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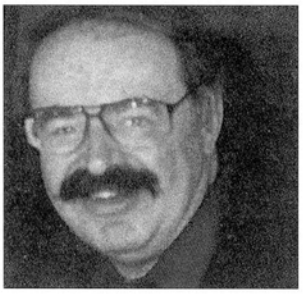
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Bussaco 1810

Wellington defeats Napoleon's Marshals



René Chartrand • Illustrated by Patrice Courcelle



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Series editor Lee Johnson • Consultant editor David G Chandler

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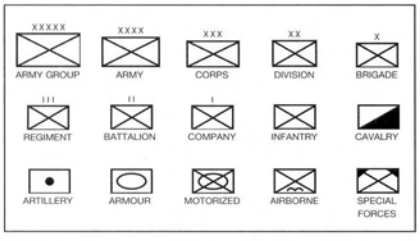
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Dedication

To Hugo Veludo Coelho

Acknowledgements

In Portugal, I have had considerable assistance, especially from Dr. Sergio Veludo Coelho, who patiently showed me the many superb resources available to a military historian of the Peninsular War in that country. Mr. Pedro de Brito of Porto kindly gave access to his fine collection and also provided valuable data. The Museu Militar do Porto (Porto Military Museum) was most helpful, as were the Museu Militar do Buçaco (Bussaco Military Museum) at Bussaco, Mr. Moutinho Borges in Almeida and the Archivo Historico Militar in Lisbon. In Great Britain, I am especially grateful to the staff at the Public Records Office at Kew, UK. Patrice Courcelle skilfully illustrated key events of the campaign. All this material could never have come together in a handsome book without the fine editorial work of Lee Johnson and Marcus Cowper's coordination at Osprey. To one and all, please accept my heartfelt expression of deepest gratitude.

Author's Note

The battle of Bussaco is regarded as one of the great British victories of the Peninsular War yet it did not prevent the invasion of Portugal. It is only one of the several paradoxes in an unusual and intensely interesting campaign. Until recently most histories have given little attention to the pivotal role of the Portuguese fortress of Almeida in this 1810 campaign. Yet, but for the catastrophic misfortune that nearly destroyed it, Almeida might have held out and the invasion might not have taken place. Once the French invaders poured in, the resilience of the Portuguese people was beyond measure. The French army's regrettable barbarity towards the Portuguese was answered by a massive scorched earth policy and a national mobilisation sacrificing everything to the struggle. Fortunately, the invaders faced a truly extraordinary leader in Wellington. But his British army was not numerous enough to face the French imperial hordes alone. The Portuguese army had been totally reorganised and partly incorporated with the British to form an Allied army. But, as good as they looked and drilled, no one was quite sure how the Portuguese troops would perform in battle.

Portuguese spelling generally follows the adaptations that have long been prevalent in British and American military and historical publications, in particular as expressed by Oxford Professor Sir Charles Oman in his *History of the Peninsular War*.

The following abbreviations are used throughout the footnotes: Public Records Office (Kew, UK) – PRO; Audit Office – AO; Foreign Office – FO; War Office – WO.

Artist's note

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ORIGINS OF THE CAMPAIGN

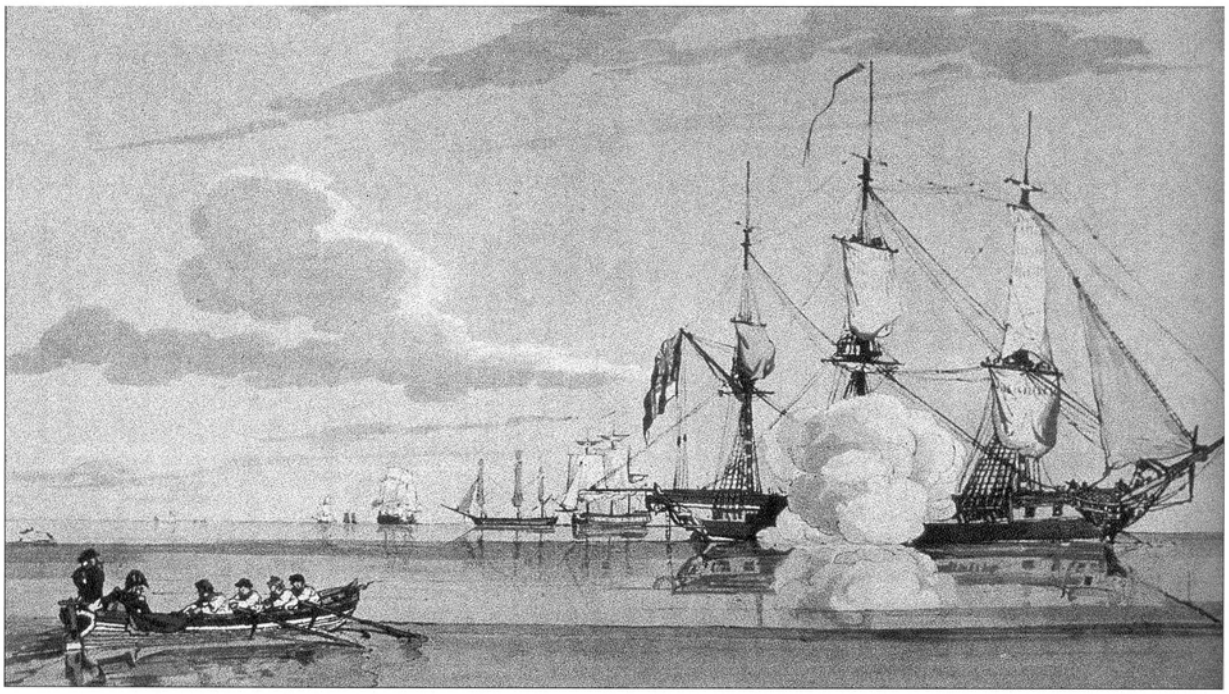
In the year 1810, Napoleon Bonaparte, emperor of the French, reigned supreme over much of Europe. The influence of the French emperor was felt as far away as Russia and Turkey. His direct rule extended as far as Poland and the northern Adriatic seacoast in the Balkans. The Russian empire had been humbled in 1807 and the Austrian empire had seen French troops march into Vienna in 1809. To seal the 'alliance' with Austria, Napoleon took Princess Marie-Louise as his new empress and she would indeed bear him a son, whom the emperor immediately made the king of Rome. Thus, almost everything in western Europe swayed to Napoleon's fancy.

There remained, however, one or two black spots to tarnish the gleam of Napoleonic Europe. First and foremost was Great Britain, the rich and powerful island nation that just never seemed to admit defeat



LEFT **Marshal André Masséna, Duke of Rivoli, Prince of Essling (1756–1817), commander of the French 'Army of Portugal' tasked by Napoleon with the conquest of Portugal in 1810.**

RIGHT **Napoleon and his staff reviewing troops at Shönbrunn Palace near Vienna in late 1809. With the defeat of the Austrian empire, Napoleon's power in western and central Europe reached its zenith. Only Britain, Russia and Portugal remained unconquered by the mighty French imperial army. (Print after JOB)**



Britain's resilience in her struggle against Napoleon was largely due to her world-wide trade and the absolute superiority of the Royal Navy. (Print after Atkinson)

in its struggle against Imperial France. Napoleon reigned over western Europe, making and unmaking kings, but Britain's Royal Navy reigned supreme on the seas around Europe and, indeed, across the globe. French warships were, by and large, blockaded in various continental ports not daring to venture out; when they did, they were nearly always beaten back with loss. Napoleon had decreed the 'Continental Blockade' of Britain in late 1806. Three and a half years later, Britons flourished and had all they needed while the remains of the French merchant fleet was in agony and French households were getting desperate for sugar.

To make matters worse for Napoleon, even his mastery of western Europe was not quite complete. Despite all his attempts at conquest two areas continued to resist him. Behind both the emperor clearly saw the 'perfidious' hand of Britannia.

The smaller and more remote of these was the island of Sicily. When the French invaded the Kingdom of Naples (also known as the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies) the British had immediately secured the island of Sicily, where the Bourbon royal family of Naples set up court at Palermo. A French attempt to drive out the British and Neapolitans had been defeated at Maida in 1806 but later British raids further north had failed with heavy losses. Sicily proved a good base for seizing the few islands occupied by the French off the Balkan Adriatic coast and for the Royal Navy to keep French and Italian warships at bay. The situation was a stalemate with little actual fighting taking place.

The other much larger problem for Napoleon was presented by the Iberian peninsula. There he had been drawn into a seemingly endless conflict. The situation in Iberia, far from improving, was getting worse. The struggle had been sparked by Napoleon's attempt to take over the peninsula three years earlier. After a bloodless occupation of Portugal in

late 1807, he had deposed the 'degenerate' Spanish Bourbon royal family in early 1808 and placed his brother Joseph on the throne. The whole peninsula had erupted in May and June 1808, King Joseph having to flee Madrid while a Spanish army crushed a French force at Baylen and a British army landed in Portugal under Sir Arthur Wellesley, the future Wellington, who beat General Junot at Vimeiro on 21 August. Napoleon himself led some 250,000 men of his *Grande Armée* into Spain in the late autumn of 1808, swept everything before him and marched into Madrid on 4 December to reinstall his brother on the throne.

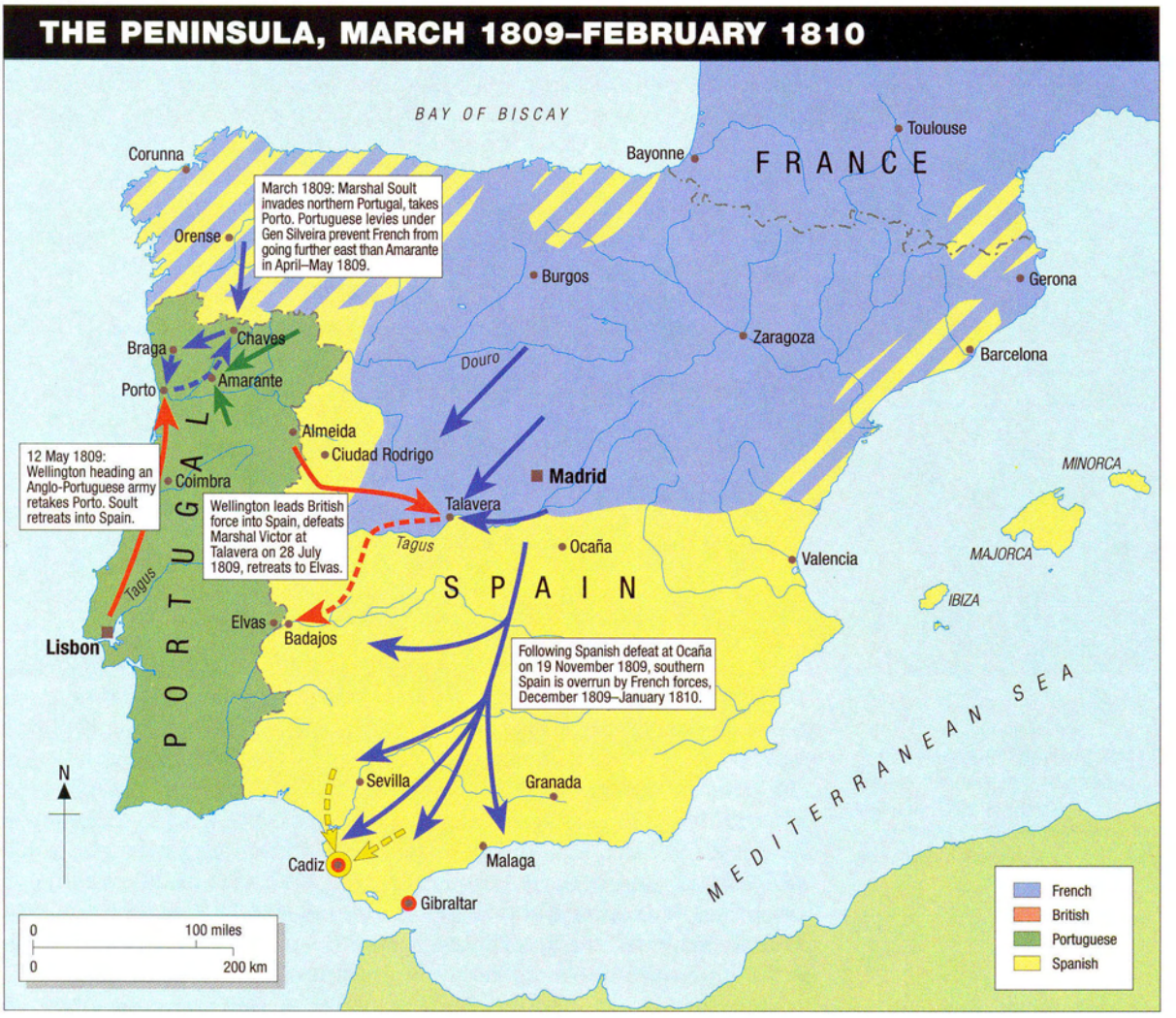
The British army in Portugal was now commanded by the talented Sir John Moore, one of the pioneers of light infantry tactics. In the first week of October, he had received instructions from the British government to take most of his army into Spain leaving 10,000 men in Portugal. Once in Spain, he would join forces with another British force that would land at Corunna. The British army was to support the Spanish armies in their attempt to encircle the invading French in northern Spain. Moore had left 9,000 men at Almeida and entered Spain on 16 October with his 17,000 men to meet Sir David Baird's 12,300 marching into Leon from Corunna. Moore also sent all the guns he could spare towards Madrid by the Elvas route escorted by 4,000 men under LtGen Sir John Hope. This force included all the British cavalry in Portugal. Meanwhile, marshals Soult, Ney, Victor, Lefebvre and Bessières swept the Spanish aside and, before long, some 80,000 French troops were marching to meet the British. Moore, recognising his force was no match, retreated towards Corunna. Although Moore was killed in the ensuing battle outside the Spanish port city, the French were beaten off and the British army was evacuated to the relative safety of Portugal by the Royal Navy. Except for pockets in Andalusia and Valencia, much of Spain was now occupied by French troops. The Spanish armies, badly organised, led, trained and armed, could not stand against the superior French imperial troops. But with indomitable courage the Spanish never gave up the struggle no matter how desperate.

Meanwhile, in central Europe, Austria had declared war on Napoleon that spring, forcing the French emperor to gather most of his available troops to march on Vienna. Demonstrating his usual genius, Napoleon overcame the Austrians, occupying Vienna on 12 May 1809 and defeating the Austrian army at Wagram on 6 July. Smaller revolts in Germany were also crushed and even elderly Pope Pius VII, who had crowned Napoleon emperor in 1804, was not spared, with his Roman states annexed to the French empire by a decree of 17 May 1809.

1809 – THE FOILED INVASION OF PORTUGAL

Portugal was now effectively the only large area of continental Europe where French troops could not march at will. There, at present beyond Napoleon's reach, a sizeable British force remained and the Portuguese were rebuilding their army.

Napoleon was further disturbed by the course of events in Spain. Although the Spanish field armies were being defeated repeatedly, the



emergence of the powerful 'guerrilla' bands across the country had considerably complicated the situation. Napoleon knew of the British support to the Spaniards and to the guerrillas in particular – something he greatly overestimated. One thing was certain, should the British be allowed to remain in Portugal for long the consequences would be disastrous for Napoleon's control of Spain. This boil needed to be lanced, and quickly. Napoleon ordered Marshal Soult to invade northern Portugal from Vigo in Spain while Marshal Victor marched into Portugal further south. Hopefully, the combined might of both French armies would prove too much for the British and force them to evacuate Portugal.

On a map this plan may have looked flawless. On the ground the story was very different. Soult's invasion of the north in March 1809 certainly represented the most serious threat, with Braga and Porto, Portugal's second largest city, falling to French troops on 29 March with thousands of hapless civilians being killed in the process. The British commander in Portugal was, once again, Sir Arthur Wellesley. He was created Viscount Wellington on 26 August 1809 and we will henceforth refer to him by this his more famous name. He had performed



ABOVE **The battle of Amarante Bridge, 12 April–2 May 1809. The town of Amarante and its bridge is seen in the centre background. In the left foreground Portuguese Ordenanza, mostly in dark brown with round hats, 'liberate' some French booty and guard French soldiers. The few regular infantrymen and gunners in uniform belonged to the 12th Infantry and the 4th Artillery. General Silveira is seen as a small figure on a white horse in the right background. (Museu Militar do Porto)**

RIGHT **The liberation of the city of Porto by British troops on 12 May 1809 as seen in an allegoric Portuguese print of the time. This brilliant operation by Wellington forced Marshal Soult to evacuate northern Portugal. (Pedro de Brito Collection, Porto)**



brilliantly in the Vimeiro campaign of August 1808, was familiar with Portugal and proved to be a match for both of Napoleon's marshals in 1809. In May, Wellington had moved up from Lisbon with his British and Portuguese troops, crossed the Douro, liberated Porto. Meanwhile, between 12 April and 2 May, some 10,000 Portuguese levies under Gen Francisco da Silveira stubbornly prevented about a third of Soult's French army from crossing the bridge over the Tamega River at the town of Amarante. The French finally succeeded and set fire to the town but Silveira's action prevented about 8,000 French troops from joining Soult against Wellington. With Porto taken by Wellington on 12 May and Silveira threatening his eastern flank, Soult was compelled to retreat back into Spain.

The rapidity of this campaign left Wellington sufficient time to gather his forces at Abrantes, march into Spain and unite with General Cuesta's Spanish army in Estremadura to face Marshal Victor's army. The Talavera campaign which followed greatly undermined the French position in the peninsula. Wellington's two lightning victories at Porto and Talavera, won by substantially the same British army against two powerful French forces, confirmed, if any doubt remained, that Welllington was an exceptional general. The hold of King Joseph and his French marshals on western Spain was now broken, Portugal was gaining strength and the reputation of French troops had been dealt a serious blow.

The Spanish had their successes too until the Central Junta ordered their main army of 53,000 men led by General Areizaga to free Madrid – a disastrous strategic decision. Areizaga was consequently crushed by Marshal Soult at Ocaña in Castile on 17 November 1809. This decisive French victory obliterated yet again a large portion of the organised Spanish army and opened the way to Andalucia, which the French immediately invaded. With Spain apparently largely subdued, Napoleon could now look to solve his Anglo-Portuguese problem once and for all.

CHRONOLOGY

1809

Wellesley appointed to command in Portugal, as commander-in-chief of the British and Portuguese forces.
March, Marshal Soult invades northern Portugal.
29 March, Soult captures and sacks Porto.
12 May, Battle of Porto. Wellesley advances from Lisbon and defeats Soult, liberating Porto and forcing the French to retreat into Spain.
June, Wellesley advances into Spain.
28 July, Battle of Talavera. Wellesley defeats Marshal Victor.
26 August, Wellesley created Viscount Wellington.
Late October, Lines of Torres Vedras started north of Lisbon.
19 November, Battle of Ocaña. Spanish army under General Areizaga is defeated by the French under Soult and Joseph.
December 1809–January 1810, Southern Spain is overrun by the French.

1810

17 April, Marshal Masséna appointed by Napoleon to command the Army of Portugal with instructions to conquer the country and take Lisbon.
10 July, Ciudad Rodrigo falls to the French.
24 July, Battle of the River Coa, BrigGen Robert Craufurd routed by Marshal Ney's 6th Corps.
15 August, French troops begin construction of trenches at Almeida.
24 August, French attempt to construct second parallel is thwarted by heavy fire from the town's guns.
26 August, Disastrous explosion in Almeida destroys the castle and severely damages the fortifications.
3.00am, 28 August, Masséna's guns cease firing and Almeida surrenders.
14 September, Masséna's Army of Portugal begins march westwards.
17 September, French cross Mondego River at Fornos marching towards Viseu.
18 September, First French troops reach Viseu.
21 September, Col Nicholas Trant's Portuguese militia brigade attacks French column at Sotojal.
25 September, Loison's Division of 6th Corps reaches Moura. Ney arrives that evening.
26 September, Reynier's 2nd Corps arrives at Sao Antonio de Cantaro.
27 September, Battle of Bussaco.
28 September, French army moves north to turn the Allied position at Bussaco.
30 September, Trant is surprised and nearly captured by French cavalry at Sardao.
1 October, French occupy and ransack Coimbra.
3 October, French finally leave Coimbra.
7 October, Coimbra retaken by Portuguese. French army reaches Leiria.
10–11 October, Allied troops on guard within the Lines of Torres Vedras.
11–13 October, French reach the Lines of Torres Vedras.

OPPOSING PLANS

THE FRENCH

Previous attempts to subdue the British and Portuguese in 1808 and 1809 had shown the complexity of the task that faced the French. A substantial army would be required and was assembled in western Spain. Marshal André Masséna was chosen by the emperor to lead this French 'Army of Portugal'. Its three corps would be led by General Reynier, Marshal Ney and General Junot, the cavalry reserve by General Montbrun. Its total strength came to some 68,000 officers and men. Other forces, notably an army led by Marshal Soult in south-western Spain, would provide diversions elsewhere along the border, forcing the Anglo-Portuguese to divide their forces. This powerful army with good, experienced generals, would at last conquer Portugal.

Aerial view of the fortress of Almeida guarding Portugal's northeastern border with Spain. The southern gate, the 'Porta da Cruz' crosses the S. Francisco ravelin to reach the S. Francisco gate into the city. At the left of the picture, the very large western ravelin and gate of S. Antonio. At right, note the heavily casemated Nostra Senora da Brotas ravelin facing east. The remains of the castle are visible at centre left. (Camara Municipal de Almeida)



The French plan disregarded the Spanish, reduced as they were to mere mobs of bandits – these so-called 'guerrillas'. As events were to prove, the French ignored the Spanish at their peril. As well as troops in western Spain still capable of giving a good account of themselves there remained the armed bands under Don Julian Sanchez, one of the country's best guerrilla leaders, roaming the plains of Leon. Indeed, the French staging area in western Spain was, at that time, still under the control of the Spanish patriotic forces, in particular the old walled fortress city of Ciudad Rodrigo, only about 30km (18½ miles) east of the Portuguese border. Only once Ciudad Rodrigo was taken could Masséna's troops prepare to march into Portugal. Masséna's first objective in Portugal was even more daunting – the great fortress of Almeida. This fortress was the key to the successful invasion of Portugal. Its capture was crucial although a long siege was expected. With Almeida taken, Masséna's army would then march west, take Coimbra, head south and finally occupy Lisbon. The British and Portuguese Allied army under Wellington would ideally be crushed along the way or at least forced to evacuate Portugal. The Allied army – especially its Portuguese component – was considered incapable of confronting a strong and well-equipped French army. This was Napoleon's and Masséna's dream scenario.

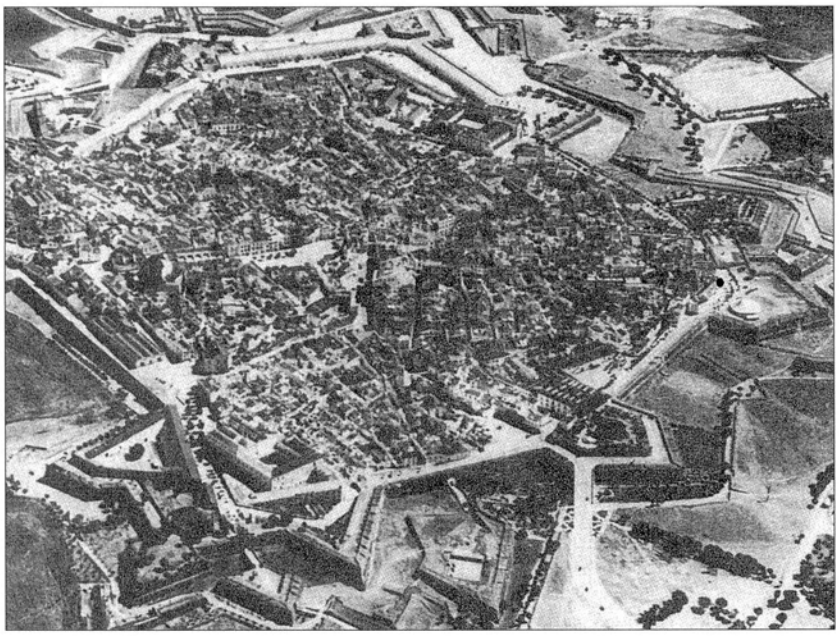
THE ANGLO-PORTUGUESE

Since January 1810 a much more sombre scenario had 'occupied the most serious consideration' of government ministers in Britain: the measures to take should the Anglo-Portuguese army be defeated by the French. In the 'event of the necessary evacuation of Portugal by the British forces', Wellington was asked to take the British army to Cadiz, in Spain. The Portuguese army might be convoyed 'to the Brazils' or to 'some other part of the Peninsula'. It was hoped that a few toeholds could be retained in Portugal 'during the remainder of the war'. The seacoast fortress of Peniche was to be kept in 'permanent possession' by the British forces as well as the fort of Bugio at the entrance of the Tagus River 'and perhaps one of the islands off Faro'.[1]

While acknowledging the cabinet's concerns, Wellington and the whole Allied army felt that Portugal could be defended successfully. Wellington was a fine geostrategist who clearly saw the fundamental conditions necessary to military success in the Peninsula. He was convinced the French could be beaten in Portugal and indeed in the whole Peninsula, but only if certain basic conditions were met:

First, it was vital that a first-class and numerous Portuguese army served alongside the British. Secondly, control must be retained of the two key fortresses of Elvas and Almeida. Finally, Portugal must be totally secured before the Anglo-Portuguese armies could carry the war into Spain.

It was the maintaining of a strong and efficient Portuguese army that was perhaps the most perplexing to the government in Britain. The cost of 10,000, then 20,000 men was assumed by Britain from late 1808. Many British officers had already been seconded to the Portuguese army but, as Wellington reported, it was not enough. The British 'Portuguese Subsidy' had grown to nearly £1,000,000 in 1810. Wellington knew this was too little and now put the actual cost of a 30,000-man Portuguese



Aerial view from the northwest of Elvas, the fortress guarding the southeastern border with Spain. The top left of the picture faces east towards Spain. From an old photo. (Camara Municipal de Elvas)

army at over £1,600,000 – the equivalent of around one billion pounds Sterling today – a stupendous amount. And this was 'exclusive of clothing and arms which are to be furnished by Great Britain' at further expense. The House of Lords had questioned the subsidy in late 1809, some Lords considering the maintenance of a British army in Portugal against Napoleon's troops as hopeless. However, Wellington's 30,000-man subsidy was approved in April 1810 and raised to £2,000,000 in 1811. In all this, it should not be forgotten that Portugal had to somehow find the money for the balance of its forces, another 13,000 regulars in March 1810, plus garrison and auxiliary forces, a near-crippling expense for a country ruined by war. Britain could certainly bear the cost but the expenses of the conflict were nevertheless huge. Besides the Portuguese subsidy there was the expense of maintaining the British troops themselves, perhaps another £2,000,000 and other expenses such as those associated with the naval forces in that area.[2]

Wellington with his British and Portuguese generals braced themselves for the onslaught from the end of 1809, convinced that Napoleon would try to invade Portugal for a third time. In an attempt to force a conclusion, the French were expected to commit a very large force. Such an invasion was unlikely to come from northwestern Spain along the route used by Soult in his attack on Porto in early 1809 nor along the route of Junot's 1807 invasion which would now be heavily defended by thousands of determined troops. The only alternatives were the two traditional invasion routes: the southern via Elvas or the northern via Almeida. The southern route seemed less likely as there were still sizeable Spanish and British forces in Cadiz and southern Andalucia and it would take time to move a huge army along this route and create major logistical problems. Wellington reasoned that Masséna would come via Almeida and it was this route Napoleon chose in his orders to his Marshal.

While the northern invasion route via Almeida appeared the most likely to the Anglo-Portuguese staff, the French were putting up various feints to keep their enemies guessing so as to divide their troops and thus weaken their defences. The Anglo-Portuguese, with fewer troops than the French, knew they could only have a sizeable force in one area. Communications and intelligence were therefore all-important to Wellington and his generals. The Portuguese component of Wellington's army included a 'Corps of Mounted Guides', which was an intelligence-gathering unit. Wellington also had the services of a Portuguese innovation – a 'Telegraph Corps' for transmitting information rapidly. Supervised by the Portuguese Royal Corps of Engineers, this unique unit manned small stations on hills so that information could be transmitted from Almeida to Lisbon in a matter of hours and from Elvas to Lisbon in a matter of minutes. It should be noted that the French had nothing like the intelligence and communication system that the Anglo-Portuguese had set up. Furthermore, Spanish guerrillas, especially those under Don Julian Sanchez operating in western Spain, provided much valuable information to Wellington on French troop movements.

Once the northern invasion route was confirmed, that is where Wellington would deploy his army. He would not, however, risk his troops in an advance into Spain. It would have been very tempting to try to relieve the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, but on the flat plains of Leon, Wellington's Anglo-Portuguese would have probably been overwhelmed by Masséna's stronger force, especially well provided with numerous and experienced cavalry and artillery units. The better course was to remain in mountainous Portugal where high ground could be used to stall and inflict losses on the invading enemy. In such terrain, Masséna's cavalry and artillery would be much less effective in a general engagement.

The ideal Anglo-Portuguese scenario was for Masséna to lay siege to the fortress of Almeida, which would hold out for months and, hopefully, that the French would fail to take it. Wellington's force would be nearby to shadow Masséna's every move and harass the French besiegers, finally forcing them to abandon the siege and return to Spain.

If Almeida fell, however, Britain and Portugal's only sizeable field army simply could not be risked in an 'all or nothing' battle. The plan was to inflict casualties during a fighting retreat towards Lisbon. On the other hand, Lisbon had to be defended at all cost. Masséna and Wellington both knew if that city was taken, it would mark the effective end of the British intervention in the Peninsula and its total occupation by the French. To prevent this, in late 1809 the Portuguese and British secretly started building numerous defence works north of Lisbon which spanned the wide peninsula between the Tagus River and the Atlantic Ocean. These works became famous as the Lines of Torres Vedras. They would constitute the last line of defence in Portugal.

It was clear in 1810 that despite the efforts of both Wellington and the Portuguese, Portugal was far from secure and had to be defended at all cost. If this defence was effective and the invaders driven out then the war could indeed be carried into Spain.

1 These considerations were discussed at length and it is obvious that the British Cabinet was very worried despite Wellington's confidence. PRO, WO 6/34 and *Dispatches*, VI.
2 On the Portuguese subsidy, see in particular PRO, FO 63/120, WO 1/244 and *Supplementary Dispatches*, VII, pp. 593–594.

OPPOSING COMMANDERS

THE FRENCH

Marshal André Masséna, Duke of Rivoli, Prince of Essling (1756–1817). Born in Nice, young Masséna served in the French infantry from 1775 and retired a sergeant-major in 1789. After a stint as a trader and smuggler in Antibes, he volunteered into the army in 1792 and, in these desperate times, this gifted soldier had risen through the ranks and was a major-general by 1793. He campaigned with the young General Bonaparte in Italy and was truly outstanding in the Swiss campaign of 1799-1800, winning the battle of Zurich against the Austrians and Russians. A marshal in 1804 and showered with honours by Napoleon, Masséna also had a taste for looting and enriched himself at every opportunity. A skilful courtier, he had the ear of Napoleon, who knew his faults but prized the extraordinary general who had the rare capacity for independent command. His strategic and tactical talents were instinctive as he had never studied military theory due to his dislike of reading. Following the Austrian campaign of 1809, Napoleon named Masséna commander of the French 'Army of Portugal' in early 1810. The Masséna of the Bussaco campaign was not quite the same active, vigorous and keen-eyed general that had performed so brilliantly in Switzerland ten years earlier. Now a marshal and a duke, he had grown accustomed to leisure and the luxuries of his high station. He brought his Parisian mistress on campaign, the wife of a captain of dragoons nicknamed Madame X by Marbot. According to several French officers, her influence resulted in some critical delays. It was generally agreed that Masséna had a difficult, even detestable personality but his military talents were recognised by the greatest military men of the age including Napoleon. Wellington, asked years later by Lord Stanhope who was his most redoubtable opponent immediately answered 'Masséna', adding that 'when Masséna opposed me in the field, I never slept comfortably'.[3]



Marshal André Masséna, Duke of Rivoli, Prince of Essling (1756–1817), commander of the French 'Army of Portugal' tasked by Napoleon with the conquest of Portugal in 1810.

Marshal Michel Ney, Duke of Elchingen (1769–1815). Born in Sarrelouis, he was trained as a law clerk but joined the hussars in 1788 as a private. Six years later he was a brigadier-general and rose to marshal in 1804. Temperamental, he could be an extraordinary tactician when calm, had a very quick mind in action and had considerable drive and energy. He could be a superb, even charismatic leader of men in battle. However, as General Jomini observed, all these qualities diminished in proportion to commands that 'increased his responsibility' so Napoleon did not make him an army commander. He led the 6th Corps during the Bussaco campaign but detested Masséna, who finally relieved him from duty in 1811. But Napoleon gave Ney other corps commands and named him Prince of the Moskova for his



Marshal Michel Ney, Duke of Elchingen (1769–1815), commander of the French army's 6th Corps. Portrait by Gérard. (Musée de l'Armée, Paris)

outstanding conduct in Russia. He fought with great bravery at Waterloo and was later executed by the royalist government.

