

who are quoted directly in various sidebars. Only one “typo” was encountered. Some of the photographs, such as the large truck and boxed bulldozer bearing down on caribou (p. 140), are spectacular. Conversely, a few photos were underexposed.

Anyone interested in the conservation of caribou in North America should purchase this book. It is hoped that it will also find its way to the desks of politicians and officials of resource companies who are in a position to make a difference. It is a reliable and current overview of one of the major conservation issues in North America. The cover price is reasonable, considering that the maps and photos are almost all in color. Furthermore, any profits from sales of the book will go to the two organizations affiliated with the authors, World Wildlife Fund (M. Hummel), and Wildlife Conservation Society Canada (J. Ray).

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THE DEW LINE YEARS: VOICES FROM THE COLDEST COLD WAR. By FRANCES JEWEL DICKSON. Lawrencetown Beach, Nova Scotia: Pottersfield Press, 2007. ISBN 978-1-895900-87-3. 208 p., b&w illus. Softbound. Cdn\$19.95.

Stretching more than 3000 miles from Alaska to Greenland along the 69th parallel, the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line was a tremendous feat of geographical engineering that re-shaped the North American Arctic. Conceived as a response to the Soviet bomber threat in the early thermonuclear age, this technological marvel embodied the Cold War marriage of science and geo-strategy. It was also a human story, lived by personnel who conceived, built, and operated the radar and communication system. Several studies have traced the origins of the system, notably Joseph Jockel's (1987) *No Boundaries Upstairs*, and others, such as R. Quinn Duffy's (1988) *The Road to Nunavut*, have documented myriad impacts of the radar network on northern indigenous peoples. First-time author Frances Jewel Dickson, a retired public servant and the daughter of a pilot who lost his life on the DEW Line in 1957, should be commended for compiling an interesting series of anecdotes that reveal the experiences of the workers and pilots who worked the line.

Dickson's accessible narrative, based largely on correspondence with nearly one hundred DEW Line veterans, paints an alternate narrative of the Cold War Arctic. “I once read a press release that referred to those of us on the DEW Line as ‘sentinels of democracy,’” veteran DEW Liner DeWitt Thompson II recounts. “I doubt any of us thought

of ourselves in those lofty terms. We were just a bunch of guys doing a job complicated by harsh conditions for which we were well compensated” (p. 8). This is the collective portrait that emerges in this book, where civilian “voices from the coldest Cold War” (as the subtitle characterizes the DEW Liners) appear to lack the discipline and patriotism of the professional forces documented in most Cold War military histories. At the remote stations, practical jokes were an essential antidote to the boredom, and good food, prepared by professional chefs recruited from high-end restaurants, was the key to morale. In overviews of everyday life along the line, readers learn of the centrality of POL (petroleum, oil, and lubricants)—“the lifeblood of existence” (p. 60)—in keeping the network functioning and the inhabitants warm enough to survive. Equally important for the well-paid and isolated workers was the illicit procurement of alcohol that kept them lubricated beyond the meagre ration of six cans of beer per week.

The classic trope of the battle between “man and nature,” with the Arctic cast as a quintessential “hostile environment” to be braved and survived by southerners (to borrow geographer Matthew Farish's apt characterization), is well represented. The most memorable attacks did not come from Soviet TU-95 “Bear” bombers, but from polar bears intruding on the radar sites or encountered by workers exploring the surrounding landscapes. Commercial and Air Force pilots, flying everything from bush planes to giant “Globemasters” in the most ambitious airlift in polar history, were celebrated for conquering distance and weather. Not all of them succeeded. Some of the most tragic revelations in the book are those of airplane crashes like the one that claimed the author's father, which confirm just how daring and dangerous the pilots' daily exploits were. On another psychological plane, the burden of living and working in an isolated, homosocial environment, “cooped up inside several hours, even days, on end,” was too much for some workers, who went “bushy” and had to return south (p. 154). For others, the unforgettable experience was marked by camaraderie, interaction with Inuit co-workers and neighbours, and learning to adapt to unanticipated situations. “The first thing we learned is that you can't fight the Arctic and win,” one of the DEW Line construction managers told *National Geographic* in 1958 (LaFay, 1958:142). “So we decided to roll with the punches.” These personal stories suggest that this philosophy was pervasive across space and time.

The DEW Line Years is not a scholarly monograph. It does not provide readers with a detailed background on the DEW Line, the geostrategic and diplomatic contexts in which it was conceived, Canadian Arctic policy, or a sense of the broader socio-economic, cultural, and environmental implications of this major Cold War project. There are no footnotes, and there is no bibliography to point the reader to further readings. It is a popular account dedicated to the memories of those who served on the line, which will be welcomed by former DEW Liners and their descendants. Northern researchers searching for first-hand accounts of

the epic construction and resupply efforts that created and maintained the DEW Line will find enjoyable anecdotes to integrate into analytical histories of the radar network and more general accounts of the Cold War Arctic.

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