

## BOOK REVIEWS:

# *Australians on the Western Front 1918* *Volume One: Resisting the Great German Offensive*

by David W. Cameron

Penguin Viking: Melbourne; 2018; 768 pp.; ISBN 9780143788614 (paperback); RRP \$34.99



In *Australians on the Western Front 1918 Volume 1*, the first in a two-part series, David Cameron tells the extraordinary story of Australian troops on the Western Front in March and April of 1918.

These troops were directly responsible for halting the German advances on the Somme towards Amiens at Dernancourt and Villers-Bretonneux and further north at Hazebrouck, saving the Channel Ports. Their actions resulted in the collapse of the German offensive which was intended to finally win the war for Germany.

This book bears witness to the sacrifice and victories of the Australian Army Corps, which continued to provide critical support for the British forces as 'shock troops' despite their ongoing casualties and dwindling reinforcements.

With vivid descriptions drawing on the diaries and letters of soldiers on the battlefields, Cameron weaves together a thrilling narrative around the significant moments that marked the defeat of the great German offensive, placing their actions within the broader strategic context.

The Australian victories in April 1918 enabled the British to launch their own great offensive in August 1918,

in which the Australian Army Corps now led by General John Monash, would play a pivotal role in the defeat of Germany three months later (which will be covered in Volume 2).

Cameron completed his PhD in biological anthropology at the Australian National University and is a former Australian Research Council QEII Fellow at the Department of Anatomy and Histology, University of Sydney. He has conducted fieldwork in Australia, Europe, the Middle East and Asia. He is the author of several books on Australian military history and primate evolutionary biology and has published over 60 papers in internationally peer-reviewed journals. His passion for recording the overarching history of Gallipoli has resulted in six books on the subject – including *The Battle of Lone Pine* and *Sorry Lads, but the Order is to Go*. Last year he published *The Charge: the Australian Light Horse victory at Beersheba* to mark the centenary of the event.

*Australians on the Western Front 1918 Volume 1* includes several black-and-white images (sadly, several of them are a little grainy) as well as eight good quality maps to illustrate the movement of units in several battles. There is also the order of battle of the Australian Army Corps down to infantry battalion level when it was formed in April 1918, extensive notes, a list of references and a detailed index.

*Australians on the Western Front 1918 Volume 1* is a clear and timely publication as we reflect on the final year of the Great War and Australia's part in it.

**Marcus Fielding**