

## Introduction

Thank you for volunteering to participate in the National Army Museum's first crowdsourcing project, 'Waterloo Lives: In Their Own Words'. We hope you will enjoy working with this unique collection of Napoleonic documents while also making an important contribution to the Museum's work in the 200<sup>th</sup> year since the Battle of Waterloo.

These instructions are designed to help you get started with transcribing as quickly as possible. Please read these in conjunction with the Heritage Helpers [technical manual](#). If you have any questions or difficulties please get in touch either through the message board on the Waterloo Lives [project page](#) or via email to [info@nam.ac.uk](mailto:info@nam.ac.uk).

## Selecting your preferences

Once you have registered and are ready to start transcribing our documents, you can select a few simple preferences which will influence the material you are presented with. These can be found on the Preferences tab on the project page.

The material is broken down into categories:

- **Difficulty rating** (Hard, Normal, Easy)  
We have rated the difficulty of the documents based on factors such as legibility, condition, and format.
- **Text type** (Manuscript, Printed, Mixed)  
Some documents contain handwritten manuscript, some printed text, and some a combination of the two.
- **Language** (English, French, Mixed)  
Some documents are written entirely in English, some in French, and some in a mixture of several languages including Dutch and German.

You can change your preferences at any time. If after a while you want a greater challenge, you can opt to receive more difficult material.

## Overview of the transcription interface

Once you have set these preferences, you are ready to start transcribing.

You can begin by pressing the 'Data Entry' button on the project homepage, after which you will be taken to the main transcription page. The image below shows the important elements you will find on the screen and provides a short description of these elements.

**The transcription interface**

Waterloo Lives: In Their Own Words My profile: Greg Hannah | Log out

ARMU003000006\_0004, Circular issued by the Quarter Master General's Office, Horse Guards, 15 Jul 1815. 21  Toggle help  Move scan during data entry  Toggle screen configuration 12

Insert transcribed text here... 2

↑ Dates covered: 18-06-1815 3 dd-mm-yyyy 4

↑ Locations: Brussels 5

↑ Key events: Battle of Waterloo 6

↑ Key names: Duke of Wellington 7

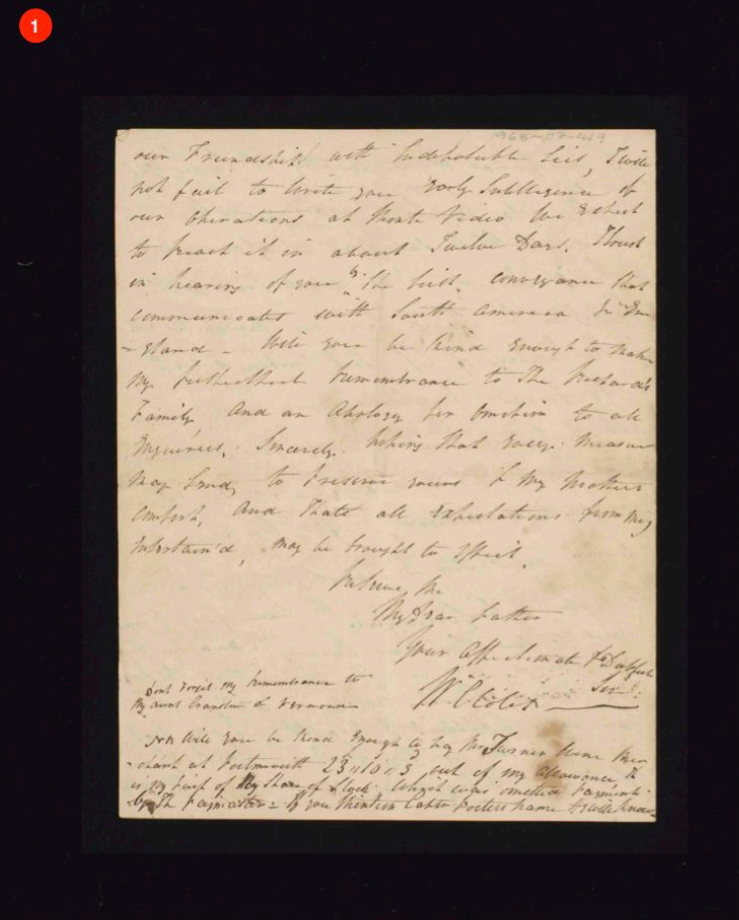
↑ Key units: 1st Foot Guards 8

↑ Keywords: diary 9

↑ Keywords: battle 10

↑ Entry field: 11

1



13 14 15 16 17 18

Finalize 19 General manual (pdf) 20 Explanation

Too difficult 21

Unusable

Noteworthy!

