



Understanding the Somme 1916: An Illuminating Battlefield Guide

Thomas Scotland, Steven Heys

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This is a guidebook with a difference. It is not a list of memorials and cemeteries. Its aim is to provide the reader with an understanding of the Battle of the Somme. There were some partial successes; there were many disastrous failures. In 17 concise chapters dealing with different areas of the battlefield and various aspects of strategy, this book explains what happened in each location and why.

Each chapter is accompanied by color photographs, taken by the authors in the course of many visits to the Somme, which will illustrate, illuminate and allow the reader to understand important points made in the text. It doesn't matter whether you are in your armchair, on foot, on a bicycle, or in a car, this book will effortlessly transport you to the battlefield and will sweep you round the front line of 1 July 1916.

From Montauban in the south, to Serre in the north, it will lead you to the night attack of 14 July and to the first use of tanks on 15 September. It will take you to the Pozières Ridge and to Mouquet Farm, and to the heights above the Ancre. You will visit the famous Sunken Lane near Beaumont Hamel, where the text will transport you in time to stand with men from the 1st Lancashire Fusiliers waiting to go over the top on 1 July 1916. You will look towards Hawthorn Mine Crater and almost feel the earth tremble beneath your feet as though you were there at 07.20 hrs. on 1 July 1916. You will go into Beaumont Hamel with the 51st (Highland) Division and climb up Wagon Road. You will look across to where Frankfurt Trench once was, and where men from the 16th Highland Light Infantry from Glasgow fought a last ditch battle, having become marooned in the trench, in what was the last action to take place before the Somme finally petered out in the mud in late November 1916.

With its focus on informing and illuminating the events of 1916 on the Somme, and illustrated throughout by carefully annotated color photographs showing the sites today, this book will prove equally essential to the battlefield visitor or the 'virtual visitor' in their armchair.

REVIEWS

Well worth reading in itself, but a real boon if you are planning to visit the battlefield yourself.

Military Modeling

“... a useful addition to our understanding of the Somme battlefields ...” Paul Reed, Great War Centenary 1914-18 website

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