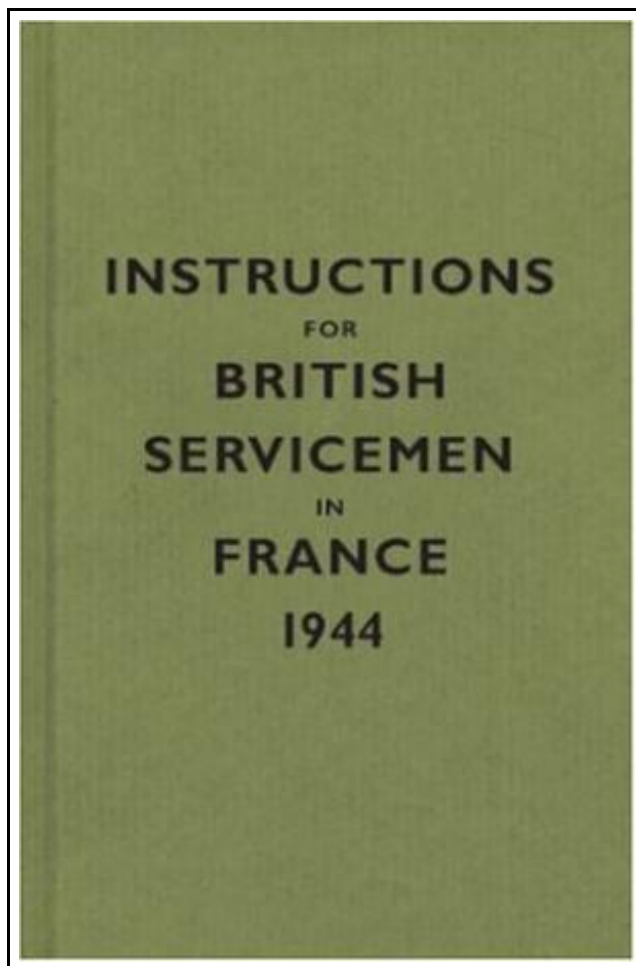


## Instructions for British Servicemen in France, 1944



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The Bodleian Library. Hardback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Instructions for British Servicemen in France, 1944, Bodleian Library, In 1944 the British War Office distributed a handbook to British soldiers informing them what to expect and how to behave in a newly-liberated France. Containing candid descriptions of this war-ravaged society (widespread malnourishment, rampant tuberculosis) as well as useful phrases and a pronunciation guide (Bonjewer, commont-allay-voo), it was an indispensable guide to everyday life. This small, unassuming publication had a deeper purpose: to bring together two allies who did not enjoy ideal relations in 1944. The book attempts to reconcile differences by stressing a shared history and the common aim - defeating Hitler. It also tried to dispel misapprehensions: 'There is a fairly widespread belief among people in Britain that the French are a particularly gay, frivolous people with no morals and few convictions.' Often unintentionally hilarious in its expression of these false impressions, the book is also a guide for avoiding social embarrassment: 'If you should happen to imagine that the first pretty French girl who smiles at you intends to dance the can-can or take you to bed, you will risk stirring up a lot of trouble for yourself - and for our relations with the French.' Many of its observations still ring true today. For example, 'The French are more polite than most of us. Remember to call them "Monsieur, Madame, Mademoiselle," not just "Oy!"' Others remind us of how we recently we have adopted French customs: 'Don't drink yourself silly. If you get the chance to drink wine, learn to "'take it".' Anyone with an interest in Britain, France or World War II will find this an irresistible insight into British attitudes towards the French and an interesting, timeless commentary on Anglo-French relations.

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