



# **With Wellington in the peninsula: The Adventures of a Highland Soldier, 1808-1814**

*Paul Cowan*

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Few men from the 71st Highland Light Infantry who sailed from Cork with Wellington to Portugal in 1808 returned to the Irish port six years later. The author of *Vicissitudes in the Life of a Scottish Soldier* was one of the survivors and claims only four other men from his company came through the entire six years with him. ??As one of Wellington's elite Light Infantry units the 71st were in the fore of the fighting in some of the hardest fought battles of the Peninsular War. The book was controversial on its release in 1827 for its unvarnished and unsentimental account of the grim war against the French in Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal and France itself. A cynic with a highly developed sense of humour, the author was not afraid to criticise his superiors, be they thieving sergeants or officers who were far from gentlemen. ??Editor Paul Cowan draws on little known diaries and other accounts written by the author's contemporaries to corroborate and expand on this frank but all too long neglected first-hand picture of the war in the Peninsula as it was really fought.

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