

[PDF] The Battle: A New History Of Waterloo

Alessandro Barbero - pdf download free book



Books Details:

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Author: Alessandro Barbero
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Description:

From Publishers Weekly This new and valuable history of the 1815 French defeat begins with a minimum of background for the non-Napoleonic student, but does superlatively well once Wellington and Napoleon have arrayed their armies for battle (and does not forget the Prussians waiting in the wings). The narrative is unusually accessible, and as experienced readers march on, they will find some novel insights and analyses. For Barbero, cavalry was not on the whole effective, but it could usefully suppress artillery, a welcome change from the usual denigration of everybody's equine forces (even the British are given credit for superior horses). The role of the Prussians, and also of German allied troops in Wellington's ranks, is studied in much more detail than in more Anglocentric

accounts, and that many of the Prussians were half-trained militia is emphasized. Finally, Napoleon's army did not go off completely thrashed and in disarray, but substantially maintained order and discipline for several days. The author also does a better job than many popular historians in dealing with factors such as rate of fire, accurate range and the sights, sounds and smells of a Napoleonic battlefield. And while rejecting certain "patriotic myths," he supports the concept of Waterloo as a battle of unusual intensity. *(July)*

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From Italian historian Barbero offers a very readable narrative of one of the most significant battles in European history. From soggy June 17 (the day before) to the bloody night of June 18-19, he describes Waterloo as if telling a story, including details--such as both Wellington's and Napoleon's use of telescopes to keep an eye on one another, and the fact that experienced soldiers smeared their blankets with mud to waterproof them--to fill in the picture for those unacquainted with the fine points of Napoleonic-era warfare. Barbero also provides enough information on tactics to depict how and why as well as what the commanders were trying to do, which makes the book an excellent resource for those with limited knowledge of the battle. It also puts such vexing questions as whether Napoleon should have attacked earlier in the day, and to what extent Ney and Grouchy left undone what they ought to have done, in the context of what the various commanders knew and had reason to expect. *Frieda Murray*

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