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A Rifleman Went To War

Herbert W. McBride

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From childhood Herbert W. McBride was familiar with rifles, at first watching his father prepare for the hunt, later learning the game himself: he was destined to become a Rifleman.

Growing up in Indiana, surrounded by veterans of the Civil War, he followed his father and his father before him into a military life, rising in time to become a Captain.

“Missing” two conflicts, when war was declared in 1914 a burning curiosity to find out what a “real war” was like led McBride to resign his commission and head to Canadian forces.

Assigned to the 38th Battalion, upon finding out it was slated for garrison duties he transferred to the 21st Battalion, fearing war’s end before he could taste the fire of battle.

As a Private in the Machine Gun Section, a rifle always on his shoulder, McBride served in France and Belgium from September 1915 to April 1917.

Weaving his experiences and observations into a gripping narrative, his account of his time in the Canadian Corps offers fascinating insight into the role of a Rifleman in WWI.

McBride’s emphasis on the use of the military rifle in sniping, its place in modern armament, and the work of the individual soldier is as valuable as the insight given into soldiers’ minds.

‘A Rifleman Went to War’ not only offers a unique insight into the Canadian Corps, and in turn, the British Army of WWI, but also into military science.

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