

that it had been settled by two unrelated populations, one of which had replaced the other, and that the Larsen Bay site had been abandoned before colonial contact drew people back. Hrdlicka's conclusions were initially used by the Smithsonian as an argument against returning all of the collection, especially skeletal material from the earlier phase of settlement. Hrdlicka had, moreover, interpreted post-mortem treatment of skulls during the earlier period as evidence for cannibalism, inviting the inference that they had not been treated with reverence at the time of interment.

New research prompted by the demand for the return of the collection indicated that there probably was some continuity between Hrdlicka's two populations. The remains in the upper layers were found to be more closely linked to living coastal Inuit, although it was possible the lower layers had been left by people ancestral to the native people of the Northwest Coast. Cannibalism and warfare are considered too narrow as explanations to account for all practices evidenced. The defleshing of bones at or soon after death is reinterpreted as a mortuary ritual. James Simon and Amy Steffian conclude that there is less evidence for violent injury or death than previously thought, but suggest that population growth may have placed pressure on subsistence resources, leading to territoriality and conflict. Several contributors point out that native Americans value the results of anthropological and archaeological research, but resent the apparent arrogance evidenced by delays in responding to their requests and the questioning of their status vis-à-vis their ancestors. Pardoe has made the same point with regard to native Australians (Pardoe 1991).

Native voices are provided by Henry Sockbeson of the Penobscot Indian Nation, the attorney representing the Larsen Bay Tribal Council in its negotiations with the Smithsonian, and by Gordon Pullar, an anthropologist and former president of the Kodiak Area Native Association. Pullar explains why the community sought reburial and describes the reburial ceremony. He critically examines the scientific arguments against return of the excavated material and shows that Hrdlicka was well aware that some of the skeletons he excavated were those of relatives of living people. Both Sockbeson and Pullar regret the adversarial atmosphere that prevented negotiating alternatives to reburial. Sockbeson points out that research will never establish with certainty the movement of people in the past, or continuities with the present, and that the law merely requires examination of evidence available at the time of a request for the return of skeletal material or grave goods. This is a valuable and detailed case study that does much to clarify the issues raised by the return of such material as well as advancing knowledge of the history of the area during the last 3500 years. (Robert Layton, Department of Anthropology, University of Durham, 43 Old Elvet, Durham DH1 3HN.)

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- ARCTIC AND ANTARCTIC: THE WILL AND THE WAY OF JOHN RIDDOCH RYMILL.** John Bécher-vaize. 1995. Bluntisham: Bluntisham Books. x + 230 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-871999-07-3. £14.00; \$US22.00.
- John Rymill is portrayed in this book as a reserved, dyslexic person who 'spoke little and wrote less.' He was more adept with a dog-whip or a stock-whip than with a pen, and was not given to self-advertisement or glamourization of his exploits. Today his name is barely known to people outside a circle of polar specialists. Yet his great achievement was to organize and lead the British Graham Land Expedition (BGLE) of 1934–1937, which apart from the Discovery Investigations ranks as the most productive British polar enterprise between the wars. The BGLE wrote Rymill's name in bold letters in the annals of Antarctic exploration, but the expedition received little publicity at the time because its field despatches were exclusive to *The Times*, which was not popular reading; because it suffered 'no deaths, tragedies, or shocking privations to interest the sensation-seeking public'; and because it returned quietly to the United Kingdom as war clouds were gathering on the horizon. It is proper and long overdue that Rymill's name should become known to a wider circle through the publication of this biography.
- Rymill was a scion of two land-owning families that settled in South Australia in the mid-nineteenth century. His father died when he was a small child, and he was brought up on Old Penola Station by his strong-willed, staunchly Anglophile mother. After schooling in Australia, he first appeared on the English scene in 1923, for his mother kept an address in London, where she enjoyed a busy social life. Rymill was now able to pursue his childhood ambition of becoming a polar explorer. Standing 6 ft 5 in, of magnificent physique and impressive bearing, he readily made valuable contacts at the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) and in Cambridge, and trained himself in most aspects of polar exploration, including cooking and flying. (He qualified as a pilot in 1928.) He also took part in an ethnological expedition to northern Canada in 1929.
- Those who especially fostered Rymill's ambitions were Edward Reeves at the RGS, and Louis Clarke and Frank Debenham in Cambridge, but the young Gino Watkins set the course of Rymill's polar career by inviting him to join his British Arctic Air Route Expedition (BAARE), 1930–1931. Though men of very different background, both Watkins and Rymill were imbued with the desire to see 'beyond that last blue mountain barred

with snow,' rather than with any scientific bent. The two men differed also in style of leadership. Watkins led by sheer charisma and example, appearing to reach his decisions alone, often with startling changes of plan and with too great a reliance on the element of luck. Rymill led less inspirationally, perhaps more methodically, certainly more cautiously and with due consultation. He prepared in his rock-solid way, as far as possible, for all eventualities that might overtake an expedition in the field. These qualities of Rymill are well illustrated by John Béchervaise, himself a distinguished leader of three Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions wintering in the field.

