Fire from Sea and Sky: The Defence of British Columbia in the Pacific War

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NOTE: The following essay was produced partly on the basis of research conducted for the Third-Year Honours Essay (HSTR 497) submitted on 2020-08-28 and presented to the 32nd Canadian Military History Colloquium (hosted by the Laurier Centre for the Study of Canada) on 2022-05-07. 'Part 2' of this essay is adapted from the body of the HSTR 497 submission, reformatted comparatively with new research conducted in the intervening time.

ABSTRACT

In the Pacific Theatre of the Second World War, the Canadian province of British Columbia on the west coast of North America is generally considered to be of little military significance. Nevertheless, the risk of an Imperial Japanese attack aimed at establishing a beachhead against the continental United States was considered by military officers in Ottawa, militia commanders on the coast, and ordinary British Columbians alike to be substantial in the early months after the attack on Pearl Harbour. These fears were fuelled both by reasonable strategic concerns and by a racist public distaste for the local Japanese-Canadian fishing community, whom defence planners believed would act as agents and saboteurs. As a result, units of army Pacific Command, the Royal Canadian Navy, and the Royal Canadian Air Force collaborated with civil defence volunteer groups and local police to maximize resource efficiency in the protection of Canada's most geographically isolated province. Due to budget constraints and national focus on other theatres of war, BC defenders and citizens often felt that the particular risk to their home had been forgotten. The resulting unique culture of home defence maximized during confirmed attacks on provincial soil, such as the shelling of Estevan Point by a Japanese Submarine in June 1942. Following the eviction of Japanese troops from the Aleutian Islands in mid-1943, official military planning on the coast reoriented toward training for an eventual offensive against the Japanese mainland. In January 1945, however, a new threat emerged and seemingly confirmed the worst fears of the most concerned BC officials and civil defence officers. Nearly ten thousand automated Japanese balloon bombs carried incendiary weapons across the Pacific Ocean, in the first intercontinental attack in the history of warfare. Uncertain as to the full potential of these weapons, British Columbia coordinated its full military and civil defence capacity, emphasizing especially the unorthodox use of the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers and the Provincial Police together with several smaller organizations.

The following essay argues that an early sense of military isolation in the war against Japan resulted in a highly particular defence culture in British Columbia, emphasizing community involvement and racial and regional identity. This culture was both the result of unusual home defence initiatives and of a decades-old racist distrust of Japanese immigrants and Japanese-Canadians. Further, the creation of a defence infrastructure along such lines in 1942 allowed an especially strong integration of community and military formations during the balloon bomb campaign of 1945.

Table of Contents

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	Aircraft Detection Corps
BCPP	British Columbia Provincial Police
BCW	Biological and Chemical Weapons
BD	Bomb Disposal
BW	Biological Weapons
CBW	Chemical and Biological Weapons
DCW	Directorate of Chemical Warfare and Smoke
FR	Fisherman's Reserve
IBDC	Interservice Bomb Disposal Centre
MPAB	Medical Procurement and Assignment Board
NDHQ	National Defence Headquarters
PCMR	Pacific Coast Militia Rangers
PJBD	Permanent Joint Board on Defence
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RCE	Royal Canadian Engineers
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RCN	Royal Canadian Navy
JSCJB	Joint Service Committee on Japanese Balloons
WAC	Western Air Command

Introduction and Historiography

It was by a mere technicality of time zones that Canada declared war upon the Empire of Japan prior to the United States on 7 December 1941. And yet, for some among the people of British Columbia, this early commitment against a foe which they felt posed a unique brand of threat to the west coast of North America must have seemed fitting. Isolated from the rest of Canada by the Rocky Mountains and bracketed by the United States to the north and south, residents of the westernmost province had since the end of the First World War feared being caught in the middle of a conflict for Pacific dominance between expansionist Japan and America. Further, white British Columbians, though they sometimes admired the pre-1931 Japan as the 'Britain of Asia,' had mixed and increasingly hostile feelings for their Japanese-Canadian neighbours, who found themselves the target of government suspicion and later repression, from September 1940.[1] In this environment, British Columbian and federal politicians and military leaders had to balance the insurance of sovereignty against American desires for a unified Pacific command against the perceived risk of Japanese attacks from without and within.

During the Pacific War (1941-1945), British Columbia faced two waves of perceived direct threat from Imperial Japan: From Pearl Harbour through mid-1943, The Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN), and Western Air Command (WAC) of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) prepared for a Japanese amphibious landing aimed at establishing a beachhead against the continental U.S., in concert with submarine nuisance raids aimed at gutting American and Canadian shipping along the coast. While June 1942 saw the sinking of the merchantman

[1]It was from this time that Japanese-Canadians were required to register with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), which process aided their eventual internment. For an exploration of this process, see Ken Adachi, *The Enemy that Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart,1991.

Fort Camosun and the shelling of Estevan Point lighthouse by Japanese submarine I-26, the actual threat was limited and was seen to have receded by 1944. Starting in January 1945, defence concerns were reignited by the appearance of the *Fusan Bakudan* (Fire Balloon), or '*Fu-Go*' devices. Approximately 9,300 9.1-metre-diameter hydrogen balloons were released from launch sites in Japan by a project of the Imperial Japanese Army 9th Technical Research Laboratory (*Dai kyū Rikugun Gijutsu Kenkyūjo*), armed primarily with incendiary devices aimed at setting ablaze the forests of the Pacific Northwest, diverting manpower to home defence and causing civilian casualties. An analog barometer regulated a system of hydrogen vents and sandbag weights released by blowout plugs, keeping the balloon at an altitude of 7,600-9,150 meters for a three-day crossing on the Pacific jet stream, a phenomenon then unknown outside of Japanese metrological circles. From 3 November 1944 to April 1945, only an estimated ten percent of *Fu-Go* devices reached North America and resulted in only six casualties in an incident near Bly, Orgeon.[2] In fact, optimal seasonal jet stream winds coincided with the wettest seasonal weather, in the fall and winter.[3] Nevertheless, the first intercontinental attack in the history of warfare constituted an unknown threat when first detected. There is evidence that its reception played into the British Columbian sense of a uniquely isolated and vulnerable position understood by neither Ottawa nor the United States. While the response to *Fu-Go* was less conventional than that to the danger of submarine attacks and land invasion, military and civil defence coordination were conditioned by earlier experiences which seemed to reconfirm British Columbians' worst fears.

[2]Robert C. Mikesh, *Balloon Bomb Attacks on North America,* Fallbrook, CA: Aero Publishers, 1982, pp. 17, 40-47.
[3]Jameson Karns, "A Fire Management Assessment of Operation FuGo." *Fire Management Today* 75, No. 1 (March 2017), pp. 53-57.

The scholarship of the defence of British Columbia during the Second World War owes much to Galen Roger Perras of the University of Calgary. His contributions to the *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, *War and Society*, *The Journal of Military History*, and *Canadian Military History* from 1997 to 2015 have elucidated the unique military-political position of Canada in coordinating Pacific defence with the United States. Additionally, his contributions to the 2008 compilation *Contradictory Impulses: Canada and Japan in the Twentieth Century* have nuanced understandings of pre-war coastal defensive planning vis à vis Japan. In particular, Perras has tied the national conscription crisis to BC defence, illustrating the relationship between federal expedience and local needs. Bill Rawling and John D. Meehan have also worked substantially in this field, as summarized in their contributions to the same volume.[4] This evolved understanding of Pacific defence imperatives, namely the need to avert implicit American threats to territorial sovereignty or Canadian strategic command on her own shores while preparing for Japanese aggression, is crucial for understanding the planning mentality of 1941-45. Timothy Wilford's 2011 strategic study *Canada's Road to the Pacific War: Intelligence, Strategy, and the Far East Crisis* and his 2012 study for *Intelligence and National Security* have refined the study of security intelligence imperatives and propaganda in priming the BC public for Japanese infiltration both real and imagined.[5] Likewise, J.L. Granatstein and Gregory Johnson's

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[4]For articles by Galen Roger Perras, see especially, "Who Will Defend British Columbia? Unity of Command on the West Coast, 1934-1942," *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 88, No. 2 (Spring 1997), pp. 56-69.
In *Contradictory Impulses: Canada and Japan in the Twentieth Century* (Bill Donaghy and Patricia E. Roy eds.) Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2008:
Gregory Johnson and Galen Roger Perras, "A Menace to the Country and the Empire: Perceptions of the Japanese Military Threat to Canada before 1931" (pp. 62-79),
John D. Meehan, "Canada and Japan Between the Wars, 1929-41" (pp. 80-100),
Bill Rawling, "Only if Necessary: Canada's War Against Japan, 1941-45" (pp. 101-119).

[5]Timothy Wilford, *Canada's Road to the Pacific War: Intelligence, Strategy, and the Far East Crisis.* Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011.
Timothy Wilford, "The Enemy Within and the Pacific Threat: Canadian Security Intelligence in British Columbia, 1942-45." *Intelligence and National Security* 27, No. 4 (August 2012): 531-558.

controversial 1988 study, recently reprinted, remains a useful primary source analysis for actual instances of Japanese espionage and their social and military effects.[6] More generally, Mark Bourrie's 2011 work on Canadian censorship in the Second World War deals in significant part with the strategic cooperation of the British Columbia provincial government, the federal government, and Canadian newspaper publishers and ordinary civilians in denying information to Japan.[7]

Two substantial studies of *Fu-Go* exist, these being Robert Mikesh's 1982 technical overview and Ross Coen's 2014 narrative history.[8] Mikesh remains upheld by volume of citation as the preeminent English-language authority on the campaign, and his technical documentation and tables of recovery incidents and encounters remain unmatched, though his work lacks any exploration of military or psychological significance. Conversely, Coen is broadly comprehensive regarding operational background, military and social response, and relevance to other facets of the Pacific War. His work covers the Japanese development program and Allied responses in parallel, including detection systems, countermeasures, and the coordination of censorship programs. While the book is largely devoted to the American experience, one chapter compares Canadian military and civil defence, primarily emphasizing similarities to American planning. While some differences and distinctions in approaches are noted, unique elements of Canadian defensive strategy are not discussed in detail. Finally, Mathias Joost provides the most

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[6]For the latest version of this work, see J. L. Granatstein and Gregory A. Johnson, "The Evacuation of the Japanese Canadians, 1942: A Realist Critique of the Received Version," in J. L. Granatstein, *Canada at War: Conscription, Diplomacy, and Politics*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020, pp. 249-276.

[7]Mark Bourrie, *The Fog of War: Censorship of Canada's Media in World War Two*, Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2011.

[8]Robert C. Mikesh, *Balloon Bomb Attacks on North America,* Fallbrook, CA: Aero Publishers, 1982.
Ross Coen, *Fu-Go: The Curious History of Japan's Balloon Bomb Attack on* America, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2014.

comprehensive examination of WAC countermeasures and tactics against *Fu-Go* specifically, illuminating a decidedly ad hoc approach to an unconventional threat.[9]

The above authors have treated key aspects of Canadian social-military attitudes and operational or tactical thinking on the BC coast during the Pacific War. The tendency has been to view civil-military measures prior to about August 1943, when the final threat of Japanese incursion via the Aleutian Islands had abated, and the late-war resurgence in the form of *Fu-Go* as separate concerns. However, a clear progression exists from the state of civil defence and military cooperation as established in 1942 and its reorganization against a new threat in January 1945. Both strategic phases share a common genesis of prewar planning, with an arguable overemphasis on the risk of Japan attacking the United States via BC and a conditioned paranoia of incursion by subversive means, namely fifth columnists and bacteriological warfare. These factors, mirrored between military planning circles and public life as evidenced in newspaper publications, created a culture of civil-military cooperation unlike that of other home fronts throughout the war. To many British Columbians, the attack on Pearl Harbour and the fate of the Canadian contingent at Hong Kong confirmed the 'otherness' of the Japanese enemy and their Japanese-Canadian counterparts alike. This projected quality, common among the Allied nations, was further conditioned by both a sense of isolation from the military establishment in Ottawa and a divergence from American strategic interests. As such, pundits and certain local military officers alike railed against an apparent abandonment of home defence.

