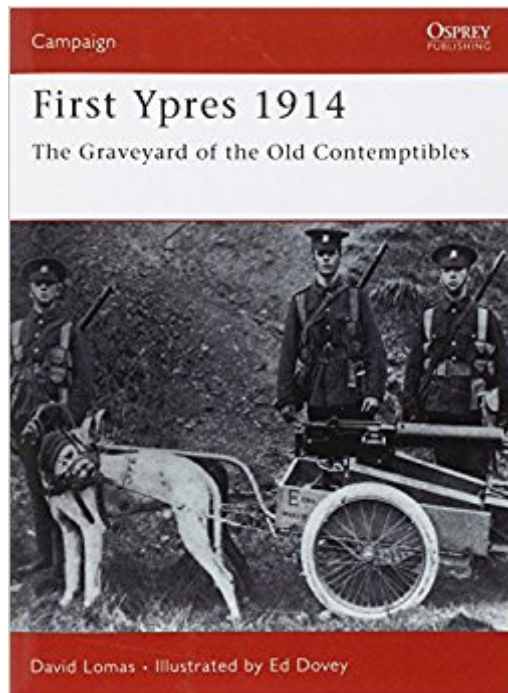




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First Ypres 1914: The Graveyard Of The Old Contemptibles (Campaign)



Synopsis

Osprey's overview of the First Battle of Ypres of World War I (1914-1918). In the autumn of 1914 the original British Expeditionary Force faced a heavily reinforced German drive. Field Marshal Sir John French, the British Commander-in-Chief, had sent his men north in an attempt to take the fight into Flanders, so they could fight across open ground. History tells us that this was not to be the case. David Lomas chronicles the first of the trench-warfare battles, where lines that would remain almost static for the rest of the war were established. Although the Germans failed to reach the channel ports, the death knell had rung for the BEF, which was virtually wiped out in this brave defence.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Perhaps my expectations have been raised too high by the many excellent Osprey campaign books I have read recently, but this book fell short for me. It is told almost entirely from the British point of view and can be easily summarized: the gallant Tommies hold off the German hordes despite terrible casualties. There is very little discussion of the German point of view and even less about the French, who played a key role in the battle. I give it three stars because the story is told competently, but that is all. Being a relatively early book in the series (they are now up to about 150), it does not meet the standard of the later books. The book also suffers from having to devote a section to wargaming the battle (something dropped in the later books). The author wastes six pages on this -- wastes, as his ideas on wargaming are useless. He would have done much better

to keep this section to a minimum and use the pages elsewhere -- either in more descriptions of small unit actions or to flesh out the sections on leaders and the opposing forces, which are terse to the point of being virtually useless. He does include a very detailed order of battle -- for the British. The orders of battle for the French and Germans are skimpy by comparison. In particular, the German heavy artillery, which he repeatedly mentions as having a big impact on actions, is left out completely. The occasional detailed description of small unit actions are the high point of the book; the rest of the battle is told at such a high level (and in such a dry style) that I was not engaged. I would have happily given up some of the high level narrative for more small unit 'vignettes'.

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