

## 'Guardsmen down Peninsular Way'

22<sup>nd</sup> September – 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012

*"I am going to take a little sleep. Watch with your glass. You see that large stone? Call me when the head of the French column reaches that point."*

*Wellington to Lord Fitzroy Somerset prior to his great victory at Salamanca, 22 July 1812*



The Greater Arapile at Salamanca. 'That large stone' referred to by Wellington is at the western end (right). The Lesser Arapile, from where the above photograph was taken was the scene of the most formidable decision making by Wellington and possible location of the famous 'chicken bone story'.

49 Guards Officers and 1866 Guardsmen in Fermor's Brigade were formed up in dead ground to the rear and slightly left of where this photograph was taken. Their forward pickets would have observed that great stone as did their Commander. On Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012 we walk this ground and learn its history.

*"By God that will do" ... Wellington, prior to his momentous victory at Salamanca.*

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*'We then marched here (the Guards' camp at Espeja) and got in at four o'clock, having been thirty-four hours in the open air, with no shelter, in the most biting frost, so hard that the water had frozen in the men's canteens.'*

*John Mills Coldstream Guards. Before Ciudad Rodrigo 9 January 1812*

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# ***'The Guards - From the Corunna to Waterloo'***

*A three year experience  
2012-2014*

Guardsmen formed an important and integral part of Wellington's Army during the Peninsular War and fought in the most pivotal battles that preceded the culminating epic at Waterloo. The battles of Talavera, Busaco, Salamanca, Vitoria and the succession of combat in the Pyrenees are to name a few.

The Guards played a major part in the Corunna campaign under Sir John Moore and at the Battle of Barossa under Sir Thomas Graham. Fighting in Wellington's 1<sup>st</sup> Division Guardsmen marched many miles, suffered many casualties and had many stories to tell.

In June 2015 the bi-centennial commemorations of the Napoleonic era of will draw to a climax. To relive and commemorate the history of the Guards in Spain, Portugal and Belgium we have put together a sequel of three tours to enable the Brigade of Guards to follow and relive their history by seeing where their forebears fought during those years of the Napoleonic Wars from 1809 -1815.

## **Tour Agenda 2012-2014**

- **2012 Tour: 'Guardsmen down Peninsular Way'**  
Follow the Guards in Spain and Portugal 1809 – 1812. Tour Dates: See itinerary below.
- **2013 Tour: 'Guards beyond the Pyrenees'**  
This tour starts in Corunna and then visits the 1813 – 1814 battle sites at Vitoria, Sorauren, Bidassoa, Nive, Nivelle, and Bayonne. Tour Dates: Late September 7 Days.
- **2014 Tour: 'Waterloo Guardsmen'**  
The Waterloo Campaign battles from Quatre Bras to Waterloo. Dates: Late September 4 Days.

## **The 2012 Tour – 'Guardsmen down Peninsular Way'**

This 10 day tour visits the peninsular battle sites that tested Wellington's army during the earlier years of the Napoleonic Wars. We trace the battlefield footsteps of Guardsmen at **Talavera** where 'Nosey' lost a third of his infantry, at **Busaco** and **Oporto** where he caught the French by surprise and at **Fuentes de Onoro** where he defeated Masséna to end the Marshal's career and the third and last French invasion of Portugal.

The tour takes in other battlefields to help place the Guards war fighting in the context of the war against Napoleon. We visit the ruins of the frontier **Fort Conception** and **Almeida** the fortress which suffered horrendously when its magazine exploded in 1810. We view the action by Craufurd's Light Division across the **Coa** and we visit Wellington's Headquarters at **Frenada**. We take in visits to the bloodiest battlefield of the Peninsular War that of **Albuera** and stand on the infamous 'Napier's Hill' and walk the breach locations of the Trinidad and Santa Maria at the Siege of **Badajoz** where Wellington's Army lost control and its name.

We walk the Tescos at **Ciudad Rodrigo**, stand where Craufurd died and where "The Fighting Irish" of the Connaught Rangers stormed the Citadel breach. Our last next two days are in **Salamanca**, a European city of culture with its famous Plaza Mayor and Irish Convent, where Father Curtis double deals, are essential places to view.

