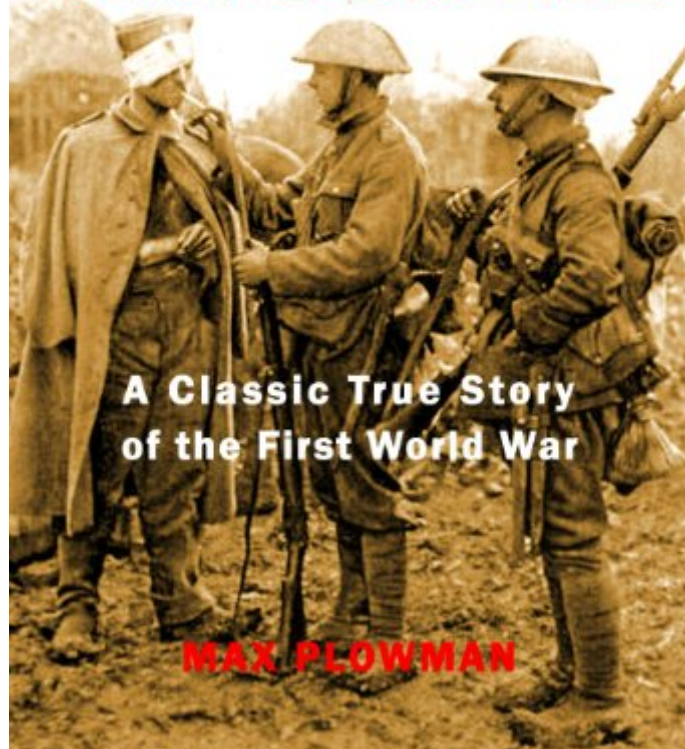


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# SUBALTERN ON THE SOMME

## SUBALTERN ON THE SOMME



## Synopsis

Max Plowman joined the 10th Battalion, the West Yorkshire Regiment shortly after it suffered heavy casualties on the first day of the Battle of the Somme - its casualty rate exceeded that of any other British unit on that day, with seventy per cent killed or wounded. Throughout the rest of 1916, Max Plowman served as a young officer with the Battalion on the Somme. *Subaltern on the Somme* is a record of his daily life, and ranges across different aspects of his war in the trenches - including fear, shellfire, drunkenness, mud, frustration and his views about his fellow officers and British army commanders. *Subaltern on the Somme* is for anybody who wonders what trench warfare was like for a junior officer.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A SUBALTERN ON THE SOMME is a very unusual memoir. In a sense it is reminiscent of Anthony Swafford's JARHEAD, because rather than being about battles and fighting, it is really an account of what it means to be at war in the everyday sense of the word. The author, Max Plowman, served in France in 1916, a time when some of the most sanguinary battles of the First World War were taking place, but you won't find passages about masses of men charging into machine gun fire, hand-to-hand fighting, or anything like that. Instead, what you get is a series of incidents which

demonstrate that war consists largely of mud, lice, discomfort, boredom, exhaustion, filth, stench, loneliness, homesickness, black comedy, petty tragedy, bullying, drunkenness, and institutional stupidity. Sure, the shells go flying; and yes, if you stick your head even an inch over the parapet it's liable to be smashed by a sniper's bullet; and to be certain, you'd better keep that gas mask handy...but moment to moment, war is a bore - and an uncomfortable one at that. SUBALTERN was originally written under a pseudonym ("Mark VII"), and it soon becomes obvious why: Plowman was the antithesis of the flag-waving jingo patriot and "Hun-hater" that the British press and government tried very hard to create and lionize. A sensitive man who could see his German opponents as human beings first and enemies second, he volunteered in a spirit of idealism that did not long survive contact with the world's first totally industrialized war. In fact, the war seems to have disappointed him rather intensely.

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