General Jean-Louis Reynier (1771–1814) was born in Lausanne, Switzerland. He joined the French army as private gunner in September 1792, was commissioned captain within a month and rapidly rose to brigadier-general in 1795 and general of division the following year. His rapid rise was due to his exceptional efficiency. He then became chief of staff of General Moreau but this was to hamper Reynier in the years ahead. Moreau was a rival of General Napoleon Bonaparte so that Reynier fell into disfavour once Napoleon became first consul. After a time, Napoleon seems to have concluded that he was not a political plotter. Reynier was thus later sent to southern Italy where the French took over the Kingdom of Naples. When Reynier pushed further south with his army, however, he was soundly defeated at Maida in 1806 by the British General Stuart, who then retreated to the island of Sicily. Reynier was a strict disciplinarian but was also humane, brave and very honest, but he was also cold, taciturn and could not inspire his men. As a result, he was not well liked by his troops. Very efficient, he was a difficult subordinate and had no respect for the capacity of some marshals. He was an outstanding and meticulous planner, a talent that Napoleon fully recognised. Planning was Masséna's weakness and Reynier thus filled that void while also commanding the 2nd Corps. After the 1810–11 campaigns, he went on to serve in Russia in 1812 and Germany the following year. He died in Paris in February 1814.



General Jean-Louis Reynier (1771–1814), commander of the French army's 2nd Corps.

General Andoche Junot, Duke of Abrantes (1771–1813) met Napoleon Bonaparte at the siege of Toulon in 1793, became his ADC and campaigned in Italy and Egypt, by which time he had risen to general of division. He was also at Austerlitz in 1805. One of Napoleon's closest friends of his early career, Junot was a good soldier if not an outstanding general. Previously ambassador to Portugal, he managed to occupy the country without resistance during the invasion of November 1807 for which he was named Duke of Abrantes by Napoleon. He had difficulties coping with the revolt in Portugal from June 1808 and was overwhelmed once the British landed in August. The Sintra Convention, negotiated thanks to General Kellerman, saved his army and Napoleon forgave him. Junot was given command of the 8th Army Corps for the 1810 campaign but he was now under Marshal Masséna and with Marshal Ney and General Reynier, all clearly better field officers. His corps was held in reserve and was not engaged at Bussaco. He later commanded it in Russia.



General Andoche Junot, Duke of Abrantes (1771–1813), commander of the French army's 8th Corps.

THE BRITISH

Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wellesley, Viscount Wellington (1769–1852). The future Duke of Wellington was born in Ireland and joined the army in 1787. He campaigned in Holland during 1794–95, was in India from 1796 where he won much distinction for his victories over the Mahrattas at Assaye and Argaun in 1803. Back in England in 1806, opportunities for commands were relatively few although he led a brigade at Copenhagen in 1807. Gazetted lieutenant-general, he was put



RIGHT **LtGen Sir Arthur Wellesley, Viscount Wellington (1769–1852), commander-in-chief of the allied forces in 1810. He was appointed to command the British forces in Portugal in April 1809 and appointed marshal-general of the Portuguese army on 6 July. He was created a Peer with the title of Viscount Wellington on 26 August 1809.**

BELOW **MajGen Rowland Hill (1772–1842). His engaging personality and somewhat 'country gentleman' manners allied with his good judgement and efficiency as a commander very much pleased Wellington. Hill commanded the 2nd Division and was also his effective second-in-command entrusted with independent commands thanks to his outstanding ability to read Wellington's tactical mind. Lieutenant-general in January 1812, knighted in March, created Baron Hill of Almaraz and Hardwicke following the Peninsular War, he served with Wellington at Waterloo. Following duty with the army of occupation in France, Hill happily retired to his country estate in 1818. However, when Wellington became prime minister in 1828, he accepted the post of commander-in-chief. Print after a portrait taken in the 1830s.**



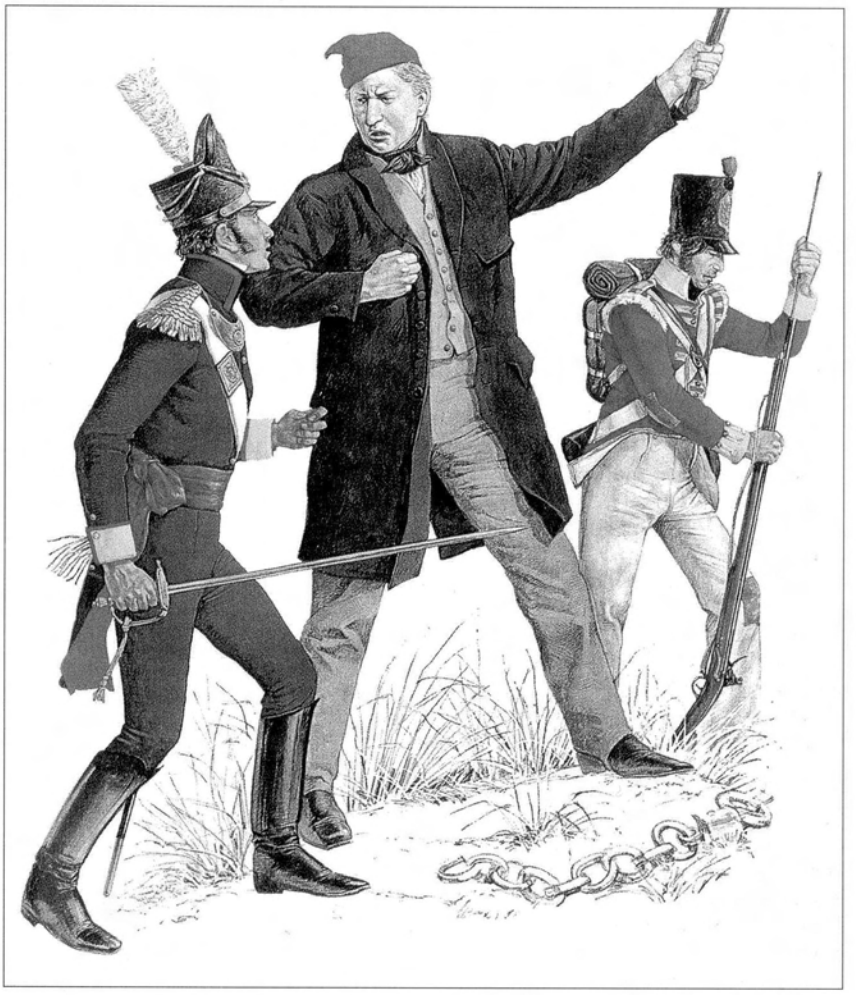
in command of the troops sailing from Ireland to Portugal in July 1808 where he performed brilliantly. However, Sir Harry Burrard and Sir Hew Darlymple were senior to young Wellesley and he was superseded on 21 August, the day he defeated General Junot at the battle of Vimeiro. Wellington was again put in charge of the British forces in Portugal in April 1809, retaking Porto from Marshal Soult's French troops, who fell back into Spain. The summer found him making a foray into Spain as far as Talavera, where he beat Marshal Victor on 27 August, and he was back in Portugal by early September confirming that he was really a most talented general. Appointed Marshal-General of the Portuguese forces and thus commander-in-chief of the Allied Army on 29 April 1809, he was tireless in his support of Marshal Beresford's reorganisation of the Portuguese army. His construction of the Lines of Torres Vedras in late 1809 as an ultimate defence against a future French invasion showed great prescience. The invasion occurred in 1810 and the French invaders were eventually chased back into Spain and beaten at Fuentes de Onoro in May 1811. Wellington then campaigned through Spain and finally into southern France by 1814. He is of course most famous for his victory over Napoleon at Waterloo on 18 June 1815. He went on to be commander-in-chief of the army and prime minister. This extraordinary man passed away in 1852.

Major-General Rowland Hill (1772–1842) was commissioned in 1790 and campaigned at Toulon and in Egypt. A major-general by 1808, he commanded one of the brigades in the army in Portugal. Hill's efficiency and good judgement were demonstrated in the field during the Vimeiro campaign. Hill then served with distinction under Sir John Moore in the Corunna campaign. When Wellington once again assumed command of the British and Portuguese forces in 1809, Hill accompanied him during the Porto and the Talavera campaigns. By then, Rowland Hill's kindness and consideration towards his men was well known within the army and he was affectionately known as 'Daddy Hill'. During the 1810 Bussaco campaign Hill was entrusted by Wellington with independent commands, and with an apparent ability almost to read Wellington's mind he proved very successful. He later became ill with malaria, was successfully treated in Britain and was back in Portugal in May 1811. During the remainder of the Peninsular War, Hill remained Wellington's most trusted subordinate.

Brigadier-General Robert Craufurd (1764–1812) was commissioned in 1779 and served in India and on the Continent in various capacities and campaigns. By the mid-1800s, Craufurd was one of the most experienced and knowledgeable officers in the army but his advancement suffered because of his fiery temper, which made him enemies. However, he was a friend of Sir John Moore and a disciple of his beliefs in light infantry tactics so that, in the autumn of 1808,



ABOVE **BrigGen Robert Craufurd (1764–1812), commander of the Light Division. In 1807 he was with the ill-fated expedition to Buenos Aires and Montevideo under the command of the incompetent Gen Whitelocke but this did not tarnish his reputation with the men. As he had greying hair, a toast in the army at the time – disappointed at the Montevideo fiasco – was 'Success to grey hairs, bad luck to white locks!' The 1810 campaign started badly for Craufurd, who was almost trapped by Marshal Ney's troops at the River Coa, but he was outstanding at Bussaco a few weeks later.**



ABOVE, RIGHT
MajGen Thomas Picton (1758–1815) played an important role in the battle of Bussaco, his 3rd Division defending one of the two areas attacked by the French. Picton was notorious for his indifference to uniform and habitually wore civilian clothes, usually a blue frock coat. His staff officers followed suit and were collectively known as the 'bear and ragged staff'. On the morning of 27 September, Picton rushed out of bed in his red nightcap which won him as much fame as his inspiting leadership. Richard Hook's artwork shows him in action, giving instructions to a captain of the 8th Portuguese Infantry. A light company private of the 88th Foot stands behind. (*Wellington's Generals*, Osprey Men-at-Arms Series No. 84)

Craufurd was given command of the Light Brigade, which he led with vigour during the Corunna and Talavera campaigns in 1809. In the 1810 campaign, his brigade, consisting of the 43rd and 52nd light infantry and the 95th Rifles, was joined by the 1st and 3rd Cazadores battalions forming the Light Division. For five months, until July, his division held a 60km front on the northeastern Portuguese border against a force six times his strength. He eventually pushed too far east, resulting in the unnecessary River Coa fight. Wellington did not chastise him for this error, knowing Craufurd's talent, which was certainly in full bloom at the battle of Bussaco. He then went on leave to England but was back leading his Light Division at Fuentes de Onoro in May 1811 and was promoted major-general the following month. He was killed at the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo on 24 January 1812, his death depriving the Allied army of one of its best officers.

Major-General Thomas Picton (1758–1815) campaigned in the West Indies and was governor of Trinidad until 1806. Promoted major-general in 1808, Picton was recommended to Wellington by Spanish General Miranda, who had known him in the West Indies. In early 1810 Picton was sent to Portugal at Wellington's request and appointed to



RIGHT **Marshal William Carr Beresford (1768–1854), commander-in-chief of the Portuguese army from 1809 to 1820. He was an experienced soldier, having served not only in Europe but in India, Egypt, South Africa, South America and Madeira – where he learned Portuguese – before serving with Sir John Moore in the Corunna campaign. He was recalled by Rifleman Harris as 'a fine looking soldier and equal to his business'. An excellent administrator, he was appointed to command the ragged Portuguese army and given the formidable task of transforming it into a force comparable to the British. The 1810 Bussaco campaign was the first test of his success. Beresford wears the dress uniform of a Portuguese marshal, dark blue and richly embroidered with gold. (The Count of Amarante and Marquis of Chaves, Porto)**

command the 3rd Division. Some years after the Peninsular War, William Napier wrote that it was 'common opinion' that Wellington and Picton were on bad terms, but this must have been an unfounded rumour. Wellington refuted this adding he could not recall 'even a difference of opinion, much less anything of the nature of a quarrel' between him and Picton and that 'he had never reason to regret' his choice.[4] Picton's performance during the Bussaco campaign certainly bore that out; his 3rd Division was heavily engaged in the battle and often formed the rearguard in the subsequent retreat to Torres Vedras. Picton went on to distinguished service during the rest of the Peninsular War but was killed at Waterloo.

THE PORTUGUESE

There were no outstanding actions fought by Portuguese generals in the 1810 campaign. This includes British generals in the Portuguese army as well as native-born Portuguese general officers. It was, however, an intensely formative campaign and nearly all those named below went on to senior commands. The Portuguese high command did go through a massive 'revolution' at that time along with the whole army. In the spring of 1809, the Portuguese government sought a British commander to transform its disorganised army into an efficient fighting force. **Major-General William Carr Beresford** was the obvious choice and he was appointed marshal on 7 March 1809. His efforts were tireless and no administrative or political obstacle daunted him. With Wellington's support, he transformed the Portuguese army into a numerous, well-equipped and disciplined force led by effective commanders, one of the Peninsular War's most important if less familiar achievements. Beresford was not, however, an outstanding tactician and did not serve with Wellington's army. During the Bussaco campaign he commanded the Allied forces further south. However, **Benjamin D'Urban**, Quartermaster General of the Portuguese army, was with Wellington's staff. The governor of the ill-fated fortress of Almeida was **William Cox**. **Colonel Nicholas Trant** led a militia brigade that shadowed the French columns as did **Colonel Carlos Frederico Lecor**, while the brigade of **Colonel José Joaquim Champalimaud** was one of the first heavily engaged at Bussaco. The Portuguese forces further to the northeast were led by **Major-General Francisco da Silveira**, who kept the pressure on the French at Almeida while **Lieutenant-General Manuel Pinto Bacelar** commanded forces in the northeast.



MajGen Francisco de Silveira (1763–1821) kept the pressure on the French garrison at Almeida with his Portuguese militia and Ordenanza. In early August 1810, a French column moved to Puebla de Senabria but Silveira, with a small Spanish force under Gen Taboada, overwhelmed the garrison. Once Masséna's main French force had moved west, Silveira blockaded Almeida so effectively that its garrison had no outside communications between 18 September and 15 November 1810.

3 Masséna felt the same way about Wellington. In 1816 the two met in Paris and Masséna exclaimed: 'Ah Monsieur le Maréchal, que vous m'avez fait passer des mauvais moments!' (Ah! Marshal, what bad moments you have put me through), adding that he had not left him with a black hair on his body. Arthur Griffiths, *The Wellington Memorial* (London, 1897), p.88.
4 Quoted in Griffiths, *The Wellington Memorial*, p.320.

OPPOSING ARMIES

THE FRENCH

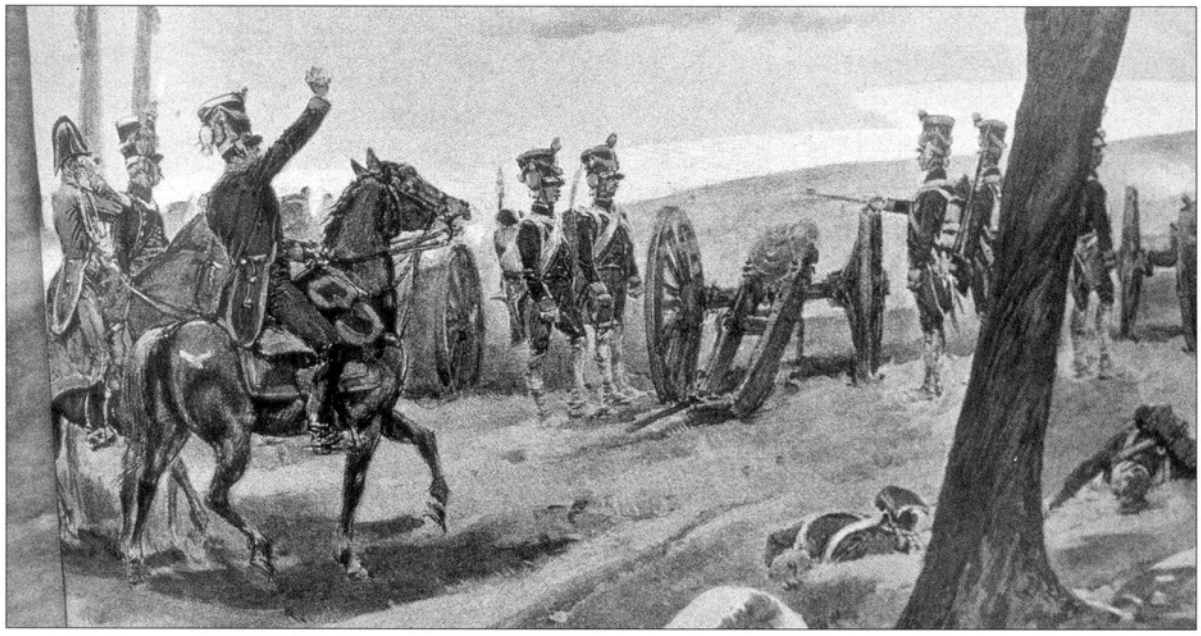
The origins of the French 'Army of Portugal' lay in the 25,000-man force with which General Junot had successfully occupied Portugal in November 1807. Repatriated to France under the terms of the Convention of Sintra in the autumn of 1808, it had been sent back into Spain and, for this third French attempt to invade Portugal, had been considerably reinforced. Under the overall command of Marshal André Masséna, it now had three Corps under Marshal Ney and generals Junot and Reynier totalling over 65,000 men including 2,475 officers. Ney's 6th Corps was the strongest with over 24,000 men while the two other corps each had about 17,000 men. The army had a cavalry reserve of some 3,500 men.[5]

From 18 February 1808, each regiment of French infantry was to have five battalions, four service and one depot. The service battalions had a company of grenadiers, one of *voltigeurs* – light infantry skirmishers – and four of fusiliers, all companies having 140 men including three officers. With battalion staff, eagle bearers and musicians, the regimental establishment totalled 3,908 men including 78 officers. The actual strength of the regiments in the field was often much less, as can be seen in the orders of battle. A few regiments also added a 6th battalion. The light infantry *Chasseurs* had the same establishment except that their grenadiers were termed *Carabiniers*, although they were armed with ordinary muskets rather than rifles ('carabine' in French). French cavalry regiments usually had five squadrons each having two companies, but these were often dispersed in different armies. The artillery was considered one of Europe's finest and served the dependable Gribeauval system guns.



Officer, French 3rd Hussar Regiment, c. 1806–10. The 3rd Hussars were part of Marshal Ney's 6th Corps and performed brilliantly during the battle of the River Coa. (Print after Hoffman)

One of the enduring misconceptions about the French infantry in the Napoleonic wars is that it always attacked in columns while its opponents would be formed in lines – the so-called 'column versus line' tactics. The French infantry would indeed normally march up in columns. But, as they neared their opponents, would deploy into lines as specified by their 1791 drill. In line, French infantrymen were formed three ranks deep and were always preceded by a screen of light



French Foot Artillery, c. 1810–11. The guns and their carriages are of the French Gribeauval artillery system. (Print after L. Sergent)

infantry *voltigeurs*. But this was not always followed in the peninsula. In practice they often could not deploy into line from column in the type of terrain Wellington cleverly chose, and Bussaco was a good illustration of this difficulty for the French. Their firepower, while typical of a modern army, was inferior to the exceptionally murderous volleys of British and Portuguese troops. They were, however, very fearsome in bayonet attacks.

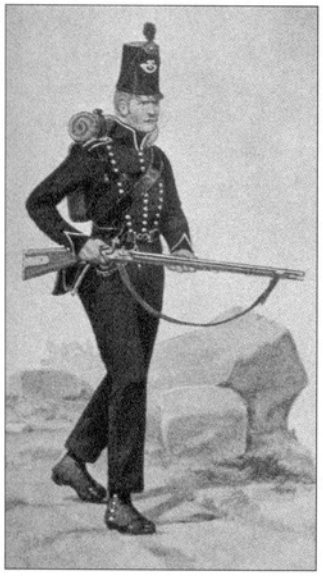
The French cavalry in the Peninsula was generally very dependable and manoeuvred quite competently. It was a well-trained body of troops usually kept under reasonable control in battle. Masséna's army had four units of light cavalry, the 1st and 3rd hussars and the 15th and 25th Chasseurs à cheval, and some medium cavalry, dragoons detached from a dozen regiments, but no heavy cavalry such as cuirassiers. All units in Masséna's army had previously served victoriously in other parts of Europe so they had numbers of experienced campaigners within their ranks.

The French army in the Peninsula was prone to indiscriminate marauding, which would sometimes culminate in the wholesale slaughter of dozens of innocent civilians. Histories have often recounted examples in Spain but what went on in Portugal may well have been even worse if one considers the smaller population and size of the country. It certainly began at an earlier date; as early as December 1807 during the first French occupation, which terrorised the population and practically ruined the country. The 1809 invasion of the north by Marshal Soult's army lasted only a few months but the devastation and robbery was widespread and the innocent deaths rose to thousands in Porto. To this day the village of Arrafina, south of Porto, remembers 17 April 1809 when a detachment of the 34th French Line Infantry came and cold-bloodedly slaughtered 62 men – all civilians and the bulk of its male population.



Shako plate from the French 75th Infantry of the Line, 1810. This plate was found in Almeida, where the 75th was posted in 1810. It was a new, unissued plate from the regimental store as it had never been bent and pierced to be attached to a shako. The plate is of the 1810 model. (Moutinho Borges Collection, Almeida)

The behaviour of the French troops during the 1810 campaign was no different. However, some things had changed. The Emperor himself



Private, 95th Rifles, c. 1810–15. (Print after P.W. Reynolds)



Officer, 95th Rifles, c. 1810–12. (Print after Goddard & Booth)

was now questioning the behaviour of some of his generals, such as the notorious Loison. In addition the effect of the behaviour of the French on the Portuguese was quite unprecedented: as Masséna and his troops advanced into the country, they were amazed to find that it emptied before them. Faced with the French barbarity the Portuguese preferred to destroy their own farms and crops. This created chronic logistics and supply problems for the French. The French blamed Wellington and the Portuguese government's orders to leave nothing to the enemy but, in reality, the true culprit was their own previous indecent conduct.[6]

THE BRITISH

The British army's organisation was not as refined as the French in that there was no corps structure. Wellington's army was divided into large divisions with some independent brigades added. The great majority of the army consisted of infantry and most of that was line infantry. By 1810 most of the 104 regiments of the line had two battalions, only one usually being deployed in a theatre of operation. For instance, the 2nd Battalion, 24th Foot was in Portugal with Wellington's army but the regiment's 1st Battalion was in India. The strength of a British regiment could vary greatly. For example, in Cole's 4th Division, the 2/53rd Foot had 25 officers and 448 men while the 1/40th Foot in the same division had 48 officers and 1,007 men. Such differences were not only due to lack of recruits and to casualties but also to the numbers of their authorised 'establishment' as voted by Parliament at various times. Hence the considerable differences in numbers one routinely sees in British army listings. Wellington's 'British' army included a sizeable number of Germans, mostly Hanoverians, in the King's German Legion who gave excellent service. From September 1809, Portuguese brigades were added to the British divisions but, although well trained, no one knew for certain how they would perform against the French. The British army in Portugal was about 30,000 strong, nearly all of it in the field with Wellington.

The British line infantryman carried the India Pattern musket with its socket bayonet. This was a very sturdy, practical weapon, which fired a .75 calibre bullet. The 60th and 95th Rifles were armed with rifles, a very accurate weapon for skirmishers. The uniform was red except for the rifle units, who wore dark green. The men's shakos were of black felt with brass shako plates. White breeches and black knee gaiters were the regulation dress but, in Portugal, the infantry more usually wore comfortable white linen or grey pantaloons. While the British army's clothing was mostly reported as good in 1810, there were deficiencies across the various regiments. Even the Brigade of Foot Guards reported the 'jackets of the [2nd] Coldstreams are very short in the waist, those of the 3rd [Scots Guards] Regiment altho', in general, a better length'.[7]

British soldiers were not above stealing and, in a few cases, murdering innocent civilians. This meant death by hanging if caught. The standard of discipline was one of the toughest in Europe with offences punished by floggings with the 'cat-o'-nine-tails'. For all that, offences were frequent with drink being the main culprit. British soldiers manoeuvred and drilled according to the practical 1788 '19 steps' by Sir



ABOVE **Gunner, Royal Horse Artillery, c.1810–15. (Print after P.W. Reynolds)**

David Dundas. Drill was most rigorous and British soldiers, even in two lines, could fire some of Europe's most murderous volleys three times a minute. Such firepower was matched by precise manoeuvres and considerable coolness in battle. The officers were generally talented individuals who had their men's respect. As a whole, the spirit of the army was excellent.

THE PORTUGUESE

In early 1809, it was clear to the Portuguese government's Council of Regency that its army could only be transformed into a modern military machine with British help. That the Portuguese even made such a request shows the strength of character and commitment to the common cause. British MajGen William Carr Beresford was made marshal and given the task. A brilliant and tireless military administrator, he brought in over 300 British officers while replacing many more conservative Portuguese officers with keen young men. As there were about 2,500 Portuguese regular officers in the new army, many of them of senior rank, the reforms were largely carried out by them and not exclusively by British officers. Unlike the British army, which was made up of volunteers, the Portuguese army was filled by drafting men, sometimes by force. As a British private recalled, '... their ranks were recruited by compulsory conscriptions. We often witnessed their levies arrive guarded by cavalry, and fastened by ropes, in the manner of convicts are sent off for transportation. These recruits were as dirty and ragged as can be imagined; barefooted and covered with large broad-brimmed hats, and at first sight they appeared as so many miserable old men; but when clothed, we were often surprised to see them as it were metamorphosed into a body of athletic young fellows.'[8] In the fortress of Peniche, transformed into a general training depot, they were disciplined and drilled as British soldiers were and even taught command words in English as they would be called to manoeuvre in battle with British troops.[9]



The army had 24 infantry regiments, each of ten companies (including one of grenadiers and one of light infantry), four regiments of artillery, each of ten companies, 12 cavalry regiments of four squadrons each and six battalions of light infantry *Cazadores* of six companies each (including one of 'Tiradores' sharpshooters) besides a number of small specialised units. The effective strength of most infantry regiments in 1810 was about 1,400 to 1,500 officers and men, artillery from 1,100 to 1,400, cavalry at about 550 and Cazadores



ABOVE **Infantrymen of the 13th, 4th and 16th Portuguese line infantry regiments, 1810. Portuguese infantry, artillery and cavalry uniforms were blue and trimmed according to the May 1806 Portuguese regulations except for the Cazadores, who wore brown uniforms. (Museu Militar do Porto)**



ABOVE, RIGHT **Drummer, 5th Cazadores, and Private, 6th Cazadores, c. 1810–15. The 5th was part of Gen Lecor's Portuguese Division posted south of the Mondego River. The 6th was part of Campbell's 5th Independent Portuguese Brigade at Bussaco. Cazadores had brown uniforms trimmed with black with battalion facing colours at the collar and cuffs. From August 1810, Baker rifles were issued to sharpshooters but two-thirds of the men were armed with muskets and most of the musicians were drummers. (Bill Younghusband, from *The Portuguese Army of the Napoleonic Wars (2)*, Osprey Men-at-Arms Series No. 346)**

LEFT **Trooper, 1st Portuguese Cavalry Regiment, c. 1809–10. In this print after Bradford, the helmet is missing its brass plate and the piping is erroneously shown as a button-wide bar. (Pedro de Brito collection, Porto)**

battalions at around 620. The whole regular army amounted to about 45,000, the militias to about the same number. Some 32,000, mostly regulars, formed the major part of Wellington's army in the field during 1810.

Weapons were supplied from Britain and similar to those used by the British army. It is however important to bear in mind that the Cazadores battalions were not armed with Baker rifles until early August 1810. Thus, the 1st and 3rd had none at the River Coa in July but, in August, the battalions were each issued with 200 rifles so they had them at Bussaco. The rest of the men, about 400 per battalion, continued to carry smooth-bore British India Pattern muskets.

For all their rigorous training, most Portuguese troops had not seen action. For instance, the 8th Portuguese infantry was almost entirely made up of recently incorporated peasants whose first engagement would be at Bussaco. The quality of the revitalised Portuguese army in battle was certainly demonstrated in the Bussaco campaign. The French initially despised the Portuguese troops and took little account of them, but experience made them change their minds. Perhaps the most telling comment on the renewal of the Portuguese army came from the commander of their enemies, Marshal Masséna. He later wrote that: 'Most of the line regiments who had been recently formed were made up, it is true, of four fifths of recruits, but the Portuguese soldier, intelligent, sobre and untiring on the march, when commanded by British officers and trained in the British discipline, could be at par with the Anglo-Hanoverian and surpass them.'[10]

5 These figures are after Oman according to the French military archives. Marshal Marmont's memoirs give remarkably precise figures that put Reynier's and Ney's corps at 59,665 men including 10,998 cavalry, their artillery and train having 5,942 horses and 1,019 vehicles of all types. General Junot's corps is given as having 15,000 men. *Mémoires du Maréchal Marmont, Duc de Raguse* (Paris, 1857), IV, pp. 14–15. This is partly explained in that the Army of Portugal had some 86,000 men but some remained in Spain so that 65,000 constituted the invasion army. The French then had some 300,000 men in Spain.

6 Many reports of awful abuses by the French troops were reproduced in Luz Soriano, III. The lack of discipline among their British allies, especially due to drink, was also noted by the Portuguese but incidents, although frequent, paled in comparison to the vast scale of crimes committed by French troops. Of course, a French straggler that fell into the hands of vengeful peasants lurking in the hills with scores to settle – such as the rape and murder of a family member – was likely to suffer horribly before death provided a merciful release.

7 PRO, WO 27/102.

8 A Private Soldier, 'Two months recollection of the late war in Spain and Portugal', *United Services Journal*, 1830, pp. 416–417

9 Lord Liverpool to Wellington, Downing Street, 15 December 1809, PRO, WO 6/34. Their pay, which had been amongst Europe's worst, was considerably improved and, from December 1809, Britain paid for 30,000 men in the Portuguese army. Although nearly ruined, Portugal paid for the remaining 15 to 20,000 regulars plus the militia and *Ordenanza*. The British bill came to £980,000 including £130,000 for the increased pay of officers.

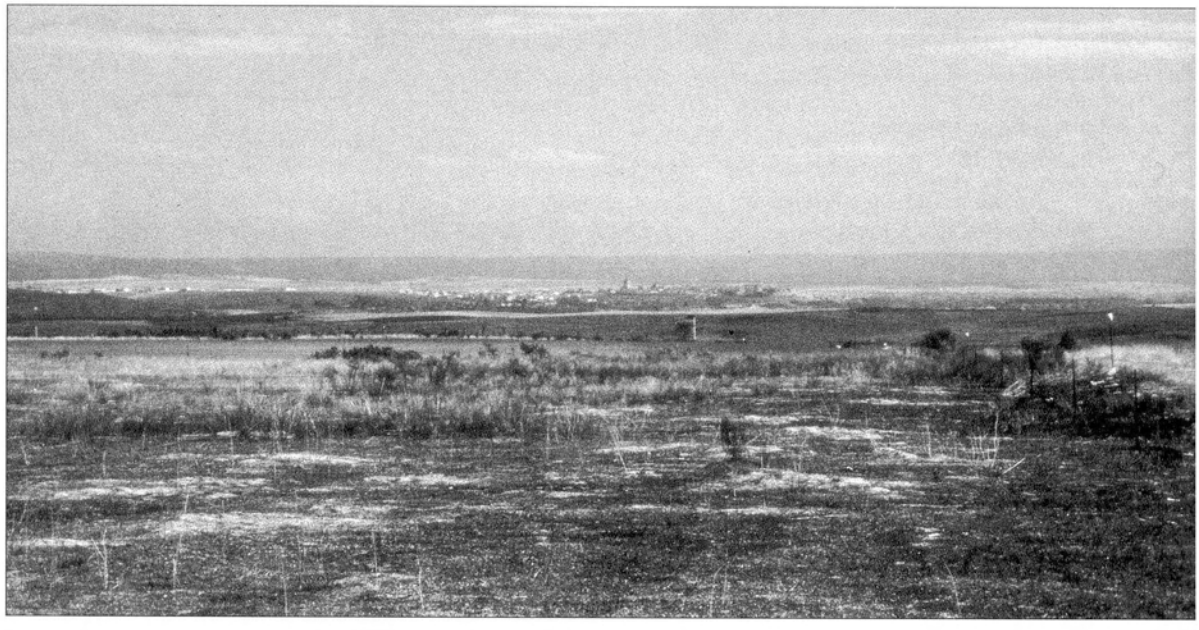
10 Quoted in Luz Soriano, III, p. 181.

