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"FOR THE CAUSE"

CADIZ AND THE PENINSULAR WAR:  
MILITARY AND SIEGE OPERATIONS  
FROM 1808 TO 1812

by

JAMES P. HERSON JR.



A Thesis submitted to the  
Department of History  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirement for the degree of  
Master of Arts

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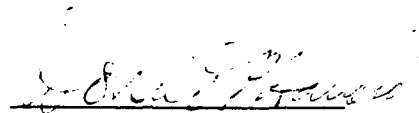
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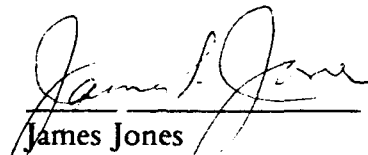
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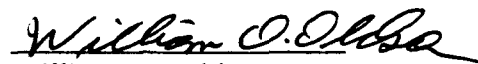
The members of the Committee approve the Thesis of James P. Herson Jr.  
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## PREFACE

The unsuccessful French siege of Cadiz is one of the most important military actions in the Peninsula. The successful allied defense of this key city made possible the survival of the revolutionary Spanish Government and facilitated the funneling of British arms, money, and soldiers into Spain for its fight against the French. Had Cadiz fallen, and with it the 1812 liberal constitution drafted by the Cortes, the latter history of Spain would have been far different. Had the French taken the last "free" city in Spain, the vicious guerrilla war against her troops may have lacked both reason and coordination in Andalusia. The British government would have had no cliental point of coordination or a secure base of operations. Cadiz served not only as the capital of the Spanish government, it also served as the focal point for Peninsular support operations for the British outside of Lisbon.

This work would not have possible if not for the kind assistance and professionalism shown by the staff of the Strozier Library, and most especially, its Special Collections division. Thanks must be given to Dr. Robin Thomas and Dr. Charles Esdaile, both of the United Kingdom, for their invaluable help and suggestions. I would also like to express my thanks to the staffs of the Public Records Office, at Kew Gardens, London; the University of Southampton, United Kingdom for their kind permission to use the Wellington Collection; and the National Army Museum of London, records section.

My most profound thanks are reserved for Dr. Donald D. Horward. This professional and dedicated scholar has been both a guide, and more importantly, a mentor. His exceptional knowledge and patient suggestions made possible this first work of scholarship. His efforts at expanding our understanding of the fantastic struggle in the Peninsula have shed new light and knowledge on this brutal and crucial battlefield of the Napoleonic era. I would also like to thank the other members of my committee, Dr. James Jones along with Dr. William O. Oldson, for their help and thoughtful suggestions.

In closing I would especially like to thank my wife, Captain Laurie Ann Herson, for her numerous sacrifices, in order for me to write this thesis. Her dedication and love made possible this work.

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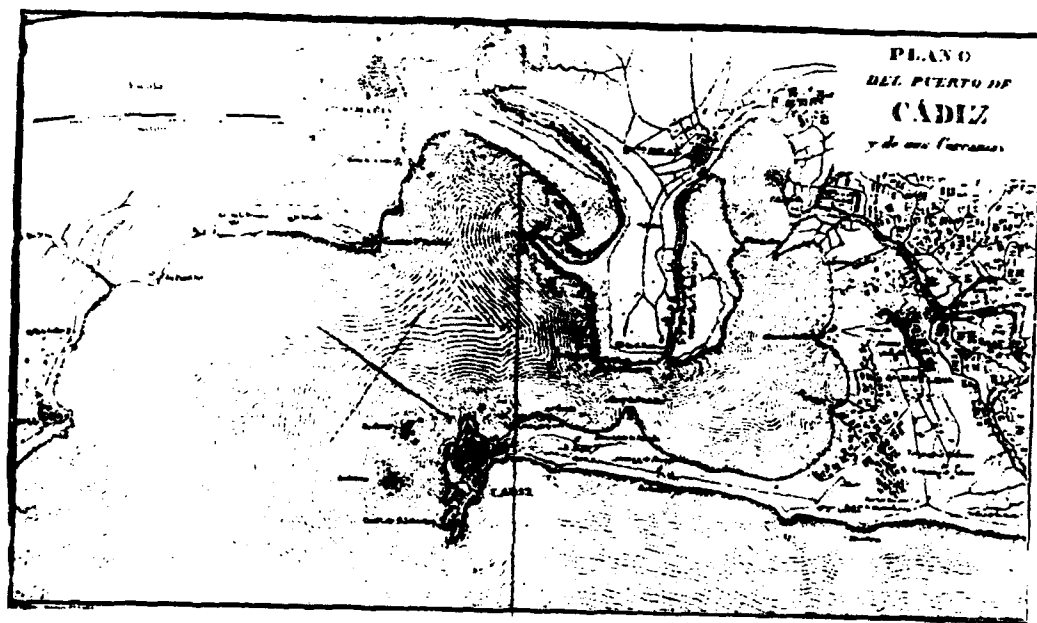
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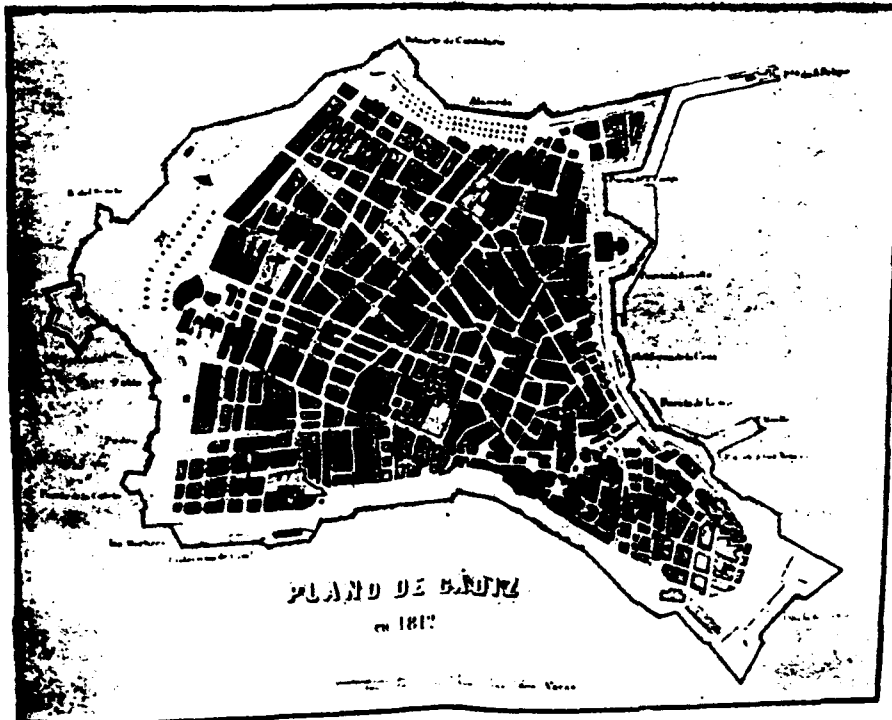
PLAN OF THE BAY OF CADIZ 1812



PLAN OF THE CITY OF CADIZ  
1812

FIGURE 1:

Source: *El Cadiz De Las Cortes, La Vida en La Ciudad en Los Anos De 1810 a 1813*. Ramon Solis. Madrid: Institute De Estudios Politicos, 1958.



**"FOR THE CAUSE"  
CADIZ AND THE PENINSULAR WAR:  
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This Thesis provides both an original examination of the military aspects of the siege of Cadiz during the Napoleonic period, as well as, a reevaluation of previous treatments on the city's military role. No definitive study has ever been attempted on this unique campaign of the Peninsular War.

In 1808 Cadiz assumed a pivotal role in the relationship with Spain's new allies. When Napoleon Bonaparte invaded the Iberian Peninsula, first to enforce the Continental System against the United Kingdom, and shortly afterwards, to put his own brother on the Spanish throne, he did not realize the difficulty of his task. Of all the other provinces and cities, only Cadiz remained a free city. It became the center of the new Revolutionary government and the focus for allied cooperation in Spain. Blessed with a good harbor and natural defensive barriers, Cadiz proved an ideal location for allied cooperation.

In support of her new ally, the British government sent almost 19,000 British soldiers, and gave 13 million pounds for city's defenses. The vital role of Cadiz was clearly recognized by the Duke of Wellington, and by the other Wellesley visionaries--Richard, and Henry. Cadiz became the only city in continental Europe which did not fall to the French. It was besieged for thirty months, far longer than any other city which dared to challenge Napoleon.

