

Introduction

This volume is all about partnerships. Most obvious is the fact of it being a co-publication between Canada's two preeminent journals dedicated to military and maritime history, *Canadian Military History* and *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord*. This rare undertaking was suggested by the size of the final manuscript, larger even than the usual combined summer and fall numbers of each journal which it purports to be – indeed, only through the joint efforts of the two journals could the publication of this number of papers under a single cover be made possible. Another level of partnership is that *The Northern Mariner* is the journal of record for both the Canadian Nautical Research Society / Société canadienne pour la recherche nautique (CNRS) and its U.S. sister, the North American Society for Oceanic History (NASOH). As guest editor of the volume, I am indebted to the governing bodies of each journal for the confidence they demonstrated in authorizing the effort to proceed, and also to the editorial and production staffs of each journal for their forbearance and oft-required good humour to see it through to timely publication within a tight deadline. With that it should be underscored that, while each journal retains its separate cover, the content is exactly the same for each and the copyright is shared jointly.

The second partnership is less obvious but equally important. The conference from which these papers sprang was itself a joint effort between the Canadian Navy and the Canadian War Museum. Again, without the confidence and generosity of the management of the Museum in hosting the conference, the occasion for presentation of these papers might never have happened, and what I hope the reader will come to appreciate is a unique body of scholarship would have been lost. Bringing this partnership forward, the continuing assistance of the Museum in partial sponsorship of *Canadian Military History* is yet again important to the fact of this volume seeing the light of day.

Back in May 2010, when the distinguished group of scholars represented in these pages gathered in the Barney Danson theatre of the Canadian War Museum, the Canadian Navy was not yet again 'Royal' but still known as 'Maritime Command' (the government-mandated re-styling as the Royal Canadian Navy or RCN would come in the summer of 2011). Nonetheless, it was celebrating its Centennial, and the occasion seemed to suggest that holding an historical conference to mark it would be 'a good thing', in the words of a recently popular personality. But other than the evident logic of the statement, the question remained – to what avail? Eight previous Maritime Command (MARCOM) Historical Conferences had been held, five of them resulting in

major academic publications – *RCN in Retrospect* (1980), *RCN in Transition* (1985), *A Nation's Navy* (1992), *The Admirals* (2002), *Citizen-Sailors* (2010) – and the other three in equally important volumes even if they did not enjoy wide distribution – *Continuity or Change* (1990), *Canada's Pacific Presence* (1997) and *People, Policy and Programmes* (2005).¹ The challenge to the organizers in 2010, especially considering the imminent publication of the official history of naval operations in the Second World War and continuing restrictions on access to Cold War records, very much was: “what more was there new to write about?”

Hence the decision to take a new tack, to follow through on the self-ascribed (and perhaps self-serving) role as ‘the senior dominion’, to look at the historical experience of the Royal Canadian Navy through comparison and contrast with the other major Commonwealth navies (our nearest equivalents in origins, size and operational culture). Recent scholarship had been suggesting that the placement of the RCN between its historical origins within the British imperial system and geographical location next to the American superpower had unique influences upon Canadian naval force development over the past century. Rather than taking yet another look at the details of our own history, the conference aimed to contribute further to this growing body of knowledge by situating the evolution of the RCN within the broader comparative context of other Commonwealth navies, exploring the national, regional and chronological ‘drivers’ that have determined the different paths along which they each have progressed after gaining independence from Britain. Another interesting layer of perspective comes from the United States Navy being considered one of those fundamental drivers that have shaped each of the navies considered here, but again in different ways.

Under the rubric then of this new historical approach of ‘comparative Commonwealth naval development’, a group of internationally recognized historians was assembled from Australia, Britain, Canada, India, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa and the United States; a fact important unto itself is that a large number of these are ‘sailor-scholars’, seasoned naval professionals endowed with academic achievement. The papers were grouped then as they now are presented in this volume, in the five broad categories illustrated in the table of contents, but deserving of some elaboration here.

