



The Very Thing: The Memoirs of Drummer Bentinck, Royal Welch Fusiliers, 1807-1823

Jonathan Crook

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Drummer Richard Bentinck of the 23rd of Foot (Royal Welch Fusiliers) was a rarity: he survived many sanguinary experiences and recorded his adventures. His writings provide an evocative portrait of an ordinary soldier's perception of living with one of the most experienced Napoleonic infantry battalions.

He was discharged in 1823 for ill health, but lived a full life, dying in 1878 as an old man. Jonathan Crook has meticulously researched his ancestor's life, finding unpublished firsthand accounts from Bentinck of desperate conflict across the globe, from Copenhagen to Martinique, throughout the Peninsular Campaign and culminating at the battle of Waterloo. These accounts are drawn from interviews that Bentinck conducted with a journalist just before his death.

The title of the book is taken from the Battle of Aldea de Ponte: Wellington identified a tactical vulnerability and called for infantry to conduct an immediate maneuver. On being informed that the 23rd of Foot was best disposed, he smiled and said, 'Ah, the very thing,' demonstrative of his hard-earned confidence.

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