also provide the reader with synopses of the entries that have been omitted. It is also in this introduction that the authors analyse McKennan's ethnographies, returning often to the theme of the Boasian influence on his work. McKennan attempted to describe Tanana and Gwich'in culture holistically and with scientific objectivity by always writing about his findings in the third person. Mishler and Simeon are correct in establishing the fact that this emphasis on distanced description left many anthropologists dissatisfied with a lack of theory in his work, while maintaining that McKennan's methodology has deep theoretical roots in American anthropology.

The authors also introduce the fact that McKennan's field journals are very different from his published ethnographies. The journals were written in the first person, reported on what he thought about certain situations, are rich in descriptions about his personal relationships with people, and perhaps most interestingly they contain a great deal of information on the Euro-American residents of the area. For the scholar interested in the history of the northwest part of North America, his descriptions about the relationship between European agents, trappers, and traders and Aboriginal people during the early 1930s are invaluable. The only dissatisfaction that I have with the introduction is that I would have liked more discussion about the reasons for such a long delay between his fieldwork and the publication of his ethnographies. There is mention of the Depression and then World War II delaying the books' publication but not much discussion about the change in the academic climate, namely a shift to an ecological-evolutionary orthodoxy that dominated American anthropology when he was trying to get the books published. Many of McKennan's descriptions — like those of several other scholars working in Alaska and northern Canada — challenged the assumptions used as evidence for culture change by the leading figures in this neo-evolutionary school of thought. However, the picture that Mishler and Simeon present is perhaps more true to the temperament of McKennan if we are to take his field journals as a guide. They focus on the positive relationships that he had with people like Elmer Harp instead of the conflicts that he had within the discipline.

The last two parts of the book comprise McKennan's field journals annotated by Simeon in the case of the Tanana and Mishler for the Chandalar. As stressed by Mishler and Simeon, the journals represent the humanist side of McKennan's work that is often downplayed in his 'scientific tradition' of writing ethnography. As an illustration of the two sides of McKennan's writings, the authors have added a few quotations from his ethnographies below corresponding passages in his journals, so that the reader may easily refer between the two versions. The journals are full of adventure and document the highs and lows that he encountered while doing anthropological fieldwork. McKennan openly questioned some of his own methods, referring to the anthropometric measurements he was to take as part of his funded research as 'a nuisance' and 'the worst feature of my work' because this method was regarded suspiciously by his informants. Certainly some of his methods and some of his activities while in the field would be frowned upon today; however, the journals would be a most valuable read for any student preparing to go to the field. While the technologies, methodologies, and ethics of fieldwork have changed, the need to form good relationships to be successful has not; McKennan was particularly skilled at forming good, lasting associations with his informants or teachers. For those more interested in the area, the many annotations are highly informative, providing background to cultural matters mentioned by McKennan and documenting almost all the people mentioned within the text. There are also photographs (many taken by McKennan) of the people that he worked with, most of which have never been seen by their descendants. The inclusion of some of the photographs shot by McKennan while in the field aids in repatriation, highlights his humanistic side, and assists in reinvigorating the relationship formed between anthropology and these communities. Those interested in Athabaskan material culture will find the colour photographs of beaded clothing curated at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, Japan, in the Robert McKennan collection a welcome addition.

While both Mishler and Simeon's own research with the Gwich'in and the Tanana have contributed to the anthropological record on Alaskan Athabaskans, their work in re-introducing anthropology to McKennan's ethnography and journals is laudable. Not only does it have potential for further exegesis on the history of the discipline, but it allows anthropologists an opportunity to connect to one of our own ancestors in a positive manner. (Robert P. Wishart, Department of Anthropology, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen AB24 3QY.)

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COURAGE SACRIFICE DEVOTION: THE HISTORY OF THE US NAVY ANTARCTIC AIR SQUADRON VXE-6, 1955–99. Noel Gillespie. 2006. West Conshohocken, PA: Infinity Publishing. vi + 513 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 0-7414-2912-8. $US35.95. doi:10.1017/S0032247407286346

This is not a book to read through but to dip into. It is a fine collection of flying stories largely compiled from the accounts of the airmen involved. The title words *Courage sacrifice devotion* are taken from the inscription on the US Antarctic Service medal. The stories extend from 1955

until the squadron decommissioned in 1999, and include not only the aircraft of VXE-6 but also other aircraft that visited McMurdo.

