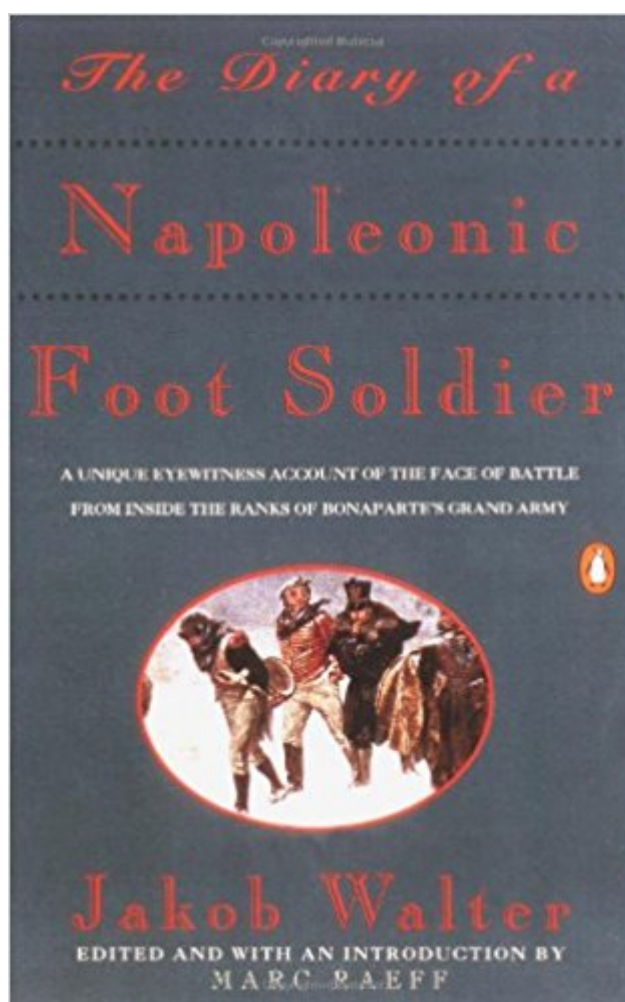


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The Diary Of A Napoleonic Foot Soldier: A Unique Eyewitness Account Of The Face Of Battle From Inside The Ranks Of Bonaparte's Grand Army





Synopsis

Eighteen-year-old German stonemason Jakob Walter served in the Grand Army of Napoleon between 1806 and 1813. His diary intimately records his trials: the long, grueling marches in Prussia and Poland, the disastrous Russian campaign, and the demoralizing defeat in a war few supported or understood. It is at once a compelling chronicle of a young soldier's loss of innocence and an eloquent and moving portrait of the profound effects of all wars on the men who fight them. Also included are letters home from the Russian front, previously unpublished in English, as well as period engravings and maps from the Russian/Soviet and East European collections of the New York Public Library. "Vivid and gruesome … but also a story of human fortitude. … It reminds us that the troops Napoleon drove so mercilessly were actually more victims than victors—a side of Napoleon that should not be forgotten." —Chicago Tribune

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Customer Reviews

Of the half - million men who invaded Russia in Napoleon's army in June 1812, barely 25,000 survived. One who did was the author of this diary, Jakob Walter (1788-1864), a German private soldier from Westphalia. First conscripted in 1806, he was recalled to duty in 1809 and again in 1812. Walter's writing is unemotional and non-interpretive; he describes straightforwardly what he experienced. The account of the 1812 campaign--Napoleon's march on Moscow and inglorious retreat--takes up three-quarters of this short volume and constitutes its most interesting portion. In a chronicle of progressive demoralization, Walter observes how the instinct for self-preservation, under the pressure of Cossack attacks and treachery by erstwhile allies, leads to savagery among

Napoleon's troops. The common-soldier perspective is rare among the mass of material left by veterans of the 1812 campaign and the book will be of interest to the general reader as well as the scholar. This edition includes six short letters home by other German soldiers in the Grand Army, all less interesting than Walter's diary. Raeff is professor of Russian studies at Columbia University. Illustrated. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

More memoir than diary, this slim volume contains the reminiscences of a young German conscript into the army of Napoleon in the campaigns of 1806, 1807, 1809, and 1812-13. As such, it represents one of the few historical documents that portray the life and death of common soldiers of the period. As the army fought its way back and forth across Eastern Europe, young Walter encountered Poles, Russians, Jews, and other groups, and his descriptions of his interactions with these "others" illuminates attitudes and prejudices of German troops of the period. The firsthand description of the retreat of a starving army from Moscow and the attendant breakdown of discipline and morale will interest military historians as well. Walter's book is reminiscent of Guy Sajer's World War II memoir *The Forgotten Soldier* (LJ 12/15/70) and should be popular with a similar audience; it belongs in libraries with Napoleonic history or fiction collections.-- Stanley Planton, Ohio Univ.Chillicothe Lib.Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

To be honest, I'm away in England at the moment and sent it back home for when I return. . . however, my dad said the book looked very interesting. So based on that, it's as good as can be.

I am so glad I was not there and did not share his experiences. I read it twice. The parts where he describes how they "foraged" AKA stole from the population is interesting and what a bad time it was to be a small farmer.He describes the retreat from Russia too . . . I probably would have died.

Excellent account of the invasion of Moscow - one of the most readable and interesting ones I've found. Perhaps that's because it was written by a common soldier not long after the war. Informative introduction, too.

I found this book really interesting and would recommend it to others with an interest in the Napoleonic period. I thought the author's analysis of the soldiers writing's was very helpful and I

appreciate his point of view.

class

Good read and very interesting.

Although it is from one mans perspective it also is probably a good representation of what many of these men experienced. Truly a tragic event for the common foot soldier.

Product delivered as described.

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