

Passages on the Crimean War: The Crimean War Diary of Private Richard Barnham, 38th Regiment South Staffordshire

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In 1854, a quarter of a million British soldiers headed east to fight in the Crimean War. Together with their French and Turkish allies, the goal was to free the important port city of Sevastopol from the clutches of Russia, thus keeping them from the seizing control of the Red Sea and thence Mediterranean. This they did, but not without considerable hardship, suffering and loss of life - over 21,000 British men fell to enemy fire, accidents and disease.

Many first-hand accounts of this war were penned by British officers, but there few were written by the common soldiers, as most were illiterate. As such, this account by Private Richard Barnham offers a rare insight into the daily lives of the soldiers serving in the Crimea. The passages he recorded during the war are not always an easy listen, as they detail many of the hardships of campaign life, the devastation of the cholera outbreak (which killed almost twice the number of those who died in battle) and the horrors of the military engagements. But Richard also gives great insight into the richness of the Crimean countryside and its people, together with the camaraderie of the soldiers themselves.

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