Even as Japan was pushed back in the Pacific during the summer of 1942, sudden nuisance raids such as the attack on Estevan Point prevented a sense of definitive security. The

[9]Matthias Joost, "Western Air Command and the Japanese Balloon Campaign," *Canadian Military Journal* 6, no. 2 (Summer 2005), pp. 59-68.

lapse of enemy activity in late 1943 and 1944 convinced many civilians and not a few officers in the defence services that the threat had passed, as did the general strategic situation. However, when a new form of attack of totally unknown scope and with unknowable potential appeared in early 1945, fearful community and militia leaders appeared momentarily justified. Notably, the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers (PCMR), formed mainly to defend against Japanese amphibious invasion in 1942, avoided dissolution in January 1945 when their potential as spotters and scouts for provincial police, army, and RCAF responses to *Fu-Go* was recognized. Even as official military preparedness against Japanese incursion was scaled down and specified to deal with this narrower danger, civil defence coordination was broadened. And yet, those organizations which played significant roles (the PCMR, the provincial police, Air Raid Precautions (ARP) groups, etc.) had honed their thinking and military-civil coordination apparatuses in the years immediately prior. It is thus necessary to conceive of British Columbian coastal defence during the Pacific War as particularized in both methodology and psychosocial dimensions. The latter also intersect markedly with narrower facets of Canadian identity. For example, indigenous peoples of the province were assessed by security intelligence early in the war as potential enemy collaborators lacking Canadian loyalties, yet were hailed by the PCMR as 'natural rangers' and valued comrades, while indigenous civilians acted as guides for army bomb disposal units during the balloon campaign. The following sections will demonstrate the continuity of a unique thread of British Columbian identity, both socially and operationally, in civil-military coordination against foreign attack. While both distinct phases of the threat proved in the event to be militarily insignificant, efforts were as comprehensive as available information dictated necessary, and made excellent strategic and operational use of limited resources.

1-1. The Background of Coastal Defence and Japan, 1907-1941

An examination of wartime defensive concerns requires a limited background in the strategic and socioeconomic posture of Canada and Japan in prior decades. The 1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance cemented cooperation between the commonwealth dominions and Japanese regional colonial aims in east Asia. While American territorial interests in Alaska, the Aleutians, and the Philippines provoked a trans-Pacific rivalry, Canadians and particularly British Columbians generally admired the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905. For the next two years, white Vancouver residents and Japanese immigrants alike celebrated the battles of Liaoyang and Tsushima, while a visit by Imperial Prince Fushimi in June 1907 was attended by much pomp.[10] However, the United States, having checked Japanese war gains in the Treaty of Portsmouth, moved to assuage public fears of expansion by restricting Japanese immigration on 14 March.[11] In response, immigration to Canada via Vancouver accelerated rapidly by the summer, sparking concerns of a cheap foreign labour surplus. After a rally by the Asiatic Exclusion League initiated an anti-Japanese riot on 7 September, BC militia officers began speaking of the "influx of Asiatic hordes"[12] as a threat to security, with several officers noting the military experience and "aggressive patriotism" of many *Issei*.[13] Another factor also fed such local military concerns: since the Royal Navy reforms of 1904, the British fleet had pulled out of Esquimalt, leaving a paltry militia garrison to defend the BC coast.[14] As such, those local officers who shared

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[10]Patricia E. Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989, p. 181.

[11]Asada Sadao, "The Japanese Navy and the United States," *Pearl Harbor as History: Japanese-American Relations, 1931-1941*, (Dorothy Borg and Shumpei Okamoto ed.) New York: Columbia University Press, 1973, pp. 225-59.

[12]Willoughby Gwatkin, quoted in Johnson and Perras, *Japanese Military Threat to Canada,* p. 65-66.

[13]Rowland Brittain, quoted in Johnson and Perras, *Japanese Military Threat to Canada,* p. 66.
Note that '*Issei'* refers to Japanese immigrants to Canada, while '*Nisei'* refers to their descendants, especially the second generation.

[14]"Strategic Conditions of Esquimalt," 26 May 1905, Wilfred Laurier Fond, 101371-2; Documents on Canadian External Relations vol. 1, 1909-1919, Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC).

American trepidations were keenly aware of their Asian ally's naval superiority. Nevertheless, the Anglo-Japanese alliance precluded any preparation for any such contingencies, as proven when the fledgling Royal Canadian Navy petitioned the Laurier government in vain for Pacific Fleet expansion on that basis.[15] As such, 1907 may be reasonably considered the watershed year from which a particularized British Columbia defensive attitude towards Japan, together with a partial but increasingly prevalent distrust of and prejudice against Japanese Canadians, began to take shape. However, Canadian and Japanese cooperation on Pacific defence against Germany during the First World War and in Siberia during the Russian Civil War also reinforced a positive official relationship.[16]

Two sets of events broadly shaped Canada's Japanese policy and public feeling in the interwar period. Firstly, the lapse of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1921 necessitated an independent diplomatic relationship between the two nations. The legation system established by the Mackenzie King government in the late 1920s found cooperation in the Japanese Diet for immigration-limiting policies, even as Canadian raw materials exports to Japan increased. However, the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and subsequent rise in ultranationalist rhetoric shocked and horrified Canadians.[17] A subcommittee led by General Andrew McNaughton in that year concluded that, in the event of a Japanese-American War, the inability to deny Japanese operations along the west coast could result in a defensive American occupation of BC.[18] While this fear was not new, it was taken far more seriously in Ottawa than

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[15]Johnson and Perras, *Japanese Military Threat to Canada,* p. 66.
[16]Ibid.
[17]Meehan, *Between the Wars*, pp. 84-86, 91
While few Canadians were aware of the early coup attempts of the various Japanese radical militarist movements, the Young Officers' coup of 26 February 1936 was publicized in BC and cemented a popular perception that Japan had descended politically into fascism. However, some white BC residents remained sympathetic even to the *Kōdoha* radicals, conflating their extremism with a broader reaction to "weak government" *(Daily Colonist*, 28 February 1936, p. 4).
[18]"The Maintenance of Canadian Neutrality in the event of war between Japan and the U.S.A.," 10 March 1933,

it had been twenty years prior. When the signing of the Tripartite Pact in September 1940 necessitated a concrete strategy, therefore, McNaughton's framing of the need to protect sovereignty while ensuring an independent defensive command would return to the forefront.[19]

1-2. The Defensive Strategy, 1937-1942

By the end of 1936, the Mackenize King government had agreed to strengthen RCN, army, and RCAF presence in BC over the course of a five-year plan, resulting in the expansion of militia training and the foundation of an independent Western Air Command in March 1938.[20] In August 1940, the Permanent Joint Board on Defence (PJBD) was founded as an intergovernmental committee to negotiate contingency planning with the United States. Led by Colonel H. D. G. Crerar, Canadian representatives fought successfully to ensure that joint command in the case of invasion would not be ceded to the US, and that Canada would not be obliged to sacrifice troops garrisoned in BC to reinforce Alaska.[21] These key provisions of the final PJBD agreement (ABC-22) reflect not only sovereignty concerns, but also the spirit expressed by Canadian external affairs undersecretary O. D. Skelton in February 1937 that Canada should not "allow the United States to do for us what we can and should do for our own protection."[22]

Under ABC-22, the United States Navy would be responsible for deep water patrol, while

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HQS 5199-A, Vol. 1, 2692, RG24, NAC, Department of National Defence Records (Hereafter DNDR).

[19]It was for this reason that PM Mackenzie King had opposed President Roosevelt's personal initiative in 1936 for the building of an Alaskan highway through BC to link Alaskan defenders with the contiguous States. The King government generally recognized a need to keep American military forces out of the province by securing an independent defence. See Perras, *Unity of Command*, pp. 60-63.

[20]W.A.B. Douglas, *The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air Force Volume II: The Creation of a National Air Force.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986, p. 426.

[21]H.D.G. Crerar to J. L. Ralston, "Joint Canadian-United States Basic Defense Plan No. 2," 14 October 1940, D-19-2 1940, Vol 4, RG2, LAC.

[22]O. D. Skelton quoted in Perras, *Unity of Command*, p. 62.

the RCN would maintain coastal patrol.[23] Defence Scheme No. 2 (April 1938) also continued to apply. Adopted under post-depression economic pressures and more relevant than ever as Ottawa directed military funding to Atlantic defence, the plan anticipated an attack by one or two Japanese cruisers, a landing group equivalent to perhaps two regiments, or a handful of minelayers, armed merchantmen, torpedo boats, or cruiser submarines.[24] Fort Rodd Hill at Esquimalt would remain the priority defensive site for coastal artillery, rather than the more geographically protected Vancouver. Anti-aircraft artillery and searchlights were provided to New Westminster, Prince Rupert, and Vancouver for use against light marine aircraft. Finally, active infantry formations would delay enemy landings and occupy vulnerable coastal sites ahead of reserve mobilization, before closing with and destroying landed forces as needed. Battalions stationed further inland would coordinate with BC Provincial Police (BCPP) to maintain internal order.[25] Defence Scheme No. 3 (August 1939) clarified the latter point by breaking down assignments and army-BCPP cooperative duties by district.[26]

At the beginning of the Pacific War, Western Air Command still found itself woefully underequipped to meet the threat projected under Scheme No. 2. In Summer 1940, WAC had fourteen torpedo bombers and six patrol aircraft, mostly obsolescent stressed-skin biplanes.[27] However, the outbreak of war in Europe had released record volumes of funding for the RCAF, some of which was folded into WAC expansion, to remarkable effect even before the attack on

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[23]"Operational Plan of Royal Canadian Navy to Implement Joint Canadian-United States Basic Defence Plan," 19 December 1940, Vol .11, 764, File PC010-9-1 Vol. 1, DNDR.

[24]For the discussion of likely scales of attack met under Scheme No. 2, see "Report of Meeting Held at Headquarters, 13th Naval District Seattle, 6 March 1942, Vol. 2688, f. HQS-5159-1, Vol 2, DNDR, Library and Archives of Canada

[25]Rawling, *Only If Necessary*, p. 102.

[26]"Memorandum from the Chief of the General Staff to the General Staff," 13 February 1939, C8293, 3498-10, LAC. In addition after the outbreak of the Pacific War, forty RCN and army policemen were placed under the command of the Victoria Police Department. See *Daily Colonist,* 9 December 1941, p. 13.

[27]Rawling, *Only If Necessary*, p. 102.

Pearl Harbour. By early 1942, WAC had eleven semi-modernized squadrons (fourteen by the end of the year) operating out of six stations, in the process of being equipped with Canso flying boats, modern Hawker Hurricane and Curtiss Kittyhawk monoplane fighters, and Bristol Bolingbroke bombers among others.[28] This funding owed partly to WAC participation in the Commonwealth Air Training Plan, but equally to the King government's authorization on 18 March 1942 of a forty-nine squadron Home War Establishment for the RCAF, a significant proportion of which WAC was able to secure for itself.[29] This was likely because Prime Minister Mackenzie King, intimately invested in PJBD deliberations, was well aware of the political considerations of Canadian sovereignty and the perceived vulnerability of BC. As subsequent sections will demonstrate, the sovereignty question was not rendered irrelevant by the need to cooperate with allies in wartime.

At the beginning of the Pacific War, the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) operated nine patrol vessels out of Esquimalt, Prince Rupert, and Vancouver, including four modern ex-Royal Navy destroyers.[30] More notable than these for the purposes of military-civil cooperation, however, were the unlikely craft of the Fisherman's Reserve (FR), popularly called the 'Gumboot Navy.' This unusual arm of the RCN had been created in 1938 in response largely to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war and a perceived need to control the large population of Japanese-Canadian fishermen on the coast. Although this population had, on paper, not come under official scrutiny before 1940, the proposal for the FR as a force of "Canadian, British and Scandinavian fishermen in their own vessels, suitably armed, to round up all enemy aliens and

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[28]Ibid pp. 103, 108.
S. Kostenuk and J. Griffin, *RCAF Squadron Histories and Aircraft, 1924-1968*, Toronto: Stevens, Hakkert and Company, 1977, pp. 29-30, 40-48, 65.
[29]Rawling, *Only If Necessary,* p. 106.
[30]W.A.B Douglas, Rogert Sarty and Michael Whitby, *No Higher Purpose*: *The Official Operational History of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Second World War, 1939-1943,* Vol. 2, Part 1, St. Catharines, ON: Vanwell Publishing, 2002, pp. 30-31.

intern them in camps" met substantial official interest.[31] Despite a leak of its intended purpose to the *Vancouver Sun*, reported on approvingly in March 1938, the FR was officially a general auxiliary service intended to bolster coastal reconnaissance and patrol capability.[32] Given this motivation, it is unsurprising that the FR was prepared to act almost immediately from 8 December 1941 in rounding up the approximately one thousand small Japanese Canadian-owned fishing boats in BC. This action was authorized by Commodore W.J.R. Beech, Commanding Officer Pacific Coast and complete before New Year's Day 1942.[33] As one editorial put it by way of justification:

> If anyone wanted a good and accurate map of the British Columbia coastline, it could always be purchased in Japan They were really more open about their object on the Pacific Coast than the "Liberal" Government of Canada is in facing facts."[34]

The operation offers a stark reminder that both the local naval establishment and many ordinary working-class British Columbians were eager even before Pearl Harbour to act against the ostensible Japanese threat. That the 'threat' in this instance comprised ordinary immigrants and their families, sporadically but increasingly conflated with a foreign menace as they had been for three decades, was clearly secondary.