First are a pair of ‘keynote’ papers expanding upon the ideas the presenters were charged to deliver. Christopher McKee, then-Rosenthal Professor at Grinnell College, Iowa, illustrates the potential for comparative history while underscoring a limitation of these proceedings: that a collaborative volume such as this, with individual scholars treating their national navies as unique institutions, cannot bring the same insight as a single scholar digesting the material for consumption. Demonstrating

¹ The latter volume has an historiographical essay detailing the progress of the MARCOM conferences: Richard O. Mayne, “Rejuvenation: The Historiographical Setting of the MARCOM Conference Series,” in Richard H. Gimblett and Richard O. Mayne (eds.), *People, Policy and Programmes* (Ottawa: Canadian Navy Heritage Team, 2008).

one avenue to approach this synthesizing challenge is James Goldrick, an admiral with broad operational command experience in the Royal Australian Navy who also has a notable academic publishing record; his pioneering study here is premised on the controversial notion that the ‘cloning’ of the new dominion naval forces upon their initial establishment as ‘fleet units’ of the Royal Navy enabled their immediate operational effect but in other important ways slowed their maturation into proper national ‘navies’.

Second are survey histories of the respective national naval experiences. In the interest of time at the conference and of space in this volume, it was accepted that there was no requirement to cover the well-known narratives of the Royal and United States Navies, although some of the conclusions presented in these proceedings suggest there is some room for a re-interpretation of this premise. Presenting Canada’s navy as “one of necessity” is Roger Sarty, formerly the senior historian in the Directorate of History, later in charge of exhibition development for the new Canadian War Museum, and now at Wilfrid Laurier University (and normally the editor of *The Northern Mariner* and of *Canadian Military History*). The Australian experience is examined by former naval officer David Stevens, now Director of Historical Studies at the Sea Power Centre – Australia. The complex challenges that have faced the Indian Navy are described by Uday Bhaskar, now Director of the National Maritime Foundation think tank in New Delhi, informed by his previous 37-year service career. Michael Wynd, researcher-historian at the Royal New Zealand Navy’s Museum, traces his navy’s evolution in parallel with the country’s development towards true independence. Allan du Toit, another serving Australian admiral, was born in and began his service career in the South African Navy, and delivers a knowing study of his native service. Rounding out the section is a look at the strategically-situated Republic of Singapore Navy by another sailor-scholar, Joshua Ho.

The third section covering ‘formative experiences’ includes here only two of the papers delivered at the conference. Chris Madsen, a professor at the Canadian Forces College in Toronto and current President of the Canadian Nautical Research Society, focuses on the chequered attempt by Britain to develop a triangular relationship amongst South Africa, India (and eventually Pakistan), and Australia to see to the naval defence of the Indian Ocean basin. As suggested earlier, a relationship with the United States Navy is common to all of the Commonwealth navies, being at the same time unique to each given the American preference for bilateral defence arrangements, and John Hattendorf, Ernest J. King Professor of Maritime History at the U.S. Naval War College and past president of NASOH, presents a sweeping study of how views in the USN about Commonwealth Navies over the past century have varied as Americans viewed the matter in terms of differing contexts. Of the two ‘missing’ papers, that on the role played by the Canadian Navy League in the development of naval policy by Ken Mackenzie (who served in the RCN before moving into the museum world), has been shifted due to space considerations into the next number (January 2015) of *The Northern Mariner*. And the paper originally presented by Christopher Bell, professor of history at Dalhousie University in Halifax, on “Churchill

and Dominion Navies” in the pre-Great War years has developed into other publishing successes, a full book treatment on *Churchill and Sea Power* (Oxford University Press, 2013) and in an article spin-off in another journal has precipitated a rare, vigorous historical debate on divining the true intentions of the mercurial First Lord.²

