



Print of *A View of the Storming and Taking of Badajoz in Spain on April 6 1812*.  
By permission of the Museum of the Mercian Regiment (WFR Collection)



Artistic impression of Macpherson raising his jacket at Badajoz. By permission of the Museum of the Mercian Regiment (WFR Collection)

# NOTTINGHAMSHIRE'S 'CHOSEN MEN'

The television adaptation of Bernard Cornwell's *Sharpe* novels familiarised viewers with the heroic exploits of British soldiers during the Peninsular Wars and at Waterloo.

Nottinghamshire's real-life 'chosen men' include Lieutenant James MacPherson of the 45th (1st Nottinghamshire) regiment, who scaled the walls of the castle at Badajoz in Spain on 6 April 1812. MacPherson was one of the first men to mount the escalades (ladders) during the assault. Despite being severely wounded, he made it to the keep where he raised his scarlet jacket on the flagstaff to show the castle had been captured. This action is commemorated every year at the Nottinghamshire Headquarters of the 2nd Battalion Mercian Regiment (Worcesters and Foresters) in Chilwell.

Corporal John Shaw of the 2nd Life Guards distinguished himself at Waterloo. Shaw, known as the Cossall Giant, was a famous boxer. On 18 June 1815 he killed up to a



*Shaw the Life Guardsman's heroic attack on the French Cuirassiers.*  
London, Pub. by Thomas Kelly, Paternoster Row, Oct. 26 1816.

dozen French cuirassiers — armoured cavalymen with steel breast-plates and brass helmets — using his sword and helmet. He died from his wounds and was buried on the battlefield.

Shaw's deeds ensured him the status of a Nottinghamshire hero. Today he is remembered at St Catherine's Church, Cossall, along with two other Waterloo soldiers, Richard Waplington and Thomas Wheatley. Their memorial was unveiled on Waterloo Day, 18 June 1877.

CHARGING  
AGAINST NAPOLEON



*Shaw the Life Guardsman's Heroic Attack*: print by Thomas Kelly in Christopher Kelly, *A full and Circumstantial Account of the Memorable Battle of Waterloo...* (London, 1817). From French Revolution Collection o/s DC242.K4

The Waterloo memorial in Cossall churchyard. By Mark Bentley, 2015.