

# From Waterloo To Salamanca: 14 Eyewitness Accounts Of Soldier Life In The Early

War has always been a defining feature of human history. It has shaped nations, cultures, and individuals. In the early 19th century, two major battles stand out as significant events that changed the course of history - the Battle of Waterloo and the Battle of Salamanca. These battles not only marked the end of an era, but they also brought to light the realities of soldier life. In this article, we present 14 eyewitness accounts that provide a unique insight into the experiences of soldiers during these critical periods.

## 1. John Smith's Perspective

As a young recruit in the British army, John Smith vividly describes the fear and excitement he felt before the battle of Waterloo. He recounts the chaos on the field, the deafening sounds of cannon fire, and the desperation to survive.

## 2. Maria Fernandez's Diary Entries

Maria Fernandez, a nurse accompanying the Spanish troops in the Battle of Salamanca, writes about the grueling conditions in the field hospitals. Her entries provide an intimate portrayal of the suffering experienced by both soldiers and civilians during the battle.

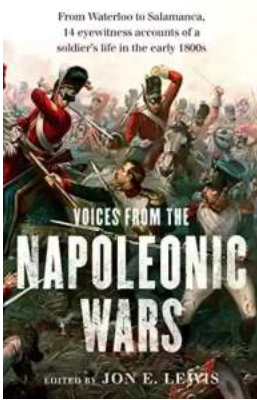
### **Voices From the Napoleonic Wars: From Waterloo to Salamanca, 14 eyewitness accounts of a soldier's life in the early 1800s**

by Jon E. Lewis(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 2015 KB



Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 512 pages



### **3. Thomas Thompson's Letters Home**

Thomas Thompson, a soldier in the Duke of Wellington's army, details the harsh realities of daily life during the campaign. His letters home reveal the toll that war takes on soldiers, both physically and emotionally.

### **4. Sophia Johnson's Memoirs**

Sophia Johnson, a civilian caught in the crossfire during the Battle of Salamanca, shares her personal account of the horrors she witnessed. Her memoirs shed light on the impact of war on non-combatants and the destruction it leaves in its wake.

### **5. George Anderson's Sketches**

George Anderson, an artist and soldier, captured the scenes of war through his sketches. His drawings provide a visual account of the battles, showcasing the chaos, bravery, and devastation in vivid detail.

### **6. Catherine Taylor's Journal**

Catherine Taylor, the wife of a soldier, writes about her experiences as a military spouse. Her journal entries explore the challenges faced by families left behind and the strength required to cope with uncertainty and loss.

## **7. James Wilson's Songs**

James Wilson, a soldier in the British army, composed songs that reflected the sentiments of his fellow comrades. These songs became a means of expressing their emotions, fears, and hopes during the battles.

## **8. Charles Johnson's Recollections**

Charles Johnson, a veteran of the Battle of Waterloo, recalls the camaraderie and extraordinary bond forged between soldiers amidst the chaos of war. His recollections paint a picture of resilience and the unbreakable human spirit.

## **9. Luis Ramirez's Poems**

Luis Ramirez, a Spanish soldier, turned to poetry to express his experiences and emotions during the Battle of Salamanca. His poems capture the intensity of the fighting and the toll it takes on those involved.

## **10. Emma Thompson's Correspondence**

Emma Thompson, a nurse on the battlefield, exchanged letters with her family during the Battle of Waterloo. Her correspondence offers insights into the horror she encountered as well as the compassion she showed to the wounded.

## **11. Benjamin Roberts' Memoirs**

Benjamin Roberts, an African American soldier in the British army, shares his unique perspectives on the discrimination he faced both before and during the Battle of Salamanca. His memoirs shed light on the intersectionality of race and war.

## 12. Elizabeth Collins' Tactical Observations

Elizabeth Collins, a military strategist, provides analytical assessments of the battles. Her detailed observations and tactics offer valuable insights into the strategies employed by commanders during these crucial conflicts.