Cadiz, along with Andalusia, served as a source of strategic consumption of the French Army in the Peninsula, and contributed directly, to the loss of Spain for the French.

## INTRODUCTION

### SETTING THE STAGE

The introduction of nationalism by the French Revolution to the western world had a profound effect on the established political, economic, and social life of Europe. The impact of French Philosophers such as Voltaire and Montesquieu along with English writers such as John Locke, combined with the stunning, working democracy known as the United States, shocked the European world. The previous expression of national commitment centered primarily on loyalty to the king; the emerging nationalism centered on loyalty of the people and the state. Nationalism became a motivating force in France. With the tremendous changes brought about by the sweeping revolution of 1789 in Paris, France had declared war on the old order. The citizen armies and the efforts of Lazare Carnot<sup>1</sup>, made possible the unprecedented victories gained by the infant republic. Cursed in the beginning with a shortage of qualified officers, the French Army turned inward to find the necessary talent to transform defeat into victory. Men of ability such as André Masséna, Jean Lannes,

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<sup>1</sup> Carnot can be favorably compared to the WW II American General George C. Marshall. Both men were "Organizers of Victory" and approached warfare in a practicable, systematic manner. Carnot's "Levée en Masse" enabled France to conscript the majority of the available male population into the army, or some other related defense activity. The Levée en Masse first was issued on 23 August 1793. By September of 1794, French Army strength was over 1,000,000. The factories soon produced huge numbers of muskets, cannon, bayonets, swords, etc. With superior numbers and better equipment, the young armies of France were able to extend the benefits of the Revolution to other European nations, such as the Belgium and Switzerland. Napoleon was able to capitalize on the work of Carnot when he led the Army of Italy into legend.

Joachim Murat and Napoleon Bonaparte, were able to distinguish themselves and to lead the demi-brigades to victory.

When Napoleon Bonaparte achieved political as well as military control of France, his aims were to protect the Revolution and to extend the benefits and rights enjoyed by France's people to the rest of feudal Europe.

Under Napoleon, the French Flag would wave from the coast of the Baltic Sea to the beaches of the Mediterranean. His Empire spread from the Atlantic shores of France to the steppes of Russia. Few empires were as extensive, or as well organized, as that of the "Emperor of the French". The only country in Europe not overrun was the island nation of Great Britain, whose geography alone prevented her capitulation.

Great Britain endured against a hostile Europe that was assembling ships from many countries to make up a massive invasion fleet to storm her shores. Only by foul weather and loss of several captured national fleets (due to timely English naval raids), was the defeat of Britain prevented.<sup>2</sup> The prospect of a British invasion was abandoned in 1805 because of intelligence received concerning Austrian mobilization and because of the defeat of the joint Franco/Spanish fleet by the tactics of Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson off of Trafalgar. Napoleon turned to another weapon against the British—economic blockade—known as the "Continental System." It caused a severe strain on an already burdened British economy that was still paying for the previous

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<sup>2</sup> See William L. Clowes's, The Royal Navy. A History from the Earliest Times to the Present. (London, 1900). See volume III, for details on the Copenhagen raid and others.

wars against France.<sup>3</sup>

The only two nations which were not aligned or in concert with Napoleon's economic assault on Great Britain were Portugal and Sweden. Both nations were on the periphery of Europe, and resisted the designs of the French to adhere to the blockade. At this time, the effects of growing nationalism were not yet fully felt. Later though, it would form the basis of the German resistance to Napoleon (as well as) the Spanish revolt against the French-imposed King of Spain, Joseph Bonaparte.<sup>4</sup> The success of the French Emperor to lure the Spanish royal family to Bayonne, enabled him to deceive them and successfully seize the throne of Spain.<sup>5</sup>

In 1808 a uniquely Spanish revolt began with the anger of the Madrid populace over the transportation of the "infantes" to France. On 2 May, "Dos de Mayos", opposition erupted into rage at the governing French. The almost universal action against the French surprised even Napoleon. After all, was not a relative of Napoleon going to sit on the Spanish throne? Such a rebellion caught the attention of all of Europe; here was another crack in the French curtain which had surrounded the continent. The sudden prospect of a new ally for the war weary English encouraged the British government to support the popular revolt with all available means. At last

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<sup>3</sup> See Eli Heckscher's, The Continental System: An Economic Interpretation. (London, 1922) for the impact of the Continental system on British commerce.

<sup>4</sup> See Michael Glover's, Legacy of Glory, the Napoleonic Kingdom in Spain, 1808-12. (New York, 1971), for a complete work on this short lived kingdom.

<sup>5</sup> For an account of the usurpation of the Spanish Royal family by Napoleon see Nina Consuelo Epton's, The Spanish Mousetrap: Napoleon and the Court of Spain. (London, 1973).

a front was available for combat against the French in continental Europe.<sup>6</sup>

The assistance required to help both Spain and Portugal in resisting the French was a tremendous undertaking, no less because of their proximity to France. Massive amounts of equipment to arm its forces, specie to pay its soldiers, and the political will to endure a military contest in the barren Iberian Peninsula could not endure many setbacks. The task of coordination alone was significant, but the opportunity to again battle on the continent could not be ignored. For Napoleon, the Spanish revolution in the Peninsula was inconvenient but manageable, he had already defeated four coalitions of Europe several times. This attitude would later contribute to his unrealistic expectations and poor management of the Peninsula campaign.

Great Britain prepared to aid the Spanish and Portuguese with finances, arms, and soldiers. The task was prodigious; the English coffers were still dangerously low from paying the other European powers to arm and mobilize several times previously.<sup>7</sup> If secure locations could be found in both Portugal and in Spain to coordinate the insurrections and to deploy and control British forces, then the task would be simplified. If France assumed the offense and all of Spain and Portugal were overrun, then Great Britain would be the "lone adversary" with a declining economy and growing peace movement to sap its national will. The British chose Lisbon in Portugal

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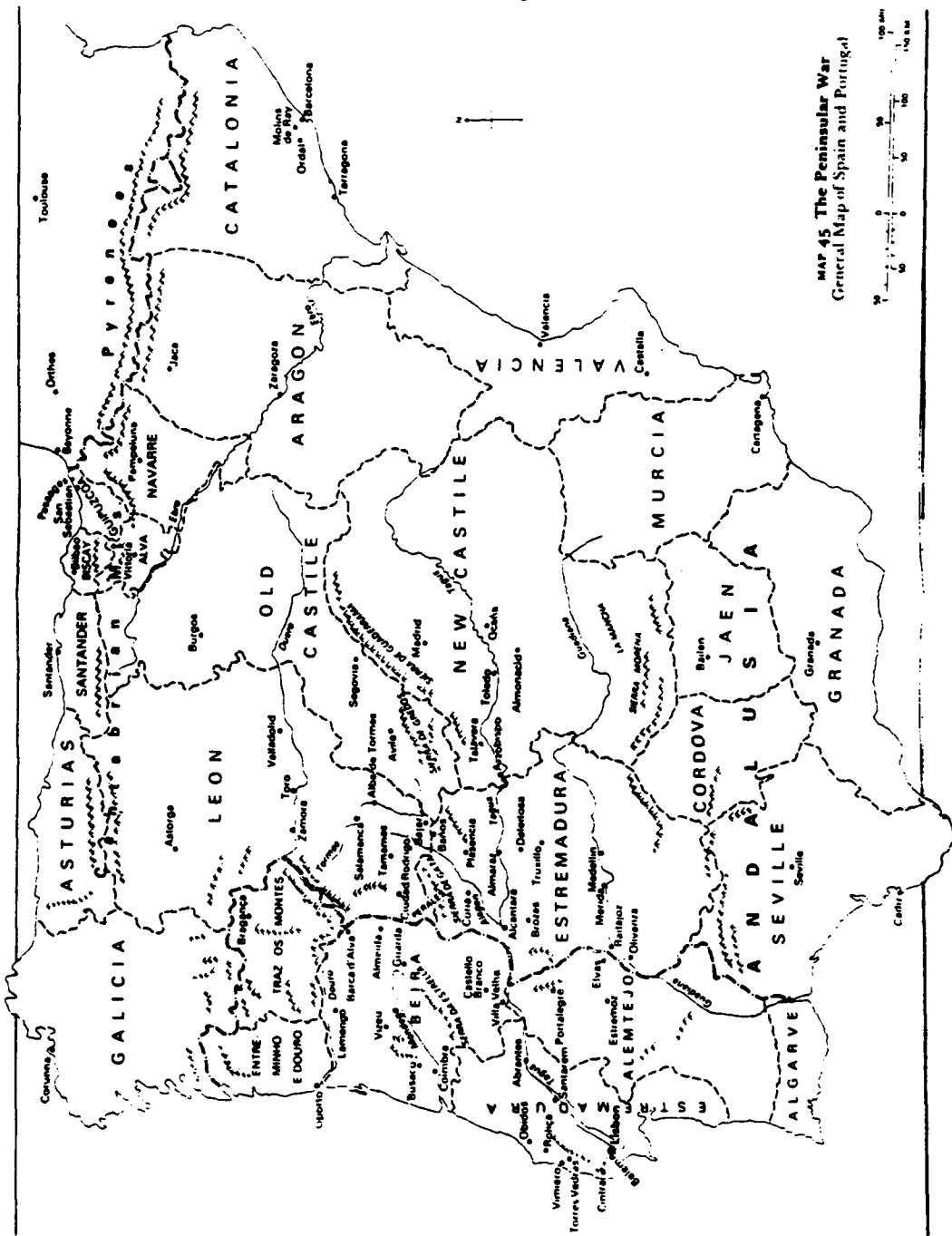
<sup>6</sup> "A spirit of Patriotism burst forth which astonished Europe, and equalled the warmest hopes of those who were best acquainted with the Spanish nation: for those persons who knew the character of that noble people,.. who were familiar with their past History, and their present state...The holiest and deepest feelings of the Spanish heart were roused, and the impulse was felt throughout the Peninsula like some convulsion of the earth or elements." See Robert Southey, History of the Peninsular War, (London, 1823-32.), I, 265.

