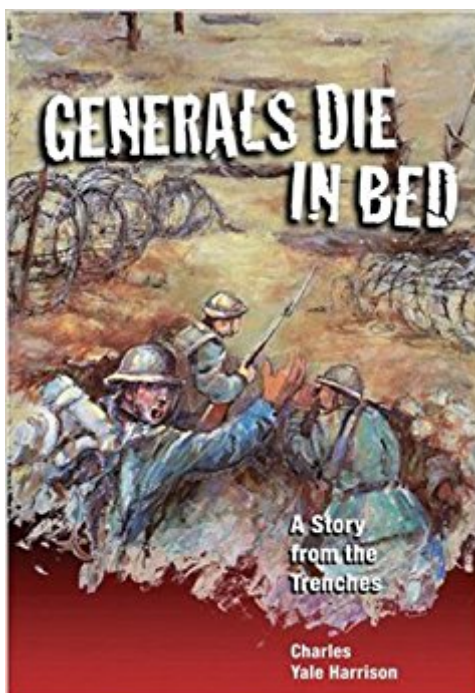


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# Generals Die In Bed: A Story From The Trenches



## Synopsis

Generals die in bed, while soldiers die in the trenches, horrifically, unimaginably, infested with lice and surrounded by rats fattened on corpses. There are no rules, no expectations in war. And there is certainly no glamour. Instead, the men inhabit a senseless world, trusting only the instinct to stay alive. Based on his own experiences in the First World War, Charles Yale Harrison writes a stark and poignant story from the point of view of a young man sent to fight on the Western Front.

Beginning in Montreal, the scene soon shifts from the cheering crowds, streamers, and music of the farewell parade to the stench of the trenches, where the soldiers meticulously divide up the stale, gray "war" bread and rationed sugar for their weak tea. In stark, graphic detail, Harrison writes of the soldiers' fear as the crumbling dirt walls of the palisade tumble down upon them during a shell attack. He recounts the horror of face-to-face combat, where the enemy is revealed to be a smooth-skinned lad, no different from the boy down the street. He shows compassion for both the killer and the killed, each innocent, in a situation without choice. In raw, powerful prose, the insanity of war is shown clearly as Harrison questions the meaning of heroism, of truth, and of good and evil.

The First World War may seem distant and irrelevant to many young people today, but it is a timeless and important lesson. Seen through the eyes of the adolescent narrator, the experience of trench warfare takes on renewed vibrancy as readers identify with the plight of the youthful soldiers. Harrison's vivid account is a valuable resource for all teachers and students of history and of the human condition. An introduction places *Generals Die In Bed* in its proper literary context, beside *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *A Farewell to Arms*. Harrison's concise, blunt writing style is an effective means of conveying the reality of war and an example to students of literature. Originally published in 1930, this book was lauded as "the best of the war books" by the *New York Evening Standard*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The author, an American working in Canada, served with the Royal Montreal Regiment during the war. His fictionalized account of experiences in the vermin-filled trenches of Europe does not glorify the experience. First published in 1930, the book leaves no doubt that combat was brutal, conditions severe, and recruits not likely to die in the comfort of a bed. This new edition includes an introduction that places the book in context, plus a map of the front and archival photographs.... The writing is a terse staccato, echoing gunfire and pounding hearts, and reinforcing tension.... Period photographs add to the book's gritty, poignant reality. This powerful literary work deserves an audience beyond young adults. (Linda Salisbury ForeWord)A classic... an almost clinical account of war's brutalizing effects. (Brian Bethune Macleans 2004-11-08)A stark and poignant novel. (Canadian Children's Book News)

Charles Yale Harrison was born in 1898 in Philadelphia. He left school in grade four, and at the age of 16 began writing for the Montreal Star. Before long, he joined the Royal Montreal Regiment and fought as a machine-gunner in France and Belgium. He was wounded at Amiens in 1918 and returned to Montreal. Harrison worked as a theater manager and reporter before moving to New York City, where he earned his living as a public relations consultant, radio commentator, and writer.

One of the best eye-witness memoirs of WWI I've read. Enthralling and easy read that doesn't hold back on the true horror of trench warfare. Not a thick book, but a good addition to any library.

I feel that there is a shortage of good books regarding WWI. This is a down-to-earth book that shares the experience of one Canadian soldier before, during the war and going home. The book, the soldier's actual diary, is gritty and truthful. For some readers, portions may be too graphic of the uncomfortable living conditions and war horrors described. The author shares details of military life, including the vast differences between officers and lower ranking men, a very important aspect of how the military was organized during WWI, adding to the misery of the lower ranks. The book is not laborious to read, which can be the case regarding diaries. If you want the truthful viewpoint of a WWI soldier then this book would be a good choice.

An interesting novel which may also be a narrative of Yale Harrison's experiences as an American volunteer in WW1; as a member of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. The narrative is earthy and perhaps controversial since it includes the looting of Arras; which had been denied until recently.

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