

which allowed New France to expand, and hold, her frontiers for a century and a half. During that time French authority extended from the Atlantic to the Great Lakes, and from Hudson's Bay to the Gulf of Mexico, while the British colonies, ten times more populous, remained hemmed in between the eastern seaboard and the Appalachians.

René Chartrand, conversely, examines all of this in detail; the warlike customs of the Amerindians form the backdrop for the arrival of the Europeans, with their evolving technology, and its ramifications on military life and material culture. Chartrand chronicles the growth of the martial spirit in America as New France evolved from a mere fur trading counter to an intricate far-flung network of fortified outposts. Armed conflict between the Iroquois and the French began in earnest in the early 1640s. For a generation the Iroquois, who were receiving firearms from their trading partners — first the Dutch, then the English — held the strategic advantage, thanks to their tactics and their superior numbers. In time, however, the French developed their own war doctrine, uniting the methods of the Amerindians and the technical advances and the discipline of the Europeans. Gradually, they brought warfare to the back door of the enemy, be it Iroquois or British, and for a time were able to impose themselves militarily over much of North America.

We learn much from Chartrand, but not from Bodin, of the myriad of material details pertaining to the Canadian fighting man: that he carried a light weight musket, hatchet and knife, and adopted as his own the garb of the Amerindian (*capot*, leggings, a blanket, moccasins). He travelled on foot and by canoe, and in winter he donned snowshoes and packed his party's meagre baggage on toboggans. Using surprise, stealth, ambush, savage hit-and-run attacks and withdrawing as rapidly as they

came, the Canadian war party was the scourge of the North American frontier. Traditional sergeant's halberd and the tricorne hat (which figure prominently in Lelièpvre's illustrations in the Bodin book) were not required for the voyage!

Chartrand's central chapter, and his longest (chapter 5), deals with the *Compagnies franches de la Marine*, the colonial regulars and the most consistent military presence in New France. This is fitting, for Canadian historians have tended to exalt the place in our lore of *la petite guerre* to the detriment of the numerous garrisons of colonial regulars serving in both the established centres and in the far-flung forts. Chartrand examines the minute details of the regular soldier's life as well. He devotes a full chapter (chapter 6) to the lower colonies of Acadia, Plaisance and Île Royale, frequently neglected in general Canadian histories. Bodin's most evocative chapter is his depiction of the port of Rochefort (chapter 17) which deals interestingly with the "population" of a large warship, and the modalities of warfare on the high seas.

Both of these recent titles add to our knowledge of the material culture of military New France, although not to the same degree. Bodin's work is weakened by its traditional narrative form of history and by its shallow research, but nevertheless brings together an important part of the iconographic record. Chartrand's *Canadian Military Heritage* is the most valuable, thanks to its author's judicious use of all the available sources. His extensive footnotes refer us variously to archival sources (memoranda of expenditures, clothing and other supplies, etc.), printed sources (memoirs of daily life, travel, military etiquette, etc.), and to the best recent studies, including numerous unpublished monographs on material history subjects by his Parks Canada colleagues.

Desmond Morton, *When Your Number's Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War*

PETER SIMKINS

Morton, Desmond. *When Your Number's Up: The Canadian Soldier in the First World War*, Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1993. 354 pp., 52 photographs, 5 maps, 5 diagrams. Softcover \$19.00, ISBN 0-394-22288-1.

Although nearly 80 years have elapsed since the end of the Great War, interest in it has, if anything, grown in the past two decades and the debates about its causes, conduct and effects are as fierce as ever. Military and war museums —

especially those such as the Imperial War Museum in London, the Australian War Memorial (AWM) in Canberra, and the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa, which house not only artifacts but also major international collections of documents, film, photographs and works of art — have played a significant part in generating and sustaining this interest. The vigorous collecting policies of these institutions and of other museums and archives in recent years have ensured the preservation of large numbers of diaries, letters and unpublished memoirs and, at the same time, have greatly increased their accessibility to scholars and general readers alike.