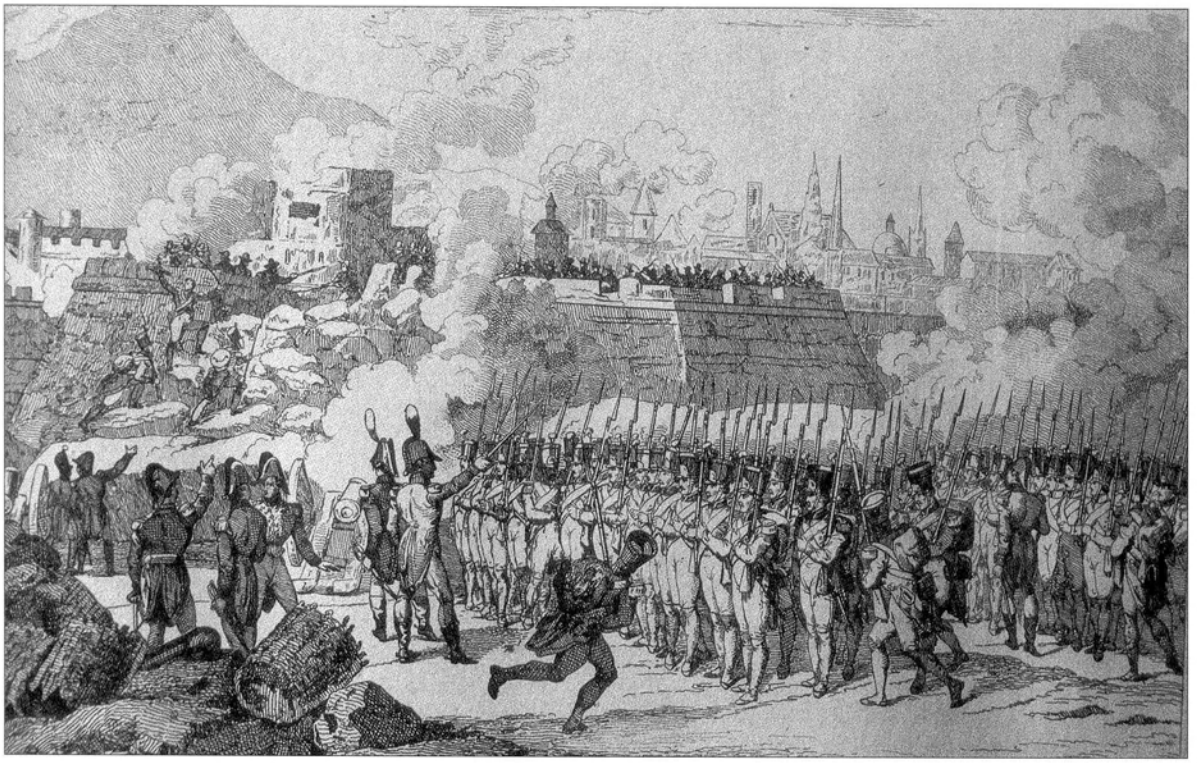
THE CAMPAIGN

THE FALL OF CIUDAD RODRIGO

The French Army of Portugal actually fought its first action in Spain. Sweeping all opposition before it with ease as it marched onto the plains of Leon, the Army of Portugal neared Ciudad Rodrigo, then a city of some 10,000 inhabitants. The Spanish garrison of some 6,000 men had over 100 guns and mortars and a determined commander in LtGen de Herrasti, governor of the city. Its defences were substantial if somewhat varied. The walls were mostly from the 17th century but kept in good repair. The medieval castle was strengthened as a makeshift citadel. On 31 May, Marshal Ney with several senior officers rode ahead of the French army, reconnoitred the fortress and agreed that its northwestern wall was the most vulnerable. Masséna arrived with his troops a few days later and the city was invested from 6 June. On 25 June, the French batteries started bombarding the city. There were fierce artillery duels as the Spanish put up a gallant resistance but they were hopelessly outnumbered and out-gunned. They hoped that Wellington and the Allied army on the Portuguese border would march to their relief and challenge Masséna. One look at the topography of the area shows that this would almost certainly have spelled disaster for Wellington. Ciudad Rodrigo sits on a hill in the middle of a large plain. The superior French army would have badly

The plains of Leon with the city of Ciudad Rodrigo visible in the distance. This view is from about 15km (9 miles) west of the city and illustrates admirably why Wellington chose not to march to the city's relief. Ciudad Rodrigo is located on ground ideal for Masséna's large army, in particular his numerous and experienced cavalry. (Photo: RC)





French assault troops about to storm Ciudad Rodrigo on 10 July 1810. The Spanish city fell the same day after a heroic siege of 72 days. (Print after Martinet)

mauled if not destroyed Wellington's smaller Allied army. The defence of Portugal was Wellington's overriding priority and the price to be paid was the sacrifice of Ciudad Rodrigo.

Masséna was still worried that Wellington might intervene. French patrols had seen some British troops to the west. Were these an advance party of Wellington's army? Masséna doubted this but asked General Junot to send troops to drive in the British outposts and establish the exact position of the Allied army. On 4 July, BrigGen Sainte-Croix commanding five infantry battalions, six dragoon squadrons and some light artillery neared Gallegos. Some 200 French dragoons came upon a British cavalry picket of the 16th Light Dragoons and pursued it for about 5km (3 miles) to Gallegos. There, the French dragoons ran into two squadrons of the 16th Light Dragoons, one squadron of the King's German Legion's 1st Hussars and a couple of field guns under the command of LtCol von Arentschild. Sainte-Croix and the main force were not far behind and, having deployed his troops near Gallegos, he ordered the 3rd Provisional Dragoons and a platoon of the 1st Hussars to attack the British outpost. The British withdrew in good order although at a stone bridge further west, on the road leading to the village of Alameda, the pursuing French nearly cut them off. Just in front of the village was LtGen Robert Craufurd's Light Division. Craufurd formed a line across the road and added the retreating troopers and guns to it as they arrived. The French attacked to the north but were repulsed by the steady fire of the 3rd Cazadores. Craufurd could see he was outnumbered and feared being cut off so he withdrew westwards to Dos Casas, then to the ruins of the Spanish Fort La Concepcion at the Portuguese border skirmishing all the way. Junot did

not go any further as he knew he was nearing the great Portuguese fortress of Almeida. Other patrols revealed that Masséna had little to worry about from the west and could concentrate on the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo.

The French artillery relentlessly pounded the city and a breach was made although the Spanish returned the fire sharply on the French batteries and trenches. Barricades and new obstacles were thrown up to seal the breaches. On 10 July, Ciudad Rodrigo surrendered and the French entered the partly ruined city, which had suffered about 1,800 soldiers and civilians killed. The French reported 182 killed and 1,043 wounded. Masséna could now carry out the Emperor's wishes and invade Portugal.

ALMEIDA'S IMPORTANCE

The first obstacle Masséna had to overcome in Portugal was the Fortress of Almeida some 35km (22 miles) west of Ciudad Rodrigo. While Almeida was not as large as the fortress of Elvas to the south, it was certainly a formidable stronghold and controlled the route into Portugal from the northeast. Its old castle dated from the early 14th century and had been built to prevent Spanish incursions. The fortress, much of which can still be admired today, was constructed on the orders of King Joao IV from 1641 when Portugal was waging a war to sever its forced union with Spain in 1580. It was designed by a French engineer, Antoine Deville, and incorporated the latest innovations of fortification design. The Spanish attacked several times hoping to stop its construction but all their attempts failed. By the end of 1646, the perimeter of Almeida as it appears today had been built.

In 1663 the Spanish made a final attempt to reconquer Portugal, but suffered a crushing defeat at Almeida, securing Portugal's independence as a separate kingdom. Improvements continued to be made to the works in the following decades. It was nevertheless surrendered after token resistance in 1762 to Spanish and French troops, its loss resulting from a lack of resolve on the part of its 81-year-old commander rather than any defect in its fortifications. Returned to Portugal in 1763, additional works and batteries were installed. Occupied briefly by the French in 1808, it was back in Portuguese hands in September of that year following the French evacuation resulting from the Sintra Convention.

The fortress is sited on a high flat plateau that marks the boundary of the Spanish plains of Leon to the east. Just west of Almeida, the land falls away steeply for about 3km (2 miles) until it reaches the rocky banks of the narrow River Coa. Beyond the Coa further west steep stone cliffs rise abruptly. The ground is very rocky in this part of the country with only about a metre (3ft) of topsoil on the circular plateau upon which the town of Almeida is built. Its fortifications consist of six large bastions with demi-lunes and various refinements. The deep dry ditches that surround the town were carved out of the rocky plateau, an extraordinary feat in itself. Until 1810 the old castle was incorporated in the works, its thick walls acting as a powerful bastion.

It has been suggested that the fortress might have been built closer to the Coa River so as to cover the valley with its guns. That, however, would have placed it on lower ground if built east of the Coa so that enemy guns could have targeted anything within the fortress from overlooking heights. The west side of the Coa is a maze of steep and rocky hills. How a viable town could have been built on such ground is far from obvious, especially given a 17th- and 18th-century transport system. This may also have resulted in the fortress controlling only its immediate surroundings, leaving an enemy free to roam at will beyond the range of its guns. On the flat and rocky plateau where it was built, it commanded the highest ground for many kilometres around and as a key crossroads was also commercially significant. As a result, Almeida was always a major consideration in the strategic planning of any conflict in Portugal. The loss of this fortress could have dire consequences for the nation as it certainly would in 1810.

At the time of the 1810 French invasion, there were 115 pieces of ordnance mounted on its walls, 40 of them being 18pdrs or larger. Its civilian population was about 2,000 souls. The garrison consisted of the 24th Portuguese Infantry Regiment, which mustered 1,585 officers and enlisted men, 401 gunners from the 4th Portuguese Artillery Regiment, 68 troopers from the 11th Portuguese Cavalry Regiment and 2,197 militiamen from the Arganil, Guarda and Trancoso regiments of militia, giving a total garrison of 4,197 officers and men. The governor was BrigGen William Cox, a British colonel seconded to the Portuguese army. He was also Marshal Beresford's brother-in-law. There were five other British officers, one of them an engineer, in an otherwise all-Portuguese garrison.[11]

There were various problems during the summer with the militiamen in the garrison – they wanted to go home to gather their crops rather than stand guard at Almeida and, in June, over 1,000 were absent without leave. Finally, Governor Cox, fearing the remainder would mutiny, relented and allowed the militiamen to go home. He could not see how forcing compulsory military service on peasants could produce decent troops. He expected most to desert and kept asking Beresford for at least another infantry regiment to beef up the garrison. The marshal could not spare any troops and, no doubt to Cox's amazement, the militiamen came back after the harvest. The militia units were hardly pampered. Shortly before the siege, the Trancoso Militia Regiment lacked equipment while the Arganil Militia Regiment had no accoutrements and over 100 of its men did not even have muskets. Even the regulars of the 24th Infantry suffered from equipment shortages; they were missing their bayonet belts, had no canteens, haversacks or greatcoats and lacked some 500 shakos. Overall, the troops were in good spirits and, except for the desertion of the men of two companies of the Guarda Militia, the garrison remained firm as the French neared.

11 The garrison has been estimated as high as 4,500 men but Governor Cox later reported he never had more than '3,000 bayonets' in his garrison. We have followed the Portuguese army records as published in Maghaleas Sepulveda, *Historia Organica...*, XI (Coimbra, 1916) as they are the most precise.

THE BATTLE OF THE RIVER COA

Wellington kept his army some distance west of the River Coa. This gave him the flexibility to move in any direction quickly without being trapped with his back to the river. It also ensured that Masséna could not attack him by surprise but, on the contrary, the Anglo-Portuguese army could threaten the French army's flank while it besieged Almeida. Not a great threat however, reasoned Masséna, as Wellington also could not cross the Coa without difficulty.

After the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, Masséna's army tarried there for a time as it lacked supplies and transport bullocks and needed to organise for the next stage of the campaign: entering Portugal and besieging Almeida. Wellington, for his part, had deployed MajGen Robert Craufurd's Light Division on the Spanish border to keep tabs on Masséna's movements. Craufurd's force consisted of the 43rd and 52nd light infantry regiments, the 95th Rifles, the 1st and 3rd Portuguese Cazadores battalions, the 14th and 16th light dragoons, the 1st Hussars of the King's German Legion and Ross's Troop of the Royal Horse Artillery, in all a force of about 4,000 men. They were posted just south of Almeida, forming a rough line between the fortress and the village of Juncas about 4km (2 miles) to the south. Craufurd had his back to the Coa River and, in case of retreat, could use only the single bridge nearby, about 2km (1 mile) to the west. His forward elements spent some time skirmishing with French outriders but, on 21 July, the whole situation changed dramatically.



French dragoon, c. 1805–11. The bulk of Masséna's cavalry consisted of squadrons of dragoons detached from a variety of regiments. (Print after Meissonnier)

MARSHAL NEY MARCHES WEST

On Masséna's instruction, Marshal Ney with his whole 6th Corps was rapidly moving west towards Portugal. The two cavalry brigades, Gardanne's 15th and 25th dragoons and Lamotte's 3rd Hussars and 15th Chasseurs à cheval totalling about 3,000 troopers rode in front. The fast-moving Chasseurs de siège light infantry battalion was with the cavalry. Then came Loison's 3rd Infantry Division of some 6,800 men in 13 battalions formed in columns. These were the forward elements and they were marching rapidly towards the Portuguese border. In all a force of nearly 10,000 men.

Craufurd was thus heavily outnumbered although he did not realise it at first. Additional troops of Ney's 6th Corps followed Loison. Further back was Mermet's 2nd Infantry Division with another 11 battalions. And behind those another eight battalions of Marchand's 1st Infantry Division with the 10th Dragoons, although it was very unlikely these units would be engaged. Marshal Ney knew that the Anglo-Portuguese would retreat; his one hope was that they would delay so that Loison



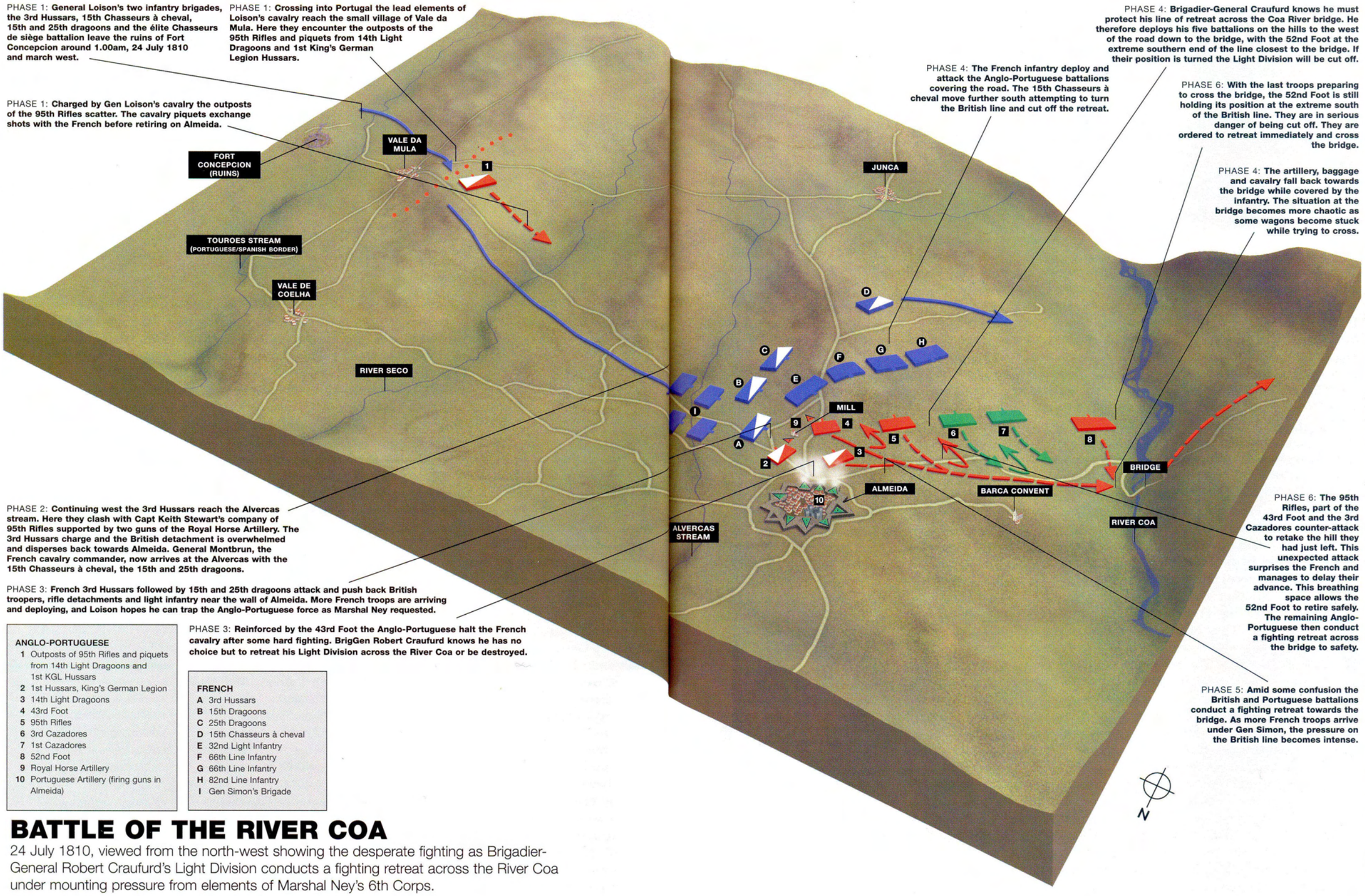
The road leading to the bridge over the River Coa seen from the east. (Photo: RC)

might catch up with them. If so, Ney wished that his troops first cut off the Anglo-Portuguese Light Division from Almeida and, secondly, that they block the Light Division's retreat across the River Coa.

Loison arrived at the ruins of the Spanish fort La Concepcion, regrouped his forward troops and prepared to move against the nearby Allied corps. The night of 23 July was disturbed by an unusually fierce thunderstorm But at 1.00am on 24 July, the French marched on in the rain and wind and thunderbolts, reaching Dos Casas some hours later where they formed columns. By then, the storm had subsided and it was early dawn. At 6.00am the columns moved west. The 3rd Hussars and 15th Chasseurs à cheval were in front followed by the Chasseurs de siège elite battalion, the 15th and 25th Dragoons and, last but not least, Loison's two infantry brigades. The cavalry was first to cross into Portugal and troopers of the 3rd Hussars reached the small village of Vale da Mula followed by the Chasseurs de siège.

The forward elements of the French cavalry and chasseurs encountered the outposts of the 95th Rifles, which they scattered, and engaged the British cavalry troopers of the 14th Light Dragoons and the 1st King's German Legion Hussars out on forward pickets. The British cavalrymen had seen parties of French cavalry scouts before, but this time it was different. More and more French kept coming. Before long, instead of random pot shots, Craufurd and his men could hear sustained carbine fire to the east. Shortly thereafter the overwhelmed British troopers and riflemen were beating a retreat towards Almeida – something was wrong.

Colonel Laferrière of the 3rd Hussars led his troopers west along the road; they met no opposition until they neared the banks of the small Alvercas River. There, a company of the 95th Rifles under Capt Keith Stewart with two guns of the Royal Horse Artillery opened fire. However, the British detachment proved unable to resist the seasoned troopers of the 3rd Hussars. The Hussars' first charge overwhelmed them and they scattered and ran back towards Almeida. General Montbrun, the cavalry commander, now arrived at the Alvercas river bank with the



ANGLO-PORTUGUESE

1 Outposts of 95th Rifles and piquets from 14th Light Dragoons and 1st KGL Hussars
2 1st Hussars, King's German Legion
3 14th Light Dragoons
4 43rd Foot
5 95th Rifles
6 3rd Cazadores
7 1st Cazadores
8 52nd Foot
9 Royal Horse Artillery
10 Portuguese Artillery (firing guns in Almeida)

FRENCH

A 3rd Hussars
B 15th Dragoons
C 25th Dragoons
D 15th Chasseurs à cheval
E 32nd Light Infantry
F 66th Line Infantry
G 66th Line Infantry
H 82nd Line Infantry
I Gen Simon's Brigade

BATTLE OF THE RIVER COA

24 July 1810, viewed from the north-west showing the desperate fighting as Brigadier-General Robert Craufurd's Light Division conducts a fighting retreat across the River Coa under mounting pressure from elements of Marshal Ney's 6th Corps.



The 'windmills' near Almeida were most likely small depots for fertiliser which the Portuguese nicknamed 'Pombal' after their famous 18th-century prime minister. The one shown is just south of Almeida and the fortress's works can be seen in the background. This Pombal or one or more like it were in this same area where Craufurd's Light Division made contact with Marshal Ney's pursuing French troops. (Photo: RC)

15th Chasseurs à cheval and the 15th and 25th Dragoons. French horse artillery was also arriving, followed by the two infantry brigades of generals Ferey and Simon. Montbrun secured the position on the Alvercas River and paused for the troops to regroup. He then deployed to attack further west and marched on. Simon's infantry brigade was to the north, to its south and somewhat further forward were the 3rd Hussars and 15th Dragoons, then Ferey's brigade with the 15th Chasseurs à cheval and the 25th Dragoons behind. It was a full-scale attack by a French division and they were only about a kilometre from Almeida. Worse, they might cut off Craufurd's Anglo-Portuguese Light Division.

The French, seasoned campaigners that they were, had moved expertly and rapidly. For all his qualities, 'Black Bob' Craufurd was nearly caught as his Allied soldiers were now surprised to see the fields to the east covered with lines of French infantry. With drums beating, supported by squadrons of cavalry and with scores of skirmishers to their front, all these French troops were moving towards them.

Part of the company of the 95th Rifles, which ran back from the Alvercas River, had now regrouped around a 'mill' – probably actually a Pombal – held by half a company of the 52nd Light Infantry with a couple of field pieces and two other guns of the Horse Artillery nearby for support. Another company of the 95th, O'Hare's, was ordered forward to check the French and took position behind a stone wall south of the mill. They opened fire on a column of the 32nd French Line Infantry but were now under fire themselves from cannon of the French horse artillery. The *voltigeurs* of the French 32nd came right up to the wall and charged in. They had a distinct advantage in close combat wielding the long Charleville muskets with fixed bayonets against riflemen with their shorter Baker rifles fixed with the awkward sword-bayonets. The British riflemen soon gave way and fled.

Meanwhile, drums were beating and bugle calls sounded in the Anglo-Portuguese camp. In Almeida's bastions, the gunners prepared their cannon while Craufurd's troops outside its walls formed for battle. The Light Division was deployed in a line just east of the road running southwest from the fortress of Almeida to the stone bridge on the River Coa. The 1st King's German Legion Hussars were nearest Almeida, then the 14th Light Dragoons behind the 43rd Light Infantry near a 'windmill', then the 95th Rifles, the 1st Cazadores, the 3rd Cazadores and the 52nd Light Infantry closest to the river.

OVERLEAF **At the Coa River on 24 July 1810 Craufurd and his Light Division were very nearly caught napping by Marshal Ney's 6th French Corps. Craufurd miscalculated the strength and the swiftness of the French attack and his men had to fight hard to extricate themselves from a difficult situation. The Coa River bridge was their only means of escape and had to be held at all costs. The scene shown is in the latter stages of the battle when the Light Division had succesfully retired across the bridge and French attempts to cross were beaten back. (Patrice Courcelle)**

French Charges

The guns on the southern bastions of Almeida opened up on the 'French' running past below but the men in dark uniforms turned out to be riflemen of O'Hare's company of the 95th – a few seem to have been injured before the gunners realised their error. Lieutenant Johnson's detachment of the 95th retreating at the far north of the British line was caught and outflanked by the 3rd French Hussars, who galloped into them slashing with their sabres. And worse was to come as the French 15th and 25th Dragoons moved up in support. Fortunately for the riflemen, some of the British 43rd came up to support them which stopped the French cavalry but only after some hard fighting. Only one officer and 11 men of O'Hare's 95th company escaped unscathed.

The 15th Chasseurs à cheval and more French infantry were arriving on the scene but it took about two hours for the superior French force to deploy for the attack on the Light Division. At this point Craufurd committed a near fatal error; instead of falling back to the other side of the River Coa as fast as he could, he held his line. This was against Wellington's 'most positive' instructions not to engage the French on the east side of the Coa. His division of about 4,000 men – 2,000 British, 1,200 Portuguese and about 800 light cavalry – was strung out on a front of about three kilometres. Fortunately for him, only part of Ney's 6th Corps, some 6,000 men – 3,700 infantry and 2,300 cavalry – was about to attack. But Craufurd was ultimately doomed even if he managed to hold his position as, eventually, more of Loison's Division would arrive and, finally, Marshal Ney with the rest of his corps.

While Ferey's French brigade was forming into four columns to attack the British 43rd near its 'windmill', the 15th Chasseurs à cheval were riding south to outflank the 52nd at the other end of the British line. Ferey's columns, made up of the 32nd Light and the 66th and 82nd Line infantry, marched past Almeida against the left flank of the British position. The fortress's guns fired on the French columns as did the 43rd, but the French did not return the fire. The cannon fire from Almeida 'became extremely hot, but was badly aimed' according to the French report of the battle. As they closed the French charged the British with fixed bayonets. The pressure from the French was now mounting and, in spite of suffering casualties, the French columns were driving a wedge between Almeida and the British 43rd Foot to the south. The 3rd Hussars also charged, fell on the British infantry and sabred many men – Ney's instructions to isolate the fortress from the Allied force outside were being carried out.

The French charges, while successful, were hampered by 'a terrain so difficult that most of our cavalry found it impossible to join in the action'. Marshal Ney later reported that the British cavalry 'refused to charge' the French, rallied under the protection of Almeida's guns and hurried to cross the Coa River. In fairness to the British and German troopers, to charge the French would have been tantamount to suicide under the circumstances and retreat was the sensible option.



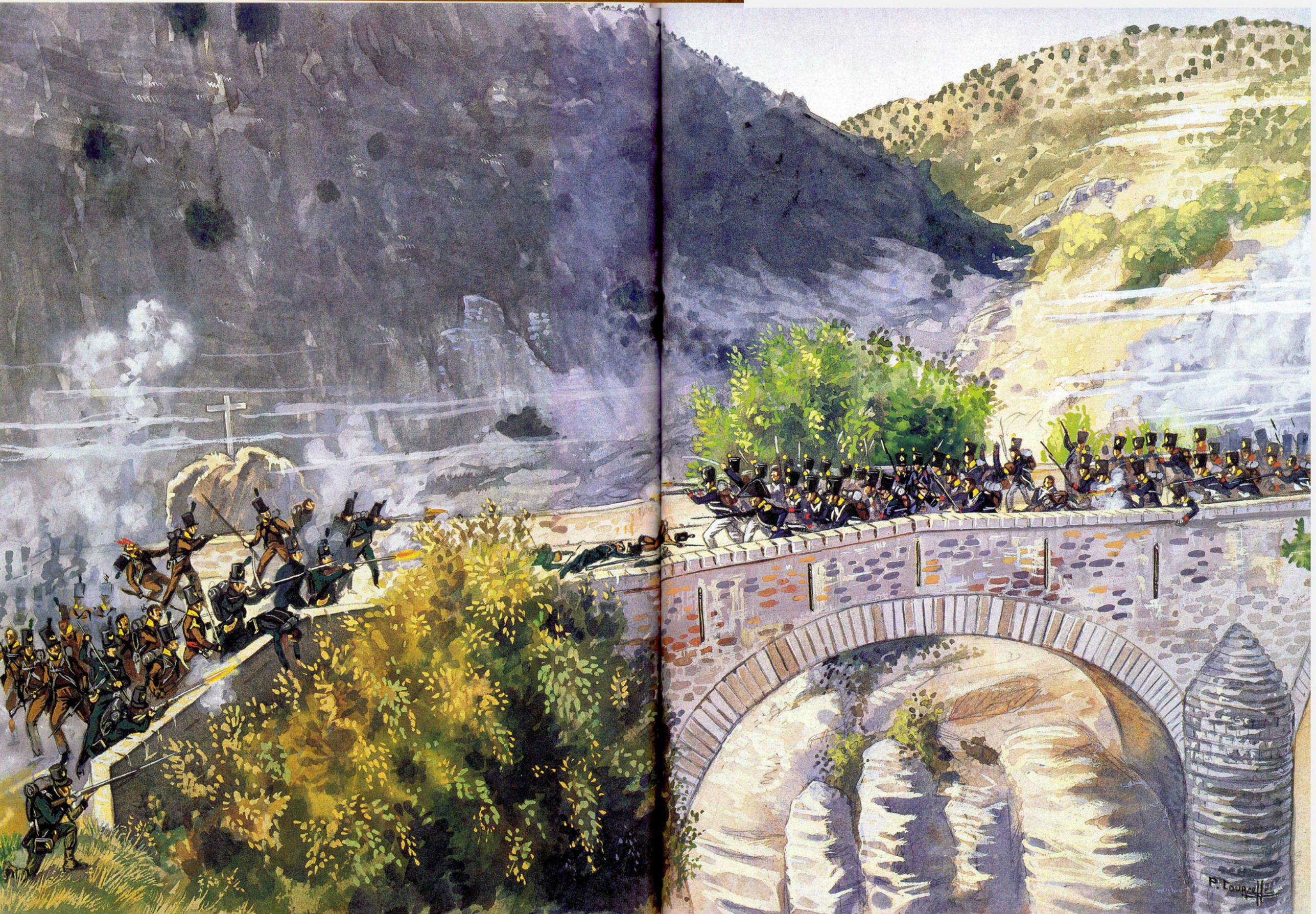
Capt William F.P. Napier (1785–1860) served in the 43rd Light Infantry and was shot through the left hip at the River Coa on 24 August 1810. Although wounded, he nevertheless was with his regiment at Bussaco. He wrote the first detailed British history of the Peninsular War and was later knighted. He is shown in the uniform of an officer of the 43rd c. 1810 – scarlet faced with white, silver buttons and epaulettes; a pelisse slung over the shoulder indicates he is a light infantry officer. The medals were added later.

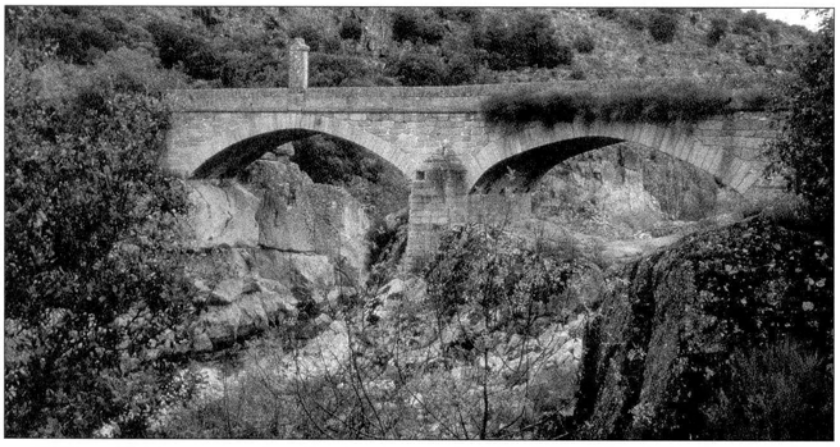


Drummers of a French infantry Regiment, c. 1805–10. (Print after Raffet)

THE RETREAT TO THE BRIDGE

The Light Division was confronted with the prospect of being cut off from its only line of retreat, the stone bridge on the River Coa. Craufurd now





LEFT **The bridge on the River Coa looking towards the north. The original bridge was damaged during the French invasions and repaired later. The stone tablet rising at its centre has commemorative inscriptions. (Photo: RC)**

TOP, RIGHT **Trooper of the 4th French Dragoons and a grenadier of the 94th French Line infantry, c. 1810–11. Two squadrons of the 4th Dragoons were with Masséna's army. The 94th was part of Marshal Victor's 1st Corps in Spain but the dress of the infantry with Masséna would have been generally the same as shown in this English print by Goddard and Booth. Foot troops wore blue uniforms with shakos, dragoons and Chasseurs à cheval green and hussars a wide variety of colours. The grenadier is shown with a bicorn, which was worn when the bearskin cap or shako was not required.**

realised his force had to cross the river, and cross it quickly. However, the infantry would have to hold the French back as long as possible to enable the supply wagons and the guns of the horse artillery to cross the bridge first, followed by the rest of the troops. The British 52nd and 43rd Foot and the companies of the 95th Rifles would have to bear the brunt of the French columns' attacks. The 1st and 3rd Cazadores were to hold their position at the centre to cover the road down to the bridge. The 52nd Foot was on the far right of the British line and was to avoid being outflanked at all cost – if it broke, part of the British force's retreat would inevitably be cut off.

The British retreat soon ran into problems when a wagon missed the sharp turn before the bridge and blocked part of the road. The result was a 'traffic jam' at the worst possible moment. The bridge and its immediate area was soon crowded with vehicles and men trying to get across. While this was happening, the French redoubled their attacks with the Chasseurs de siège, the 32nd Light Infantry and the 66th and 82nd Line infantry gradually gaining ground on the British 43rd and 95th Rifles. Colonel Sydney Beckwith of the 52nd, in charge of that sector, ordered the 1st and 3rd Cazadores to fall back. This went smoothly for the 3rd Cazadores, who took up position on the ridge overlooking the Coa River allowing them to cover the road, but it was less successful for the 1st Cazadores. Some companies redeployed but others were seen to rush down towards the bridge to cross it. This created the impression that they had broken and were running for it. In fact, as the subsequent inquiry into the battle revealed, the Cazadores had not been given clear instructions by Beckwith and believed it was their turn to cross. Whatever the cause, the British situation was rapidly becoming confused and desperate.

