

## **BOOK REVIEW:**

# ***Australians on the Western Front 1918*** ***Volume Two: Spearheading the great British offensive***

by David W. Cameron

*Penguin Viking: Melbourne; 2018; 560 pp.; ISBN 9780670078288 (paperback); RRP \$34.99*

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In this, the second in a two-volume series<sup>1</sup>, Cameron tells the story of Australian troops on the Western Front from May to November 1918. He covers Monash taking command of the Australian Corps; and the battles of le Hamel (4 July), Amiens (8-12 August), Mont St Quentin-Péronne (31 August – 3 September), the Hindenburg Outpost Line (18 September) and the Hindenburg Line (29 September), culminating with the capture of Beaufort and Montbrehain (3-5 October).

The Australian Corps acted as 'shock troops' for the British Expeditionary Force despite their ongoing casualties and dwindling reinforcements – many troops tragically lost their lives just as the war was finally drawing to a close. Ultimately, however, the breaking of the Hindenburg Line by Australian, Canadian, British and American troops delivered a crucial blow to the German army and led to the armistice one month later.

Cameron draws on the diaries and letters of the participants and places their actions within the broader strategic context. He also covers the significant role that American Expeditionary Force units played as part of the Australian Corps. He strikes a good balance between being informative and entertaining.

Cameron, with a PhD in biological anthropology (Australian National University), is a former QEII Fellow in the Department of Anatomy and Histology, University of Sydney. He is the author of several books on Australian military history and primate evolutionary biology and has published over 60 papers on primate evolutionary biology in internationally peer-reviewed journals.

The book includes: 16 pages of black-and-white images; eight good quality maps; the order of battle of the Australian Corps down to infantry battalion level in mid-September 1918; extensive notes; a list of references; and a detailed index.

The book's publication is timely as we reflect on the final year of the Great War and Australia's part in it.

**Marcus Fielding**

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<sup>1</sup>*Volume One: Resisting the great German offensive* was reviewed at *United Service* 69 (2, June), 31, 33, 2018.