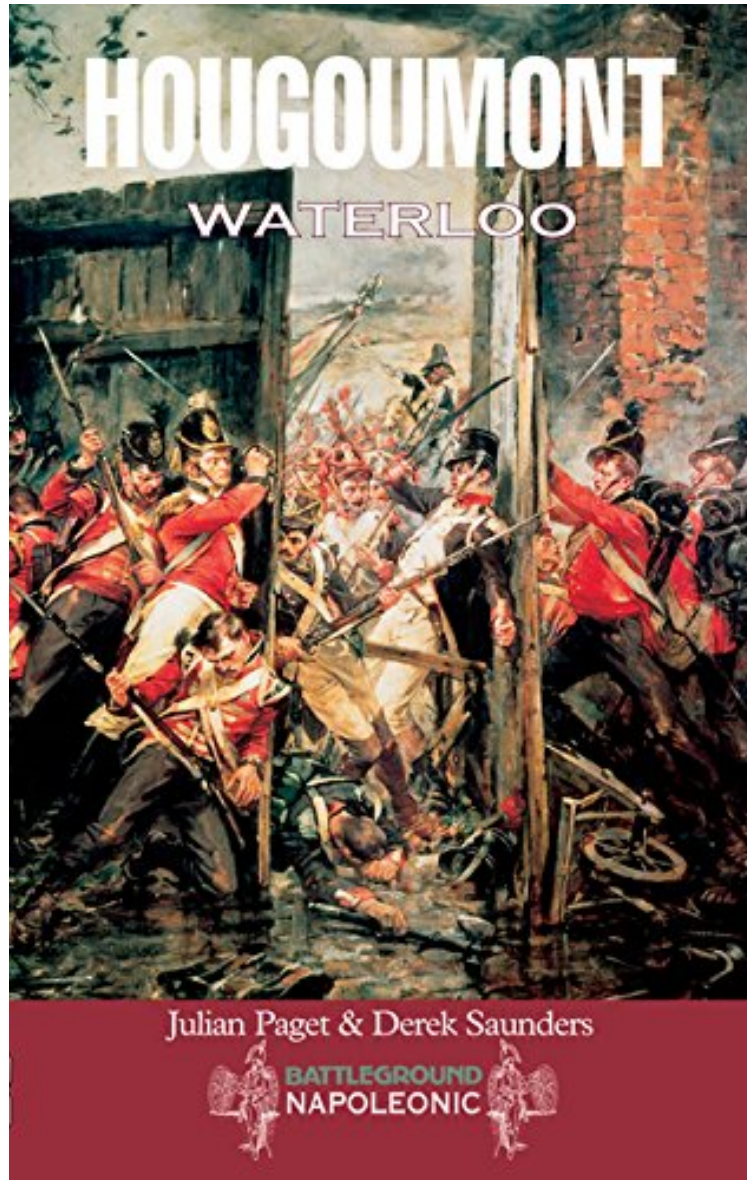


(Mobile ebook) Hougoumont (Battleground Europe)

Hougoumont (Battleground Europe)

Julian Paget, Derek Saunders
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Julian Paget, Derek Saunders : Hougoumont (Battleground Europe) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hougoumont (Battleground Europe):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. "Keep Hougoumont" By Ronnie Dewayne Guthrie This small book is a great addition to anyone's list of Waterloo literature. Most books that I have read about Waterloo give the battle for Hougoumont at most a single chapter, but often much less. Wellington is quoted as saying that upon the closing of the

gates of Hougoumont "rested the outcome of the Battle of Waterloo". Answering the Earl of Uxbridge's question as to what should be done if the Duke was incapacitated or worse on the field that day, Wellington simply replied, "keep Hougoumont". The ancient farm enclosure saw the first combat that June 18th, and among the last actions as well. The French poured over 15,000 men into the unsuccessful attack, effectively tying down a large segment of Napoleon's forces. Wellington's Guards and other allies are celebrated for their heroic actions in the face of far superior numbers, generally estimated at about 2-1 in favor of the French. The writers include research that has rarely been used by other authors, and therefore present a fresh look at the battle. Included are many individual small actions that present a wondrous view of combat of the era, as well as the hardships experienced by the common soldiers. The image presented of a private who tried to jump across a muddy ditch near Hougoumont but fell just short, soaked to the bone, brings the reader farther into the soldiers' reality. The maps included are a revelation. For the first time, I could visualize the battle in and around Hougoumont. Small details, such as a single haystack, lets the reader zero in at ground level to the close-combat savagery that day. One telling sentence was when a soldier who fought in Hougoumont explained that he knew nothing of the rest of the battle, being limited by terrain, smoke, and by his own fierce attention to keeping himself alive all day. In addition, the descriptions of present-day Hougoumont are enlightening, and a lesson in the preservation of history itself. Lastly, but very helpfully, charts are included that shows a timeline of events, units who participated and their strengths, and my favorite, descriptions of many personalities who fought at Hougoumont. Perhaps my only complaint is that the book ended much too soon! Highly recommended.

