



The Spanish Ulcer: A History of the Peninsular War

David Gates

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The Peninsular War in Spain and Portugal was the most bitterly fought contest of nineteenth-century Europe. From 1808 to 1814, Spanish regulars and guerrillas, along with British forces led by Sir John Moore and the duke of Wellington, battled Napoleon's troops across the length and breadth of the Iberian Peninsula. Napoleon considered the war so insignificant that he rarely bothered to bring to it his military genius, relying instead on his marshals and simultaneously launching his disastrous Russian campaign of 1812. Yet the Peninsular War was to end with total defeat for the French, and in 1813 Wellington's army crossed the Pyrenees into mainland France. What Napoleon had called "the Spanish ulcer" ultimately helped bring down the French empire. Michael Howard of Oxford University hailed this book as "a major achievement...the first brief and balanced account of the war to have appeared within our generation." Illustrated with over a hundred maps and fifty contemporary drawings and paintings, this is a richly detailed history of a crucial period in history that resonates powerfully to this day—and figures prominently in Bernard Cornwell's internationally acclaimed novels of the Napoleonic era.

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