Although the British and Portuguese put up stiff resistance, the French were stronger and Craufurd ordered most of his infantry to withdraw. The retreat was carried out in some confusion as the French infantry were close on their heels and the French cavalrymen of the 15th Chasseurs à cheval joined in the pursuit. Allied company commanders tried to withdraw as best as they could down the hill and across the bridge. Craufurd ordered part of the 43rd, the 95th Rifles and the 3rd Cazadores to hold the height overlooking the bridge while others retreated. Not an easy task under mounting French pressure. The Allied screen was gradually falling back from the hills to cross the Coa



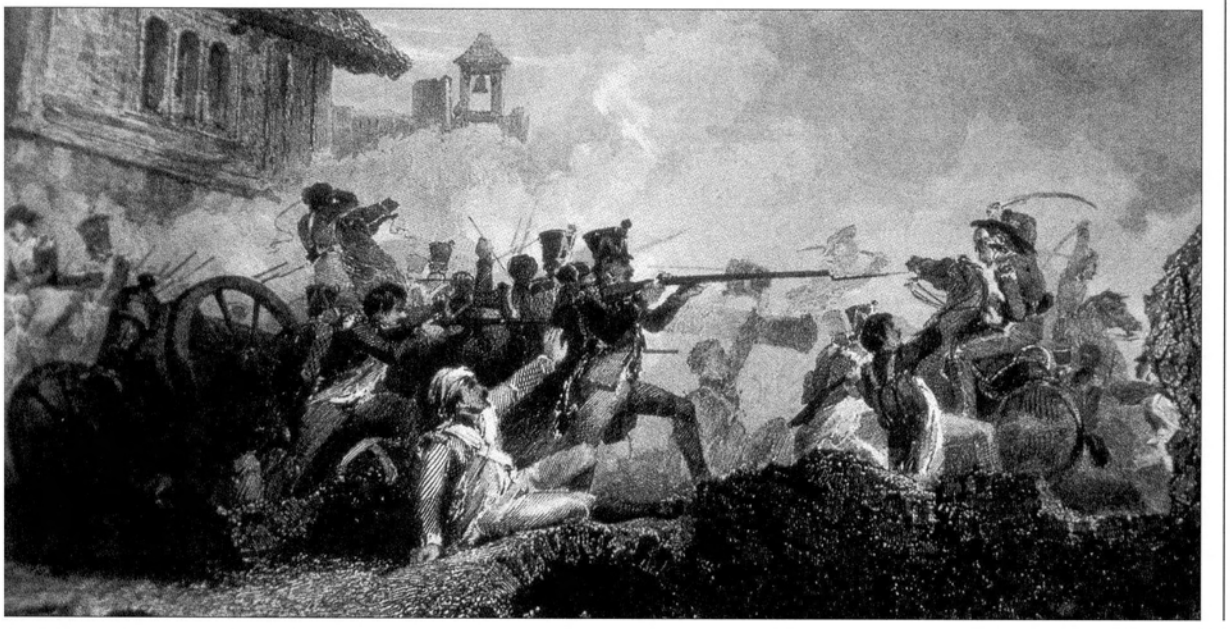
when it was realised that the 52nd had not crossed and was still deployed further south. The French were already moving onto the heights that the British and Portuguese soldiers had just left overlooking the bridge, and would soon cut off the 52nd. Major George Napier rode off at once to tell the 52nd to retire immediately on the bridge. Beckwith realised that the French had to somehow be cleared off the heights above the bridge to gain a little time. He ordered the 95th to retake the hill they had just left. Part of the 43rd and the 3rd Cazadores also supported them, a move that so surprised the French that they were stopped long enough for the 52nd to cross, after which the remaining British and Portuguese companies also fell back across the Coa.

Craufurd's Light Division had been mauled but survived. If Marshal Ney's orders had been followed to the letter, Montbrun's cavalry brigade would have attacked the Allies' right (or south) flank and cut off the retreat.

Conflicting reports

Commenting on this first battle of France's third invasion of Portugal, Oman's history severely chastised Masséna for falsifying reports of this engagement which ultimately appeared in the French official *Moniteur* as a glorious affair for the French army with a colour and guns captured. However, more recent research into Masséna's papers by Professor Donald Howard shows that the reports were not falsified by the marshal but by the editors of the *Moniteur* as it was, first and foremost, a propaganda paper totally controlled by the French imperial government. Oman also criticised the report of the captured British colour as totally unfounded. He wrote that Ney never mentioned 'the imaginary flag' that Masséna reported captured. Ney did in fact mention it in his dispatch of 29 July to Masséna stating that it was captured on 24 July by a M. Domel, a drummer in the 25th Light Infantry. So there seems little doubt that some sort of colour was captured, even if only an ordinary Union Jack from an

French infantry clash with Allied cavalry during the Bussaco campaign. (Print after J. Gilbert)



outpost. As the 95th and the Cazadores had no colours, it may have belonged to the 43rd or 52nd Foot, unless a cavalry standard of the 1st King's German Legion Hussars or the 16th Light Dragoons was taken. The identity of the unit from which the colour was captured is not given. Ney's report of the Anglo-Portuguese strength as given in the *Moniteur* spoke of 10,000 men including 2,000 cavalry and has been used in many French histories since. Yet, in his letter to Masséna written at two in the afternoon of the 24th, he mentioned Craufurd's (which he spelt 'Crawfurd') force as 2,000 cavalry and 3,000 infantry, so it seems the editors of the *Moniteur* 'polished' Ney's dispatches too. Craufurd actually had about 4,000 men. British exaggeration was even more pronounced. Craufurd's letter in *The Times* refuted the *Moniteur*'s version of events but went on to state that he had, in effect, fought Ney's whole 6th Corps of 24,000 men. This figure has been followed by Napier, Oman and other historians until recently. Yet it was only a relatively small part of Ney's 6th Corps that was engaged at the Coa – Ferrey's 3,774 infantrymen and Montbrun's 2,279 troopers. The main body of the 6th Corps was much further back.

The casualties reports also varied. Ney mentioned 530 French casualties killed or wounded. In his 24 July dispatch he stated that the British casualties were 'rather considerable' and that he 'already' had by that time (2.00pm) about 100 prisoners including 'a few officers' held at his HQ. The British reported losses of 36 killed, 273 wounded and 83 missing but, after the battle, the French found the bodies of 301 British and Portuguese soldiers. Loison, who supervised the post-battle mopping up, estimated about 500 Allied wounded and about 100 Allied troops made prisoners. The later inflated French report of 60 Allied officers and 1,200 men killed and wounded was of course for propaganda purposes.

The French were pleased with their success. The faults and virtues of Craufurd's command of the Light Division in this engagement were debated at the time and by historians since. Wellington, however, was the one who had the ultimate responsibility. In a private letter to his brother William Wellesley-Pole, he confided that he 'had positively forbidden the foolish affair in which Craufurd involved his outposts' as he did not want the Light Division in battle on the east side of the Coa River. But an engagement there was and Wellington thought that Craufurd should not have remained 'two hours on his ground after the enemy had appeared' but crossed the river at once to safety – certainly the most sensible response in the circumstances. Yet he did not condemn Craufurd, who was still his best light troops commander, but defended him: 'if I am to be hanged for it, I cannot accuse a man I believe has meant well, and whose error is one of judgement and not of intention'.

In any event the Allies had learned two important lessons. The first was that Craufurd's troops, in spite of the errors of some of their officers, had proved remarkably resilient and that the untried Portuguese Cazadores had performed very well. The second was that the French imperial army, for all its supposed defects, was a well-led, brave and fast-moving force and that anyone who 'fooled around' for too long with the likes of Marshal Ney would be lucky to live to regret it.

THE SIEGE OF ALMEIDA

With the Light Division out of the way, the French army surrounded and invested the fortress of Almeida on 24 July. Its garrison was in good spirits and had ample supplies of food and ammunition. They were confident of delaying Masséna for months and perhaps even discouraging him from going any further by inflicting heavy casualties on his army. On 26 July, several hundred Portuguese made two sallies to destroy nearby houses and works and a similar raid was made two days later, all of which kept the French very much on their guard. Nevertheless, a heavy bombardment was expected and those inhabitants that had remained were instructed to take refuge in the many bomb-proof casemates of the fortress. Initially only Ney's 6th Corps surrounded the town and nothing much happened for days as the heavy siege guns moved very slowly. Some of the Spanish heavy ordnance taken at Ciudad Rodrigo had been added to the French guns, however. Almeida thus faced the prospect of some very heavy bombardments.



The imposing 'Porta da Cruz' south gate leading into the S. Francisco ravelin when entering the fortress of Almeida. (Photo: RC)

To confuse Wellington, Masséna had dispatched 9,700 men from Reynier's 2nd Corps to create a diversion further south. Wellington reacted by having General Rowland Hill and his 2nd Division shadow Reynier from a distance. Some 9,300 men of Junot's 8th Corps also moved to the Agueda River and for a time it appeared that Masséna might bypass Almeida and simply rush into Portugal. This seemed unlikely to Wellington, however, as this would leave Masséna's weakened forces divided and potentially outflanked.

Masséna's real objective remained Almeida and, when the French soldiers started digging trenches on 15 August, Wellington knew he could ignore the feints. The French heavy siege artillery had now arrived and batteries were being built, albeit with difficulty because of the thin topsoil. Numerous sandbags and gabions had to be prepared to make a first parallel. This field work came to about 500 metres (550yds) from the walls of the Sao Pedro bastion to the southeast, chosen by the French engineers as the most suitable spot to breach. From 17 to 24 August, some 50 heavy guns were installed in 11 batteries along this



The southern battery at the fortress of Almeida. (Photo: RC)

first parallel. A second parallel was attempted on 24 August but the heavy fire from the town's guns drove away the French pioneers. Although somewhat out-gunned, the garrison kept up a brisk fire on the French and apart from setting some houses on fire, the bombardment had had little effect. The French continued mounting guns and, by the early morning of the 26th, the 11 batteries had some 65 guns that opened a very heavy fire on the town. Almeida had now been surrounded for a month and while heavy bombardments had now begun, Governor Cox and his garrison remained confident they could hold out for some considerable time yet. The civilians and a proportion of the soldiers were relatively secure in the town's bomb-proof casemates. Most of the troops outside were serving guns in the town's various batteries and were protected by the massive fortifications. In addition to ample food and various supplies, the garrison had plenty of ammunition available, most of it being stored in the remains of the ancient castle, which had been transformed into a powder magazine.

DISASTER!

Then, in the early evening of 26 August, a cataclysm struck Almeida, a disaster unparalleled in the annals of the Peninsular War. At about seven or eight in the evening, a lucky shot from a French mortar fell within the walls of the old castle, where the main powder magazine was situated. There are several versions as to what happened next but unsurprisingly there is no first-hand account. At this point some 30 gunners were in the



Looking west from the ramparts of Almeida. The French batteries were mostly situated on this side. (Photo: RC)

OVERLEAF

The Portuguese garrison of Almeida used the castle as the fortress's main magazine. In the early evening of 26 August, a French bomb somehow ignited 150,000 pounds of black powder in the old castle. The subsequent cataclysmic explosion levelled great areas of the town and wreaked huge damage on the town's defences. The bastions on the southern and western walls were largely destroyed, with many of the guns being blown off the walls. Both the garrison and the civilian population suffered significant casualties and the town was rendered virtually indefensible. The destruction of the fortress was a stroke of amazing luck for Marshal Masséna. (Patrice Courcelle)

castle transferring powder barrels to the ramparts. It would seem that a large bomb crashed through the door of a subsidiary magazine and there ignited some 4,000 prepared charges which, in turn, ignited 150,000 pounds of black powder and over 1,000,000 musket cartridges. In a matter of two or three seconds, the medieval castle went up in a tremendous, earth-shaking explosion. A French dragoon related that 'not only the magazine blew up but almost the whole city; houses, churches, towers and palaces, everything collapsed! The earth was crevassed up to our camp. I never heard such an awful noise.' Colonel Emmanuel-Frédéric Sprünglin, a French staff officer, was observing the city with Marshal Ney when the explosion occurred. He recalled in his *Souvenirs* that 'the earth trembled and we saw an immense whirlwind of fire and smoke rise from the place. It was like the bursting of a volcano – one of the things that even after twenty-six years I cannot forget. Great blocks of stone were hurled into the trenches where they killed some of our men. Heavy-calibre guns were lifted from the ramparts and hurled far outside them. When the smoke cleared, a great part of Almeida had disappeared, and the rest was a heap of debris.' To make matters worse a secondary magazine also exploded in one of the bastions.

The havoc within Almeida was colossal. The castle, made of large stones, had totally disappeared! All that remainded were its foundations at ground level. The same was true of the small nearby cathedral, which vanished in an instant – not a trace of it left standing! Sections of the walls and bastions were severely damaged, especially on the south and west sides, and their guns largely destroyed. The force of the explosion was such that it levelled almost every structure in town, the second storeys of houses being blown off. The place was in ruins within seconds



with every building either destroyed or damaged. Fires had broken out in many places in the city. Worse still, some 600 infantrymen and about 200 gunners perished, blown clear off the ramparts. Across the town many more were lying wounded, often critically. Of the 1,000 civilians still in Almeida, as many as 500 perished, often killed in collapsing houses. It was a scene of utter desolation.

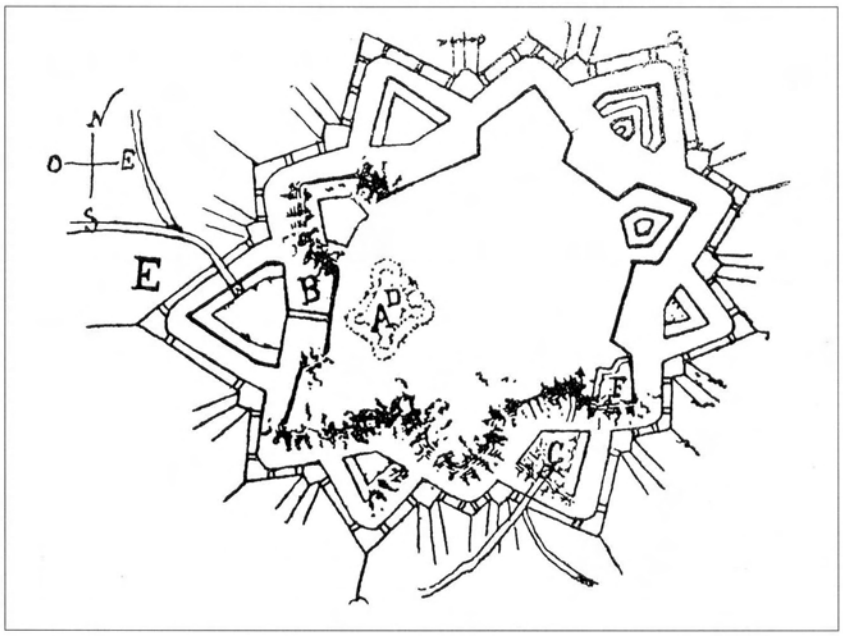
Yet, almost incredibly in such a catastrophe a few of the Portuguese gunners on the ramparts who had the miraculous luck to survive the explosion continued to serve their cannon even as debris was still falling down 'threatening to crush them'. The French who witnessed this praised their 'admirable coolness'.

In spite of the chaos around him, Governor Cox remained calm and, emerging from a casemate, ordered the garrison out in case the French assault troops should try to rush the damaged ramparts. The French were quite astonished at the magnitude of the explosion and were not ready to mount such an assault. Nor, as night fell on the ruined town lit here and there by fires burning within its walls, did Masséna feel that one would be necessary. The dazed survivors, military and civilian alike, emerged from their shelters. In the meantime Governor Cox, undaunted by 'the most horrible spectacle that can be imagined', ensured that the gunners continued to man their cannon. On the west side the guns had been mostly blown away with the parapets, but in other areas remained mounted. In spite of the massive explosion, the bastioned ramparts, although battered, survived.

Nevertheless, it was as clear to Cox as to everyone else in the town that Almeida had been rendered practically indefensible. The governor now put his faith in the hope that Wellington would come to the rescue. However, just as Wellington sacrificed Ciudad Rodrigo, he would not risk his army to save Almeida. As a fortress Almeida had been destroyed and would likely fall to the first large French storming party. This realisation and the fate of its garrison were a bitter enough pill for Wellington to swallow, but he could foresee that the wider consequences of Almeida's fall were even worse. The French could now invade Portugal unhindered and he had to find suitable ground on which to face them with his partly untried army. Almeida was certainly not the place to make that stand. In the early morning of 27 August Marshal Masséna, accompanied by several officers including the renegade Portuguese general the Marquis d'Alorna, rode up to survey the damage which was clearly immense. All were shocked to find that the castle and the cathedral had vanished.

SURRENDER

Almeida was a scene of total desolation and Masséna sent a summons to surrender. Cox answered that he would not surrender as he was not 'reduced to the last extremity' and his garrison could still put up a fight. In fact with only 39 barrels of powder left he was bluffing. Cox impressed LtCol Pelet, who delivered the summons, as a 'tall, noble, a handsome figure with the shrewdness of self-discipline, the appearance of a strong character', which was certainly true, perhaps too much so. Cox sent artillery Major Barreiros and Captain Pedro de Mello to Masséna's camp to



Plan of Almeida after the explosion of 26 August 1810. The letter 'D' indicates the site of the magazine in the old castle (A). As can be seen, the walls were largely destroyed on the south and west side rendering the place indefensible.

try to obtain better terms and thus introduce more delay. They were to stall until noon the following day and ensure that the terms of capitulation allowed the militiamen of the garrison to return to their homes, and the regular soldiers to rejoin the Allied army with their equipment.

Cox was either unaware or had ignored that the morale of many of his soldiers in Almeida was now shattered; when the Marquis d'Alorna with some staff officers rode up near the walls, some soldiers of the garrison recognised him and shouted 'Long Live Marquis d'Alorna' and talked with him and other Portuguese officers on his staff. Masséna meanwhile rejected Cox's conditions as Barreiros had divulged to the French marshal, seemingly in the absence of Mello, that Almeida had very little powder. Masséna, now knowing Almeida was his, conceded nothing and Barreiros signed the capitulation on the spot. So did Mello, but he insisted the garrison should be freed. Cox was not pleased when presented with this by the French envoy, LtCol Pelet, and worried about the garrison he argued for better terms. Time passed and finally Pelet cut the negotiations short as the French knew full well that he was playing for time in the hope that Wellington would come to the rescue. The French could see the town's telegraph signalling to Wellington's outposts. Finally, Masséna got fed up and at 8.00pm the French guns again opened fire. By now, the entirety of the garrison was ready to give up and even Cox was perturbed as shells fell on the town again. Despite all the signals, it was increasingly clear that Wellington was not coming. Faced with all this, Cox sent word that he would capitulate and the regular troops would be prisoners of war but the militiamen would be sent home. Masséna agreed and the guns stopped firing at about 3.00am on 28 August. The great fortress of Almeida, key to Portugal, had fallen to Napoleon's invading troops.

It seems that the Marquis d'Alorna convinced Masséna to let the militiamen go to their homes on condition that they would fight the



The site of the medieval castle at Almeida. As can be seen, its walls were literally cut off at ground level, as if sliced off by a giant knife, such was the force of the explosion. (Photo: RC)

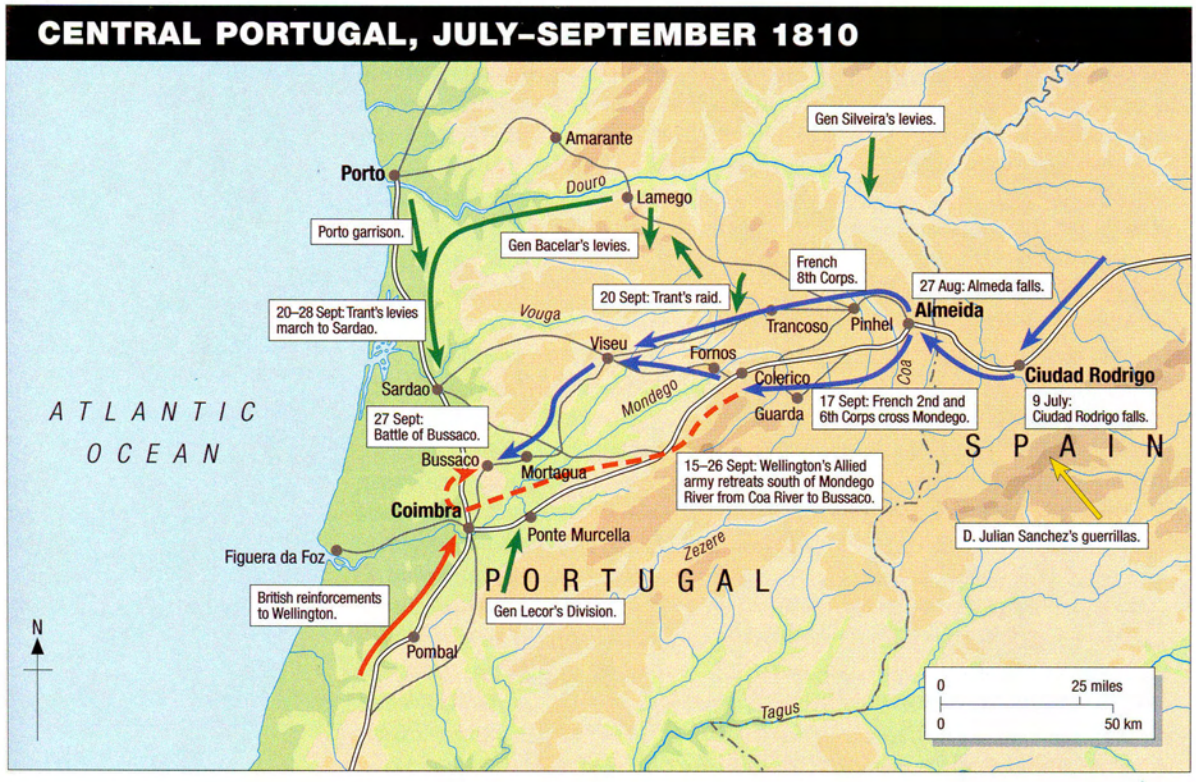
British in the future. However, Masséna drafted over 600 militiamen as pioneers before letting the rest go. As the French later bitterly realised, many liberated militiamen took up arms against them instead. Many Portuguese regulars in Almeida 'joined' the French army, which initially rather upset their British comrades until it was seen that they deserted in droves and rallied to the British lines whenever they could. The very first night the Portuguese regulars saw in French service, 'some officers and 200 men deserted' and many more later followed suit. Wellington soon reported that many men of the 24th Portuguese infantry had joined his army. Masséna complained to Wellington about the desertions of the militiamen and the soldiers. On 24 September he was reminded that he had pressed seven officers and 200 men from each of the three militia regiments to form a pioneer corps in violation of the terms of Almeida's capitulation; thus the Allied commander considered the terms null and void. Nevertheless, Almeida had fallen to the French. The consequences for Portugal in the months to come were to be horrific.[12]

12 The circumstances of Masséna's violation of Almeida's surrender terms were in a letter from Governor Cox to Marshal Beresford dated at Aldea de Obispo on 30 August 1810. Beresford sent it on to Wellington when he recieved it on 4 September. As it turned out the pioneer corps does not appear to have been formed as the militiamen seemingly absconded in large numbers as well. Cox, and Maj Hewitt and Capt Tolly of the 24th Portuguese were sent to England for exchange. See *Boletim do Arquivo Historico Militar*, III (1933) and Wellington's *Dispatches*, VI, pp. 464-465.

TO BUSSACO

As shattering as the news of Almeida's explosion was in Portugal, the nation lost none of its resolve. It now knew that it would be invaded for a third time in as many years and that this invasion would likely be the worst. Nor was the resolve of the British under Wellington affected. The Allies had hoped for the best but, wisely, they had also made elaborate plans for the worst. From now on, the strategy would be to slow down the French army's progress, strip the countryside of any supplies, indeed anything the French could use, and, if at all possible, severely maul the French before retreating behind the imposing network of fortifications that were being built north of Lisbon. The Allied army was practically intact as only its Light Division had been previously engaged.

The next step would obviously be a gradual retreat westward towards Coimbra as Masséna's army would now pour into Portugal. Wellington deployed his light troops, and his light cavalry in particular, as a screen to the rear of his retreating army. It was vital that they were constantly aware of the location and movements of the French army.

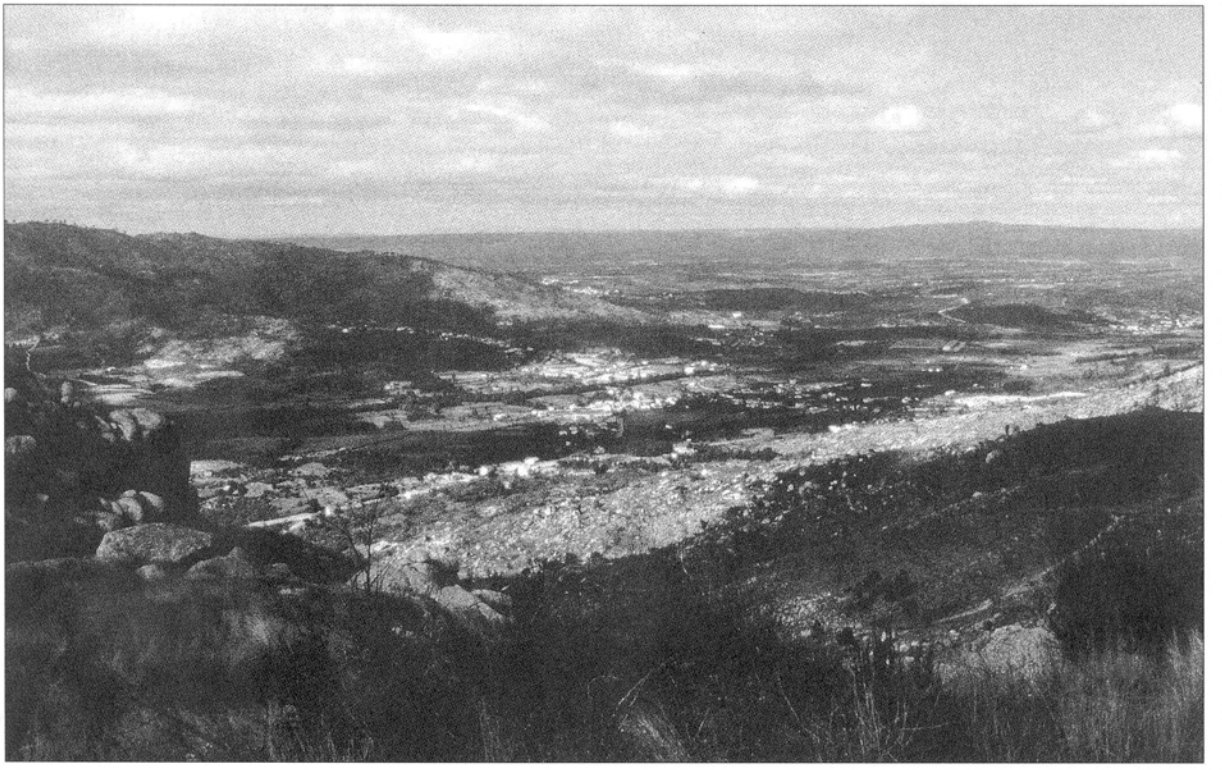


With the fall of Almeida, Wellington expected Masséna to quickly march into Portugal but the French were short of supplies, transport vehicles and animals and remained at Almeida while these deficiencies were rectified. In the meantime, French patrols reported that the inhabitants had left their dwellings and that the countryside was basically empty except for 'brigands' who fired on French troops in much the same way as the guerrillas in Spain. On 4 September, Masséna issued a proclamation to the Portuguese warning that if French troops captured them bearing arms but not wearing uniforms they would be shot. Indeed a few were captured and shot, leading to an exchange of letters between Masséna and Wellington, the former wishing to execute them as common criminals, the latter insisting that, although they had no uniforms, they were part of the Ordenanza. Masséna was also aware that the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida had weakened his army and wished to wait for Reynier's 2nd Corps so as to enter Portugal in strength with about 65,000 men.

On 14 September, Masséna's troops finally started marching westward, the 2nd Corps entered Guarda and the 6th Corps reached Freixedas, driving out detachments of British cavalry in both places. The next day, the French army advanced further and Wellington had expected it to follow the main road south of the Mondego River. Accordingly, he had selected Ponte de Murcella as a good position to make a stand against the French. However, on the 17th, the Portuguese and British scouts reported that the French army was crossing the bridge over the Mondego River at Fornos and taking another route north of the river. They were going towards the town of Viseu, which meant they would have to cross the Alcoba mountain range to get there. This came as a surprise to the Allies but was certainly good news as they knew Masséna's chosen route was an utterly wretched road. As D'Urban, the Quartermaster General of the Portuguese army put it, this news made 'Lord Wellington's game a much simpler one than he expected. Instead of being distracted by the uncertainty' of the French choosing their approach by 'three or four routes, he will now only have to look to one [route] and fight upon whatever part of that he likes best.'

THE HARD ROAD

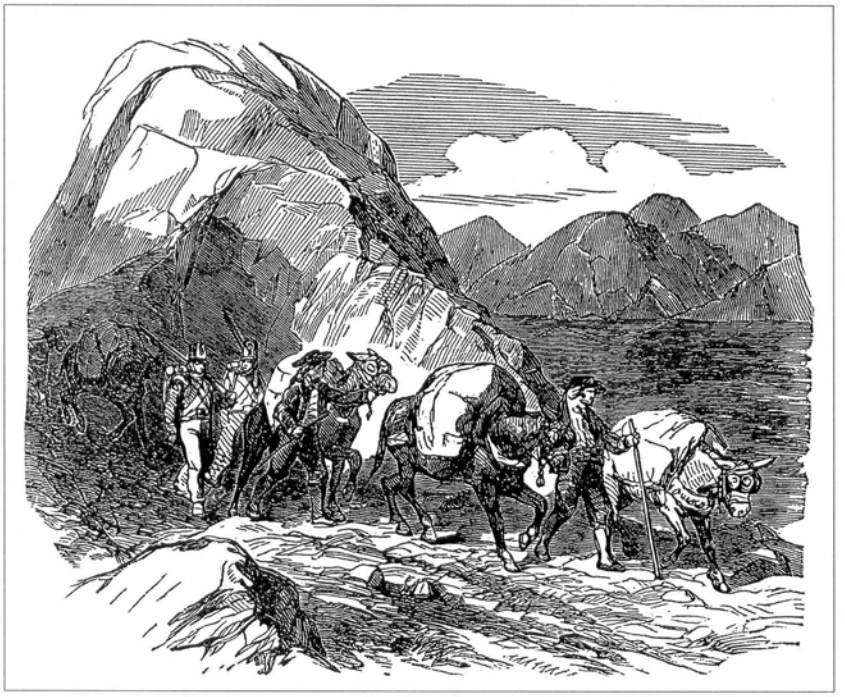
Masséna's reasons for choosing this route remain unclear. Marbot, who was on Masséna's staff, later related it was due to Commandant Pelet's influence. Masséna was looking for a large town to replenish his army's dwindling supplies. The apparent lack of knowledge of the country on the part of the French command was the result of Masséna having very little dependable intelligence available on Portugal. The map of Portugal used by the French was published in 1778 and contained numerous inaccuracies particularly with regard to the more remote parts of the country; its topographical information was minimal, some roads were shown and some were not. The Portuguese officers with Masséna were, unluckily for him, of no help. This part of the country was as little known to them as him, although it seems they were embarrassed to admit it and only made things worse by guessing what lay ahead. Masséna had heard of large field fortifications being erected on



The hills and valleys near Guarda. West of Guarda, the French army moved into mountainous and difficult terrain. (Photo: RC)

the main road to block his way and he probably felt that by using the northern roads he could bypass them, resupply his army at the sizeable town of Viseu, and fall on the north flank of the Allied army.

When the French army moved west from Almeida it left behind the flat landscape east of the Coa River and by the time it reached Guarda found itself in mountainous country. As General Foy wrote: 'nine tenths of the main roads in Portugal are impracticable to vehicles', which gives an indication of the difficulties facing Masséna.[13] The main road to Coimbra south of the Mondego River, even if a crude affair as it must have been in 1810, offered just about the only possibility for wheeled transport in that area. Even today this remains a remote part of Portugal. It is only in the last few years that the fine modern highway between Viseu and Guarda was built. It is mostly used by lorries that, even with all the highway amenities, have some challenging hills to negotiate on the way to and from Spain. The scenery is magnificent but the route must have been nightmarish for the French troops in 1810. This is borne out in the French journals of the campaign. Baron Marbot noted the roads in Portugal – at least in the interior of that country – were almost always little more than rocky paths where most portage was carried out by mule trains. It was bad enough for infantry and cavalry but for an artillery park of some 60 guns with all their limbers and wagons, it turned into a nightmare once they passed the medieval town of Trancoso. The road ceased to exist, artillery colonel Noël related, all that remained was a stony and narrow path. His batteries of field guns were with the main army. His gunners would try to enlarge the road with picks and a terrible climb up would be followed by a perilous winding route down with more hills further on to negotiate – the men were soon



Transport of supplies in Portugal was carried on mostly by mule trains, wheeled transport being confined to the few main roads.

exhausted. All order was lost and it became a case of 'each gun for itself'. The countryside had emptied of its inhabitants but Noël's men did eventually find an old peasant in a deserted hamlet who confirmed they were on the 'road' to Viseu.