<sup>7</sup> See John Serwig's, Gunpowder and Guineas. British Foreign Aid in the Wars with France 1793-1815. (Cambridge, 1969) for detailed expenditures and financial arrangements.



for a base of operations. In Spain, the city of choice was Cadiz.

The city of Cadiz became the focal point for joint Anglo-Spanish planning in the Peninsula. Its access to the sea assured communication with the powerful British fleet, and with it, a constant supply of material to carry the war to the French. Without Cadiz, the revolutionary Supreme Junta would fall to the French and Spanish resistance would be regulated to that of localized revolts. Cadiz became a rallying cry in the British press, as well as for the Spanish people, for without British aid and succor, the second front would collapse and the House of Bonaparte would remain on the Spanish throne.



MAP 45 The Peninsular War  
General Map of Spain and Portugal

GENERAL MAP OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA (1800)

FIGURE 2:

Source: The Peninsula War 1807-1814. Michael Glover. London, 1974.

## CHAPTER ONE

### CITY BY THE SEA

The city of Cadiz, situated on a triangular island in the southwestern region of Spain adjacent to Rota, was a major trading port for the Spanish colonies in the New world. Cadiz, was first settled by the Phoenicians in 800 BC. It was well situated due to its easily defensive position, access to both the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea, and had a superb harbor.<sup>1</sup> Cadiz, Spain's leading port on the Atlantic Ocean,<sup>2</sup> enjoyed a strategic location and moderate temperature due to the interaction of the two seas.<sup>3</sup> Its population included an unusually large merchant and early bourgeois classes.

Cadiz, in the province of Andalusia, was at that time one of the largest and richest cities in Spain. Andalusia, Spain's most southern province, enjoyed a temperate climate and had rich lowlands noted for their productive farms and vineyards.<sup>4</sup> The mixture of fertile soil, good climate, and access to the Mediterranean and the Atlantic

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<sup>1</sup> "The Isle of Leon is separated from the mainland by salt marshes which, as early as 800 BC, had been used by the Phoenician colonists against the Tartesian tribes". See Harold Livermore, A History of Spain, (New York, 1968), p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> Eric Christiansen, The Origins of Military Power in Spain 1800-1854. (London, 1967), p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> See Arthur Symons, Cities and Sea-Coasts and Islands, (New York, 1919), for a discussion of climate, temperature, and currents of the western Mediterranean and the straits of Gibraltar.

<sup>4</sup> Julia Page. An Intelligence Officer in the Peninsula Letters and Diaries of Major The Hon Edward Charles Cocks. 1786-1812. (New York, 1986), 52-7.

made Andalusia the second richest province in Spain.<sup>5</sup> The harbor of Cadiz was one of the best in Spain; it was deep and surrounded by rocky embankments which made docking both convenient and safe. The Isla de Leon, primarily made up of a sandy compound with a rocky ridge running along its length like a spine, was situated at the mouth of the harbor. The city sat at the base of the spine which terminated in the sea. This geographical layout gave the inhabitants both protection from the mainland and easy, safe access to the Atlantic.

The surrounding country side which lay across from the Santi Petri Channel was varied. From the Island's eastern end, the land was composed primarily of tidal marshes with interspersed hillocks. The water table was high; digging in this area would have resulted in hitting water only after three feet. The tidal marsh gradually gave way to beach vegetation and then to mature grassland. From the high tide mark pine forests were evident at seven hundred yards inland. A road ran from the east to the west/northwest generally bisecting the grassland and young forest.<sup>6</sup> British Army Major John Cocks, traveling in Andalusia, records in his journal on 3 February, 1810:

Went to Headquarters and took possession of my billet. Headquarters were established in the town of Isla. It is considered that the French can only attempt the passage of the river Santi Petri in three points, namely by the Puente Zuarza, by the Point of Santi Petri, and the right of Carracas and to the left. Between these points the banks of the river are

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<sup>5</sup> Each province in Spain contributed to the Royal treasury. The tax roles of Andalusia were the second largest in Spain and the province was often referred to as the "the sunny, wealthy south" by the royal treasurer.

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed terrain description of Cadiz in 1810 see Page, *An Intelligence Officer*, pp. 52-55.

so boggy that it is inaccessible on each side...<sup>7</sup>

North of the Isla de Leon were two militarily significant, narrow points of land. They were Trocadero (an island at high tide) on the east and Matagorda Peninsula on the west. Each pointed directly at the Isla, with the closest point being only some 4,600 yards from the outer walls of Cadiz. On each of these sites, a fort had previously been constructed. The one on Matagorda lay in partial ruins, abandoned since 1754. Fort Catalina, constructed at the end of the Trocadero, was occupied by a unit of Spanish artillery. These two peninsular points had a small channel between them which flowed all the way to the mainland. The channel ran directly to the small town of Puerto Real, which had ferry service to Cadiz as well as to the Bay warehouses.<sup>8</sup> Continuing west from the town of Puerto Real, some six kilometers away, lay the town of Puerto Santa Maria. This town also had a Ferry service to Cadiz and was connected by road to both Puerto Real and north to Seville. This town was a commercial center closely tied to Cadiz. To the southwest of Puerto Santa Maria lay the small fishing village of Rota, which sits on the western edge of the bay of Cadiz; its small fishing fleet lay in the inlet of Rota Bay, which was part of the larger harbor of Cadiz. From Port Chiclana in the east to Rota in the west, the semi circle of land which outlined the Cadiz bay was almost twenty five miles in length. This distance would be difficult to fully defend in the event of a hostile siege.