1-3. 'Submarines, Soldiers, and Secret Agents:' The Threat as Perceived in 1942

In early 1942, Alan Morley of the *Vancouver Sun* wrote a series of widely perused articles charging the Canadian government with an unacceptable lack of preparedness in British Columbia:

> Our derelict defence is not ready to fight a 1942 battle. We are preparing, with minute

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[31]Rowland Bourke, quoted in Gregory David Kier, "The Gumboot Navy: Securing or Sundering Canada," MA Thesis, (University of Victoria, 2014), p. 29.
[32]Ibid., p. 40.
Notably, FR vessels were gradually equipped to combat submarines and surface raiders from early 1940. See ibid., p. 110-11.
[33]Rawling, *Only If Necessary*, p. 106.
[34]*Daily Colonist,* 8 January 1942, p. 4.

> forces, to fight Singapore, Hong Kong, and Dunkirk again. […] Our present defence is based on the assumption that we must surrender, and might as well do it first, rather than last.[35]

Even while the federal government was in fact engaged in expanding Pacific defence, numerous BC civilians demonstrated their readiness to protect their communities where Ottawa would not. Accordingly, the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers (PCMR) were organized before the end of March, and within one year had attained its peak strength of 15,000, divided across dozens of localized detachments. Comprised of outdoorsmen, First World War and even Boer War veterans, and general patriots or enthusiasts, the PCMR was answerable to the army's Pacific Command and divided into area companies under Ranger Headquarters. The organization was founded and led by Pacific Command staff officer Lieutenant Colonel T.A.H. Taylor, though detachment officers and company leaders were elected, generally based on outdoor or military experience.[36] The Rangers received training from regular army units in signals, electronic communications, and engineering, though they performed most of their work independently. Notably, the PCMR constructed no fewer than 163 rifle ranges for its own use and frequently outshot the regular army in marksmanship competition.[37] The Rangers also collaborated extensively with local Indigenous bands and raised 'native detachments.'[38] Clearly, this was a militia dedicated to the idea of self-sufficient protection, reflecting the concerns of many working-class British Columbians and their mentality of 'going it alone.'

Morley and the PCMR were not alone in their fears of a serious Japanese assault during the first half of 1942. In February, Defence Minister J. L. Ralston's office was advised by the

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[35]"*Vancouver Sun* 13 March 1942, p. 1.
[36]Whitney P. Lackenbauer, "Guerillas in our Midst: The Pacific Coast Militia Rangers, 1942-45," *BC Studies* 155 (Autumn 2007), pp. 40-41.
[37]Ibid, pp. 51-52.
[38]Ibid, pp. 57-60.

chiefs of staff that the Japanese strategy would probably involve occupying "North American forces" on the coast with escalating raids, up to preparation for an invasion when and if it became strategically possible.[39] In May, following the American Doolittle Raid against Tokyo, Canadian security intelligence predicted retaliatory carrier strikes on the west coast.[40] Likewise, Air Commodore L. F. Stevenson, WAC Officer Commanding, asked Ralston for sixteen more squadrons, outfitted to defend against an attacking force comprising aircraft carriers, battleships, and cruisers.[41] That this further RCAF expansion was not granted highlights the difference in risk perceived in BC and in Ottawa. However, Stevenson did what he could with what he had. Aircraft Detection Corps (ADC) detachments, present on the Queen Charlotte Islands from the end of 1939, were massively increased in number through 1942, totalling about eight hundred observers divided over five hundred remote posts. A typical four-man ADC unit, comprising only radio and telegraph operators assisted by experienced outdoorsmen, was stationed overlooking likely enemy landing sites in order to survey the sky and sea together. The RCAF men complained of spartan cabin accommodations and barely accessible mooring sites, making resupply difficult.[42]

Finally, the public was trained and continually educated by local ARP groups in blackout and dimout drills, dealing with unexploded ordnance or chemical weapons from enemy air raids, and in the extreme, comprehensive evacuation plans for Vancouver Island and the lower

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[39]Secret Session File, Chiefs of Staff Appreciation, 19 February 1942, Vol. 72, J. L. Ralston Fond, LAC. Additionally, tensions were likely heightened by sensational reporting of the supposed 25-26 February air raid on Los Angeles. Although the 'Battle of Los Angeles' was a false alarm, the *Daily Colonist* repeated rumours of potential real aircraft contact and of Japanese Americans suspiciously violating blackout orders. See *Daily Colonist,* 2 June 1942, p. 1.

[40]Granatstein and Johnson, *Evacuation of the Japanese Canadians*, p. 268.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Rawling, *Only If Necessary*, p. 108.

mainland in the event of a Japanese landing in force.[43] Though some remained skeptical, there was no shortage of public figures to insist on civilian preparedness. Speaking at a meeting of the Provincial Civilian Protection Committee attended by ARP held on 22 June, Professor Edward Savannah of Victoria College lambasted those who viewed the threat as remote, declaring that "on the contrary, we have mighty good reason to think we will be bombed."[44] Likely, Savannah's concerns had been prompted by the surprising events of two days prior.

Indeed, public and military perceptions of a likely large-scale raid on British Columbia were heightened by two real attacks and several false positives occurring during and shortly after June 1942. On 28 May, *Victoria Daily Times* readers received confirmation from a republished *Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun* article that Japan had claimed credit for a much-publicized submarine attack in February, against the oil fields of Santa Barbara, California.[45] On 3 June, Pacific Command sent a team to investigate an oil slick on Kekeah Beach suspected to have come from a Japanese submarine. The actual origin proved to be a Greek steamer sunken two years earlier, but the heightened tension remained.[46] Then, as if on cue, two verified Japanese submarine attacks on the BC coast occurred in as many days.

On 19 June, The Victoria-built SS *Fort Camosun*, launched on her maiden voyage to carry war material to England via Panama, was torpedoed by Japanese submarine I-25 on her first night out of port. The crew was able to abandon ship and was rescued by the corvette HMCS *Edmunsdston*.[47] The following day, a second B1-Type cruiser submarine, I-26, fired between seventeen and thirty shells from her deck gun at a federal government wireless and

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[43]Granatstein and Johnson, *Evacuation of the Japanese Canadians*, p. 268.
For public notice of such ARP-led blackout training, see for example *Daily Colonist,* 9 December 1941, p. 4.
[44]*Daily Colonist,* 23 June 1942, p.5
[45]*Victoria Daily* Times, 28 May 1942, p. 16.
[46]Wilford, *Enemy Within*, p. 556.
[47]"Report on the Sinking of Ford Camosun," undated, Vol, 11, 845, COPC 8852-F96, DNDR.

telegraph station attached to the lighthouse on Estevan Point, Vancouver Island. No significant damage was caused, and the lighthouse and radio crew were lauded for a quick response, having deactivated the targeted beacon and transmitted news of the attack even as shells exploded around them.[48] Coastal patrol vessels (including FR) and aircraft were reportedly scrambled to the site, though the attacking craft was not identified. Reading the initial report, Ralston stated that at least two craft were involved in the attack, based on the observed rate of fire. This confusion was likely exacerbated by apparently mistaken reports of a surface craft sighted in the area shortly prior.[49] Security intelligence later learned that a woman from the local Hesquiaht First Nation had clearly witnessed the submarine surface and resubmerge earlier in the day but was afraid to inform authorities until after the following month.[50]

Reactions to the attacks varied at official levels. Victoria mayor Andrew McGavin and Premier John Hart were initially dismissive. When asked if he would issue a statement requesting calm, Hart told the press, "No one has the jitters, and it would be ridiculous to suggest [local people] needed such a message because of the shelling of Estevan."[51] 'Jitters' they may not have had, but the local militia took the increased threat rather seriously. In a public speech in Victoria intended to recruit volunteers for the Canadian Scottish Regiment, Captain George A. Reynolds stated emphatically:

The Enemy is not 10,000 miles away. Today on our Island [sic] shells of a submarine

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[48]Commander Yokoda of I-26 only recalled approximately seventeen shells, while the NDHQ report suggested thirty. See Bert Webber, *Retaliation: Japanese Attacks and Allied Countermeasures on the Pacific Coast in World War II*, Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1975, p. 26, and *Daily Colonist,* 24 June 1942, p. 8.

[49]*Daily Colonist,* 24 June 1942, p. 8.
Daily Colonist, 23 June 1942, pp. 1, 5.

[50]Wilford, *Enemy Within*, p. 556.

[51]*Daily Times,* 22 June 1942, p. 1.
The Imperial Japanese Navy submarine force, though materially advanced, was seriously hampered in its effectiveness by a lack of strategic or operational doctrine for shipping interdiction. Having been trained as a reconnaissance force for decisive fleet actions and surface patrols, the nine submarines deployed for nuisance operations along the west coast lacked the necessary support and intelligence to inflict serious damage. For an assessment of this problem in detail, consult the introduction and third chapter of Carl Boyd and Akihiko Yoshida, *The Japanese Submarine Force of World War II*, Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Books, 1995.

> found their mark. Less than two weeks ago, a vessel was sunk less than sixty miles from where you are now sitting or standing. The enemy is at our doors.[52]

Echoing the local military sentiment, Ralston told the House of Commons that the attack should suggest to Canadians "the nearness and vastness of the danger."[53] "No one," he declared in the same address, "can take too seriously both the immediacy and extent of the danger with which all parts of the world are confronted, and *our own part in particular* [my emphasis] at this time."[54] There were, however, few new measures which Pacific Command could undertake with present budgetary constraints, aside from the already ongoing expansion of WAC coastal patrol units.[55] One scheme which did arise in direct response to the *Fort Camosun* and Estevan Point incidents involved a special unit of the Fisherman's Reserve proposed directly by the Joint Services Committee (JSC). A new FR contingent of several hundred men was to be recruited to act in concert with the army, trained as amphibious commando infantry and equipped with fast landing craft capable of response to enemy landings anywhere on the coast. Beginning in late 1942, the men recruited under this program were transferred to England to serve in the projected invasion of Normandy, proving that even resources explicitly created for Pacific defence by Ottawa were not immune to the call of more pressing wartime service.[56] Even so, the specific coordination by federal planners of such a uniquely British Columbian force as the FR proves that Ottawa was hardly uninterested in the special concerns of the west coast.

The fears of 1942 also stemmed in part from continued concerns about the infiltration of enemy agents and fifth-column activities.[57] Although there were dissenting views, some of the

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[52]*Daily Colonist,* 23 June 1942, p. 2.
[53]*Daily Times,* 22 June 1942, p. 1.
[54]*Daily Colonist,* 23 June 1942, pp. 1, 5.
[55]WAC remained vigilant in wake of the June incidents. For example, from 8-10 October, a general alert saw squadrons chasing an approaching 'enemy cruiser' spotted from RCAF Seal Cove, finally identified as the USS *Charleston* (Rawling, *Only If Necessary*, p. 108).
[56]Kier, *Gumboot Navy*, p. 100.
[57]It is not the general purpose of this thesis to deal with the internment of the 22,000 Japanese Canadians

most the vocal opinions expressed by ordinary BC residents favoured ever-harsher repression of Japanese Canadians, even amidst their dispossession and removal from communities.[58] However, there remained a degree of credible threat from particular Japanese nationals at least as late as March 1942. Approximately 7,200 Japanese subjects and many dual citizens resided in BC at the outbreak of war, and the Japanese Consulate in Vancouver worked to maintain a sense of national community amongst them. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) noted that Consulate-funded patriotic associations and Japanese-run schools attempted to inculcate values of imperial loyalty.[59] Further, intercepted intelligence from as far back as January 1941 had proven that the Consulate had been instructed to strengthen intelligence gathering on coastal defenses, and to "[utilize our] second generation [*Nisei*] and our resident nationals" in this respect.[60] Certainly then, the Imperial Japanese intelligence service believed that some groups of Japanese-Canadians were prepared to assist them, regardless of how many might have been willing in the event. In any case, WAC intelligence sources suggested that only approximately sixty individuals attached directly to the Consulate were actually involved in prewar intelligence gathering.[61] Following the closure of the Consulate, joint service intelligence agents uncovered suspicious radio broadcasts by Japanese agents transmitting information on coastal naval activities to a central agent employed by a Reorganized Republic of China organization in

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interned by the government during the war, as this topic has been and continues to be amply explored in numerous publications and ongoing projects. Parties interested in the current state of the field are directed to the 'Landscapes of Injustice' project of the University of Victoria History Department (https://www.landscapesofinjustice.com) and its corresponding publication, *Landscapes of Injustice: A New Perspective on the Internment and Dispossession of Japanese Canadians*, Montreal: McGill Queens Press, 2021.

[58]One editorialist, for example, stated (in a repetition of the founding principle of the FR) that "the Japanese fleet "fish arm" here has undoubtedly rendered valuable services to the Tokio Government these many years," and that "we had better intern the Japanese and their friends, the pro-Japanese, along with them" (*Daily Colonist,* 11 June 1942, p. 4.