Trant's Raid

Noël finally reached Viseu by 20 September, but the bulk of the artillery park and supply trains still lagged behind. It was only the next day at Sotojal on the Adsomil road that it encountered the first resistance. Colonel Nicholas Trant had been shadowing this French column with his brigade of militia and two squadrons (181 men) from the 6th and 11th Portuguese cavalry regiments. The French column was preceded by a company of grenadiers and a 500-man battalion of the green-coated Irish Legion brought up the rear. Montbrun's huge column of cavalry was further down the road but too far away to be able to assist immediately. Although his force consisted entirely of untried raw troops, Trant nevertheless attacked. The cavalry squadrons charged the grenadiers head on but the elite French soldiers easily repulsed the troopers, killing about 50 of them according to Marbot. Meanwhile, Trant's militiamen on both sides of the road opened fire on the train and went in, destroying some wagons, taking about 80 prisoners and calling on the rest to surrender as they were surrounded. French commandant Fontinilly began negotiations to buy time as he knew the escort battalion of the Irish Legion was coming to the rescue. Trant fell for the trick. The Irish were soon in sight and the French officer told 'the English officer' that he could no longer negotiate as 'here is my general coming to my rescue with eight thousand men …' Trant and his men hastily retired to the hills. As Marbot later observed, had the park and train been destroyed, Masséna's invasion might have ended at Viseu.[14]



View of the older part of the city of Viseu where Masséna spent an inordinate amount of time with his mistress. (Photo: RC)

DELAYS IN VISEU

In the meantime between 18 and 20 September the long column of the exhausted French army reached Viseu. This town of 9,000 souls was, to their astonishment, empty of its inhabitants! The only food they could find there in quantity were lemons and grapes, which was not very substantial nourishment. By the time Masséna was moving Ney's 6th Corps out of Viseu on 22 September, the park and the cavalry reserve had still not reached the town. Masséna himself stayed in Viseu with many of his troops for almost six days, a delay almost as damaging as his decision to take the awful road north of the Mondego Valley in the first place. Rumour in the French army had it that the delay was due to Masséna's mistress, who was much fatigued by the journey. Finally, on 25 September, Masséna resumed his march west. Trant's attack had shaken the French high command as it was obvious the park and the supplies had been weakly guarded so it would now be escorted by Junot's 8th Corps which was left behind for that purpose.

Wellington's scouts were constantly watching for the next French move. These scouts, according to Marbot, were extraordinary. They were usually lone British officers who were superb horsemen especially mounted on the best thoroughbred horses. One would often be seen on a hill following the French column just out of musket range. French light cavalry might go after the observers but never caught any as they would easily lose them thanks to their race horses. As the French troopers rejoined their column, the British scout on his superb horse would often be seen approaching again. Thus Wellington, who prized intelligence services, was kept constantly informed of his enemy's movements while as Marbot sadly observed, the French had no comparable source of information.

Wellington now certainly needed all the intelligence he could get on the movements of Masséna's army. He needed to know where it was going so as to pick a new position where a battle to slow down and maul

the French might be fought. The move to Viseu had been unexpected and most welcome as it had given more time for reinforcements to reach Wellington's army. Some 1,792 officers and men had even formed a new brigade in Brent Spencer's 1st Division thanks to the timely arrival of the 1/7th Foot and the 79th Highlanders. Wellington expected that, from Viseu, Masséna would want to march southwest to reach the main road to Coimbra south of the Mondego. However, when the advance guard of Ney's 6th Corps came out of Viseu on 20 September, it marched west towards the Serra of Bussaco. Wellington was immediately notified by his fast-riding scouts. This was good news for the Allied commander as the Bussaco mountain ridge north of Coimbra would form an excellent defensive position. The Allied army would now be deployed there over the next few days. A close watch of the French's every movement confirmed that Masséna was indeed intending to use that route as reports came in of other troops marching out of Viseu in the same direction. To be on the safe side of possible events, Wellington also called Trant's militia to cover the area north of Bussaco in case Masséna might try some subsidiary operations against Porto, and posted Spencer's 1st Division to the south should some of his troops move towards the main road to Coimbra. Hill's 2nd British Division had acted independently in the past weeks, shadowing especially Reynier's 2nd French Corps from the south of the Mondego River. Hill was therefore nearing Wellington's main army and hurried up the pace so he could join it to face the French at Bussaco.

13 Maximilien Foy, *Histoire de la guerre de la péninsule*, Paris, 1828, II, p. 78.
14 As quoted in *Mémoires du Général Baron de Marbot*, Paris, 1891, II, p. 378. Oman, III, p. 350, felt that Trant missed 'a great opportunity' to destroy the train. Perhaps, but it must be recalled he had raw levies who were incapable of facing regulars. Luz Soriano, III, p. 158, gives Trant's force as 3,000 militia and 30 troopers. His militiamen were from the Aveiro, Feira, Coimbra, Porto, Maia, Peñafiel and Oliveira do Azemis regiments. Fontinilly's '8,000 men' were a bluff but Montbrun's troopers were coming up as well.

BUSSACO PRELIMINARIES

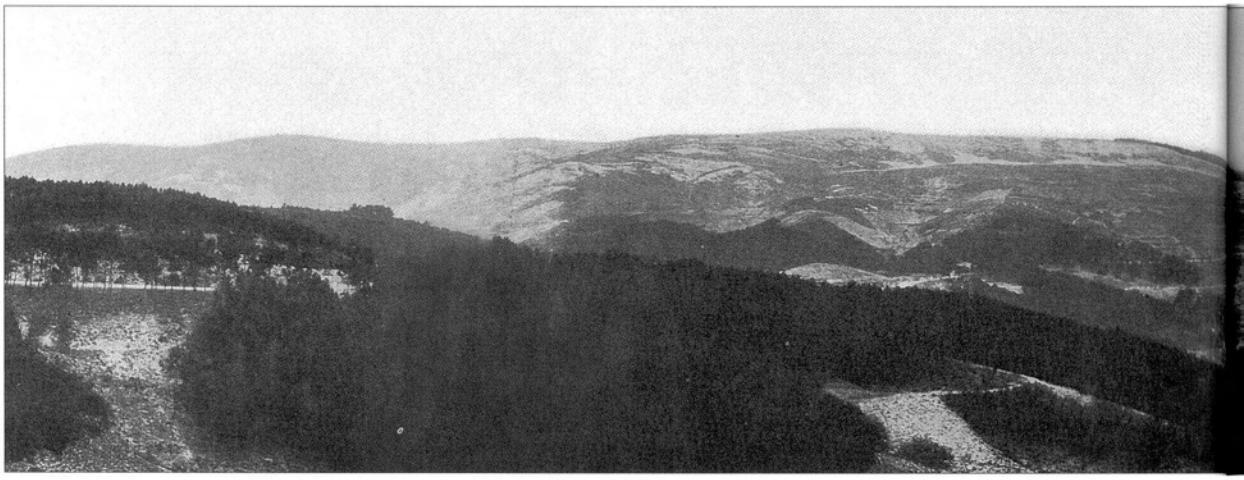
Serra de Bussaco

Today, the Serra de Bussaco is a superb resort with a beautiful forest where one can take the waters as well as enjoy some of Portugal's best hotels – it is that country's Spa, a Lusitanian monument to stylish sightseeing. The ridge is a long mountain with a flat top in places which goes on for some 12km (7½miles) with its highest point being 572 metres (1,877 feet).[15]

In 1810, the long ridge of Bussaco was anything but a stylish resort. It was considered a most remote area, difficult of access, which even the people of Coimbra barely knew. The ridge and its surrounding hills were sparsely populated by rugged mountaineers who made their living from herds of sheep and goats that freely roamed the hills. There were fewer trees on the ridge than today. The heavily wooded mountains shown in the author's photos (taken in March 1999 and October 2000) are the result of the modern diversification of the local economy. The illustrations taken from Chambers's book published in 1910 with far fewer trees and dwellings give a much better impression of the ridge as Wellington's and Masséna's troops would have seen it in 1810. Visibility was much better and the Allies could see the French much more clearly than would be possible on the same ground today.

In 1810 Bussaco was such a remote spot that it had become a haven for hermits. A Barefoot Carmelite convent was built there in 1628. The Barefoot Carmelites were a reclusive order of friars vowed to live in poverty and the contemplation of nature for the greater glory of God. During the 1630s they added a high stone wall around their estate for greater seclusion but also, as these friars were remarkable botanists, to protect their trees from the attentions of the local goats. By the 18th century, this walled enclosure of some 4,000 square metres (43,000 square feet) had become the 'Forest of Bussaco' – remote but renowned amongst botanists for its fine varieties of Lusitanian chestnut trees, green chestnut trees, Mexican cypress, oak, ash, etc.

This isolated, timeless existence at Bussaco came to an abrupt end at 1.00am on 20 September 1810: 'there arrived here, noted Brother José de S. Silvestre, an aide-de-camp of Lord Wellington; when we opened the gate he said he wished to see the convent, crying: Now! now! as by 2 p.m. to-morrow, the General-in-Chief will be here.' After seeing the room, ordering it to be immediately whitewashed and cleaned for the general, the aide-de-camp drank a little wine and then galloped off. The Carmelite Brothers were aghast, their tranquil world had been shattered in a moment. Tens of thousands of men were marching towards Bussaco and much slaughter would ensue. We 'now saw ourselves obliged to tolerate things never before known in this house' wrote Brother José.[16]

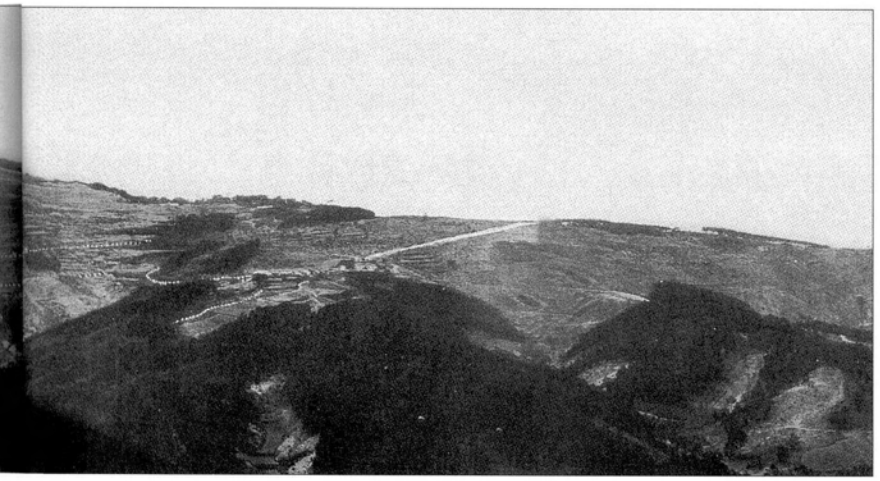


THE FRENCH ARMY APPROACHES

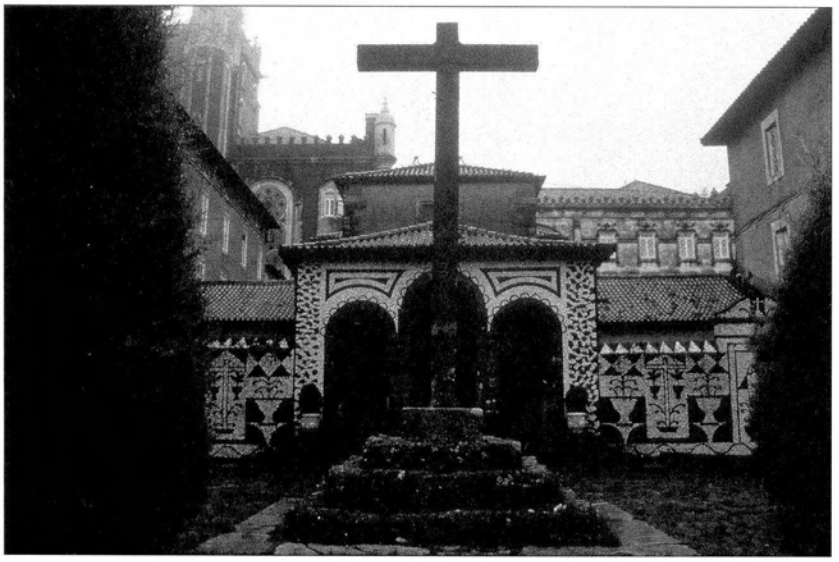
While the commander-in-chief, Marshal Masséna, wished to stay in Viseu, seemingly for some rest and recuperation with his mistress, his fiery subordinate, Marshal Ney, was most eager to press on. His 6th Corps had already left Viseu with Loison's advance guard division, reaching Tondella by the evening of 20 September. Ney wanted to send his light cavalry further on the next day but was stopped by Masséna, who wanted to wait for the artillery of the 2nd Corps and Junot's 8th Corps before moving further west. Ney, who could not stand Masséna having his mistress with the army, wished only to continue the advance and reach the Anglo-Portuguese positions as fast as possible before they grew stronger. The two marshals were once again at odds.

To make matters worse, Masséna sent orders direct to Loison and his advance guard, over Ney's head, giving him specific orders to attack the British and Portuguese outposts at Mortaga. Loison complied, sending 450 troopers and 800 infantry to push the Allied outposts back on the morning of 23 September. There was no action, the Allies leaving the ground to the advancing French. By then Reynier's 2nd Corps had reached Mortaga and these troops participated in the first lively engagement on 24 September. Just beyond the village were Craufurd's Light Division and Dennis Pack's Portuguese Brigade, a total of over 6,000 men, besides some light artillery and pickets of light cavalry deployed to their front. This largely Portuguese force had been retiring before the French on the road from Viseu destroying bridges, crops and just about anything that could be useful to the invading French. Craufurd and Pack seemed to want to make a stand and the French advanced, drove in the British light cavalry but went no further when the artillery opened up. The British and Portuguese were still there the next morning with Craufurd itching for a fight. Wellington ordered him back and a frustrated Craufurd proceeded further west to join the main army at Bussaco, some of his troops skirmishing with advanced parties of the French 2nd and 6th corps throughout the day.

Later that same day, 25 September, Loison's Division of 6th Corps reached Moura. To the west stood the ridge of Bussaco whose steep



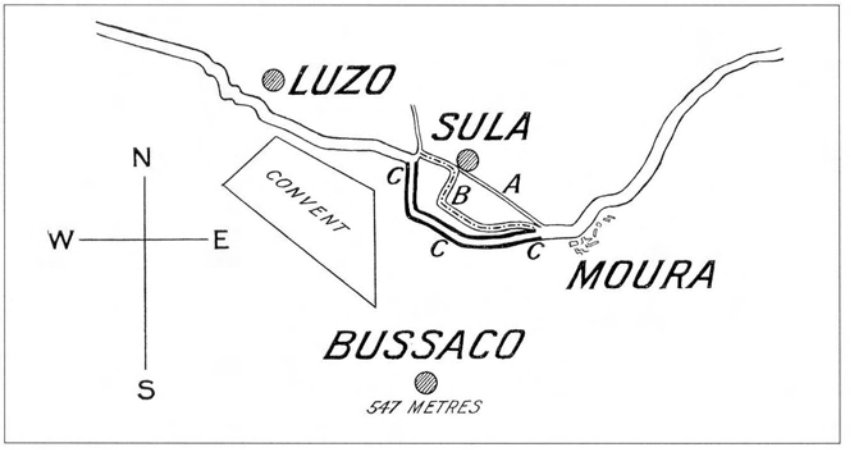
LEFT **Bussaco Ridge from a panoramic photo in Chamber's *Bussaco* published in 1910.**



BELOW, LEFT **Entrance to the Bussaco Convent. Built from 1628, this rustic convent's gates were decorated with pebbles and stones embedded in the masonry of its triple arched portico. The palace and gardens were later built around it but its structure was basically preserved. Wellington slept in a small room at left of the arches and used the place as his HQ while in Bussaco. (Photo: RC)**

slopes were alive with British and Portuguese troops. Loison estimated them at about 30,000 – he was facing Spencer's, Craufurd's and Cole's divisions. At about the same time, 2nd Corps' advanced guard reached Sao Antonio do Cantaro looking up at Picton's Division 4km south of Moura. By the evening, Marshal Ney was on the spot with 6th Corps and received a message from Reynier that he would be arriving at Sao Antonio with 2nd Corps the next day. Ney sent one of his ADCs to Masséna with a situation report. He also stressed that the presence of the commander-in-chief was urgently required to decide what action was appropriate. Ney then answered Reynier, who also could not suffer Masséna's mistress, telling him that the British were moving troops to Coimbra and to the Porto road to cover their flanks, adding, after stressing the necessity for a decision from Masséna, that 'if I was in command, I would attack without an instant's hesitation …'[17]

Ney's instinct to attack immediately may have been right. We can never know if such an assault would have succeeded but its chances would have been better than later. The troops his scouts had detected



Plan of the western part of Bussaco ridge, 1910. A hundred years after the battle, there were (and are now) three parallel roads between the villages of Sula and Moura. Those marked A and B existed in 1810 but the one marked C is a modern road built about 1900–10.

apparently covering the Allied flanks were in fact columns of reinforcements marching in. These included Hill's 2nd Division, which was just arriving, so that hours later Wellington's position was much stronger. But Ney was not in command.

He was, however, on the spot at the foot of Bussaco. Throughout 26 September the French army streamed into Moura and Sao Antonio. It made a most impressive sight from the top of the ridge. Moyle Sherer of the 34th Foot recalled 'the magnificent scene which burst upon my astonished eyes. Far as the eye could stretch, the glintering of steel and clouds of dust raised by the cavalry and artillery proclaimed the march of a countless army.' Ney deployed the army as follows: his 6th Corps was on the French right and centre at Moura; Reynier's 2nd Corps was at Santo Antonio de Cantaro; Junot's 8th Corps followed by the artillery park was coming up and would place itself in reserve behind the centre; Montbrun's cavalry reserve was further behind. At about 2.00pm Brother José saw the British guns open up on the French at Moura and some Cazadores 'descended the mountain and did the same, and their fire lasted with but little effect until 4 p.m.'

Masséna was at Mortaga, a ride of about two hours to Moura. It seems that he only left at about 2.00pm and so would have finally reached Ney at Moura at about 4.00pm at the earliest. Rumour in the army had it that his mistress was the cause of the delay. Considering the events of previous days and the lack of any information as to Masséna's whereabouts the soldier's rumour seems plausible. In any event, it was now late afternoon and too late to order any useful reconnaissance. The day had been wasted and it had been to Wellington's profit as the French officers knew. By then Ney's opinion was shared by all the other generals. When Masséna finally came face to face with Ney, Pelet, who was one of the staff officers nearby, witnessed a very sharp discussion between the marshals regarding the necessity of an immediate attack. While this was going on, General Junot came up and the arguments were renewed. Then, Reynier came up to the group and even this cold-tempered general heated up the discussion. At length, Masséna finally agreed to attack the next day, the 27th. 'Give us orders' replied his generals. In this charged atmosphere, Masséna ordered the two staff officers present, Pelet and Fririon, to sit on the ground while he dictated the order for the attack.



Masséna and his staff arrive in the area of Bussaco, September 1810. Azujelo by Jorge Colaco done at the end of the last century. (Bussaco Palace)

MASSÉNA'S ORDERS

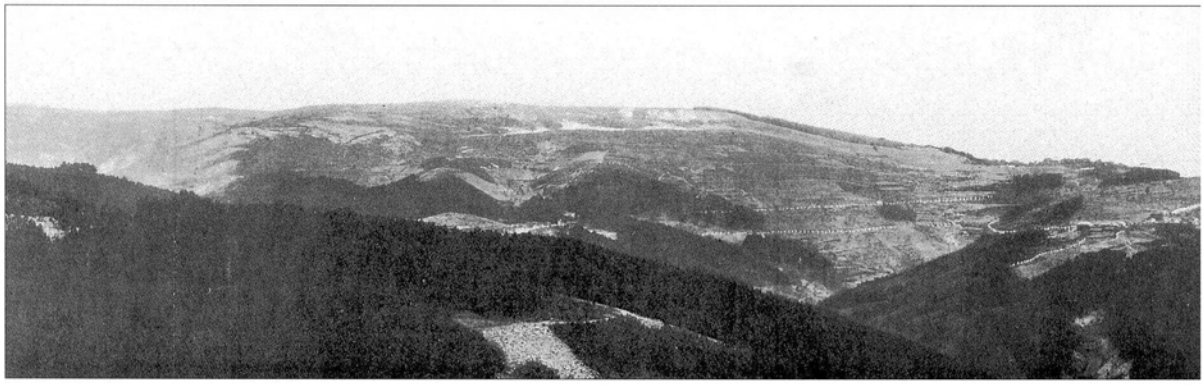
General Reynier's 2nd Corps (on the French left to the south) would attack first on the Allies' right preceded by its skirmishers and would push back the Anglo-Portuguese and gain the top of the mountain; there, the 2nd Corps would form in a close column and head north until it reached the Convent of Bussaco which would place it behind the Allied centre; a reserve would also be formed and the 2nd Corps' artillery would be deployed to counter the Anglo-Portuguese artillery.

When Reynier's 2nd Corps was 'master of the heights', Marshal Ney's 6th Corps would attack along the two roads leading up to the ridge preceded by its skirmishers; one of his divisions forming his reserve and his artillery deployed to support the attack. However, Ney was to press his 6th Corps attack if the Anglo-Portuguese attacked Reynier's 2nd Corps. Once Reynier gained possession of the summit, Ney was to get his troops to the Convent of Bussaco.

Junot's 8th Corps, which was somewhat smaller having two rather than three divisions, was to deploy behind Moura ready to provide assistance to either attacking corps as required. Its artillery was to be deployed either side of the road to provide cover should Ney's troops be driven back and the Anglo-Portuguese counter-attack.

The terrain allowed little role in the attack for Montbrun's cavalry, which would be posted on either side of Junot's Corps.

Masséna had now issued his orders – not especially innovative nor even particularly clear – but several of his subordinates had reservations. Junot and Reynier agreed with Masséna that the British, and certainly their Portuguese allies, could be brushed aside by powerful and determined frontal attacks. So did the commander of the engineers, General Laszowsky. Chief of staff Fririon had some misgivings about a



The central and northern part of Bussaco ridge looking west as seen from the French positions. At the extreme left is the area attacked by Reynier's 2nd Corps. At the right end the village of Sula on the hill is the area attacked by Ney's 6th Corps. Note that there are far fewer trees shown in this photo reproduction in Chambers's 1910 *Bussaco*.

frontal attack. Ney, who had been so adamant about attacking as soon as possible, wondered if a turning movement to the north towards the Porto road might not be better. Ney had an instinctive ability to judge an attack's chance of success just by viewing the ground, what the French call the 'coup d'oeil militaire', which now told him that the opportunity had passed and that by the 27th Wellington's army would be too strong for any such attack to be sure of success. Masséna dismissed this as rubbish, retorting that the Emperor had tasked him with taking Lisbon not Porto. Masséna then spurred his horse and headed back to his quarters at Mortaga for the night. His abrupt departure caused 'general stupefaction' as his generals had believed he would scout the Allied positions for himself and remain amongst his men for the last few hours before the battle began. In his memoirs, Marbot also mentioned that he and another staff officer, Ligniville, had heard of a mountain road north of Bussaco that could enable the French army to outflank the Allies and, with General Fririon, they begged for permission to reconnoitre it. But Masséna was under the influence of Pelet, who favoured the attack. Finally, Masséna cut them off saying that it was nearly midnight, he was very tired and would have to leave at 4.00am to be at Bussaco at daybreak. The attack was on.

WELLINGTON'S DEPLOYMENT

The Anglo-Portuguese had not been inactive during the French approach. Troops had been streaming in for days to be posted in various places on the Bussaco ridge. On the far Allied right where the hill ends overlooking the Mondego River was a battalion of the Loyal Lusitanian Legion about 820 strong with two guns. On its left, on a higher part of the ridge, was Hill's 2nd Division consisting of three British and two Portuguese brigades totalling 10,677 officers and men. Further left was Leith's 5th Division with a British and a Portuguese brigade making about 6,500 officers and men. This included an 820-strong battalion of the Loyal Lusitanian Legion, which was stretched for some 3.5km (2 miles) over very rough ground between the British and the Portuguese brigades.[18] Next came Picton's 3rd Division of two British and one Portuguese brigade totalling 4,743 officers and men. Spencer's 1st British Division, consisting of four brigades including one of the King's German Legion (a total of 7,053 men), was deployed on steep, rising



Looking northeast from the British position at the plateau area above Sula. (Photo: RC)

ground. Three independent Portuguese brigades (Pack's, Campbell's and Coleman's) 8,363 strong were near the German legionnaires. Out in front of Spencer's Division strung along a narrow path-road which ran across the ridge were Craufurd's Light Division with two brigades totalling 3,787 officers and men. Further left were the 7,400 officers and men of Cole's 4th Division with its one Portuguese and two British brigades.

The Allied army's artillery sited along the ridge overlooking the ground below totalled some 66 guns.[19] The two six-gun 6-pdr batteries of Ross's and Bull's troops, Royal Horse Artillery were deployed with Craufurd's Light Division and Cole's 4th Division respectively. Lawson's field company, Royal Artillery had one 9-pdr and one howitzer deployed with Pack's independent Portuguese brigade. Additionally four 9-pdrs were positioned on the high plateau. The six 6-pdrs of Thompson's field company, Royal Artillery were with Lightburne's brigade in Picton's 2nd Division. Von Rettberg's King's German Legion artillery company,



The plateau area where the monument to the battle now stands was where Wellington posted his cavalry. (Photo: RC)

six 6-pdrs, were with Spencer's 1st Division. The six-gun battery of 6-pdrs of Cleeves's artillery company, also of the King's German Legion, were with Coleman's independent Portuguese brigade. Also with Coleman's Brigade was Passos's battery of the 4th Portuguese Artillery – an additional six 6-pdrs. The 1st Portuguese Artillery's two batteries (Maj Alexander Dickson with Capt Pedro de Rozierre and Capt Joao da Cunha Preto's batteries) with their two 6-pdrs and ten 3-pdrs were with Hill's 2nd Division. The two batteries of Major V. von Arentschildt's 2nd Portuguese Artillery were commanded by Capt Jacinto P.M. de Freire and Capt Joao Porfirio da Silva. Their two 6-pdrs and 12 3-pdrs were deployed with Spencer's 1st Division.

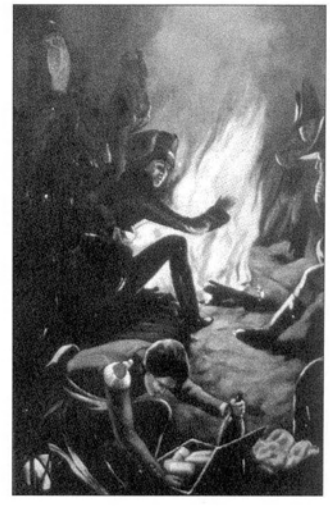
Two squadrons of the 4th Dragoons were further back on the plateau and with the gunners, the wagon train and other service troops made a total of 26,843 British and 25,429 Portuguese troops for a grand total of 52,272 officers and men of the Allied army present at Bussaco on the morning of 27 September.

There were other troops in the vicinity. Further south, beyond the Mondego River, were the 1st, 4th, 7th and 8th Portuguese cavalry regiments with the British 13th Light Dragoons, making a force of about 1,700 under General Fane. In case the French mounted a diversion against the flanks, Lecor's Portuguese Division of two regular, three militia regiments and the 5th Cazadores Battalion was at the Ponte de Murcella. Some 1,600 British cavalry were near Mealhada further to the west ready to intervene.

The night before the battle, Wellington forbade the army to light campfires to avoid revealing his positions. The French, on the contrary, had lit many. In the British camp, the mood was solemn and a subaltern recalled 'the deathlike stillness that reigned throughout our army was only interrupted by the occasional challenge of an advanced sentry, or a random shot fired at some imaginary foe. Some of us sat together chatting over the past, and guessing over the future' each wondering if this was his last night alive. Below, at Moura and Sao Antonio do Cantaro, was a scene 'impossible not to regard ... with feelings of awe' as the French army estimated at about '65,000 to 70,000 warriors' had 'more than a thousand fires' illuminating their camp. Many of the French soldiers were reckoned to have campaigned in other theatres, always victoriously, so their confidence was expected to be high. For many of the British and the great majority of the Portuguese, the forthcoming fight would be their first major battle.



MajGen Galbraith Lowry Cole (1772–1842) commanded 4th Division, which held the extreme left (or north) of the Allied line at Bussaco and thus was not engaged. Cole was later wounded at Albuera in 1811 and again at Salamanca in 1812. He was knighted in 1814, missed Waterloo because of his honeymoon and served as governor of Cape Colony between 1828 and 1833. (Print after a c. 1814 portrait by Lawrence)



A British bivouac during the campaign. At Bussaco, Wellington forbade his army from lighting fires the night before the battle. Painting by R. Caton-Woodville. (Museu Militar do Bussaco)

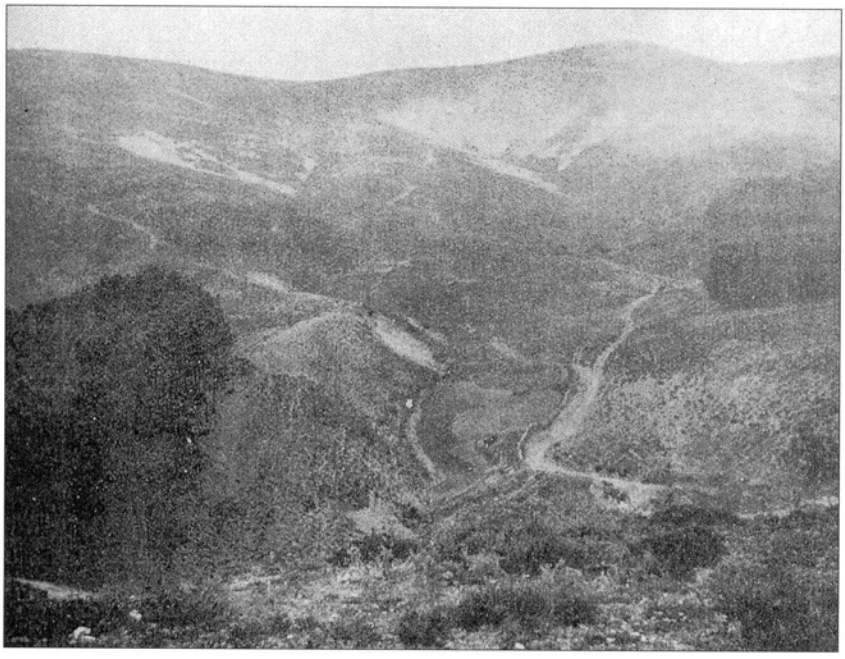
15 The length of Bussaco ridge is also given as eight or nine miles or more by various authors. I have used the Portuguese army's figures as given in the recent monograph by Brig Alberto Araujo F. Silva, *The Battle of Buçaco*.
16 The journal of Brother José de S. Silvestre is published in English in G.L. Chambers, *Bussaco*, London, 1910.
17 Quoted in H. Bonnal, *La vie militaire du Maréchal Ney*, Paris, 1914, III, p. 384. This is also reported by Marbot, II, p. 385.
18 Oman, III, mentions three battalions for the Loyal Lusitanian Legion's 1,646 officers and men in Leith's 5th Division. However, the Legion's 3rd Battalion was never formed as intended so that there were two battalions at Bussaco each probably being somewhat over 800 strong. One battalion being detached on the extreme right, the 5th Division contained only one, and not three, battalions of the Loyal Lusitanian Legion. In this, Luz Soriano, III, p. 186, is more accurate and names lieutenant-colonels Maxwell Grant and Edward Hackshaw as commanders.
19 The number of Allied guns present at Bussaco can range from 60 (Oman) to 84 (tabulating from the dispatches). While still an open question, we have taken G.L. Chambers's figure of 66 as he discusses this question extensively in his book on Bussaco. The position of some of these guns is also subject to interpretation.

THE BATTLE OF BUSSACO, 27 SEPTEMBER 1810

REYNIER'S 2ND CORPS ATTACKS

Dawn at Bussaco on 27 September was typically foggy. Reynier's 2nd Corps was already up, formed, and ready to march. As the day's early light became stronger, the brigades marched out towards their objective – a lower spot on the ridge. Light infantry voltigeurs and chasseurs formed the skirmish screen and advanced. They were followed by Heudelet's Division formed into an 8,000-man column of 15 battalions to the left (or south) and Merle's Division of 6,500 men in 11 battalions also in column to the right. As they advanced, the order of the columns became disrupted over the increasingly rough terrain with Merle's Division moving ahead. The further up they climbed, the more irregular the formations became until they were broken up into numerous large groups of soldiers struggling to climb the increasingly steep hill. The frontage of both columns had been compressed and they had veered to the left as they climbed towards the ridge.