Highlight

Provisional save

|   |                                                                                                        |    |                                                                                          |    |                                                                                                                |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | The window displaying the original source document and tools for manipulating the view of the document | 8  | The key units field                                                                      | 15 | The 'Unusable' button which rejects a document because it contains no text or is obscured                      |
| 2 | The transcription field for entering the text of the document                                          | 9  | The keywords field                                                                       | 16 | The 'Noteworthy' button which allows users to bring something interesting or noteworthy to our attention       |
| 3 | The first date entry field                                                                             | 10 | The keywords field (repeated for illustration purposes)                                  | 17 | The 'Highlight' button which allows users to draw attention to a particular piece of text                      |
| 4 | The second date entry field                                                                            | 11 | New data entry field button                                                              | 18 | The 'Provisional Save' button which allows users to save progress and return to the transcript within 24 hours |
| 5 | The key locations field                                                                                | 12 | Change screen configuration                                                              | 19 | The link to the Heritage Helpers general manual                                                                |
| 6 | The key events field                                                                                   | 13 | Finalise and submit text for validation                                                  | 20 | The 'Explanation' which toggles on screen tips                                                                 |
| 7 | The key names field                                                                                    | 14 | The 'Too Difficult' button which rejects a document because it is too hard to transcribe | 21 | The 'Toggle Help' button which activates tool tips for the data entry fields.                                  |

## Entering text into the transcription field

**1** On the right-hand side of the screen (the viewer), you will be presented with a digital scan of an original document. At the bottom of the screen there are a range of tools which allow you to change the magnification level, rotate the document and change the contrast, brightness and hue. These different views should allow you to see the document in the best possible format. When you are happy with the image in the viewer, you should begin transcribing the text you can see.

**2** Please enter into the transcription field an exact transcription of the text you read in the document presented to you on the screen. As far as possible please reproduce sentence structure, punctuation and even spelling mistakes as seen in the original document. Where words cannot be transcribed because they are too difficult to read, are covered by a mark or are missing due to damage, please indicate this by typing four hash symbols (e.g. 'The ##### of Waterloo'). In cases where a single letter or number cannot be read, please replace it with the character '@' (e.g. '18 June 18@5'). If a word has been crossed out or deleted by the original author, please indicate this by placing it in a set of square brackets (e.g. [deleted word]).

If the material you presented with contains non-English material, we ask that you do not provide a transcription of the material. Rather, if you are able to understand and translate the material, please enter as complete a translation as your language skills allow. If you are not sufficiently confident to translate the language in question simply press the 'Too Difficult' button and you will be presented with an alternative text, hopefully in English. For further guidance on translation please see the 'Additional Guidance and Tips' section below.

## Filling in the data fields

Beneath the main transcription field are a series of additional entry fields in which we would like you to enter categorised pieces of information relating to the document you are transcribing. These fields are important, as they will be used to further enhance the Museum's archive catalogue, allowing researchers to access more archive content than ever before. Each of these fields should contain only one piece of information (e.g. one date, one location, one person, etc.). Additional fields can be generated as required using the entry field drop

down list **11**. It is not expected that all (or indeed any) of these fields will be required in every case. There are several different types of data field:

- **3 4 Dates:** Please enter into this field any date mentioned in the document, using the dd/mm/yyyy format. A single date (e.g. 18/06/1815) should be captured in the first date field. A date range (e.g. 16/06/1815 - 18/06/1815) should be captured using both date fields: the start date in the first date field and the end date in the second date field.
- **5 Locations:** Please enter into this field any notable location mentioned in the text. This can include cities and towns, but also buildings (e.g. Paris or the Palace of Versailles).
- **6 Events:** Please enter into this field any significant event mentioned in the text (e.g. 'Siege of Badajoz', 'Battle of Waterloo', 'Retreat from Corunna').
- **7 People:** Please enter into this field any notable individual mentioned in the original text. The name should be captured as it appears, including rank if relevant (e.g. 'Duke of Wellington', 'Lieutenant Hugh Gordon').

- 8 **Units:** Please enter into this field any regiment or other military unit mentioned in the text (e.g. '7th Hussars', '92nd Regiment of Foot', 'The Gordon Highlanders').
- 9 10 **Keywords:** Please enter into this field any keyword that may be relevant to the document (e.g. 'battle', 'casualties', 'letter', 'journal', 'order', 'cavalry').

## Rejecting a page

14 If you are presented with a document that you find too hard to transcribe (e.g. if the handwriting is too difficult to read), please press the 'Too Difficult' button in the row of blue buttons beneath the entry fields. After pressing this 'Too Difficult' button, the document will be replaced with another, hopefully easier, document.

15 The second option for rejecting a document is if you find there is no text to transcribe. A number of the documents have front and rear covers, or occasional blank pages; in some cases it may be a map or illustration; in rare instances you may find the quality of the scan is too poor or the text is obstructed in some way. If you find a page meeting these criteria, select the 'Unusable' button from the bottom row. You will be asked to describe why you have rejected the page. Please select the appropriate option from the drop down list and, if necessary, add a brief explanation/description of the problem with the document.

## 16 Notable material

If you find something particularly interesting or surprising in the text you are transcribing (e.g. a direct mention of an interaction with a major historical figure – perhaps the Duke of Wellington), please press the 'Noteworthy' button. This will open a text box in which you can provide a brief outline of what you have discovered. However, please use this function sparingly.

