



# **The Little Field Marshal: A Life of Sir John French (Cassell Military Paperbacks)**

*Richard Holmes*

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The definitive biography of Sir John French, by the increasingly famous Richard Holmes. Sir John French is a figure who has always aroused controversy. Douglas Haig despised him, while Churchill thought his leadership qualities unsurpassed. Despite being the most capable cavalry leader of his generation, posterity has judged him an unfeeling butcher, responsible for more deaths in the first two hours of the battle of Loos than all the casualties on both sides in the 1944 D-Day landings. But there was another side to French, which is only revealed in his private papers. If his public life was controversial, his private life was positively scandalous: he courted dismissal after an affair with a fellow officer's wife, and had a string of beautiful and well-connected mistresses. And far from being the unfeeling butcher of popular myth, he was personally tormented by what he termed 'glory and her twin sister murder'. The lengthening casualty lists on the Western Front filled him with despair, as he envisaged his room at GHQ filled with the 'silent army' of the dead.

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