

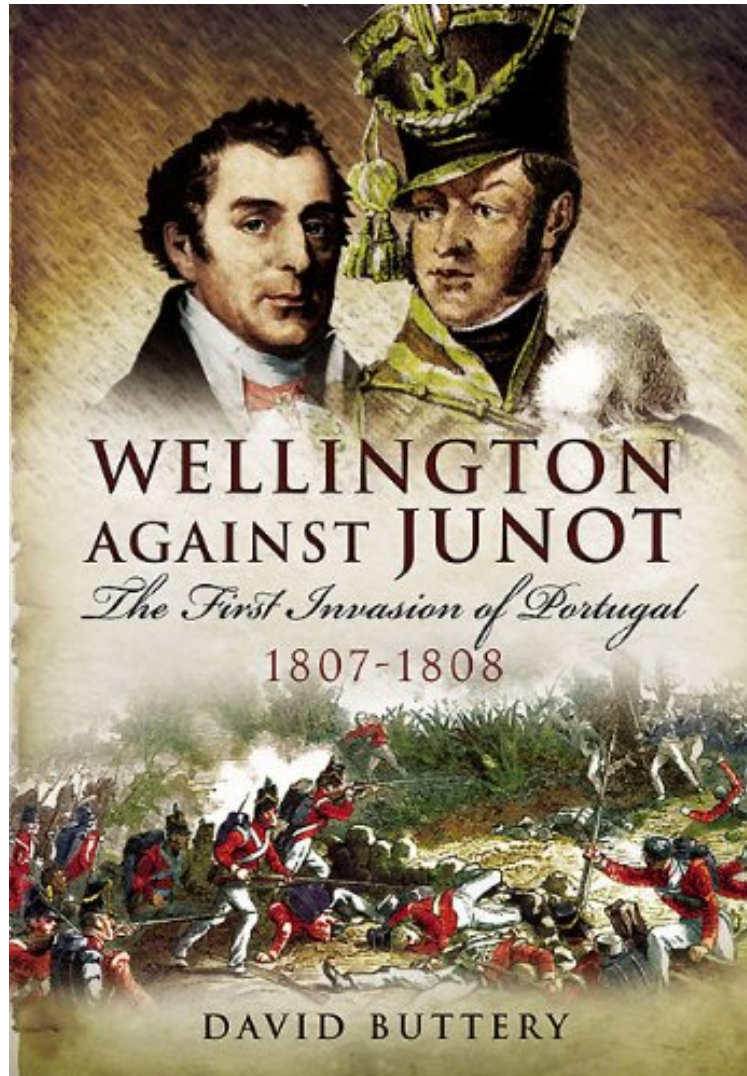
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David Buttery

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[Pdf free] Wellington Against Junot: The First Invasion of Portugal 1807-1808

## Wellington Against Junot: The First Invasion of Portugal 1807-1808

**David Buttery : Wellington Against Junot: The First Invasion of Portugal 1807-1808** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Wellington Against Junot: The First Invasion of Portugal 1807-1808:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The First Invasion...By HMS WarspiteDavid Buttery's 2011 "Wellington against Junot" re-examines an often overlooked phase of the Peninsular War, the initial French invasion of Portugal and the British response. A French Army under General Junot occupied Lisbon in 1807, gaining a tenuous control over Portugal. The arrival in 1808 of a British expeditionary force under the young Lieutenant General Wellesley become the short campaign that culminated in the Battle of Vimeiro and a notorious peace agreement. Buttery examines the French invasion in the context of Napoleon's ongoing efforts to dominate Europe,

including his continental system embargoing British trade and his attempt to displace the Bourbon monarchy of Spain. French General Junot's career is closely scrutinized, especially his ties to the Emperor and his hunger for a marshal's baton. Buttery rightly assumes his Anglo-American audience is already familiar with the future Duke of Wellington.

