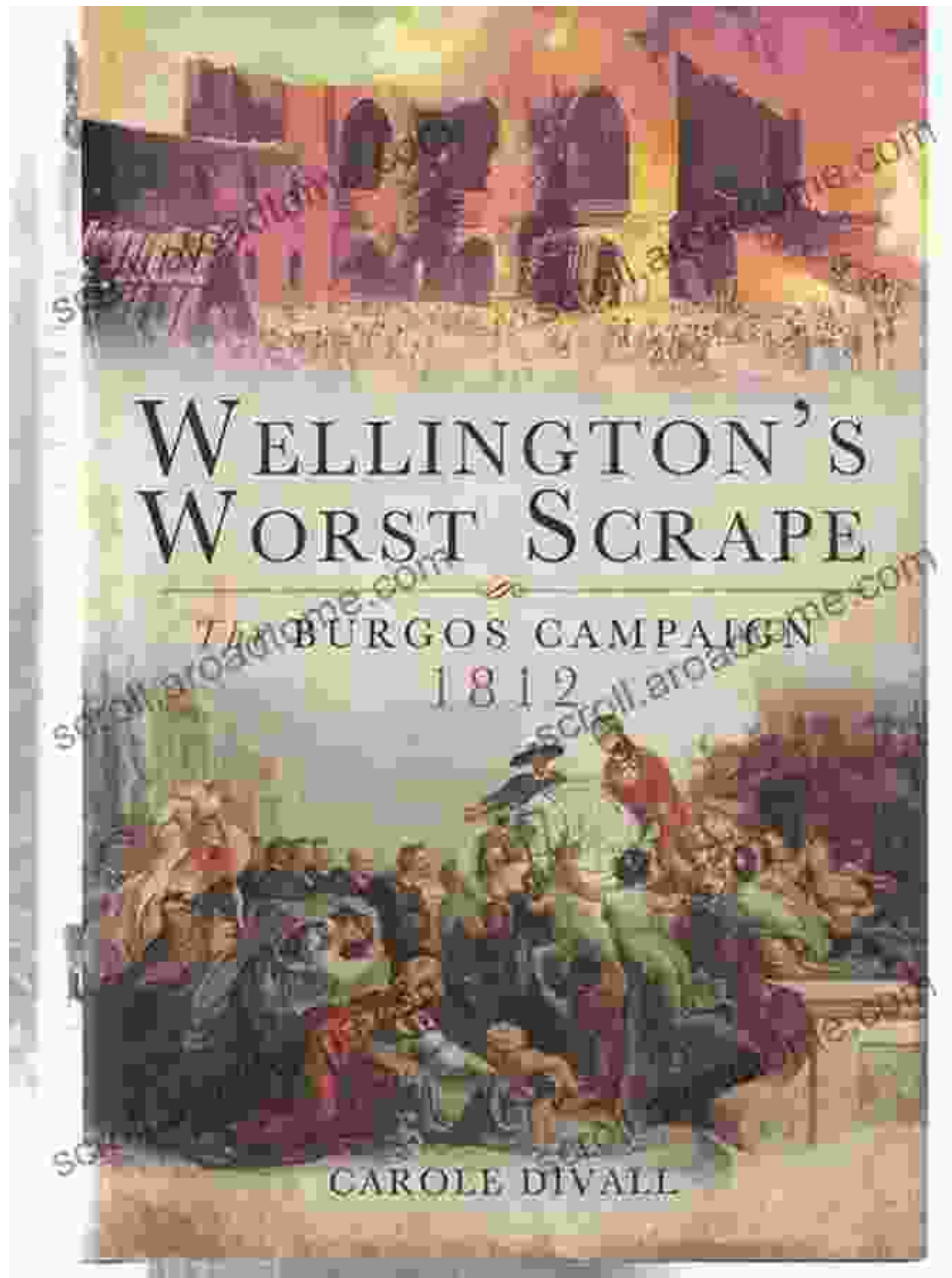


# Wellington's Worst Scrape: The Burgos Campaign of 1812

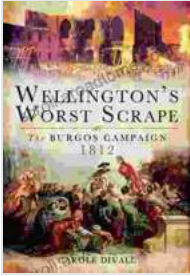


**Wellington's Worst Scrape: The Burgos Campaign,**

**1812** by Carole Divall

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

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In the annals of military history, the Burgos Campaign of 1812 stands as a pivotal and perilous chapter in the Peninsular War. Under the command of the legendary Duke of Wellington, the British Army embarked on an audacious mission to capture the strategically vital city of Burgos in northern Spain. However, what began as a promising offensive quickly descended into a desperate struggle for survival, ultimately becoming known as "Wellington's Worst Scrape."

