



As You Were: The Tragedy at Valcartier

Gerry Fostaty

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Gripping — the news story that never was. SUMMER, 1974 — Six teenaged boys died and fifty-four were injured in an explosion on a Canadian Forces Base in Valcartier, Quebec. A live grenade inadvertently made its way into a box of dud ammunition, and its pin was pulled during a lecture on explosives safety. One hundred and forty boys survived, each isolated in their trauma, yet expected to carry on with their lives. Thirty-four years later, Gerry Fostaty, who was an 18-year-old sergeant that summer and one of the first on the scene after the explosion, received an unexpected e-mail from his former sergeant-major, triggering a journey into memory, a quest for a true picture of what had happened on that day. In *As You Were*, Fostaty pieces together the story of how a series of preventable mistakes led to tragedy. The only full account of an event that received minor attention at the time, *As You Were* is the story of a normal day turned horrific, how duty, responsibility, and honour make ordinary people take extraordinary measures, and how an embarrassed military did their best to ignore this devastating incident.

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