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Code Word Canloan

Wilfred Smith

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The story of a group of Canadian Army officers who volunteered to serve in the British Army in Europe between D-Day, 1944 and VE Day, 1945, in a scheme called *Code Word CANLOAN*.

In the darkest days of the Second World War, Canada had a surplus of Army officers. Britain, however, was suffering a critical shortage. A remarkable scheme called CANLOAN enabled hundreds of Canadian Army officers to volunteer to join regiments of the British Army. The Canadians fought in Europe from D-Day until the end of the hostilities, with a casualty rate of 75% and nearly 100 awards for bravery.

Written by one of the participants and based on research supplemented by the recollections of survivors, this book is a vivid account both of the experiences of the CANLOAN officers and of the scheme itself, from the initial concept to its realization. In addition to presenting slit-trench views of the battles in Normandy, Arnhem, Italy, the Rhineland and beyond to the Rhine, Smith coves the role of the platoon commander in battle, the experiences of prisoners of war, the wounded, and the 50 Ordnance Corps volunteers who with 623 junior infantry officers made up CANLOAN. The relationship between wartime experiences of soldiers and their post-war careers is also illustrated.

Smith’s book rescues from obscurity a fascinating episode of the Second World War involving young Canadian Army officers. It is dedicated to the 128 comrades who did not return.

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