THE PROSPECTS FOR NAVAL HISTORY

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Serving naval personnel in Canada, whose company we so warmly welcome and of which we have too often been deprived at meetings of the Canadian Nautical Research Society, have a special need to know and understand Canadian naval history when, as is now so patently obvious, the axe is in danger of falling on the navy. The moment is opportune. Books and articles about Canadian naval history are increasing in number to such a degree that there no longer is - as there once was - a shortage of material on the subject. Disagreements there may be, and the resultant healthy debate — but no briefing note, no staff appreciation, no white paper concerning Canada's naval policy, no manual of naval doctrine for the Canadian Armed Forces (and of course these remarks apply to all aspects of the military experience, but the occasion demands particular attention to the seagoing profession) should see the light of day before it has been tempered by the fire of historical process.

History, of course, is a two-way street. The historian can learn as much from the sailor as the sailor from the historian. Historians can help sailors to develop a clear perspective on the past and assist policy-makers in building new policies on the rock of fact (or as close to "fact" as responsible historians are able to come) rather than the sand of myth (or fact distorted by constant misrepresentation). And when historians expose themselves to the dynamic of people immersed in the daily activities of the naval profession, they invariably return to the documents with important new insights. A partnership is possible, and failure to cultivate it is plainly a dereliction of duty.

What are the new sources of historical knowledge to which sailors can turn? In 1984 *Mariner's Mirror* published an article on "Canadian Naval Historiography"[1] which was able to cite for a seventy-four year period a total output of five volumes of official history devoted to the RCN and the Coast Guard;[2] James Boutilier's *RCN in Retrospect?* half a dozen theses on the history of the RCN;[4] several articles;[5] and a number of additional books on Canadian naval history.[6] A large proportion of the books appeared in the 1980s, and the stream is turning into a torrent. Since 1984 there have been more than two dozen volumes on the RCN, including at least six substantial scholarly studies,[7] several first person accounts, and one popular best-seller.[8] Among this cornucopia only a few have profited from naval birthdays more than they have instructed readers.

Sailors, like most people, resent criticism, but as much or more than most, they can take it. A distinguished member of this society will recall, after he had delivered his paper on

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the shortcomings of RCN convoy escorts in 1942-1943, the accusation by a very well-known Canadian naval veteran and author that he was far too young to know what really happened in the wartime navy. It was a sobering experience for a scholar who had only recently survived the ordeal of defending an MA. thesis on this very subject. And it was a source of enormous comfort when another, even more distinguished naval veteran defended him from his latter-day critics.

No doubt all historians can document similar experiences. When giving a paper on Canada's wartime navy, called "New Wine in Old Bottles," it was a source of pleasure and amazement to see a phalanx of sailors in the front rows of the Carleton University Senate Chamber attending that meeting of the Ottawa Historical Association. The paper was certainly a source of amazement, if not pleasure, to those sailors. They were not backward in challenging, for example, the observation that the RCN had no deathless sayings or mottoes of its own on which to build a tradition: no "England expects; no "Don't give up the ship" or "We have met the enemy and they are ours." What, they asked, about "Get away *Haida*, get clear," believed to be the last words of young Lieutenant Commander John Stubbs, captain of the *Athabaskan* when she was sunk in the English channel in 1944? Well, given that *Haida* would be exposed to extreme danger from shore-based artillery with the coming dawn, John Stubbs' sentiment expressed in such ordinary seaman-like words may have a muted sound, but it is no less memorable than the immortal sayings of other naval heroes, and one can certainly accept that particular caveat.

A refined version of this paper, given to a gathering of the Naval Officers Association in Toronto, met with less polite comment. Several hundred of the retired naval persons present evidently expected a splendid recitation of their wartime feats and became restless when all they seemed to be hearing was a narration of their wartime mistakes. About three-quarters of the way through the learned discourse a retired Lieutenant Commander, one who had come up through the hawse pipe, rescued the situation by forming an impromptu inspection party and piping the "still for rounds" on his bosun's call. It was a kind member of the group who observed, in thanking the speaker, that the navy needed to be told what had been wrong with it in the past if it were ever to do things right in the future.