The inner harbor at Cadiz offered a deep-water shelter to ships. It was

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 53.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 53.

protected from the ocean surf by the Isla de Leon and it offered 1600 yards of inner harbor anchorages. The city harborage had berths for some 400 vessels. The outer harbor was almost as stable, with just the embouchure receiving rough ocean waters. Thus, the city of Cadiz was situated in a naturally defensible position, separated from the mainland by a large harbor and a salt water channel, with the surrounding mainland being mostly marsh and tidal lowlands.<sup>9</sup>

Cadiz also enjoyed a rich mercantile heritage. It had dominated trade between the city and the Spanish colonies in the New World for over 200 years.<sup>10</sup> Since they enjoyed such a trading advantage, the merchants at Cadiz had a sizeable fleet which carried in foodstuffs and supplies on a regular basis. The Spanish Navy also had a large squadron stationed in the harbor; its basic mission was to provide protection against privateers and the nearby North African pirates. Cadiz enjoyed natural as well as royal advantages when it came to trading.<sup>11</sup>

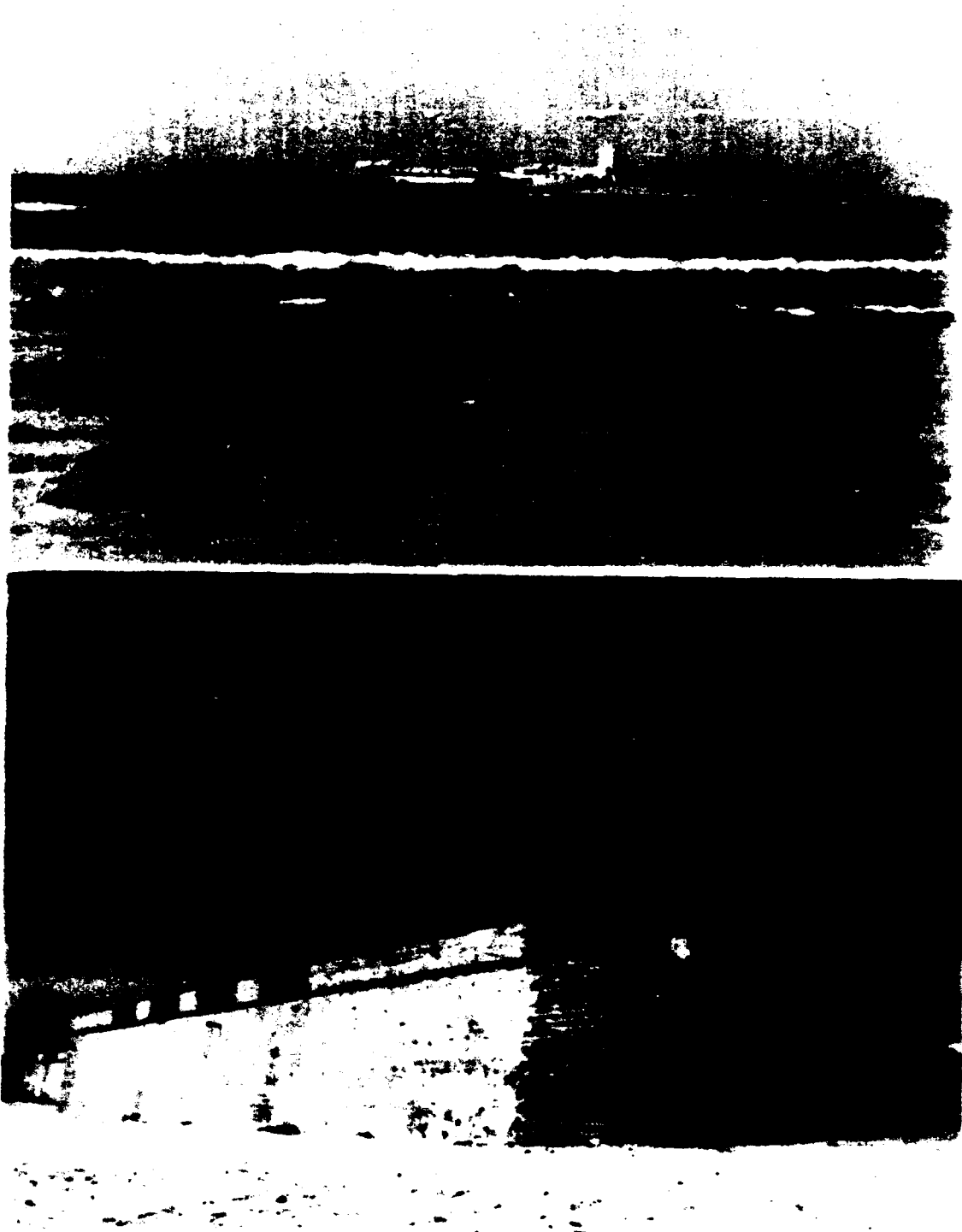
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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>10</sup> Ramon Garofano and J.R. De Paramo. La Constitucion Gaditana de 1812. (Cadiz, 1983). p. xxviii.

<sup>11</sup> Cadiz enjoyed trade protection by the crown, it held a monopoly in the America's trade. Gold, silver, food and other commodities flowed into the harbor, from there going elsewhere in the kingdom. The only other port in Spain which could trade on a regular basis with the New World was Barcelona, the leading Mediterranean port.

CADIZ (FROM ROTA), SOUTH CITY WALL  
FIGURE 3: R. Garofano. *La Constitucion Gaditana de 1812*.



When "Dos de Mayos" broke out across Spain, the city of Cadiz was not immune from the passion of revolt, but was tempered by the only "middle class" in Spain. The bourgeois class was not as inclined to believe that the French should be removed from the Peninsula as did their passionate peasant brethren. The ideas of the French Revolution, such as local self-government, economic freedom for the merchants, and a flexible social structure based on ability, appealed to the merchants of Cadiz. The stifling attitude of the Spanish nobles offered little hope of advancement to the passionate workers and simple townsfolk who would make Cadiz the sight of the first "naval victory" of the Spanish Revolution.

The success of the Spanish general Francisco Xavier Castaños in July of 1808 at Bailen demonstrated that the French could be defeated.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, the majority of the Spanish people supported regional juntas which, with varying degrees of success, attempted to coordinate further revolutionary actions in the Peninsula. Cadiz would be no exception.

In the past, Cadiz had provided supplies and water for many vessels, French included, on their way from the Mediterranean through the Straits of Gibraltar into the Atlantic and beyond. Indeed, until 1808 the fleets of Spain and France had sailed and fought together against the British fleet. Inside the inner harbor of Cadiz lay the remnants of part of one squadron of the Franco-Spanish invasion fleet which had been

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<sup>12</sup> French forces under General Pierre Dupont met defeat at Castaños's hands on 20 July 1808 in the hilly and congested region of Baylen which is northeast of Cordoba.



defeated by Nelson off the coast of nearby Trafalgar.<sup>13</sup> There were several French vessels in the harbor<sup>14</sup>, including five ships-of-the-line and one frigate. These vessels were under the command of Rear Admiral Maurice Rosily.<sup>15</sup> He was aware of the precarious situation his fleet was in after the outbreak of the insurrection, and he felt the hostility of the local crowds.<sup>16</sup> His position would prove precarious.

As a result of events in the Peninsula, Great Britain had an opportunity to extend its Peninsula operations into Spain proper. If the Government were able to arm, finance, and equip the new revolutionary armies of Spain against Napoleon, then the chance of victory would be greatly increased. The popular feelings of patriotism and love for España in the crowds of Cadiz and their decided anti-French stance gave the British a long awaited chance to destroy or neutralize the five ship French Squadron in the harbor. England maintained a substantial force to blockade them, but if the French naval threat ended, then these British ships could be freed for other operations.<sup>17</sup> The passions of the Cadiz mobs and clever naval tactics of the British

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<sup>13</sup> The battle of Trafalgar (1805) was one of the most decisive naval battles of the 19th century. See Edward P. Brenton's The Naval History of Great Britain, From the Year 1782 to 1822. (London, 1824). III, 440-96.

<sup>14</sup> Later on in the September 1808 issue of Steel's List of the Royal Navy (London, 1808), p. 49, in the Spoils section, the information on the capture of this French squadron was as follows: "Neptune-84 guns (Flagship), Algeciras-74 guns, Pluto-74 guns, Hero-74 guns." No mention was made of the captured frigate.

<sup>15</sup> Unfortunate is the correct word to describe these seamen. After the French surrender, they were locked up in rotting prison ships in the same harbor. Many remained captive for several years.

<sup>16</sup> See Mémoires du Vice-Amiral Baron Grivel. (Paris, 1845), pp. 228-50.

<sup>17</sup> See The Life and Letters of Vice-Admiral Lord Collingwood. Ed. by Oliver Warner. (London, 1968), pp. 206-29.

would make the harbor of Cadiz the site for a "sympathetic naval action".<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, pp. 264-82.

## CHAPTER TWO

### FIRST NAVAL VICTORY OF THE REVOLUTION

Admiral Rosily faced a difficult dilemma. He had an effective squadron at his disposal; five ships-of-the-line and a frigate could be a potent naval force if properly used and if the prevailing winds shifted away from the harbor mouth. The French fleet inside the Cadiz harbor was in a good state of repair and resupplied. However, the sizeable British fleet outside the harbor made flight almost impossible.<sup>1</sup> Rosily paid good wages to the Spanish craftsman who repaired his ships and was liberal with his purse to the merchants who supplied his squadron with food and water. He hoped such generosity would make the local populace more indulgent of his long stay. The British had continually harassed Spanish shipping and the French ships had taken part in several forays against the interloping English vessels.<sup>2</sup> With the relative stability of previous relations between France and Spain, his position was tenuous, but not dangerous. This would drastically change should the Spanish renounce the current alliance with France. With an experienced, battle-ready British fleet outside the harbor, and a possibly hostile local government and angry population within Cadiz, he would stand little chance of survival.

