



# Verdun: The Lost History of the Most Important Battle of World War I, 1914-1918

*John Mosier*

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Alongside Waterloo and Gettysburg, the Battle of Verdun during the First World War stands as one of history's greatest clashes. Yet it is also one of the most complex and misunderstood, in a war only imperfectly grasped.

Conventional wisdom holds that the battle began in February 1916 and lasted until December, when the victorious French wrested all the territory they had lost back from the Germans. In fact, says historian John Mosier, from the very beginning of the war until the armistice in 1918, no fewer than eight distinct battles were waged for the possession of Verdun. These conflicts are largely unknown, even in France, owing to the obsessive secrecy of the French high command and its energetic propaganda campaign to fool the world into thinking that the war on the Western Front was a steady series of German checks and defeats.

Although British historians have always seen Verdun as a one-year battle designed by the German chief of staff to bleed France white, Mosier's careful analysis of the German plans reveals a much more abstract and theoretical approach.

Our understanding of Verdun has long been mired in myths, false assumptions, propaganda, and distortions. Now, using numerous accounts of military analysts, serving officers, and eyewitnesses, including French sources that have never been translated, Mosier offers a compelling reassessment of the Great War's most important battle.

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