The firing began as the French and British skirmish screens clashed. The British skirmishers were the light companies of the 45th, 74th and 88th Foot. This thin line of British troops was driven up towards its main body by the much stronger French skirmish line. Up on the crest of the ridge, the officers and men of Picton's Division heard the shooting, but



Bussaco ridge looking west from S. Antonio de Cantaro, Gen Reynier's corps position. (Photo reproduction in Chambers's 1910 *Bussaco*)

PHASE 1: **6.00am approx. French 31st Light Infantry (4 bns) advances from S. Antonio do Cantaro against Champalimaud's Brigade. They drive back the Allied skirmishers, but come under fire from two batteries of the 2nd Portuguese Artillery. They continue to advance, but receive volley fire from 21st Portuguese Line Infantry and British 74th Foot. The French light infantry, unable to advance further, are forced to retreat.**

PHASE 1: **6.00am approx. Merle's Division advances from Pendurada against Picton's Division on Bussaco ridge.**

PHASE 2: **Gen Picton spots Merle's battalions advancing into the gap and sends a wing of the 45th Foot and the 8th Portuguese Line Infantry to support the 88th Foot. The 45th Foot and 8th Portuguese pour a heavy fire into the head of the French column, and the 88th charge into its flank. The 45th Foot and 8th Portuguese also charge and the French break and are chased down the hill. General Graindorge is killed and Gen Merle wounded.**

PHASE 3: **Leith's Division and part of Hill's Division further south along the ridge remain unengaged. They move to support units further north, Spry's Brigade arriving first followed by a battalion of the Loyal Lusitanian Legion and Barnes Brigade.**

PHASE 5: **As Foy's battalions are re-forming on top of the ridge, General Leith arrives with the British 9th and 38th Foot. Leith orders the 9th to form line, fire a volley and charge the French while the 38th outflank them. Confronted by these new enemies the French waver and break as the 9th Foot charge. General Foy is wounded and the French soldiers are pursued down the hill.**

MONDEGO RIVER
PENACOVA
CHA
S. PAULO
CARVALHO
FIGUERA DE LORVÃO
SERRA DO BUSSACO
SAZES DO LORVÃO
S. ANTONIO DO CANTARO
PENDURADA
CERQUEDO
MOURA
SULA
COMMUNICATIONS PATH
CACEMAS
PALHEIROS
MONTE NOVO
CONVENT
LUSO

PHASE 2: **The 11 battalions of Merle's Division advance diagonally towards a gap in the British line south of Mackinnon's Brigade.**

PHASE 4: **General Foy's Brigade (7 bns) is ordered forward by Reynier. They advance from S. Antonio do Cantaro and make good progress up the ridge. They again attack the area held by part of the 45th Foot, the 8th and part of the 9th Portuguese who are too weak to halt Foy's Brigade. Foy and his leading battalions gain the top of the ridge. The French appear to have the foothold they need.**

FRENCH

2nd Corps: General Reynier
A *1st Division: Merle*
Brigade Sarrut
1, 2, 3, 4/2nd Light Infantry
1, 2, 3, 4/36th Line Infantry
Brigade Graindorge
1, 2, 3, 4/4th Light Infantry

2nd Division: Heudelet
B *Brigade Foy*
17th Light Infantry
1, 2, 3, 4/70th Line Infantry
Brigade Arnaud
1, 2, 3, 4/47th Line Infantry

C In reserve, detached from Brigade Arnaud
1, 2, 3, 4/31st Line Infantry

6th Corps: Marshal Ney
D *2nd Division: Mermet*
Brigade Bardet
1, 2/25th Light Infantry
1, 2, 3/27th Line Infantry
Brigade Labassée
1, 2, 3/50th Line Infantry
1, 2, 3/59th Line Infantry

E *3rd Division: Loison*
Brigade Simon
4, 5, 6/26th Line Infantry
Légion du Midi – 1 bn.
Légion Hanovrienne – 2 bns.
Brigade Ferrey
2/32nd Light Infantry
4, 5, 6/66th Line Infantry
4, 6/82nd Line Infantry

F *1st Division: Marchand*
Brigade Maucune
1, 2/6th Light Infantry
1, 2, 3/69th Line Infantry
Brigade Marcognet
1, 2, 3/39th Line Infantry
1, 2, 3/76th Line Infantry

G 8th Corps: General Junot

ANGLO-PORTUGUESE

1 ***Elements of MajGen L. Cole's 4th Division***

2 *Campbell's 5th Portuguese Brigade (Independent)*
6th Portuguese Line, 18th Portuguese Line, 6th Cazadores

3 ***Light Division: BrigGen R. Craufurd***
Beckwith's Brigade
1/43rd, 95th Rifles (4 coys), 3rd Cazadores
Barclay's Brigade
1/52nd Foot, 95th Rifles (4 coys), 1st Cazadores

4 *Coleman's 6th Portuguese Brigade (Independent)*
7th Portuguese Line, 19th Portuguese Line, 2nd Cazadores

5 *Pack's 1st Portuguese Brigade (Independent)*
1st Portuguese Line , 16th Portuguese Line, 4th Cazadores

6 16th Light Dragoons

1st Division: Gen Spencer
7 *Löwe's Brigade*
1st, 2nd, 5th, 7th Line Bns., KGL Light Bns. detachments, KGL
8 *Lord Blantyre's Brigade*
2/24th, 2/42nd, 1/61st, 5/60th (Rifles) – 1 coy
9 *Pakenham's Brigade*
1/7th, 1/79th
10 *Stopford's Brigade*
1/2nd (Coldstream) Guards, 1/3rd Scots Guards, 5/60th (Rifles) – 1 coy

11 *Cameron's Brigade*
12 4th Dragoons

3rd Division: Gen Picton
13 *Lightburne's Brigade*
2/5th, 2/83rd, 5/60th (3 coys)
14 *Mackinnon's Brigade*
1/45th, **(15)** 1/74th Foot (and part of 45th Foot), 1/88th Foot
16 *Champalimaud's Portuguese Brigade*
9th Portuguese Line, 21st Portuguese Line

5th Division: Gen Leith
17 *Spry's Portuguese Brigade*
3rd Portuguese Line, 15th Portuguese Line
Eben's Portuguese Brigade
18 Loyal Lusitanian Legion (less 1bn.)
19 8th Portuguese Line Infantry
20 *Barnes' Brigade*
3/1st, 1/9th, 2/38th

2nd Division: MajGen Hill
21 *Inglis's Brigade*
29th, 1/48th, 1/57th, 5/60th (Rifles) – 1 coy
22 *Catlin Craufurd's (Wilson's) Brigade*
2/68th, 2/34th, 2/39th,5/60th Foot (Rifles) – 1 coy
23 *Stewart's Brigade*
1/3rd, 2/31st, 2/48th, 2/66th, 5/60th (Rifles) – 1 coy

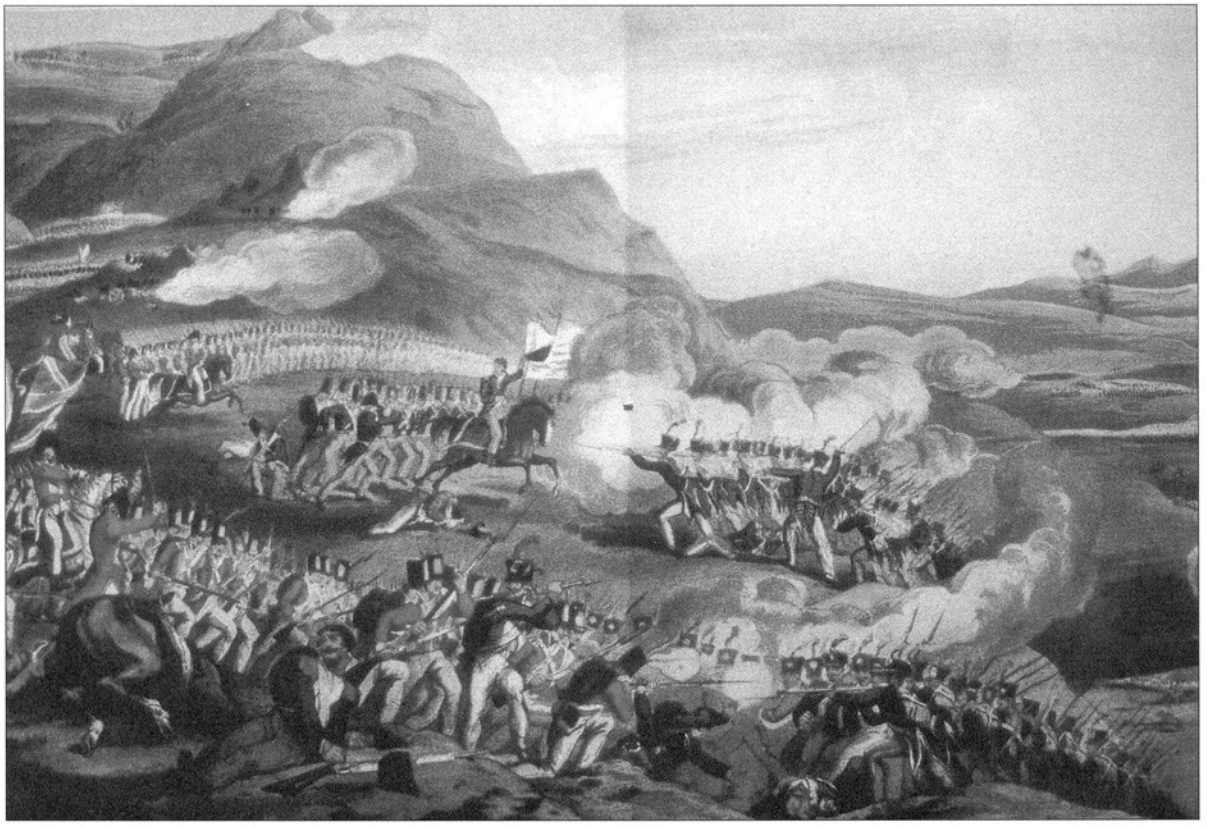
Hamilton's Portuguese Division (Attached to 2nd Div.)
24 *Fonseca's Brigade*
2nd Portuguese Line, 14th Portuguese Line

25 *Archibald Campbell's* Brigade
4th Portuguese Line, 10th Portuguese Line

26 Loyal Lusitanian Legion – 1 bn.

THE ATTACK OF REYNIER'S 2ND CORPS

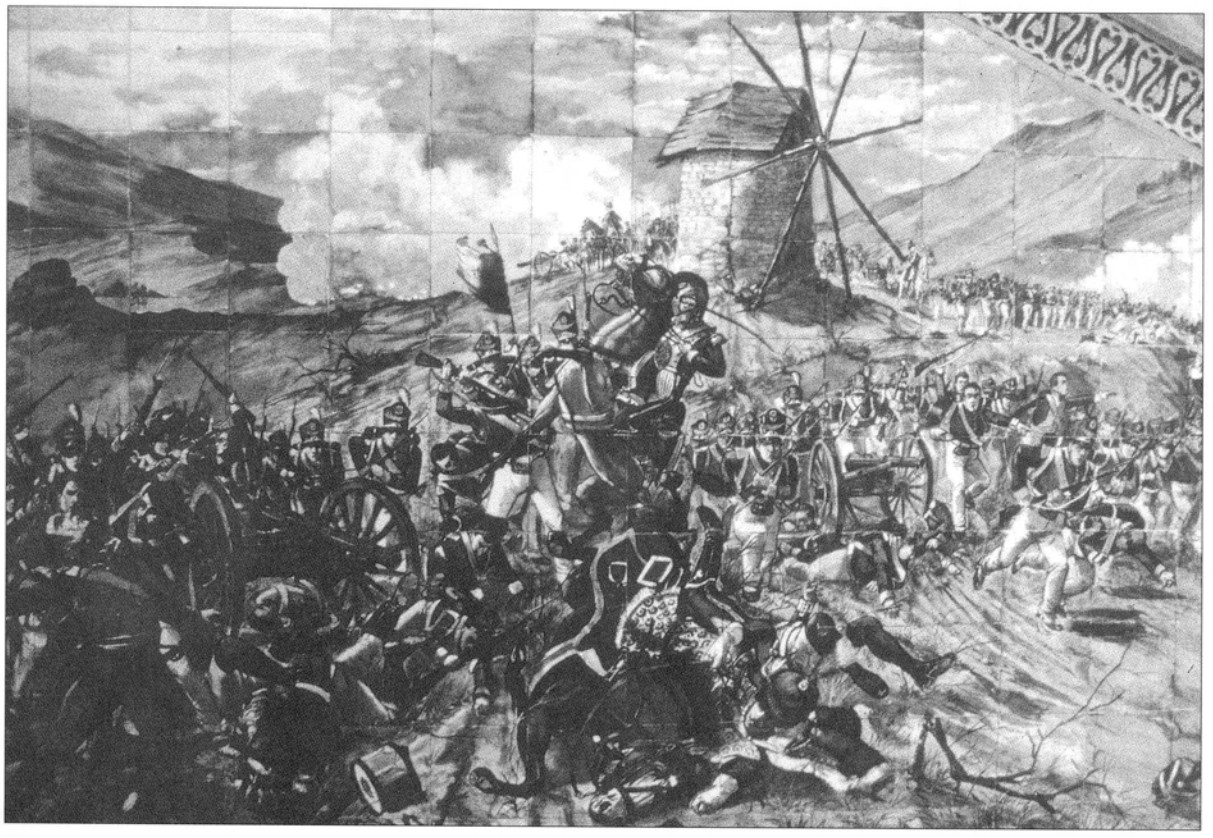
27 September 1810, 6.00am–7.00am, viewed from the west showing the attack of Reynier's Corps on Picton's Division and the movement of Leith's 5th Division and Hill's 2nd Division to support the line north of their positions.



The battle of Bussaco, 27 September 1810. The action shown is that of Picton's 3rd Division attacked by Reynier's 2nd Corps. In the foreground, the 88th Foot charges the French column. This was the first battle in which the Portuguese troops with Wellington's army were heavily engaged. They are shown in the centre wearing dark coatees and led by a mounted officer, possibly illustrating the charge of the 8th Portuguese Infantry. (Print after T. St. Clair)

looking down could see nothing of the climbing French multitude because of the fog. It was clear to General Picton that something was happening and he sent a wing of the 45th Foot and the 8th Portuguese Regiment to cover the area between him and the 88th Foot. Allied army skirmishers of Champalimaud's 9th and 21st Portuguese regiments were also now being driven back by a strong French column of four battalions of the 31st Light Infantry from Heudelet's Division.

The fog was now lifting and the Allies could see the French better with each passing minute. Arentschildt's two batteries of the 2nd Portuguese Artillery opened a telling fire on the French of the 31st Light Infantry, who in spite of heavy losses still advanced until halted by the volleys of the 21st Portuguese and 74th British regiments. For a time the French 31st held their ground but they could go no further. Meanwhile, Merle's Division was, with difficulty, climbing the ridge more or less diagonally. It now came into view through the mist and one of its regiments managed to reach the crest at an undefended spot just as the men of the 45th Foot and the 8th Portuguese came up to plug the gap. Colonel Wallace of the 88th Foot also saw the danger and, aware that the French might break the Anglo-Portuguese line and establish a foothold on the ridge, ordered the 45th and three companies of the 88th to charge the French column's flank. At the same time the 8th Portuguese poured a heavy fire into the head of the French columns. Picton, seeing the urgency, led the light companies of the 45th and 88th forward himself. They opened fire on the French only about 60m (200ft) away; tiring rapidly and under intense fire, the four

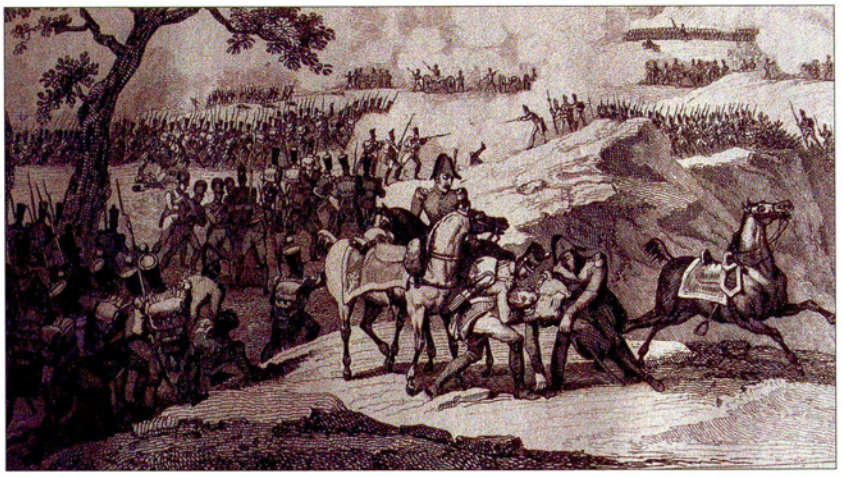


Portuguese infantry overcomes French troops at Bussaco, 27 September 1810. Azujelo by Jorge Colaco done at the end of the 19th century. (Bussaco Palace)

battalions of the French 36th Line Regiment were now charged by the 45th and the 88th. It was the critical moment and the French broke, hurrying down the hill. The 8th Portuguese also charged with Colonel Wallace shouting to his men to press on. They chased the French down the hill until the French artillery opened fire to cover its retreating infantry, then went back up to their positions.

Foy's Attack

By now the mist was rapidly clearing from the ridge and Reynier could see part of his 2nd Corps' attack was failing. Through a misunderstanding, BrigGen Foy's Brigade had not yet ascended the ridge and Reynier now urged it forward. The 17th Light and the 70th Line regiments totalling seven battalions with Foy leading began climbing towards the area held by the right wing of the British 45th Foot, the 8th Portuguese and half of the 9th Portuguese regiment. This force was much too weak to resist Foy's massed battalions but Allied help was on the way. MajGen Leith, convinced he was under no threat to his front, moved his 5th Division left (or north) to reinforce Picton's (as instructed by Wellington in such circumstances). Further south, Hill was also under no visible threat and extended part of his 2nd Division to cover the area being vacated by the 5th. The first of Leith's troops to arrive were Spry's Portuguese brigade made up of the 3rd and 15th regiments and the Tomar Militia Regiment. They were followed by a battalion of the Loyal Lusitanian Legion and Barnes's British Brigade consisting of the 3/1st Foot, the 1/9th Foot and the 2/38th Foot with a





ABOVE **General of Brigade Maximilien-Sébastien Foy was an artillery officer of much experience. He had been part of Junot's army in Portugal during 1807–08 and was promoted brigadier on 3 November 1809. He commanded a brigade in Reynier's 2nd Corps and was badly wounded at Bussaco. Emerging as one of the best general officers in Masséna's army, he became general of division on 29 November 1810. He is shown in his artillery uniform.**

ABOVE, LEFT **The battle of Bussaco as seen by the French. The wounded officer being carried away in the foreground could be General Foy or General Merle, both of whom were badly wounded during the battle. (Print after Martinet)**

battery of the 1st Portuguese Artillery. In spite of heavy fire, the French managed to get to the crest of the ridge and drive back the wing of the 45th Foot, the 8th and 9th Portuguese. The regulars of Barnes's and Spry's brigades were hurrying to meet the French but the Tomar militiamen panicked and fled before coming under fire.

It looked as though Foy's Brigade had gained a secure lodgement on the hill and Leith, who was arriving with his troops, even saw a French officer with his hat at the end of his sword cheering with his men. French battalions were quickly moving up and getting into battle formation; the 8th and half of the 9th Portuguese were spread on the hill but could not contain Foy's much stronger brigade. Leith felt there was still a good chance to succeed. He decided to attack with the 9th Foot while sending the 38th Foot around to outflank. The 9th Foot advanced on the French 'until we got within a hundred yards of them', Private James Hale related, 'when we were ordered to wheel into line and give them a volley, which we immediately did, and saluted them with three cheers and a charge, taking the signal from General Leith who … made the signal by taking off his hat and twirling it over his head. The enemy stood his ground till we got to within twenty yards of them, but seeing that it was our intention to use the bayonet, they took to their heel' and were chased down the hill by the British until they came under 'cannon shot and shells' at which point they fell back, 'leaving the light companies extended along about the middle of the hill'. By then, Reynier had engaged 22 of his 23 battalions and had lost over 2,000 men against the Allies' loss of 590. The French had lost over 100 officers including BrigGen Graindorge killed and generals Foy and Merle wounded. The only Allied general officer wounded was Portuguese BrigGen Champalimaud. Picton had only engaged six British and five Portuguese battalions.[20]

THE ATTACK OF NEY'S 6TH CORPS

While Reynier's 2nd Corps attacked, Marshal Ney observed, waiting for the moment when 2nd Corps was 'master of the heights' as specified by Marshal Masséna in his orders for the attack on Bussaco. Masséna and



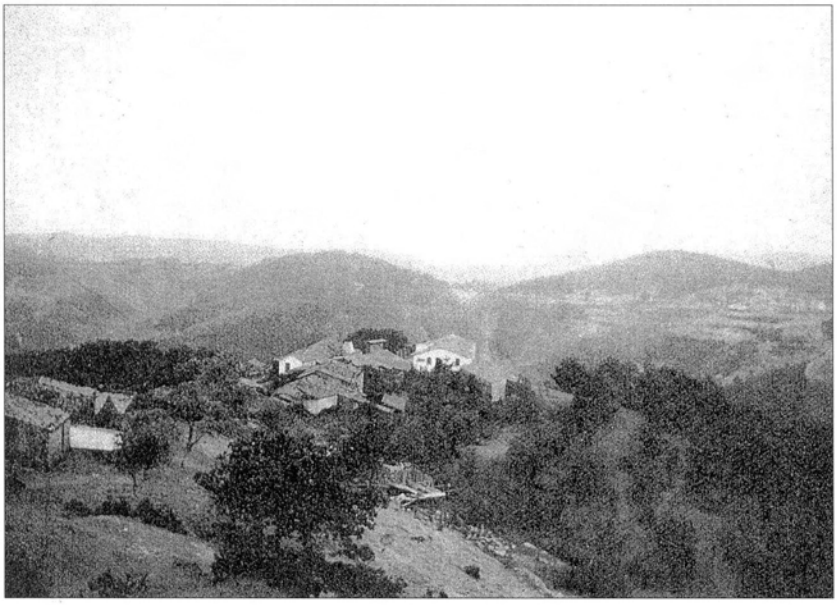


ABOVE **General of Division Marchand, commander of the 1st Division of Marshal Ney's 6th Corps during the Bussaco campaign.**

TOP **View of the hills and valleys at Bussaco looking east as seen from Craufurd's command post. Note how forested the whole area has become compared with photos taken by Chambers at the turn of the 20th century and in earlier prints. (Photo: RC)**

his staff officers were near a small windmill just above the village of Moura and would see the attack of Ney's 6th Corps. As Reynier was 3–4km (1¾ to 2½ miles)away and fog obscured everything, clearly following events may have been difficult. As far as Ney was concerned he followed his own orders to the letter. The mist was lifting and Ney saw what appeared to be Merle's column reaching the crest. The heights had not been mastered but Foy's Brigade would shortly seize part of them. Ney gave his 6th Corps the orders to attack. There were two huge attack columns, one led by Marchand on the left, the other by Loison on the right. Loison's Division would have the worst time climbing the hill as at his point of attack it became very steep from the hamlet of Sula all the way up to the crest. Marchand's Division would have a better time as it could take the small winding road that would eventually take it to the Bussaco Convent. Mermet's Division was in reserve.

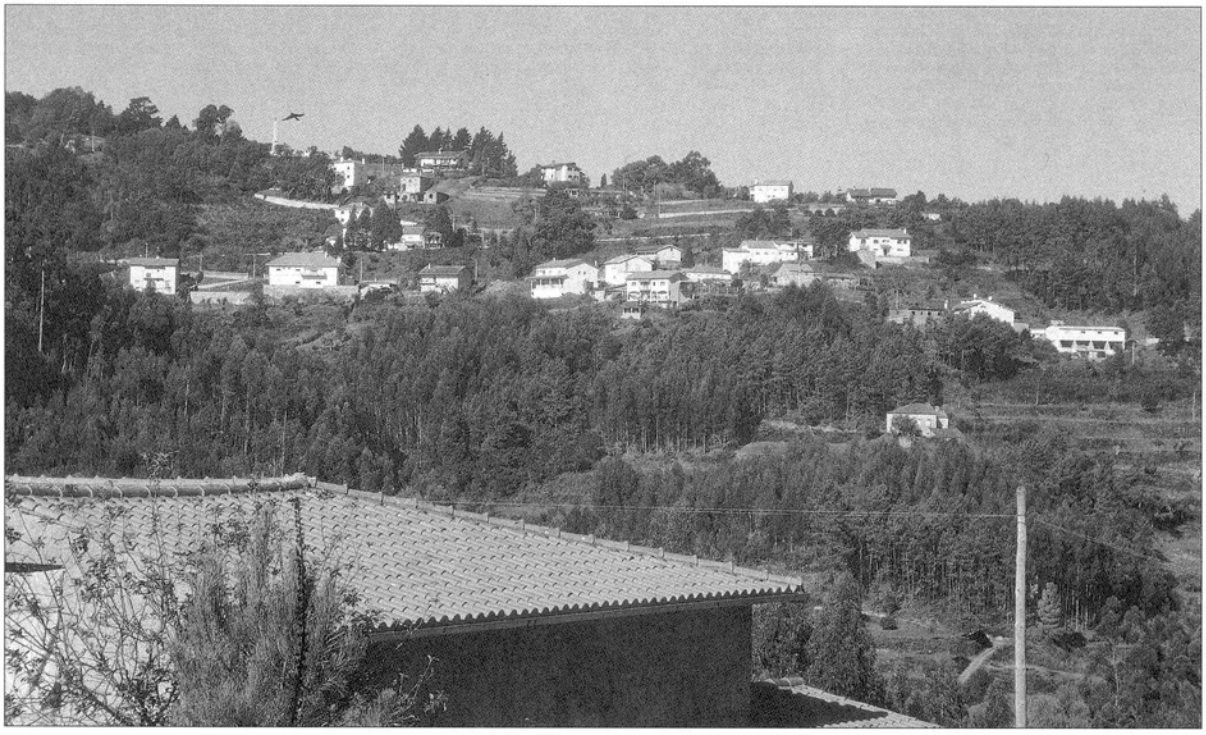
The screen of French skirmishers started up followed by Loison's and then Marchand's divisions. Loison was slightly ahead with his two columns, each consisting of a six-battalion brigade, respectively under generals Simon and Ferey, marching up almost side by side. Almost as soon as they left the level ground, the French skirmishers came under fire from the 4th Portuguese Cazadores Battalion, which had been deployed in a forward skirmish line by BrigGen Pack and which retreated, as planned, before the much stronger French. The mist had largely lifted and Loison could see the British and Portuguese troops of Spencer's 1st Division and the independent brigades on the crest. What he could not see was that Craufurd had his whole Light Division hidden below the crest in roughly two lines above and below Sula. These were the same troops that had previously met the French at the River Coa and



The village of Sula, the scene of much fighting in 1810. It was still a small hamlet a century later. (Photo reproduction in Chambers' 1910 *Bussaco*)

at Corunna and they were eager for revenge. Craufurd himself had made the hamlet's small windmill his command and observation post. His men were lying down, out of sight. Down below, in front of Sula, the 95th Rifles and the 3rd Cazadores opened fire on the French skirmishers – the shock of around 1,300 shots, including about 900 from aimed Baker rifles, caused the advancing French voltigeurs and chasseurs to waver.[21] Loison quickly ordered some line infantry battalions to support them, weakening his columns somewhat. With some difficulty the French infantry prevailed and continued its advance on Sula as the riflemen and Cazadores retreated. The hamlet was finally captured, but there the French became the targets of Ross's Royal Horse Artillery battery posted near Craufurd's HQ. Cleeves's King's German Legion battery also opened up on the French emerging from Sula shortly thereafter.

Loison urged his generals to re-form, press their attack and if possible capture the guns. Ross's battery could be seen up near the windmill only a few hundred metres above Sula. The 95th Rifles and the 3rd Cazadores had rallied and formed a new skirmish line a little above Sula. As the French battalions emerged to climb the hill, they now came under combined rifle, musket and artillery fire. The hill was also steeper. General of Brigade Simon with the three battalions of the 26th French Line Infantry Regiment in front followed a muleteer's path up going in a file as only a company at a time could get up the narrow path. General of Brigade Ferey found no path for his brigade and his battalions climbed as best they could. Men in both brigades were being picked off by the snipers of the 95th Rifles and 3rd Cazadores as the latter conducted a fighting retreat up the hill, forcing the French to return fire as well as climb. But the French soldiers would inevitably prevail as they were far more numerous and, given a chance, would take the guns at the windmill. There were less and less troops to oppose them as they pressed forward, the Allied skirmishers in green and brown uniforms retreating before them. Or so they thought …



Sula in 2000 seen from Masséna's observation post next to the Moura mill. Sula has more houses and vegetation than 100 years ago and is certainly larger than in 1810. (Photo: RC)

CRAUFURD'S SURPRISE

Craufurd had a nasty surprise in store for the struggling French soldiers. There was a narrow path passing just above the mill. This path could barely be seen from lower down. There, lying flat on the ground, were the 43rd and 52nd light infantry regiments of the Light Division, the former having 800 men and the latter 950, a total of 1,750 fresh troops eager to engage the French. At the windmill, near a large rock, Craufurd was watching the progress of the two French columns who were courageously advancing in spite of the fire they endured, notably from Ross's guns just to the left of Craufurd at the windmill. Despite substantial losses they struggled to within about 20 metres (65ft) of the windmill and Ross's battery. The skirmishers of the 95th Rifles and the 3rd Cazadores were now streaming past Ross's battery, some staying near the guns and the mill. Craufurd was there carefully watching the hopeful French; they were forming for a last gallant rush to take the guns.

Just as the French soldiers were about to charge, Craufurd waved his hat to the 43rd and 52nd, the agreed signal, and is said to have shouted: 'Now 52nd, avenge the death of Sir John Moore!' – a long line of redcoats in two ranks suddenly appeared in front of the startled French soldiers. Moments later a tremendous volley thundered from the British line shattering in an instant the heads of the French columns. The dazed survivors amidst heaps of dead and wounded were in no position to reply while the British reloaded and fired again. Three companies of the 43rd and three of the 52nd were fanning out to each flank to create a deadly crossfire. The skirmishers of the 95th Rifles and the 3rd Cazadores had re-formed and now supported the 43rd and 52nd.