## 17 Highlight

The 'Highlight' button is designed to allow you to draw attention to words or sentences where you are not entirely sure the transcription is accurate, or it does not quite make sense. To use this function, simply finish transcribing the material in question, click the highlight button and select the text with the cursor. This will allow us to check the word or sentence during the validation process.

## Additional guidance and tips

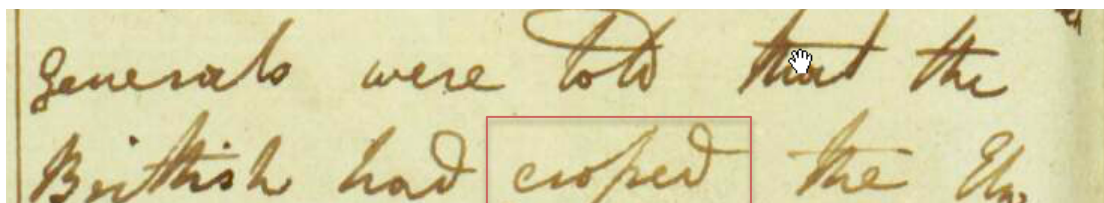
The majority of the material you encounter will be in the form of handwritten manuscript. Some of this handwriting will be beautifully crafted and clear; some will at first glance seem to be illegible. Don't worry if a piece of text is too hard. Simply press the 'Too Difficult' button and you will be presented with a new document, which you will hopefully find less



challenging. The website provides a number of technical tools to help you view the material in the most effective way. However, there are a few additional tips worth bearing in mind as you proceed.

### Double 'S'

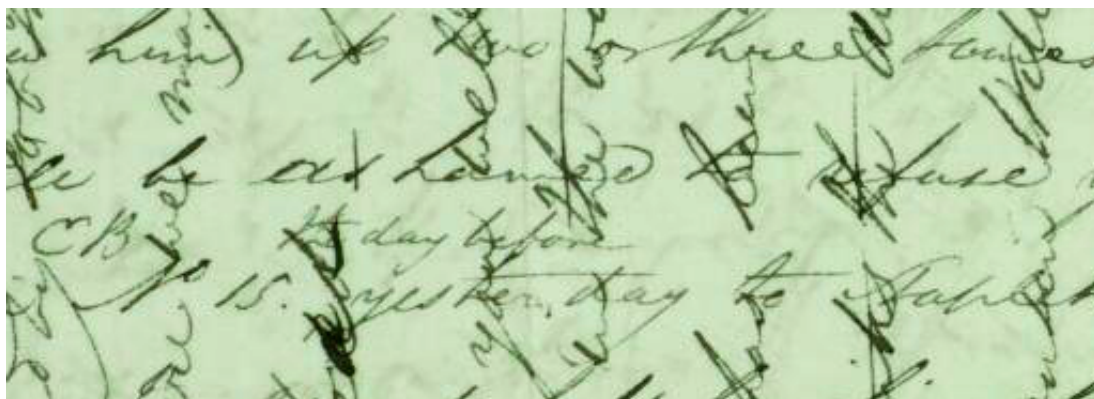
In the period most of this material comes from, it was common for a double 's' (as in the word 'crossed') to be expressed as an 'f' in handwritten manuscript (as in the red box highlighted below). Although this looks like an 'f', or even a 'p', it is in fact a double 's'.



An example of a double-'S' in manuscript

### Bi-directional text manuscript

Some documents contain a form of unusual manuscript, whereby the author or correspondent has written a first page of text and then turned the page 90 degrees and written new lines of text perpendicular to the original text. This was not uncommon among officers and soldiers on campaign who were short on writing materials. While this may have been an efficient use of scarce paper, it makes it considerably more difficult to read 200 years later. Although not impossible to decipher, such documents represent a particularly challenging part of the collection.



An example of bi-directional manuscript

### Non English language material

A small number of documents are entirely or partly in French, German, Dutch or even Scots Gaelic!

You should be able to filter these out in the 'Preferences' section described above. If you do come across a foreign language document and are unable to understand the particular language it is written in, please simply press the 'Too Difficult' button and you will be presented with an alternative, hopefully in English. Please do not enter the foreign language text (i.e. French or German) into the transcription field.

However, if you are confident about your language skills and wish to translate one of these documents for us, we would encourage you to do so. This is the only instance where we ask our Heritage Helpers volunteers not to transcribe exactly what they see in the original document. Instead, please enter in the transcription field as accurate a translation as possible (i.e. French to English or German to English). As with English text, please use the previous instructions on how to indicate letters, numbers or words that cannot be discerned (####, @).



### Saving your progress

Transcribing these documents requires a good deal of concentration and effort, so it is important to take regular breaks. As the name implies, the 'Save' button allows you to save your progress and leave the website. **Please note any material you have transcribed will be saved for 48 hours – if you do not return to the document within this period, your work will be discarded and the document released for another user to work on.**



### Finalizing the transcription

Once you have finished transcribing your document and, where appropriate, entered data into the additional data fields, you can send the final text to us by pressing the 'Finalize' button. Assuming the minimum entry requirements have been met (i.e. the transcription field has been completed), the text will be saved and sent to us for validation. At this point you can then continue to transcribe another document, which will automatically be assigned to you.