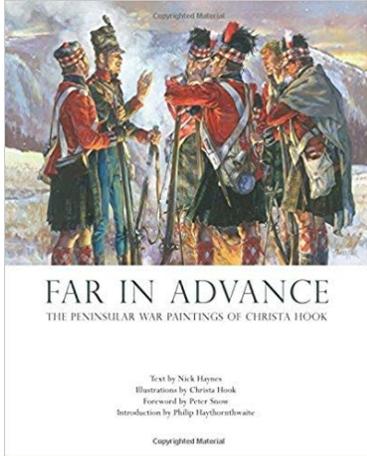


## The Napoleon Series Reviews

Haynes, Nick. *Far in Advance: the Peninsular War Paintings of Christa Hook*. Peninsula Place LLP. 2015. 156 places. ISBN: 9780993444708 £20



I recently came across this book in the Royal Green Jackets Museum. It immediately caught my eye, for is not every day there is a new book on Napoleonic artwork, no less one by a modern artist. And topping it off the price was only £20! The book contains the artwork of Christa Hook who has her work displayed in museums, on the covers of several books, and is the illustrator of 46 Osprey Books.

Although Napoleonic artwork covers a variety of subjects, *Far in Advance* focuses just on the Peninsular War. Much of it is about the famous British Light Division and quite a few of the paintings feature the 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles. Seven of the paintings cover the many months the division maintained a line of outposts in the vicinity of Ciudad Rodrigo in 1810. However, as you will see by the list below, there are paintings on units other than just those in the Light Division. Please note the resolution of the images has been reduced to prevent unauthorized copying.

Far in Advance – a study of a British rifleman  
Repulse of Charlot's Brigade, Vimeiro, 21 August 1808  
Gunner, Foot Artillery, c. 1808  
[Sahagun, 21 December 1808](#)  
Crossing the Douro, the Liberation of Portugal, 12 May 1809  
[Defence of the Seminary, Porto, 12 May 1809](#)  
[The Talavera March, Craufurd's Light Brigade, 28-29 July 1809](#)  
[Peninsular Pursuits, January 1809](#)  
Winter Warmer, Barba del Puerco, March 1810  
French Night Attack on the 1/95<sup>th</sup> Rifles, Barba del Puerco, March 1810  
Plumbing the Depths, Outpost Duty on the Agueda, Spring 1810  
Returning Home, Fort Concepcion, 6 April 1810  
[Retaking the Knoll, the Coa, 24 July 1810](#)  
[The Repulse of the 66<sup>th</sup> Grenadiers, Coa Bridge, 24 July 1810](#)  
[Picton's Orders, Buçaco, 27 September 1810](#)  
"Revenge Sir John Moore!" Buçaco, 27 September 1810  
Winter's Report, Portugal, March 1811  
Sanchez's Irregular Lancers, c. 1811  
[Private, Battalion Co. 2/42<sup>nd</sup>, 1811](#)  
Private, Portuguese 6<sup>th</sup> Caçadores, May 1811  
A Mastery Manoeuvre, Fuentes de Oñoro, 5 May 1811  
The Funeral of Craufurd, Ciudad Rodrigo, 25 January 1812  
Mary Frances Craufurd  
Salamanca Skirmish, Nuestra Señora de la Peña Chapel, 22 July 1812

Deadly Duel of Musketry, Salamanca, 22 July 1812  
The Bloody Eleventh, Private 1/11<sup>th</sup> Foot, Salamanca, 22 July 1812  
Sergeant French 8<sup>th</sup> Line Regt., Maya Pass, July 1813  
Stern Valour, Maya Pass, 25 July 1813  
We Shall Repent This Day Before Daylight, Vera Bridge, 1 September 1813  
2<sup>nd</sup> Dragoons, King's German Legion, c. 1812  
12<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons, C. 1812  
Duke and the Household Cavalry, May 1813  
A Christmas Tale, Guarda, December 1811  
[Rifles – a painting of the five riflemen in Mark Urban's \*Wellington's Rifles\*](#)  
Lieutenant James Penman Gairdner, 95<sup>th</sup> Rifles c. 1816  
[5/60<sup>th</sup> Regt. \(Royal American\), c. 1811](#)  
Setting the Standard

There are 37 different color images in the book, most of them full pages or more. Since a picture is worth a 1000 words, Christa has provided an example of one of her paintings. Please note that the resolution has been reduced to prevent unauthorized use. The painting is titled "We Shall Repent This Day Before Daylight, Vera Bridge, 1 September 1813" and is about the sacrifice of a company of British rifleman in the Pyrenees Mountain.



Since many of the paintings are battle scenes or about an event that happened in a specific location, there is also a map of the Iberian Peninsula showing the setting for each painting

In addition to the full color paintings there are numerous pencil sketches. One of the unique things about the book is that for many of the paintings there is a separate page that has a close up of part of the same painting that allows the reader to see the incredible detail better.

One of the things that caught my eye was the last chapter aptly named "Working Process". In it Christa takes us through the seven step process on how she created the paintings from the initial sketch to the preliminary drawing, the search for extra information needed to ensure accuracy of the subject, the finished pencil drawing, the color sketch, the underpainting, and finally the finished painting.

Many art books provide the art but do not really explain the context of the painting. We are fortunate that Nick Haynes provides the historical background for each painting. His crisp writing describes what the viewer of the painting is seeing and why this part of the battle is important. He often quotes eyewitnesses to the events in the painting. In many ways his ability to tell the story behind the painting in so few words is a work of art in themselves.

Christa's attention to detail of the soldier in a variety of settings, both on and off the battlefield, is stunning! She truly brings the soldier to life. These paintings should be in everyone's Peninsular War collection. *Far in Advance* is a steal at £20.<sup>1</sup> I would not wait to purchase it, for at that price it will sell quickly. Please note that for every copy of the book sold, a donation will be made to the [Rifles Charities Care for Casualties Campaign](#).

Christa's paintings can be seen in numerous books and museums. Many of her paintings are available to buy as the original oil painting or as a print. Her website is:

[Christa Hook: Artist & Illustrator](#)

Reviewed by [Robert Burnham](#)

Placed on the Napoleon Series: May 2019

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<sup>1</sup> I checked Amazon.com in the U.S. and a new copy was selling for almost \$200.