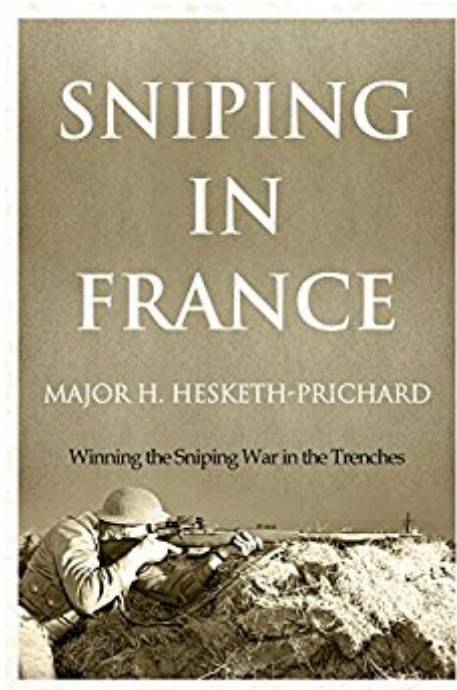


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# Sniping In France: Winning The Sniping War In The Trenches



## Synopsis

Now, if any one cares to do a mathematical sum, and to work out the number of battalions we had in the line, they will be surprised at the figures, and when they multiply these figures by thirty and look at the month's losses, they will find that in a war of attrition the sniper on this count alone justifies his existence and wipes out large numbers of the enemy. During the initial stages of the First World War in 1914, Allied forces lost breathtaking numbers of men on the Western Front to Germany's highly efficient and superior snipers. However, the passion of Major Hesketh-Prichard – hunter and excellent marksman – for the promotion and advancement of sniping practices led to the implementation of brand new sniping methods by the British Army. These new practices contributed to the reversal of fortune of the Allied forces, tipping the balance in their favour towards victory in the sniping war. This excellent book, as told in the inimitable style of Major Hesketh-Prichard, recounts the genesis, development, and advancement of sniping style and practice, intermingled with a charming autobiographical style. Truly a classic account of war, this is a must read for avid military enthusiasts. Major Hesketh-Prichard, born in India in 1876, led a vibrant life as an explorer and adventurer, big-game hunter turned animal rights activist, novelist and travel writer, excellent cricket player, and marksman. He contributed significantly to the advancement of sniping practice in the British Army during the First World War, and the measures he introduced are credited as saving the lives of thousands of Allied soldiers. Albion Press is an imprint of Endeavour Press, the UK's leading independent digital publisher. For more information on our titles please sign up to our newsletter at [www.endeavourpress.com](http://www.endeavourpress.com). Each week you will receive updates on free and discounted ebooks. Follow us on Twitter: @EndeavourPress and on Facebook via <http://on.fb.me/1HweQV7>. We are always interested in hearing from our readers. Endeavour Press believes that the future is now.

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## Customer Reviews

For those of you interested in this specific subject, this book should go on your must read list as it is an important book in more ways than one. To begin, this is the story of the art of sniping during war time being reinvented, yet again, during WWI. The German army already had expert sniper teams in the field and were taking a horrendous toll. While several individuals took part, K. Hesketh-Prichard took a leading role in establishing sniper schools, training and techniques and more importantly, how the sniper could be intergraded into battle formations. He was more or less the granddaddy of it all as well as the granddaddy of our modern scouting programs in the military. In addition to this, Hesketh-Prichard gives us insight into the military beurocratic mind set of the times (some things never change..eh?). This is the story of how the modern sniper came into being. This work will be of interest to military historians and I should think historians in general. I will tell you that there is a certain "dry" element to the narration, not uncommon either then or now for such records and accounts. Having spent a lifetime digging through academic history books and over twenty years of reading military reports it did not take much of a leap in my case but I can most certainly see how it might trouble some readers. One of the most interesting elements of this book was the fact that when we first become involved in the war in Viet Nam our sniper knowledge, skills and philosophy was almost nil. After WWII almost all knowledge of this element of battle was lost and relegated to musty old books stuffed here and there.

It would appear that this title has not been published since its first appearance in 1920; a great pity given its unique subject and the authors' expertise and experience in the field. Prior to the war, Hesketh-Prichard had been a big-game hunter, expert shot, cricketer, and travel author. He entered the army in 1914 and set about trying to improve the poor standard of British army sniping evident in France, eventually creating the "The First Army School of Sniping, Observing and Scouting (SOS)"

which set the standard for sniping in France. In this very readable book, the author discusses his enthusiasm for sniping and the problems he encountered setting up such a school in a British army that had no 'Establishment' (his words) for such a thing. Early on he describes seeing a sniper in action who was adamant he was putting every one of his bullets through the enemy's loop-hole at 600 yards with his telescopic rifle. Hesketh-Prichard observed through his own Ross telescope that they were consistently striking six feet to the left. This illustrates a common theme in the book, where 'snipers' used telescopic rifles that weren't sighted in, were poorly maintained, and were used by untrained soldiers with little or no experience of stalking, using cover, or camouflage. The result was that the Germans had the upper hand and were causing appalling casualties.

Hesketh-Prichard could see the benefit to unit morale of having truly expert snipers using specialist weapons, and successfully fought to teach this unique skill. The book discusses the early days, memories of both sniping and observing, the curriculum of the School, the training of the Portuguese, and includes two chapters illustrating the value of observation and information-gathering, 'Wilibald The Hun' and 'The Cat'.

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