-researched study using recently released archival material that examines, in the defence and security context, a very turbulent period in Canada's history. Richter's study, which continues a more recent trend in the literature to examine contributions to nuclear strategic thought from outside the US, is well written, easy to read and understand, and logically organized. It is fairly clear from Richter's study that Canada had its own views – views that often challenged US views. More important, perhaps in today's context, is that Canadian officials examined complex defence and security issues and provided analysis that furthered Canadian interests.

The book will be released in paperback in May 2003 for \$27.95. Reading this book is time well spent.

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## HIGH FLIGHT: AVIATION AND THE CANADIAN IMAGINATION

by Jonathan F. Vance

Toronto: Penguin Books. 337 pages, \$35.00

Reviewed by Aaron Plamondon

**W**hile there have been many histories written about the evolution of flying in Canada, Jonathan Vance has taken a very different approach and the result is an original piece of scholarship on a very old topic. This book is about the *idea* of flying in Canada – how people perceived the new technology and how one of humanity's greatest aspirations aroused the national imagination. Too often in the past Canadian perceptions about flying were guided, often through hyperbole, by those directly involved in the industry of flying. People were led to think that flight would improve their lives and, possibly, the world. Those who preached the 'gospel of flight', a group Vance calls the 'air lobby', often delivered "misleading, contradictory, and unrealistic" information to the public. Vance spends much of the book examining these proselytizing efforts. These attempts at 'aeronautic enlightenment' culminated in the endorsement of a social revolution, which advocated that flying could create greater international understanding and world peace by its ability to shrink space and time.

The book begins with the origins of flight in British North America – the first balloon journey in Canada in 1840 by the Bostonian, Louis Anselm Lauriat. This captured the public interest and, as Vance describes, this curiosity continued for the next seventy years, leading people to dream of highways in the air. As with any new technology, the art of ballooning had its detractors, but as the technology improved even the most pessimistic could see that history was being made. Engined flying machines were of particular interest to the Canadian Department of Militia and Defence; in 1909 one of the earliest successful flying machines, *The Silver Dart*, crashed in Petawawa during a military test. Unfortunately for the air pioneers, this crash reinforced the government's cynical attitude, the military's conservatism, and the general public's suspicions.

Despite the pre-First World War popularity of air shows and the first inter-city airplane flight between Montreal and Ottawa in 1913, Canadians were not convinced that flying was practical – flying was for entertainment. As a result, the air lobby remained a technological Cassandra until the interwar era. Flight was still unpredictable and unsafe; its progress, in the public mind, disappointingly incremental.

Vance argues, in well-crafted prose, that the Great War was a monumental catalyst for aviation in Canada. He offers vivid scenarios – more characteristic of literature than academic writing – that help the reader visualize knights in modern agile air steeds jousting for control of the sky. Through his artful writing he

reveals how breakthroughs in flight technology created strategic attack and reconnaissance weapons that directly affected how war was waged. The time of the dashing pilot had arrived with Canada claiming one of its greatest military heroes – airman Billy Bishop, whom Vance often quotes. The opinions of the Canadian government, business, and public, were not unaffected.

By the 1920s, flight symbolized progress and modernity. During the Great War, Canada had designed and built (except for the engines) a trainer plane, the JN-4, which was possibly the best piece of equipment that Canada produced for the Allies. Although these were all sold after the war, interest in airplane technology remained. This interest turned to long distance flights that linked Canada more easily with Britain and the Empire. After Lindbergh's transatlantic flight, Canadians began to see flying as practical – a tool of unity and peace – and pilots were lionized as divine messengers. Bishop even journeyed to Germany to lay a wreath on the tomb of the Red Baron, Manfred von Richthofen.

Although interrupted by the Depression, aviation proved that it could deliver mail efficiently across the country and showed its potential to fulfill the promise of Confederation better than any railway car. Much later it would even help chart and develop Northern Canada. According to Vance, flying was perceived as transcending physical and spiritual limitations.