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<sup>1</sup> The British fleet off of Cadiz had harassed and blockaded the Franco-Spanish fleets very effectively since the battle of Trafalgar. As late as 4 April 1808 the blockading fleet under Admiral Sir John Purvis, had destroyed or captured a convoy of several Spanish ships laden with riches from the Americas. "Then the boats were sent in, under Lieutenants Alan Stewart and Watkin Owen Pell, and brought off seven small craft from under the Spanish guns, though all the barges and pinnaces of the combined Franco Spanish fleet lying in Cadiz had come up to the help of the Convoy. The British lost only 1 mortally wounded and 2 less severely wounded." See William Clowes. The Royal Navy, VI, 414.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 486.

The insurrection of Dos de Mayos resulted in widespread attacks against the French inside Spain.<sup>3</sup> The British Cabinet, headed by Lord Castlereagh, and the Secretary of State of War and of the Colonies, Lord Liverpool, began to investigate the possibility of aiding the Spanish in their fight against the French. This was a sensitive subject for the Portland Ministry. The British had already sent several expeditions to the continent and elsewhere, most meeting in failure. This further undermined the already shaky British morale.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the prospect of having such enthusiastic and strategically important allies as the Portuguese and the Spanish would allow the British to take the fight back on to the continent. The local British authorities began at once to work in concert toward winning Spanish trust and confidence. Such notables included General Sir Hew Dalrymple, the Governor of Gibraltar; Admiral Lord Collingwood, commander of the British Fleet in the Mediterranean and outside of Cadiz; and later, Richard and Henry

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<sup>3</sup> "But in the Peninsula a very different experience awaited Napoleon. Even the very Cobblestones, so to speak, rose up against the "tyrant". The Spanish people only knew him in a second-hand version, as an enemy in every field—the patriotic, the religious, the political. The Spanish nation rose en masse against the invader." See Antonio Ramos Oliveira. Politics, Economics and Men of Modern Spain 1808-1946, Translated by Teener Hall, (London, 1946), p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> The British had sent several ill prepared expeditions to combat the French: the Buenos Aires disaster, the poorly equipped and led expedition to Sweden, the ineffective naval expedition to the Dardanelles straits, the Egyptian campaigns, the two expeditions to the Netherlands, and several mutinies among the colonial troops. The English did have a few successes: Trafalgar, Maida, and the Copenhagen raid in 1807. Overall, the British Army had not enjoyed many successes in its forays against the French. For additional information on the rebirth of British land prowess see Michael Glover's Peninsular Preparation: The Reform of the British Army, 1795-1809, (Cambridge, 1963). For an interesting discussion on British Army leadership see: Gordon L. Teffteller's "British Field Leadership in 1812: A Study in the Management of Scarce Resources." Proceedings: Consortium on Revolutionary Europe, 1984, (Athens, GA, 1986), pp. 213-23.

Wellesley.<sup>5</sup> England had decided to fight for Portugal, but the opportunity to gain Spain as an ally gave Britain a great deal more flexibility in conducting a Peninsular campaign. Wellington landed his forces in Mondego bay in Portugal in August 1808 and soon won a series of victories.<sup>6</sup>

The ability of local British officials to capitalize on favorable opportunities against the enemy depended on the ability and drive of the particular government official on the scene. Many would exercise personal initiative and thus, achieve significant breakthroughs in the war against the French, others would fail and the opportunities would be lost.<sup>7</sup> Fortunately for the British, the proper mix of talented civilian and military officials were on hand to supervise the change from a belligerent and hostile foreign power to that of a staunch ally. The Spanish also turned to the British who were preparing to support the Portuguese. Wellington was abruptly superseded in command<sup>8</sup> and, as a result, the highly unpopular Convention of Cintra was signed and Junot's French Army was transported back to France with

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<sup>5</sup> The two Wellesley brothers, Marquis Richard, the eldest, and Henry, the youngest, worked in concert in order to serve and assist their most famous brother, Arthur, the Duke of Wellington, who would eventually command all forces in the Peninsula. A cousin, William Wellesley Poole, also served in the Foreign ministry and carried messages and monitored the home front for the entire family. For details on this interesting family see, John Severn's A Wellesley Affair, (Tallahassee, FL, 1981).

<sup>6</sup> Robert Blakeney, A Boy in the Peninsular War. (London, 1989). pp. 17-18.

<sup>7</sup> Bartholomew Frere was one of the less able of the British officials in the Peninsula. He was later investigated by the British Parliament and found wanting in his conduct and judgement.

<sup>8</sup> Lieutenant General Sir Harry Burrard, 74 years old, assumed command of the British forces in Portugal on 22 August 1808. He forbade Wellington to pursue the French after beating them at Vimeiro on the 21st.

"appropriated" booty intact.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, Wellington would return again to the Peninsula, and, he would play an instrumental role in the fate of Cadiz.

As early as 12 May 1808 the British dispatched a reinforced brigade to the outside harbor of Cadiz, to be available should the Spanish request assistance against the French Fleet. In a letter dated 14 May 1808, General William Spencer, commander of the British Brigade, wrote to the War Office on details of preparation and his initial plans for contact.<sup>10</sup>

Two days earlier in a letter to the War Office, Spencer relayed ship movements and the plight of the Spanish Royal family<sup>11</sup>. Spencer was planning on speaking to General Francisco X. Castaños on attacking the Cadiz bound French Fleet.<sup>12</sup> Additional correspondence flowed between the War Office and Spencer on related issues such as logistics, troop rosters, and soldier transport.<sup>13</sup> The British were prepared to garrison Cadiz as rapidly as the Spanish would allow them. Cadiz, to the British, was a convenient, easily defensible position.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For a detailed account of the Portugal Theater of Operations see General Maximilien Foy's first volume of History of the War in the Peninsula, under Napoleon: to which is prefixed a view of the Political and Military State of the Four Belligerent Powers. Published by Countess Foy. (London, 1827).

<sup>10</sup> England Public Record Office, War Office, (henceforth cited as P.R.O., W.O.), 1/226, #305, Spencer to the War Office, 14 May 1808.

<sup>11</sup> The Spanish Royal family would eventually wind up at Talleyrand's country house in France as his forced guests, courtesy of Napoleon's anger over his continual duplicity.

<sup>12</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/226, #321, Spencer to the War Office, 12 May 1808.

<sup>13</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/226, #363, War Office to Spencer, 13 May 1808.

<sup>14</sup> Wellington Papers, University of Southampton, (henceforth noted as Wellington Papers), # 1/277, Canning to Richard Wellesley, 9 December 1809, "Cadiz would be essentially important. It is obvious that our operations in Spain must be defensive; that they cannot be connected with Portugal: that we must have a retreat upon Cadiz; and that retreat cannot be secure, unless Cadiz is in our hands.

Not all the people of Cadiz were as trusting of the English as they had hoped. Cadiz had been the site of a multitude of naval battles against the British, and blockades of goods had undermined the city's economy. Thus its merchants were understandably hostile to the "Ingleses". The sons of many Cadiz families who sailed to Trafalgar were the victims of Nelson's guns. Such deep resentment would not simply dissipate over the course of just two and one half years.<sup>15</sup> The peasants of the nearby villages and the townspeople were generally apathetic to the war between France and England, but their attitude changed drastically with the kidnapping of the "infantes" and the events of May. The Spanish peasant differed drastically from his French counterpart. Many of the French "third estate" could read, the majority of the Spanish could not.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the Spanish peasant was as potent a force in revolution as his counterpart had been in France. His impact in the siege of Cadiz would show his accomplishments and follies.

General William Spencer, along with a mixed task force, waited outside of the Cadiz harbor for permission to enter.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile the city underwent a change in philosophy, shifting loyalties and passion against the French revolution: it made the

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I am convinced, however, that the Spanish government will never cede Cadiz."

<sup>15</sup> Battle of Trafalgar, 1 October 1805.

