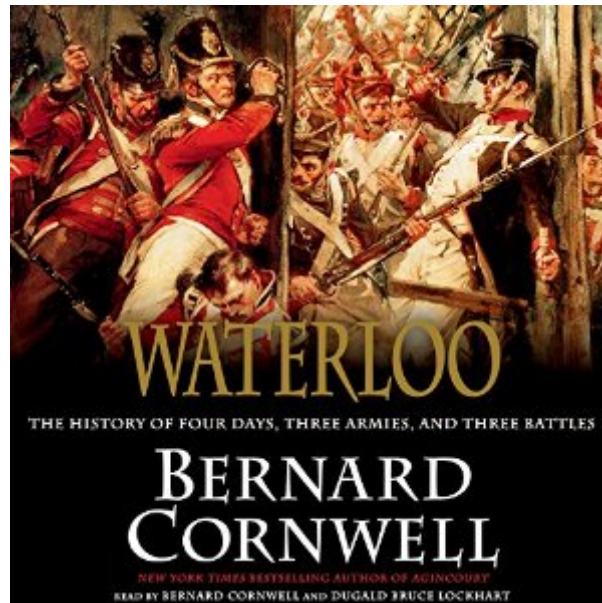


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# Waterloo: The History Of Four Days, Three Armies, And Three Battles



## Synopsis

From the New York Times best-selling author comes the definitive history of one of the greatest battles ever fought - a riveting nonfiction chronicle published to commemorate the two-hundredth anniversary of Napoleon's last stand. On June 18, 1815, the armies of France, Britain, and Prussia descended upon a quiet valley south of Brussels. In the previous three days, the French army had beaten the Prussians at Ligny and fought the British to a standstill at Quatre-Bras. The Allies were in retreat. The little village north of where they turned to fight the French army was called Waterloo. The blood-soaked battle to which the town gave its name would become a landmark in European history. In his first work of nonfiction, Bernard Cornwell combines his storytelling skills with a meticulously researched history to give a riveting chronicle of every dramatic moment from Napoleon's daring escape from Elba to the smoke and gore of the three battlefields and their aftermath. Through quotes from the letters and diaries of Emperor Napoleon, the Duke of Wellington, and the ordinary officers and soldiers, Cornwell brings to life how it actually felt to fight those famous battles as well as the moments of amazing bravery on both sides that left the outcome hanging in the balance until the bitter end. Published to coincide with the battle's bicentennial in 2015, *Waterloo* is a tense and gripping story of heroism and tragedy - and of the final battle that determined the fate of nineteenth-century Europe.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As to be expected from such a successful fiction author, *Waterloo* is an easy-to-read book whose narrative helps make sense of a very confusing battlefield. Cornwell does a great job of not only

setting the strategic and operational stage, helping us understand Wellington, Blucher, and Napoleon, but also weaving in personal anecdotes of the soldiers who fought and died on the battlefield. Waterloo, as can be imagined in a battle its size, was confusing. Many accounts contradict each other or, at least, can't agree on the timing and sequence of events. Cornwell addresses many of the key disconnects and lays out what he believed happened all while telling a story. When it's done you can begin to feel how the battle flowed, not in neat phases but as a series of often overlapping events played out over the battlefield. In this the storyteller comes to the fore because he's able to weave together a variety of multiple events, perspectives, and people in such a way that you see the whole and not the part. It's not just a story of the British or Prussian or French armies, or the common soldier, or the three great leaders. In the end it's a story about how that all came together. In this Cornwell was able to rely on the original work of historians - Cornwell's strength in this book is not original research, there's nothing new historically, but what makes his book worth reading is the way he painlessly tells the tale in a very understandable manner. If I had one complaint, and it's a relatively small one, it's that he switches between the past and present tenses in his writing, sometimes within the same paragraph.

Bernard Cornwell has written an excellent description of this great battle. "...reason to write this book is to try and give an impression of what it was like to be on that field on that confusing day." He brings to the task all the skills of a superb writer of military novels. The opening illustration in the book is Turner's "Field of Waterloo from the Picton Tree". This exaggerates the steepness of the slopes, but also shows the small size of the battlefield, and also helps accentuate the amazing tension and drama of this famous battle. The illustrations, particularly the color ones are very nice and the maps are quite good. Readable with some difficulty on my Kindle Touch; they are very clear on my IPAD and iPhone 5. The analysis is cogent, written with great drama; but there is little that is new, and some that is very old. Cornwell goes to great length to explain the "rock-paper-scissors" of Napoleonic warfare. Although Cornwell addresses the current controversy of the role of the 52nd Light Infantry at the climax of the battle, he apparently was unable to use Nigel Sale's interesting "The Lie at the Heart of Waterloo" "The Lie at the Heart of Waterloo: The Battle's Hidden Last Half Hour" which sees a conspiracy among the British leaders, including Wellington, to conceal the truth of the last half hour of the battle. Another new work, Brendan Simms' "The Longest Afternoon"

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