For Rymill's part on Watkins' two Greenland expeditions, Béchervaise draws on Freddy Chapman's two books — Rymill himself kept no diary in Greenland — and for the course of the BGLE on Rymill's own book *Southern lights* (1938), a tremendous chore of writing for a dyslexic and only made possible through the help of his wife Eleanor and devoted friends. Interpolated excerpts from unpublished diaries and letters make especially fascinating reading by revealing the undercurrents on expeditions of the days when it was unfashionable to wash even lightly soiled linen in publication.

As a competent surveyor on the BAARE, based near Angmagssalik, East Greenland, Rymill's greatest contribution was to make an accurate fix of the ice-cap station and to duplicate that fix on the final relief journey, led by Watkins, to rescue the entombed August Courtauld. Trail markers had vanished under the snow, and, but for Rymill's care and expertise, Courtauld's and the leader's luck would have run out. During the winter, as a skilled craftsman, Rymill worked long weeks with Wilfred Hampton to repair one of the two Gipsy Moth aircraft, crucially needed for logistic support and aerial survey work, which was badly damaged in a storm. A lifelong rapport was forged between the two men, who finished the expedition with a survey journey by dog sledge across the ice-cap from Angmagssalik to Holsteinborg on the west coast.

When his plans for a trans-Antarctic expedition were frustrated through lack of funds, Watkins settled for a modest four-man expedition in 1932–1933 to be based again near Angmagssalik and to further the aims of the BAARE. In August 1932, Watkins' luck finally ran out, for he was drowned while kayaking alone on a seal hunt. Rymill took over the leadership, Chapman and Quintin Riley being the other members of the party. On this expedition, it is sad to say that Watkins died in a lone pursuit that, as a leader, Rymill would have forbidden. It is sad also that, as recorded in this book, neither Watkins nor Rymill were highly esteemed by the strange and egocentric Chapman, who described Watkins as 'cold as ice' and a man at whose loss they felt no grief, and Rymill as unenterprising and lacking organization. However, these remarks tell more about Chapman than about Watkins or Rymill.

On his return to England late in 1933, with the mantle of his friend Gino on his immensely broad shoulders,

Rymill set about fulfilling the dream of an Antarctic expedition. Funds of £20,000 (about £400,000 today) allowed the planning of a double-wintering expedition to Graham Land on the Antarctic Peninsula. It was natural that Rymill should choose Hampton as his second-in-command. They were indeed a formidable pair: the one a master sledger and a surveyor, the other a master pilot and mechanic, and both adept in construction and repair. As expedition ship he acquired a three-masted topsail schooner, which he renamed *Penola*, to be commanded by Lieutenant Robert Ryder, seconded from the Royal Navy. Ryder was a rather 'pusser' officer with the courage of a future VC, a fine seaman, and an accomplished marine surveyor, to whom Rymill wisely trusted the running of the ship without interference. It is instructive and amusing to read of the clash of cultures as the ship sailed away from the Port of London in September 1934. On the one hand, Ryder found the young civilians, mainly from Cambridge, a stropy lot — with none stropier than the late Brian Roberts — brought up in the Watkins school, where tactful suggestions passed for orders. On the other hand, the civilians reeled at the formality and discipline of Ryder's 'standing orders.' Ryder was dealing for the first time with the same kind of people who as RNVR officers later served him so nobly at St Nazaire and Dieppe. In the end, aboard *Penola*, a *modus vivendi* was reached, perhaps with Ryder relaxing a little and the civilians raising their standards rather drastically.

Of the achievements of the BGLE, ably described by the author, space allows comment on only a few. Rymill and Hampton drew high praise from Ryder for the manner in which they deployed the Fox Moth aircraft for reconnaissance and pilotage to enable *Penola* to find safe haven undamaged at the Argentine Islands for the first winter and at the Debenham Islands, far south on Marguerite Bay, for the second winter. This was a technique novel to the Antarctic at that time.

As a leader, Rymill nowhere better displayed his judgement and selflessness than in his support of Alfred Stephenson's survey party down George VI Sound, explored and mapped over most of its length for the first time. He laid himself out to provide this support to the shortening of his own journey with Edward Bingham across the Antarctic Peninsula to within sight of the Weddell Sea coast. The two parties established beyond reasonable doubt that the Antarctic Peninsula was not an archipelago, as postulated by Sir Hubert Wilkins (another Australian) following his pioneer flight in 1928. This was the principal geographical finding of the BGLE.

As a highly cost-effective expedition, the BGLE returned home with a rich harvest of results in the fields of survey and mapping, geology, ornithology, and seal biology, all to be published in a series of scientific reports. Yet, in human terms, after the exploration and science had been overtaken by later work and after the minor differences between people had been put aside, perhaps the expedition's greatest achievement (as stressed by the author) was

that its members remained good friends until life's end.

