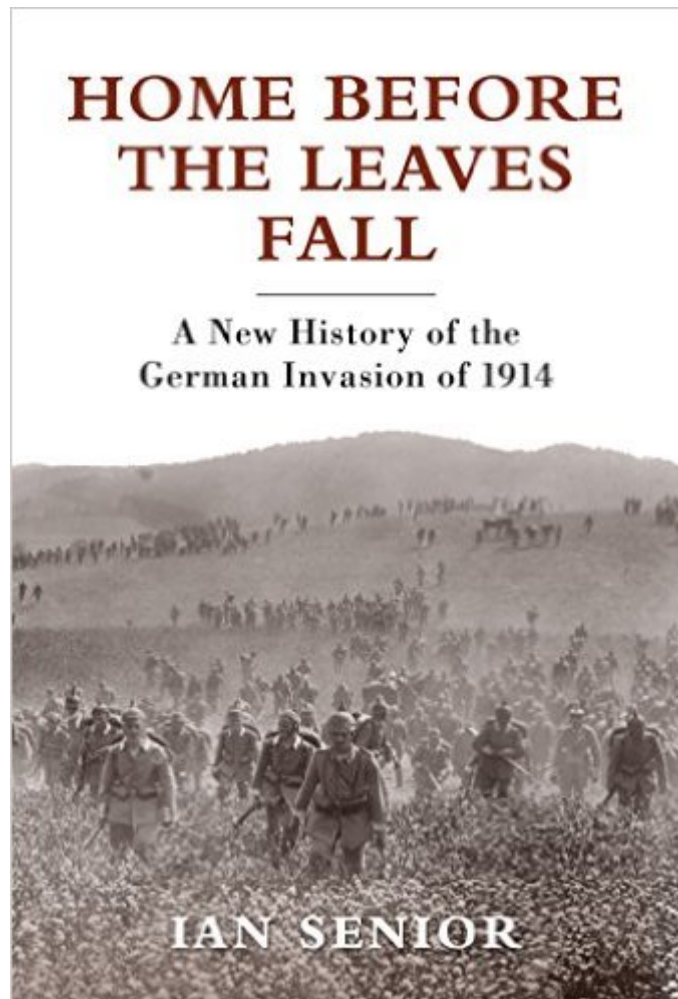


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Home Before The Leaves Fall: A New History Of The German Invasion Of 1914 (General Military)



Synopsis

The German invasion of France and Belgium in August 1914 came within an ace of defeating the French armies, capturing Paris, and ending the First World War before the autumn leaves had fallen. But the German armies failed to score the knock-out blow they had planned. The war would drag on for four years of unprecedented slaughter. There are many accounts of 1914 from the British point of view. The achievements of the British Expeditionary Force were the stuff of legend, but in reality there were only four divisions in the field; the French and Germans had more than 60 each. The real story of the battle can only be told by an author with the skill to mine the extensive German and French archives. Ian Senior does this with consummate skill, weaving together strategic analysis with diary entries and interview transcripts from the soldiers on the ground to create a remarkable new history. In addition, all previous classic histories on the subject either focus virtually exclusively on the British experiences or are now very out-of-date such as Barbara Tuchman's *Guns of August* (1962) or Sewall Tyng's *Campaign of the Marne* (1935). Supported by up numerous sketch maps, extensive archival research and poignant first-hand accounts, *Home before the leaves fall* is an accessible, narrative account of the German invasion that came within an ace of victory, that long hot summer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When the story of the German invasion of France in 1914 is told in contemporary literature there is a strange disconnect. This disconnect is manifested as such: the story is primarily told from the point

of view of the British army on the continent although it was French and Belgian territory being invaded and the battles of the first month were in large part French and German affairs. The vast majority of the sources used in the extant narratives are British although there are a lesser number of French...German sources are typically in much shorter supply. As such the works created have an understandable British emphasis. Ian Senior's new work "Home Before the Leaves Fall: A New History of the northern wing of the German Invasion of 1914" is an admirable attempt to rectify this shortcoming in the historical record. The book is told in a much more balanced manner with the primary emphasis on the two largest combatant nations on the Western Front and does much to explain the leading role of France-with an emphasis on the human cost-to the defeat of von Schlieffen's vaunted strategic vision. Furthermore, a significant amount of space is dedicated to the numerous miss-steps of German Army commanders, including von Molke himself, which led to the defeat at the Marne and long-term stalemated trench war. Senior's work is a fairly short work and although it is written primarily from secondary sources, it is impressively well done. Although the historiographical focus is not clearly established in the introduction, it seems fair to determine that the gist of it is to rectify the above noted gap in the historical record, as it exists in published English works.

Special note: It isn't the easiest read & has a good chance of being a cure for insomnia. That said, I strongly suggest this book as it has one of the few good write-ups on what happened from the point where the German Army crossed the Belgian border to their being stopped at the Marne some 6 ~ 7 weeks later. It also puts more analysis on the German side of what happened, which is quite useful as most of the literature in English covers the British & French from their perspective. Here are the basics of the campaign: 1) The French execute Plan 17 in the Alsace region & are crushed in the Battle of the Frontiers 2) The Germans sweep through Belgium (but are delayed a few crucial days by unexpectedly stiff resistance) 3) The French are surprised by the hammer blows in the north as the German Army sweeps through Belgium & debauches onto the fields of northern France. The British also end up in a desperate fight and are nearly crushed. 4) The French & British began the Great Retreat as the Germans continue the advance. The Germans were victorious, but there were few captured guns or prisoners. "Where were they?" ... 5) The German Army suffers serious attrition over time & becomes worn out with the constant marching & fighting 6) The French (& British) plan to set up a new defensive line on the Oise, but are effectively forced to withdraw to the Marne due to the speed of the German advance 7) //Critical Point // The Germans were unable (& also unwilling) to shift troops from the center to the right of their line to reinforce this advance (One rarely noted

factor is that Little Willie was the titular head of a large Army Group in the center & wanted to continue attacking, thus diverting resources that were needed further north.

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