

Blue Butterfly Books Author

Michael J. Goodspeed, *Three To a Loaf*

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Books: Fiction By Paul Bachmeier, Weekend Post

Michael J. Goodspeed's debut novel that's set during the First World War will appeal to fans of both historical fiction and the espionage genre.

A young Canadian officer, Rory Ferrall, is injured in the battle of Ypres after acquiring a prisoner at the behest of his superiors. Ferrall is transported to a convalescent hospital in Britain, where he begins talking German while he sleeps. Military Intelligence gets wind of this and Officer Ferrall is asked to continue on in the war as a spy.

Ferrall agrees, despite some serious reservations: "How was I, half-blind and maimed, a twenty-two year old Canadian infantry officer, going to go masquerading into Germany and discover the imperial army's most important secrets?" Nonetheless, he proves remarkably adept at his new job, turning up in Germany as one "Alex Baumann" with an elaborate cover story prepared by the Allies about his imprisonment and eventual escape back to the Fatherland.

Though utterly new to the spy game, he quickly wins over the German military with his assumed identity. Knowing that it is just a matter of time until he is "caught in this deadly pretension," Ferrall does his best to keep his personal life separate from the role he is playing in the war.

Still, despite the stakes, he's as fallible as the next man and cannot stop himself from falling in love with Gabriele Richter, a lively and intelligent German nurse; a situation that threatens to compromise a mission on which many lives – perhaps even the war itself – depend.

As Ferrall moves deeper into the confidence of the enemy and closer to discovering Germany's next move on the Western Front, a former police officer by the name of Kleer is convinced that something is amiss with Baumann and is determined to get to the bottom of things. The ensuing chase takes them from the streets of Berlin to Belgium.

Goodspeed, himself an experienced infantry officer, breathes life into the character of Rory Ferrall as we follow his career as brave but naïve soldier to intrepid and canny spy. On one level a straightforward tale of espionage, *Three to a Loaf* also poses bigger questions about the nature of war, and takes much care in presenting both Allied and German soldiers in a human light.

This is the first of a series of books that will feature Rory Ferrall. The next book picks up Ferrall's career during the Nazi occupation of The Netherlands.