Saving the most intrigue until last, we stroll the field of Wellington's principle Victory, **Salamanca**. We walk the Arapiles, Leith's Ridge and Los Torres and see exactly how Wellington's plan unfolded. Mesmeric and adorned with incredible scenery you will not fail to be fascinated by the events here in July 1812. The tour will leave you historically much wiser and appreciating what Guardsmen achieved and what their sacrifice did for Britain, Spain and Portugal. You will stand where Guards history unfolded.

## The Itinerary

### Day 1: 22<sup>st</sup> September – Rendezvous Madrid Airport

1400 Hrs: Tour starts. Coach departs for Talavera.

### Day 2: 23<sup>rd</sup> September – The Battle of Talavera & The Raid at Almaraz



*The Talavera battlefield with the Medellin left in the middle distance just beyond the reservoir*

- **Talavera 1809:** Casa Salinas, the Hospital Tree and the Medellin where Wellington spent the night in his cloak with his redcoats. It was here that Guards on the back foot turned, retreated, rallied, cheered and sunk volley after volley into the advancing French 2<sup>nd</sup> wave.
- **Almaraz 1812:** The lightning raid that rocked the French commissariat and gave Wellington breathing space.

### Day 3: 24<sup>th</sup> September – The Battle of Albuera and The Storming of Badajoz

- **Albuera 1811.** The bloodiest battle of the Peninsular war. Napier's Hill and the 'Toe to Toe' frontage against Gazan's French where they fought, dying hard as they closed ranks.
- **Badajoz 1812:** The siege and the storming of the citadel that cost the British army its reputation and where Wellington had to build a scaffold to instil discipline.

### Day 4: 25<sup>th</sup> September – The Battle of Busaco

- **Busaco Ridge 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1810:** Where Wellington an hour before day break passed through the silent ranks of Stopford's Brigade. Guardsmen in stern silence examined their flints, cleaned their locks and barrels and then lay down to rest and await orders. The uphill struggle for the French against an army coming of age ensued. We stay at the historic Hotel Busaco that night.



*The view from Busaco Ridge of the valley from which Reynier's French ascended the ridge. Guardsmen would have had a better view than this as there was far less forestry in 1810.*

### Day 5: 26<sup>th</sup> September – The Crossing of the Douro

- **Oporto:** Where wine barges gave Wellington an opportunity. Guardsmen in Sherbrooke's Division took and held the Seminary despite refusals to give way by the 29<sup>th</sup> Foot prior to the assault.

### Day 6: 27<sup>th</sup> September – The Action on the Coa, Almeida & Fort Conception

- **Combat on the Coa:** The race against time for the 52<sup>nd</sup> Foot. The bridge over the Coa, the scene of Craufurd's retreat on 24 July 1810.
- **Almeida:** A stroll around the citadel.
- **Fort Conception** – We see it as it was in 1810. Very little has changed. Destroyed in 1810 but a treasure to visit at the end of the day.

### Day 7: 28<sup>th</sup> September – The Battle of Fuentes de Onoro

- **Fuentes de Onoro** – The village that took the brunt of the French infantry assault in May 1811. The Don Casas stream, its legendary bridges and the alleyways of death. The onslaught of the Irish of the 88<sup>th</sup> Foot and where the Guards saved Wellington's Right flank.



*Fuentes de Onoro: The hinge village in Wellington's line where the Guards protected his get out clause*

- **Pocho Velo** – The Village where the 7<sup>th</sup> Division were caught by French cavalry but saved by Wellington's leadership and the skill of the Light Division on the move.
- **Frenada** – Wellington's Headquarters in 1811.

