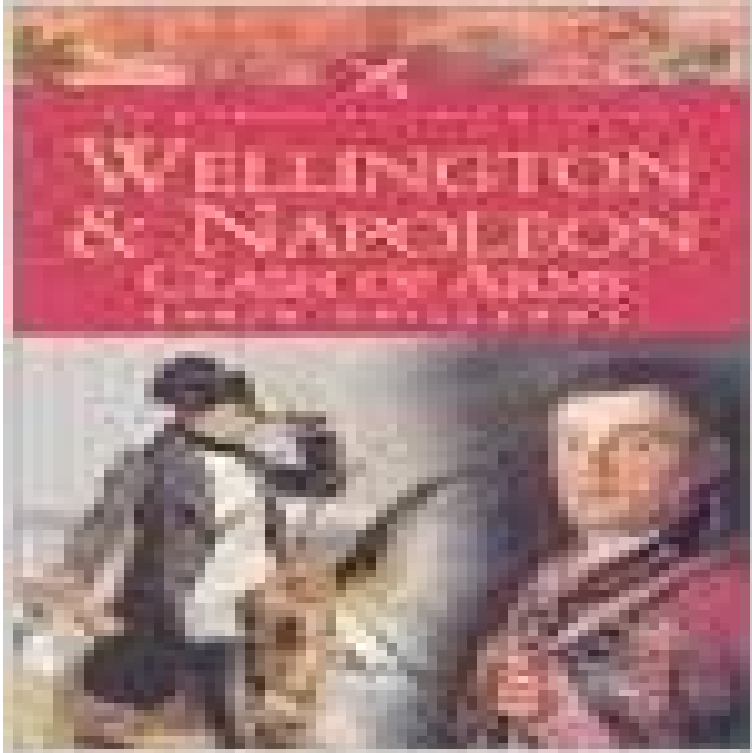


## Wellington and Napoleon: Clash of Arms



Wellington and Napoleon tells the story of the convergence and final clash of the two of the most brilliant commanders ever to meet on one field. Wellington, his men said, didnt know how to lose a battle. But Wellington himself admired his adversary: In this age, in past ages, in any age, Napoleon. Their careers were far apart in 1807, when this book opens. While at Tilsit the Emperor rearranged Europe, the most junior general on the British Army List languished as MP for Rye. But fate now drew them nearer. In Portugal and Spain, Wellington helped wreck Napoleons Continental System, bled his reserves away and showed the unbeatable French could be beaten after all. The opposing armies, like their commanders, were not at all similar. Napoleons were large conscript armies, living off the land and led by marshals who rose by merit. Wellingtons was a smaller, volunteer force, ruled by the lash though paid, and his officers were those the government chose to send. I hope, he said once, the enemy trembles as I do when they read their names. It was the British infantryman who made the difference. It all depends on that article whether we do the business or not. Give me enough and I am sure. Wellington knew that the thin red line, well handled and well placed, would never give ground but would destroy the French columns before they could close with the bayonet. Napoleon never learned to counter Wellingtons infantry, and at the great climax at Waterloo it cost him dear. Even so, the battle was so near-run that but for luck and the Prussians, history might have been quite different.

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