

One teacher recalls how her mastery of the Maclean Method of Writing landed her her first job at Heriot Bay on Quadra Island; another how Doukhobour parents in Glade berated her for promoting militarism when she lined up children for a relay race on Sport's Day.

Some of the teachers report petty injustices, but in the main they have fond recollections of school trustees and inspectors. Indeed, perhaps the most striking aspect of this anthology is its up-beat and affirmative tone. "My heart still warms at the memory of those happy years" (44) is a typical comment.

One closes this book with a sense that, for many practitioners teaching in rural schools was not so much a searing experience as it was a character-building one. Eleanor Anderson, who taught in floating schools on Desolation Sound and Toba Inlet in the 1930s, conveys the sentiments of many of her colleagues in this book:

Those first three years of my teaching career gave me many experiences I had never expected to have. Besides the ones I have recounted, I learned to teach ten grades in a one-room school, to deal with a very backward child who was constantly beaten by his father, to walk boomsticks, to row a boat, to enjoy boating, to understand a bit about the logging industry and to appreciate the beauty of British Columbia. I also came to realize that I loved teaching, and knew I had made the right decision when I decided to attend the Vancouver Normal School (79).

This anthology was compiled under the leadership of Gale Lindenthaler, with the assistance of Lillian HOLETON and Loma Robb. *Kindling the Spark* is illustrated with photographs and enlivened with pen- and ink-drawings by Sarah Walker.

The Maritime Defence of Canada

Roger Sarty

Toronto: Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies, 1996. 223 pp. Illus., maps. \$20. paper. (Vanwell Publishing, 1 Northrup Crescent, St Catherines, ON L2R 7S2)

Jericho Beach and the West Coast Flying Boat Stations

Chris Weicht

Chemainus: MCW Enterprises, 1997. 288 pp. Illus., maps. \$39.95 paper. (Chris Weicht, Box 85, Chemainus V0R 1K0).

BY PETER N. MOOGK, *University of British Columbia*

History is a matter of perspective. James A. Boutillier's collection of papers, *RCN in Retrospect, 1910-1968* (1982), provides

the view of retired senior naval officers as well as of academic writers. That collection might be styled the view from the ship's bridge. Roger Sarty's

collected essays and papers give us the perspective of prime ministers, chiefs of staff, and British advisors. This is a political account of defence measures and the strategic considerations behind them, although fiscal savings and appeasement of isolationist sentiment outweighed military strategy in peacetime. Senior officers proposed and cabinet ministers disposed. The writer's interests grew out of his doctoral dissertation on the defences of Halifax and Esquimalt, his work for the Department of National Defence's Directorate of History and Heritage, and "musings that arose from involvement in three successive projects on the history of Canadian maritime defence" (xvi). "Maritime defence," as used here, is primarily about naval protection, although the complementary roles of the air force and the army's coast artillery are acknowledged. The last is the focus of the sixth paper, "Canada's Coastal Fortifications of the Second World War." The history of the coast artillery in 1938-41 is a story of rapid improvisation by shifting vintage guns from the Halifax batteries and from surplus American stocks to Canada's other ports as a riposte to possible attacks by armed surface vessels, then seen as a real threat. British Columbia's protection is the subject of two other essays and, contrary to the myth of federal indifference to the Pacific Coast, this region was given priority over the East Coast in the allocation of weapons until 1940.

The eight papers are placed in rough chronological order. It is a pity that they were not re-edited to form a comprehensive whole, because there is considerable repetition in the essays. A background survey may be in order for a new audience listening to one paper, but the stories of the naval service's evo-

lution under Prime Ministers Laurier and Borden, of the scratch-built patrol fleet of the First World War, of the effects of inter-war budget cuts, and the belated rebuilding of the navy in the 1930s pale after the fourth retelling. The tale of Premier Richard McBride's 1914 purchase of two submarines in Seattle is recited three times. As a consequence of reading government documents, the author uses those orotund phrases beloved of bureaucrats – it would be difficult to overstate the importance, highlights the salient features, by no means identical, distinctly unenthusiastic, palpably inadequate, and so on – with mind-numbing effect. This structural and stylistic weakness is a pity because the author has some insights to share, as, for example, with regard to the recurrent theme of the Canadian government's struggle to retain control of its armed services while cooperating with the forces of the neighbouring United States and those of the British Empire. The increase in British Columbia's coast defences in the 1930s is attributed to a desire to deny the Americans an excuse for intruding to protect a "defenceless" neighbour from the Japanese Empire. The essays cover the period in which Canada passed out of Britain's orbit and assumed the role of an American satellite. Sarty's essays on the Second World War give the practical reasons for this shift in dependency.

In keeping with the current rehabilitation of Prime Minister W.L.M. King – a political calculator despised by serving officers – "Wily Willy" is credited with seeing the armed forces as a symbol of Canada's sovereignty; with starting the rebuilding of Canada's armed forces in 1937, despite domestic resistance; and with regretting (in his diary, at least) that his pre-war defence

policy had been determined by political considerations at home and not by any international realities (133). By contrast, King's political mentor, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, is described as an indecisive creature who acted on defence matters only when forced to do so by a crisis, and then he came up with a compromise to nobody's liking. The Australian government's 1907 move to create a home defence fleet was a precedent for the Laurier government's Canadian Naval Service of 1910. Another fresh insight is contained in Sarty's account of the impact of Ultra decrypts on the Royal Canadian Navy's war against German submarines. The systematic deciphering by British analysts of coded messages produced on Germany's Enigma encryption machines, code-named "Ultra," has achieved mythic status as the Allies' ace card that won the Second World War. According to Sarty, Canadians received these decrypts, but the decoded German signals gave no exact fix on enemy submarines. Long-range, B24 Liberator bombers patrolling the Atlantic Ocean forced enemy raiders into subsurface running at reduced speed, thereby crippling their effectiveness. At most, Ultra allowed the rerouting of convoys away from known concentrations of submarines.

There is a hint of patriotic defensiveness in this book. The inferior performance of Canada's sheepdog navy, when compared with Britain's Royal Navy, is attributed to technological and organizational weaknesses. There is a faint acknowledgement of our military amateurism in Sarty's statement that "much of the difficulty arose

from Canada's can-do spirit" (203). Canadians were slow to learn from the successful examples of RAF Coastal Command or of the American navy's hunter-killer groups. Convoy escort duty and anti-submarine warfare were the principal tasks of the RCN in the north Atlantic Ocean, and these provided the rationale for the post-war navy, although Canadian naval officers, like their inter-war predecessors, still dreamed of a "balanced" fleet with large warships.

Roger Sarty's view of defence measures from the perspective of the cabinet room and ministerial offices has much to recommend it, yet it is a dry narrative without the leavening of personal experiences. A recent history of British Columbia's seaplane defenders, *Jericho Beach and the West Coast Flying Stations* by Chris Weicht, provides a richness of technical and anecdotal detail concerning how Canadian defence policies were carried out by the RCAF in this province. Weicht has shown himself to be a diligent researcher and talented local historian. Ministerial policies and staff officer appreciations are mentioned in this book, although the writer prefers to discuss the men and the aircraft they flew. This is a serviceman's view of military history. It was not his intention to do so, yet Weicht has provided considerable evidence of the local improvisation and sometimes fatal amateurism – alluded to by Sarty – that characterized the Canadian forces before wartime realities and modern equipment led our personnel into a more professional approach to warfare.