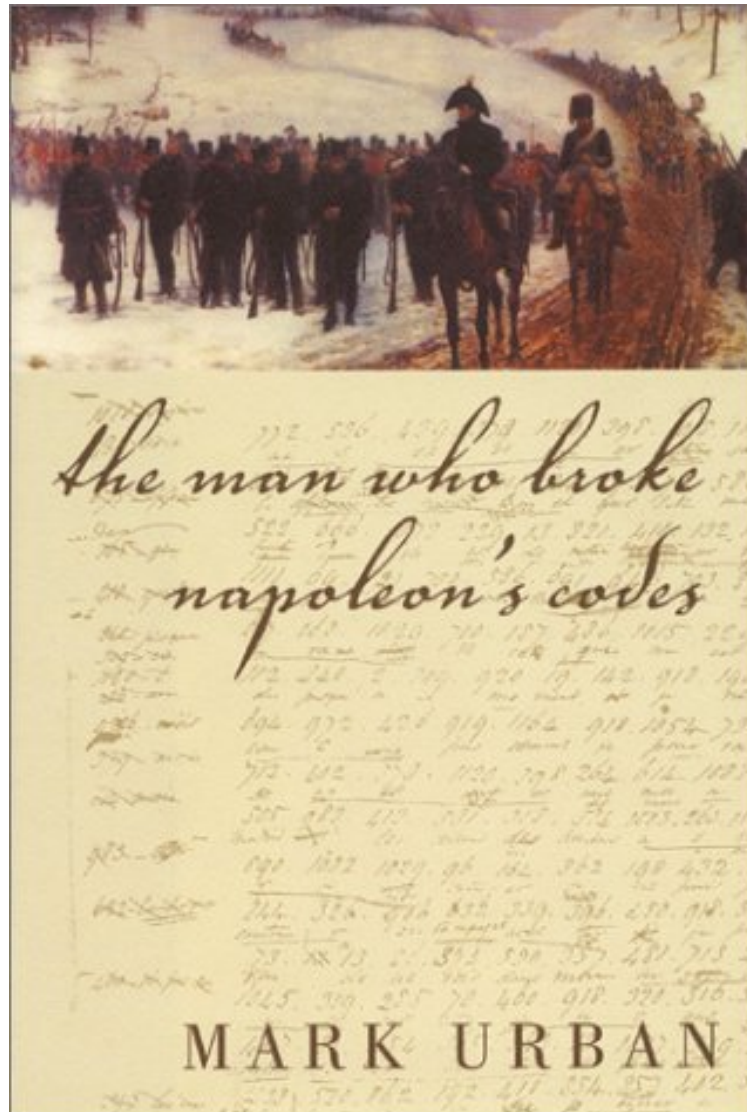


[Download] The Man Who Broke Napoleon's Codes

The Man Who Broke Napoleon's Codes

Mark Urban

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Mark Urban : The Man Who Broke Napoleon's Codes before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Man Who Broke Napoleon's Codes:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. One of the best books on the Napoleonic campaigns in SpainBy M. AlmWritten in a narrative style, this book chronicles the secret war behind the Napoleonic campaigns in Spain from the time of the evacuation from Corunna through the final victories which sent Wellington's armies over the Pyrenees, chasing Napoleon I's supposedly invincible forces home. That Wellington was a superior general there is no doubt, but he did have his flaws -- a disdain for the common man which cost him on more than one occasion. Scovell, the man of

the title, is a commoner, but without his breaking first the simpler cyphers initially used, and finally, the extraordinarily complex cypher which handed the British orders and plans, disclosed the internecine arguments between Napoleon's generals, as well as the incompetence of Bonaparte's brother Joseph, nominally the King of Spain, Britain could not have succeeded. Reading this book explained why some of the sites of specific battles were as important as they were. This is highly recommended to anyone with an interest in the Napoleonic campaigns, in espionage, or in cyphering. Just one note -- the maps are VERY hard to see on a Kindle! I had to pull them up on my computer to figure out what they said -- clearly, the graphics were not optimized for smaller screens!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Outstanding read!By JimSkinYou don't have to be a military person to understand the import of Scovall. This is a great read in that it gives the flavor of what it must have been like to campaign in the early 1800's. Rising through the ranks is never easy and Scovall certainly proved that! I was totally engaged by the book because of Scovall's efforts, the description of the battles and its brutality to the troops. That we never have to face this in our day would be a welcome blessing.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The book started with a horrible awful scene of killing horses during a retreat that ...By ARGNot near as much code breaking as I anticipated, in fact I would say none in first third of book. However, it does say it is about the man who did it and I suppose it was and needed to start as early as it did. The book started with a horrible awful scene of killing horses during a retreat that seemed a good way to get folk to stop reading, just brutal. The rest went on with a nice casual style that was very easy to read. Engaging, but not as code driven as I expected

