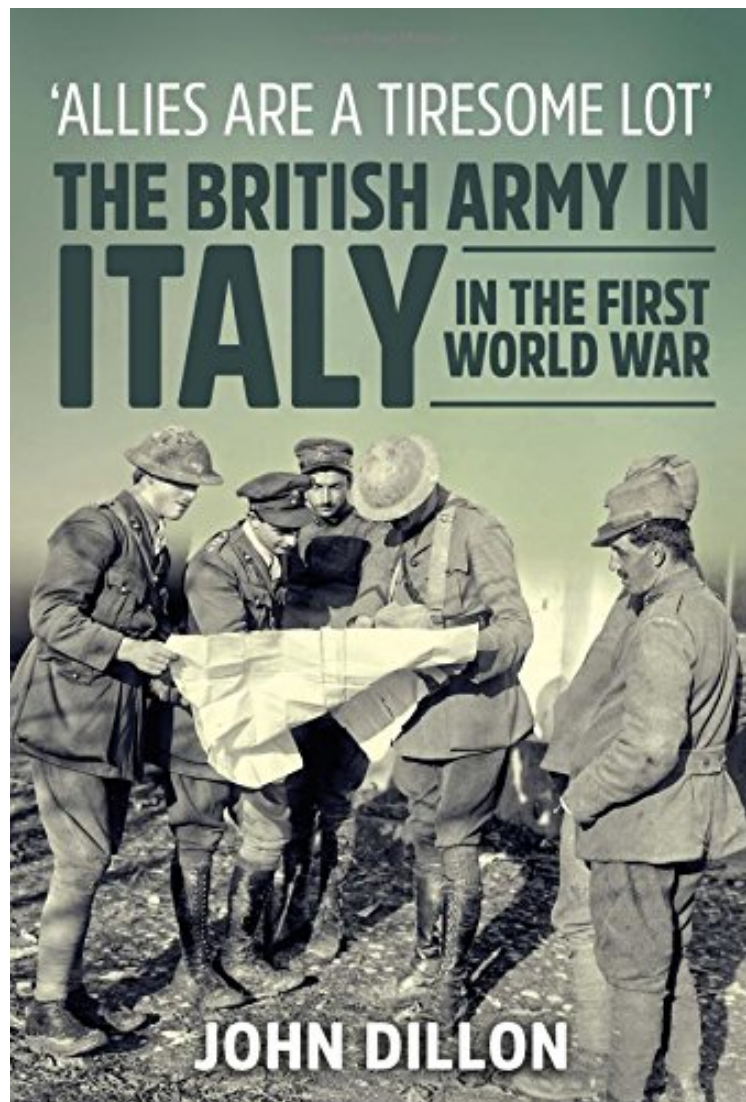


[PDF] 'Allies Are A Tiresome Lot': The British Army in Italy in the First World War (Wolverhampton Military Studies)

'Allies Are A Tiresome Lot': The British Army in Italy in the First World War (Wolverhampton Military Studies)

John Dillon

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John Dillon : 'Allies Are A Tiresome Lot': The British Army in Italy in the First World War (Wolverhampton Military Studies) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised 'Allies Are A Tiresome Lot': The British Army in Italy in the First World War (Wolverhampton Military Studies):

The year 2014 saw the start of four years of centenaries associated with the First World War. In the decades since that conflict ended there have been many books, plays, films and television programs which have variously characterized the war as senseless and futile. In more recent years revisionist historians have attempted to correct this portrayal; it was a war that Britain had to be join to thwart German hegemonic ambitions, and British soldiers were not needlessly sacrificed on the wire of Flanders by Chateau Generals. Whether the reader prefers the Blackadder or the revisionist learning curve narrative of the war, it is invariably viewed through the prism of the Western Front. In so doing the war becomes a north-European event rather than one of global scope, with the mud of Passchendaele as the paradigm for the experience of all British soldiers. Although Italy lost as many men as Britain (as a percentage of the population), its perceived status as the least of the Great Powers may account for its near absence from British histories of the war. This book details the steps by which Italy became a belligerent alongside Britain and France, rather than remain an ally of Germany and Austria-Hungary within the Triple Alliance. However, having elected to fight with the Entente but not declaring war on Germany until 1916 Italy effectively waged a separate war, much to the frustration of the Allies. Then, in October 1917, the Italians suffered a crushing defeat when the Austro-German assault at Caporetto smashed the Isonzo front; now the British and the French had to send divisions from Flanders to support their southern ally. Using official documents and reports, as well as the personal letters and accounts of individual soldiers, this book draws out the demonstrable differences in the experience of those Tommies who fought on the Western and Italian fronts. But Italian military and political leaders did not make it easy for their allies to work alongside them. In the words of Sir William Robertson, Allies are a tiresome lot, and this account outlines why, for him and Sir Douglas Haig, their Latin ally fell into that camp. Following the war, and the coming to power of Mussolini and the Fascists, Italian military historians were perceived by their British colleagues to have overemphasized their own countrys achievements, while playing down those of their British and French allies. This, and their alliance on the side of Germany in the Second World War, may also account for Italys near absence from British histories of the Great War. This book turns a spotlight on a theater of the war away from the Western Front; it broadens the narrative beyond the mud and flat farmland of Flanders and recognizes the experience of those who fought and fell so much closer to Venice than to Ypres.

This is a well-structured book, combining academic rigour with a leavening of the human element, and informed by judicious viewing of the ground and how a forgotten front was and is commemorated. Another Helion success. (Newsletter of the Society of Friends of the National Army Museum) This is a serious work, well researched and presented. He draws on a plethora of primary source material to provide not only the strategic perspective but also the soldiers narrative, weaving in many firsthand accounts into his writing. Helion has maintained its high standard of quality with the production value of this work. (War History Online)About the AuthorJohn Dillon was born in Sheffield in 1945. His father was in the RAF and at one point was based in Rutland where John attended Oakham School for three years; it was here that his love of history was fired by the only teacher whose name he can remember - Major 'Bertie' Bowes. After joining the RAF as an Apprentice, followed by three years as a Cranwell Cadet, he spent some years as a navigator on Vulcan bombers before leaving the service in 1976 for a thirty-year career in computers. Early retirement in 2005 was an opportunity to study for a history degree at Reading; a First was followed by an MA and a PhD. It was during those later years that he was able to research his grandfather's service in the Great War with the York and Lancaster Regiment, and take part in a number of battlefield tours with that great biographer of the British Tommy, Richard Holmes. John and his wife live in Berkshire where retirement allows time for his photography, military history and their recent holidays in Namibia, the Masai Mara and Asia.