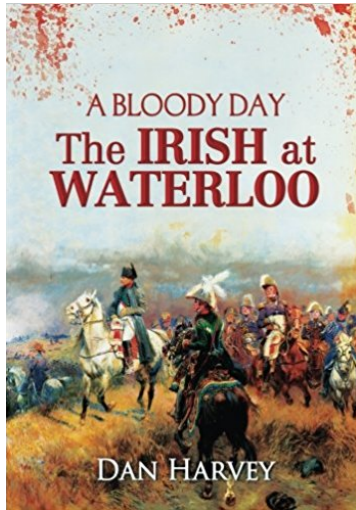


## The Napoleon Series Reviews

Harvey, Dan. *A Bloody Day: the Irish at Waterloo*. Cork: H Books, 2015. 198 pages. ISBN# 9780993114358. Paperback. \$18



Yes another review about a Waterloo book! But this book is slightly different than the others. As the title suggests it looks at the role the Irish played in the Waterloo Campaign. It is written by military historian Lieutenant Colonel Dan Harvey of the Irish Army. Although it examines the two famous Irish Regiments that fought there – the 27<sup>th</sup> Foot and the 6<sup>th</sup> (Inniskilling) Dragoons, it also looks at units that were led by Irish officers or had a large number of Irish in them. Because the author defines an Irishman as anyone who was born in Ireland, his list includes Wellington, who downplayed his Irish connection all his life. But there was also Major Generals Denis Pack, William Ponsonby, and John Vandeleur. Commanding the infantry battalions and cavalry regiments were Lieutenant Colonels Andrew Barnard, John Dawson, John Hammerton, and Patrick Dogherty, among others. There were also numerous majors, captains, and subalterns, as well thousands of non-commissioned officers, privates, and musicians.

For those looking for a detailed history of the battle, this is not the book. Nor does it go into great detail about what the Irish regiments did. It is really about the individual Irish officer and soldier on the battle. Every time Mr. Harvey mentions a name, he explains his Irish connection, what town and county he was from and in the case of the officers, who their parents were and the location of their family estates. For the enlisted soldiers he usually provided what his occupation when he enlisted. When possible he tells what happen to the officers and soldiers. If they did not survive the battle - how they died. If they were wounded, the extent of their wounds. He also tells of their life after they left the army. Surprisingly, this was not just limited to the officers. He was able to find information on a fair number of the other ranks mentioned in the narrative.

Whenever possible, the narrative is filled with recollections from the officers and soldiers. Unfortunately he rarely cites the source of the quote.

Although the vast number of Irishmen who fought at Waterloo were in the British Army he does tell the story of one of the Wild Geese<sup>1</sup> who was fighting for Napoleon: James MacCarthy who was on General Reille's staff.

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<sup>1</sup> The Wild Geese was the nickname of the Irishmen who left Ireland and fought in the armies of other countries.

*A Bloody Day* does not just look at the men. There is information about William Siborne's famous diorama of Waterloo, which was made in Ireland in 1838 and shipped to England, where it was on display for three years. He also lists the numerous monuments and memorials with an Irish connection.

*A Bloody Day* is an enjoyable read. Its strength lies not in re-telling the story of the battle, but in bringing to life the many Irish soldiers who fought under Wellington in the Waterloo Campaign. It is recommended to those interested in British regimental histories and the Irish in general.

Reviewed by [Robert Burnham](#)

Place on the Napoleon Series: April 2017