The books that have appeared since 1984, and some that were published earlier, have certainly told readers what was wrong with the navy. But it is also equally important to point out what had been right, and on the whole the literature, before and after 1984, provides a record of the good as well as the bad. The difficulty has been to distinguish between the two to achieve a balance, one that demolishes harmful myths (remembering the importance of myth in any human endeavour) while preserving the significant truths.

There is, for example, a great deal of truth in a suggestion by J A. Wilson, a long-time servant of the Department of Marine who later became the "father" of the Royal Canadian Air Force. In discussing the Canadian naval service between 1910 and 1920, he emphasized the close association of the Royal Navy with the merchant service, a bond which the RCN had failed to foster. T spent the best ten years of my life in that endeavour," he told Charles Grey, editor of *The Aeroplane*, "and know how true it is that the house was built on sand and had no permanence." The navy had no solid civil foundation and consequently no material, technological or moral support from the public. It was constantly fighting for survival.[9]

Naval planners seemed to know in their hearts that this was true; Walter Hose founded the reserve divisions between the wars; Captains Harry De Wolfe, W.B. Creery and the civilian

F. Alport in 1941 argued the need for an Imperial Navy dividing responsibility "in accordance with the relative individual economic resources and geographic position of the countries within the Empire"[10] and Captain Tom Pullen in 1987 eloquently advocated a Polar-8 icebreaker.[11] At the same time, the related Mahanistic belief that navies were a direct outcome of marine enterprise skewed the argument, and may even have prejudiced attempts to create adequate Canadian naval forces in a period of steady decline among western mercantile fleets. The huge wartime shipbuilding effort, accompanied as it was by the growth of Canadian escort forces, created a mindset that left the R C N vulnerable, in spite of well-argued position papers by naval planners,[12] to postwar perceptions of a navy designed simply as an adjunct to Canadian shipping in wartime.[13]

There is still a demonstrable need to demolish myths about the convoy battles of that war. Various books have purported to do this, some succeeding admirably, but they do not always appear to have been taken seriously by professional sailors. In *Origins of the Maritime Strategy: American Naval Strategy in the First Postwar Decade,* for instance, Michael A. Palmer has argued that

> The record of offensive ASW operations during the Second World war was mixed. During the early stages of the battle of the Atlantic, Allied navies relied on defense - the escorted convoy. This measure reduced the effectiveness of the U-boats by late 1942, but did not inflict heavy losses on the attacking submarine force. The British official history of wartime operational research noted, "It was therefore essential for their final defeat that aggressive operations should be made successful." The most notable offensive operation of the campaign was the effort against U-boats transiting the Bay of Biscay... during 1942 and 1943. This offensive, combined with German failure in the mid-Atlantic convoy battles of the spring of 1943, inflicted upon the U-Waffe a decisive defeat. The Allied strategic bombing offensive against German U-boat bases, on the other hand, was a notable failure.[14]

This is a curiously dated version of events by a fine young historian who is himself a noted debunker. His analysis of Oliver Hazard Perry's conduct of the Battle of Lake Erie in the War of 1812 concluded that Perry was a poor tactical commander, saved from defeat only by an unexpected wind change.[15] Surely, had Michael Palmer devoted the same analytical care to a study of the Biscay offensive in the Second World War, he would have concluded - as various historians have been saying since 1945 - that this offensive, far more the child of the British Anti-U-Boat Committee than of the U S N (Fleet Admiral King resisted the policy, even at its height in 1943), resulted in thousands of flying hours with relatively few U-boat sinkings, compared to 10th Fleet operations, particularly the feats of escort carriers working with the benefit of U L T R A in the mid-Atlantic, and later cost effective convoy escort operations in the Greenland Air Gap.[16]

Convoy escorts, ships and aircraft, were the most effective anti-submarine weapons, not only for the defence of shipping but also for the destruction of U-boats. Indeed, convoy was not simply a defensive measure; every analysis of convoy battles seems to reinforce the conclusion that it was the most effective offensive ASW strategy in two world wars. This was in spite of the fact that sinking submarines was simply a bonus in the much more important business of

ensuring the safe passage of ships carrying food, munitions and people to the decisive theatres of these global conflicts.[17] About the only sentence in the paragraph quoted from *Origins of the Maritime Strategy* that does not conflict directly with this interpretation is that the air attacks on U-boat bases were a failure. That statement, too, is open to question if it is meant to include the strategic bombing offensive against yards in Germany, which destroyed large numbers of U-boats on the stocks and delayed the appearance of Type XXI and Walther Boats in 1944-1945.