<sup>16</sup> But in Spain, where the huge majority of the population was illiterate, the press, which was almost always parochial in character, fed the curiosity of the clubs but had no influence over the people." See Oliviera, Politics, Economics and Men, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup> General Spencer had two Swiss regiments of Infantry and five or six regiments of British Infantry. A regiment of this force was made up of only one battalion sized unit, usually the first battalion. See Thesphilas Camden, Esq. The History of the Present War in Spain and Portugal with Memoirs of the Life of the Marquis Wellington, (Stratford, 1812), p. 154.

situation not only dangerous but also, advantageous. General Spencer, aware of these changes, maintained constant communication with Sir Hew Dalrymple, the governor of Gibraltar. Dalrymple volunteered to send two additional ship-of-the-line to support a landing if Spencer deemed it necessary.<sup>18</sup> On 18 May, General Spencer requested a meeting with Don Soracco de Solano, the Governor of Cadiz, to discuss mutual communications and coordination.<sup>19</sup> The letter was a form of arm twisting, and Solano chose not to answer it.<sup>20</sup>

The internal state of affairs of Cadiz was rapidly evolving from complacency to revolutionary fervor. The city's citizens were being transformed from a relatively conservative, pro-French population to a seat of Revolution and patriotism. The governor of Cadiz, the Honorable Soracco de Solano, was familiar with the old enemies. He had long ago recognized the British as the natural enemy of Spain and did not believe that the France could be easily defeated or ousted from the Peninsula.<sup>21</sup> "Following the failure of the call to arms that he had issued in the immediate aftermath of Dos De Mayos, Solano had come to the conclusion that the only sensible option was to collaborate with the French."<sup>22</sup> He was anti-English; at one point he pointed to the outer harbor where the sails of Admiral Purvis's blockading fleet could be seen

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<sup>18</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/226, #325, Dalrymple to Spencer, 12 May 1808.

<sup>19</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/226, #341, Spencer to Solano, 18 May 1808.

<sup>20</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/226, #357, Spencer to Solano, 24 May 1808. He wanted to know response to his previous letters.

<sup>21</sup> Southey, Peninsular War, I, 274.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Esdaile, The Spanish Army in the Peninsular War, (Manchester, 1988), p. 87.



and said, "there, there are the real enemies of Spain."<sup>23</sup> Solano was in touch with some elements of the middle class of Cadiz, but he was unaware or simply complacent concerning the views and desires of the majority of the townsfolk and peasants. His misjudgment would ultimately cost him his life.<sup>24</sup>

Spanish General Don Francisco Xavier de Castaños,<sup>25</sup> unknown to Solano, had written to the British and requested that the English fleet come to Cadiz to neutralize the French Squadron in the harbor.<sup>26</sup> The fleet under Admiral Purvis was within sight of the city on 24 May, surprising Solano. He even sent a message to Castaños, informing him of the fleet's arrival and probability of attack.<sup>27</sup> Solano took necessary defensive actions, "This gave him pretext for removing cannon from the land side, in order to strengthen the batteries toward the sea; it is said that he removed the military stores also, under pretence that the casemates would be wanted as shelter for the inhabitants."<sup>28</sup> The Spanish Admiral, Alava, circulated rumors of British invasion and lack of honor. These unpopular allegations stung Spencer, who responded with a letter to Alava proclaiming the importance of honor to the British.<sup>29</sup> Spencer went further; he sent a proclamation to the people describing his mission and the support of the

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<sup>23</sup> Foy, History of the War. II, 205.

<sup>24</sup> Esdaile, Spanish Army, p. 88.

<sup>25</sup> Commander of Spanish troops at St. Roche was located approximately 30 miles from Cadiz.

<sup>26</sup> Esdaile, The Spanish Army, p. 87.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 87.

<sup>28</sup> Southey, Peninsular War, I, 274.

<sup>29</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/266, #353, Spencer to Alava, 21 May 1808.

British nation for the cause of the insurrection.<sup>30</sup> On 21 May Spencer received a letter from Solano in Spanish, saying that no English assistance was required, and in the future all requests would have to be sent to Madrid for a decision.<sup>31</sup> Solano was able to quell the public's dismay about his measures against the British, begging he did not have official instructions to act. This excuse would soon prove invalid.

When the insurrection broke out all over Spain, many of the provinces and leading cities set up local ruling Juntas to assume control of the government. These Juntas attempted to coordinate revolutionary activities and to establish a sense of stability in the local governments. Some of the newly established heads of the Juntas joined the resistance only for "damage control purposes." General Manuel Cuesta, the Captain General of Valladolid, felt much the same way as Solano; he too was resigned to French dominance. Later he would be forced to lead the rebellion in order to save his own life.<sup>32</sup>

In a letter to the insurgent Junta at Leon, Cuesta declared, "Since I am unable to resist the torrent of public opinion, it would appear necessary to give way before it and...through the imposition of military discipline... direct its impulse toward the best order possible."<sup>33</sup> Many of the Juntas sent out numerous proclamations to the local populace in support of the revolution. The Junta at Seville, which lay some

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<sup>30</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/226, #337, Spencer to the citizens of Cadiz, 15 May 1808.

<sup>31</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/226, #349, Solano to Spencer, 21 May 1808.

<sup>32</sup> "In response to the news of the rising elsewhere, he only agreed to take command of the insurrection when he was dragged out for execution." See Esdaile. Spanish Army, p. 86.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p. 87.

seventy miles northeast of Cadiz, proclaimed itself the "The Supreme Government of Spain and the Indies."<sup>34</sup> Seville assumed the lead in coordinating and establishing control of the revolutionary forces within Spain. Seville did have some claim to this position; it was the second city in population and influence, and it possessed the only foundry for cannon in the kingdom.<sup>35</sup> "With such favoring circumstances to lend weight to its measures, the Supreme Junta lost no time organizing a system of resistance suited to the exigencies of the time."<sup>36</sup> Seville took active measures in communicating with other Juntas and attempted to "decree" revolutionary actions against the French.<sup>37</sup> However, its geographical position made the city more isolated from the forces of King Joseph Bonaparte, which were generally concentrated around Madrid. The Sierra Morena mountain chain formed part of a physical barrier which offered partial protection against the French Army. Thus, Seville, the new authority in Spain (except for the French king, Joseph), expected other Juntas to adhere to its orders.

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<sup>34</sup> Thomas Hamilton, *Annals of the Peninsular Campaigns*, (London, 1849), p. 62.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p. 62. The fact that Seville had the nation's only foundry for cannon manufacture would prove significant later when the French captured it in 1810. The engineers and ordnance troops of Marshal Claude Perrin Victor would then use the national foundry to produce huge, brass, siege cannon to bombard Cadiz.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 62-3.

<sup>37</sup> "They directed that every town containing two thousand people, a subordinate Junta should be established, to enlist under the national standard all those capable of bearing arms." See Hamilton, *Annals*, p. 63. General Foy gives a similar account of the Supreme Junta's initial actions, "The theaters were closed, in consequence of the country being in a state of mourning, and extraordinary prayers were put up in the churches. The prisons were opened, and all the criminal were set at liberty, with the exception of those who had been guilty of aggravated crimes. A similar amnesty was granted to deserters from the army and navy, and to smugglers who should surrender within eight days." Foy, *History of the War*, II, 204.

The people of Cadiz wanted to strike at the French in their own harbor.<sup>38</sup> Governor Solano gave the excuse that he did not have official orders to force the French to evacuate the harbor or surrender. This reason was soon furnished. On 29 May the Supreme Junta at Seville sent out four riders to convey instructions to several provinces and cities. Cadiz was the destination of one of these four riders. "Four artillery officers were sent by the Junta to the Governors of the Camp of Saint Roch, Granada, Badajoz, and Cadiz. One of them, Count Thebe, Cipriano Palafox, a younger son of the family of Montijo, arrived at Cadiz, on the 29 May with the decrees from the Supreme Junta."<sup>39</sup> The documents directed Solano to make every effort to force the French fleet to surrender and to comply with the directives issued from Seville. In effect, these instructions gave the crowds of Cadiz the assurance that Solano would take action against the French fleet.<sup>40</sup> These crowds surrounded Solano's house on the 29th and demanded that he enforce the Seville decrees; he demurred and said that he would assemble the necessary leaders in the morning to enforce the decree. Although the crowd was tired of his timidity and lack of revolutionary zeal, Solano also pointed out that there were many good reasons for not rising up against the French.<sup>41</sup> The appeased crowd left the square where his house

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<sup>38</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/226, Spencer to War Office, 26 May 1808.

<sup>39</sup> Foy, History of the War, II, 205.

<sup>40</sup> Southey, Peninsular War, I, 278.

