

I criticize the book in only two areas: First, I believe the material is worthy of three or four separate volumes. Humphrey himself admits how difficult it was to document research for practical educational application while keeping the book readable. Perhaps several shorter, subject-oriented books would have helped the book's organization. Second, I feel that Dr. Humphrey unfairly stereotypes the rich as obsta-

cles in a quest for a more democratic world. Wealth can, but does not necessarily, corrupt. I believe that the balanced life value exists in the rich as well.

In conclusion, *Values for a New Millennium* is one of the most important books I have ever read. Nothing since the Bible has caused me to reflect so deeply on my personal attitudes and behavior, especially in the context of

being a Marine and an American. It is written by a Marine for fellow Marines, whether or not he intended to target us specifically. It is also based completely on objective, contemporary research, not idle philosophical speculation.



>*Capt Gayle is currently serving as the commanding officer of Weapons Company, 2/4.*

## A Lack of Leadership in High Places

reviewed by LtCol Donald F. Bittner, USMCR(Ret)

**THE CANADIAN ARMY AND THE NORMANDY CAMPAIGN: A Study of Failure in High Command.** By John A. English. Praeger, New York, 1991, 347 pp., \$49.95. (Member \$44.95)

*The Canadian Army and the Normandy Campaign* is an unusual and unexpected book. Written by LtCol John A. English, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, who is better known to Marines for his *On Infantry* (1981), the work is an analysis of the Canadian Army's performance in the Normandy campaign from the D-Day landing to the end of the Falaise Gap operations. It is based upon superb research and sophisticated analysis with clear and striking interpretations. It should also be stated what this book is not—a history of the Canadian Army in World War II. As English noted, that story has been superbly written by others.

What, then, is the focus of this history? LtCol English strives to answer the question of why the Canadian Army

in the Normandy campaign did not perform as well as it could have. To him, it had the opportunity to play a role similar to that of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in World War I, i.e., spearhead the crucial attack that led to victory over the Germans. Instead, opportunities to end the war quickly were lost in the Normandy campaign. But this was not for want of trying and at a high cost in human casualties. The question is why.

To English, the fault lay with the Canadian high command. He disagrees with the myth that the Canadian Army overtrained in Britain from 1939 to 1944 or that the Germans had better material, were better soldiers, or were more motivated than their Canadian counterparts. In postulating these views, English analyzes not only what the Canadians did in preparing for Normandy, but also what the Canadian Army did as a whole in the inter-war years. In those decades, this small Army fought for survival, becoming immersed in bureaucratic politics, citizenship/social programs, and strategic

concerns. Its senior leadership, some of whom later served in World War II, was wedded to a technical view of soldiering (artillerymen and engineers were favored), which, fused with the citizen-soldier myth exemplified in the militia regiments, caused them to be concerned with matters other than developing warfighting skills. English concludes:

the professional tradition established by the CEF [the Canadian Expeditionary Forces in World War] was largely usurped during the post-war years by an older entrenched militia tradition that perpetuated the illusion of citizen-soldier superiority and the game of political patronage.

In the midst of this, English's major charge against the senior leadership is that it forgot "... that the chief purpose of an Army ... is to fight its country's wars and fight them well." In peacetime, he stresses, any force can be diverted from this basic goal. With a glance at the current Canadian involvement in peacekeeping operations, he comments that the British Army had years of such duty in the Empire (especially India), but concludes that "peacekeeping then as peacekeeping today in no way en-

*Canadian bicycle troops land at Juno Beach during the Normandy campaign.*



hanced the capability of a professional army to wage war effectively against a first-class enemy."

To English, the Canadian Army's leadership did nothing to prepare it for a major war and once in it, it further wasted the opportunity to adequately prepare troops for operations against the Germans. He continually stresses that the troops and regimental officers were of superb quality and were not to blame, frequently quoting Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery's assessments of men, units, and commanders. Rather, for him, the fault lay with the generals who themselves did not develop an army for modern war, and who were personally unprepared to lead troops into combat, especially in combined arms operations at the corps, army, and division levels. Furthermore, these senior officers, English asserts, could not adjust to a war of rapid changes, where lessons of combat proved hopelessly diverse—from the deserts of North Africa to the mountainous terrain of Italy to the varied conditions of Northwest Europe. Personality conflicts, different approaches to soldiering, lack of professional military education, a lingering reliance on the tactics of World War I, too much emphasis on "battle drill," and service politics, all contributed to lack of success on the battlefield. For English, this is the Canadian heritage of World War II and the legacy of the largest military force Canada ever deployed abroad.