[59]Granatstein and Johnson, *Evacuation of the Japanese Canadians*, p. 256.

[60]Quoted in Ibid.

[61]Ibid.

Vancouver, from whom the data was transmitted to an espionage unit in Mexico.[62] Although the RCMP attempted follow up investigations through March, it was never clear how many such agents had operated in BC, or how integrated with the local Japanese Canadian community they had been. Nevertheless, such early encounters with security infiltration helped to justify the systematic maltreatment of a larger body of Canadian dominion subjects of Japanese origin.

It is illuminating with regard to the evolution of a British Columbian identity of civil defence to juxtapose against the treatment of Japanese-Canadians the views by intelligence and militia officers of Indigenous peoples. In October 1942, the BCPP produced a report on the Clo-Oose First Nation, noting that the local people had preferred to sell their fish to "the Japanese" rather than to white residents, that they were apparently uninterested in assisting the war effort, and that in all instances they should not be allowed to acquire more firearms, lest they "be influenced by rash promises or money, [as they] could prove dangerous should an invasion of this coast ever occur."[63] This assessment had already been utterly subverted by Pacific Command, when No. 6 Clo-Oose Company of the PCMR was established on 9 June 1942, providing many residents with ample firearms and training while committing them quite directly to defence.[64] By all accounts, Indigenous communities were, in the words of one PCMR instructor, "strongly and enthusiastically (almost too much) for the Ranger organization. They see in it the opportunity to do their bit and to help in home defence in country and in terrain and surroundings in which they [are] familiar and in which they would be most useful."[65]

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[62]Wilford, *Enemy Within*, p. 554.
[63]Ibid. p. 551.
[64]"Pacific Coast Militia Rangers Organization – Reserve Units," General Order 433/42, Canada Gazette, 28 November 1942, P. 2733/4, reprinted in David Clark, *Rangers on Patrol: An Illustrated Regimental History of the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers of British Columbia and the Yukon Territory,* Victoria, BC: Published by Author, 2015, p. 81.
[65]Quoted in Whitney P. Lackenbauer, "Guerillas in our Midst: The Pacific Coast Militia Rangers, 1942-45," *BC Studies* 155 (Autumn 2007), p. 59.

1-4. The Northern Campaigns and the Threat in 1943

By the end of 1942, the state of the war in the south and central Pacific had shifted decisively against Japan. The loss of four fleet carriers, the failure of the Combined Fleet to take Hawaii, and the advance of American land forces into the Solomon Islands had begun the slow process of establishing naval and air superiority around the home islands. In the Aleutians, however, the northern prong of the mid-1942 offensive continued to vex Allied commanders until August 1943, when a joint American-Canadian force ended the Japanese occupation of Attu and Kiska. Even after the Battle of Midway, it was not self-evident that the threat to the British Columbia had receded, and its solution would bring to a head the sovereignty issue, as well as the balance of American and British Columbian demands regarding conscription in the dominion.

The Mackenzie King government's careful navigation of the politics of conscription for overseas service had significant implications for local defence.[66] Conscription for home service duty only was introduced in June 1940, while overseas conscription remained as in-demand amongst many military officers as it was unpopular amongst large minority populations, particularly French Canadians and Indigenous peoples. Meanwhile, the value of conscripts versus volunteers was regularly debated in military circles.[67] An April 1942 plebiscite released the King government from a prior pledge not to impose overseas conscript duty, though King held off its institution in the interest of national unity. The federal government walked a careful tightrope, seeking to avert disunity by not requiring overseas duty on the one hand while on the

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[66]For a general summary of the Canadian conscription debate and conflicts of implementation, see Michael D. Stevenson, *Canada's Greatest Wartime Muddle: National Selective Service and the Mobilization of Human Resources During World War II*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001.

[67]Wilford, *Enemy Within*, p. 533.
Lackenbauer, *Guerillas in Our Midst*, pp. 58-59.

other building up an army in British Columbia for the purposes of both assuaging local fears and preparing for an eventual overseas offensive.[68] British Columbian responses to the debate were complex, and could prioritize both home defence and overseas action. For example, responding to a speech favouring conscription by Navy Minister Angus Macdonald in June 1942, Howard Green, Opposition MP for Vancouver South, insisted that a conscript army "should be built on the Pacific Coast to strike out to Alaska, Siberia, and also Japan."[69] Green directly linked the Estevan Point attack and the Japanese occupation in the Aleutians, suggesting that west coast force ready to take the fight to the enemy could represent a kind of proactive defence.[70] He was not alone in this thinking, although leaders in Ottawa were perhaps as concerned about proving Canada's military capacity to the United States as about defending BC.

In keeping with the Liberals' 'middle road' policy, the army in British Columbia was rapidly expanded with home service conscripts, including both local recruits and units transferred from the east. The command reached its peak size in mid-1943, with twenty-eight battalions (approximately 34,000 men) divided across two divisions and one reserve brigade.[71] The 6th Division garrisoned Vancouver Island, while the 8th was posted to the northern mainland and the 19th Brigade was based in Vernon.[72] Whether this proliferation of troops assuaged public fears or merely increased the sense of impending invasion is open to

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[68]Wilford, *Enemy Within*, p. 533.
[69]*Daily Colonist,* 23 June 1943, p. 3.
[70]A surprisingly oft-repeated conspiracy theory more directly ties Estevan Point with conscription, claiming that Estevan Point was a false flag attack perpetrated by the US Navy at Mackenzie King's request to justify conscription. Given the timeline of the issue and the above-stated goals of the federal government, as well as the definitive proof of the Japanese origin of the fired shells, this is patently absurd. For a typical example of the theory and its refutation, see Norm Hall and Carol Hall, "At a Crucial Hour: The Attack on Estevan Point: Mackenzie King was Sitting on a Fence. To Conscript or Not to Conscript? He Needed a Little Push. Miraculously, One Came: the Japanese attacked British Columbia. Or Did They?" *The Beaver: Exploring Canada's History* 84, No. 2 (April-May 2004), pp. 18-24 and "Japanese Records Confirm B.C. Shelling," *The Ottawa Citizen*, April 11, 2004, A13.
[71]Rawling, *Only If Necessary*, p. 106.
[72]Ibid.

interpretation, but in any case, the primary debate involved the use of these men. The month of the conscription plebiscite, the head of Pacific Command, Major-General George Pearkes, petitioned the US Army in Alaska to include a Canadian contingent in the recapture of the Aleutians.[73] This was an ideal mission, as the archipelago was technically considered a part of North America according to the United States, and thus did not invoke the feared move to overseas service (to the chagrin of a handful of officers who hoped they qualified for an overseas service tax rebate).[74] Chief of the general staff Maurice Pope favoured the idea of the troops gaining battle experience, and Mackenzie King duly argued that the deployment would raise morale on the west coast while proving to the Americans a willingness to actively defend the continent.

With cabinet approval, the 13th Brigade Group was formed under Alaska Defence Command. It would include in its ranks both former Pacific Command conscripts (among others) and the reformed Winnipeg Grenadiers, the latter a nod to the unit's destruction at Hong Kong. Given popular press coverage and common knowledge of Japanese maltreatment of Canadian POWs, British Columbians joined in a common Canadian spirit to avenge the national honour.[75] The Kiska operation, commencing on 15 August, was overshadowed by the prior Japanese withdrawal and the injuries and deaths caused by mines and traps, and by friendly fire incidents.[76] Even still, the organization and training of the 13th Brigade Group signalled a turning point in the mindset behind Pacific Command. Pearkes stated that the posture changed in late 1943 from "keeping the 6th and 8th Divisions keyed up as much as we could against the

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[73]Ibid., p. 111.
[74]Ibid., p. 112.
[75]Rawling, *Only If Necessary,* pp. 103-104.
[76]For a full exploration of the incidents, intelligence mistakes, and outcome of this campaign in context, see Galen Roger Perras, *Stepping Stones to Nowhere: The Aleutian Islands, Alaskan, and American Military Strategy, 1867-1945*, Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2003.

possibility of an attack to one in which the 6th Division was to prepare itself for any commitment which might occur in the Pacific."[77] That commitment, had Pearks had his way, would have come in an expanded Canadian offensive role. From late May, he had worked on a plan to form three new brigade groups for a second joint assault on the Kurile Islands, clearing the way for strategic air superiority over northern Japan. Prime Minister King halted the plan despite its support by more senior generals, including Ralston, on the basis that it risked overcommitting troops to American campaigns, as well as using conscripts in a decidedly overseas role.[78] The existing divisions would remain in British Columbia, preparing for the anticipated lift of the overseas service ban and the invasion of Japan, while costing the government $252 million by war's end.[79]

The RCAF and RCN units from British Columbia were also involved in the Aleutians campaign, in equally cautious measure. WAC was convinced to sacrifice No. 8 (Bomber-Reconnaissance) and No. 111 (fighter) squadrons to support the American operation in June 1942. In that instance it was Lieutenant-General Ken Stuart, chief of the general staff, who argued against sacrificing any of the WAC strength before Japanese operations against Hawaii were certain to have halted.[80] The RCN later supported the American landing on Adak in August, deploying the ad hoc 'Force D,' comprised of three armed merchantmen and two corvettes.[81] BC coverage of the event, though somewhat muted by security restrictions, emphasized the cooperation of Canada with her ally and the willingness to strike a proactive

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[77]Quoted in Wilford, *Only If Necessary*, p. 114.
[78]For the complete planning and background of this aborted operation, see Galen Roger Perras, "Eyes on the Northern Route to Japan: Plans for Canadian Participation in an Invasion of the Kurile Islands – A Study in Coalition Warfare and Civil-Military Relationships, "*War and Society* 8, No. 1 (May 1990), pp. 100-117.
[79]Wilford, *Only If Necessary*, p. 114.
[80]Perras, *Stepping Stones to Nowhere,* p. 73-74.
[81]For a discussion of 'Force D' in operational context, see Brian Garfield, *The Thousand Mile War: World War II in Alaska and the Aleutians*, Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1969, p. 31-41.

blow. Macdonald proudly declared that "now we have taken our part in an offensive action in the Pacific and have had our share in seizing the initiative from the Japanese."[82] Clearly, if the Navy was able to do as such, it was hardly on its back foot for home defence. The tide had shifted.

As in the latter half of 1943 and through 1944, coastal defence slowly but surely lapsed in priority, even as Pacific Command and WAC trained and were politically primed to expect a far eastern deployment. Nevertheless, routine scares continued to keep certain elements of the defensive network active. For example, security intelligence officers continued to investigate elevated reports of submarine activities in wake of the Estevan Point attack. The RCN was briefly convinced of a submarine recontouring New Oil Wharf in May 1943, while February 1944 saw a deployment to Coal Harbour to investigate a suspected submarine reconnaissance of the RCAF station there.[83] However, as Japan faced increasing pressure on the defensive, Pacific military officials estimated the risk of any serious incursion to be very low, while there had been no serious intelligence threats since the severing of the only confirmed Japanese espionage channels in March 1942. In September 1944, the RCN signalled this definitive shift in clear but unceremonious fashion— Bomb disposal officers were sent to disable the depth charge nets established in December 1941 off Nanaimo.[84] In the course of the year and a half since Kiska, official military prerogatives had shifted from a carefully coordinated defensive priority on the west coast to confident preparation for the *coup de grâce* against a beaten foe. Civil defence organizations, however, communally minded and devoted as they were, would soon tell a different story.

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[82]*Daily Colonist,* 9 October 1942, pp. 1, 3.
[83]Wilford, *Enemy Within*, p. 556.
[84]Ibid.

1-5. The Start of Censorship in British Columbia

Under the War Measures Act, brought into force on 25 August 1939, the Defence of Canada Regulations could by law be implemented, as they were by the Mackenzie King government on 3 September 1939. The Regulations granted broad control to the regional censorship offices to restrict published material they deemed subversive or counterproductive to the war effort.[85] In practice, the censors faced three broad problems. In the first place, the system was vulnerable to Conservative accusations of its misuse against political opponents. Secondly, military intelligence officers often had much more stringent definitions of unacceptable material compared with their civilian counterparts.[86] Finally, the scope of Canadian journalism necessitated a high degree of self-censorship, with material deemed intolerable sometimes published before censors became aware of and retracted it.

The issue came to a head in British Columbia after the commencement of the Pacific War, first centering on Japanese-Canadian publications such as the Vancouver-based *New Canadian*, ironically aimed at assimilating *Nisei* into white anglophone society. Federal censors, the staff of the *Vancouver Sun*, and provincial MPs worked to impose special restrictions on the publication without basis in the Regulations, forcing the editor to accept pre-publication oversight for both English and Japanese-language copy. Remarkably, the head of this censorship operation, *Vancouver Province* editor Lew Gordon, generally championed the cause of the *New Canadian*, defending most of its articles from any unreasonable restrictions. Gordon generally continued his support for the publication throughout the war, even after it was forced to relocate

[85]Bourrie, *Fog of War,* pp. 29-51.