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Interesting, but LimitedBy R. A Forczyk Although the fighting around Hougoumont Chateau on 18 June 1815 had a major impact upon the on-going Battle of Waterloo, it usually receives only cursory attention in most accounts of that famous battle. In this Battleground Europe volume, the fighting around Hougoumont finally gets adequate coverage and Napoleonic enthusiasts should appreciate the uniqueness of this book. Unfortunately, while the book does provide an spotlight on an interesting aspect of the Battle of Waterloo, the inherent limitations of this volume detract from its historical value. The book itself consists of thirteen short chapters, with the first providing a detail history and layout of Hougoumont Chateau. Another chapter is used to provide background on the campaign. Ten chapters cover the British occupation and defense of Hougoumont, including one chapter that covers the immediate aftermath of battle. A final chapter consists of a tour of Hougoumont today. Three appendices are included: a detailed hourly chronology, British personalities at Hougoumont and orders of battle on Allied and French troops at Hougoumont. However selected bibliography displays the limited sources used, including the unreliable Siborne and regimental histories. One of the authors, Julian Paget, is a retired officer from the Coldstream Guards and he has used regimental records to enhance this account, at least from the British side. Unfortunately, the French side is greatly neglected, with little information provided on units and almost none on commanders. Napoleon's brother Jérôme who pushed the attack, and his division commanders, remain ciphers in this account. Apparently, no French sources were consulted. The wider issue of the impact of the struggle for Hougoumont on the outcome at Waterloo is addressed obliquely and with some exaggeration. Napoleon conceived of the attack on Hougoumont as a diversion that he hoped would divert at least British attention, if not reserves, away from his main effort in the center. This concept was tactically sound, and was originally only supposed to employ one division of the three in the French II Corps. It was a combination of Jérôme's escalation of his minor role in the battle into a full-fledged but uncoordinated corps attack and Napoleon's inability to reign him in, that really hurt the French cause. The author's cite Napoleon's failure to initially use his massed artillery against Hougoumont as a "mistake" but they fail to realize that (A) Napoleon would not waste his massed artillery reserve against a fortified target that was not his main effort and which initially only held a few hundred skirmishers, (B) Jérôme had plenty of II Corps and divisional artillery available to support his own attacks and (C) the muddy, wooded and cultivated terrain around Hougoumont inhibited rapid deployment of French artillery in a close support role against the chateau. Actually, Wellington made a significant mistake by not deploying at least one battery within the grounds of Hougoumont since grapeshot would have inflicted huge losses on the French infantry as they crossed the open ground to the south. British artillery supporting Hougoumont was deployed too far to the rear to employ anything but solid shot or howitzer shells. Whether or not French 12 pounder solid shot could have breached the walls of Hougoumont is also open to debate. This book is an interesting read because it offers new perspectives on a well-known battle. Unfortunately, the author's predilection is to provide an glory-tinged narrative of one of his regiment's most famous actions - and at that limited objective he succeeds. Yet the wider goal of providing a fresh and balanced account of this crucial side-show remains unfulfilled.

3 of 5 people found the following review helpful. 'For lack of a nail...'By A Customer Suppose LtCol.MacDonnel and a handful of Coldstream Guards hadn't forced the north gates shut; Hougoumont may have been taken. Without Hougoumont, Wellington's right flank was vulnerable. With Wellington's right crumbling, Napoleon wins Waterloo before Blucher and his Prussians can arrive. The Austrians, Russians, and Prussians negotiate a separate peace, Napoleon is ascendant in Europe, Germany doesn't become a world power, no Versailles Treaty, no Hitler, no World War Two, etc...Or perhaps not. But it wouldn't be exaggerating to say that Hougoumont was the pivot upon which the Battle of Waterloo hinged. Julian Paget, himself a member of the Coldstream Guards, presents a detailed account of this critical episode that is usually discussed all too briefly in the more general histories of Waterloo.

This book is filled with photographs, maps, a minute by minute timeline, and a breakdown of each section of the battle: the forcing of the gates, the orchard, the formal garden, etc. Paget even dispels the myth, promulgated by Victor Hugo in *Les Misérables*, about the 300 French bodies being dumped down the well. The final section of this compact book is a guide for tourists, with an interest in history, for it leads you step by step through present day Hougoumont. Appendix includes the complete Order of Battle and bibliography. Overall, even though not monumental in scope, this book gets five stars for accomplishing its goal of covering one of the most decisive moments in the Napoleonic Wars.

The desperate defence of the hamlet of Hougoumont by the Guards was the key to Wellington's victory over Napoleon at Waterloo. It was 'a battle within a battle' and Wellington himself later declared that the outcome 'rested upon the closing of the gates at Hougoumont'. To call this a close run affair was indeed something of an understatement. This book brings to life the events of 18th June 1815 to both the visitor and reader at home.

About the Author Colonel Sir Julian Paget is an author and historian.