The vision of the airplane as a tool of goodwill evaporated during the Spanish Civil War when Guernica was destroyed in 1937 by German bombers aiding Spanish Fascists. The Second World War took this new method of attrition even further. Because aerial bombers could reach and destroy enemy cities, they were

seen as an Allied tool of revenge. Bombing was not merely accepted by Canadian citizens, it was glorified. Airplanes were viewed as an alternative to costly ground war with its abominations of battlefields deep in mud and littered with corpses. This concept was largely an illusion, however, and people soon realized that an air war did not eliminate casualties, but rather caused many on both sides. Pilots were no longer revered: they were simply part of a crew directing a machine; flying lost its spiritual nature for the public. While war made flying common and accessible, Vance argues that indiscriminate bombing and competition for the air ruined the innocent perceptions of flight.

Vance has provided a valuable addition to the historiography of flight in Canada, in large measure because of his talent as a storyteller. He does not write about events in chronological order, but switches between topics easily. He makes exceptional use of newspaper articles to illustrate popular opinion – from early skepticism to blind faith in all things airworthy. Although some historians may scoff at his extensive use of anecdotal evidence, journals, diaries and poems, these sources are often the only way to show how people *thought* about a subject; in this instance they are competently used on the art of flight. This is a cogent and well written work that clearly shows what flight has meant to Canadians throughout its tumultuous history. Reading *High Flight*, one can reflect on how far aviation has come since the first balloon journey, what the development of aviation has meant to this country, and how it may affect the waging of war in the future.

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## QUEBEC, 1759: THE SIEGE AND THE BATTLE

by C.P. Stacey, and revised by Donald E. Graves

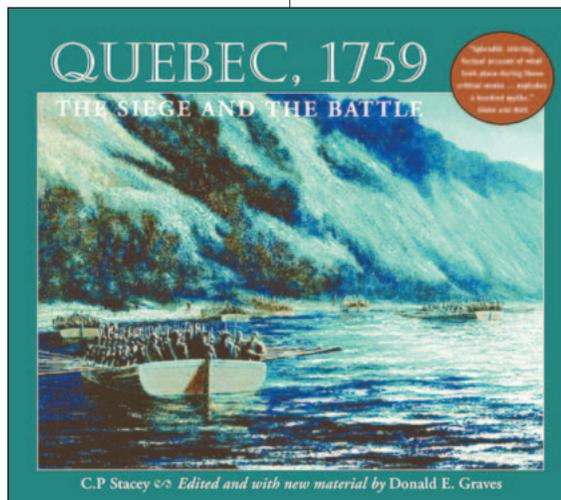
Toronto: Robin Brass Studio, 270 pages, \$27.95.

Reviewed by Captain Andrew B. Godefroy

Originally published in 1959, Colonel Charles Stacey's, *Quebec, 1759: The Siege and the Battle*, is the latest early-period military history to receive the attention of Donald Graves and the Robin Brass Studio. This team had previously produced an excellent edited version of J.M. Hitsman's *The Incredible War of 1812: A Military History*, and this effort once again demonstrates the quality treatment given to this genre of publications by Robin Brass Studio. For students of military history who continuously fret over the usual lack of maps, illustrations, details about the orders of battle and the weights of ammunition – fear not. This publisher's series provides considerable relief from your run-of-the-mill military history texts.

*Quebec 1759: The Siege and the Battle* examines the climactic engagement between Britain and France in their struggle for dominance in North America. In 1757, after the William Pitt-Duke of Newcastle coalition ministry came to power in London, Britain reopened its campaign against the French in Canada, subordinating all its other military operations against the French to that end. After achieving mixed results in 1758, a decision was made to launch an attack against Quebec City the following year and settle the matter once and for all. A young British general, James Wolfe, was given the honour of making a grab for the city. The French general opposing him was Louis-Joseph, Marquis de Montcalm.