[86]These issues tended to come to a head when the press wished to report on events detrimental to public morale or which questioned military decision-making, such as when newspapers acquired the first reports of the treatment of Canadian POWs captured by the Japanese at Hong Kong, leading to Conservative criticisms of the deployment of the contingent. See Ibid., pp. 155-157.

to remote Kaslo in the Kootenays in October 1942. The only Japanese publication allowed to remain operation in BC after January 1942, the *New Canadian* was even provided by the provincial Security Office with Japanese typeset confiscated from other publications, for the purposes of a fully bilingual reach. Evidently, there were some in BC who understood the utility of a demonstrably loyal *Nisei* publication. Even so, Gordon strongly opposed articles opining the injustice of internment.[87] His link to the *Nisei* press, aside from demonstrating an unusual degree of solidarity, illustrates the kind of specific interpersonal relationships which could define censorship policy application on the ground.

Gordon and the Vancouver Censorship Office also dealt with far more incendiary journalism. For example, it nixed a story which the *Vancouver Sun* had planned to run on 15 February 1942, showing a photograph of a group of Japanese Canadians hired to pose as simulated 'saboteurs' near a power dam and a map illustrating likely sabotage sites. Gordon was reportedly infuriated at the parallel streams of poor judgement required to both inflame anti-Japanese Canadian sentiment and to suggest targets to actual infiltrators.[88] C.D. Orchard, provincial minister of forests, spoke often and loudly through the first half of 1942 about his plan to appoint one thousand special fire wardens to deal with Japanese incendiary devices dropped from aircraft or planted by agents. Though Gordon initially suppressed publication of these speeches, he relented on 22 May after Orchard delivered a highly attended address for a meeting of the Victoria Rotary Club at the Empress Hotel.[89] Gordon fumed to the federal Censorship Office in Ottawa:

> If the Japs fail to sprinkle incendiary bombs on the Coastal [sic] forests of British Columbia this summer the most disappointed man in the world will be Chief forester [sic] Orchard. No amount of persuasion has induced him to refrain from invitations to the Japs

[87]Ibid., pp. 203-219.
[88]Ibid. p. 199.
[89]*Daily Colonist,* 22 May 1942, p. 9.

to come over and do their worst.[90]

Despite attempts by censors to moderate fear-generating headlines, the likes of Orchard and Alan Morley did not lack an audience, and as previous sections have demonstrated, such fears were clearly shared by many British Columbian military officers and by some in Ottawa. Although public fears of direct attack by Japan would subside after Midway and the events of mid-1943, Orchard's particular fears soon be confirmed, albeit in a fashion he could never have predicted.

2-1. Fu-Go: Federal Coordination and Response

The Canadian response to the Japanese balloon bomb campaign officially began on 20 January 1945, with a memorandum addressed from Brigadier General Maurice Pope to Prime Minister Mackenzie King. On the advice of Defence Minister General Andrew McNaughton and based on information from three confirmed balloon bomb incidents in the country, Pope stated that the balloons were likely intended to produce newspaper reports of landings. These would then be intercepted to determine Pacific weather patterns, possibly in preparation for a future airborne invasion of the West Coast.[91] At the time, Canadian authorities were unaware of the destructive intent behind the balloons and assumed that they had been launched via submarine near the coast, due to a lack of awareness of the feasibility of intercontinental balloon traversal.[92]

However, responders to early incidents in Canada were already aware of the risk of biological weapons (BW) carried by the balloons. Between 12 January and 22 January, suspicious material was recovered from what later proved to be *Fu-Go* balloon landings near Minton, Saskatchewan and Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories. Study of potential

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[90]Bourrie, *Fog of War*, p. 198.
[91]Coen, *Fu-Go*, pp. 145-146.
[92]John M. Lewis, "Ooishi's Observation: Viewed in the Context of Jet Stream Discovery," *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 84, No. 3 (March 2003), pp. 357-369.

bacteriological contaminants was carried out under authority of then-head of the Directorate of Chemical Warfare and Smoke (DCW) and United States-Canadian Chemical Warfare Advisory Committee liaison Dr. Otto Maass, initially using local civilian experts and experiments conducted directly through the chemical warfare office. Maass and his analysts did not initially find evidence of BW deployment, though they declared the Japanese balloons "highly suitable" to carrying BW in future.[93] This observation marked the beginning of a uniquely Canadian investment in researching BW-associated risks posed by *Fu-Go.*

On 24 January, amidst increasing reports of balloon incidents in the United States and the work of the chemical warfare office, representatives of the three branches of the Canadian Armed Forces and the RCMP convened in Ottawa, to form a body that would address both national defence against the balloon bomb threat and coordination with the United States. The Joint Service Committee on Japanese Balloons (JSCJB), now aware of the explosives and incendiary devices carried by the balloon bombs due to both information from the US Western Defence Command and the work of Dr. Maass, divided responsibility across the service branches.[94] As in the United States, the army was made responsible for the location, disabling, and recovery of downed balloons in the western provinces. The RCN likewise assumed jurisdiction over sighting and recovery at sea. Meanwhile, the RCAF was tasked with intercepting and shooting down balloons sighted in the air for later army recovery, while the RCMP coordinated local law enforcement in the identifying and securing of balloon bomb material in rural areas prior to army recovery.[95]

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[93]Donald Avery, "Canadian Scientists, Weapons and Japan, 1939-1945," In *Science and the Pacific War: Science and Survival in the Pacific, 1939-1945,* edited by Roy M. MacLeod, Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic, 2000, pp. 240-242

[94]Coen, *Fu-Go*, p. 147.

[95]Ibid.

The character of the initial Canadian response to the threat posed by *Fu-Go* was similar to that of the United States in its division of responsibilities, and the activities of the JSCJB and the service branches acting as its subsidiaries were conveyed to the office of the US military attaché in Ottawa from the start.[96] However, uniquely Canadian and provincial distinctions evolved rapidly. The US Office of Censorship prioritized information denial such that no detail as to the nature and intent of Japanese balloons was to be conveyed to the public. Meanwhile, the JSCJB authorized the general dissemination of descriptive information that may have improved sighting and detection to civilians in rural communities, at the discretion of military personnel and police operating in these areas. This splitting of policy was due to sparser Canadian populations in the western provinces, particularly in northern British Columbia where sightings were expected to maximize.[97] As subsequent sections will demonstrate, the general and discretionary nature of the passing of information, in that it was only restricted to word of mouth, played an active part in bomb recovery coordination with civilians. The JSCJB coordinated directly with the BCPP and PCMR, empowering both independently to inform and acquire the assistance of local fire departments, emergency response personnel, and the BC Forestry Service as they deemed necessary.[98] Thus, the Canadian military response to the *Fu-Go* threat was organized along the same lines of intra-government and inter-service coordination as was the American response. However, the Canadian and particularly British Columbian strategy was designed to take greater advantage of local authorities and civilian resources across a sparser but

[96]Ibid, p. 147-150.
[97]"General Summary, Japanese Balloons in Canada," 15 March, 1945, RG 24, Vol. 222, File 1400-16, Part 2, LAC.
[98]Coen, *Fu-Go*, p. 147.
"Report on Coordinating Meeting re: Japanese Balloons in Canada," 24 January, 1945, RG 24, Vol. 222, File 400-16, Part 1, LAC.

larger geographical area. Local Canadian efforts in the campaign were coordinated from the top down while still allowing for generous lateral organization and response between groups.

2-2. The Biological Warfare Threat

The investment of Dr. Otto Maass and the DCW in the balloon bomb campaign originated partly in several prior years of preparation for the possible deployment of CBW (Chemical and Biological Weapons) both by and against Japan in the event of an invasion of British Columbia. In 1942, Maass aggressively pursued funding for large-scale BW research, arguing that the entry of Japan into the war necessitated higher prioritization of BW defensive and retaliatory capabilities. After all, from early 1938, Japan had proven willing to deploy chemical weapons against Chinese civilians. Receiving funding, he soon collaborated with British and American researchers at a new facility at Grosse Isle, Quebec.[99] From 1943, DCW coordinated closely with the British and American chemical warfare agencies in the production of chemical weapons, primarily phosgene gas, for retaliatory deployment in the event of a CBW first strike by an Axis nation. By the beginning of 1944, the DCW was involved in production and American-Canadian joint testing for the offensive use of poison gas in the Pacific Theatre.[100] Amidst this environment of retaliatory CBW planning, it is unsurprising that the DCW took seriously the viability of the *Fu-Go* as a platform for bioweapon delivery. An influential United States Chemical Warfare Service (CWS) report of January 1945 outlines the concerns shared by Dr. Maass in consultation with his CWS colleagues:

> The type of agent chosen would depend upon the degree of accuracy with which the balloons could be sent. In the event that city limits were to be the site of landing, effective agents would be either those epidemic in character (e. g. pneumonic plague) or non-epidemic agents easily transmissible via the respiratory tract (e. g psittacosis). If non-accurate dispersion were attempted, insect-borne agents or those affecting livestock would be indicated…. One of the most likely agents might well be Japanese B

[99]Avery, *Canadian Scientists*, p. 236.
[100]Ibid, pp. 236-238.

> Encephalitis since it has been shown that this virus can be transmitted by every mosquito capable of carrying equine encephalomyelitis (Eastern and Western)…. If this type of wholesale distribution were used on our pasture lands with our important food producing animals as the ultimate target, the bacillus of anthrax, the viruses of Foot and Mouth disease, and Rinderpest might be effective.[101]

CWS reports were initially less certain of the BW risk posed by *Fu-Go*, due in part to a memorandum by US R&D head Vannever Bush stating that Japanese CBW-use was unlikely due to the Japanese knowledge of certain retaliation.[102] Unconvinced, Maass pursued an aggressive and flexible locality-based solution in anticipation of balloon-based BW attacks. At nearly the same time as the formation of the JSCJB, he gained the endorsement of the Chemical Warfare Inter-Service Board (CWISB) to chair a subcommittee in assessing the balloon bomb BW threat. In March 1945, the subcommittee declared that balloon bombs recovered were well-suited to transmitting pathogens causing mass harm to agriculture and the civilian population. It recommended granting the DCW power to coordinate the resources of the provincial boards of health and the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Safety. Additionally, the CWISB subcommittee was restructured to report directly to the Cabinet War Committee.[103]

Coordination of local medical officials became an active concern, sometimes in both directions between local officials and the JSCJB. A Northwest Territories forestry commissioner wrote to the committee in April 1945 to obtain a detailed release of information to local doctors regarding the balloon bomb BW threat, which was promptly granted.[104] In British Columbia, however, where the *Fu-Go* threat was likely to be more acute, Minister of Defence Andrew McNaughton became personally involved in organizing provincial resources for the CWISB

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[101]Ibid, p. 241.
[102]Ibid, p. 236.
[103]Ibid, p. 241-242.
[104]"Interview with Mr. Charles Camsell," 12 April 1945, RG 24, Vol. 2678, LAC.

balloon bomb subcommittee. In a letter of 6 April 1945 to BC Premier John Hart, McNaughton states that, although he regarded the risk of *Fu-Go* bombs themselves to be low:

> I am however primarily concerned with the medium that is offered to spread in this country, bacteria giving rise to serious outbreaks of human and animal infectious diseases. At the commencement of the war with Japan this was considered a possibility but as enemy agents in Canada and the United States were brought quickly under control, the threat receded. It has again become a matter for serious consideration.[105]

McNaughton informed Hart that arrangements had already been made to instruct provincial health authorities, and that the subcommittee would henceforth aid in coordinating provincial medical and agricultural resources as necessary.[106] Subsequently, Premier Hart, BC Provincial Health Officer Dr. Gregoire Amyot, Provincial Secretary G. S. Pearson, and the office of the Defence Minister corresponded regarding details. Pearson and Amyot, at the request of Premier Hart, reviewed the plan of the CWISB subcommittee. This involved Medical Procurement and Assignment Board (MPAB) coordination of provincial military and civil medical assets to aid outlying areas, with the caveat that funding and equipment reimbursement be provided by the province and its municipalities.[107] Of this proposed division of responsibility, Pearson stated to Hart, "I need not say to you how difficult this would be for us even if we had the authority, which I do not think we have at the present time."[108] While Hart formally rejected the MPAB medical assistance plan, Secretary Pearson and Dr. Amyot instead worked to ensure local medical authority awareness of the *Fu-Go* BW threat.[109] However, by the end of May 1945, Hart had formally accepted the MPAB plan in order to ensure access to military medical assistance, with the change that deployment of Army doctors and medics would be done on an

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[105]Minister of National Defence to Premier of British Columbia, April 6, 1945, British Columbia Archives, Premier John Hart Fond, GR 1222, Box 107, File 6, Letters of Premier John Hart and Department of National Defence et al., January 28, 1944 to June 13, 1945.
[106]Ibid.
[107]Ibid.
[108]British Columbia Provincial Secretary to British Columbia Premier, May 6, 1945, John Hart Fond.
[109]British Columbia Provincial Secretary to British Columbia Premier, April 20, 1945, John Hart Fond.

ad hoc basis at the request of the province, so long as "the objectionable features of the plan," i. e. funding and reimbursement, needed not be applied.[110] Meanwhile, Dr. Amyot and his local authorities disseminated information via municipal sources, such as in local lectures to the St. John Ambulance Brigade advertised in newspapers.[111]

Generally, the response of the BC provincial government to the perceived biological warfare threat of *Fu-Go* demonstrated both a commitment to protective measures and a locally-tailored approach. While the Hart government evidently considered seriously the threat of BW agents, it was unwilling to accept wholesale the intervention of federal committees where they demonstrated ignorance of provincial particularities. Further, while Premier Hart accepted a need for potential military medical assistance in extreme cases, he chose primarily to trust the Provincial Health Office to prepare localized responses.

