

NEWS RELEASE

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November 1, 1996
58-96

Staebler Award winner details experiences at the front

WATERLOO, Ontario - George Blackburn, winner of the 1996 Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction, will read from his book, *The Guns of Normandy: A Soldier's Eye View, France 1944*, on **Monday, November 4, 1996 at 12:00 noon in the Paul Martin Centre.**

Described as "one of the best war memoirs ever written by a Canadian" in a *Quill and Quire* review, the work is a first-hand account from the frontlines of battle - the mortal terror of impending destruction, the unending fatigue, and the giddy exhilaration of finding oneself still, inexplicably, alive.

Blackburn, born in 1917, spent four and a half years in the Canadian Artillery, earning the rank of Captain, a Military Cross, and a reputation of being the oldest forward observation officer (FOO) in the First Canadian Army. FOOs did not usually last long: they were on the frontlines, calling for fire on enemy counter-attacks and concentrations.

Blackburn was featured in the television documentary on Canada's role in the D-Day invasion, "D-Day: The Final Reunion," which aired in June, 1994. His second book, *The Guns of Victory: A Soldier's Eye View, Belgium, Holland, and Germany 1944-45*, is about to be published.

The Staebler Award, which is administered by the University and is valued at \$3,000, was established in 1991 by writer and journalist Edna Staebler. It recognizes creative works of non-fiction, and supports the work of a new Canadian writer - a first or second book, set in Canada or with a particular Canadian significance.

There is no admission charge for the lecture and the public is invited to attend.