

course of the one Sewid organized, girls and boys gave away candy to the audience. In other words, he saw correctly that the spirit of Father Christmas and of *gwomiass* would blend nicely.

The tolerant pragmatism of Sewid can be seen in his comment on expensive funerals, which were a Kwakiutl tradition: "I always compared our custom to the Egyptians who used to do that to the very noble people. . . . That was what some of the ministers in our church wanted to change. I felt it was wrong for a person who came and stayed among us for a couple of years to want to change those kind of things. It would be all right to change it if he was going to stay with us for life" (p. 213). In the cultural relativism of his reference to the Egyptians and in his shrewd appraisal of ministers, Sewid shows an appealing balance between the demands of tolerance and responsibility.

In this instance, as in many others in the book, James Sewid's life provides what the editor justly concludes is a good "corrective to the widely held idea that the effect of culture conflict is primarily negative" (p. 271). Looking at what Sewid did and what he gained, the reader has to agree. But looking at the shift from *hamatsa* to *gwomiass*, this reader is struck also by what he lost. The latter may be more than we deserve from the Kwakiutl (having banned its serious counterpart, the potlatch, for thirty years), but the *hamatsa* ritual was obviously a deeper and more integrating experience than any section of our culture can offer today.

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The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, 1919-1965, by R. H. Roy. Vancouver: History Committee, Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, 1969. 559 pp. \$12.50.

During the reorganization of the British Army in the early 1960s, the proud title, Seaforth Highlanders, disappeared from the infantry regiments of the time, a victim of the same process of amalgamation which had created it just over two centuries before.¹ But it says much for the durability of the British regiment as an institution that the name should

¹ In 1778 the 72nd Regiment of Foot, the Ross-shire Buffs, was combined with the 78th Regiment of Foot, the Duke of Albany's, to form the Seaforth Highlanders. In 1960 the Seaforths were combined with the Cameron Highlanders to become the Queen's Own Highlanders.

live on, carried by a unit of the Canadian Army on the shores of the Pacific Ocean.

The survival of institutions can often be attributed to their flexibility. In this respect the regiment is fortunate; it is "... part family, part fighting machine, part club, and part brotherhood."² In highland units these elements are further strengthened by the traditions and trappings of the Scottish clan. Whether for clan spirit or *esprit de corps*, all regiments treasure their special identity by means of distinctive dress, colours, and customs. But no less important are the achievements and traditions of the past recorded in the regimental history.

The writer of a regimental history has the exacting task of pleasing a small and critical reading public. The veterans expect him to confirm their memories and are likely to be mortified by his omissions. The present members of the regiment expect from him a work worthy of their pride. Professor Roy is well aware of the restrictions these attitudes impose upon the historian, for his latest work, *The Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, 1919-1965*, is the third regimental history he has written. Furthermore, in 1965 he reviewed Lieutenant-Colonel G. R. Steven's book on the Loyal Edmonton Regiment, which had a very similar history to the Seaforths' in the second world war. Thus he knew that he would be faced with the difficulty of describing the routine events of the interwar years and of the long period between 1939 and 1943 when the regiment was in England. These tend to be, in his own words, "... tedious to anyone but a veteran of the unit."³ Nevertheless, as a veteran of another highland regiment, Professor Roy has not allowed these built-in hazards to dampen his enthusiasm. He is aware that though broader works might win a wider public they seldom make such a direct contribution to the traditions of a living institution. He is unlikely to be dismayed if readers who view enthusiasm for such traditions with suspicion find his work excessively sympathetic towards his subject, and his style and vocabulary curiously anachronistic.

His book begins in 1919 when the life of the Seaforths was at a low ebb. Bitter memories of trench warfare kept the veterans away, and the absence of any external threat to Canada deterred new volunteers. In 1921-22 the Seaforths were so weak in numbers that they were "... ashamed to march out on the street ... [except] in the dark, which was

² From the address given by Prince Philip at the Presentation of Colours to the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada, June 3, 1963.

³ R. H. Roy, "The Story of the Edmontons," *Canadian Army Journal*, XIX, 2 (1965), p. 94.

hard on the band." However, by the mid-thirties the regiment had grown sufficiently to justify the building of the present armoury in Vancouver, but money was short and arms and equipment were of 1914-18 vintage. Yet it was the part-time soldiers of regiments like the Seaforths that enabled Britain and the Commonwealth to raise an army in 1939.

The frustration of these volunteer soldiers waiting three and a half years before they saw action is clearly reflected in the eighty pages devoted to this period. Professor Roy conveys the atmosphere of wartime England well, partly because he makes much use of the slang and clichés of the 1940s. But this section of his book, in which a German bomb "throwing up huge chunks of earth" merits a whole paragraph, will probably hold the attention only of those who were there or who have an interest in the changes in training methods brought about by the lessons of the *Blitzkrieg*.

Once the Seaforths of Canada go into action in Sicily and Italy, and later in Holland, Roy is able to demonstrate his skill in turning the masses of material from the regimental archives and personal memoirs and diaries into coherent combat accounts. The task is made formidable by the disjointed nature of the fighting in the broken, hilly terrain over which the First Canadian Division advanced. Brigade and battalion attacks frequently disintegrated into company, platoon, or even section actions, each isolated from the next by a ridge or a vineyard. In the descriptions of such actions attention devolves upon the individuals.