It can be said in Michael Palmer's defence that what he has written probably portrays accurately the thinking of naval planners in the early 1950s. One still hears the argument, even in discussions among naval historians today, that the only thing that prevented evasion of U-boats by convoys in 1942 and early 1943 was the sheer number of submarines at sea. In fact, as David Kahn has recently reaffirmed in his new book on Enigma in the naval war,[18] it was only when convoy routing authorities suffered from "blackouts" of Enigma intercepts that evasion was impossible. While it is true that on some occasions in spite of an exact knowledge of the location of wolf packs the convoys ran out of sea room and had to fight their way through, this was the exception rather than the rule. So "new perceptions" about the Battle of the Atlantic which are already in print need to be hammered home. Not least of the studies to do just this is the volume of official history now in preparation about Canadian naval operations in the Second World War.

Escorting convoys, we are again seeing, was the most significant role of the RCN in that war, but it was far from the only function, and in some ways not the most demanding. One must never lose sight of the achievement represented by growth of such enormous proportions-no other navy matched it~and what the men and women of the wartime RCN were able to accomplish in defending trade during five years of war without adequate prewar preparation. The common mistake, however, is to focus so much on the Battle of the Atlantic that it obscures other highly important developments.

The origins of the naval air service and its often unhappy postwar history, for example, are still only partly recorded. I think David Kealy, author of the pioneering study, *A History of Canadian Naval Aviation*,[19] published well before the demise of Canada's last aircraft carrier, would agree that his account only skimmed the surface. Why Canada acquired a naval air capability is still an open question. There is much to suggest, as George Stanley suspected when he reviewed Gilbert Tucker's *Naval Service of Canada* in the *Canadian Historical Review*™ that the RCN was after "capital ships" to create a balanced navy, and used trade defence as an excuse to get them. The recorded discussions of the Naval Staff lend credence to the idea: "All the more important Navies of the world have an air service."[21] It was assumed that the Royal Navy wanted escort carriers to enhance its ASW capability; Canada could alleviate British manpower shortages by manning an escort carrier or two with spare RCN personnel. It was a surprise when the RN refused to spare the carriers for the task envisaged.

Canada had wanted HMS *Nabob* to be the first carrier attached to a Canadian support group. Captain H.N. Lay, the ship's commanding officer, advanced the idea, supported by a message from Ottawa, in July 1944. The Admiralty, which had other roles in mind for the escort carriers they received under Lend Lease than their American allies intended, had already earmarked *Nabob* for strike operations off the Norwegian coast, and the only other available employment was in support of Operation OVERLORD. Moreover EG-16, the support group slated by the RCN for employment with the carrier, was not in the end able to be spared.

There was another reason, to which the British did not admit publicly: that the proposal implied "the [unacceptable] intention to operate the group independently."[22]

There are comparisons to be made between the RCN's naval aviation experience and that of the Royal Australian Navy. Comparative studies seem to be the way of the future in military history, especially for countries with related origins and interests. Ken Hagan's recent history of the United States Navy shows that there are also points of comparison between lesser and greater sea powers.[23] The 1989 Australian Naval History Seminar in Canberra was an encouraging first step in comparative work: James Boutilier's comparison of the *Bonaventure* and *Melbourne* stories, leading to the conclusion that "two sea-worn carriers may be said to have contributed in their separate and distinct ways, to the fashioning of more realistic defence policies in Australia and Canada," will no doubt spark vigorous opposition in some naval circles in both countries, but it initiates an important historical debate.[24]