2-3. The Interservice Bomb Disposal Campaign

The balloon bomb recovery effort assumed by the Canadian Army under JSCJB policy was based around a specialized network of bomb disposal (BD) units under the overall command of the Interservice Bomb Disposal Centre (IBDC), led by Lieutenant Commander E. L. Borradaile of the RCN. Although raised primarily from the army's Royal Canadian Engineers (RCE), the IBDC had authority over the RCMP and the PCMR in locating and disabling balloon bombs.[112] Borradaile had previously served in the Coast Service and the Home Fleet of the British Royal Navy,[113] and was well-suited to the command of a unique and "hastily organized"[114] inter-service unit. Borradaile had in fact personally disabled one of the first

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[110]British Columbia Premier to Minister of National Defence, May 27, 1945, John Hart Fond.
[111]*Victoria Daily Times*, 11 July 1945, p. 6.
[112]Coen, *Fu-Go,* pp. 146-150.
Victoria Daily Times, 19 September 1945, p. 13.
[113]*Daily Colonist,* 30 September 1945, p. 5.
[114]*Victoria Daily Times,* 19 September 1945, p. 13.

recovered *Fu-Go* incendiary bombs in February 1945.[115] The IBDC was formed not only due to the need for a coordinated response, but because of the army mandate by the JSCJB to capture balloon bomb devices intact for study.[116] The organization was divided into seven detachments, based respectively in Vancouver, Prince Rupert, Prince George, Esquimalt, Calgary, Regina, and Winnipeg.[117]

Of particular interest in the study of the IBDC is the Prince George Detachment, headed by Captain Charles A. East, due primarily to the postwar publication by East of his memoirs. These deal with the location and disabling of "white paper," or grounded *Fu-Go* devices.[118] The territory for which the Prince George Detachment was responsible included not only much of isolated northern BC but also parts of the Yukon and Northwest Territories.[119] Captain East, recalling the threat as understood by the RCE in 1945, writes:

> I think we all considered [balloon bombs] to be a ridiculous type of warfare. The prospect of spreading bacteria along with bombs, together with the possible long range effects, made the situation much more serous [sic]. It was for this reason that the operations were kept under a complete blanket of secrecy. The risk of incendiary and anti-personnel bombs were [sic] of only secondary consideration.[120]

East, like most of his fellow RCE officers, had graduated a four-week training course from the BD school in Ottawa in the demolition and disposal of all known types of enemy explosives. He had personally observed the recovery of the first armed balloon in Saskatchewan alongside Borradaile in February 1945.[121] Disposal was complicated not only by the need for sample recovery, and thus to avoidance of detonation, but also by balloon bomb design. A fully

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[115]Ibid.
[116]Coen, *Fu-Go,* p. 146.
[117]Ibid.
Daily Colonist, 30 September 1945, p. 5.
[118]Charles A. East, *White Paper: Japanese Balloons of World War Two,* Prince George, British Columbia: College of New Caledonia Press, 1993.
[119]Coen, *Fu-Go,* p. 51-52.
[120]East, *White Paper,* p. 4.
[121]Ibid, pp. 3-5.

intact 'Type A' device included up to 81 separate explosives, comprising 74 electric blowout plugs with nitrocellulose charges, a primary and a secondary magnesium flash bomb for device destruction, four incendiary bombs, and one anti-personnel fragmentation bomb. Of these, only the picric acid AP bomb was a standard Japanese Army model.[122] Large and ungainly sample recovery boxes were issued to RCE personnel, which were often difficult to transport via RCAF Noorduyn Norseman ski-planes to remote recovery sites.[123] Transportation for East and his colleagues was assignment dependent, ranging from army trucks and lent RCAF jeeps to dogsleds provided by local Dakelh First Nations peoples. East described Indigenous locals as "very co-operative," providing food, trail guides, and shelter to BD officers on request.[124] While working with a young Dakelh guide hired by the RCE party who asked him to identify a balloon bomb as they worked to recover it, East exercised his special authority per JSCJB protocol and informed the guide of the weapon's origin:

> I tried to convince him that it was a special American weather balloon that had gone astray. He shrugged his shoulders and I could see that he didn't buy it. I later told him that it was Japanese, but that all information had to be kept secret, in case his people should encounter another one in the Bear Lake region, where he was going. William George was only 17, but he had a brother in the army. He had just graduated from the Indian School at Fraser Lake and was well posted on wartime activities. I felt that it was safer for him to know the truth for his people, rather than have someone killed out of curiosity and incorrect information.[125]

IBDC personnel were mandated additional unusual precautions when dealing with reported 'white paper.' Recovery teams were issued with gas masks, rubberized suits, boots, and gloves to protect against the potential BW threat. Due to the BW potential, still seriously considered by the IBDC in Ottawa, new BW training was integrated into specialized

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[122]Ibid.
Mikesh, *Balloon Bomb Attacks,* pp. 48-54.
[123]East, *White Paper,* pp. 4-5.
[124]Ibid, pp. 6-7, 15.
[125]Ibid, p. 11

courses as late as April 1945.[126] More curiously, BD personnel were also instructed to prepare for potential Japanese infiltrators carried by piloted balloons.[127] While, as East states, the likelihood of an intercontinental pilot surviving in remote areas even in the event of a successful Pacific crossing was extremely low, the possibility was both touted by Japanese propaganda and considered theoretically feasible by the JSCJB.[128]

2-4. The Royal Canadian Air Force and Fu-Go

As stated in previous sections, the task of intercepting and disabling 'Blue Paper,' or *Fu-Go* devices in flight, was designated to the RCAF on 24 January 24 1945. Three confirmed balloon bombs were brought down in British Columbia by RCAF pilots during the campaign. Two were shot down by Curtiss Kittyhawk pilots of No. 133 'Lightning' Squadron of RCAF Station Patricia Bay, at Sumas Mountain on 21 February and 10 March respectively. On 12 March, a PBY 'Canso' flying boat of No. 6 Squadron forced down a third balloon with its propeller wash and wingtip near RCAF Station Coal Harbour.[129] Additionally, a Kittyhawk scramble from RCAF Station Abbotsford on 20 April engaged a balloon which may have been disabled from the air before its landing near Mount Vedder, while wartime newspapers claim a fourth (unverifiable) interception in March near Strathmore, Alberta.[130]

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[126]Ibid, p. 33
[127]Ibid, p. 23.
[128]Ibid, pp. 33-35.
Wall Street Journal 5 June 1945, p. 3.
[129]British Columbia Aviation Museum, Records Library, RCAF R.65, Daily Diary of RCAF Station Coal Harbour, B.C.
British Columbia Aviation Museum, Records Library, RCAF R.92, Daily Diary of 133 (F) Squadron, RCAF Stn. Patricia Bay BC, for the Months of January to August 1945.
British Columbia Aviation Museum, Records Library, RCAF R.65, Daily Diary of 135 (F) Squadron, RCAF Stn. Patricia Bay BC, for the Months of February to August 1945.
[130]W. A. B. Douglas, *The Official History of the Royal Canadian Air force Volume II: The Creation of a National Air Force*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986, p. 426.

WAC operations in disabling *Fu-Go* devices were seen as particularly valuable, given the variable and often isolated topography of the province.[131] The RCAF reaction is also notable for its independent initiation: based on local reports, WAC began its campaign fifteen days prior to the formation of the JSCJB. Beginning from the WAC command staff meeting of 11 January 1945, Air Vice-Marshal F. V. Heakes, officer commanding, initiated coordination and response efforts. Very little information as to the intention or launch sites of the balloons was available in this period. However, appointment by Heakes of a "special balloon investigator" to coordinate sightings with American military authorities confirmed the devices to be of mostly uniform construction, definitively of Japanese origin (due to markings near the gas relief valve) and at least partly armed.[132] Heakes initially regarded the balloon bombs as being of "no immediate significance" beyond reconnaissance and psychological warfare potential, although he acknowledged from 11 January both a risk of BW agents and the likelihood that the balloons were submarine-launched.[133] By the end of that day, Heakes had also ordered that one fighter from each WAC base was to be put on alert for investigation and possible interception of balloons. Even at this early date, Heakes stressed the value of recovering devices intact where feasible.[134]

Following the formation of the JSCJB, the RCAF position in the new chain of command was formalized. A liaison office between WAC and Pacific Command was established, ensuring that ground sightings would be promptly relayed to WAC for interception and the results thereof

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[131]Ibid.

[132]Joost, *Western Air Command,* p. 60.

[133]Ibid.
Because western scientists were at the time unaware of the pacific jet stream and its ability to intercontinentally transmit unmanned balloons, it was an entirely reasonable for AOC Heakes and his American counterparts to assume submarine-based launches of *Fu-Go*.

[134]Ibid.
Douglas, *Creation of a National Air Force*, p. 425-426.

back to the army.[135] Prior to 24 January, the RCAF had used the code name 'Crabapple' to refer to Japanese balloons, though the JSCJB soon standardized the American colour-coded 'Paper' system.[136] As described previously, RCAF personnel and aircraft were designated for ferrying IBDC personnel to and from 'white paper' sites.[137]

Another core area of interest for the RCAF regarded early detection of balloon bombs. The air force provided technicians for the newly formed JSCJB Radar Subcommittee, the purpose of which was to collect data on the potential of coastal radar to detect balloons. All three Canadian armed services maintained coastal radar emplacements at the time, while WAC possessed radar-equipped Lockheed Ventura aircraft for coastal patrol duty. According to early Radar Subcommittee reports based on collated United States Army and Navy balloon encounters, land and sea-based radar could potentially detect balloons at high optimum ranges estimated between 32 and 137 kilometers. Aircraft radar, meanwhile, was considered reliable at only three to six kilometers.[138] WAC command expressed doubts at the supposed reliability of ground and sea-based radar systems in early subcommittee report meetings, doubts apparently supported by actual results. Because the paper envelopes and very small metal components of balloon bombs made for poor reflectors, Canadian radar sightings were haphazard, rarely corresponding to sightings and never to interceptions.[139] While detection of *Fu-Go* was possible at lower altitudes and closer distances, properly functioning devices did not descend below 7,000 meters and, when they entered reliable radar range due to ineffective self-destruction, they often did so further inland, beyond areas of dense radar coverage.[140]

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[135]Joost, *Western Air Command,* p. 62.
[136]Coen, *Fu-Go*, p. 46.
[137]East, *White Paper*.
[138]Joost, *Western Air Command,* pp. 62-63.
[139]Ibid.
Douglas, *Creation of a National Air Force,* pp. 425-426.
[140]Coen, *Fu-Go*, p. 46.

The organization of aircraft for balloon bomb interception after 24 January was based on squadrons and sections always held at varied levels of readiness from February to July 1945. At the most active base, RCAF Station Patricia Bay, 133 'Lightning' and 135 'Bulldog' squadrons alternated between active and inactive duty. The duty squadron maintained one section of two Kittyhawk fighters at constant readiness, two sections thirty minutes readiness, and three sixty minutes. The off-duty squadron maintained one section at readiness and five at sixty minutes readiness.[141] In Alberta and Saskatchewan, though the threat was understood to be lower, limited provisions were made for interception. In early February, Air Commodore B. F. Johnson ordered that at least five (possibly six or seven) Hawker Hurricane fighters be removed from storage at Moosejaw, Saskatchewan and reequipped at No. 8 Repair Depot, Winnipeg, to serve as low-level interceptors, followed by similar small postings at depots through Saskatchewan and Alberta.[142] As Johnson and WAC likely surmised from the earliest 'white paper' recovery missions, balloons were more than capable of remaining a hazard at lower altitudes. However, as the obsolescent Kittyhawk did not perform well at the intended *Fu-Go* altitudes of 7,600-10,600 meters, re-equipping of the most frequently scrambled units was initiated in April 1945. By mid-May, 133 Squadron was entirely re-quipped with DH. 98 Mosquito fighters, superior high-altitude performers and faster in pursuit. The standby sections of two Kittyhawks each were replaced with single Mosquitoes.[143] Unbeknownst to the Allies, *Fu-Go* releases had ceased in late April, and so the Mosquitos saw no successful interceptions.[144]

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[141]Joost, *Western Air Command,* pp. 63-64.
[142]Douglas, *Creation of a National Air Force,* pp. 425-426.
Daily Diary of No. 3 Gunnery School, RCAF Stn. MacDonald, Manitoba, for the Months of April and May 1945.
Daily Diary of No. 8 Repair Depot, Winnipeg, Manitoba, for the Months of April and May 1945.
[143]Joost, *Western Air Command,* p. 65.
[144]Ibid.