<sup>41</sup> "...Sorocco de Solano went on to point out that an uprising would nevertheless amount to the height of folly. Cadiz would be left exposed to British treachery; the harvest would be lost for want of labor; the improvised levies who would constitute the bulk of Spain's forces would be certain of defeat; and the French would be justified in inflicting the most severe punishment upon the population for having had the temerity to interfere in the conduct of the war. In addition, Socorro maintained

was located. Instead of dispersing, however, they roamed the city, with some citizens going to the city arsenal, arming themselves and any faction which was anti-French.<sup>42</sup>

Another group went to the city jail and freed the prisoners. At midnight the crowd returned, angry and defiant, and demanded that Solano, "required that the French Squadron should immediately be summoned to surrender."<sup>43</sup> The home of the French Counsel was broken into and the mob tried to find him, but he escaped to the fleet in the harbor.<sup>44</sup>

In the morning the council of notables, which were mainly made up of generals and admirals, met at Solano's home. At noon, a large group of people came to his balcony to determine what was to be done about the fleet.<sup>45</sup> Solano went out on to the balcony and assured the crowd that he and the informal council were meeting to discuss ways in order to make the French surrender a reality.

One man cried out that they did not choose to see the French colors flying. Solano asked where they were to be seen? and upon being answered, on the French ships, he replied, that the naval officers and engineers were already instructed to take measures to obtain possession of that squadron. They appeared satisfied with this, and Solano sat

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that resistance was not only futile but unnecessary, given that the Spanish Royal family had abdicated their rights to the throne of their own free will, and had never ceased to proclaim their friendship with Napoleon." See Esdaile, *Spanish Army*, p. 88.

<sup>42</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/226, #385, Spencer to the War Office 6 June 1808, concerning the death of Solano and the events in Cadiz. See also Foy, *History of the War*, II, 206. Esdaile, *Spanish Army*, p. 88.

<sup>43</sup> Southey, *Peninsular War*, p. 278.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p. 278.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p. 279.

down to dinner.<sup>46</sup>

This dinner would be Solano's last supper. Before Solano could finish his meal, a second crowd assembled in front of his home. Its leader was a former initiate of the Carthusian Order, and he demanded to speak to the Governor immediately.<sup>47</sup> The Governor's staff told the man that the governor was in need of rest and would be available later in the day. Neither the mob, nor its leader, were satisfied with the answer given and tried to push past the door sentinel.<sup>48</sup>

"The ex-Carthusian was not satisfied with this, and endeavored to push by the sentinel, who upon this fired his piece in the air, and fastened the door. The mob then, under the same leader, brought cannon against the house, shattered the doors, and rushed in. They were now bent upon Solano's death."<sup>49</sup>

The frightened Governor, wisely understanding the danger of his situation, fled upstairs and attempted to escape from the hostile mob.<sup>50</sup> He gained the roof of his home and jumped to the next door neighbor's house.<sup>51</sup> A Mrs. Strange, the wife of the resident

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 279.

<sup>47</sup> Foy, History of the War, II, 206.

<sup>48</sup> Southey, Peninsular War, I, 280.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 280.

<sup>50</sup> The mob also brought cannon for use in storming his residence. This seeming spontaneity of the crowd is wisely questioned by Charles Esdaile in Spanish Army. Why would a second crowd, prearmed with a cannon, come to the palace after the first crowd was dispersed with promises? "almost certainly at the instigation of the Conde de Montijo, whose very presence suggests the existence of a Fernandino plot to remove Socorro from power." See Esdaile, Spanish Army, p. 88.

<sup>51</sup> Foy, History of the War, II, 206. He gives the neighbor the name of Strange, with a Irish nationality and with banking as his occupation. Southey gives the neighbor the name of Strange and that he was an English merchant. Mrs. Strange was injured by the mob when she attempted to stop their abduction of the governor. She was stabbed in the arm and was cuffed and spit upon for her resistance.

banker, hid him in a secret compartment in her bedroom but only for a short period. A carpenter who was part of the mob was the one who had fashioned the valuables cache for the banker's wife, reported its location to the mob; they stormed the house and dragged Solano into the street.<sup>52</sup> He was brought toward a hastily erected gallows, but they did not wait to hang him; he was killed en route by the mob.<sup>53</sup> The death of the reluctant governor seemed to clear any obstacles to forcing the French fleet to surrender.

After Solano's murder,<sup>54</sup> the crowd returned to his house and sacked it; the proceeds were deposited into the city treasury.<sup>55</sup> The command of the city fell on Don Thomas de Morla, a crowd-conscious politician with more anti-French feelings than his predecessor; he vigorously took charge in making plans to force the enemy fleet to surrender.<sup>56</sup> Morla issued several proclamations to the citizens of Cadiz in order to control the crowds<sup>57</sup> and to better orchestrate action against the captive

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<sup>52</sup> Southey, Peninsular War. I, 280. Mrs. Strange and her husband left Cadiz in 1811 during the siege.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, I, 281. "Other assassins ran up, discovered the unfortunate Solano, wounded him with their weapons, dragged him from street to street, and after subjected him to a lingering and cruel agony, put him to death in the square of San Juan de Dios." See also Foy, History of the War, II, 206. Apparently Solano was in the process of being castrated by the crowd when an ex-bodyguard of his put him out of his misery with a well placed saber thrust through his back.

<sup>54</sup> P.R.O., Foreign Office (henceforth listed as F.O.), 72/64, #68, Solano's death proclamation made by Morla, 30 May 1808.

<sup>55</sup> Hamilton, Annals, p. 63.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p. 63.

<sup>57</sup> P.R.O., F.O., 72/64, #75, Proclamation naming Morla "Captain General of Andalusia." 6 June 1808.

fleet.<sup>58</sup>

Soon after Solano's death, Rear Admiral Rosily ordered his captains to move their vessels out of the inner harbor and into the Caracas channel, which feeds into the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>59</sup> This movement would take his fleet away from the majority of the Spanish land batteries, already erected on the Isla de Leon. Nevertheless, outside of the channel lay the fleet of Admiral Purvis, who was awaiting Admiral Lord Collingwood's reinforcements to arrive from the Mediterranean.<sup>60</sup> The French squadron was exposed in a poor defensive position. The channel gave them little room to maneuver and the land batteries could pour accurate fire on the ships while enjoying significant protection from counter fire.<sup>61</sup> Rosily began negotiations with the new governor, in order to stall for time.<sup>62</sup> The prospect of reinforcements arriving from Lisbon was good, indeed General Arvil's corps had already marched for Cadiz.<sup>63</sup> "He made

<sup>58</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/226, #421, Morla to citizens of Cadiz, 30 May 1808, concerning assemblies, registration for military service, etc. Southey writes, "exhorting the people to be tranquil, telling them that a set of ruffians were plundering and destroying under the mask of patriots, protesting that the only desire of the persons in authority was to die in the cause of their beloved Ferdinand, whom a tyrant had separated from them." See Southey, Peninsular War, I, 281.

<sup>59</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/266, #385, Spencer to the War Office, 6 June 1808.

<sup>60</sup> Collingwood to Castlereagh, 17 June 1808, "Your Lordship will properly have been informed by my letters to the Admiralty, that on receiving intelligence from Sir Hew Dalrymple, when off Toulon, of the critical state of affairs in Spain. I left the squadron there under the orders of Vice Admiral Thronborough, on the 1st of June, and repaired to this point of my station, where I arrived on the 11th." See Oliver Warner. The Life and Letters of Vice-Admiral Lord Collingwood. (London, 1968). p. 206. Admiral Collingwood's arrival is mentioned by Foy. See Foy, History of the War, II, 210.

<sup>61</sup> Land artillery always has the advantage over sea based guns due to the fact that land is simply a far more stable firing base. The ship at sea has to deal with listing, yawing, and even pitch polling, while attempting to fire.

<sup>62</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/266, #385, Spencer to the War Office, 6 June 1808.

<sup>63</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/266, # 431, Spencer to the War Office, 12 June 1808.



overtures to the governor, proposing to quit the bay, if an arrangement to the effect could be made with the British squadron; this, he said, was for the purpose of tranquillizing the people, since his force, and the position which he had taken, appeared to occasion some uneasiness. But if the English should refuse their consent, he then offered to land his guns, keeping his men on board, and not hoisting his colours; in that case he required that hostages should be exchanged, and demanded the protection of the Spaniards against the exterior enemy."<sup>64</sup> The new governor thought about the terms and rejected them. It "was not compatible with his honor to accept them."<sup>65</sup> Admiral Collingwood, returning from Toulon, conferred with Purvis and prepared to collaborate with the Spanish fleet should assistance be required. The Spanish politely rejected the offer; victory would be won by Spanish arms alone. The total force under Rosily's command amounted to less than 4,100 sailors and marines.<sup>66</sup> Following Morla's negative response, the French admiral sent an envoy to Captain Pennemore of the British Fleet asking for terms.<sup>67</sup> The Spanish began to move an artillery train toward the Carracas channel and posted gun boats in the bay, armed

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<sup>64</sup> Southey, Peninsular War, I, 281-2.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, I, 282.

