

*Operation East Timor: The New Zealand Defence Force in East Timor 1999–2001.* By John Crawford and Glyn Harper. Reed, Auckland, 2001, 232 pp. NZ price: \$59.95 hardback, \$39.95 paperback. ISBN 0-7900-0823-8.

OPERATION EAST TIMOR is an attractive volume, designed for a general readership — and will certainly appeal to it. It has definite value to military historians and others interested in modern peacekeeping. For a large number of servicemen and women who have been deployed in East Timor, this timely volume will be a valued memento of their service. Indeed it shows due recognition of it, in a country which has not always given its due to those it sent away. A Roll of Honour, a list of awards and commendations, and a nominal list of those who served in East Timor between 1999–2001 are included. The photographs, most in colour, of military personnel carrying out their many and widely varied duties in East Timor, are simply superb.

John Crawford is the New Zealand Defence Force historian and Glyn Harper is an army officer and senior lecturer in Defence Studies at Massey University. Both could not be better placed to obtain first-hand source material on their topic, and the bibliography reveals a good array of personal interviews, as well as defence force file material, giving them a unique look inside the New Zealand deployment to East Timor. No Foreign Affairs file material appears to have been used; its use may have strengthened some aspects of the book.

The book provides a brief background outlining the origin of the East Timorese problem. It then moves chronologically from 1998 providing a narrative of the developments as they occurred. Clear detail is given of the New Zealand military planning processes, the deployment of the unarmed UN observation group — UNAMET, the 1999 referendum in East Timor and its aftermath. The description of the breakdown in order after the referendum and the evacuation of UNAMET are compellingly written. The subsequent preparations involved in bringing the New Zealand deployment (as part of UNAMET's successor, INTERFET) into effect, reveal shortcomings in NZDF's transport assets, which were overcome by leasing commercial aircraft and vessels.

Crawford and Harper's account of naval operations, probably more than anything which occurred during the frigate debate, highlights the value of the Anzac frigate *Te Kaha* and the supply vessel *Endeavour* — one protecting the other in support for New Zealand's contribution to INTERFET. Attention is also given to the role of the frigate *Canterbury*, as well as to the military police, engineers, SAS and infantry units. The destruction discovered in Suai and the operations of New Zealand forces, both military and humanitarian, are discussed. The book concludes with the lessons learned. Overall, a good narrative work, an essential reference for those interested in what happened on the ground in East Timor and a useful contribution to the literature on UN operations generally.

The use of foreign affairs material and a critical approach to the New Zealand government's decision to become involved would have strengthened the book. Crawford and Harper emphasize the Rowling government's commitment to the principle of self-determination and to UN sponsorship of any international involvement following the unrest of 1975. They highlight a 1975 Ministry of Defence contingency plan for New Zealand involvement under UN auspices. But was New Zealand as ready to get involved as this might suggest? The deployment in Vietnam had just ended, and it would have been a bold move indeed for a New Zealand government to send troops back into Asia at that time. Foreign affairs material might well have revealed a distinct reluctance to do so, and a tendency to accommodate, if uncomfortably, Indonesia's invasion of East Timor.

What made 1999 different from 1975? Some analysis of the New Zealand political decision to become involved, and heavily involved, in the East Timor operation

would have been useful. The preface refers to this, but more could have been made of it. The press neglected to analyze critically the government's decision. As the worst-case scenario — an Indonesian military challenge to the presence of UN forces — has not eventuated, this decision escaped critical review.

It is clear that New Zealand's deployment of forces to East Timor, like INTERFET itself, was not without risk. There were contacts between Australian and New Zealand SAS troops and militia groups, and the New Zealand Battalion Group lost lives. This book emphasizes the risk that was taken in deployment of INTERFET, reveals the dilemmas faced by its commanders in securing it within East Timor and leaves the reader with the impression that New Zealand Forces have had both luck and professionalism on their side.

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*A Wise Adventure: New Zealand and Antarctica 1920–1960.* By Malcolm Templeton. Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2000. 328 pp. NZ price: \$39.95. ISBN 0-86473403-4.

THE YEARS 1920–1960 may be ancient history to the callow, but thinking readers will be aware how profoundly the past gives meaning to the present, and appreciate this book.

That the past shapes our era is exemplified by the continued vitality (but also the controversial nature in the eyes of non-parties) of the Antarctic Treaty. Given that expansionist powers had dispatched explorers to and staked out vast pie-shaped claims in the continent for decades, the conceiving, drafting and signing of that Treaty in the 1950s was one of the twentieth century's unsung triumphs. It not only suspended territorial claims, deflected rivalries, averted conflict and protected the environment but also created the world's first weapons-free zone.

New Zealand's long and intimate role in the Ross Dependency and in the negotiation of the Antarctic Treaty is the focus of Templeton's work. Drawing from official documents, he traces and analyzes New Zealand's diplomatic dealings with an imperialist Britain, a sceptical United States' government, and a visionary (read pushy) Admiral Byrd in detail never previously attempted. In so doing he provides instances of official ignorance, prevarication and obfuscation as well as far-sighted idealism, artful compromise, and skilful word-smithing. Diplomats and political leaders, and scholars of their affairs, can learn much from Templeton's patient and lucid clause-by-clause analysis of the negotiation of the Antarctic Treaty.

Templeton, a former Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs and author of numerous works on New Zealand's diplomatic history, is confident that history will speak for itself, and does not insult the reader's intelligence by drawing explicit lines to current issues. But he has embedded a sufficient wealth of illustrations and insights in his well-crafted analysis of diplomatic exchanges and political decisions to justify acquisition of his book not only by libraries but also serious students of international affairs, contemporary as well as historical.

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