



# **Fields of Fire: The Canadians in Normandy (Joanne Goodman Lectures)**

*Terry Copp*

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*Fields of Fire* offers a stunning reversal of accepted military history. Terry Copp challenges and refutes the conventional view that the Canadian contribution to the Battle of Normandy was a 'failure': that the allies won only through the use of 'brute force,' and that the Canadian soldiers and commanding officers were essentially incompetent. His detailed and impeccably researched analysis of what actually happened on the battlefield portrays a flexible, innovative army that made a major, and successful, contribution to the defeat of the German forces in just seventy-six days.

Challenging both existing interpretations of the campaign and current approaches to military history, Copp examines the Battle of Normandy, tracking the soldiers over the battlefield terrain and providing an account of each operation carried out by the Canadian army to illustrate the valour, skill, and commitment of the Allied citizen-soldier in the face of a well-entrenched and well-equipped enemy army. Using signal message logs, war diaries, operational research reports, and interviews, Copp re-examines often overlooked battles such as the advance inland on D-Day and the defence of the bridgehead, as well as the frequently analyzed struggle for Verrières ridge and the operations to reach Falaise, placing each operation within the context of overall Allied strategy. He demonstrates that previous accounts exaggerated the prowess of the German army and that while Allied air power and numerical strength were important, the Canadian and other Allied citizen armies won the war on the battlefield by employing an effective doctrine. The Canadian contribution to the Battle of Normandy, Copp argues, was an extraordinary achievement, well out of proportion to the number of troops engaged in battle, and the army was far more successful than previous historians have claimed. Passionately written and compellingly argued, *Fields of Fire* will make an irrefutable and controversial mark on Canadian military history.

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