Towards the end of 1938, Rymill's first love for Old Penola Station claimed him, and he returned to Australia for good, despite his tentative plans for a further Antarctic expedition and despite pleas from Sir Douglas Mawson, both before and after the war, to consider establishing a base in the Australian Antarctic Territory. In the words of Riley, he became a 'station master.' His plans for the station were soon interrupted by the outbreak of war, although he was at first rejected for service because of an old knee injury. In 1942 he was commissioned as a lieutenant, RANVR, and given a humdrum job in naval operations, his leadership qualities and polar expertise unused. In 1944 he gained his release from the navy on the grounds that he would be better employed raising sheep and cattle to feed the troops. He was now able to devote his life to revitalizing the Old Penola Station into an efficient and thoroughly modern concern, drawing in his methodical way on all that agricultural science could offer. As a renowned horseman himself, he also set up a riding centre. He died in 1968, aged 63, as a result of a car accident on the road to Adelaide, while following an ambulance taking his wife to hospital for treatment. Rymill held the Polar Medal with Arctic and Antarctic clasps and the Founder's Medal of the RGS, and he is, as the author fails to mention, commemorated in three place-names in the British Antarctic Territory and one in the Australian Antarctic Territory.

A foreword to this book contains a moving tribute to Rymill by Colin Bertram, one of three surviving members of the BGLE. Another tribute by Stephenson (last of those who served on both the BAARE and the BGLE) is referred to in the text as included in the final chapter, but has in fact been omitted. This omission and an unevenness in some passages suggest that the text has been cut down from a longer manuscript. Better editing was needed, as indicated also by a rather large number of misprints. However, these shortcomings hardly detract from the author's splendid portrait of a great man, a great Australian, and a polar specialist of the days when it was still possible to 'explore.' (Geoffrey Hattersley-Smith, *The Crossways*, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 2AG.)

ALASKA AT WAR, 1941–1945: THE FORGOTTEN FRONT REMEMBERED. Fern Chandonnet (Editor). 1995. Anchorage: Alaska at War Committee. xviii + 455 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-9646980-0-5. \$US39.95.

The Second World War and the Cold War that followed it constitute the main turning point in the history of Alaska. Before 1941, the state, or territory as it was then, was a half-forgotten northern backwater with a population of about 70,000, ignored by the rest of the country, its economy based on the extraction of natural resources. It was the war, and more particularly the immense expenditures on defence that came with it and the subsequent Cold War, that pushed Alaska to the forefront of the American defence effort, and that changed the landscape of the region forever. In the 15 years after the attack on Pearl

Harbor, tens of thousands of military personnel came to Alaska, building first the Alaska Highway, and then huge military installations in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and other locations. With the onset of the Cold War, Alaska found itself on the front line of Russian–American tensions, and further military spending, including particularly the construction of the DEW (distant early warning) line in the 1950s, totally changed the economy of the state. The great oil boom of the 1970s changed it again, but it was the war that first pushed the state into the modern age.

This volume contains a collection of papers presented at a conference held in November 1993 in Anchorage to remember the war and its effect on the state and on the neighbouring Yukon Territory, which was equally transformed by the construction of the highway. The event was held also to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Alaska Highway, perhaps the best known physical manifestation of the war in the extreme northwestern part of the continent. The choice of topics and speakers represented in this volume shows how much Alaska and the study of its history have changed in recent decades. Had this conference been held in 1953, on the highway's tenth anniversary, it likely would have had an exclusively military emphasis. It is a reflection of the increasing diversity of interest in the state's history that the 1993 session included 'Minorities in Alaska's military,' 'Aleut relocation and restitution,' and 'War's impact on the home front,' as well as more traditional topics such as 'War in the North Pacific' and 'Defending the territory.' It is also a sign of the times that one paper included in this book is by an American of Japanese ancestry, who was interned during the war, another is by a Japanese professor of military and diplomatic history, while another is by a Russian from Irkutsk.

It is always difficult to summarize a book that consists of a collection of papers, and it is made even more difficult in this case by the fact that this book has 67 chapters, each a separate paper, as well as an introduction and a select bibliography. Some of the contributors are professional historians, others are military men or journalists, and a good number are simply citizens who witnessed or are interested in a vital period in the history of their state. With this number of contributors, and this variety of expertise and background, the chapters are bound to be somewhat uneven in tone and quality, but this only adds to the sense that the book represents a very wide spectrum of experience, rather than being a production solely of academics. There is no point in choosing winners and losers among the contributors to this book; the academics write like academics — carefully and precisely, with careful annotations — while the non-academics write in a looser style. But virtually everything in the book is valuable to a student of the subject.

For a collection of conference papers, *Alaska at war* is an uncommonly handsome book, doubtless the result of the fact that its production was subsidized by the Alaska Humanities Forum, the National Endowment for the Hu-