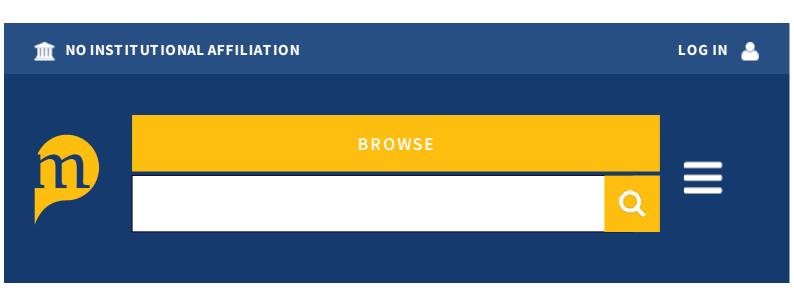
Historical Literature on Canada's Participation in the Great War.

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# Historical Literature on Canada's Participation in the Great War

W.B. Kerr

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**ARTICLE** 

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## <u>In lieu of</u> an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

REVIEW ARTICLE HISTORICAL LITERATURE ON CANADA'S PARTICI•PATION IN THE GREAT WAR • The fifteen years since the armistice have witnessed publication of much material relating to the war in all countries which took an active share in the great struggle. For this literature the official histories, though by no means necessarily superior to other records, furnish a sort of measuring rod to indicate roughly the amount of study devoted to the events of the war in each case. The fine German series of monographs prepared by the Reichs archiv and published by Gerhard Stalling, Oldenburg, has now reached the operations of September, 1918; the not-so-readable general staff history is still concerned with 1915. Austria Hungary 's Let, ter Krieg drags behind with part of 1915 completed. The British official historian, having dealt with the opening of the struggles on the Somme (July 1, 1916), is postponing the rest of 1916 and 1917 in order to record the openwarfare operations of 1918. The French offidal history has concluded the Somme battles; the Belgian

generalstaffis yetengagedwith the events of 1914. Most of the British dominions are well to the fore in
respectof war history. South Africa, New Zealand, Newfoundland have published complete official records.
The one which may best be compared with Canada is, of course, Australia. From the beginning of the war, the
Australian governmenttook great pains to secure a satisfactory record of their dominion's participation in
the struggle. They chose a competentman, Mr. C. W. Bean, as official historian, and allowed him a free hand.
Mr. Bean acquired first-hand knowledge from his experiences in Gallipoli and in France; and since the war he
has enjoyed full access to the officialdocuments. He has utilized German records even to those of obscure
Bavarian and Wurtemberg units; he has studied the British and French accounts of actions in which the
"Aussies" shared, and he has paid closeattention to the recollections of individuals. In consequence, his
work conforms to all the standards of historical writing. He is now engaged with the opening months of 1918
and bids fair to complete his task within two years. With these examples in mind we may, perhaps, take stock
of what has beendone in Canada to record the story of Canadian participation in the war. During the
struggleitself, Canadianswere eager to read something • Professor Kerrhas triedtomake the bibliography
which appears at the end of the article as complete as possible since it is hoped that it will be a basic work of
reference for future students of the subject. A supplementary list will be published in ournext issue.
Suggestions for it may be sentto the REview or to Professor Kerr at the University of Buffalo (ed.). The
authordesires to express histhanksto the Departmentof National Defence, Ottawa, and to the
CanadianMilitary Institute,Toronto,for the use of their libraries; and to the Historical Section of the General
Staff, Ottawa, and to Mr. R. C. Fetherstonhaugh of Montreal for assistance in making out the list. 412 REVIEW
$ARTICLE\ 413\ of the\ experiences and\ achieve\ ments of their\ soldiers.\ A\ number\ of\ books\ according\ lymade\ their\ soldiers.$
appearanceto describe, in so far as conditionspermitted, the work of the Canadian divisions in the field.
Most important of these are the two volumes by Sir Max Aitken (Lord Be averbrook) who acted from 1914 to mid-
19 16 as recordofficer to the Canadian combatant units: Canada in Flanders: The o•cial story of the Canadian
ExpeditionaryForce. The sevolumes give the first authoritative account of Canadian participation in British
battles from Second Ypres to SanctuaryWood. Their authorhadsome first-handknowledge of events; and he
had a gift of style which tune shis writing to the pitch of a clarion call. In the circumstances of the time he could
not avoid striking a note of pride, stressing successes more than failures, and obscuring with
magnificentphrasesthe errors of organization among the Allies which rendered futile the efforts of two
battalions during April 23, 1915. He was, of course, restrained by the necessities of war from relating all he
knew and analysing the causes of events to any serious extent; and he used material incomplete by present-
day standards. Yet these little volumes must be taken into careful consideration by all students of the early
battlesin which Canadiansshared. Lord Beaverbrook abandoned his work in the summer of 1916 and left to
Dr. C. G. D. Robertsthe task of producing the third volume of Canadain Flanders, covering the last actions in
the Salient and the whole of the fighting on the Somme. Major Roberts had no story of triumph to record; he
dealt with one successful operation(Courcelette) and the series of tragically costly assaults on Mouquet
Farm, FabeckGraben, and ReginaTrench. He makesthe failuresquite

#### REVIEW ARTICLE

HESTORICAL LITERATURE ON CANADA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE GREAT WAR!

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The author desires to express his thanks to the Department of National Oriente. On Laws, and to the Canadian Military Institute. Toronto, for the use of their librations and to the Historical Section of the General Staff, Octowa, and to Mr. R. C. Frehrestownsugts of Montreal for assistance in making out the list.

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