



14-18: Understanding the Great War

Annette Becker, Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau, Catherine Temerson

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A bold new assessment of how the violence, racist nationalism, and grief aroused in 1914-18 changed the course of history

To many, the years of the Great War seemed to signal Europe's collective suicide. A century later, the conflict continues to dominate the imagination of the West--not least because it became the matrix from which all subsequent disasters emerged.

The authors of *14-18: Understanding the Great War* have set aside the overly familiar scholarly tasks--assigning responsibility for the war, accounting for its battles, assessing its causes--and instead examine three neglected but highly significant aspects of the conflict, each of which changed national and international affairs forever.

First, the war was unprecedented in its physical violence: Why was this so, and what were the effects of tolerating it? Second, each side seemed motivated and exalted by a vehement nationalistic, racist animus against the enemy: How did this "crusade" mentality evolve, and what did it mean for Europe and the world? Third, with its millions of deaths the war created a tidal wave of grief: How could the mourners ever come to terms with the agonizing pain? These are the elements that are vital to understanding the Great War.

With its strikingly original interpretative strength and its wealth of compelling documentary evidence drawn from all sides in the conflict, this innovative work has quickly established itself as a classic in the history of modern warfare.

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