RCAF tactics for disabling *Fu-Go* devices remained somewhat poorly defined throughout the campaign. By the end of March 1945, a WAC memorandum reminded pilots that the method of disabling "will obviously depend on the area in which the interception is made" but that "it is not desirable to use machine guns over populated areas."[145] Unorthodox tactics like those used by the Canso of 6 Squadron notwithstanding, the fixed-mount aircraft machine gun necessarily remained the weapon of choice for interceptions. As late as May 1945, the pilots of 133 Squadron were instructed to target primarily the balloon bomb battery, cutting off power to the self-destruct charges and allowing intact capture, with the balloon envelope being a secondary target.[146] Considering that a *Fu-Go* battery box measured 15cm long by 10cm high and was situated directly beside the primary flash bomb, this instruction suggested a remarkable faith in RCAF gunnery skill.[147] Failing miraculous aiming, additional proposed tactics for intact recovery were explored. Through early February, a small planning committee explored a mission to fly a Consolidated Liberator aircraft alongside a balloon bomb in flight, to bring it aboard while aloft, and to disable its flash bombs before lowering it below the detonation height of 6,100 meters. The plan was apparently scrubbed not due to feasibility concerns, but because relatively intact recoveries had become more common by mid-February 1945.[148]

Lastly, the RCAF contended with several quirks related to balloon reporting and interception. On 9 February 1945, the JSCJB initiated required reporting of all Canadian military balloon launches, including weather radiosondes and radar devices. This information was not communicated either to civilian officials already aware of the campaign or to the PCMR or ARP

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[145]Ibid, p. 64.
[146]Ibid.
[147]"Fu-Go Balloon Bomb," c. 1944-1945, British Columbia Aviation Museum, measurements by author, September 13, 2019.
[148]Joost, *Western Air Command,* p. 63.

groups. A memo of 21 February acknowledged the likelihood that this oversight had contributed to false reports.[149] As late as 11 June, imperfect interservice coordination allowed an experimental balloon-borne radar device to be destroyed shortly after launch by a Mosquito.[150] More notable was the outcome of the decision by Ottawa and the JSCJB to make public general information about the *Fu-Go* campaign on 23 May. Informal civilian spotter groups quickly assembled, and false reports due to civilian misidentification of weather balloons began to mount. Likely the most significant source of false report fighter scrambles was the planet Venus, which was extremely bright in the daytime sky during the early months of 1945. Eighteen fighters were scrambled after the offending planet on 18 February, while three more sightings through the day on 21 February were traced back to Venus. In early March, all RCAF recorded sightings were re-catalogued simply to account for the 'planet-chasing' phenomenon, and the position of Venus in the sky was circulated regularly to WAC squadrons from 1 June.[151] However, no action appears to have been taken to impede the effects of civilian false positives. Resultantly, the unrelenting air force assault upon planet Venus continued into the summer, with nearly two-dozen incidents reported before the end of July for 133 and 135 Squadrons alone. The 133 Squadron diarist expressed his frustrations on 2 July:

> Three scrambles again today, two of them chasing planets again. Surely someone at control should know sufficient astro navigation to plot the visible planets in the day time and not scramble 40,000' ceiling Mosquitos thousands of light-years up.[152]

The reason for a lack of action to assuage such irritation was likely the 'cry wolf' effect, whereby failing to scramble against a likely false sighting would have risked failure to respond

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[149]Ibid, pp. 65-66.
[150]"Army Found RCAF Too Good; Jap Balloon Was Radar Device" *Globe and Mail*, August 15, 1945, Page 1.
[151]Joost, *Western Air Command,* p. 65.
[152]British Columbia Aviation Museum, Records Library, RCAF R.92, Daily Diary of 133 (F) Squadron, RCAF Stn. Patricia Bay BC, July 2, 1945.

to an actual incident. Exasperation of its pilots notwithstanding, the RCAF response to the *Fu-Go* campaign remained thorough and well-organized throughout the final months of the war. While the actual danger of balloon attacks had ended by May 1945, Western Air Command continued to bolster its interception capacity until it could be certain that the threat had ended.

2-5. The Civil Defence Organizations

It may come as little surprise that the enthusiasts of the PCMR were perhaps the most eager respondents to the perceived threat of *Fu-Go*. By January 1945, having served admirably in its communal capacity, the organization stood on the verge of disbandment due to the mitigated threat of coastal attacks and the overwhelmingly defensive posture of Japan. The discovery of the *Fu-Go* threat and the formation of the JSCJB has been credited with saving the PCMR from earlier dismissal: the Rangers were quickly recognized as ideal balloon spotters due to their knowledge of country and experience in isolated woodland operations.[153] Ranger companies were to carry out independent spotting operations, search for, identify and guard downed balloons, and to request technical specialists as needed and at their own discretion.[154] While the BCPP were charged with the same duties, and civilians were entitled to volunteer their services, no group aside from the PCMR possessed the same organized ability to navigate remote and dense woodland to confirm balloon sightings, to protect civilians from approaches to sites, and to actively police the skies for incursion.

The PCMR internal newsletter, *The Ranger*, ensured that members were kept up to date on the balloon bomb situation, including the threat of biological warfare, on which the

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[153] *Victoria Daily Times,* 9 October 1945, p. 6.

[154] David Clark, *Rangers on Patrol: An Illustrated Regimental History of the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers of British Columbia and the Yukon Territory,* Victoria, BC: Published by Author, 2015, pp. 52, 65.

organization was continually advised by Pacific Command through at least June 1945.[155] The Rangers also adopted, rather than the 'blue paper' and 'white paper' designations of the military, the more intricate colour-coded system of the BCPP, which included twelve different situational designations, e. g. White – Request bomb disposal experts, Gold – Ensure security, Yellow – Balloons parts located, etc.[156] The Rangers' strong relationship with Indigenous communities also allowed for close coordination between Indigenous detachments and local trail guides.[157]

The outcome of the highly organized PCMR approach was demonstrably effective. While at least half of balloon bomb reports acted upon by the IBDC and the RCAF were recorded as civilian in origin, most of these were in fact the work of the PCMR. Ranger sightings were variously counted as both civil and military.[158] According to a PCMR internal memo of June 1945, a staggering 76% of all balloon sightings were made by Ranger personnel.[159] While the actual figure cannot be definitively proven, it is possible to state with certainty both that the PCMR made contributions of great value to the *Fu-Go* campaign in BC and that the campaign represented the militia's greatest operational success. The activities of the PCMR and the size of its contribution perhaps epitomize the highly localized and frequently bottom-up rather than top-down responses to the attack.

Aside from the PCMR and BCPP, other civil organizations also participated in the campaign. The Canadian ARP organization was especially suited. Numbering 65,000 strong at its height, it was divided into local and municipal branches in which air wardens and their volunteer teams were answerable to the local office of Civil Defence Controller, itself ultimately

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[155]Ibid, p. 65.
[156]Ibid, p. 66.
"British Columbia Provincial Police: Japanese Balloons," 30 April 1945, RG 24, Vol. 2678, LAC.
[157]Lackenbaur, *Guerillas in Our Midst,* pp. 57-60.
[158]Joost, *Western Air Command,* pp. 64-65.
[159]Clark, *Rangers on Patrol*, p. 65.

responsible to National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ).[160] ARP volunteers were organized as local fire wardens and air wardens to coordinate civil firefighter assistance groups, to enforce blackouts in the event of air raids, to train medical personnel for rapid response, and to issue gas masks and helmets as necessary. For the most extreme scenarios, ARP devised complete rapid evacuation plans for all municipalities. In Victoria at the start of 1945, Civil Defence Controller Inspector A. H. Bishop of the Victoria Police commanded nearly 3,800 defence volunteers organized across seventeen departments and ten overseeing committees.[161] In August, BC ARP units possessed an estimated $1,500,000 worth of firefighting and medical equipment, including trucks, hoses, ladders, and gas masks, as well as its own small ambulance brigade.[162]

As with the PCMR, the ARP in British Columbia forwent earlier disbandment with most of the other Canadian civil defence groups, due to a decision to incorporate it into the JSCJB strategy. Aside from maintaining all previous precautions against the possibility of mass balloon bomb casualties, BC ARP units were also assigned a new responsibility. Because the JSCJB deduced from its early meetings that the primary aim of the *Fu-Go* attacks was the ignition of forest fires, the ARP was tasked with raising special firefighting forces. Enlarged auxiliary ARP firefighting units under local fire wardens were raised from May 1945, but in wake of the first balloon recovery made in the Greater Victoria area on 29 June, Inspector Bishop judged the auxiliaries insufficient. In July, he ordered the formation of a special unit made up of ninety men, comprising younger fire wardens, fit high school students, and the local Navy League of Canada "Rainbow Sea" cadet Corps. Trained by local fire chief Alex Munro, the youthful members of the special fire corps were to be protected by two ambulances and a Red

[160] *Victoria Daily Times,* 29 November 29 1945, p. 12.
[161] *Victoria Daily Times,* 17 August 1945, p. 16.
[162] Ibid.

Cross canteen kept at the ready in the event of deployment. The special firefighters received the use of nine forest-type pumps and heavy trailers kept on standby at Victoria Fire Hall, with at least one other depot planned at Nanaimo. In the event of fires in remote areas, the firefighters and their equipment would apparently have been transported by aircraft, though whether these planes were to be supplied by the RCAF or another party is unclear.[163] It is likely that the special ARP corps was founded in response to civilian concerns once again raised by the new discovery of balloon bombs near municipal areas, and that, as with the PCMR, the value of the group was in maintaining a sense of public safety as much as in potential practical effects.

Because no new Japanese balloons were launched after April 1945, the most extensive and uniquely localized preparations of the ARP were in the event never mobilized. Nevertheless, the continued efforts of the organization and the decisions made by local leaders like Inspector Bishop speak to the tailoring of responses to the reignition of public fears first primed at the commencement of the Pacific War.

2-6. The Censorship System Triumphant

One of the key operational factors of the *Fu-Go* campaign in both Canada and the United States was the use of the existing censorship system and its informal networks to deny strike information to the enemy. Although the intentions and launch trajectories of the balloon bomb attacks were not initially obvious, it was an assumed fact that Japanese intelligence would screen allied publications for evidence of success or failure. Even minor data regarding landing sites, casualty and damage reports, or even general public knowledge or opinion may have provoked improvements to balloon design and encouraged or discouraged committing further resources.[164]

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[163]Ibid.
Victoria Daily Times, 3 July 1945, p. 8.
[164]Coen, *Fu-Go*, pp. 159-182.

Further, security officials understood that widespread news of balloon attacks was liable to become exaggerated in the minds of a British Columbian populace already fixated on its unique security position.[165] As such, Canadian and American national defence leaders quickly agreed, seemingly without major debate, that a blackout of all press discussion of balloon bombs, Japanese or otherwise, was in the best interest of the public.

In the United States, the Office of Censorship reacted to the December 1944 newspaper reports of a Japanese-marked balloon found near Kalispell, Montana by instituting a general press blackout on 4 January 1945.[166] Even prior to the formation of the JSCJB, Canada was quick to follow suit. On 5 January, Colonel B. R. Mullaly, head of Operational Intelligence for Pacific Command, contacted then-head of the BC Censorship Office in Vancouver, John Graham, to request institution of a censorship policy patterned on the American approach.[167] The offices of radio programs, newspapers national and provincial, and local journals and magazines received confidential NDHQ memos detailing known information about the balloon attacks. As per the 'honour system' established in 1942, publishers and broadcasters were requested to self-censor any such information or references, direct or oblique, in all of their own materials. The classified memo of January 1945 was also sent to the censorship office of each province, which held the responsibility for enforcement.[168] As had been the case from early 1942, publishers had to be taken largely at their word and penalized or their materials retracted only in the event of clear offense.

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[165]Wilford, *Enemy Within,* p. 557.
[166]Larry Tanglen, "Terror Floated Over Montana: Japanese Balloon Bombs, 1944-45," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 52, No. 4 (Winter 2002), 76-79.
[167]Bourrie, *Fog of War,* p. 224-225.
[168]Ibid.

