Andrew Douglas White

The Only Australian at the Battle of Waterloo

By Oliver McBride and Henry Bole
A.D. White’s Early Life and Family

Andrew Douglas White was born in Sydney Cove, Australia, in February 1793. He was born a bastard (almost certainly the only bastard on the battlefield) and his mother was a convict named Rachel Turner. Rachel was born in about 1760. She was convicted on the twelfth of September 1787. She sailed to Sydney Cove aboard the Lady Juliana from June 1789 to June 1790. She was the housekeeper of Andrew’s father, Doctor John White. His Father was a naval surgeon, born in 1756, who had joined the Royal Navy in June 1788 as third surgeon’s mate on the HMS Wasp where he went on a voyage to establish settlements in Australia. He got married in 1800 and had three children, including Richard White (mentioned in Andrew’s will. He died on the twentieth of February 1832, aged seventy-five.

Andrew was baptised in Sydney on the third of November 1793, and then his father took him back to England with him in late 1794 when he was just fifteen months old. He was brought up in England by the sister of his father’s friend Lieutenant Henry Waterhouse.

White joined the Royal Engineers as a second lieutenant on the first of July 1812 and was promoted to first lieutenant on the twenty-first of July 1813. He went to Flanders in late 1813 (as part of the British force) under lieutenant-General Thomas Graham.
The Battle Of Waterloo

On the 18th of June 1815, the armies of Napoleon, made up mainly of French troops loyal to Napoleon (mostly volunteers), and the armies of the Duke of Wellington, made up of British, Hanoverian, Prussian and other troops, met near Waterloo (present day Belgium).

The Coalition was larger in number, but their men were weaker and less experienced than the French soldiers, who were all veterans of at least one campaign.

At 11 am, the French bombarded Hougoumont Farm, which was quite far to the right of the allied line. This began the battle. The British troops then attacked the French troops with artillery.

At about midday, there was an assault on Hougoumont ordered by prince Jerome. His division’s infantry columns to begin the long struggle that lasted a day.

At about 1:30, 74 French guns were brought over by Marshal Ney over the ridge opposite la HaySante as well as 17,000 infantry of
D’erlon’s corps. They began to attack the left and centre of Wellington’s army.
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Arthur Wellesley (the Duke of Wellington at the time)
Why the Battle of Waterloo Took Place

After the fall of the French Royal Family and execution of the King and Queen in 1793 there came a period of almost communism where the French people all equal. However, not all the French population liked this situation and thought that the execution of the Royals was wrong so these people rebelled. While the new French government was dealing with this problem there was also the problem of the other Royals in Europe feeling threatened by this new form of society and were scared that their people would rebel against the Royals. Then in 1804 Napoleon Bonaparte was made the emperor of France and he started his campaign to conquer Europe. He was doing very well and had conquered most of Europe and places as far south as Egypt. However, he didn’t own the seas as he met Nelson’s navy in 1805 at the battle of Trafalgar which he lost. Then in 1812 he started his disastrous invasion of Russia. In this he put 600,000 men into Russia on the 22nd of June and reached Moscow before winter. However, he then waited for the Russian army to come out and fight them, but they didn’t and during winter Napoleon decided to retreat out of Russia. After this retreat he reached the French empire with only 25,000 men. In the same year he surrendered to the Coalition forces and was captured, arrested and sent to the island of Elba. However, in 1815 he escaped from the island and returned back to France and rallied his old army for battle. They prepared for battle and met with the British near Waterloo in 1815.
A. D. White’s Involvement in the Battle and Late Life

As you probably saw in the title that A.D White was the only Australian on the Waterloo battlefield. He was also lieutenant. He received no injury on the battlefield however stayed on the continent for a year before returning to England to receive his Waterloo medal. Part of his job on the battle field was to protect the Duke of Wellington. After the battle he was part of the movement that captured Paris He wasn’t just involved in the battle of Waterloo he was also involved in attacking the fortress of Bergen-op-Zoom in 1814. This partially led to Napoleon’s abdication. He then returned to Sydney in 1822 and reunited with his mother who had married a wealthy farmer and philanthropist called Thomas Moore. He hadn’t been to Australia for thirty years. Then again he went back to England in 1824 and became second captain in the Royal Engineers in 1826. Then he went back to Australia in 1833 and two years later married Marry Anne MacKenzie (who was a niece of Lieutenant-Cornel John Piper). Then he died of an unknown cause in 1837 leaving no heir. He wasn’t famous while he was alive however, he was widely regarded as the first Australian to become a decorated soldier.
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