



The Myth of the Great War: A New Military History of World War I

By John Mosier



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Based on previously unused French and German sources, this challenging and controversial new analysis of the war on the Western front from 1914 to 1918 reveals how and why the Germans won the major battles with one-half to one-third fewer casualties than the Allies, and how American troops in 1918 saved the Allies from defeat and a negotiated peace with the Germans.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In reading and analyzing the great body of tactical and operational literature published by French soldiers and academicians in the interwar period, Loyola English professor and film critic Mosier, who is fluent in French, brings to light a perspective generally neglected by historians who prefer to tell the war's story from a German or British view. For most of WWI, Mosier reminds us, it was the French who held most of the front and did most of the dying. In contrast to the German army's systematic success at technical and tactical innovation, Mosier finds that French and British generals "solved" battlefield problems by throwing shells and bodies at them, then concealing the gruesome results from their governments and their people. Allied victory, he argues, depended on an American Expeditionary Force whose commander, Gen. John J. Pershing, saw through the pretensions of his counterparts in command, and insisted on fighting the war in his own way. While Mosier's argument is eloquently presented, scholars of the period will find it consistently spoiled by overstatement; the German army of WWI as described by most historians is nothing like the tempered and perfected instrument described in these pages, and Mosier's notion of Verdun as a German victory was not likely to be found in the ranks or the headquarters of the divisions who fought there. Still, this is the best narrative account in English of the Franco-German combat in central and in southern France from the aftermath of the Marne in 1914 to the end of Verdun in 1916. Buffs and scholars will take note, but the detailed maps, charts and technical focus will put off generalists.

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From Library Journal

Mosier (English, Loyola Univ.) offers a scathing indictment of the Allied military mindset that caused so many senseless deaths on the Western Front during the Great War. For example, Mosier argues that it took the slaughter of thousands of infantrymen before the British and French commands tried to use artillery as an effective offensive weapon. Even then, Allied artillery bombardments never matched their opponents' effective use of heavy-caliber howitzers. Mosier points out that from the very beginning the German General Staff attempted to minimize losses by making firepower central to its offensive tactics. Consequently, German casualties were half those of the Allies. Blind adherence to antiquated military doctrines is not a new criticism of Allied generalship, but Mosier's original scholarship does offer a fresh perspective on an old theme. Recommended for public and academic libraries with strong military history collections. Jim Doyle, Sara Hightower Regional Lib., Rome, GA

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From [Booklist](#)

According to Mosier, many standard battle accounts of World War I give too much credit to the woefully inadequate commanders and armies of France and Britain. In comparison, the German generals and forces were better trained and equipped. Technologically advanced and tactically superior, the Germans sustained far fewer casualties and experienced considerably more offensive victories than the Allies. After dissecting the major campaigns on the western front, Mosier concludes that Germany's ultimate defeat was the direct result of the influx of American soldiers into France in 1917 and 1918. The American Expeditionary Force, led by its own commanding officers, who wisely defied or ignored French and British strategy and advice, was almost exclusively responsible for the eventual outcome of the conflict. This is revisionist history that convincingly smashes the myths that Allied governments, leaders, and propagandists worked so hard to

promulgate. Mosier's masterful account is a welcome addition to the number of recent books that are reviving interest in World War I. *Margaret Flanagan*

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Users Review

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Leonard Santiago:

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Richard Strohm:

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