However, with the limited information available on the nature of the threat in January 1945, it was perhaps inevitable that some journalists would attempt to publish new knowledge as it became available in wake of fresh *Fu-Go* incidents. Within the first week of the news blackout, John Graham cut a story from the *Vancouver Province* for its speculation that approximately one in forty balloon bombs released reached North America.[169] A vague reference to balloons saw an edition of the *Regina Leader-Post* retracted to avoid implying that *Fu-Go* had made it as far inland as Saskatchewan. A freelance reporter out of Fort St. John, one George Murray, attempted to sell several detailed balloon bomb stories to multiple daily papers. These were collectively nixed by Graham with the pointed directive that any further stories offered by Murray were to be submitted to him for personal approval.[170]

Although most BC newspaper editorial staff remained loyal to censor's directives, leading newspapermen did occasionally rebel against the restrictions placed on their organizations. Hal Slaight, managing editor of the *Vancouver Sun*, penned a letter to John Graham demanding publication rights for balloon bomb stories on the basis that the campaign had become "common knowledge," due to government circulation of information through the PCMR, the ARP, local communities, and in schools. Slaight compared *Fu-Go* with the contemporary Nazi V-weapons, pointing out that German commanders were quite aware of British interceptions and countermeasures. In response, Graham reminded Slaight that Germany already possessed detailed reconnaissance data on London, which Japan lacked for BC.[171]

The turning point in the entire North American censorship program occurred on 5 May, 1945, following the most infamous incident of the *Fu-Go* campaign. On a country road near Bly,

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[169]Ibid.
[170]Ibid.
[171]Ibid, pp. 227-228.

Oregon, Elsie Mitchell, wife of local pastor Archie Mitchell, discovered a downed balloon bomb while on a picnic with two of her children and three Sunday-school pupils. The anti-personnel device detonated, killing Elsie Mitchell and the five children in what would prove to be the only confirmed fatalities caused by *Fu-Go*.[172] By late May, defence officials in Ottawa and Washington had conferred and agreed that the need for a general release of information for public safety now outweighed military value to the enemy. This was in large part because available data then confirmed balloon bombs as too widely spread and impossible to direct, such that any fine-tuning of the *Fu-Go* system based on published data would produce negligible effect.[173] The regional implementation of the information release would prove more complex.

In early May 1945, Hal Slaight made further ingress against the Vancouver censorship office by suggesting in a letter that the *Sun* was free to publish technical details of *Fu-Go* for public recognition and safety purposes. The Bly incident had clearly changed the situation, and Graham consulted with Pacific Command Headquarters before conveying to Slaight its view that any data suggesting technical failures or perceptions could still be of use to Japanese researchers.[174] On 23 May, Colonel Richard Moore of Army Public Information confirmed in a press release the general nature of the Japanese balloon bomb and that a full release was pending. In discussions with Washington, NDHQ had decided that general technical data, incidents of balloon bomb interceptions and recoveries, and public warnings and advice could be released unilaterally, though information such as numbers of balloons found or suspected and any mention of BW concerns remained prohibited.[175] For the remainder of May, Canadian newspapers collated their backlogged *Fu-Go* stories and prepared to release information as soon

[172]Mikesh, *Balloon Bomb Attacks*, pp. 67-69.
[173]Conley, *Balloon Offensive,* pp. 82-83.
[174]Bourrie, *Fog of War*, p. 229.
[175]Ibid.

as the go-ahead was given on both sides of the border. On 30 May, without warning, the American Associated Press released its first glut of balloon bomb stories. Slaight and several other publishers later opined that they and Canada had been betrayed by the Americans, who wished to release information for reprint in smaller papers first, thus undermining the accomplishments of Canadian reporters. Without waiting for confirmation from Ottawa, the *Sun* and more than a dozen other major newspapers rushed to release their articles.[176]

Ottawa did not attempt to stem the floodgates, as the lack of international press release coordination had been the result of mere untimely communication on the part of the NDHQ.[177] One result of the publication rush, however, was the most noted Canadian censorship breach of the period. An article in the 31 May morning edition of the *Toronto Star*, bearing the alarming title "Germ, Fire, Death Dropped on British Columbia By Jap Balloons," contained an explicit reference to recovered balloon bomb material "being analyzed in the belief that this matter is bacterial culture intended for use against humans, crops, or stock." The offending article also speculated as to specific balloon numbers.[178] The Ontario censorship office promptly informed the *Star* that it had abused its publication privileges, and references to numbers and BW were deleted in subsequent printings.[179] Admirably, no other Canadian violations appear to have occurred.

Despite the secondary goal of censorship in containing public fears, Canadian authorities naturally could do little to control Japanese propaganda uses of the *Fu-Go* campaign. Fortunately for Canada and BC, enemy propagandists seemed to recognize the futility of placing stock in a campaign for which results were not obviously pending. Japanese military mouthpiece *Dōmei*

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[176]Ibid.
[177]*Los Angeles Times,* 24 May 1945, p. 4.
[178]*Toronto Daily Star,* 31 May 1945, p. 2.
[179]Clark, *Rangers on Patrol*, p. 53.

notably referenced *Fu-Go* in early June 1945, claiming that the early balloon campaign had been exclusively experimental, and that mass attacks using manned balloons and an assault comprising "millions" of paratroopers against North America was forthcoming. Ostensibly, hundreds of devastating forest fires had been ignited and the Canadian and American public were in a state of disarrayed panic, having suffered countless injuries and lost faith in their government's ability to protect them. *Domei* not only made use of *Fu-Go* after the campaign had been entirely cancelled, but also reported the supposed first launch date as 10 March, 1945 rather than 3 November 1944, likely to minimize the ineffectual period.[180] Thus, any potential extended propaganda value of *Fu-Go* was made negligible by an inability to support claims with even a modicum of evidence such as might have been provided by detailed early news reports, had they existed.

The efficacy of the censorship program can hardly be overstated. In 1947, American Brigadier General W. H. Wilbur interviewed Major-General Kusaba Sueki, head of the *Fu-Go* project in Japan. Kusaba disclosed that the maximal period of funding to the Noborito Research Institute for *Fu-Go*, in February and March 1945, had come in response to initial American and Canadian newspaper reports of the Kalispell incident, and had declined thereafter due to a lack of strike confirmation. Kusaba stated that, to his knowledge, Japanese intelligence was aware only of North American reporting on the Kalispell and Bly events, and that failure to confirm range and efficacy was cited to him when the project was ordered shut down at the end of April.[181] Although no western authority prior to 1947 could have confirmed the significance of the media approach, earlier commentators did not fail to recognize the clear strategic benefit. In BC, a *Daily Colonist* article published on 20 July 1945 reflected:

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[180] *Wall Street Journal*, 5 June 1945, p. 3.
[181] Conley, *Balloon Offensive,* pp. 82-83.

> No Canadian newspaper would ever wittingly convey any information useful to the enemy, whether censorship existed or not. It is fair to state that despite little grievances the system worked well: and that, after some false starts, a workable plan was found and was adhered to by both parties to the contract, the government and the press. It was the honor [sic] system, and that trust was not misplaced.[182]

While censorship was definitionally an imperfect system, made to balance the military and political value of information denial against the risk to public safety, the effect of hiding from Japanese planners the necessary information to modify or improve their campaign was such that resources otherwise potentially available to them were no longer forthcoming. In this regard, the North American campaign may be described as one of the more significant victories of wartime censorship ever achieved. Further, while censorship followed a broad general policy across both the United States and Canada, the practice of that policy was continually tweaked at the local level. In BC, involvement of the censorship office necessitated a close familiarity with regional publishers and journalists, as well as their concerns or idiosyncrasies. This familiarity had, in turn, been built during the media responses to earlier threats in the first year of the Pacific War.

Conclusion

On August 6 and 9, 1945, American atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively, effectively ending the Pacific War and World War II entire. With the surrender of Japan on August 15, any risk of further attack on Canada was at last entirely eliminated. Civil defense groups stood down, freeing up vital municipal resources, while the Joint Service Committee on Japanese Balloons and its special subsidiary committees and organizations were disbanded.[183] Although many *Fu-Go* devices remained scattered in remote

[182] *Daily Colonist,* 3 June 1947, p. 4.
[183] *Globe and Mail,* 6 September 6 1945, p. 15.

provincial woodlands, proposals to systematically find and disable each were rejected.[184] As a result, the devices are still occasionally discovered and detonated by bomb disposal technicians, the latest at time have writing having been found near Lumby, BC in October 2014.[185]

The defence of British Columbia may conceptually be divided into two phases. The first phase spans from the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941 until the end of operations against Japan in the Aleutians in August 1943, while the second commences in January 1945 with the initial appearance of the first balloon bombs. What is to be made of comparison between the military and social attitudes of British Columbians in each phase?

Firstly, a shared psychological and psychosocial genesis may be observed. Although perceptions of Japanese immigrants to British Columbia and of Japan itself fluctuated nonlinearly in the first decades of the twentieth century, a locally particularized distrust and an equation of immigrants with their nation of origin may be dated at least as far back as 1907. As Imperial Japanese aggression came to feature more prominently in English-language news from the mid-1930s, this distrust appeared vindicated. It was this relatively rapid culmination of longstanding prejudices which ensured that security intelligence operations, both military and police, were prepared to deal rapidly and harshly with Japanese-Canadians on the coast. Broadly, these moves were supported by white British Columbians. However, they would exercise a curious effect on distinctly local constructions of what it meant to be Canadian in wartime. As public acceptance of the Canadian identity of the *Issei* and *Nisei* diminished (always a thin veneer) other groups gained a kind of enfranchisement as accepted Canadians. While the BCPP associated some indigenous groups like the Clo-Oose with the Japanese, they were apparently in the minority among the civil defence community. By the end of the war, work with the IBDC

[184] *Victoria Daily Times,* 16 August 1945 p. 11.
[185] Dene Moore, "Japanese Balloon Bomb Found in BC." *Prince George Citizen,* 20 Octoboer 2014, A2.

and especially with the PCMR ensured that Indigenous Canadians had been recognized as nationally Canadian, as well as regionally British Columbian.

An acute public awareness of the poor level of local military readiness, combined with rapid moves by Ottawa in rectifying this issue, ensured that the first phase of the war in BC would be defined by an interplay between the perceived need to act alone and the increasing resources available for doing so. It is apparent that, initial popular views to the contrary, NDHQ and the King Government were invested from the first in providing whatever material assistance could be spared from more acute Atlantic and European needs. Organizations like the PCMR, FR, local ARP units, and the police forces may have been infused with a sense of urgent and highly localized public service, but their integration into the defence network proves an appreciation for their efforts and needs. It is not obvious on the face of the evidence that there was anything 'derelict' about British Columbia's defences, but rather, that the acuity of the problem took only a reasonable time to catch up to budgetary decisionmakers. By mid-1942, when I-26 bombarded Estevan Point, local and national defence leaders appreciated equally the elevated perception of risk which such an attack would cause, but also, that enhancement of all processes by which the defence could be improved (coastal patrol, spotter networks, increased aircraft presence, recruitment and conscription, voluntary censorship) was already ongoing. Each of these processes, insofar as they required work between civilian groups and military commands, were established relatively smoothly and holistically, supporting the conclusion of a common set of attitudes.

It is tempting to view the *Fu-Go* campaign with the benefit of hindsight, in the assurance that the technology and operational plan were insufficient for a militarily significant result. For the purposes of military-civil coordination, however, judgement of the response must be

restricted to assumptions which could reasonably be made on the basis of available information. The origin of the bombs, the destructive range of the munitions attached, and to give Dr. Maas his due, their potential for carrying bacteriological contagions were all unknowable well into the spring of 1945. Considering the resources at hand, NDHQ employed its maximal ability to integrate regular miliary units and their civil counterparts. Had the resources at General Kusaba's disposal included the feared CBW agents, for example, the BC defence network would have been as prepared as reasonably possible. Equally, it is not difficult to imagine the perception of this totally new form of warfare as the manifestation of privately-held certainties among devoted Rangers, public figures, and ARP members: They had always *known* that something was coming for British Columbia, and now their moment was at hand. And while Premier Hart had kept a level head during the Estevan Point attack, his thorough preparation for a BW attack speaks to the similar level of vigilance maintained by local government.

The true significance of *Fu-Go* in BC is clearly not in its military potential, but in its acting as a catalyst for the fullest possible test of the BC defence network had been militarily and socially constructed in the years immediately prior. Had the balloon bombs or a similarly urgent threat appeared in January 1942, for example, any response would have depended more directly on a mobilization of resources on the federal and command levels, rather than the deployment of organizations and systems which were not yet in place. As it was, Pacific Command and WAC could rely on large numbers of devoted citizens, united by a shared identity and ethic in the defence of a mutual homeland.

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