Excitement there is aplenty. Whilst overall this is a story of success in overcoming obstacles to support the US Antarctic Program, the illustrations show dozens of crashed aircraft and list the 50 or so members of the task force who lost their lives in the course of the 44-year history of the squadron. Daunting as these figures are, they come into perspective when the author describes how an Air New Zealand DC-10 on a sightseeing flight crashed into Mount Erebus on 28 November 1979, killing all 257 souls on board. It turned out in the subsequent enquiries that the aircrew had not understood the nature of an Antarctic whiteout. A chapter of the book is devoted to this accident because VXE-6 helicopters flew more than 100 hours to take out human remains during the months that followed. Wreckage was still visible on the mountain 25 years later.

There are 160 pages of photographs at the end of the book, representing a valuable historical archive. Unfortunately the publisher's use of poor-quality recycled paper does not do justice to their importance. The illustrations include 17 pages of pre-VXE-6 photographs, starting with Robert Falcon Scott's balloon ascent in 1902, the Wilkins-Hearst expeditions in 1928–30, Richard E. Byrd's expedition of 1928–30, Lincoln Ellsworth's expedition of 1933–35, and Operation Highjump of 1946–47.

The first six chapters of the book cover the squadron's first two seasons on the ice, culminating in the first landing at the South Pole on 31 October 1956. The author enlivens the story with frequent quotations from the words of those on board. The following year, a Pan-American Stratocruiser was chartered to fly US Navy personnel to McMurdo on 15 October 1957. On board were two stewardesses. Although the author was aware that two women had wintered in the Antarctic with Finn Ronne's expedition of 1947–48, the book's list of contents could not resist claiming that the stewardesses were the first females to visit the continent.

The endless accounts of mishaps are daunting. On page 103 we read: 'By this time there were three crashed Globemasters on the ice runway, all damaged while landing.'

On page 202 we read: 'On October 22 [1964]. . .while taking off with JATO [rocket] assistance. . .had one of the canisters inadvertently fire. . .causing one rocket to strike the left propeller knocking the engine off. . .The aircraft was a total loss.'

'On November 8 1964, one of the Army's UH-1B helicopters crashed while attempting to land near the summit of a 13,800 foot peak. . .the unit was destroyed.'

'On December 5 1964, a UH-13P helicopter. . .crashed while making an emergency landing, with the helicopter catching fire when the main rotor blade struck the tail assembly during the hard landing, leaving it totally destroyed.'

'A little over a month later on January 12 1965, the fourth squadron accident occurred when LC-47J. . .struck a large but unnoticed sastrugi, striking its propeller, tearing off the port engine, and twisting the fuselage.'

One chapter follows the fortunes of many of the squadron's pilots. As with fighter pilots in time of war, the options were to learn fast or die. Although Antarctica is more benign, it seems that some accidents were related to inexperience. In the US Navy, as in most armed forces, too many pilots were posted to new jobs just when they had mastered the special skills of Antarctic flying. Of course there were exceptions. Lt Cdr John F. Paulus flew LC-130 aircraft for nine seasons (1969–80), accumulating 2250 hours of Antarctic flying. Known as 'Cadillac Jack,' the nickname stuck after someone remarked that 'Jack Paulus is so smooth that flying with him in like riding in a Cadillac.'

Most of the great milestones of the squadron's history are related in this massive volume. In October 1991, using the author's words, 'the stereotyping myth of Antarctic aviation as the sole domain of barnstorming male aviators was shattered.' A seven-member all-female crew flew a VXE-6 LC-130 Hercules commanded by Lt Rhonda Buckner from McMurdo to the South Pole.

The opening of the *Pegasus* ice runway (named after a crashed C-121 Super Constellation) was celebrated in 1993. The following year the runway was used by C-141 wheeled aircraft operating at take-off weights of up to 140 tonnes.

Appendix 4 lists the fate of every single aircraft ever operated by VXE-6, each one identified by its unique service number. So the aircrews who flew them and the passengers who rode in them can now follow their adventures from birth to death. Over the years, 13 of the US Navy's R4-D (modified DC-3) aircraft crashed, yet because of their relatively slow landing speed, only one resulted in loss of life.

An astonishing feat was the recovery of three crashed LC-130 (Hercules) aircraft from an altitude greater than 11,000 feet on the Antarctic plateau. 'The cold winds, the high altitude, the reduced oxygen, and the cold soaked aircraft all combined for tiring days, and because of these conditions we could only work 20/30 minutes at a time.' One of these aircraft had been written off as unsalvageable. Yet after 17 years lying buried deep under snowdrifts, the machine was dug up, repaired on site, and flown out in an operation costing $20 million. A new LC-130 would have cost around $100 million.