In developing these themes, English deftly moves between the operational and tactical levels of war, addressing with ease issues such as the maneuver and firepower schools of soldiering—his approach being slightly more balanced regarding the latter. As for how the author handles problems of higher

command, he postulates that the Canadian Army's senior leadership ultimately had only a limited ability to plan, and to foresee and resolve problems. A further complicating factor, he notes, was the intense personality conflicts that existed between senior officers. He also claims that too few senior officers properly understood the concept of supporting arms coordination, including too much reliance on rigid adherence to preplanned artillery and air support plans—at all levels. This will remind Marine officers of the emphasis Gen Louis H. Wilson, the 26th Commandant, placed on this subject in the mid-1970s, particularly in regard to the needless casualties that often occurred because commanders did not know how to, or could not, properly use and coordinate their supporting arms. In reading English's account of the Canadian Army's Normandy operations, the inflexibility of, and adherence to, air and artillery plans by unit commanders brings to mind Martin van Creveld's work regarding timetable warfare.

This is a meaningful and serious book for Marines to read and upon which to reflect. However, several cautions must be raised. First, it is necessary to be familiar with the British Army staff system to truly appreciate the book. Chapter 4 gives a good accounting of the British Army's staff college at Camberley. This is must reading, possibly the first part of the book to read after the superb prologue that addresses the various sources historians use and oftentimes misuse. Second, English has provided a much needed list of abbreviations; American readers will use this often. Third, familiarity with Canadian military personalities is necessary. A general World War II biographical reference

work will be helpful to readers not familiar with that country's major World War II-era commanders. Similarly, some knowledge of the organization of Canadian divisions and regiments in the war is essential. Appendices A and B from the condensed official history of the Canadian Army in World War II (C. P. Stacey, *The Canadian Army 1939-1945*) are helpful. Careful study of the box diagrams that English has provided is also quite helpful.

Although English has had the advantage of both research and leading four Canadian Land Force Staff College staff rides on this terrain, the photographs and maps in the volume provide only limited assistance to a reader unfamiliar with the operational area in which Canadian forces fought. For one unfamiliar with the localities, further maps or photographs are necessary for a better understanding of the tactical operations. This part of the volume will require not only careful reading but also additional effort. Stated another way, it is not an easy read.

The work is the result of a superb research effort. English has used the official records in Canadian and British archives, personal papers of senior and junior leaders, appropriate memoirs and secondary works, and professional journals. The latter is particularly noteworthy, as he has read and digested the key articles written by professional officers in the inter-war years.

This is a blunt and candid history, written without any "mythic glow" of the after-effects of victory. It is superbly researched and well written, with clear but controversial interpretations. This could have been two books (pre-war history, followed by a second volume on the Canadian Army's performance in the war), but English chose to produce one volume, thus further emphasizing his analysis. If his assessment is correct, then the Canadian regimental soldier and officer were placed in the worst kind of situation that anyone in combat could confront. English illustrates this by recounting the view of LtCol Dave Stewart, who opined that he always tried to protect his unit from "two enemies, the Germans and our higher command." It is the task of senior leadership to prevent such situations from ever arising again.



>LtCol Bittner is a professor of history at the Marine Corps University, Quantico.

## CAMP PENDLETON or EL TORO BOUND?

(or perhaps moving out of the area)



**SUE LEHMAN**  
"Former USNA Mom"  
Military Relocation  
Specialist

*"Serving San Diego & Orange Counties"*

**1-800-745-0755**

**Home 619-753-7415**

**Fax 619-755-3086**

**SUN HARBOR REALTY**

2651 Via de la Valle • Del Mar, CA 92014