

Reliving the Trenches

Memory Plays by Veterans of the Great War

Alan Filewod, editor

"The plays in *Reliving the Trenches*, collected and contextualized by Alan Filewod, are vital and exceptional. They offer intimate, challenging, and fractious depictions of Canadian soldiers during World War I, which stand in contrast to the popular and enduring myth of the Great War. There is nobility here, but these soldiers also fight with one another; they argue; they complain. The trenches in these plays are, to quote one of the characters, 'a hell of a mess.' That general messiness, along with Filewod's expansive explanation of their historical and literary significance and his careful research into their reception and textual histories, makes these plays essential reading for anyone looking to understand more about the Great War and its significance in Canada."

—Joel Baetz, author of *Battle Lines: Canadian Poetry in English and the First World War* (WLU Press, 2018)



431 pp. | \$85.00 | Hardcover | October 2021
978-1-77112-502-4

In *Reliving the Trenches*, three plays written by returned soldiers who served in the Great War with the Canadian Expeditionary Force in France and Belgium appear in print in their entirety for the first time. With a critical introduction that references the authors' service files and establishes the plays as memoirs, these plays are an important addition to Canadian literature of the Great War.

Important but overlooked war memoirs that relive trench life and warfare as experienced by combat veterans, the three plays include *The P.B.I.*, written and staged in 1920 by recently returned veterans at the University of Toronto. Parts of this play appeared in print in serial form in 1922. *Glory Hole*, written in 1929 by William Stabler Atkinson, and *Dawn in Heaven*, written and staged in Winnipeg in 1934 by Simon Jauvoish, have never been published.

These plays impact Canadian literature and theatre history by revealing a body of previously unknown modernist writing, and they impact life writing studies by showing how memoirs can be concealed behind genre conventions. They offer fascinating details of the daily routines of the soldiers in the trenches by bringing them back to life in theatrical re-enactment.

Alan Filewod was formerly Professor of Theatre Studies at the University of Guelph, where he specialized in Canadian drama and political theatre. A former editor of *Canadian Theatre Review*, he has served as president of the Canadian Association for Theatre Studies and the Association for Canadian and Québec Literatures.



WILFRID LAURIER
UNIVERSITY PRESS

MEDIA, EXAMINATION, AND REVIEW COPIES

Contact: Clare Hitchens | 519-884-0710 ext. 2665 | chitchens@wlu.ca
Distributors: UTP (Canada) 1-800-565-9523 | Ingram (USA) 1-866-400-5351