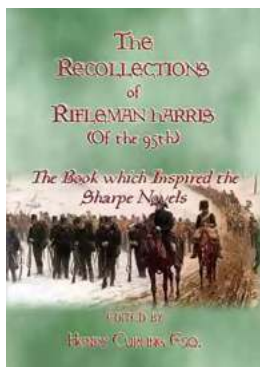


## The Recollections Of Rifleman Harris: Inspiring The Sharpe Novels



The Sharpe novels, written by Bernard Cornwell, have captivated readers for years with their thrilling tales of adventure set during the Napoleonic Wars. But did you know that these novels were inspired by the real-life recollections of a rifleman named Harris?

Private Benjamin Harris served in the 95th Rifles, a regiment renowned for their skill and bravery on the battlefield. His memoir, "The Recollections Of Rifleman Harris," provides a unique and personal account of life as a soldier during this tumultuous period in history.



## THE RECOLLECTIONS OF RIFLEMAN HARRIS - The book which inspired the Sharpe Novels: An Elisted Man's Account of the Peninsula Wars

by Benjamin Harris(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 3199 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 204 pages



### The Harsh Realities of War

In his memoir, Rifleman Harris vividly recounts the harsh realities of war. From the cold and unforgiving weather conditions to the constant threat of enemy gunfire, his words transport us back in time, allowing us to experience the fear and adrenaline of battle firsthand.

Through Harris's recollections, we gain insight into the daily struggles faced by soldiers - the fatigue, the hunger, and the deep emotional toll that war takes on an individual. It is these raw and honest accounts that have resonated with readers and made the Sharpe novels so captivating.

## **Sharpe and Harris: A Shared Spirit**

Rifleman Harris's experiences on the frontlines greatly influenced the creation of Richard Sharpe, the protagonist in Bernard Cornwell's novels. Both men embody the spirit of the Napoleonic-era soldier - resilient, resourceful, and courageous in the face of adversity.

Sharpe, much like Harris, faces numerous challenges throughout the series, from battlefield skirmishes to political intrigue. Cornwell masterfully weaves these historical events into the narrative, drawing inspiration from the firsthand accounts of men like Harris to create a vivid and authentic portrayal of the time.

## **A Glimpse Into History**

Thanks to Rifleman Harris's memoir, readers have been given a unique glimpse into a crucial period in history. The Napoleonic Wars shaped the world as we know it today, and the first-hand recollections of soldiers like Harris allow us to gain a deeper understanding of the sacrifices made and the hardships endured during this turbulent era.

The Sharpe novels, therefore, not only serve as thrilling and engaging works of fiction but also as a tribute to the countless men and women who fought and died during the Napoleonic Wars.

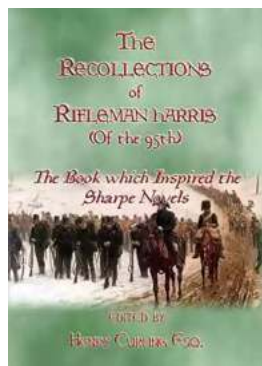
## **The Legacy of Rifleman Harris**

Rifleman Benjamin Harris may not be a household name, but his recollections have left an indelible mark on the literary world. Through his memoir, he has given a voice to the countless soldiers who fought alongside him, shedding light on the often overlooked perspectives of those who endured the brutality of war.

The enduring popularity of the Sharpe novels stands as a testament to the timeless appeal of these stories and the power of personal accounts to captivate and inspire readers.

The recollections of Rifleman Harris have provided a rich source of inspiration for the Sharpe novels, offering readers a glimpse into the harsh realities of war and the extraordinary courage of those who fought during the Napoleonic Wars. Through the medium of fiction, Bernard Cornwell has brought these stories to life, paying homage to the unsung heroes of the past.

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The book which inspired the Sharpe Novels!

Just as in the Sharpe Novels by Bernard Cornwell, the Prince's Own 95th Rifles was a real regiment, and there was a real Rifleman Harris for it is his recollections

which are published in this volume.

There was indeed a soldier who joined the rifles and was soon made a sergeant. By the end of the wars he had, unusually, risen to be a commissioned officer (see Ch. XV.). It is believed that it is this story which inspired the character of Richard Sharpe.

Harris' story starts after he had been recruited and was now, in-turn, on a recruiting drive. In this volume he recounts anecdotes about his officers; believe me all enlisted men have such stories about their officers. He also recounts occurrences of desertion and the penalties if caught, cases of treachery and accounts of camaraderie. There is even an account of how he held a perfectly rational conversation with a fellow rifleman during the heat of battle, no easy feat when you're using a muzzle loader. All of these are retold at some point during the Sharpe Novels.

Also recorded are the battles in which the part he, and the 95th, took part. Here you can read of the battles of Roliça, Vimiero, Salamanca and the retreat to Corunna.

Read also of the stories of "A cobbler and the cannon ball", "A lubberly artilleryman", "Major Travers and his wig" and how the 95th routed Boney's Invincibles.

If a soldier survived the Peninsula War, he would have had the opportunity to augment his meagre wages by plundering what items of value the enemy left behind. In many cases this meant picking over the dead. Hence there was the opportunity to finish the war a lot wealthier than he could have imagined.

The camp followers, the wives and common-law wives of the soldiers, were also allowed to pick over the dead at the end of each battle. In most cases it would

mean salvaging brass buttons and belts. If they were lucky they may find an officer's sword or pistol. Many would convert their pickings to cash, or use them to trade, for food for themselves and any children they may have with them.

Harris himself was illiterate. He is thought to have been born in Portsea, Portsmouth into a family of shepherds and this was his way of life until he joined the army in 1803. After the war he worked as a cobbler, a trade he is thought to have learned whilst in the army. His recollections were recorded for him, after the war, at some stage in the middle of the 1830s by an officer who knew him, Captain Henry Curling, editor of this volume. Curling then kept the manuscript until 1848, when he succeeded in getting it published.

So, we invite you to download this very interesting, first-hand account, of an enlisted man who inspired the story of Richard Sharpe and the Sharpe Novels.

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**HISTORICAL NOTE:** The Prince's Own 95th underwent a few reinventions and amalgamations during the Peninsula Wars ending the Napoleonic wars as The Rifle Brigade.

They were still in existence during WWI and at the outbreak of WWII they were part of The 1st Battalion, Rifle Brigade and performed with distinguished service during both World Wars.

On 1 January 1966 the regiment was amalgamated with the 1st Green Jackets (43rd and 52nd) and the King's Royal Rifle Corps to form The Royal Green Jackets.

The 1st Battalion The Royal Green Jackets' final operation was in Basra, Iraq, on Operation Telic in 2006/7. Thereafter they were reorganised and amalgamated in 2007 with a few other regiments to become The Rifles.

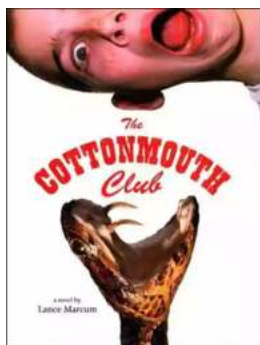
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KEYWORDS/TAGS: Rifleman Harris, Peninsula Wars, Napoleon, Boney, Richard Sharpe, Bernard Cornwell, Duke of Wellington



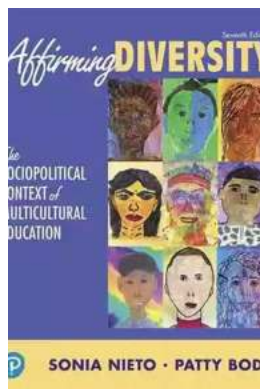
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