New technology has inevitably facilitated the task of the curator and archivist. The advent of the cassette recorder and camcorder has given us an 11th-hour opportunity to interview the dwindling number of First World War veterans and to carry out what has been aptly described as a “smash and grab raid on history” by the New Zealand author Maurice Shadbolt in *Voices of Gallipoli* (Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1988). Similarly, computers have transformed cataloguing and information retrieval. A visitor seated at a computer workstation in the Australian War Memorial’s splendid Research Centre can obtain details of the AWM’s entire holdings on, say the 1917 operations at Bullecourt without moving. From the general public’s viewpoint, the most obvious changes wrought by modern technology lie in the area of museum display. The Historial de la Grand Guerre at Péronne in France, for example, makes highly imaginative use of film in its galleries to reflect the cultural and social impact of the Great War in France, Germany and Britain, while the Imperial War Museum’s remodelled First World War displays, opened in 1990, incorporate — besides film — oral history listening posts, sound effects, interactive touch-screen video monitors, and a “Trench Experience” complete with smells, “conversations” between soldiers and a simulated trench raid.

In the field of research two trends have become particularly apparent in the last 20 years or so. One, which has both inspired and mirrored the present museum collecting and display policies, has been the much closer attention paid by scholars to the experiences of junior officers and other ranks — the study, in short, of “everyman at war.” The other has been the gradual, yet now firmly based, recognition that in the British and Dominion contingents on the Western Front between 1916 and 1918 there

was a distinct and more or less continuous “learning curve,” manifesting itself in a series of tactical, organizational and technological improvements which enabled those formations to make what was arguably *the* decisive contribution to the final Allied offensive of August–November 1918. The distinguished Canadian historian, Professor Desmond Morton, has already done much to determine the recent course of Great War studies. Not the least of his achievements in his empathetic analysis of the Canadian soldier in the First World War is the skilful and entertaining way in which he combines and, interweaves these two main strands of current research.

Desmond Morton makes many telling points in his wide-ranging survey. Like scholars in Britain, Australia and New Zealand, he establishes doubt that the motives of those who volunteered in 1914–1915 were far more diverse than previous generations of writers and historians had supposed. Reminding us that up to 70 per cent of the First Canadian Contingent’s other ranks were British-born, he observed that, certainly at the outset, the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) had only a little of the restless egalitarian “mateship” of Australian units. “Canadian-born officers and predominantly British-born other ranks,” he remarks, “helped maintain a deep social gulf.” But, as the war progressed, the advantages enjoyed by the units of the Canadian and Australian Corps in staying together in their own formations *did* make it easier for them to decentralize and foster tactical initiative. Morton is right to underline the fact that the Canadians were important partners, and sometimes leaders, in the development of more flexible tactics, even if he undervalues the role of the best British divisions — such as the 9th (Scottish) and 18th (Eastern) — in this process.

Throughout the book the author demonstrates a refreshing willingness to chip steadily away at the myths and half-truths that still pervade our collective folk-memory of the First World War. In the chapter, covering the CEF’s medical services, for instance, he emphasizes that 93 per cent of the wounded men who received medical treatment survived their wounds — a rate of recovery unmatched in the Second World War. Canadian losses in the successful battles of August to October 1918 exceeded those suffered by the CEF on the Somme in 1916, though the proportion of lighter wounds was higher and fatalities lower. As well, nearly one in nine Canadian soldiers was infected with venereal disease, which was

the largest single cause of hospitalization for Canadians during the war.

A few mistakes have crept through to the final text. One or two places names are misspelt (Festubert on page 36 and Armentières on page 37); there is a curious reference to "Oxford Square" in London on page 86; and Ivor Maxse (page 154) was the commander of the 18th Division, not XVIII Corps, in July 1916. However, these are minor blemishes in an outstanding work which — perhaps more accurately than any other study — pinpoints the qualities of

heart and mind that made most Canadians such good soldiers in the First World War. In Morton's own words, once the conflict had ended, "poets, politicians, even veterans, preferred to dwell on military incompetence, not achievement.... What lay behind the unexpected victories of 1918 was easily forgotten. Now it has been recalled." The Canadian soldier could ask for no better tribute or any more honest and balanced assessment of his motives, attitudes and deeds, than that which Professor Morton has provided here.

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