

Comptes rendus / Book Reviews

CAMPBELL, James D. – *The Army Isn't All Work: Physical Culture and the Evolution of the British Army, 1860-1920*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2012. Pp. 224.

In the officer's mess at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, there is a series of watercolours by Lionel Edwards executed for the 1913 edition of Edwin Alderson's *Pink and Scarlet, or Hunting as a School for Soldiering*, depicting episodes of war and sporting equivalents. The most amusing, perhaps, is the equation made between turning one's horse over to the groom for feeding after the hunt, and turning one's soldiers over to the sergeant for feeding after a route march. Victorian and Edwardian military memoirs are also redolent of the analogies made between war and sport such as John Bisset's *Sport and War* (1875), James Willcocks's *The Romance of Soldiering and Sport* (1925), Neville Lyttelton's *Eighty Years: Soldiering, Politics, Games* (1927), and Henry Beauvoir de Lisle's *Reminiscences of Sport and War* (1939). All four authors reached general rank as, indeed, did Alderson. As it happens, none of these memoirs figure in the bibliography of James Campbell's monograph on the development of the Army Gymnastic Staff, which was formed at Aldershot in 1860, and of scientific physical training within the army. He does draw, however, upon Robert Baden Powell's many books and has searched out a variety of primary sources in British national and regimental archives.

Campbell is a little unlucky in that Tony Mason and Eliza Reid published *Sport and the Military: The British Armed Forces, 1880-1960* in 2010, although his own work is based upon his earlier MA thesis for the University of Maine back in 1997. Campbell is at pains, therefore, to emphasise that while Mason and Reid deal only with sport, his focus is upon physical culture, and the relationship of institutionalised physical training to the increasing professionalisation of the army. Inevitably, perhaps, Campbell is drawn back frequently to sport and we get some well known stories such as the footballs handed out to the four companies of the 8th Battalion, The East Surrey Regiment by Captain W P Neville being kicked out across No Man's Land on July 1, 1916, emulating Rifleman Frank Edwards of the 18th (County of London) Battalion, The London Regiment (London Irish Rifles) at Loos on September 25, 1915. Campbell also recounts in outline, but without precise detail, how Lieutenant Colonel Ernest Montresor halted the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment to hand out the medals won by B Company in the regimental cricket competition held prior to mobilisation on August 29, 1914 during the retreat from Mons: Montresor was killed on the Aisne on September 14, 1914.

Where Campbell is breaking new ground, however, is in his attempt to relate the army's development of physical training to the other more recognised advances in professionalism. Some key figures emerging are the first long-serving Superintendent of Gymnasia, Frederick Hammersley; George Fox, who was Inspector of Gymnasia from 1890-97, and went on to be Inspector of Physical Training for the Board of Education; and Sir Reginald Kentish, who was to head the Army Sport Control Board in 1918, and went on to found the National Playing Fields Association. Campbell traces the evolution of physical training science in the army through such means as the debate on the Swedish 'Ling' system and the emergence of the first army manual of physical training in 1908. When increasing attention has been drawn to the creation of the army's tactical manuals during the Great War, it can be noted that SS 137 Recreational Training appeared in 1917, and the provision of sports grounds was mandated in SS 152 Instructions for the Training of the British Armies in France in 1918. Interestingly, SS 137 prohibited monetary prizes for sports competitions, the victors in boxing matches in particular having been so rewarded, in one case with a purse of uncut diamonds. Indeed, Campbell suggests a creeping professionalism in the army's supposedly amateur sporting contests. The 1st Battalion, The Grenadier Guards football team, for example, had seven former professional footballers in 1916.

Professional boxers in particular, such as 'Bombardier' Billy Wells—later familiar to many British cinemagoers from his prominent role in striking the gong at the start of Rank's film productions—had been recruited by Ronald 'Bloody' Campbell, who began teaching bayonet fighting skills in Third Army in March 1916. Linked primarily to the idea of the 'Spirit of the Bayonet', Ronald Campbell's methods spread throughout the British armies in France and Flanders although he himself well understood that the bayonet was an ineffective weapon and his advocacy contributed primarily to the wider concern of the military authorities to instil high morale and fighting spirit. Paradoxically, the Army Gymnastics Staff had been dismembered on the outbreak of war in August 1914 with many personnel dispersed to their regiments. But it was soon appreciated that the 'New Armies' as well as the Territorials—Campbell errs in referring throughout to the Territorial Army when it was the Territorial Force until reconstitution in 1921—required physical training, albeit that much of it was to consist of route marching.

Campbell refutes one suggestion of John Fuller's *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-18* (1990) that sport behind the lines in France and Flanders emerged spontaneously and unorganised. Indeed, events such as gymkhana became highly organised, with formal divisional championships emerging in no less than fifteen different sports. Although rightly emphasising the army's role in spreading sports within the Victorian empire, Campbell is less successful in establishing sport as something that both differentiated soldiers from civilians and also, simultaneously, bridged the divide between army and civil society. Campbell is equally not entirely convincing in suggesting that gymnastic training was a vital building block in the process whereby civilians were turned into soldiers. Overall, however, Campbell has

usefully told us more about physical culture in the army than we recognised before.

Ian F. W. Beckett
University of Kent

COOK, Tim – *Warlords: Borden, Mackenzie King, and Canada's World Wars*. Toronto: Allen Lane, 2012. Pp. 472.

A good book can have a bad title. Neither Robert Borden nor William Lyon Mackenzie King could rightly be called warlords, at least not without expecting laughter. Title aside, though, *Warlords* is a very good book. Well-researched, drawing upon a wealth of complex scholarship, the book synthesizes a host of ideas. It succinctly summarizes complex debates, all the while making you want to read more. This is not a monograph of narrow specialization.

Warlords is a double biography of Canada's two wartime prime ministers, Borden and King. Cook is sympathetic, but often critical. He is judicious, but not naïve. What kind of account of Borden and King do we get?

On Borden, Cook makes the case that, on at least some fronts, his reputation should be resuscitated. Robert Borden was an 'unlikely leader'. After starting his legal career in the small town of Kentville, Nova Scotia, he was spotted by Sir Charles Tupper, the Conservative cabinet minister, and brought to Halifax to join the Tupper's Law firm. Drawn into public life and into the work of the Conservative Party, Borden eventually went to Ottawa as an MP in 1896, though he was not especially happy in the capital. He kept planning to leave, but never did. When Borden was tapped by Tupper to be the next leader of the Conservative Party, many including Borden himself were surprised. 'Even in an age when cronyism was the rule,' Cook writes, 'to choose his law partner to take his place seemed beyond the pale.' (p. 14) Borden stayed on, only to keep losing. He offered to resign after the party's loss to Laurier again in 1904 but the Conservatives, seeing no other viable alternatives, kept him on.

The Great War both saved and ruined Robert Borden. After winning the reciprocity election of 1911, his party struggled through the next several years. The economic depression that began in 1913 did not help, nor did the tricky issue of Canada's contribution to the British Navy. In the Great War, Borden saw a clear cause—as did, initially, most Canadians. Britain was at war, and so was Canada. What Cook does exceedingly well in this book is to trace several different narrative threads through the wartime years. He shows how the progression of the war complicated many initial assumptions and hopes. If this is clear in retrospect, it can also be complicated to show and explain. Cook traces the growing tensions in Canada over the extent of the Canadian contribution. Perhaps surprisingly given that Cook is known for his military history, it is his account of the domestic politics that really shines. We get the riveting story of the growing jingoism on the home