

BOOK REVIEWS

sides. Beevor is certainly no apologist for German atrocities, and he does not intimate that there was some kind of moral equivalence shared between the Allies and the Germans. In fact, he is unsparing in his description of reprisals and slaughters inflicted upon the civil population, largely by SS units. But Beevor suggests, at least obliquely, that the nature of high-intensity, high-stakes battle does not always follow the rules of war.

In this book, Beevor repeatedly depicts the struggle for Normandy as being at least as savage, bloody, and pivotal as any major battle on the Eastern Front. On more than one occasion, he appraises the intensity of the fighting by examining casualty rates, and finding that, on a divisional basis, the fighting in Northwest France was probably more intense than that on the Eastern Front. What Beevor does not comment upon directly, but it jumps off the page, is the period's grim acceptance of mass casualties. Unlike our own era, where societies are buffered by their armies and where professional soldiers fight limited wars, the battle for Normandy was an existential fight – with both sides understanding that whoever lost the campaign would not only lose the war, but forfeit the basis of their social and political order.

An element of *D Day* that begs mentioning is that Beevor is a brilliant caricaturist. His book is worth reading almost on this basis alone. In just a few quick phrases, Beevor captures the essence of a personality: Eisenhower smoking four packs of cigarettes the day before the invasion; Montgomery energetic and vain, insisting that everything had gone precisely as

he had planned; Kluge railing at his headquarters; or an untested battalion commander trying desperately to energize frightened troops. On every page, Beevor brings to life the personalities and the atmosphere of the campaign.

From a Canadian perspective, Beevor generously gives credit where it was due. He has high praise for the quality of Canada's junior officers, the Canadian Army's abilities, and its dogged toughness. He is only slightly more reserved in his enthusiasm for our most senior officers – although he puts the blame squarely on Montgomery for not closing the Falaise Gap. In an interesting aside, Beevor shares the civilian Canadian's obsession with trying to define our national character. He comes to the conclusion that we had British traditions and an American disposition, and, perhaps on this point, he misses the mark. Defining character is an elusive undertaking; but anyone who has ever served in the Canadian Forces has never had a problem understanding the differences between Canadian and American temperaments.

There are many excellent features of this book. It is balanced, well-researched, well-written, and, in its unique way, it is a penetrating examination of the fight for Northwest France. It is as good a study of the campaign as has been written.

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CANADIANS UNDER FIRE – INFANTRY EFFECTIVENESS IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

by Robert Engen

Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009

x + 245 pages, \$34.95

ISBN 978-0-7735-3626-5 (cloth)

Reviewed by: Howard G. Coombs

Canadians under Fire provides analysis of a hitherto untouched trove of first-hand battle questionnaires from a variety of Second World War Canadian infantry officers who served in both the Mediterranean and Northwest European theatres. Some of these combat leaders, like Major Jeff A. Nicklin of the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, are well known to Canadian military enthusiasts, while others are not so prominent. However, all contribute to the mosaic painted by Robert Engen providing, "...a new perspective on how Canada's Second World War was fought at the tactical level." Engen goes on to elaborate, "...the Canadian riflemen, as indicated by the questionnaires, were capable of flexible responses to the problems presented by the battlefield." (p. 145).

In a similar fashion to American military historian Dr. Russ Glenn's *Reading Athena's Dance Card: Men against Fire*

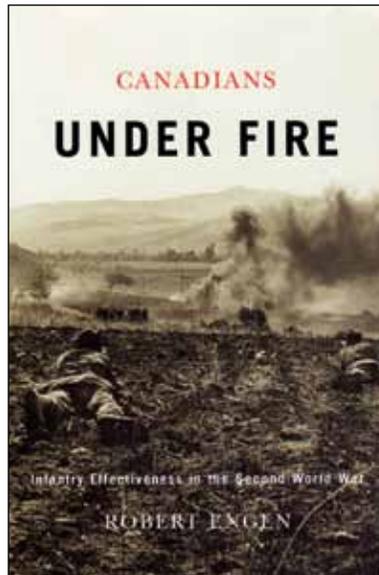
in Vietnam (2000), Engen disputes the results of United States Army researcher S.L.A. Marshall's *Men against Fire: the Problem of Battle Command in Future War* (1947). In his seminal work, Marshall argued that 75 percent of American infantrymen that he interviewed did not fire their weapons, regardless of provocation. Although this statistic has been called into question during recent years by historians such as Dr. Roger Spiller, it nonetheless has influenced some military and police training, such as that designed by retired United States Army Lieutenant Colonel David Grossman, author of *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (1995) and *On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and in Peace* (2004). Engen and Glenn, based on their respective sources, show that in the instances they studied, there was not a problem getting soldiers to fire but quite the opposite, thus calling into question the universality of application of Marshall's statistics.

