

**Consolidated Liberator & Boeing Fortress.** C.R. VINCENT with J.D. OUGHTON and E. VINCENT; drawings by G.G. HOPP, Stittsville, Ontario: Canada's Wings, c1975, 246 p. ill., plans. (Canada's Wings, v. 2) ISBN 0 92002 01 3 \$17.95.

This volume sets a standard of professional commitment for Canadian archivists. It represents my ideal of the "complete archivist" — the individual who not only acquires, arranges, and describes the records in his custody, but also develops a level of mastery enabling him to interpret these records in a scholarly fashion.

Carl Vincent, the aviation specialist at the Public Archives of Canada, is primarily responsible for the acquisition and custody of the aviation records of the Federal Government. Clearly these formal commitments have engaged Vincent's imagination, motivating him to acquire as much other related archival material as possible, often on his own time and usually from private donors who must first be identified and located. Log books, diaries, personal correspondence, and taped conversations from squadron reunions have all proven fruitful sources. Most impressive are the hundreds of photograph albums and individual photographs acquired from pilots, navigators, and gunners of the Royal Canadian Air Force, which represent a vital addition to the archival heritage since most official RCAF photographs were destroyed at the end of the Second World War. Having acquired these records and turned them, or copies, over to the Archives, Vincent determined to publicize the story of Canadian aviation which they reveal. *Consolidated Liberator and Boeing Fortress* is the second book in a seven-volume series designed to accomplish this purpose.

Too often military history on such a narrow scale degenerates into regimental or squadron eulogies, but Vincent has avoided this pitfall. While devoting one-half of his chapters to individual squadrons and units, he does so to illustrate effectively the specific roles of the Liberator. As indicated by the series' subtitle, *Canada's Wings*, most of the book concentrates on the 149 Liberators and six Fortresses which saw service in the RCAF. Vincent demonstrates convincingly that their significance to Canadian aviation belied their small numbers and relatively short life-span. As forerunners of the Orion/Aurora, the Liberators were the first four-engined, long-range aircraft to serve in the RCAF totally under Canadian command. (The RCAF overseas squadrons functioning as part of the Royal Air Force were administered, crewed, maintained, and financed by Canada, but the Dominion had no operational control over them.) As the best anti-submarine and long-range patrol aircraft on either side, the Liberator provided for the first time an aircraft equal to those of Canada's allies and also the ability, again for the first time, to operate over any part of the North Atlantic with Canadian-based aircraft as well as the capacity to transport and supply Canadian forces around the world. As part of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, the aircraft was used to train crews for the aerial offensive in Southeast Asia. Perhaps most important, the Bomber Reconnaissance Squadrons effectively contributed to convoy protection in the Northwest Atlantic, the RCAF operational responsibility, by engaging, often wounding, and occasionally sinking German U-boats. Aside from these significant roles in the development of Canadian aviation and the Allies' war effort, the Liberator underlined the perennial problems of a "middle power." Despite Allied agreement on the importance of Canada's Liberators in the Battle of the Atlantic, training, and heavy-duty transport, the Dominion had great difficulty procuring these aircraft. Only concerted and prolonged effort at the highest levels, including the intervention of Winston Churchill, diverted some Liberators to Canadian use.

An exposition of the volume's themes does not convey the full pleasure to be found in reading *Consolidated Liberator and Boeing Fortress*. The book is profusely, perhaps even excessively, illustrated. Four hundred and nine well-produced photographs docu-

ment all aspects of the planes, their equipment, and their roles. Photographs of the amusing, often risqué nose art with which crews adorned their aircraft is an example of Vincent's breadth of exploration. Indeed, the volume is as much a photo-study as a textual history. Exciting, first-hand accounts taken from log books and diaries greatly enliven the story. Good appendixes and charts deal with technical information for purists and the colour-coded drawings will satisfy modellers. Based on thousands of measurements of the *Liberator* preserved at the National Aeronautical Collection, a remarkable, fold-out, plan to scale has been added at the back of the book. The volume is attractively designed and not marred by many typographical or technical errors.

Nevertheless, there are some irritating weaknesses: the volume lacks a bibliography and an index, and chapters are not numbered. The most serious deficiency is the lack of footnotes. While much of the evidence and many of the quotations seem to come from private sources unearthed by Vincent, some indication of their nature, date, and present location should have been provided. Without this scholarly apparatus, no reader can conveniently trace the sources Vincent has utilized. After all, research is cumulative, and footnotes are an essential rung by which later scholars may advance further up the ladder of historical inquiry. Finally, greater discretion might have been exercised in the number of photographs finally used. Although the illustrations are one of the book's greatest strengths, the cumulative effect leaves the reader convinced that he is being bombarded with nearly-identical images. Fewer small photographs and more full-page pictures would enhance future titles in the series. Yet, in sum, these shortcomings do not undermine the volume's overall utility. This is a good book, admirably researched, written, and designed. When most archivists display the initiative and skilled commitment toward the acquisition and comprehension of records evident in this volume, it will be a happy day for the archival profession.

Terry Cook  
Public Records Division  
Public Archives of Canada

**Ontario and the First World War, 1914-1918: A Collection of Documents.**

Edited with an introd. by Barbara M. Wilson. Toronto: The Champlain Society for the Government of Ontario, University of Toronto Press, 1977. cxix, 201 p. illus. ISBN 0 8020 2255 3 \$15.00.

The military historian Theodore Ropp has stated that, during the First World War, "the distinction between the fighting and home fronts (a significant new term) tended to disappear. . . . Citizens had to be persuaded as well as compelled to change their normal peacetime habits." In studying certain aspects of one home front, the province of Ontario, Barbara Wilson has selected documents prefaced by a 119-page introduction, which show with great clarity the regimentation of daily life which, in the opinion of many Ontarians, was necessary to win the war. When did you last hear someone say that, given a renewed sense of the national purpose that won two world wars, this country could whip problems like inflation, unemployment, the energy crisis and national disunity? Tell that person to read *Ontario and the First World War, 1914-1918* before too hastily advocating this panacea.

Although there were no artillery barrages on the home front, the citizens of Ontario did undergo an insistent bombardment of appeals, demands, advice and regulations, all designed to impel them to enlist in the armed services, work in munitions plants, increase agricultural production, support prohibition, donate to a host of fund-raising activities, and conserve such resources as food and fuel. Some of the organizations and agencies mentioned in the book are (pause for a deep breath) the various Protestant denominations within the province, Speakers' Patriotic League, Ontario Recruiting