

is definitely worth the read and provides a great deal of knowledge to any heritage manager or enthusiast.

Ivor Mollema

Tallahassee, Florida

Christopher D. Dishman. *Warfare and Logistics along the US-Canadian Border during the War of 1812*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, www.kansaspress.ku.edu, 2021. 352 pages, illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. US \$39.95, hardback; ISBN 978-0-7006-3270-1.

This is a book that promises more than it delivers. In the preface, Christopher Dishman states his objective is to provide “a comprehensive study of the combat that took place along the US-Canadian border during the War of 1812” (xi). As part of this, he seeks both to “highlight the interdependencies between the many land and naval operations conducted on the border frontier during the war” and to “detail the importance of logistics in the frontier war” (xii). Each goal is laudable and the combination even more so. Most of the fine accounts that have been written about combat in the region favour one aspect of the fighting over the other, while histories of the conflict have only addressed the enormous logistical challenges faced by both sides in passing. Integrating warfare on both the land and the lakes into a single narrative, while offering a long overdue focus on the impact of logistical constraints would be a valuable achievement.

What Dishman has produced, however, is a fairly standard operational history of the fighting along the border that adds little that is new to our understanding of the war in that theatre. His book is particularly disappointing in its coverage of the logistics of the campaign, which offered him the greatest opportunity to break new ground. After a promising start in which he describes the local agricultural economy and the sparse network of roads in the region, Dishman lapses into the standard passing references to the logistical difficulties faced by the forces on both sides in the region. His declared intention at the start to exclude aspects of the war outside the US-Canadian border is particularly regrettable in this respect, as he undertakes no examination of the particular issues British forces faced in having a logistical chain that stretched across the Atlantic to Great Britain and the West Indies. While a decision not to go into detail about the relevant aspects of trade warfare and privateering is understandable, to exclude any consideration of it gives his book a lamentable tunnel vision. Instead, goods just seem to materialize in the theatre as though they were somehow teleported there to be hauled to the waiting men.

Dishman is more successful in his efforts to integrate the operations of

land and naval forces, yet here he again falls short of his stated goals. He notes that from the outset, both sides recognized the value of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario in terms of their lines of communication and they contested for control accordingly. Neither side possessed more than a small collection of vessels in the region when hostilities began, leading them to embark upon crash construction programs in an attempt to gain an advantage. Dishman recounts the shipbuilding race undertaken during the conflict and notes the common challenges faced by American and British constructors in terms of inadequate materials and a shortage of skilled personnel to build and crew these new vessels. Yet his coverage here takes a back seat to his focus on the campaigning, leaving only a partial exploration of one of the most prominent areas where logistics was a factor driving events.

Another factor was the interservice relationship between naval and military commanders on the various fronts. This is one of the strongest parts of Dishman's book, as he describes how the oftentimes prickly and ambitious leaders cooperated or clashed with one another. Usually it was the latter, as naval officers were frustrated by their official subordination to their army counterparts in the theatre, especially given the limited understanding the generals often possessed of the possibilities and limitations of naval warfare. He cites the partnerships between Robert Barclay and Henry Procter on the British side and Oliver Hazard Perry and William Henry Harrison for the Americans as examples of what was possible when the two forces worked harmoniously. Dishman praises the relationship between Perry and Harrison in particular for its success, noting how Harrison "showed respect for Perry's naval acumen and engaged him as a peer, not a subordinate" (161). This contrasted with the collaboration between James Yeo and George Prevost, that, after the second attack on Sackett's Harbor in 1813, was characterized by an "animosity [that] hindered army-navy operations throughout the remainder of the war" (145).

Unfortunately, such valuable assessments are submerged in a narrative devoted primarily to recounting the ground campaigns waged in the region. Combined with insufficient coverage of the logistical issues, it makes for a book that is of limited interest for most readers of this journal. While it can be recommended to anyone seeking a useful introduction to the War of 1812 in the US-Canadian borderlands, serious students of the subject will find little that is new within its pages. Despite Dishman's identifying the need for greater attention to the logistics of the conflict or joint military-naval operations, those books remain to be written.

Mark Klobas
Scottsdale, Arizona