Another LC-130 fell in a crevasse — at least the right main ski did. The wing dropped and the outer starboard propeller struck the snow. A team of 30 specialists flew in, but not before radar and satellite images had been used to plot the position of every crevasse in the vicinity. Bulldozers filled in the crevasse under the fallen ski and, after months of hazardous work, the Hercules was hauled out, repaired on site, and eventually flown to McMurdo.

In the years between 1959 and 1989, the reviewer of this book flew in 10 varieties of VXE-6 aircraft. Had

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I known how many of them would — sooner or later — bite the dust, I might have chosen a different career. However, I cannot speak too highly of the aircrews and their willingness to land even large aircraft in strange and difficult places where nobody had landed before.

The author, Noel Gillespie, is a journalist rather than a scholar. He writes entertainingly, although the text is littered with typographical errors that could have been corrected by a good proof reader. But let that not deter the reader. This is a thrilling narrative of pioneering aviation in perhaps the most challenging environment on Earth. (Charles Swithinbank, Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Lensfield Road, Cambridge CB2 1ER).

MARINE MAMMALS AND NORTHERN CULTURES. Arne Kalland and Frank Sejersen. 2005. Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute Press. v +349 p, illustrated, soft cover. ISBN 1-896445-26-8.
doi:10.1017/S0032247407296342

Marine mammals and northern cultures is an excellent book on several grounds. One is as a synthesis of the relationship between a number of European and eastern Arctic Inuit societies and a wide range of marine mammals. The heart of this synthesis is a survey in time and space (see chapters two and three) of cetacean and pinniped hunting and its importance around the North Atlantic region. That this survey is not focused on one culture or society, Western or Inuit, sets this work somewhat apart from much of the literature on whaling and sealing and, as will be discussed below, is critical to the deeper aspects of the book.

Overall, the material about Greenlandic and European (Faroese, Norwegian, Newfoundland, and Icelandic) marine mammal exploitation and use in these chapters is stronger than that given to Canadian Inuit. This is not surprising, as none of the contributors to this volume has worked to any great extent with Canadian Inuit. However, as I must admit that I am at best only slightly informed about, for instance, Faroese whaling, I welcomed the emphasis on non-Inuit activities.

As hunting of sea mammals has become increasingly controversial, exploration of the politics of such use, not surprisingly, is a second major focus here. And, while any number of works have tasked themselves to address the pro and anti aspects of sealing and whaling, *Marine mammals* is not merely an addition, but also a substantial contribution, to this literature (see, for instance, Freeman 1988; Freeman and others 1992; Stoett 1997; Sullivan 2000; Vestergaard 1990; among many). In chapters six and seven, the authors address a wide range of issues related to the way(s) international organizations have approached the management of marine mammals and how user communities have responded. Not surprisingly, considerable attention is given to the International Whaling Commission, NAMMCO (North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission), the High North Alliance, and various anti-use organizations. Fortunately, a listing of relevant organizational and regulatory acronyms is provided at the book's end. Running to three pages, I took this list to be something of a comment on the prospect for compromise between pro and anti forces.

In some respects, the overall discussion is reminiscent of the sealing controversy of the 1970s and 1980s, especially regarding the trumping of scientific information by politics. However, clearly different from the case of sealing is the organizational sophistication and resilience of the pro-use community — something that could only be said of the anti-sealing movement around 1980.

Finally, there is a third focus. This concerns the nature of traditional, or local, knowledge and, most trenchantly, whether the knowledge of one culture or people should be privileged over that of other cultures or peoples. While most directly addressed in chapters four ('Hunting, Selfhood and National Identity') and five ('Perceptions of Nature'), these matters as a theme run through *Marine mammals*, are its intellectual center, and are its most thought-provoking aspect.

Up to a point, I agree with the authors' conclusion that setting apart the knowledge of indigenous users from similar knowledge held by non-aboriginal fishers and hunters may lead to false reification and stereotyping of the former and, thus, undercut 'the very cultural diversity that has enabled them to initiate and maintain a global discourse on indigenous rights.' However, in the end, I still see Inuit understanding of seals and whales as different from that of Faroese or Icelanders, not because the hunting, sharing, and consumption of sea mammals contributes less to non-Inuit identity or local culture than it does that of Inuit. Rather, my non-acceptance stems from my understanding of how Inuit see themselves in relation to marine (and other) animals and, more importantly, how this shapes their behavior.

In the end, while I disagree with the authors, I appreciate the persuasive case they make about the deep knowledge held by non-Inuit about the animals they interact with and about the meaning of these animals in their lives. But this is secondary to the fact that what they present made me re-examine my thinking about Inuit and traditional knowledge. (George W. Wenzel, Department of Geography, Burnside Hall, McGill University, 805 Sherbrooke Street West, Montréal, Quebec H3A 2K6, Canada.)

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