History books report -- and rightly so -- that it was the strategic and intelligence-gathering brilliance of the Duke of Wellington (who began his military career as Arthur Wellesley) that culminated in Britain's defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte at Waterloo in 1815. Nearly two hundred years later, many of General Wellesley's subordinates are still remembered for their crucial roles in these historic campaigns. But Lt. Col. George Scovell is not among them. The Man Who Broke Napoleon's Codes is the story of a man of common birth -- bound, according to the severe social strictures of eighteenth-century England, for the life of a tradesman -- who would in time become his era's most brilliant code-breaker and an officer in Wellesley's army. In an age when officers were drawn almost exclusively from the ranks of the nobility, George Scovell -- an engraver's apprentice -- joined Wellesley in 1809. Scovell provides a fascinating lens through which to view a critical era in military history -- his treacherous rise through the ranks, despite the scorn of his social betters and his presence alongside Wellesley in each of the major European campaigns, from the Iberian Peninsula through Waterloo. But George Scovell was more than just a participant in those events. Already recognized as a gifted linguist, Scovell would prove a remarkably nimble cryptographer. Encoded military communiqués between Napoleon and his generals, intercepted by the British, were brought to Scovell for his skilled deciphering. As Napoleon's encryption techniques became more sophisticated, Wellesley came to rely ever more on Scovell's genius for this critical intelligence. In Scovell's lifetime, his role in Britain's greatest military victory was grudgingly acknowledged; but his accomplishments would eventually be credited to others -- including Wellington himself. Scovell's name -- and his contributions -- have been largely overlooked or ignored. The Man Who Broke Napoleon's Codes tells the fascinating story of the early days of cryptology, re-creates the high drama of some of Europe's most remarkable military campaigns, and restores the mantle of hero to a man heretofore forgotten by history.

.com "I am making haste to pass on the contents to 25. 13. 8. 9. 38. . . . who has ordered me to open communications with you." So reads a French dispatch captured by the British in the Peninsular Campaign against Napoleon's armies, causing the Duke of Wellington to comment, "The devil is in the French for numbers"--and occasioning Mark Urban's intriguing study of code making and code breaking. The early 19th-century British army was hidebound by tradition, writes Urban; elegant and well-placed gentlemen gained command, while more deserving but lower-born men languished in the ranks. Against that army, in Spain and Portugal, stood Napoleon's forces, "the mightiest armament since the legions of ancient Rome." Thanks to one common-born officer, George Scovell, a linguistic genius and adept solver of puzzles, Wellington's forces avoided disaster by learning of the superior enemy's plans--though, after the war, Wellington dismissed Scovell's contributions and took credit for himself and his favorite staff officers. A fine chapter in the history of intelligence and cryptography, Urban's book provides a fascinating aside to the well-documented Napoleonic Wars. --Gregory McNameeFrom Publishers WeeklyAlan Turing wasn't the only Brit with a genius for code cracking. The Man Who Broke Napoleon's Codes introduces readers to George Scovell, an engraver's apprentice who stumbled into a job as the Duke of Wellington's decoder and managed to unravel Bonaparte's legendary Great Paris Cipher, which contained 1,400 coded elements. Mark Urban, a BBC correspondent, chronicles Wellington's campaigns against the French from the battle of Corunna in 1809 to the 1815 victory at Waterloo, showing how Scovell's decoding of enemy communications was pivotal to Napoleon's defeat. (Mar.) Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalIn an extremely useful addition to the literature concerning the British army's campaigns in Spain and Portugal during the Napoleonic Wars, Urban rescues from obscurity the life and career of Maj. Gen. Sir George Scovell. One of Lord Wellington's staff officers, Scovell, an engraver's apprentice prior to purchasing an army commission, got involved with the attempt to break the French army's enciphered dispatches.

Far more intelligent than the average high-born officer, Scovell was also a linguistic genius who was able to break the simpler codes. As the French switched to a more complicated code, the stage was set for the race against time to break the code and enable Wellington to gain the victory in the Iberian Peninsula. Urban, a well-known BBC correspondent and also a former British army officer, has combined the fast-paced narrative of a spy novel with colorful period detail describing the inner workings of an army staff at war. Recommended for all libraries. David Lee Poremba, Detroit P.L. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.