

Book Reviews

a pre-nineteenth-century or fabulous age, a Victorian heroic era and a modern age of triumph. Unlike Conrad who saw “geography triumphant” as cause for melancholy, the doctors perceived modern medicine as a source of celebration. Like geography too, nineteenth-century medicine was riven by arguments about where medical knowledge was to be made: was it in the ward, the museum or the laboratory? Similarly, medicine was torn by debates about expertise and gentility. That collection and display were central to nineteenth-century medicine needs no further comment here. And just as explorers developed paternalist and disciplinary ideologies in the midst of indigenous peoples so did doctors in the hospitals and the slum. The similarities go on and on. It is time someone explored them.

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Matthew H Kaufman, *Surgeons at war: medical arrangements for the treatment of the sick and wounded in the British army during the late 18th and 19th centuries*, Contributions in Military Studies, No. 205, Westport, CT, and London, Greenwood Press, 2001, pp. x, 227, illus., £44.95 (hardback 0-313-31665-1).

In this volume, Matthew H Kaufman takes an overview of British military and naval medicine during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The two longest chapters focus on the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, and the Crimean War, with the remainder of the book serving as a prelude and epilogue to these conflicts. We learn about the recruitment of surgeons to the armed forces, the burdens of disease and the difficulties of evacuating casualties, and about changing methods of treatment (although the book has more to say about

surgery than physic). The book also provides a useful account of the education and training of military and naval surgeons, and some reflections on the status of medical practitioners in both services.

One thing that comes across strongly in the chapters on military campaigns is the importance of close communication between commanding officers and medical men. Throughout this period, there was a social gulf between combatant officers and surgeons: the former of gentle or aristocratic descent, the latter of relatively humble origins. This gulf was bridged only rarely, and seldom by younger officers, who possessed little or no military experience. There were exceptions though, most notably Arthur Wellesley, later the Duke of Wellington, who listened attentively to James (later Sir James) McGrigor, the Principal Medical Officer during the Peninsular War. After reorganizing the regimental hospital system in the peninsula, McGrigor went on to enjoy a long and successful career as head of the military medical department. During the Crimean War, however, such co-operation was sadly lacking, at least in the first phase of the campaign. The then Director-General of the Army Medical Service, Sir Andrew Smith, was poorly informed about the size of the force dispatched to the Crimea and it suffered gravely from a lack of medical equipment. Yet, it is clear from Kaufman's account that a very real effort was made to remedy these deficiencies, and that many subsequent reports of “neglect” in British newspapers were exaggerated.

Between the French and Crimean Wars there were some important developments in military medical education, namely, the two Regius chairs of military surgery established at the universities of Edinburgh (1806–56) and Dublin (1855–60). Although the foundation of the Edinburgh chair has already been discussed in L S Jacyna's monograph *Philosophic Whigs* (1994), Kaufman provides a useful account of the life and work of two incumbents, John

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Thomson and George Ballingall. He has very little to say, however, about the short-lived chair at Dublin, but the final chapter provides a sketch of medical education in the wake of the Crimean war, and the establishment of the Army Medical School at Fort Pitt, Chatham, in 1860 and its relocation to Netley three years later.

Overall, the book provides a good deal of useful information about British military and naval medicine, but it lacks a clear sense of purpose or unifying argument. One assumes that the book was intended as a supplement to Sir Neil Cantlie's two-volume history of the Army Medical Services, which appeared in 1974. If so, it succeeds in the sense that it provides a more detailed study of military medical education and in that it utilizes some new published sources (mostly medical monographs but also some manuscripts). It does not, however, supersede Cantlie's account, which remains the more detailed of the two, and the more closely grounded in official records.

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Charles G Roland, *Long night's journey into day: prisoners of war in Hong Kong and Japan, 1941–1945*, Waterloo, Ontario, Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2001, pp. xxviii, illus., \$28.95 (paperback 0-88920-362-8).

The imprisonment of large numbers of Allied soldiers in the Far East, and their experiences until their release in 1945, was a significant occurrence in both military and medical history. Yet, strangely, good secondary source accounts are remarkably hard to find. This book is therefore a welcome and excellent addition to the small literary resource available. The author, Charles Roland, is a Professor of the History of Medicine at McMaster

University, Ontario. In his preface he gives some clues as to why the Far East Prisoner-of-War (POW) experience has attracted relatively little academic attention. He points out that POWs in general are "low status" players in the military history scenario. They win no battles or medals, and many lead boring and unhistoric existences in drab camps. If they are lucky, they return home alive, but unglorified, to a retarded military career, or civilian life in which no one asks "what did you do in the war?". Small wonder that historians have tended to ignore this backwater of military history.

This viewpoint is, however, a major misconception, and certainly so for Second World War Far East imprisonment. Here, mere existence was difficult, and required regular acts of extraordinary heroism. Roland also points out that it is highly appropriate for a medical historian to investigate this subject, as it "is explicitly a medical story since every POW was a patient at some time" during their captivity, many becoming seriously ill, and a number dying before release.

An especially important feature of this book is that it is entirely concerned with POWs captured in Hong Kong in late 1941. This is understandable, as many were Canadian, and their oral history record was particularly available to the author. It also adds, however, to the uniqueness of the book, since other secondary sources on the Far East POW experience have almost all dealt with the fall of Singapore and the subsequent imprisonment of British, Australian and Dutch troops, and their experiences in Changi Goal, or (most infamously) the Thai-Burma Railway.

The book begins by describing the rapid events leading to the surrender of the Far East Allied Forces. In Singapore, the amazing Japanese sweep down the Malaysian peninsula was known as the "Hundred Days War"; for Hong Kong it was an "Eighteen Day War", culminating in capitulation on what must have been a most