

The Napoleon Series Reviews

Chambers, Barbara J. *Men of the 1st Foot Guards at Waterloo and Beyond*. Letchworth Garden City (UK): self published, 2003. 2 vols. 918 pages. ISBN# 9052804565. Paperback. £22 / \$40

Men of the 1st Foot Guards looks at the 2500 men who served in the British 1st Foot Guards Regiment during the Waterloo Campaign. It states that it is about 2nd and 3rd Battalions, however the reader will be pleasantly surprised to find that it also includes the occasional officer and soldier from the 1st Battalion who found themselves serving with Wellington's Army instead of performing their garrison duties in England. The book is not a regimental history. Although there are two chapters on the history of the regiment in the Napoleonic Wars, its focus is on the officers and men of the regiment. The bulk of the book consists of short biographies of not just the regimental officers, but the non-commissioned officers, musicians and other ranks who were present in the campaign.

The book had to be a labor of love for Ms. Chambers, for she spent years combing through the regimental archives, the Public Record Office, Parish Registers, and archives as far away as Australia searching for information. Her sources include company muster books and pay lists, casualty returns, medal rolls, cash and account books, prize money lists, and even court-martial documents! What the reader is left with is a comprehensive personal file on the soldiers.

Every individual has his own entry. For the officers, it includes his name, when he was commissioned and into which regiment, his rank, his service record, and other miscellaneous information such as date of death, where he was buried, and who he was married to. The real strength of the book though is the information on the enlisted soldiers. Each of their entries includes the soldier's name, place of birth, his occupation prior to enlisting, his date and place of enlistment, his age at enlistment, when he was discharged and reason why, his physical description, his service prior to 1815, the company and battalion he served in during the Waterloo Campaign, whether he was wounded during the campaign and the extent of his wounds, post Waterloo service, and information on his discharge.

Ms. Chambers does not just leave it at the soldier's military service. When possible, she includes information on his post-military life, such what town he returned to after his discharged, did he get married, have children, and when and where he died.

Men of the 1st Foot Guards is a gold mine for anyone looking for data on individuals from the regiment who served in the Waterloo Campaign. The historian will be able to use it to gain a snapshot of the typical Guardsman of the Napoleonic Era. . . how old he was, his height, where he was from, his former occupation, etc.

For those who do not want to do your own data crunching, Ms. Chambers includes a compilation of some of the data, to include age range for the soldiers, their typical occupations, and where they were from.

Chapter 6 looks at 100 soldiers who were court-martialed between 1820 and 1825. She gives the name and rank of the soldier, where the trial took place, his offence, his sentence and in the case of flogging, the number of lashes given.

Men of the 1st Foot Guards has numerous illustrations. There are several portraits of officers, maps, contemporary drawings, and some original black and white etchings by Bryan Fosten!

Unfortunately the book is difficult to find, but after searching for several weeks I was able to obtain a copy from [GenFair](#). This book is a must buy for those interested in the British Foot Guards. Since it was self-published 14 years ago, I highly recommend you do not wait to buy a copy.

Reviewed by: [Robert Burnham](#)

Placed on the Napoleon Series: November 2016