



Genesis, Employment, Aftermath: First World War Tanks and the New Warfare, 1900-1945

(Modern Military History)

Alaric Searle

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The employment of the first tanks by the British Army on the Western Front in September 1916, although symbolic rather than decisive in its effects, ushered in a new form of warfare - tank warfare.

While much has been written on the history of the tank, this volume brings together a collection of essays which uncover new aspects of the history of these early machines. Leading military historians from Britain, France and Germany offer insights into the emergence of the tank before the First World War, during the conflict, as well as what happened to them after the guns fell silent on the Western Front.

Based on painstaking research in archives across Europe, each of the chapters sheds new light on different aspects of the history of First World tanks. Two chapters consider why the Germans failed to recognize the possibilities of the tank and why they were so slow to develop their own machines after the first British tank attack in 1916. Two other chapters chart the history of French tanks on the Western Front and after the end of the war. Tank communication, the employment of British tanks on the Western Front, as well as the activities of British Tank Corps intelligence, are also explained. The use of British tanks in Palestine and in the Russian Civil War is examined in detail for the first time.

The volume also reflects on the impact of the Battle of Cambrai, both in terms of its psychological impact in Britain and the power it exerted over military debates until the end of the Second World War. The aim of the book is to reconsider the history of First World War tanks by widening the historical perspective beyond Britain, to include France and Germany, and by reflecting on the pre-1914 and post-1918 history of these new weapons of war.



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