It is a feature of the research and writing now underway about the navy that nothing is taken on faith. Roger Sarty and Michael Hadley have taken us back to the origins of the RCN for at least the fifth time since revisionist work began to appear.[25] In 1980, not long after Sub-Lieutenant Richard Gimblett wrote his M A . thesis on the fishery protection origins of the naval service, Rear Admiral Nigel Brodeur produced the first published paper on the subject. In 1985 Barry Gough provided a modified version of the argument, while in 1988 Roger Sarty and Donald Schurman refined the argument still further. In 1989 Sarty then wrote an illuminating comparison between the origins of the Australian and Canadian navies which is of great interest to anyone attempting to understand the nature of both services.[26] This was followed by *Tin Pots and Pirate Ships,* which places the Canadian story in a remarkable new context. Sailors might be excused for not being able to keep up with this outpouring; a summary of the state of play, perhaps in the *Canadian Defence Quarterly,* would be a useful service.

The "high-tech" and intelligence stories also rest uneasy on the "received doctrine" shelves of naval libraries. From both national and comparative perspectives, this subject needs further exploration. Hard questions have been asked and harsh criticisms advanced; more of both may be expected. "High-tech" problems and solutions were extremely complex. Extraordinary personalities and circumstances appear at every turn, and here as much as anywhere the contribution of practitioners may be necessary to help historians understand why certain decisions were taken. Why, for instance, was MF/DF~used by a number of Canadian escort commanders with success in detecting enemy U-boat reporting signals-rejected out of hand by Admiralty staff? Why did Canada not accept some American equipment when it was badly needed, while struggling to acquire such things as SU radar? What impact did "high-tech" problems and decisions have on procurement in the postwar navy?[27]

The postwar navy has belatedly begun to receive adequate notice from historians. Conferences in 1980 and 1985 produced papers of considerable interest by both historians and sailors,[28] and in 1990 Maritime Command held its first biennial historical conference, modeled on the German navy's annual *Historische Taktische Tage* in which serving officers presented papers addressed to the theme of continuity and change in the Canadian navy. At this society's annual conference we have heard two innovative papers on the navy since the Second World War.[29] It goes without saying that much still needs to be done.[30] There has been no mention, for example, of that exceptionally important topic, people. Until we have an adequate social history of the navy we shall be working to some extent in a vacuum. As personnel files become available for research this will become an area of considerable interest to graduate students.[31]

Historians, then, should cast their nets widely among the sailors who can help them ask the right questions. And sailors might allow me the indulgence, with profound apologies to Gilbert and Sullivan, of a plagiaristic verse:

Come, friends who plough the sea,
Truce to navigation,
Take another station;
Let's vary piracee
With a little historee.

NOTES

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1. W A . B . Douglas, 'Canadian Naval Historiography," *Mariner's Mirror,* L X X , No. 4 (November, 1984), 349-362.

2. The official histories were Gilbert Tucker, *The Naval Service of Canada* (2 vols., Ottawa, 1951); Joseph Schull, *The Far Distant Ships* (Ottawa, 1950); Thor Thorgrimsson and E.C. Russell, *Canadian Naval Operations in Korean Waters, 1950-1955* (Ottawa, 1965); J.D.F. Kealy and E.C. Russell, *The History of Canadian Naval Aviation* (Ottawa, 1965); Thomas Appleton, *Usque ad Mare: A History of the Canadian Coast Guard and Marine Service* (Ottawa, 1968).

3. James Boutilier (éd.), *RCN in Retrospect, 1910-1968* (Vancouver, 1982).

4. J.M. 1 litsman. "Canadian Naval Policy" (Unpublished M A . thesis, Queen's University, 1940); W.G.D. Lund, "Command Relationships in the North West Atlantic, 1939-1943" (Unpublished M A . thesis, Queen's University, 1972); William H. Tatley, "The Jellicoe Mission to Canada: Canada and Imperial Defence, 1921-1923" (Unpublished M A . thesis, Guelph University, 1974); R H . Gimblett, "Tin Pots or Dreadnoughts: The Evolution of Naval Policy of the Laurier Administration, 1896-1911" (Unpublished M A . thesis, Trent University, 1981); T.R Melville, "Canada and Seapowen Canadian Naval Thought and Policy, 1860-1910" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Duke University, 1981); Roger Sarty, "Silent Sentry: The Military and Political History of Canadian Coastal Defence, 1960-1945" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1982); Marc Milner, "No Higher Purpose: The Royal Canadian Navy's Mid-Atlantic Battle, 1939-1944" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1983, later published as *North Atlantic Run* [Toronto, 1986]).

