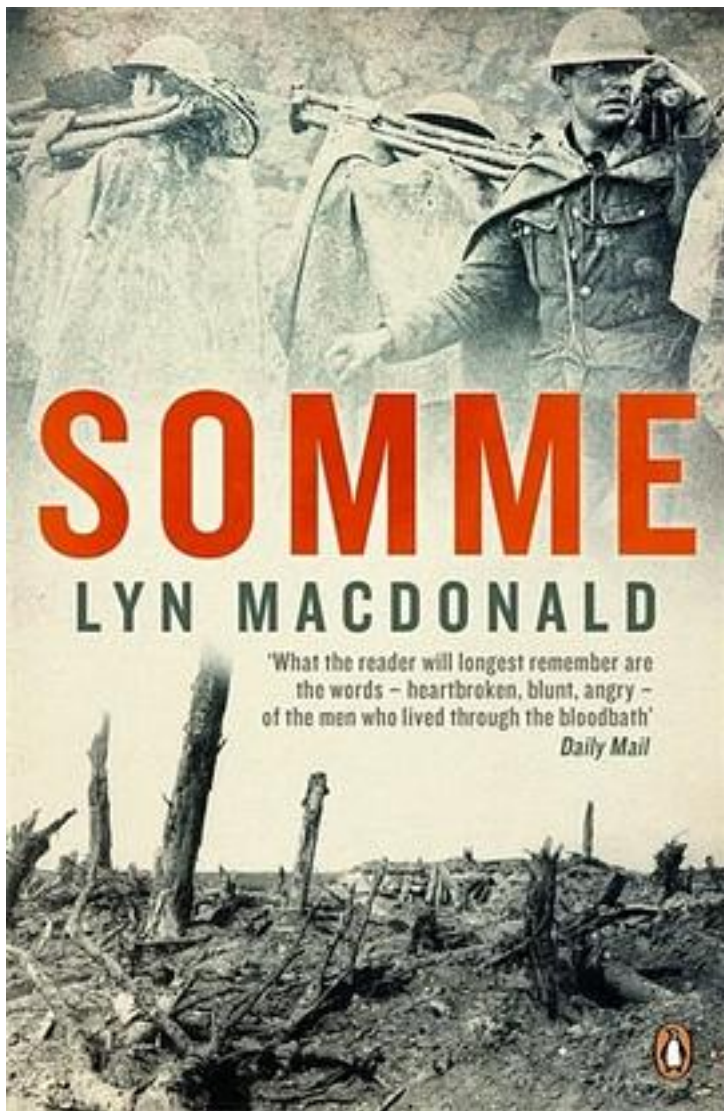


# Somme



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The Battle of the Somme, fought between July and November 1916, was among the bloodiest conflicts of all time. The aim was to end the stalemate on the Western Front -- the result was carnage. In a total of just over a hundred days of fighting, the death toll reached 310,459. Half the bodies were never recovered. At the close of the battle, the British and French forces had not even reached the line they set themselves for the first day. Yet, despite its horrific destruction, the fighting at the Somme was characterised by incredible individual bravery. In commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the battle, Martin Gilbert, one of Britain's most distinguished historians, graphically recreates the tragedy. He interweaves individual stories, wartime documents, letters and poetry in a deeply moving, succinct narrative. From gripping descriptions of struggles on the battlefield to poignant evocations of the memorials and cemeteries that stand there today, this is a definitive guide to the Somme. It is a story of unparalleled folly and heroism, from which, as it unfolds, there emerge deep implications that are shared by all wars.

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