

1813 Leipzig: Napoleon and the Battle of the Nations

Digby Smith



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The crucial three-day battle of Leipzig, known to posterity as the Battle of the Nations, was the biggest battle of the Napoleonic Wars. It was also one of Napoleon's worst defeats - Leipzig sealed the fate of Napoleon's empire. Now, in this superbly narrated account of the battle, Digby Smith describes the events of 16, 17, 18 and 19 October 1813, and stresses both the significance of the battle and the brutality of the fighting. At the height of the battle Napoleon fielded more than 200,000 men against an Allied force - which included contingents from Russia, Austria, Prussia and Sweden - of some 360,000 soldiers. Cornered against the River Estler, Napoleon, outnumbered and suffering heavily from the fire of 1,400 Allied guns, was soundly defeated, had to relinquish control of Germany and was forced back into France. Digby Smith's evocative account of Leipzig concentrates on the ferocious fighting, charts the fortunes of the three day struggle and underlines the incredible human cost of the battle. Using a wealth of first-hand accounts, many of them previously unpublished in English, he brings the dramatic struggle to life and demonstrates just what it was like for the average French, German, Russian, Prussian, Austrian or Swedish soldier to take part in the Battle of the Nations.

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