5. Gilbert N. Tucker, "The Naval Policy of Sir Robert Borden, 1912-1914," *Canadian Historical Review,* XXVIII (1947); C P . Stacey, "Halifax as an International Strategic Factor, 1749-1949," Canadian Historical Association *Report* (1949); John D. Harbron, The RCN at Peace, 1945-1955: The Uncertain Heritage," *Queen's Quarterly,* LXXIII, No.3 (Autumn, 1966); Malcolm MacLeod, "The Royal Canadian Navy, 1918-1939," *Mariner's Mirror,* L V I , No. 2 (1970); R A . Preston, The RCN and Gun-boat Diplomacy in the Caribbean," *Military Affairs,* XXXVI, No. 2 (1972); George Lindsey, "Canadian Maritime Strategy in the Seventies," in A . M J. Hyatt (ed.), *Dreadnought to Polaris: Maritime Strategy since Mohan* (Toronto, 1973); W A . B . Douglas, "Conflict and Innovation in the Royal Canadian Navy, 1939-1945," in Gerald Jordan (ed.), *Naval Warfare in the Twentieth Century: Essays in Honour of Arthur Marder* (London, 1977).

6. William Pugsley, *Saints, Devils and Ordinary Seamen* and *Sailors Remember* (Toronto, 1948); Harry Catley, *Gate and Gaiters: A Book of Naval Humour and Anecdotes* (Toronto, 1949); T A . Irvine, *The Ice was AU Between* (London, 1959); Alan Easton, *50 North: An Atlantic Battleground* (London, 1963); Fraser M. McKee, *Volunteers for the Service: A Brief History of the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, Its Predecessors and Successors, On Its 50th Anniversary, 1973* (Toronto, 1973); James Lamb, *The Corvette Navy* (Toronto, 1977); Hal Lawrence, *A Bloody War: One Man's Memories of the Canadian Navy, 1939-1945*

(Toronto, 1979); Jeffry V. Brock, *The Dark Broad Seas* (Toronto, 1981) and *The Thunder and the Sunshine* (Toronto, 1983); Fraser M. McKee, *The Armed Yachts of Canada* (Erin, Ontario, 1983).

7. Michael Hadley, *U-Boats Against Canada: German Submarines in Canadian Waters* (Montreal, 1985); Marc Milner, *North Atlantic Run: The Royal Canadian Navy and the Battle for the Convoys* (Toronto, 1985); W A B . Douglas (ed.), *The RCN in Transition, 1910-1985* (Vancouver, 1988); David Zimmerman, *The Great Naval Battle of Ottawa: How Admirals, Scientists and Politicians Impeded the Development of High Technology in Canada's Wartime Navy* (Toronto, 1989); J. David Perkins, *Canada's Submariners, 1914-1923* (Erin, Ontario, 1989); Roger Sarty and Michael Hadley, *Tin Pots and Pirate Ships: Canadian Naval Forces and German Sea Raiders, 1880-1919* (Montreal, 1991).

8. Gordon Stead, *A Leaf Upon the Sea* (Vancouver, 1988) ; Tony Law, *White Plumes Astern* (Halifax, 1990); Hal Lawrence, *Tales of the North Atlantic* (Toronto, 1989) and *Victory at Sea* (Toronto, 1990); James Lamb, *The Triangle Run* (Toronto, 1989); and Tony German's best-selling, *The Sea is at Our Gates: The History of the Canadian Navy* (Toronto, 1990).

