



Fort Douaumont: Verdun (Battleground Europe)

Christina Holstein

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This fully revised second edition of Christina Holstein's acclaimed Battleground guide to Fort Douaumont will be essential reading for students of the Battle of Verdun, for visitors to the battlefield, and for anyone who is interested in the history of twentieth-century fortifications.

The battle, which lasted from 21 February to 15 December 1916, was a turning point in the First World War, and Fort Douaumont was at the heart of it. In 1914 the fort was the strongest and most modern of the fortifications around Verdun and it formed the keystone of the French defense in the area.

Using both French and German sources, Christina Holstein introduces the reader to the fortress system around Verdun, explains the construction, reinforcement and armament of Fort Douaumont and describes its surprise capture by the Germans in February 1916. Its loss was a terrible blow to French morale and their repeated attempts to retake the fort are portrayed in graphic detail. As the months ground on and the Battle of Verdun turned into stalemate, the desire to keep or to recapture Fort Douaumont, whatever the cost, became the reason for both sides to go on fighting.

This invaluable, and now fully up-to-date, Battleground guide gives a compelling insight into the brutal nature of the struggle – and into the soldiers, French and German, who took part in it.

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