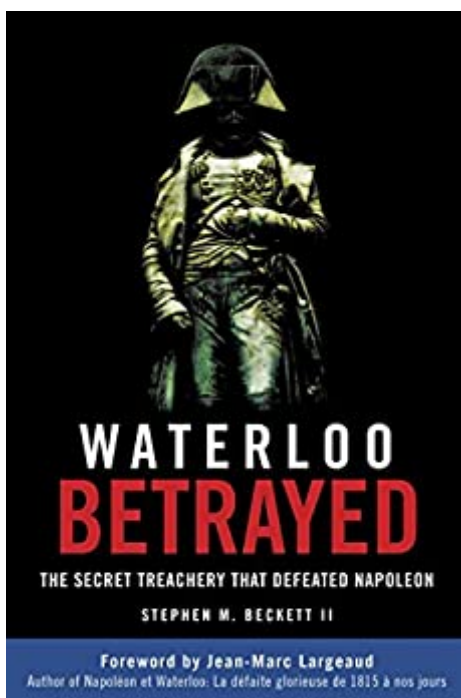


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Waterloo Betrayed: The Secret Treachery That Defeated Napoleon



Synopsis

Discover why Napoleon really lost the Waterloo Campaign Napoleon was betrayed during 1815 There is no doubt of this. The traitors admitted as much, and the Allied powers documented their acts. In the immediate aftermath of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, many French considered treason as the primary cause. But over the next 100 years, a conventional narrative of the campaign coalesced, and acts like Bourmont's defection were downplayed and sanitized to the point of meriting barely a mention in many histories. Since the early 20th century, while the details have improved, the same basic story arc has remain unchanged. At most, treason may have contributed to the fragility that some claim manifested at the close of June 18th, 1815. Waterloo Betrayed: The Secret Treachery that Defeated Napoleon presents a new narrative that demonstrates that Napoleon was massively betrayed during the Waterloo campaign and only this treason prevented a decisive victory. The 1815 Campaign in Belgium was not four days long starting on June 15th. French military operations began on June 5th, and the planning even earlier. With a detailed analysis that starts at the beginning of the campaign, and focusing heavily on the most thorough collection of French military correspondence ever assembled in a single work, the book demonstrates: Napoleon's concentration orders were rewritten without authorization, sabotaging his plans, and forcing Napoleon to delay the campaign a full day. Traitors, enabled by the rewritten orders and campaign delays, tipped off the Prussians allowing them to concentrate 12-hours earlier. This alone enabled the Prussians to give battle at Ligny. Napoleon went to his death never having learned the actual dispositions of his left wing on June 15th or June 16th - information that was actively withheld. Napoleon did issue recall orders to Grouchy on June 17th. Napoleon never said the battle of Waterloo would be as easy as breakfast, the most often quoted statement from the campaign frequently used to justify poor analysis. The book includes over 270 pages of Appendices that provide extensive source citations including over 100 pieces of correspondence each in their original French and translated into English. Waterloo Betrayed provides the answers to this campaigns most enduring mysteries.

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Customer Reviews

This book is a thoughtful reevaluation of the Waterloo Campaign of 1815. While not a detailed description of the Battle of Waterloo itself, the author skillfully analyzes key strategic decisions by Napoleon (and his adversaries) and reconstructs the deployment of the French Army and its subsequent defeat. The author's thesis is that the campaign was sabotaged by Marshall Soult, Napoleon's Chief of Staff, and his arguments are quite powerful. On the other hand, you don't have to agree with this thesis to appreciate the author's analysis, use of rare sources, and critique of many Waterloo myths and questionable sources. The book tackles many gaps in our knowledge of the Waterloo Campaign, while justifying several decisions made by Napoleon on the basis of information he had. First of all, the French Army's deployment is analyzed in detail, and the author emphasizes potential distortions of Napoleon's original plan, as well as the resulting opportunity to face the Prussian Army for a decisive battle on June 16th. Moreover, the movements of the Erlon Corps on June 16th are carefully studied with the focus on Napoleon's knowledge of its whereabouts. Another key contribution is the author's analysis of the movements of Lobau Corps on the same day and its inability to reach the battlefield on time. Furthermore, the author provides valuable evidence in support of the theory that Napoleon did issue a recall order to Marshall Grouchy's forces on the night of June 17 and, as a result, expected some kind of linkage / collaboration on June 18th. Finally, the author points to various sources suggesting that the French command was aware of *some kind* of the presence of the Prussian Army on the morning of June 18

perhaps as early as 10:30-11:00am. Overall, a terrific book! While Napoleon emerges as a better military leader than previously thought and a commander who was let down by his lieutenants (either willingly or negligently) during the Waterloo Campaign, there is no effort to shift all the blame elsewhere.

Becket makes a thorough analysis of the concentration of the French Army prior to the 1815 campaign in Belgium in addition to an analysis of the political situation both before and after the campaign. He starts at the first orders from Napoleon to his chief of staff, Soult, and takes the reader through the important days of June 1st - 18th. The study of the days before 16th June are crucial to understanding this campaign, and Becket thus gives us something few other authors writing about the campaign have delivered. He also explains the political situation several years after the campaign, which at least to me was an eye opener with regard to introducing new perspectives I was unaware of although this was my sixth book on the subject. The book is not a detailed narrative of the fighting on 16th and 18th of June, but it focuses on analysing the key actions of command and control that gives the reader more insight in this crucial aspect to understand the larger manoeuvres, or the lack of them. Therefore the reader should be familiar with the outline of the narrative before picking up this book. As Becket points out, there are too much of the potential primary sources (orders and letters) missing to make it possible to draw absolute conclusions, but he has gathered more than I have ever come across in any book and everything he presents in the abundant appendixes is translated to English for us who don't read French. Based on this apparent extensive research he delivers his well argued theses. The first is that Soult consciously sabotaged Napoleons plans and operations design, and the second is that the extent of treachery and desertions among higher ranking officers, who could reveal very sensitive plans, made a much larger impact on the outcome of the campaign than hitherto has been recognized. The second thesis is rather clearly proven, but the first is more based on circumstantial evidence, first of all due to "lost" sources. If you agree or not with the new and probably surprising theses, I found the analysis of the approach march and concentration of the French worth the book itself. To me new perspectives on the political situation before and after the campaign was also very valuable. Last, I would also recommend the book due to the well argued new theses, which also provides something new to the study of this campaign. A few typos in my Kindle version can easily be overlooked due to the otherwise well written and quite interesting to read arguments.

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