PHASE 1: **General Loison's Division advances and encounters Allied skirmishers around Sula hamlet. Having captured Sula, Loison's battalions re-form and push on up the ridge. 3rd Cazadores and 95th Rifles gradually fall back as they skirmish with Loison's men. In the diffiult terrain the French formations break up into files. They are under continuous fire, but press forwards hoping to capture the guns of Ross's battery.**

PHASE 1: **The attack by Reynier's 2nd Corps has failed. Unaware of this and seeing Foy's men atop the ridge Ney orders 6th Corps to attack. Reynier's troops retreat to Pendurada and S. Antonio do Cantaro to regroup and tend their wounded. French cavalry covers the road to the south.**

PHASE 1: **Leith's and Hill's divisions have now moved to support Picton. Reynier's badly mauled divisions now face three largely fresh Anglo-Portuguese divisions.**

MONDEGO RIVER
PENACOVA
CHA
16
S. PAULO
CARVALHO
SERRA DO BUSSACO
FIGUERA DE LORVÃO
SAZES DO LORVÃO
15
S. ANTONIO DO CANTARO
PENDURADA
B
A
14
13
CERQUEDO
G
C
D
MOURA
F
12
10
11
9
COMMUNICATIONS PATH
PALHEIROS
CACEMAS
SULA
E
1
2
5
8
4
3
MONTE NOVO
CONVENT
7
6
LUSO

FRENCH

2nd Corps: Gen Reynier

A *1st Division: Merle*
Brigade Sarrut
1, 2, 3, 4/2nd Light Infantry
1, 2, 3, 4/36th Line Infantry
Brigade Graindorge
1, 2, 3, 4/4th Light Infantry

B *2nd Division: Heudelet*
Brigade Foy
17th Light Infantry
1, 2, 3, 4/70th Line Infantry
Brigade Arnaud
1, 2, 3, 4/31st Light Infantry
1, 2, 3, 4/47th Line Infantry

6th Corps: Marshal Ney

C *2nd Division: Mermet*
Brigade Bardet
1, 2/25th Light Infantry
1, 2, 3/27th Line Infantry
Brigade Labassée
1, 2, 3/50th Line Infantry
1, 2, 3/59th Line Infantry

D *3rd Division: Loison*
Brigade Simon
4, 5, 6/26th Line Infantry
Légion du Midi – 1 bn.
Légion Hanovrienne – 2 bns.
Brigade Ferrey
4, 5, 6/66th Line Infantry
4, 6/82nd Line Infantry

E 2/32nd Light Infantry (separated from Brigade Ferrey)

F *1st Division: Marchand*
Brigade Maucune
1, 2/6th Light Infantry
1, 2, 3/69th Line Infantry
Brigade Marcognet
1, 2, 3/39th Line Infantry
1, 2, 3/76th Line Infantry

G 8th Corps: Gen Junot

ANGLO-PORTUGUESE

1 ***Elements of MajGen L. Cole's 4th Division***

2 *Campbell's 5th Portuguese Brigade (Independent)*
6th Portuguese Line, 18th Portuguese Line, 6th Cazadores

3 ***Light Division: BrigGen R. Craufurd***
Beckwith's Brigade
1/43rd Foot, 95th Rifles (4 coys), 3rd Cazadores
Barclay's Brigade
1/52nd, 95th Rifles (4 coys), 1st Cazadores

4 *Coleman's 6th Portuguese Brigade (Independent)*
7th Portuguese Line, 19th Portuguese Line, 2nd Cazadores

5 *Pack's 1st Portuguese Brigade (Independent)*
1st Portuguese Line, 16th Portuguese Line, 4th Cazadores

6 16th Light Dragoons

1st Division: Gen Spencer

7 *Löwe's Brigade*
1st, 2nd, 5th, 7th Line Bns., KGL
Light Bns. detachments, KGL

8 *Lord Blantyre's Brigade*
2/24th, 2/42nd, 1/61st, 5/60th (Rifles) – 1 coy

9 *Pakenham's Brigade*
1/7th, 1/79th

10 *Stopford's Brigade*
1/2nd (Coldstream) Guards, 1/3rd Scots Guards, 5/60th (Rifles) – 1 coy

11 *Cameron's Brigade*

12 4th Dragoons

13 ***3rd Division: Gen Picton***
Lightburne's Brigade
2/5th Foot, 2/83rd, 5/60th (3 coys)
Mackinnon's Brigade
1/45th Foot, 1/74th, 1/88th Foot
Champalimaud's Portuguese Brigade
9th Portuguese Line, 21st Portuguese Line

14 ***5th Division: Gen Leith***
Spry's Portuguese Brigade
3rd Portuguese Line, 15th Portuguese Line
Eben's Portuguese Brigade
Loyal Lusitanian Legion (less 1bn.), 8th Portuguese Line
Barnes' Brigade
3/1st, 1/9th, 2/38th

15 ***2nd Division: MajGen Hill***
Inglis's Brigade
29th, 1/48th, 1/57th, 5/60th (Rifles) – 1 coy
Catlin Craufurd's (Wilson's) Brigade
2/68th, 2/34th, 2/39th, 5/60th (Rifles) – 1 coy
Stewart's Brigade
1/3rd, 2/31st, 2/48th, 2/66th, 5/60th (Rifles) – 1 coy

Hamilton's Portuguese Division (Attached to 2nd Div.)
Fonseca's Brigade
2nd Portuguese Line, 14th Portuguese Line
Archibald Campbell's Brigade
4th Portuguese Line, 10th Portuguese Line

16 Loyal Lusitanian Legion – 1 bn.

PHASE 3: **Marchand's Division begin their attack just after Loison, with Maucune's Brigade (5 bns) forming the lead columns. They follow the road from Moura and then veer to their left and are fired on by the Allied guns.**

PHASE 4: **The French are fired on by skirmishers of 4th Cazadores and charge forwards to outflank the Cazadores. This brings them in range of the rest of Pack's Brigade who open a heavy fire. French losses mount and Gen Maucune is wounded. Marcognet's Brigade arrive but are halted by artillery. Pack's Brigade charge and Maucune's men flee down the ridge. With Maucune Loison having failed, Marcognet also withdraws. Marshal Ney orders Marchand's Division to fall back effectively ending the battle of Bussaco.**

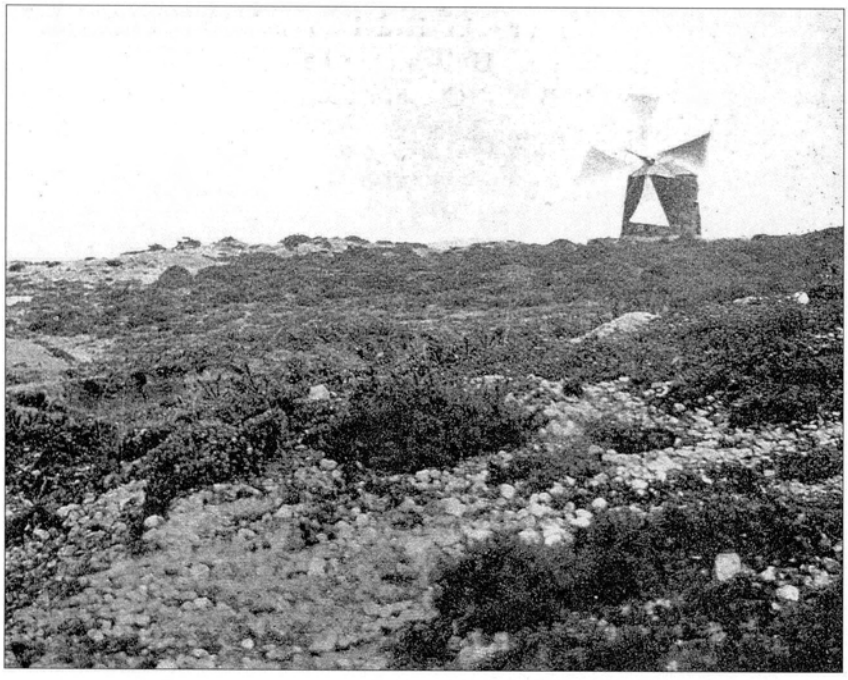
PHASE 2: **Loison's column is shattered by the Allied volleys. The Allied second line (95th Rifles and 3rd Cazadores) join in charging the French who flee in panic.**

PHASE 2: **General Craufurd's Light Division remain hidden. With the French only 20 metres (22 yds) down the slope, Craufurd signals to his men and a long line of redcoats rises and poures a storm of fire into the startled French.**

PHASE 2: **2/32nd Light Infantry becomes separated from Loison's main body during its attack. On the narrow road between Sula and Moura it encounters the 19th Portuguese Line who give the French a volley and charge. 2/32nd Light are swept away and pursued down the hill by the Portuguese.**

ATTACK OF MARSHAL NEY'S 6TH CORPS AT BUSSACO 27 SEPTEMBER 1810

27 September 1810, 7.00am–8.00am, viewed from the west showing the attack of Ney's 6th Corps on the northern part of the British line, and their repulse with heavy loss by Craufurd's Light Division and Pack's Portuguese Brigade.



Craufurd's command post was at this windmill in 1810. It was still an operational windmill when this photo was taken for Chambers's 1910 *Bussaco*.

The remaining French showed the bravery of desperation – some returned fire, others charged, all in vain. BrigGen Simon, who had charged at the head of his men, was wounded in the jaw and captured by a private of the 52nd. The British troops kept firing and then the 43rd, 52nd, 3rd Cazadores and 95th Rifles all charged; the French who could still stand broke and fled, tumbling into their comrades further down the hill who were trying to climb up. This scene of utter disorder spread to all the French columns, who fell back pell mell. The Allied artillery continued to fire and panic overcame the French columns as the Allied battalions counter-charged down the steep hill. Some swept well past Sula looking to bayonet any French they could catch.

During the attack, the 2nd Battalion of the French 32nd Light Infantry became separated from Ferey's brigade but was nevertheless pushing forward further to the right up the narrow road from Moira to Sula. Wellington's dispatch of the battle mentioned a 'determined and very successful attack' with bayonet was made by the five companies making up the 1st Battalion of the 19th Portuguese Regiment under LtCol Macbean when the enemy 'attempted to maintain himself, the 19th continued to move on, gave him a volley and charged'. This drove the French 'headlong down the steep: a heavy [French] battery opened upon them [the 19th Portuguese] from the opposite side of the ravine; the regiment immediately, under the fire, reformed, faced to the right about, and as if manoeuvring on a parade, regained its original position, amid the acclamations of all the left of the British Army who were spectators to their conduct' according to information sent to Beresford.[22]

In less than 20 minutes from Craufurd's order, Loison's Division had been routed with great loss. Some 21 officers had been killed, 47 wounded and some 1,200 casualties suffered amongst the enlisted men out of a force of 6,500. The Allies had taken only about 150 casualties and no senior officers hit. The engagement had lasted about



The Sula windmill, Craufurd's command post during the battle as seen today. (Photo: RC)

an hour, the final and bloodiest phase from when Craufurd ordered his men up perhaps 15–20 minutes. Craufurd's men and the 19th Portuguese retired up the hill as the French artillery was now shooting at them and the French 25th Light Infantry was sent by General Mermet to cover Loison's fleeing division.

While Loison's assault was breaking on the rock of Craufurd's Light Division, Marchand's Division was also attacking on the French left. The leading column consisted of Maucune's Brigade: five battalions from the 6th Light and 69th Line regiments. They followed the road up from Moura but soon came under heavy fire from Cleeves's, Parros's and Lawson's batteries as they veered to the right. Nearing a wooded area, they now came under fire from skirmishers of the 4th Cazadores concealed behind the pine trees above. They had been detached by BrigGen Pack, whose independent Portuguese brigade was further up at the crest. Under this galling fire the French soldiers – seemingly without orders to do so – spontaneously charged up the hill to outflank the Cazadores in which they succeeded. But in so doing, they came upon the 1st and 16th Portuguese infantry regiments – over 2,100 men – of Pack's Brigade who poured a torrential fire on the French. They suffered heavy casualties including General of Brigade Maucune, who was wounded. The second brigade of Marchand's Division was also coming up under General of Brigade Marcognet but halted when it began receiving Allied artillery fire. By now a charge was driving Maucune's men back down and many French soldiers could see that, to their right, Loison's attack had failed. Maucune's Brigade had taken about 850 casualties and Marcognet's about 300.

With the attack of Reynier's 2nd Corps having failed, Loison's Division beaten off and Marchand's about to suffer the same fate, Marshal Ney decided to sound the retreat. It was now about 8.00am. Both divisions retired behind Moura but Ney sent out a line of skirmishers which kept the Allied light troops busy for the rest of the morning. There were no further movements and the battle was reduced to random musket fire between skirmishers and the occasional cannon shot.

Marshal Masséna had been watching, largely helplessly, the progress and failures of 6th Corps near a windmill just above the village of Moura

OVERLEAF

The Men of Marshal Ney's 6th Corps struggled up the ridge driving back the Allied skirmishers until they seemed poised to capture the guns of Ross's battery. But concealed in dead ground little more than 20 metres in front of them was Craufurd's Light Division. As the French approached Craufurd waved his hat and shouted 'Now 52nd, avenge the death of Sir John Moore!' At their commander's signal the men of the 43rd and 52nd light infantry rose as if from out of the ground — a long line of redcoats in two ranks. Seconds later, a tremendous volley thundered from the British line smashing the heads of the French columns. The French attack was stopped in its tracks. (Patrice Courcelle)

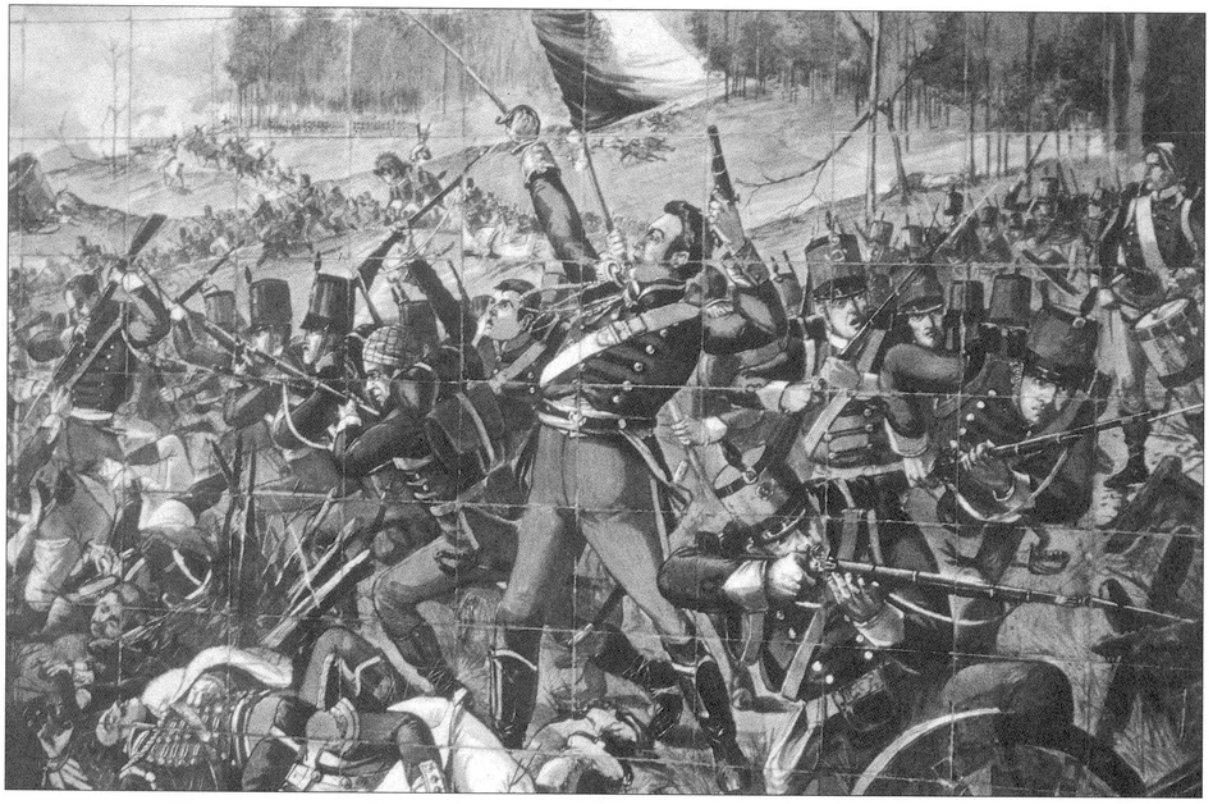

F. Courcelle

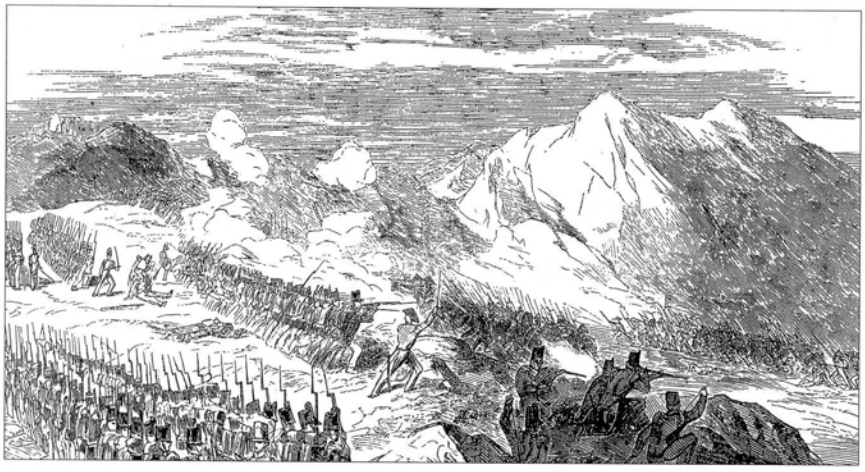


A 'cantinière' of the French 26th Line Infantry hearing that BrigGen Simon had been wounded and taken prisoner loaded his effects on her donkey and started up the hill saying 'let's see if the English will dare to kill a woman'. The Allied soldiers seeing her did not shoot and let her cross the 'no man's land'. Reaching the top, a British officer took her to Gen Simon. She looked after him for several days and then rejoined her unit. This incident is reported in Marbot's memoirs. (Print after Eric Pape)

while receiving news that 2nd Corps had also been thrown back and that casualties were very substantial. Once he knew that both attacks had failed, there was little else he could do. Sending in Junot's 8th Corps would have only added to the already considerable slaughter in his army. And while the French still had about 20,000 fresh infantrymen, he rightly suspected Wellington also still had plenty of fresh troops. The French had suffered 4,498 casualties including 522 killed, 3,612 wounded and 364 missing in 2nd and 6th corps according to returns. There were at least 100 in other formations, with total French casualties amounting to 4,600. But it may have been closer to 5,834 according to Chambers, who, with some justification, did not trust the accuracy of the French returns. Marbot, who was there with Masséna's staff watching at the Moura windmill, termed the battle 'one of the most terrible setbacks ever inflicted on the French armies', adding that the casualties had been nearly 5,000.[23]

Wellington, at his command post on one of the highest spots of Bussaco, had observed everything, ensuring that the French would not break through by providing sufficient reserves. Following the attacks, Wellington sent in Hill's 2nd Division as reinforcements so that the areas previously attacked were now defended by around 10,000 more men. The Allies thus had at least 33,000 men who had not yet fired a shot

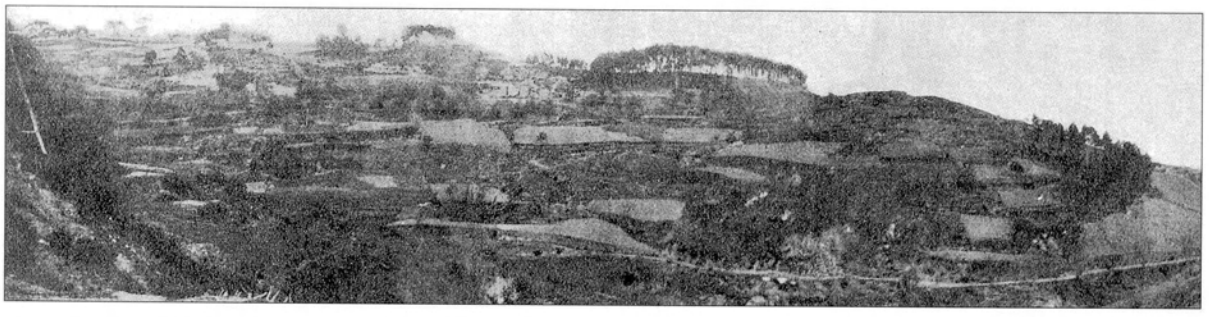




Charge of Portuguese Cazadores at Bussaco, 27 September 1810. Azujelo by Jorge Colaco done at the end of the 19th century. (Bussaco Palace)

LEFT **Craufurd's Light Division repulses Loison's French Division from Ney's 6th Corps.**

BELOW **Bussaco ridge showing the old road going to Sula. This is most likely the area where the 19th Portuguese charged and routed Ferey's French brigade. (Photo reproduction in Chambers's 1910 *Bussaco*)**





ABOVE **The Moura windmill, Masséna's command post during the battle. (Photo: RC)**



RIGHT **Wellington's command post at Bussaco. This is one of the highest spots in the whole area. (Photo: RC)**

BELOW **View of Bussaco ridge looking south from Masséna's command post. (Photo: RC)**





View looking east from Wellington's command post. (Photo: RC)

besides those that had been engaged. Preliminary reports stated that losses had been relatively light and that all units that had been under fire were still in fighting condition. The British and Portuguese expected a renewed effort but it did not come. Later that day, some French skirmishers once again came up. The men of the Light Division being tired, Wellington sent the 6th Cazadores and the light companies from Löwe's Brigade of the King's German Legion to skirmish while a company of the 43rd chased some French out of Sula. More attacks were expected but, except for the occasional exchanges between skirmishers, none came. The casualty reports that eventually reached Wellington were most satisfying: the Allied army only had 1,252 casualties including 200 killed, 1,001 wounded and 51 missing.

20 Pvt Hale's account is quoted in F. Lorraine Petre, *The History of the Norfolk Regiment 1685–1918* (Norwich, n.d.), I, p. 209. Portuguese regiments were then divided into two battalions of five companies each. The full 8th and 9th and half of the 21st Portuguese were engaged. British regiments had ten companies per battalion usually divided into two 'wings' so that it could also be counted as two and a half battalions for a total of only eight and a half battalions in British terms. The Tomar Militia Regiment had fled before coming under fire. Except for the light companies of the British 5th and 83rd, the rest of Picton's and Leith's divisions were not engaged. It is interesting to note that, despite the relatively small number of Allied troops actually engaged, Reynier thought he had been repulsed by a force three times as strong as his attack columns.

21 Oman states that the 95th Rifles had some 700 rifles, which is correct, and the 3rd Cazadores had 600 rifles, which is not. From August 1810, the six Portuguese Cazadores battalions would have had a maximum of about 200 rifles each. D'Urban specifically mentions 200 rifles ordered issued to the 1st, 3rd and 6th Cazadores in the 6–7 August 1810 entry of his journal. The other 400 men having British India Pattern smooth-bore muskets. The 2,000 Baker rifles were ordered in March and June 1809 for the Cazadores and received at the Portuguese army's magazine in Lisbon in late June 1810 (PRO, WO 1/239 and AO 3/757).

22 Wellington's dispatch to the Earl of Liverpool regarding the battle of Bussaco was written at Coimbra on 30 September 1810 (PRO, FO 63/100). It was published in the *London Gazette* of 15 October 1810. Macbean's and Beresford's accounts are from Chambers, p. 122.

23 Marbot, II, p. 394. Chambers felt the French had 2,000 killed, 3,580 wounded and 254 prisoners for a total of 5,834. Marbot added the British and Portuguese had 'by their own admission' sustained 2,300 casualties (!) and also mentioned that if the French had attacked the previous day, 25,000 men of Wellington's best troops were still south of the Mondego and Masséna would have carried the position easily. This has been (and still is) often stated in French sources. This seems to refer to Hill's 2nd Division of 10,000 men but the rest of Wellington's army was already at Bussaco. Howard's *Bussaco* offers some slight variations over Oman's usually accepted figures.

AFTERMATH

MASSÉNA OUTFLANKS THE ALLIES

Early in the morning of 28 September, parties of French cavalry were dispatched to thoroughly scout the countryside north and south of Bussaco, a task that should have been done before rather than after the battle. The French troopers from Reynier's 2nd Corps were sent south to the Mondego River. What they found in that area was not especially encouraging. There were numerous Allied cavalry and infantry – Fane's Brigade and Lecor's Division – and prepared field works beyond. The route to the southwest did not look promising – any crossing of the Mondego might result in another costly assault.

The parties of French dragoons sent north had better luck. The inaccurate maps of 1778 that Masséna's staff had showed no road or trail there but the troopers, who were accompanied by Gen Montbrun, found that there was indeed something like a mountain road about 15km (9 miles) north of Bussaco and running west. This must have been the same road Marbot had heard about the night before the battle. Its condition was not marvellous but it would serve. Montbrun rode back to Masséna with this news.

Several choices were now open to Masséna. The first, to retire to Almeida and cancel the invasion, was unacceptable as his army was still quite powerful and Napoleon would never forgive him for such a decision. Another assault on Bussaco was out of the question as Wellington's position was much too strong. Turning the position by the southerly route was equally inadvisable. This left the road to the north. Taking this road would enable the French army to get past Bussaco and outflank Wellington, who would have to retire. Masséna naturally chose that option. From noon on 28 September the French army marched north while French skirmishers closed on the Allied positions at Bussaco to distract them. General Sainte-Croix's dragoons formed the vanguard of the French army marching north and then west followed by Junot's 8th Corps, the artillery park, the baggage, Montbrun's reserve of cavalry and Ney's 6th Corps. Reynier's 2nd Corps was the last to leave the area on the 29th.

Wellington was not surprised and expected such a move. After watching the French move out on the 28th, he rode back to the convent of Bussaco, which he had made his HQ, and issued orders for his army to retire towards Coimbra and, ultimately, towards Lisbon. There were still those who anticipated that the British and Portuguese would have to abandon Lisbon and quit Portugal in a hurry. While wishing to have transports stationed at the Cape Verde Islands, just in case, Wellington was amazingly optimistic for someone whose position had been turned by the French . He wrote 'but let us wait a little to see the results of what



LtGen Manuel Pinto Bacelar, commander of the Portuguese militias in northeastern Portugal.

is now going on'. He knew he had dealt the French a very hard blow and was 'quite certain the French will not get Portugal this winter'.[24]

As before, British and Portuguese scouts followed the progress of the French to keep Wellington informed. On 30 September, however, there was very nearly a blunder when Sainte-Croix's dragoons riding ahead of the French army ran into parties of Portuguese militias near Sardao. This was Nicholas Trant's force of about 3,000 militia with a detachment of regular Portuguese dragoons. It had been ordered to Sardao on 27 September by LtGen Manuel Pinto Bacelar, general officer commanding militias along the western Douro, but using a round about route via Lamego. This was intended to reveal if the French still had units east of Bussaco. The resulting delay, however, left Trant's force marching west along the Douro River, parallel to the French army further south. He then turned south to Sardao and early on 30 September, Trant was at Agueda (Sardao's twin village separated from it only by a bridge over a small river). He had intelligence that French cavalry was further east about 3.8km (2½ miles) away 'when a dragoon came flying in to inform me that the French were coming on in two columns of cavalry in full speed. My coffee was not ready, and remained for the French to amuse themselves with. I had only time to get the Peñafiel regiment over the bridge when the French arrived – five minutes sooner and I had been nabbed!' Trant wanted to resist from the other side but shortly after the shooting started, the dragoons panicked followed by some militiamen formed as light infantry 'Cazadores' who lost some 30 men as they fled. With regard to the militia infantry regiments, however, Trant noted, 'this is the brighter side of the picture – showed not agitation, notwithstanding the attack on their nerves' they stood their ground until a proper retreat to the Vouga River was made.[25] Wellington was much disappointed at Trant being surprised and forced to retreat so suddenly. He blamed 'the blunders of the Portuguese General commanding in the north' for the French's success, going so far

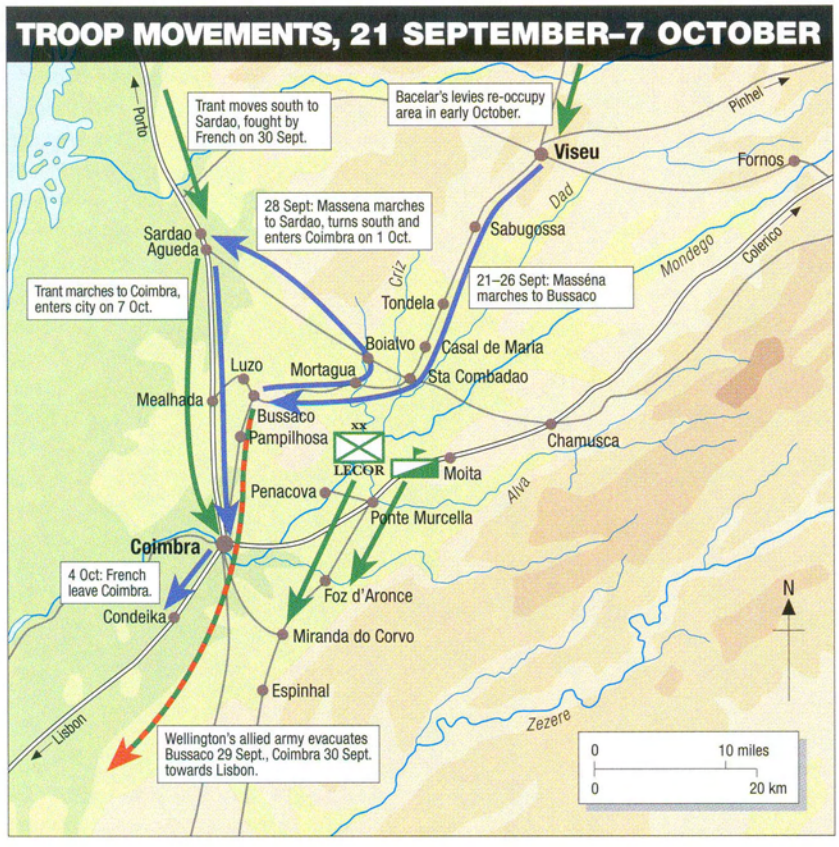


Columns of tens of thousands of Portuguese civilian refugees guided by the military filled the roads leading to Lisbon in October 1810. A large part of the population from Coimbra to the Lines of Torres Vedras abandoned their homes, sometimes destroying them, taking only what they could carry as the French army approached. (Print after Silva e Alberto)

as to say that they 'couldn't have turned our position' had Gen Bacelar sent Trant quickly to Sardao. How he could have expected Gen Bacelar or Trant with their paltry forces of militiamen to stop Masséna's seasoned regulars defies any logic and reveals Wellington at one of his weaker moments. The nearly unbearable pressures of his command occasionally affected him. He would then lash out, damning his Portuguese and Spanish allies or even his own 'scum of the earth' soldiers. Why he had not sent some of his regular troops to secure that area and try to stop the French from turning his position was the obvious question. Later, a calmer Wellington reasoned that it was an impossible task for any detached corps as it would have been too 'hard pressed' and 'therefore, there was nothing to do but to withdraw from Bussaco'.[26]

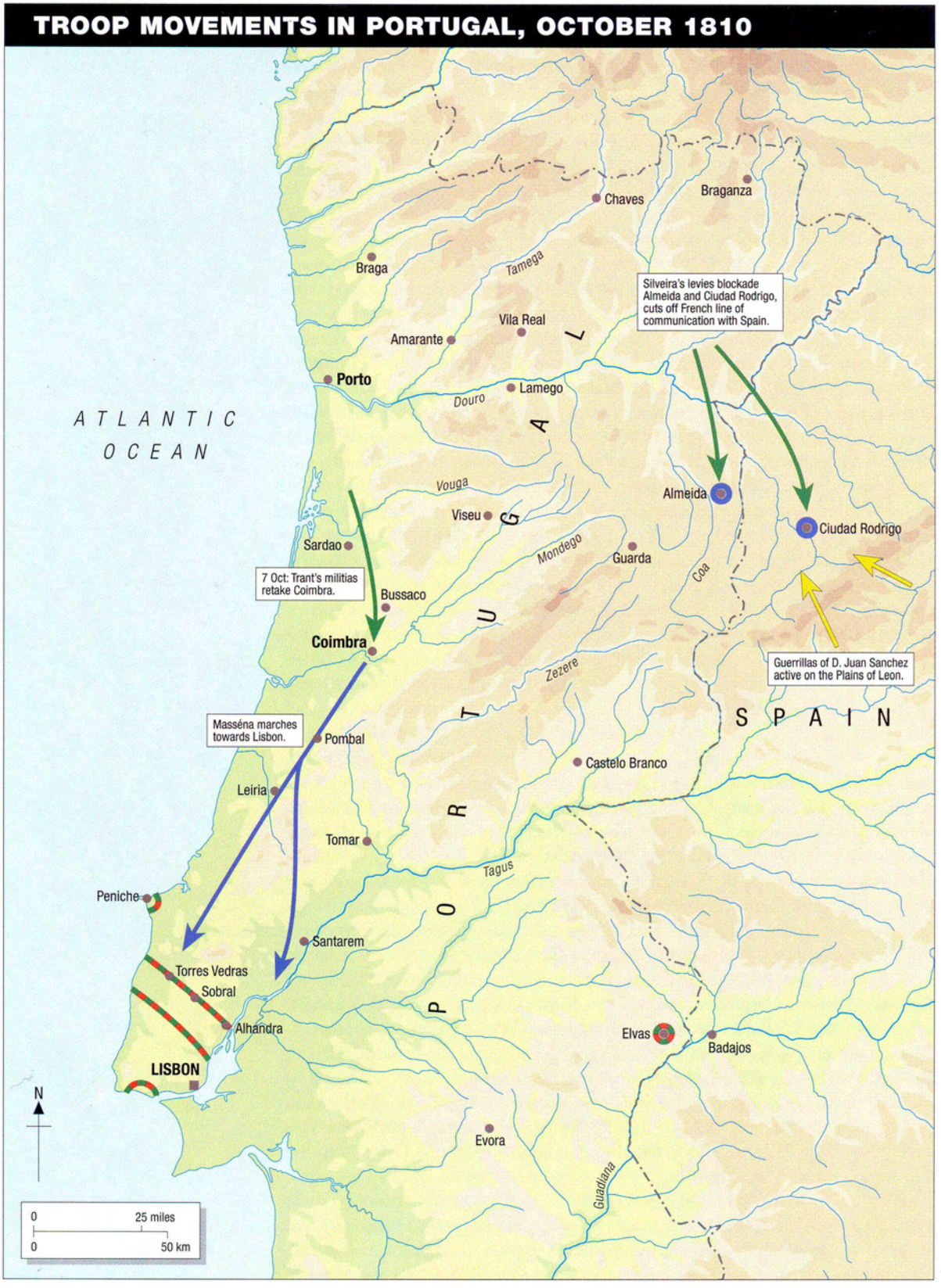
THE SACK OF COIMBRA

Meanwhile, Wellington's army was retiring from Bussaco. By 30 September, it had crossed the Mondego River, leaving behind the city of Coimbra as it marched southwards. The vast majority of its 40,000 inhabitants, at first unwilling to abandon their beloved city, bowed to the inevitable and left. The Allied army was retiring by three roads to Lisbon. By 4 October, Wellington, who was on the centre road with Spencer's, Leith's and Cole's divisions, was passing Leiria.





Student volunteer of the Coimbra Academic Corps, 1809–11, with a subject of study familiar to male students everywhere. The corps originated in the 1640s and took part in the 1808 and 1809 campaigns. In 1809 a blue uniform with scarlet collar and cuffs, blue piping, brass buttons, red plumes and yellow shako cords was adopted. While not listed specifically as a corps with Trant's troops in the Bussaco campaign, it is likely that some of its members were present and attached to the Coimbra Militia. The corps later served in Coimbra until its student members were released from active service on 15 April 1811. Print from Fernando Barreiros, *Noticia Historica do Corpo Militar Academico de Coimbra 1808–1811*, Lisbon, 1918. (Pedro de Brito Collection, Porto)


TROOP MOVEMENTS IN PORTUGAL, OCTOBER 1810
ATLANTIC OCEAN
PORTUGAL
SPAIN
Chaves
Braganza
Braga
Tamega
Vila Real
Amarante
Porto
Douro
Lamego
Silveira's levies blockade Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo, cuts off French line of communication with Spain.
Vouga
Almeida
Viseu
Ciudad Rodrigo
Sardao
Mondego
Guarda
Coa
7 Oct: Trant's militias retake Coimbra.
Bussaco
Coimbra
Guerrillas of D. Juan Sanchez active on the Plains of Leon.
Zezere
Masséna marches towards Lisbon.
Pombal
Castelo Branco
Leiria
Tomar
Tagus
Peniche
Santarem
Torres Vedras
Sobral
Alhandra
Elvas
Badajos
LISBON
Evora
Guadiana
N
0
25 miles
0
50 km

Craufurd's Light Division was a little further north with the three cavalry brigades acting as a rearguard. The roads were also filled with tens of thousands of civilian refugees of all ages with what few belongings they could carry as the population of central Portugal abandoned its homes, farms and businesses before the French army's arrival. Crops were systematically burned and many destroyed or buried whatever could not be carried rather than leave it to the despised French. It was a scene of desolation but also an outstanding act of patriotism by the Portuguese and, until Napoleon's Grand Army marched into Russia two years later, something almost unheard of on such a scale.