In his introduction the author expresses a desire to avoid personalities and "... to focuss... on the regiment." In doing so he would be making his task more difficult, for this would strip away the very elements which make regiments more than mere cold fighting machines. Fortunately, he does not succeed, and though he glosses over the human frailties, the crimes, desertions, and lootings which are also a part of military life, a few characters manage to emerge on his pages. The most conspicuous is the least military, Padre Durnford, a brave and modest man whose diary adds so many touches of deep humanity to the grim recital of battle. He is emotionally involved, yet he retains his mental independence from the soldiers' environment; his diary entries express a saddened sanity in the midst of chaos. The constant mention of proper names also makes the account more personal and thus more real than in those broader war histories where men are submerged in military formations and casualty lists are mere statistics. The ghastliness of war is far more vividly conveyed by the description of one man whose hand has been blown off crouching in a shell crater nursing the stump, than by the cold fact that

the Seaforths suffered 1576 casualties in Italy. In conveying an image of war as a monstrous tragedy demanding the lives and suffering of human beings, books like this redress the effect of those which present it as a great game of chess made more fascinating by the drama involved.

Nevertheless, questions of strategy cannot be ignored even in a work of this sort. While Professor Roy successfully recreates the atmosphere and events of the tough battles for the ridges and river crossings of Italy, he falls short of his aim of making these actions "... as understandable to the veteran as to his family." There must have been many times when the Seaforths, after capturing one line of German defences only to be confronted by another, asked themselves why their superiors had chosen to land them on "the toe" of Italy to fight all the way up "the boot" across dozens of natural obstacles. Unfortunately, this question is not answered in their regimental history. Similarly, the absence of any explanation of the strategic outcome of the Sicilian campaign leaves the reader with a sense of anti-climax. Seaforth veterans will still find it difficult to understand why, after the successes of the landing, the breakout, and the swift advance to the foot of Mount Etna, the Allies failed to prevent the Axis forces from escaping across the Straits of Messina.

The tough fighting required to dislodge the Germans from their defences in Sicily and Italy will cause the student of military affairs to ask whether the traditional regimental organization placed British and Canadian infantry battalions at a disadvantage when confronted by close-knit German "combat groups" of infantry, tanks, mortars, and artillery. The Germans fostered *esprit de corps* on a divisional rather than on a regimental level. As a result the teamwork between the main component arms of the division, the infantry, artillery, and armoured troops, was close both in training and battle. The British regimental tradition, however, tended to foster an exclusiveness, even a snobishness, which impaired inter-arm co-operation. The situation was worsened by the fact that in the small prewar armies of Britain and Canada manoeuvres involving co-operation between infantry, armour, and artillery were rare; indeed many Seaforths had never seen a tank or an anti-tank gun until 1940. Even when wartime expansion made inter-arm training possible, the flaw remained. It took its worst form in the British cavalry regiments which, as Corelli Barnett has pointed out in *The Desert Generals*, neglected to co-ordinate their armoured operations sufficiently with the infantry and artillery and suffered severe defeats at the hands of the *Afrikakorps*. Professor Roy's account of the Seaforths' early battles in Sicily and Italy reveals evidence of a similar weakness. There were fre-

quent occasions when close contact with the supporting artillery was lacking. Companies advancing without an artillery forward observation officer were unable to call for supporting fire or, most important, report their own location to avoid being shelled by their own guns. Bitter experience forced the infantry to make better use of the artillery, and the descriptions of the later battles reflect this improvement. However, the provision of adequate anti-tank protection remained a serious problem in Italy. Finally the Seaforths followed the example of the Loyal Edmonton Regiment and improvized a "tank-hunting" platoon within the battalion.

The achievement of close co-ordination depended mainly upon good wireless communications. But for most of the interwar years the Seaforth's signals training had been confined to a few ancient field telephones. When enterprising members of the Signals Section applied for permission to conduct experimental work with their own wireless transmitters and receivers, it was refused by the National Defence Headquarters on the grounds that it might detract from their orthodox signals training. Such military obscurantism was bound to create tactical and technical difficulties when the small prewar army was suddenly expanded. But these difficulties could not detract from the quality of leadership and service in war which enabled the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada to live up to the proud traditions they display in peace.

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Victoria: The fort, by Derek Pethick. Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1968. 287 pp. \$7.50.

Despite an almost archaistic delight in using Victorian prose, Derek Pethick has produced a first-rate history of Fort Victoria's first twenty years. His book should please both casual readers and academicians, for it is well documented with annotated footnotes at the end of each chapter, and the abundant resources of the Provincial Archives in Victoria have been thoroughly exercised.

There are two outstanding characters in *Victoria: The fort*, Sir James Douglas, KCB, and Amor De Cosmos (né William Smith). Douglas is treated in the usual manner, emerging as something resembling a stuffy "hero." Pethick's observations on De Cosmos are engrossing and show