The fourth section is a series of examinations of how Commonwealth navies have worked with each other and/or with the United States Navy. The post-war cementing of the RCN-USN alliance for the defence of North America is traced by Peter Haydon, who embarked upon an academic career after a long naval one, which included exposure to the Permanent Joint Board on Defence that features in his study. American defence analyst Norman Friedman offers a thought-provoking study of how the challenges of Cold War anti-submarine warfare fostered continuing cooperation, first with the Royal Navy in the lead but eventually with the USN hoping to create something like an ‘empire navy’. Edward Marolda, former acting Director of U.S. Naval History and who saw military service in the U.S. Army in Vietnam, addresses in detail the cooperation between the USN and Commonwealth navies during the Korean War, with brief coverage of later cooperation elsewhere in east Asia. A very different aspect is presented by Laurence Hickey, then-Commander of the Canadian Atlantic Fleet, with a detailed study of the multiple and multi-dimensional linkages amongst Commonwealth submarine forces (informed in large part by personal experience). Jason Delaney, a serving officer at the Canadian Directorate of History and Heritage, continues the submarine theme with a comparison of the difficult procurement programmes in Canada and Australia. Another admiral – this time a Canadian – whose work draws deeply from personal experience is Richard Greenwood, then-Chief Engineer of the Navy, and his paper completes a series commenced in *RCN in Retrospect* with an engineer’s perspective on RCN history since unification of the forces in 1968. Two papers presented at the conference also are ‘missing’ from this section: a study by Directorate of History and Heritage historian Isabel Campbell looking at Canadian contributions to the development of NATO naval strategy in the 1950s and 1960s will appear in a future number of *The Northern Mariner*; and another by Carleton University emeritus professor Joseph Scanlon with serving officer Elizabeth Steele on disaster relief delivered from the sea has already been published in the *Canadian Military Journal*.³ Rounding out the section with an incisive look at the varying post-imperial relationships is Stephen Prince, Head of the Royal Naval Historical Branch.

The fifth section turns to the near-present and future, probing avenues for the development of national and commonwealth naval strategy into the twenty-first century. Independent naval historian Nicholas Tracy makes a thought-provoking

² Christopher Bell, “Sentiment vs Strategy: British Naval Policy, Imperial Defence, and the Development of Dominion Navies, 1911-14,” in *The International History Review*, 2014, at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2014.900817>, accessed 12 June 2014.

³ Joseph Scanlon and Elizabeth Steele with Alex Hunsberger, “By Air, Land, and Sea: Canada Responds to Hurricane Katrina,” *Canadian Military Journal* 12:3 (Summer 2012) 54-62. Accessed 27 September 2014 at <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vol12/no3/page54-eng.asp>.

argument on the ineffectiveness of naval enforcement of economic sanctions. Rob Huebert, Associate Director of the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary, sketches the course of Canadian naval strategic thought and argues in turn for its continued progress; although nationally focused in its presentation, it raises a number of points for the consideration of all navies in the development of a governing strategy. The prospects and challenges for the development of a cooperative Commonwealth naval strategy are examined by Geoffrey Till, Director of the Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies. The section ends with the view of someone bearing the ultimate responsibility for the development and implementation of naval strategy, Canadian Vice-Admiral Dean McFadden, then-Chief of the Maritime Staff.

The volume closes with an entertaining piece by retired British naval officer turned successful author Peter Hore. Delivered as the banquet after-dinner speech, his sketches of Canadian naval persons who have appeared in the obituaries section of the *Daily Telegraph* is a most appropriate ‘afterthought’ on the meaning of service at sea.

Space does not allow for a full exploration of the many ideas germinating in these pages, but they carry the promise of an abundant crop for some future harvester. Just one notion is reflected in the decision to change the title of the volume from that under which the conference originally was held: although the evolutionary path was cast as being “From Empire to Independence,” a comprehensive review of the papers very quickly reveals that the development of the various Commonwealth navies has been less definitive and far more nuanced than previously thought. Where certainly they have progressed into their varying guises of national independence, with maturity they individually and collectively also have entered into a comfortable era in which the relationships with the Royal Navy and the United States Navy can be appreciated as having many mutual benefits of inter-dependence. Another notion is to harken back to Christopher McKee’s opening “plea for comparative naval history”: with this volume opening the way, there clearly is a need for – and more than sufficient material to support – a probing global study into the parallel, independent and inter-dependent historical experiences of the many Commonwealth navies.

A brief note on style – this volume follows the practice of *The Northern Mariner* as a joint Canadian-American publication, in that spelling and usage conform to the nationality of the writer (Commonwealth writers for this occasion being honorary Canadians).

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