This article delves into the gripping narrative of the Burgos Campaign, exploring the complex strategies, valiant battles, and personal trials that shaped its outcome. Drawing upon meticulous research and vivid eyewitness accounts, we transport you to the battlefields of Spain, where Wellington's troops faced a determined French army, treacherous terrain, and unforgiving weather conditions.

## **Strategic Prelude**

In 1812, the Peninsular War had been raging for several years, with the British and their Portuguese allies gradually gaining ground against the occupying French forces. Wellington's overarching strategy was to push the French out of Spain by capturing key fortresses and cities along the

northern coast. The city of Burgos, located on the banks of the Arlanzón River, was a major strategic prize. Its capture would disrupt French supply lines and open up the path to Madrid.

### **March into the Unknown**

In September 1812, Wellington's army of approximately 40,000 troops set out from Salamanca, marching towards Burgos. The route was arduous and treacherous, passing through mountainous terrain and swollen rivers. The weather was unforgiving, with heavy rains turning the roads into quagmires. Yet, Wellington's troops pressed on, determined to reach their objective.

### **The Siege of Burgos**

On October 19, 1812, Wellington's forces arrived at Burgos and laid siege to the city. The French garrison, under the command of General Jean-Gabriel Marchand, was well-prepared and fiercely determined to defend the city. The British began their siege operations by establishing a series of trenches and batteries around the city walls. However, the French responded with a barrage of artillery fire, inflicting heavy casualties on the British troops.

As the siege dragged on, the weather conditions worsened. Heavy rains turned the trenches into a morass, and the cold and wet conditions took their toll on the British soldiers. The French defenders, better equipped for the harsh conditions, launched repeated sorties, further depleting Wellington's forces.

### **Desperate Measures**

As the siege reached its critical point, Wellington realized that he had underestimated the strength of the French defenses. The British were running low on ammunition and food, and the morale of the troops was dwindling. In a desperate gamble, Wellington Free Downloaded a massive assault on the city walls on October 29th.

The assault was a costly failure. The French defenders repulsed the British with heavy losses. Wellington was forced to abandon the siege and retreat his army.

### **Wellington's Worst Scrape**

The Burgos Campaign had been a costly and demoralizing failure for Wellington. He had lost over 2,000 men, including many of his finest officers. The retreat from Burgos was a humiliating setback, and it cast doubt on Wellington's ability to defeat the French in Spain.

However, Wellington learned valuable lessons from his experience at Burgos. He realized the importance of careful planning, logistics, and adequate intelligence. He also developed a greater appreciation for the tenacity of the French army.

### **Legacy and Impact**

Despite its disastrous outcome, the Burgos Campaign had a significant impact on the Peninsular War. It exposed the weaknesses of Wellington's army and forced him to reassess his strategy. It also gave the French a much-needed morale boost and helped to prolong the war.

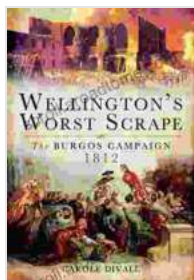
Wellington would eventually triumph over the French in Spain, leading to their expulsion from the country in 1814. However, the Burgos Campaign

remained a dark chapter in his military career, a reminder of the perils of war and the importance of careful planning and execution.

## Historical Significance

The Burgos Campaign of 1812 is a fascinating and instructive episode in the history of warfare. It showcases the complexities of military strategy, the challenges of fighting in harsh conditions, and the resilience of soldiers in the face of adversity. By examining this campaign, we gain a deeper understanding of the Peninsular War and the pivotal role that Wellington played in shaping the course of European history.

Wellington's Worst Scrape: The Burgos Campaign of 1812 is a captivating tale of military adventure, strategic blunders, and human endurance. Through meticulous research and vivid storytelling, this article has shed light on this pivotal moment in the Peninsular War. By exploring the campaign's origins, challenges, and consequences, we have gained a deeper appreciation for the complexities of warfare and the remarkable resilience of the human spirit.



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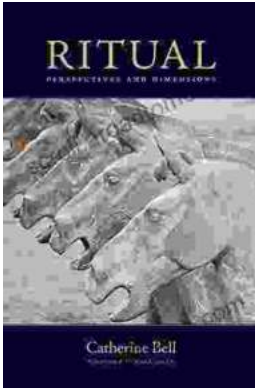
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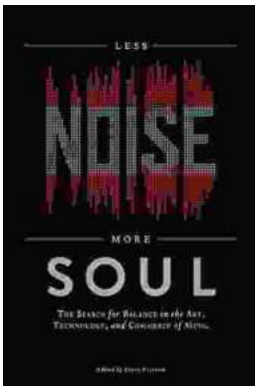
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