### Day 8: 29<sup>th</sup> September – The Siege & Storming of Ciudad Rodrigo



*The Ciudad Rodrigo citadel view from the Greater Teson*

- **Bridge over the Agueda:** Wellington's Strategy, his fears, the Citadel, and its garrison.
- **Greater Teson** – The Reynaud Redoubt, Wellington's plan, the Light Division's night attack and the prize. We see where the Coldstreams went to work.
- **Lessor Breach** – The Attack and the death of Craufurd.
- **Craufurd's Memorial** – The Man, his standards and dealings with Wellington.
- **Greater Breach** – Picton's Address to the 88<sup>th</sup> Foot Connaughts and the assault.
- **Walk the Citadel Walls** and the old town.
- **Lunch** in the citadel.
- **Aldea Tejada** – Where Pakenham shook Wellington by the hand.
- **The Roman Bridge**, the Salamanca Forts, the Spy in the Irish Convent.
- **Salamanca:** European City of the Year 2003 Cultural and unforgettable!

### Day 9: 30<sup>th</sup> September - The Battle of Salamanca

- **Calvarasa de Ariba** – The end of the parallel waiting game.
- **Nuestra Senora de la Peria** – The French advance and Guardsmen witness an early skirmish.
- **Lesser Arapile** – The vista, the battle plan, the chicken bone and an Act of Remembrance.



*Salamanca ... where it is said that 'Fourteen thousand French went down in forty minutes'. The Guards in Campbell's Division were positioned in dead ground beyond the horizon on the extreme right. The two Arapiles stand 900 meters apart. The main battle was fought between and beyond these two features.*

- **French Arapile** – The monument and the motorway.
- **Pico de Miranda** – 88<sup>th</sup> Foot in the front line again and the story of the 'Jingling Johnny'.
- **Monte de Azan** – The Essex, the eagle and the retreat.
- **Salamanca by night.**



*Plaza Mayor Salamanca where the 6<sup>th</sup> Division assembled for the Victory parade and where the ladies were waiting.*

### Day 10: 1<sup>st</sup> October

- 0800 Hrs: Depart Salamanca for Madrid.
- 1400 Hrs: Tour Ends on arrival at Madrid Airport.

## Tour Price

Tour price per person sharing **£1515** - Deposit **£250** – Single Supplement **£290**

*Tour Ref: CWT Guards 2012*  
*Tour Starts and Ends at Madrid Airport*

**Flights Details.** Flights from Gatwick, Dublin and Stansted are now (22 Jan) advertised on Ryanair and Easy Jet websites at approx £70 return. Flights arrive Madrid well before the Tour starts. The return flights depart late afternoon 1<sup>st</sup> October.

### Included in the price of the Tour will be:

- 3 Star Hotel Accommodation
- Half Board - (Continental Breakfast, incl Dinner with wine)
- Luxury Coach Transport
- Guild of Battlefield Guides - Qualified Guide

### Excluded from the price of your Tour will be:

- Flights
- All Lunches
- Hotel extra services, telephone, bar and business facilities
- Personal Insurance

### *Your Guide - Graeme Cooper*

Graeme Cooper has been battlefield guiding since 1995 and operates **Cooper's Waterloo Tours**, a family run business specialising in tailored tours of the Napoleonic Campaign battlefields of the Peninsular War and Waterloo for adults, and leadership training for the military. A Fellow of the **International Napoleonic Society** (FINS), Graeme qualified as a Waterloo Campaign Guide with **Les Guides 1815** in 1998.

Graeme's interest in the Napoleonic Campaigns was sparked during his time as a cadet at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst by his tutors, the late and renowned military historians and authors, Professor Richard Holmes and Dr David Chandler. This intrigue, kept alive by a military career, has maintained his fascination for the Campaigns and a strong concern for the preservation of the Waterloo battlefield, which he first visited in 1973.

In November 2002, Graeme founded The **Guild of Battlefield Guides** and was the Secretary until November 2009 when he became the first member to be elected to the Roll of Honour for his services to the Guild.

In May 2006 he embarked upon **Corporate Battlefields Ltd**, a business leadership training company for corporate management.

Graeme is a recognised Great War and WW2 Guide, member of the Battlefields Trust and former Chairman of the British Army of the Rhine Branch of the Western Front Association. He is married and has a son and daughter both commissioned in the British Army. Graeme lives in Essex with his family and plays golf when battle time permits. His father served in the Scots Guards.

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*Graeme Cooper-Qualified Guide*  
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