9. W A B . Douglas, *The Creation of a National Air Force: The Official History of the RCAF* (Toronto, 1986), II, 43.

10. The "Halifax Paper," an unsolicited appreciation submitted to the Director of Plans at Naval Service Headquarters in December 1941, National Archives of Canada (NAC), RG 24 D l, Vol. 3844, NS 1017-10-34, cited in Douglas, "Conflict and Innovation."

11. T.C. Pullen, "What Price Canadian Sovereignty," US Naval Institute *Proceedings*, CXIII, No. 9 (September 1987), 66-73.

12. Lieutenant Colonel Douglas Bland, "Continuity in Canadian Naval Policy, 1961-1987," *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, XVIII, No. 5 (April 1988), 29-33.

13. Paul Hellyer, *Damn the Torpedoes: My Fight to Unify Canada's Armed Forces* (Toronto, 1990), 33. "...Each service was preparing for a different kind of war. The air force was thinking in terms of a three to five-day all-out thermonuclear exchange. The army was thinking of a long war...The navy had a foot in each camp, with their emphasis on the type of anti-submarine warfare essential to convoy duty, as in World War II." See also James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada. Vol HI: Peacemaking and Deterrence* (Toronto, 1972), 100. Joel Sokolsky, "Canada and the Cold War at Sea" in Douglas (ed.), *RCN in Transition*, 213, has not completely erased the idea. "It would appear, based upon now declassified US and Canadian documents," he wrote, "that the RCN's leadership perceived its salvation in the NATO role." Less temperate statements critical of the navy's desire to fight the last war again were to be found in the daily press in the late 1940s and 1950s.

14. Michael A. Palmer, *Origins of the Maritime Strategy: American Naval Strategy in the First Postwar Decade* (Washington, 1988), 26-27.

15. Michael A. Palmer, "A Failure of Command, Control and Communications: Oliver Hazard Perry and the Battle of Lake Erie," *Journal of Erie Studies*, XVII, No. 2 (Fall 1988), 7-26.

16. David Syrett and W A . B . Douglas, "Die Wende in der Schlacht im Atlantik: Die Schliessung des 'Grönland-Luftlochs', 1942-43" ("The Turning Point in the Battle of the Atlantic: Closing the Greenland Air Gap, 1942-43"), *Marine-Rundschau*, LXXXIII, Nos. 1-3 (1986).

17. Arthur Marder, *From the Dreadnought to the Scapa Flow: The Royal Navy in the Fisher Era, 1904-1919* (5 vols., London, 1961-1970), V, 102-103. For a similar and well-documented assessment see Philip Lundeberg, "Undersea Warfare and Allied Strategy in World War I," *Smithsonian Journal of History*, I, No. 3 (1967), 1-30 and No. 4, 49-72.

18. David Kahn, *Seizing the Enigma: The Race to Break the German U-Boat Code, 1939-43* (Boston, 1991).

19. J.D.F. Kealy, *A History of Canadian Naval Aviation 1918-1962* (Ottawa, 1967).

20. *Canadian Historical Review*, XXXV, No. 2 (June 1954), 53.

21. Naval Staff Decision 168-5,6 April 1943, Appendix "B," Minutes of Naval Staff Meetings, Directorate of History, NDHQ (DHist); Naval Board Decision 11-4,12 April 1943, Minutes of the Proceedings of the Naval Board, DHist.

22. "Canadian CVE's," NDHQ to Admiralty, 10 July 44; VCNS minute of 19 July 44, Public Record Office, A D M 1/16032.

23. Kenneth J. Hagan, *This People's Navy: The 'Making of American Sea Power* (New York, 1991), describes the United States Navy in its optimum form as "a modest but proud expression of the democratic will at work."

24. James A. Boutilier, "Get Big or Get Out: The Canadian and Australian Decision to Abandon Aircraft Carriers," in T.R Frame, J.V.P. Goldrick and P.D. Jones (eds.), *Reflections on the Royal Australian Navy* (Kenthurst, NSW, 1990), 382^t08.

