Inside Wellington's Peninsular Army 1808-1814

Wellington's celebrated Peninsular army played a vital role in the defeat of Napoleon's French forces in Portugal and Spain. It is one of the most famous armies in military history. Yet the last large-scale examination of its structure and operation was written by Sir Charles Oman as long ago as 1913.

Since then so much new material has come to light that a fresh account is long overdue. This book breaks new ground in a series of detailed studies which reveal the hidden mechanisms that lie behind triumphs such as Salamanca and Vitoria, and at the same time places Wellington's campaigns in their strategic context and explain how he achieved his success.

Discover the code to the organization of Wellington's army and the principles underlying how and where troops were placed in the line of battle. Delve into the role played by the subordinates who commanded his brigades and divisions, many of whom are all but forgotten today. Explore the importance of army rank and seniority in all its complex variations. You will encounter the men who built Wellington's military bridges, including Europe's first suspension bridge, and catch a glimpse of the role of reconnaissance (or 'observing') officers who sought to overcome the practical difficulties of campaigning in a country where roads were few and maps inaccurate. Trace the strategies by which Wellington sought to keep up the manpower of his battalions as combat, disease, and bureaucratic imperatives bled them away. An invaluable appendix lists titles, organized by regiment, of the many hundreds of first-hand accounts of the war by British soldiers, building on Oman's compilation of a century ago. These essays underscore that there was more to Wellington's generalship than just commanding on a battlefield.

This study extends Oman's pioneering work, providing new research into the subject, and is a major contribution to the history of the Peninsular War.

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Authors:

Rory Muir (Australia) has written several books on the Peninsular War, including Britain and the Defeat of Napoleon, Tactics and the Experience of Battle in the Age of Napoleon, and Salamanca 1812. Robert Burnham (U.S.) has been Editor-in-Chief of the Napoleon Series internet website for over a decade and penned numerous articles on the Peninsular War and the British army. Howie Muir (U.S.) also has several articles on Napoleonic history to his credit, and Ron McGuigan (Canada) has been studying the British army for over three decades, and is the author of Into Battle: British Orders of Battle for the Crimean War.