Engen uses archival battle questionnaires to draw conclusions about the Canadian infantry experience during the Second World War. He examines these questionnaires as historical artifacts, detailing their construction, and he provides the names of those that participated in the surveys, along with a brief description of who these officers were. Engen also looks at the combined arms team of artillery, infantry, armour, and air power, and, as well, provides thoughts with respect to the effectiveness of Canadian infantry during this period. His

BOOK REVIEWS

conclusions argue that the Canadian soldier of this time was aggressive and innovative – certainly unlike the inferences drawn by Marshall for his nation's soldiers during the same conflict.

However, the difference between the books written by Engen and Glenn is that Glenn attributes the difference in Marshall's low "ratios of fire" during the Second World War and his findings concerning the much higher rates of fire among American infantryman in Vietnam to leadership and training, which he explores in some detail. If *Canadians under Fire* has any shortcoming, it is that Engen does not look at those aspects of the Canadian infantry experience during the Second World War to the same degree. To be fair, one must keep in mind that Engen researched a group of historical documents that were designed to provide a snapshot of the Canadian battle experience in the context of the time, and were focused on identifying the tactical lessons of combat. On the other hand, Glenn designed his own questionnaires to be administered to Vietnam veterans over two decades after the end of the war. Therefore, Glenn's research *could* and *did* address much broader issues in greater detail.



In any case, Engen provides a trove of historical analysis and sources useful to Canadian military studies. His work gives a foundation for other historians to examine that which enabled the Canadian infantry to perform as well as they did during the war. Perhaps of most significance for current Canadian military practitioners is Engen's use of our national military experience to call into question the applicability of the conclusions drawn by S.L.A. Marshall in training for the wars of the 21st Century. Consequently, *Canadians under Fire* is a solid piece of work that is of utility to both military professionals and historians.

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THE NAVAL SERVICE OF CANADA 1910-2010: THE CENTENNIAL STORY Richard H. Gimblett (Ed.)

Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009

230 pages, \$ 39.95

ISBN: 978-1-55488-470-4

Reviewed by: Jurgen Duewel

The book is divided into chapters covering important periods in the history of the navy, as well as speculation with respect to its future. Along with the expected chapters dealing with war and peace, readers will be pleasantly surprised to find some unexpected gems. For example, the often neglected topic of maritime research and development is well written by Harold Merklinger, a former defence scientist at the Defence Research Establishment Atlantic (DREA). Merklinger shines a light on some of the unique Canadian contributions to naval warfare – including such marvels as the hydrofoil, the Canadian Anti-Acoustic Torpedo Decoy (CAAT), the Variable Depth Sonar (VDS), the Bear Trap and the Helo Hauldown system, as well as the ubiquitous trackball. Another pleasant addition to the book is the chapter covering naval art of the Second World War by Pat Jessup. This chapter depicts other dimensions of life in the navy during that time, and it serves as a reminder of some the more poignant aspects and experiences of men and women at war.

The book's first chapter describes the events leading up to the creation of the Naval Service by Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier on 4 May 1910. As Roger Sarty writes, in 1906 Great Britain launched HMS *Dreadnought*, the revolutionary battleship that made all other warships preceding it obsolete. The problem for Great Britain was that, suddenly, new naval powers, and specifically Germany, were now much closer to parity in numbers of battleships. The Dreadnought scare of 1909 (fear of German parity by 1912), compelled Great Britain to inform her colonies that they could no longer count upon Britain to look after their maritime defence, as she was pulling back her naval forces closer to home to deal with the emerging German threat. Great Britain also expected her wealthier former colonies, such as Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, to either build their own ships or to provide funding for Great Britain's shipbuilding efforts. Although Laurier had decided that Canada should build its own navy, the Leader of the Opposition (and soon to be Prime Minister), Robert Borden, did not agree, and he preferred to transfer funds to Great Britain instead. Unfortunately, when he came to power, he did neither – the result being that Canada, and consequently her navy, were wholly unprepared for the First World War. Thus the Canadian Navy's contribution to the war effort at sea was unsurprisingly minimal, and, at times, even comical. For example, we are told of how the province of British Columbia purchased two submarines for the navy, and of how even a private citizen got involved through the donation of an armoured yacht. At one of the lower points of the war for the service, the only ship that had an opportunity to attack an enemy submarine in Canadian waters, HMCS