

[Free] The Recollections of Rifleman Harris as Told to Henry Curling

The Recollections of Rifleman Harris as Told to Henry Curling

Christopher, edited by HIBBERT
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Christopher, edited by HIBBERT : The Recollections of Rifleman Harris as Told to Henry Curling before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Recollections of Rifleman Harris as Told to Henry Curling:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Harrowing accounts of the retreat to Corunna and the medical disaster in WalcherenBy M Clement HallAdditional commentaries to those already published:The value in this authentic work is the description of the life of the common soldier, the tacit acceptance of appalling conditions, 300 lashes for minor offences and totally incompetent medical care.The poem describing the death of Moore at Corunna is well known, less well known are the dreadful conditions of the British soldiers retreating in defeat by the French, barefoot across the mountains of northern Spain, to reach Corunna and evacuation to England.Also poorly remembered now is "Walcheren Fever" which accounted for the total destruction of a British invasion force; its symptoms are well described by Harris who suffered from it but survived although eventually discharged from the army as a consequence.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The life of a private solder in Wellington's armyBy DawnThese memoirs give a rare view into the daily life of a private solder in the British army during the Napoleonic wars. Harris, drafted into the 66th Regiment of Foot from his quiet life as a shepherd's son, shares his adventures, war stories, and privations over several years of active service during a very busy time for the Army. In a short while he sees the riflemen as the most dashing and exciting of the units he had seen, with the smartest uniform, and volunteers into an Irish battalion of the 95th Rifles, where he spent most of his career.Since the writer is a

shepherd and part time shoemaker, his writing is rather straightforward than eloquent, and he recalls events in no particular order, so it is not a linear history, but it gives a good feel of the daily life on campaign of the regular foot soldiers, a picture we seldom see. As a Rifleman, Harris was frequently, as he states it, in the van of the vanguard on advance, and the tail of the rearguard on retreat, which neither he nor his General liked to do. He was heavily involved in the Peninsular Campaign against Napoleon, and describes action in the battles of Roliça, Vimeiro, and the march from Portugal into Spain. He loved the glorious appearance presented by the advancing Army, colours flying, appearing invincible, but also describes the desperate fatigue and debilitating hunger of the long retreat to Corunna and their pathetic arrival at the coast, where the sailors had to push the weakened survivors and their wives and children up the rope ladders onto the troopships to take them home to England. Harris' recollections include several interesting vignettes of life on campaign. He met Wellington before he was made a Duke, and describes General Craufurd creeping among his weary troops as they lay hidden in the grass to refresh and inspire them with a canteen full of rum during a long battle watch. He also describes the severe discipline on campaign, but maintains that only by dint of that strict control did so many of them as did survive a grueling retreat to return home. He also describes several instances where, given a few minutes or hours to rest, he took out the cobbling tools he carried in his pack to repair shoes and boots for the men and officers who still had any. Overall, Harris gives his reader an invaluable glimpse into the life of a foot soldier of 200 years ago. We see accounts by and about officers with much greater frequency, which is what makes Rifleman Harris' recollections so valuable. Through his eyes we experience the excitement, thrills, chills, and hardships of the common soldier.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. What a Story By Janet K. Schwartzkopf

One of the great things about Kindle, I have found, is the availability of first-person accounts, many of which were first published (not to mention written) years ago. Why this particular book caught my eye I really can't say, but I did enjoy it, in large part due to the style of writing by Rifleman Harris. I don't believe his level of education is ever touched on, but he writes in a clean, clear -- although not always concise -- style that's easy to read. And, what a story he has to tell, slogging through Europe battling Napoleon. This is not a book about great political upheavals or grand strategies, but rather about a man doing his duty under often terrible conditions at a time when the poor and under-educated were truly cannon fodder. Not a particularly introspective person, the one thing I regret is that he didn't reflect more on why he was able to plod through the worst situations, and keep plodding when many of his fellows fell by the wayside. However, He does provide a straightforward account of army life at that time, and by the time he reaches his separation from the army, I was glad he had survived and I hope he had an enjoyable life in retirement. I'm also grateful he wrote his "Recollections."

This work features the recollections of Benjamin Harris who fought in the British Army's campaign against Napoleon in Spain and Portugal. Harris joined the army in 1802 and later joined the 95th Rifles, a regiment which became the elite of the Army through their expertise with the rifle, their alertness, discipline and regimental pride. The story unfolds from the moment that the diminutive Harris lands in Portugal and marches away in the sun, weighed down by his kit and great coat, his blanket and camp kettle, his haversack rifle, ammunition, ship-biscuit and beef and all the tools and leather that he had to carry as the battalion's cobbler.

About the Author Christopher Hibbert was educated at Radley and Oxford. He served as an infantry officer during the war, was twice wounded and was awarded the Military Cross in 1945. Described by Professor J.H. Plumb as 'a writer of the highest ability', he is, in the words of The Times Educational Supplement, 'perhaps the most gifted popular historian we have.' He is a fellow of the Royal Society of