25. Sarty and Hadley, *Tin Pots and Pirate Ships.*

26. Rear Admiral Nigel D. Brodeur, "L.P. Brodeur and the Origins of the Royal Canadian Navy," in Boutilier (ed.), *RCN in Retrospect,* 13-32; Barry Morton Gough, "The End of Pax Britannica and the Origins of the Royal Canadian Navy: Shifting Strategic Demands of an Empire at Sea" in Douglas (ed.), *RCN in Transition,* 90-102; Donald M. Schurman and Roger Sarty, "An Historical Perspective on Canadian Naval Policy," *ARGONAUTA, TV,* No. 1 (March 1987), 6-13; Roger Sarty "The Origins of the Royal Canadian Navy: The Australian Connection," in Frame, Goldrick and Jones (eds.), *Reflections on the Royal Australian Navy,* 74-105.

27. Zimmerman, *The Great Naval Battle of Ottawa,* has made an important beginning. His "The RAN and RCN and High Technology in the Second World War" in Frame, Goldrick and Jones (eds.), *Reflections on the Royal Australian Navy,* 206-219, also pioneers comparative studies in this field. Some of Zimmerman's judgements have been questioned or challenged by others entering the field, as well as by people who took part in the events he describes and who resent some of his criticisms, a not surprising state of affairs given the previous neglect of the subject. Marc Milner, "The Implications of Technological Backwardness: The Royal Canadian Navy 1939-1945," *Canadian Defence Quarterly,* XIX, No. 3 (Winter 1989), 46-53, draws attention to the harmful effects of such backwardness, and reflects on the obsolescence of modern Canadian ships. Ralph Erskine, "U-Boats, Homing Signals and HF/DF," *Intelligence and National Security,* No. 2 (1987), 324-330, points out the U-boat use of MF/DF for sighting reports and Admiralty rejection of this as a valid source of intelligence, while convoy reports from 1942 document Admiralty criticism of Canadian escort commanders without HF/DF who investigated MF/DF bearings. See Milner, *North Atlantic Run,* 139-140, citing ADM 237/88 for Admiralty criticisms. U-Boat logs and the war diary for U-boat headquarters, from 29-31 July 42, confirm German use of MF/DF beacons for shadowing convoy ON-115.

28. Boutilier (ed.), *RCN in Retrospect,* and Douglas (ed.), *RCN in Transition;* see also Rear-Admiral S. Mathwin Davis, "It Has All Happened Before: The RCN, Nuclear Propulsion and Submarines," *Canadian Defence Quarterly,* XVII, No. 2 (Autumn 1987), 3^40; *Davis,* "'Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien': The Nuclear Powered Submarine Programme," *Canadian Defence Quarterly,* XVIII, No. 2 (Autumn 1988), 47-56. German, *The Sea is At Our Gates,* opens up some new territory, but the relative paucity of sources for an adequate postwar history of the RCN is evident from the chapters dealing with this period.

29. Rear Admiral S. M. Davis, RCN (Ret'd), "The RCN's Naval Shipbuilding Panel, 1955-1965" and Commander Peter Haydon, "The Canadian Role at Sea during the Cuban Missile Crisis."

30. This does not simply refer to the postwar period. Examples of important work that places contemporary problems in a historical context, are Donald Graves, "Hellboats of the RCN': Canadian Naval Policy and the Fast Attack Craft, 1937-41," *The Northern MarinerILe Marin du nord,* forthcoming; and Michael Whitby, "In Defence of Home Waters: Doctrine and Training in the Canadian Navy During the 1930's," *Mariner's Mirror,* LXXVII, No. 2 (May 1991), 167-177.

31. There have been books about the men and women of the navy, for example, Rosamond "Fiddy" Greer, *The Girls of the King's Navy* (Victoria, 1983), and William Pugsle/s books about men in the lower deck (see note 1), but no substantial analytical studies have yet been attempted. There have been, on the other hand, some interesting developments in the field. At the 1985 naval historical conference in Halifax James Boutilier presented a paper based on oral interviews with eight wartime lower deck ratings, insufficient to establish firm conclusions about the composition and contribution of RCN seamen during the Second World War, but enough to convey the flavour of life at sea. At the June 1991 annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association at Kingston, Ontario, David Zimmerman presented a paper based on an analysis of the peacetime officer corps of the RCN between the wars.