Wolfe laid siege to Quebec early in 1759, but the undermanned, half-starved, and poorly defended fortress proved a difficult target to invest. After a summer of half-hearted attempts to take the fortress, Wolfe and his generals decided on a plan that eventually led to the battle – and to victory – on the heights (later known as the Plains of Abraham) just outside the city walls on 13 September. Though the engagement lasted only the better half of the morning, both



opposing generals were killed in the fight and have since been enshrined in popular history as legends in an epic struggle. However, Stacey's work has shown that both men were, in fact, far from being heroes; they were instead studious, courageous, and resourceful soldiers, one of whom was lucky and the other not. Their story involves one of the most exceptional and most studied battles of the period.

Of particular interest in this book is the attention paid to the naval and amphibious aspects of the siege and battle. While the siege of Quebec is often perceived primarily as a land battle, both Stacey and Graves have highlighted the invaluable service delivered by the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, without which the British expedition against the town would surely have failed. The British naval commander, Vice Admiral Charles Saunders, was arguably the real hero at Quebec, but unlike Wolfe, he has been all but forgotten by history. Though Graves has sought to shed some light on his exploits, much work remains to be done on this officer's military career.

Graves' introduction does a superb job of providing the context for and a critique of Stacey's original manuscript, leaving little obvious room for another contemporary review. Stacey's work itself, though dated, has stood the test of time very well and remains one of the best books produced on the subject. Among the notable improvements over the original, this new edition has included in the appendices an article written by Stacey in 1966

for the *Canadian Historical Review*, which offered details of new documentation that came to light after the publication of the original manuscript. The article was insightful both for the new details it provided and the lessons it represented. Essentially, no matter how authoritative and complete a work may seem, history (and Stacey) has shown us that there will always be room for refinement. Donald Graves continued this work with his own academic improvements to the appendices, citations, and notes.

The academic attention is well deserved. The Battle for Quebec is perhaps one of the most important battlefield studies for Canadian military historians, and unlike most battlefields of interest to Canadians this one is practically in our back yard. A visit there makes an enjoyable and fulfilling battlefield tour. Strategy, logistics, tactics, amphibious operations, naval support, the fog of war, reconnaissance, medical issues, and even desertion can be brought out and discussed at length. Indeed, many have used Stacey's original publication as a battlefield guide, but it was time for an updated reference with better illustrations and maps. Fortunately, Donald Graves and Robin Brass have delivered exactly that.

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## THE EVOLUTION OF SPECIAL FORCES IN COUNTER-TERRORISM: THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN EXPERIENCES

by J. Paul de B. Taillon

Westport, CT: Praeger, 190 pages, \$US62.50.

Reviewed by Steven Wolski

**T**he recent actions of Special Forces in Afghanistan in support of Coalition measures against the Taliban and Al Qaeda have demonstrated in the public's eye their ability to meet operational challenges in the emerging war on terrorism. But the decision to use Special Forces in a counter-terrorism role has not always been easy for military or political leaders to make, and indeed it continues to be controversial from both practical and ethical standpoints. Dr. Paul Taillon's book provides a detailed insight into the dynamics shaping the creation of such forces and defining the roles they play in this form of conflict. The body of the book, in four chapters, traces the emergence of the American and British Special Forces from conventional military structures. It describes how the historical context of each country's approach to low intensity conflicts shaped the current nature of their respective Special Forces. By means of several case studies, Taillon then illustrates the challenges such forces confront to be an effective means for governments to counter terrorist actions.

The Olympic massacre of 1972 focused the political realization that dealing effectively with terrorist acts may be beyond the capabilities of traditional enforcement tools. Taillon

suggests that the use of Special Forces, properly adapted to the counter-terrorist role, is an effective tool for governments to use in terrorist incidents. He believes that the chances for their success are greatly enhanced by international cooperation. He examines in detail the experiences of the United States and the United Kingdom, while alluding to those of a number of other countries, to highlight his points. To compare and contrast their differing approaches to resolving terrorist incidents, two case studies from 1980 are fully examined: the Iranian Embassy siege in London and the attempted rescue of American hostages in Iran. A fascinating account is given of both operations – conducted respectively by the British Special Air Squadron (SAS) and American Delta Force – along with a critique on the effectiveness of each. This sets the stage for a number of recommendations in his conclusion for areas of increased international cooperation. These range from intelligence sharing to forward basing in the event of incidents, secure communications, shared training, attachments and exchanges.