The events of the French invasion and the British response are narrated with good tactical detail and with due consideration for the political ramifications in Portugal and elsewhere. The actual battles of Rolica and Vimeiro have been described by other authors, including Oman and Weller. Buttery's most interesting contribution may be his painstaking discussion of the controversial Convention of Sintra and its effects on the British command structure and the conduct of the Peninsular War. Buttery's narrative is workmanlike and solidly pleaded, and highly recommended to students of the Peninsular War. This book contains a nice selection of maps and photographs. 6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Hard work to read and by no means definitive. By Avon Napoleonic Fellowship I found this book hard work to read. Buttery's writing is at best bland and the book is beset with poorly structured paragraphs. He has a journalistic style in which the same topic is repeated and revisited later in a chapter causing the sequence of ideas in paragraphs to be near-random. These bizarre subject changes between consecutive paragraphs were infuriating. The most striking example is when, after his description of the Battle of Rolia the next paragraph changes topic to describe uniform changes to the British infantry that occurred after the battle, only to switch back again to discuss the casualties from the battle in the next paragraph! Whilst it will likely appeal to the blindly patriotic, I found Buttery's blatant cheer-leading and propagandist statements--which are perhaps second only to Arthur Bryant's 1940s trilogy--galling. Whilst the French invasion of Portugal and Spain is, probably quite rightly, condemned as an expansionist act, the English seizure of the neutral Danish fleet is dismissed and the prospect of doing the same with the Portuguese fleet in the lead up to Junot's invasion is glossed over. One is left with the impression that the French empire was completely destructive whilst the British was a benevolent organisation. I was astounded that, in 2011, an English author could write of Lt Gen. Burrard "under Generals Howe and Cornwallis, he saw extensive service in North America during the colonists' rebellion against British rule 1775-1783." A war of independence that established an autonomous America is a little more than that. Buttery's greatest praise and patriotic statements are accorded to British arms and especially to 'Sir Arthur'. The landing at Mondego Bay in July 1808, an unopposed landing on the territory of an ally, is summarised by "the fact that they overcame these problems in 1808 is a tribute to the persistence and determination of both the British army and the Royal Navy" (p 83). If he is a cheer-leader for British arms, then he is a near-disciple of Sir Arthur Wellesley. He says of Wellesley, upon hearing of plans to send Burrard and Dalrymple to replace him, "many men would have resigned upon receiving such an unmerited slight but Wellesley was determined to see his part through in honourable fashion" (p 85). Such a statement is made despite the quote from Wellesley at end of the same paragraph (taken from a letter to Sir Charles Richmond) that "I hope I shall have beaten Junot before any of them arrive, and then they may do as they please with me". Whilst he was not reckless it is generally accepted that Wellesley was pleased to have the chance to confront the French before his superiors arrived and may even have been unusually aggressive if Junot had not attacked him. Finally, referring to Wellesley's defeat of Junot at Vimiero "in truth, his opponent had more experience of army command and went on to humble superior generals, such as Massena, in the Peninsula"--amazing. Like so many English authors Buttery underrates the contribution of the Portuguese and Spanish forces, particularly the guerrillas and militia in the Peninsular War. The actions of these irregulars was crucial to the fact that such a small British army was able to be effective and that such large numbers of French troops were required in the Peninsula. The actions of the British army contributed significantly to the defeat of the French but they would have been unlikely to have done so without the activities of the guerrillas and hostile populace. Portuguese and Spanish resistance may well have defeated the French without British military presence (though not without its gold), but the opposite is most unlikely. Buttery's concession is that the two were necessary to "drive the French from Iberia" (p 152). Whilst not a joy to read there is some interesting and useful information in this book. The dilemma of the Portuguese court at the impending invasion and approach of Junot's army into Portugal, particularly whether to lean towards France or Britain, is described in some detail. Similarly the drama of the flight of the Portuguese court, description of chaos on the docks, and the eventual 'conquest' of Portugal by two regiments of hungry, weary and ragged infantry are vividly described and present some of the few exceptions to the generally poor writing. Buttery's suggestion that Portugal was 'conquered' by the reputation of the French army and fear of what may come if they resisted is a telling observation. Chapter 4 detailing the Portuguese resistance to Junot's 'regime', an aspect not covered in detail in other books that I have seen, is most interesting. This is a critical part of the history as it was the resistance by the Portuguese and their Spanish 'cousins' that prompted Britain to send land forces to the Iberian Peninsula. The description of French military reactions to the 'insurgence', the fact that they could not tell civilians from irregular fighters and their mis-placed reliance on military might to combat it are reminiscent of similar failures in more modern conflicts. The chapter ends with an anecdote regarding the term 'to go to maneta' which comes from a nickname for General Loison and is used in modern-day Portuguese language to indicate being "in trouble or... about to pay the price for an infraction" (p 68). The Battle of Rolia is described in chapter 6. The text is accompanied by well-produced, clear maps and is supported by some eyewitness statements, but, unfortunately, orders of battle are not included either within the text or as an appendix. I had not realised that the first use of reverse slope in Anglo-French actions in the

Napoleonic wars was by the French at Rolia and that some French troops were ordered to go prone to avoid casualties from British guns. The success of Delaborde in delaying a force four times his own and withdrawing in good order, although the loss of three guns would not have pleased Napoleon, is played down by Buttery. He dismisses Wellesley's failure to destroy Delaborde as due to the defensive position occupied by the French and terrain preventing Wellesley from bringing his superior numbers to bear. Surely Napoleon would not have dallied in such a manner when faced with a wonderful opportunity to outflank and destroy an enemy army? Naturally the Battle of Vimiero is also covered in detail. As with Rolia it combines narrative with a few key quotes and eye-witness accounts (principally from rifleman Harris) and accompanying maps, but orders of battle are sadly absent. It was pleasing that Buttery points out that the usual French drill of forming line prior to the final attack was restricted due to terrain and the proximity of the enemy, rather than perpetuating the myth of column attacks. Unfortunately the account is spoiled by the poor paragraph structure and appalling flow of logic that I have already bemoaned. The book concludes with chapters about the aftermath of the Battle of Vimiero, the armistice, so called Convention of Cintra, inquiry into Dalrymple, Burrard and Wellesley and an assessment of the campaign and of its aftermath for Wellesley and 'the unfortunate' Junot. The interesting and useful descriptions, observations and quotes make this book worth reading, but certainly not a definitive account of these battles and campaigns. A better written account that included orders of battle and statistics of the troops involved, along with more objective text would be easier to recommend.

The first French invasion of Portugal in 1807 - which was commanded by Junot, one of Napoleon's most experienced generals - was a key event in the long, brutal Peninsular War. It was the first campaign fought in the Peninsular by Sir Arthur Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington, yet it tends to be overshadowed by more famous episodes in the six-year conflict that followed. David Buttery, in this original and perceptive new study, sets the record straight - his tightly focused narrative covers the entire campaign in vivid detail.

About the Author David Buttery has established a reputation as a leading historian of nineteenth-century British military history. He has made a particular study of the Napoleonic and Crimean wars. He has worked in newspapers and museums and has published extensively in many of the leading military history periodicals including the Victorian Military Society's journal, *The Leicestershire Chronicle* and *Military Illustrated*. His most recent books are *Wellington Against Massena: The Third Invasion of Portugal 1810-1811*, *Messenger of Death: Captain Nolan and the Charge of the Light Brigade*, *Wellington Against Junot: The First Invasion of Portugal 1807-1808* and the *Waterloo Battlefield Guide*.