Through all this time no French pursuit of the Allied army materialised. The explanation lay back in Coimbra. When Masséna and his troops reached this lovely city on 1 October, all discipline was lost. World-renowned for its ancient and superb university it was too much for the French officers and soldiers. They had been mauled and humiliated at Bussaco, were almost out of provisions and, in their greed, descended into an orgy of pillage such as had never yet been seen in the country. For two days Coimbra was host to barbaric groups of largely drunken soldiers who broke, destroyed, defaced, ransacked everything in sight. Even the university's astronomic laboratories witnessed the destruction of their scientific instruments including graphometers and micrometers. Churches were stripped of gilded panelling and, except for what had been saved by the Portuguese, the libraries were practically annihilated. As for those Portuguese inhabitants who remained behind, their fate was most tenuous as later sickening statistics revealed. The Bishop of Coimbra reported on the effect of the passage of Masséna's army in his area: 2,969 'assassinated' persons of both sexes and all ages, 1,144 houses put to the torch besides other buildings – this was what those Portuguese that had not fled could expect.[27]

These horrors allowed the Allied army and the endless stream of refugees flooding towards Lisbon a two-day advantage over the French. Not until 4 October did the French emerge from Coimbra to march south after Wellington. During the retreat, a few men in some Allied regiments misbehaved and looted at Leiria but, Napier later related, 'Lord Wellington arrested this growing disorder with a strong hand. Three men, taken in the fact at Leiria, were hanged on the spot.' Some regiments 'more tainted than others, were forbidden to enter a village'. The French cavalry galloped hard and caught up with the Allied pickets. There were a few skirmishes, including a fairly major one between Leiria and Pombal on 5 October involving detachments of the 1st King's German Legion Hussars and the 16th Light Dragoons with the French cavalry. A few British cavalrymen were captured and mentioned casually 'the lines' when taken to Masséna's HQ. This was dismissed by the French staff as some last-minute field works being put up by Wellington's army. Masséna knew these could easily be assaulted at last giving him the opportunity to attack the Allied army on ground of his own choosing. Encouraged, the French army reached Leiria on the 7th and marched briskly south.

North of Coimbra Col Trant and his Portuguese militias, now reinforced to about 4,000 men, had moved cautiously towards the city. On 7 October, they wiped out a small French outpost at Fornos and by mid-afternoon Trant and his troops were on the outskirts of the devastated city.

Wanting all of his forces to attack Lisbon, Masséna had left only a small French garrison consisting of a company – 156 men – from the 44th *Bataillon des Equipages de Haut-Bord*.[28] They were to guard some 3,000 wounded from Bussaco and about 1,000 sick with the help of a couple of provisional companies organised from the less incapacitated soldiers. Trant's men approached the two northern gates of the city and quickly overcame their French guard. His squadron of regular cavalry galloped in. The French retreated to the Bishop's palace and surrendered after an hour of fighting on the promise of being protected. This was a difficult promise to keep, especially with the Coimbra Militia Regiment present whose 800 men were enraged to find their once beautiful city utterly vandalised. The French had even 'wantonly set fire to some houses, and heaped into the streets in one general mass of disorder all the furniture' and some vengeful militiamen 'committed acts of violence' Trant was 'sorry to report', but believed that 'not more than 6 or 8 Frenchmen were the victims of their resentment'. No doubt, some French convalescents were roughed up but it is obvious that, in spite of French malicious rumours that hundreds had been massacred, there was no such blood bath and some 4,500 prisoners were instead escorted to Porto by Trant. The news of Coimbra's fall with its rumours of massacre quickly reached the French army, causing anger and bitterness at Masséna's neglect for leaving his men unprotected.[29]

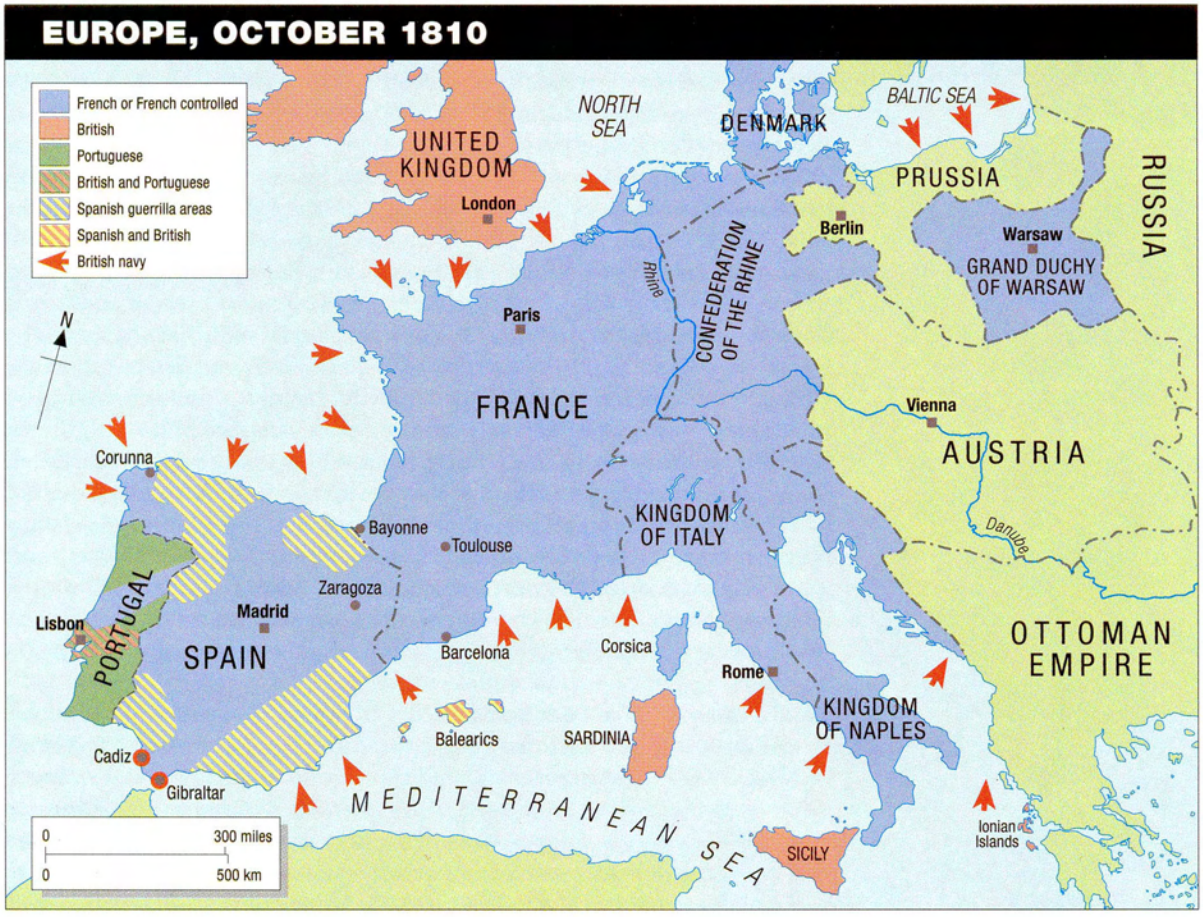
The Lines of Torres Vedras

By the evening of 9 October, the civilian refugees and the Allied army had reached the perimeter of defensive works north of Lisbon. These were not the mere field works anticipated by the French but an enormous network of forts, batteries and redoubts whose construction had started the previous November – the now famous Lines of Torres Vedras. The next day, the last of the Allied rearguard, Pack's Portuguese brigade and Craufurd's Light Division, retreated behind the lines chased by Montbrun's French cavalry.

General Montbrun and his troopers were some 50km (30 miles) ahead of the main force as they neared the lines. Prudence dictated they now wait for Masséna and the rest of the army. On 11 October, Montbrun sent out scouts; they came back with stories of interlinking forts and works as far as they could see. The French now realised that these were no ordinary field works but an enormous system of integrated fortifications. The most incredible fact is the total French ignorance of their existence, which betrays extraordinary defects in their intelligence. They obviously had no spies. Tens of thousands of Portuguese labourers had toiled for months and yet had been discreet even with their fellow countrymen. Typically perhaps, it was only three days later that Masséna himself rode up to view the lines. The campaign, which had started so well for the French with the fortuitous destruction of Almeida, had now ground to a halt. The Napoleonic invasion of Portugal had reached a stalemate.

The Lessons of Bussaco

Since Masséna had taken Ciudad Rodrigo, taken Almeida, turned Wellington's position after Bussaco and forced him to retreat to the outskirts of Lisbon, should Bussaco really be considered an Anglo-Portuguese victory? The short answer is yes, as its effects on the morale



and confidence of the French were tremendous. The invincible French commanded by some of their best marshals had been repulsed with very heavy casualties by a largely untried mixed British and Portuguese force. It was a shock for the 'French army of Portugal' from which it never recovered.

On the Allied side Bussaco was greeted with a great sigh of relief. The performance of its forces against the mighty French imperial army had been reassuring. The resilience of the Portuguese army was especially noted by King George III himself as the 'conduct of the Portuguese troops in this operation, has, in a most particular manner, attracted His Majesty's attention' and 'most fully proved the value of those efforts which have been made' to improve it.[30] The campaign had proven that they could now be brigaded effectively with British troops and that their steadiness and firepower were remarkable. Finally, General Wellington was confirmed as a worthy leader to challenge the best French marshals. The Allies had found their supreme commander.

But Bussaco was only the first part of the campaign. The defence of the Lines of Torres Verdas and the road to Fuentes de Onoro lay ahead. This conclusion to the 1810–11 campaign is examined in the forthcoming Osprey Campaign title *Fuentes de Onoro 1811*.

24 Wellington, to his credit, insisted that, should the army have to be evacuated, the Portuguese be embarked in vessels 'of the same description as those in which the British army is to be embarked.' Wellington to Charles Stuart, Coimbra, 30 September 1810, *Dispatches*, VI, p. 478.
25 Trant as quoted in Oman, III, pp. 399–400. The dragoons and the commander of the Cazadores, nicknamed 'Bravoure Bombasto' by Trant, planned to flee all the way to Porto. Trant caught 'Bombasto' and four dragoons, who were imprisoned. One assumes all were later court-martialled, which must have brought a severe penalty. These so-called Cazadores were not those of the regular Portuguese army, had no rifles (and probably hardly any uniforms) and were meant to act as skirmishers. Oman criticises Gen Bacelar's order which delayed Trant but it certainly made sense, from his perspective, to see if any French still remained to the east. There was also a possibility they might move north.
26 Wellington's slur on Bacelar is in *Supplementary Dispatches*, VI, pp. 607–107 and his calmer conclusions in his 'Memorandum of the Operations in 1810' written much later in February 1811, see: *Dispatches*, VII, pp. 291–312.
27 Luz Soriano, III, pp. 200–203 taken from the bishop's 'Memoria breve ...' published in Lisbon during 1812. It is said that Masséna himself was looting and even offered Ney a large telescope taken at the university. A disgusted Ney refused the gift.
28 This was a unit of the French Navy made up of conscripted sailors which had been attached to the Army of Portugal to assume naval duties once Lisbon and its port were captured. For more on naval units, see *Napoleon's Sea-Soldiers* (Osprey MAA 227).
29 Trant to Beresford, Coimbra, 7 October 1810, *Boletim do Arquivo Historico Militar*, IV (1934). One assumes the '6 or 8 Frenchmen' were killed by Portuguese militiamen although this is not specifically stated. French histories carried on the massacre story as fact as it is given in several French journals such as Marbot's. Thus Trant and the majority of his Portuguese have been maligned ever since when they in fact protected the prisoners as stated in a memorial of French officers printed in Napier. Trant's force, besides the Coimbra Militia Regiment, consisted of the Porto, Peñafiel, Aveiro and Maia militia regiments with a militia battalion of light companies. His regulars consisted of 50 gunners of the 4th Artillery, 50 from the 6th Cavalry, 48 from the 11th Cavalry and 54 from the Police Cavalry.
30 Lord Liverpool to Wellington, Downing St., 18 October 1810, PRO, WO 6/34. The King was reacting to Wellington's dispatch to Lord Liverpool from Coimbra, 30 September 1810 reporting the battle of 27 September.

THE BATTLEFIELDS TODAY

Masséna's began his invasion at the mighty fortress of Almeida. The nearby Spanish fort of La Concepcion is in ruins but Almeida has been repaired and is an impressive example of fortress architecture. Although in a more isolated part of Portugal, Almeida has all visitors' amenities but remains a real town with few 'touristy' shops. Its population has declined slightly in the last 200 years and most inhabitants live within its massive walls. To the west, the old stone Coa River bridge is almost hidden under a large modern highway bridge barely 25 metres to the south. Ciudad Rodrigo is a short drive to the east in Spain and quite apart from its natural beauty, the topography of the whole area speaks volumes about the commanders' tactical choices. Descending from the hills of Portugal onto the flat plains of Leon one clearly sees the prudence of Wellington's decision to conduct his defence from the mountains.

Travelling west into Portugal one follows much the same general route to that Masséna traversed with such difficulties in 1810, but which makes most pleasant driving today. Guarda and Viseu are only two of several lovely stopovers. One eventually comes to the Serra de Bussaco, which has obviously changed greatly since 1810 – even since 1910 – good roads, more houses and, curiously, more fauna. The actual area of the battle of Bussaco is now a National Park with lush forest growth. Precisely where the Bussaco convent stood a superb summer palace of post-manuelan architecture was built for King Carlos I of Portugal between 1889 and 1907; it is now the 'Bussaco Palace Hotel', one of Portugal's finest. Coimbra has certainly recovered and discovering its many treasures is a joy. It takes approximately two hours to reach the Lines of Torres Vedras/Lisbon by motorway. Taking the older road to Torres Vedras through Leiria, Batalha and Obidos, however, provides the opportunity to visit many magnificent sites – and you will never regret spending the extra time.

ORDERS OF BATTLE

The French Army of Portugal, 15 September 1810

Officer Commanding :
Marshal André Masséna, Prince of Essling

2nd Corps – General Jean-Louis Reynier
1st Division, *Merle*
Brigade Sarrut
1, 2, 3 & 4/2nd Light Infantry (77 officers, 2,281 men)
1, 2, 3 & 4/36th Line Infantry (82 officers, 1,994 men)
Brigade Graindorge
1, 2, 3 & 4/4th Light Infantry (77 officers, 2,078 men)
Division Merle total: 236 officers, 6,353 men

2nd Division, Heudelet
Brigade Foy, General of Brigade Maximilien-Sébastien Foy
17th Light Infantry (57 officers, 1,341 men)
1, 2, 3 & 4/70th Line Infantry (71 officers, 2,387 men)
Brigade Arnould
1, 2, 3 & 4/31st Light Infantry (57 officers, 1,711 men)
1, 2, 3 & 4/47th Line Infantry (76 officers, 2,387 men)
Division Heudelet total: 261 officers, 7,826 men

Cavalry Brigade, BrigGen P. Soult
1st Hussars
22nd Chasseurs à cheval
8th Dragoons
Hanoverian Chasseurs à cheval
Total: 106 officers, 1,291

Artillery, Train, Engineers (25 officers, 1,554)
Corps General Staff (60 officers)

2nd Corps total: 694 officers, 17,024 men

6th Corps – Marshal Michel Ney, Duke of Elchingen
1st Division, General of Division Marchand
Brigade Maucune
1 & 2/6th Light Infantry (42 officers, 1,436 men)
1, 2 & 3/69th Line Infantry (56 officers, 1,661 men)
Brigade Marcognet
1, 2 & 3/39th Line Infantry (39 officers, 1,628 men)
1, 2 & 3/76th Line Infantry (58 officers, 1,732 men)
Division Marchand total: 214 officers, 6,457 men

2nd Division, Mermet
Brigade Bardet
1 & 2/25th Light Infantry (37 officers, 1,678 men)
1, 2 & 3/27th Line Infantry (59 officers, 1,827 men)
Brigade Labassée
1, 2 & 3/50th Line Infantry (65 officers, 2,056 men)
1, 2 & 3/59th Line Infantry (60 officers, 1,834 men)
Division Mermet total: 221 officers, 7,395 men

3rd Division, Loison
Brigade Simon
4, 5 & 6/26th Line Infantry (64 officers, 1,561 men)
Légion du Midi – 1 bn, (18 officers, 546 men)
Légion Hanovrienne – 2 bns, (29 officers, 1,129 men)
Brigade Ferrey
2/32nd Light Infantry (20 officers, 393 men)
4, 5 & 6/66th Line Infantry (68 officers, 1,762 men)
4 & 6/82nd Line Infantry (40 officers, 1,196 men)
Division Loison total: 239 officers, 6,587 men

Cavalry Brigade Lamotte
3rd Hussars
15th Chasseurs à cheval
Total: 74 officers, 1,606 men

Artillery, Train, Engineers (28 officers, 1,403 men)
Corps General Staff (82 officers)

6th Corps total: 858 officers, 23,448 men

8th Corps – General Andoche Junot, Duke of Abrantes
1st Division, Clausel
Brigade Ménard
4/19th Line Infantry (19 officers, 634 men)
4/25th Line Infantry (16 officers, 571 men)
4/28th Line Infantry (17 officers, 442 men)
4/34th Line Infantry (15 officers, 624 men)
Brigade Taupin
4/15th Light Infantry (21 officers, 813 men)
4/46th Line Infantry (18 officers, 546 men)
4/75th Line Infantry (19 officers, 532 men)
Brigade Godart
1, 2, 3 & 4/22nd Line Infantry (80 officers, 2,427 men)
Division Clausel total: 205 officers, 6,589 men

2nd Division, Solignac
Brigade Gratien
1, 2 & 3/15th Line Infantry (63 officers, 1,262 men)
1, 2 & 3/86th Line Infantry (55 officers, 1,090 men)
Brigade Thomières
1, 2, 3 & 4/65th Line Infantry (82 officers, 2,680 men)
Régiment Irlandais – 1 bn, (37 officers, 971 men)
Régiment de Prusse – 1 bn (29 officers, 957 men)
Division Solignac total: 266 officers, 6,960 men

Cavalry Division, Sainte-Croix
1st Dragoons (2 squadrons)
2nd Dragoons (2 squadrons)
4th Dragoons (2 squadrons)
9th Dragoons (2 squadrons)
14th Dragoons (2 squadrons)
26th Dragoons (2 squadrons)
Total: 92 officers, 1,771 troopers

Artillery, Train, Engineers (17 officers, 964 men)
Corps General Staff (75 officers)

8th Corps total: 655 officers, 16,284 men

Cavalry Reserve, General Montbrun
Brigade Lorcet
3rd Dargoons
6th Dragoons
Total: 52 officers, 1,040 men
Brigade Cavrois
11th Dragoons (27 officers, 634 men)
Brigade Ornano
15th Dragoons
25th Dragoons
Total: 57 officers, 1,369 men

Horse Artillery (6 officers, 294 men)
Reserve of Cavalry total: 142 officers, 3,337 men

Army of Portugal total: 2,475 officers, 62,575 men

The above total was the army that marched into Portugal beyond Almeida. The following troops were detached:

5/82nd Line Regiment, 575 left at Almeida
4/15th Line Regiment, 578 left at Ciudad Rodrigo
4/86th Line Regiment, 873 left at Ciudad Rodrigo
3rd Dragoon Regiment, 157 left at Almeida
10th Dragoon Regiment, 718 left at Ciudad Rodrigo
Artillery, about 300 left at Almeida and Ciudad Rodrigo

Grand total, French Army of Portugal: 68,251
(Oman, Vol. III)

British and Portuguese Allied Army, Bussaco – 27 September 1810

Commander-in-chief of the Allied army:
LtGen Arthur Wellesley, Viscount Wellington

1st Division, General Spencer
Stopford's Brigade
1/2nd (Coldstream) Guards (24 officers, 790 men)
1/3rd (Scots) Guards (26 officers, 791 men)
5/60th Foot [Rifles] – 1 coy, (2 officers, 51 men)
Lord Blantyre's Brigade
2/24th Foot (30 officers, 338 men)
2/42nd Foot (23 officers, 391 men)
1/61st Foot (36 officers, 648 men)
5/60th Foot [Rifles] – 1 coy, (3 officers, 47 men)
Löwe's Brigade
1st Line Bn, King's German Legion (28 officers, 510 men)
2nd Line Bn, KGL (31 officers, 453 men)
5th Line Bn, KGL (30 officers, 460 men)
7th Line Bn, KGL (24 officers, 429 men)
Light Bns detachments, KGL (6 officers, 90 men)
Pakenham's Brigade
1/7th Foot (26 officers, 843 men)
1/79th Foot (38 officers, 885 men)

1st Division total: 327 officers, 6,726 men

2nd Division, Major-General Rowland Hill
W. Stewart's Brigade
1/3rd Foot (32 officers, 826 men)
2/31st Foot (27 officers, 384 men)
2/48th (27 officers, 454 men)
2/66th (30 officers, 433 men)
5/60th Foot [Rifles] – 1 coy, (1 officer, 33 men)
Inglis's Brigade
29th Foot (31 officers, 430 men)
1/48th (32 officers, 519 men)
1/57th (28 officers, 727 men)
5/60th Foot [Rifles] – 1 coy, (1 officer, 50 men)
Catlin Craufurd's (Wilson's) Brigade
2/68th Foot (32 officers, 522 men)
2/34th Foot (36 officers, 617 men)
2/39th Foot (27 officers, 394 men)
5/60th Foot [Rifles] – 1 coy, (2 officers, 42 men)

Hamilton's Portuguese Division (attached to Hill's 2nd British Divison)
Archibald Campbell's Brigade
4th Portuguese Line Infantry (1,164 officers and men)
10th Portuguese Line Infantry (1,086 officers and men)
Fonseca's Brigade
2nd Portuguese Line Infantry (1,317 officers and men)
14th Portuguese Line Infantry (1,373 officers and men)

F2nd Division total: 306 officers, 10,371 men

3rd Division, Major-General Thomas Picton
Mackinnon's Brigade
1/45th Foot (35 officers, 560 men)
1/74th Foot (38 officers, 456 men)
1/88th Foot (40 officers, 679 men)
Lightburne's Brigade
2/5th Foot (31 officers, 464 men)
2/83rd Foot (43 officers, 461 men)
5/60th Foot – 3 coys, (16 officers, 145 men)



Drum of a Cazadore battalion, said to have been carried at the battle of Bussaco. (Museu Militar do Bussaco)

Champalimaud's Portuguese Brigade
9th Portuguese Line Infantry (1,234 officers and men)
21st Portuguese Line Infantry (541 officers and men)

3rd Division total: 203 officers, 4,540 men

4th Division Major-General Galbraith Lowry Cole
Alexander Campbell's Brigade
2/7th Foot (29 officers, 585 men)
1/11th Foot (42 officers, 920 men)
2/53rd Foot (25 officers, 448 men)
5/60th Foot [Rifles] – 1 coy, (2 officers, 58 men)
Kemmis's Brigade
2/27th Foot (34 officers, 785 men)
1/40th Foot (48 officers, 1,007 men)
1/97th Foot (27 officers, 493 men)
5/60th Foot [Rifles] – 1 coy, (4 officers, 50 men)
Collin's Portuguese Brigade
11th Portuguese Line Infantry (1,438 officers and men)
23rd Portuguese Line Infantry (1,405 officers and men)

4th Division total: 211 officers, 7,189 men

5th Division, General Leith
Barnes' Brigade
3/1st Foot (35 officers, 733 men)
1/9th Foot (30 officers, 585 men)
2/38th Foot (29 officers, 467 men)
Spry's Portuguese Brigade
3rd Portuguese Line Infantry (1,134 officers and men)
15th Portuguese Line Infantry (905 officers and men)
Tomar Militia Regiment (580 officers and men)
Eben's Portuguese Brigade
Loyal Lusitanian Legion (1,646 officers and men)
8th Portuguese Line Infantry (1,161 officers and men)

5th Division total: 94 officers, 7,211 men

Light Division, Brigadier-General Robert Craufurd
Beckwith's Brigade
1/43rd Foot (40 officers, 804 men)
95th Rifles – 4 coys, (12 officers, 384 men)
3rd Portuguese Cazadores (656 officers and men)
Barclay's Brigade
1/52nd Foot (29 officers, 946 men)
95th Rifles – 4 coys, (12 officers, 358 men)
1st Portuguese Cazadores (546 officers and men)

Light Division total: 93 officers, 3,694 men

Independent Brigades of Portuguese Infantry
1st Brigade: Brigadier-General Sir Denis Pack
1st Portuguese Line Infantry (1,089 officers and men)
16th Portuguese Line Infantry (1,130 officers and men)
4th Portuguese Cazadores (550 officers and men)
5th Brigade: A. Campbell
6th Portuguese Line Infantry (1,317 officers and men)
18th Portuguese Line Infantry (1,386 officers and men)
6th Portuguese Cazadores (546 officers and men)
6th Brigade: Coleman
7th Portuguese Line Infantry (815 officers and men)
19th Portuguese Line Infantry (1,124 officers and men)
2nd Portuguese Cazadores (406 officers and men)
Independent Portuguese Infantry Brigades total:
8,363 officers and men

Cavalry
4th (British) Dragoons – 2 sqns, (15 officers, 195 men)

Artillery
A Troop, Royal Horse Artillery – Capt H.D. Ross
I Troop, Royal Horse Artillery – Capt R. Bull
Total:18 officers, 314 men

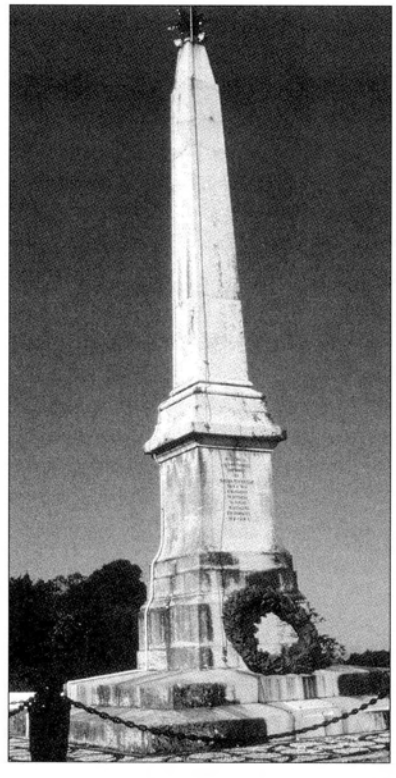
Capt G. Thompson's company, Royal Artillery
Capt R. Lawson's company, Royal Artillery
Total: 37 officers, 663 men

2nd Company, KGL Artillery – Capt.C. von Rettberg
4th Company, KGL Artillery – Capt A Cleeves
Total: 19 officers, 299 men

1st Portuguese Artillery – Maj Alexander Dickson
Capt Pedro de Rozierre battery
Capt. Joao da Cunha Preto's battery
Total: 330 officers and men

2nd Portuguese Artillery – Maj V. von Arentschildt
Capt Jacinto P.M. de Freire battery
Capt Joao Porfirio da Silva's battery
Total: 440 officers and men

4th Portuguese Artillery
Capt Antonio de Sousa Passos's battery (110 officers and men)



The monument to the battle of Bussaco. (Photo: RC)

Engineers (24 officers, 19 men)
Wagon Train (25 officers, 397 men)
Royal Staff Corps (1 officer, 40 men)

British total: 26,843
Portuguese total: 25,429
Grand total, Anglo-Portuguese Army: 52,272

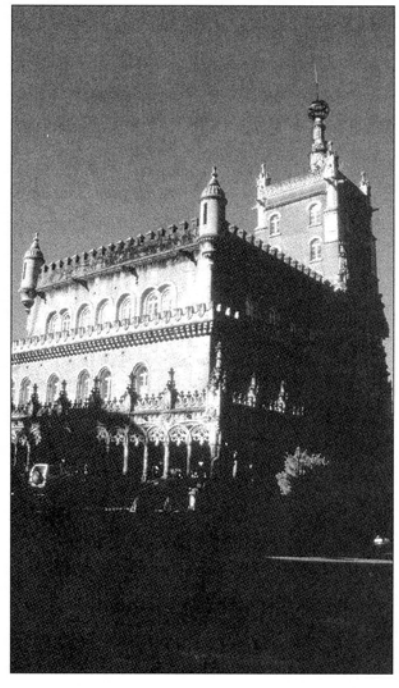
Units of Wellington's army not deployed at Bussaco:

British Cavalry near Mealhada
De Grey's Brigade
3rd Dragoon Guards (18 officers, 392 men)
4th Dragoons (14 officers, 196 men)
Slade's Brigade
1st Dragoons (20 officers, 513 men)
14th Light Dragoons (17 officers, 417 men)
Anson's Brigade
16th Light Dragoons (23 officers, 440 men)
1st Hussars, KGL (19 officers, 420 men)

British and Portuguese Cavalry beyond the Alva River
Fane's Brigade
13th British Light Dragoons (29 officers, 401 men)
1st Portuguese Cavalry (422 officers and men)
4th Portuguese Cavalry (451 officers and men)
7th Portuguese Cavalry (223 officers and men)
10th Portuguese Cavalry (354 officers and men)

Lecor's Portuguese Division in the Ponte de Murcella area
Bradford's Brigade
12th Portuguese Line Infantry (1,277 officers and men)
13th Portuguese Line Infantry (1,078 officers and men)
5th Portuguese Cazadores (456 officers and men)
Militia Brigade
Idanha, Castelo Branco, and Covilhao Militia Regiments (about 2,000 officers and men)

Portuguese total: 6,261
British total: 3,382
Grand Total: 9,643
(Oman, Vol. III; Luz Soriano, Vol. VI)



The palace of Bussaco. (Photo: RC)

FURTHER READING

Donald D. Howard's *The Battle of Bussaco: Masséna vs. Wellington* (Tallahassee, 1965) and *Napoleon and Iberia: the Twin Sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida* (London, 1994) gives the best recent coverage of the 1810 Bussaco campaign in English. Sir Charles Oman's *History of the Peninsular War*, Vol. 3 (Oxford, 1908) is also still useful but should be used in light of Professor Howard's valuable additional research. Also revealing is George L. Chambers's *Bussaco* (London, 1910). *The Dispatches of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington* (London, 1838) and the *Supplementary Despatches, Correspondence, and Memoranda of Field Marshal Arthur Duke of Wellington* (London, 1860) are essential as published documents of the campaign. William Napier's *History of the Peninsular War* (London, 1835) should be used with caution. British participants have left valuable personal memoirs and letters that have been published and many are quoted in the text.

The British army is well covered in Oman's *Wellington's Army* (London, 1913) and in Philip J. Haythornthwaite's *The Armies of Wellington* (London, 1994). Regimental histories of the various British regiments involved all cover their unit's participation. Many works deal with Napoleon's troops but John Elting's *Swords Around a Throne* (New York, 1988) is one of the best and perhaps the most enjoyable to read. There are few works in English on the Portuguese forces besides Andrew Halliday's *The Present State of Portugal and of the Portuguese Army*, (Edinburgh, 1813) and my own *Portuguese Army of the Napoleonic Wars* (Osprey Men-at-Arms Series Nos. 343, 346 and 356).

As might be expected, there are fewer published French sources on the campaign. A good overview from the French perspective is in A. Hugo's *France Militaire*, Vol. 4 (Paris, 1837). Of the French memoirs, Baron Marbot's is perhaps the most revealing and Pellet's is important also, both officers serving on Masséna's staff. Correspondence and biographies of Marshals Ney and Masséna are important if revealing perhaps more on their mutual antagonism than on the campaign, which was not to either's glory. In general French statistics must be used with caution as the numbers they give are often obviously exaggerated.

In Portuguese, essential data for the 1810 campaign are found in Simao José da Luz Soriano's *Historia da Guerra Civil ... Guerra da Peninsula*, Vol. III (Lisbon 1874). Christovam Ayres de Magalhaes Sepulveda, *Historia Organica e Politica do Exercito Portugues*, Vols. XI-XIII (Coimbra, 1916–25) has many valuable documents and compilations and statistics as does Claudio de Chaby's *Excerptos Historicos e Colleccao de Documentos Relativa a la Guerra Denomida da Peninsula ...*, Vols. III to VI (Lisbon, 1865–82). Ferreira Martins's *Historia do Exercito Portugues* (Lisbon, 1945) is the standard history of the army.

For additional sources see the footnotes.

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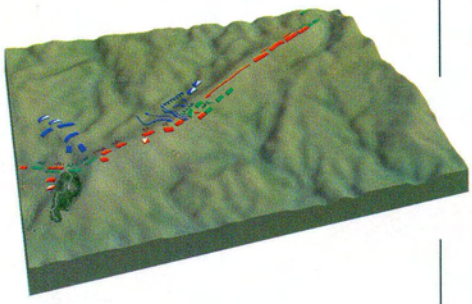
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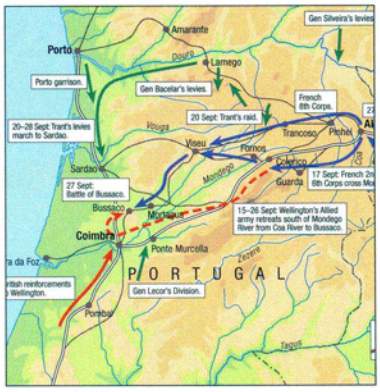
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