

Throughout the text there is effective use of extensive manuscripts and oral testimonies from both staff and students. Of the latter are almost too painful to read accounts of student teachers' first forays in front of a group of children and the nerve-wracking 'crit' lesson observed by college staff. There is also a range of illustrations and photographs well-matched with the text, highlighting the calibre of production work.

Institutional histories such as this are most often read by those who were associated as students and staff. While this is likely to be the case with this book, there is more here that will also appeal to those with a broader interest in the history of Auckland and the history of New Zealand education.

KAY MORRIS MATTHEWS

Victoria University of Wellington

The Big Show: New Zealanders, D-Day and the War in Europe. Edited by Alison Parr. Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2006. 256 pp. NZ price: \$39.99. ISBN 1- 86940-3657.

THE BIG SHOW: New Zealanders, D-Day and the War in Europe is a well-presented and illustrated collection of oral histories edited by Alison Parr of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage. The participants are, with one exception, New Zealand servicemen who were involved in the D-Day landings in France that began on 6 June 1944. The remaining interview is with Lucienne Vouzelaud, a French Resistance worker who, with her husband, was attached to the Comète Line assisting allied airmen to escape from occupied France. The book is the result of the Shared Memory Arrangement — an agreement between the New Zealand and French governments to facilitate research into the shared history of the two countries, signed by Prime Minister Helen Clark, in June 2004. Both Clark and Hamlaoui Mékachéra, French Minister of Veterans' Affairs, contributed forewords commending the publication and espousing its value in illuminating the connection between New Zealanders' war service and France. The interview with Madame Vouzelaud undoubtedly confirms the link and adds another dimension to a collection that is otherwise dominated by the New Zealand voice.

Parr's introduction offers a sketch of New Zealand's involvement in World War II and sets the scene nicely for the roles of the men interviewed. Besides Madame Vouzelaud, five ex-naval and eight ex-Air Force servicemen are featured in individualized profiles. Tracing and interviewing this number of New Zealanders with direct involvement in D-Day is a strength of the work as opportunities to interview war veterans diminish. The editor splices the interviews she recorded and links the long extracts with paraphrased connecting prose. Each person's story is supported by appropriate and interesting photographs from their personal collections and sources such as the Waiouru Army Museum, although there is a heavy reliance on material drawn from the British Imperial War Museum. Each profile ends with a photograph of the participant taken at the time of interview. In this way Parr grounds the collection in the personal. The selection of oral testimony likewise conveys the very individual nature of the remembered war experiences.

This is an easy-to-read, accessible account of New Zealanders' involvement in D-Day operations. It includes a helpful index and good background reading is suggested in a list at the end of the book that in part makes up for the absence of footnotes. The map (p. viii) lacks a caption of any sort and there is no identification of the two main countries, the United Kingdom and France, on it. Nor is the fact that *Utah*, *Omaha*, *Gold*, *Juno* and *Sword* were code names for the proposed landing sites on D-Day, not actual names of the beachheads, noted on the illustration.

The Big Show follows the pattern of numerous recent publications of veterans' accounts of war service and would appeal to an audience interested in New Zealanders' experiences

in World War II. It is a pleasant and sensitive account of events from the perspective of those actively involved but unfortunately for a more specialist readership it contributes few new insights or analysis.

GABRIELLE FORTUNE

The University of Auckland

James Michael Liston — A Life. By Nicholas Reid. Victoria University Press, Wellington, 2006. 412 pp. NZ price: \$49.95. ISBN 0-86473-536-7.

JAMES MICHAEL LISTON'S PRIVATE PAPERS were all destroyed by his own hand by the time he died in 1976 — unpromising circumstances for any biographer. Nicholas Reid suggests that this destruction took place following the 89-year-old Catholic archbishop's retirement in 1970; if so, it must have been quite a bonfire. Clerical tradition once had it that the sudden fall of France in World War II prompted Liston to burn all his personal correspondence. What is certain is that he shared the disinclination of his Melbourne contemporary, Daniel Mannix, to have 'posterity analysing my soul'.

How then does his biographer look beyond the official Liston, to paint him in the round, to capture more than the austere, autocratic churchman of legend? Reid had recourse to the riches of the Irish College Rome archives, extensive oral interviews with those who knew the prelate in his later years, and what he terms 'the imaginative folklore that Auckland Catholics developed around Liston'. He has skilfully deployed these sources to produce a lively biography of the Dunedin-born priest, a man who exercised authority over New Zealand Catholics for most of his adult life.

Although Reid recognizes that 'it is difficult to write New Zealand church history without considering its Australasian context' (p.20), this book's origin as a doctoral thesis has evidently precluded archival foraging in Australia. Such research would have provided several bishop-coadjutor battles to illuminate the Liston–Cleary conflict, and provided the key to divisions over prohibition among the New Zealand bishops. That said, chapter five is one of the best in the book, as Reid deals in a balanced and judicious manner with the bitter dispute between Liston and his Irish-born ecclesiastical superior, Henry William Cleary. After an uneasy couple of years following Liston's appointment in 1920, Cleary grew increasingly critical of his coadjutor's faults (administrative, economic and personal) and petitioned Rome for his removal. Reid is aware of hearing only Liston's side of the argument. Whether the latter emerges as 'completely vindicated' from the clash as Reid suggests will be revealed only when the relevant Roman files become accessible to researchers and someone tackles a full-length biography of Bishop Cleary.

There is surely more to be said about 'the Saddle Hill conspiracy' of 1918, when Liston's fellow priests colluded to reject him for the vacant see of Dunedin. In particular, Liston's critics deserve more attention than Reid gives them; a paltry three votes out of 20 was a devastating expression of no confidence in the aspirant bishop. Were the local clergy really terrified at the prospect of firm discipline after the laxity of Bishop Verdon's day, as claimed by the hierarchy? Reid is somewhat defensive of Liston's faults and critical of James Kelly (characterized as 'the indefatigable gossip', p.73) for his summing up of Liston as narrow, stubborn, unpopular and autocratic. Yet the rest of the book contains copious evidence of the accuracy of Kelly's charges, particularly in relation to the Campbell case and the Hibernian Society split. (As most of the major players have destroyed their private correspondence, the historian might well be grateful for Kelly's candid if acerbic letters to Rome.)

Reid tends to downplay Liston's role in the infamous sedition case of 1922, which saw him endure a two-day trial in Auckland's Supreme Court in defence of his political