Taillon describes how in Britain an Imperial policing heritage brought an early understanding of how authorities could use military force as an adjunct to police action to maintain stability in the colonies. Success was often linked to responding to timely and accurate intelligence first to locate and then to crush an enemy considered subversive to the established order. The post-Second World War experiences in Malaya, Borneo, Oman and Northern Ireland, however, reflected the growing pains of adhering to new political realities and learning to deal with the moral, ethical, political and other consequences of projecting military power in a post-colonial world. Success was again tied to timely and accurate intelligence, but now the enemy had to be first isolated, discredited and alienated from the general population before being crushed. Failure to do so, while effective

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in eradicating certain dangerous elements, did not resolve the underlying, often nationalist, issues, and incited others to replace those that had been eliminated.

The author then turns to the American approaches to low intensity warfare. These were heavily influenced by experiences in the American Civil War, and reflect a deep-seated belief in the application of overwhelming military force. America did not see itself as an imperial power and, as such, the solution to such problems was often seen in a purely military context. This belief was nurtured by successful counter insurgency actions in Greece in 1945, then reinforced, first by experiences in Korea and then by early experiences during the Cold War, before being applied in Vietnam. According to Taillon, while the British learned the key to success was to conquer 'hearts and minds', the Americans, drawn to mobility and firepower, learned from Vietnam that dominating the enemy militarily did not guarantee victory. Since then, American Special Forces have been looking for the 'right balance' between force and its application in the increasingly confused political arena they have been drawn into as the only surviving hyper power and the reluctant global policeman.

The book's discussion of the evolution of the roles and responsibilities of the Special Forces in counter terrorism also recognizes and explains certain commonalities inherent in working within a military institutional framework. Taillon explains how the recognition by the military and political leadership of the need for, and value of, dedicated Special Forces to handle increasingly 'politicized' low intensity conflicts was never universal. Special Forces in both countries were repeatedly faced with the competing priorities of rapid adaptation and specialization during times of crisis, to deal with what is considered 'irregular warfare', and then being required to conform to peacetime roles of preparing for the next traditional war. Significantly, within this ebb and flow of development, only rarely was there a slim thread of continuity of experience that survived upon which to build Special Forces to tackle the 'current' emergency.

In presenting his case, the author has drawn upon a wealth of scholarly works supplemented by media reporting of significant events and sprinkled with tidbits from military and intelligence practitioners. Meticulous care has been taken to substantiate the facts presented in the book, so readers are provided with a wealth of references in the notes and bibliography of primary and secondary sources on the subjects discussed. In addition, the book is valuable for its many detailed explanations of practices associated with the use of Special Forces, such as the list of intelligence requirements needed to insure proper intelligence is provided to Special Forces units before a hostage rescue attempt is made.

After several times raising the importance of government direction in the use of Special Forces, Taillon does not fully explore this dimension in the book. Here and there are also tantalizing references to the activities of the Special Forces of other countries, in particular Germany and Israel, with references to the hostage rescues in Mogadishu and Entebbe respectively, that could be explored more fully to flesh out his premise of the value of international cooperation. These are covered in greater detail in what could be considered a companion volume: *Hijacking and Hostages: Government Responses to Terrorism* also published by Praeger in 2002.

Paul Taillon's book is an excellent primer for those seeking to penetrate the mystique and secrecy surrounding Special Forces. It provides a better understanding of the facts behind how they evolved into their counter-terrorist roles. It highlights the challenges they continue to face in remaining an effective option for government to call upon to resolve terrorist incidents. It is a timely read, given that the Special Forces are now more than ever facing renewed challenges in the developing global war against terrorism.

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Canada's newest submarine, HMCS Cornerbrook, arrives in Halifax harbour, 10 March 2003.