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**Carl von Clausewitz (2010). Peter Hofschröer. ed. *On Wellington: A Critique Of Waterloo*. University of Oklahoma Press \$34.95**

Clausewitz participated in the Waterloo campaign as a senior staff officer in the Prussian army and after the campaign wrote up an appraisal of the campaign for the benefit of historians. Whilst Clausewitz was hampered by the lack of source material regarding Wellington's deployment and activities that was not the case with the Prussians.

His aim was to analyse the intentions and activities of the respective commanders by reference to the strategic situation and the criteria of time, distance and the capabilities of their formations. In other words, he really wanted to stand in their shoes, find out why they took the decisions they did and what alternatives they may have considered.

His approach is rigorous, dispassionate and non-judgmental though this did not prevent Wellington dismissing it as "*a lying work*" on the basis of a few lines of the text. His translated commentary was quickly buried in Wellington's private papers, where it languished for a century and a half but Peter Hofschröer has now edited it and it is published for the first time in English. The text is complete and he has added useful notes and background context. A slight criticism of the publisher (apart, as ever, from the inadequate cartography) is that it is sometimes not always easy to tell where Clausewitz finishes and Hofschröer begins.

Hofschröer shows how the Duke prevented publication of the account (and any other critical of him) during his lifetime to an extent that only recently have historians in Britain started looking at the campaign from a basis other an entirely Anglo-centric one.

Clausewitz's analysis is technical but lucid and is particularly valuable coming from an educated, contemporary staff officer with a professional background – the Prussians, of course, being very much the leaders in this particular field.

We therefore learn much about the preoccupations of contemporary commanders and their staffs in this way and insights into the capabilities of the troops. Any combat will result in a level of disorganisation that renders them *hors de combat* for at least the following twelve hours, for example; hence the importance of reserves. He cites instances where couriers go astray,

His analysis of the counter-marching of D'Erlon's corps between Quatre Bras and Ligny is the first that I have seen that cites the original orders that Ney received. He also finds Wellington's criticism of Blücher's deployment at Ligny to be unconvincing and debunks the alleged effectiveness of the Prussian cavalry pursuit after Waterloo. His analyses of the thought processes and options available to the respective commanders is always thought-provoking.

Clausewitz wrote critiques on all the major campaigns of the Napoleonic Wars. Peter Hofschröer has done a signal service in translating and offering this one. Let us hope that others follow.

**Andy Grainger**