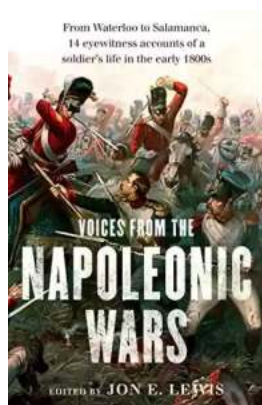
## 13. Richard Davis' Letters to his Loved Ones

Richard Davis, a British soldier, wrote heartfelt letters to his family before and after the Battle of Waterloo. His emotional words reveal the sacrifices made by ordinary individuals and the impact of war on their lives.

## 14. Henri Rousseau's Paintings

Henri Rousseau, an artist and soldier, depicted the aftermath of the battles through his paintings. His artworks convey the devastation and loss experienced by soldiers and civilians alike, capturing the essence of the human tragedy of war.

These 14 eyewitness accounts provide a diverse range of perspectives on soldier life during the early 19th century. They offer a window into the experiences and emotions of individuals who lived through the Battle of Waterloo and the Battle of Salamanca. By delving into their stories, we gain a deeper appreciation of the sacrifices made and the resilience demonstrated by those caught in the throes of war.



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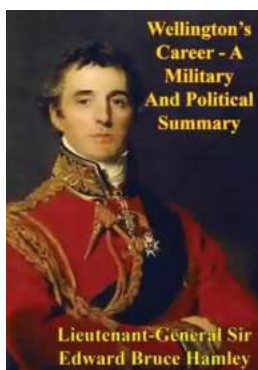
Voices from the Napoleonic Wars reveals in telling detail the harsh lives of soldiers at the turn of the eighteenth century and in the early years of the nineteenth - the poor food and brutal discipline they endured, along with the forced marches and bloody, hand-to-hand combat.

Contemporaries were mesmerised by Napoleon, and with good reason: in 1812, he had an unprecedented million men and more under arms. His new model army of volunteers and conscripts at epic battles such as Austerlitz, Salamanca, Borodino, Jena and, of course, Waterloo marked the beginning of modern warfare, the road to the Sommes and Stalingrad.

The citizen-in-arms of Napoleon's Grande Armée and other armies of the time gave rise to a distinct body of soldiers' personal memoirs. The personal accounts that Jon E. Lewis has selected from these memoirs, as well as from letters and diaries, include those of Rifleman Harris fighting in the Peninsular Wars, and Captain Alexander Cavalie Mercer of the Royal Horse Artillery at Waterloo. They cover the land campaigns of the French Revolutionary Wars (1793-1802), the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) and the War of 1812 (1812-1815), in North America. This was the age of cavalry charges, of horse-drawn artillery, of muskets and hand-to-hand combat with sabres and bayonets. It was an era in which inspirational leadership and patriotic common cause counted for much at close quarters on chaotic and bloody battlefields.

The men who wrote these accounts were directly involved in the sweeping campaigns and climactic battles that set Europe and America alight at the turn of the eighteenth century and in the years that followed. Alongside recollections of the ferocity of hard-fought battles are the equally telling details of the common soldier's daily life - short rations, forced marches in the searing heat of the Iberian summer and the bitter cold of the Russian winter, debilitating illnesses and crippling wounds, looting and the lash, but also the compensations of hard-won comradeship in the face of ever-present death.

Collectively, these personal accounts give us the most vivid picture of warfare 200 and more years ago, in the evocative language of those who knew it at first hand - the men and officers of the British, French and American armies. They let us know exactly what it was like to be an infantryman, a cavalryman, an artilleryman of the time.



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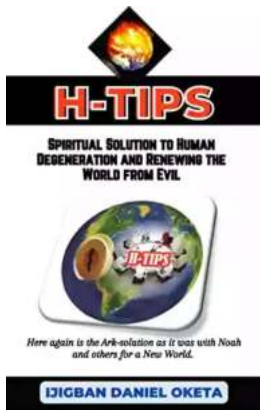
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