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Sommario/riassunto

This tribute to a proud service surveys the history of the Royal Canadian Navy from its inception in 1910 to its demise in 1968. Although established as a declaration of Canada's independence from the imperial fleet, the RCN was the child of the Royal Navy. Its first ships were RN cast-offs, and for the next forty years officers trained in the British fleet -- their 'big ship time.' From these modest beginnings, the book deals with such related issues as the problem of imperial defense, the development of a naval service with a Canadian identity, and the evolution of a Canadian naval engineering capacity. Expanding dramatically during World War II, the RCN gave convoy protection which proved crucial to the Allied victory at sea. New documentation on Canada's role in the Battle of the Atlantic highlights such critical factors as: the contribution of radio intelligence to anti-submarine warfare against the deadly German 'wolfpacks'; the wartime operational relationship of the RCN to the Royal Navy and the United States Navy: and the heroic role of Canadian sailors who served under fire. Demobilization and the paying off of ships marked the postwar decline of the RCN. This decline was intensified by a series of mutinies which demonstrated the need for a less rigid, more 'democratic' relationship between officers and ratings. Despite these difficulties, the RCN served effectively in coastal operations during the Korean War and in the establishment of Canada's presence in the Arctic. The last chapter records the reaction of the RCN's senior officers to government policy during the Unification Crisis of the 1960s and their unsuccessful attempts to maintain the independent identity of the RCN. It is ironic that on the eve of achieving its greatest measure of autonomy the RCN was overwhelmed by the forces of nationalism -- the same force which had acted as a catalyst in its formation. Originally presented in 1980 at a conference on the history of the RCN, the papers in this book range from the first-hand recollections of ex-RCN personnel to the examination of previously classified documents from German and Allied archives. The RCN in Retrospect will serve to introduce many to Canada's naval heritage and will provide valuable new insights to all readers with an interest in naval history and lore.