<sup>66</sup> Camden, The History of the Present War. p. 158.

<sup>67</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/226, #457, Rosily to Captain Perminel, 11 June 1808. He requested terms of surrender. The letter was returned to Rosily unanswered. Southey, seems unaware of Rosily's surrender attempt, "If the French commander has not relied too confidently upon the advance of his countrymen and the fortune of Bonaparte, he would now have surrendered to the English, for the certainty of obtaining better treatment, and the chance of exciting some disagreement respecting the prizes." Southey, Peninsular War, I, 282.

with cannons and mortars.<sup>68</sup>

"The firing commenced on 9 June, and was continued till the 14th when Rosily surrendered unconditionally."<sup>69</sup> With the attack under progress, General Spencer was assured by Collingwood that should the French attempt to set sail, his squadron would stop them. Spencer had received French intelligence concerning the advance of Arvil's corps, en route to rescue the beleaguered French squadron. Spencer's force set sail for Ayamonte, in order to intercept the incoming French Corps.<sup>70</sup> Meanwhile, the Spanish continued the bombardment on the enemy fleet. By 14 June 1808 the French capitulated with few losses; the Spanish had only four who died in action.<sup>71</sup> The French squadron which had been anchored in the harbor for over two years was now the property of the revolutionary government of Cadiz. Word was sent immediately to Seville with the "first naval victory of the Revolution."<sup>72</sup>

The revolutionary Junta of Seville, the "Supreme Junta" sent word to the Cadiz Junta that it would send two envoys to Great Britain to open up talks on financial assistance, equipment, arms, and matters of mutual concern.<sup>73</sup> Already, the Spanish

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<sup>68</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/266, #405, (private letter) Spencer to the War Office, 6 June 1808, concerning the Spanish preparations "in the matter of the French Fleet in the Cadiz harbor". Southey, Peninsular War, I, 282. Foy, History of the War, II, 210.

<sup>69</sup> Foy, History of the War, II, 210.

<sup>70</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/266, #451, Spencer to the War Office, 12 June 1808. See also, Foy, History of the War, II, 212, and Hamilton, Annals, p. 64.

<sup>71</sup> Southey, Peninsular War, I, 282. Foy, History of the War, II, 210.

<sup>72</sup> W.O., 1/226, #397, Spencer to the War Office, undated.

<sup>73</sup> Foy, History of the War, II, 211.

General X. Castaños was in correspondence with Sir Hew Dalrymple, the British governor of Gibraltar. Dalrymple disbursed a loan in excess of one million Reals to Castaños.<sup>74</sup> The British government warmly welcomed the delegates from Spain. The seizure of the French fleet in the Cadiz harbor, with the "help" of the blockading British squadron, allowed the new revolutionary government of Spain to earn its first substantial victory.<sup>75</sup>

I went on shore a few days ago, and you cannot conceive how rejoiced the people were to see me. I was received with all military honors; but, besides this, all the inhabitants, at least forty thousand men and women, came to welcome me. I would gladly have staid [sic] longer with them, but I could not, as I had to return to my ship at night. I went, however, to visit Madame Apodaca whose husband is an Admiral, and one of the Deputies from the Supreme Junta of Seville to England, where they are gone to beg our Government will assist them in their war against the French.<sup>76</sup>

The prestige gained from this capture allowed Seville to attain greater legitimacy as the Supreme Junta and dictate orders to the other autonomous Juntas of Spain. The loss of the fleet was not announced in Le Moniteur Universel.

The unofficial allied relationship which began with the British assistance in keeping the French Fleet in the Cadiz harbor would pave the way for formalizing an alliance against the French in the Peninsula. The British earned even more initial good will with Admiral Collingwood supplying the Cadiz batteries with much needed

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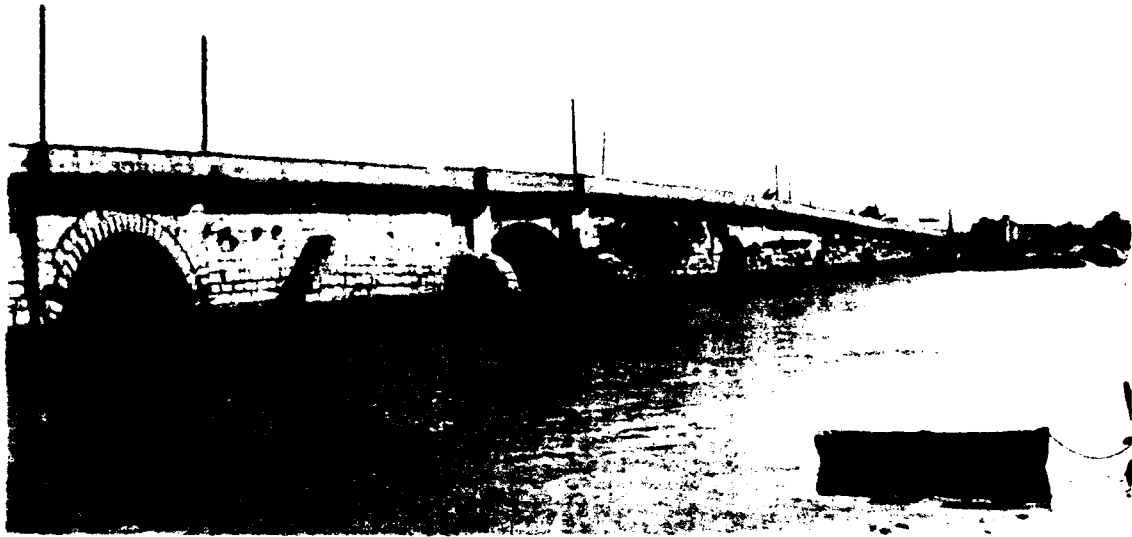
<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Admiral Collingwood would write home about his brief stay in Cadiz following the French surrender and the conveyance of the Spanish delegates to London. Collingwood wrote his sister on 26 July 1808: "She is a genteel woman about 35, which is reckoned tolerably old here, and has two very fine girls, her daughters. I wished much to visit some other ladies, to whom I am in debt for civilities, but my time would not permit." See Warner, Collingwood, pp. 206-07.

<sup>76</sup> Warner, Collingwood, p. 209.

gunpowder. The British had turned from implacable maritime foes into seaborne saviors. This timely act of military and civil cooperation enabled them to gain an important ally in its fight against the world's most powerful land army.

PUNTO ZUARZO BRIDGE, NORTH WALL, (TODAY)  
FIGURE 4: R. Garofano. *La Constitución Gaditana de 1812*



## CHAPTER THREE

### UNCERTAIN SAFETY

With the French squadron neutralized in Cadiz, the five ships-of-the-line were no longer available for use against Great Britain. General Arvil, with no knowledge of the fleet's surrender, continued to advance upon Cadiz to give Rosily aid. Avril was ordered to link up with a force under General Pierre Dupont in Andalusia. Concurrently, Spencer, along with his brigade in excess of 5,000 troops, prepared to meet Arvil.<sup>1</sup> They sailed and landed near Ayamonte. Spencer conducted a reconnaissance and using the main "trail" from Ayamonte to Cadiz as a center, he emplaced his brigade in defensive positions to await the French.<sup>2</sup> General Avril, upon finding the British were close to Ayamonte, was unsure of how to respond to the new threat. In consequence he retired from the field and returned to Lisbon, back to his senior commander, General Jean Junot.<sup>3</sup> Spencer sent word back to the War Office on Avril's departure and he then sailed up the coast. Congratulations were returned to Spencer from Lord Castlereagh.<sup>4</sup> Now that the French Army threat had ended for Cadiz, its citizens could rest easier. The town's citizens held a large parade and the

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<sup>1</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/226, # 463, Spencer to Lord Castlereagh, 17 June 1808.

<sup>2</sup> P.R.O., *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> P.R.O., F.O., 72/64, #172, unknown to Lord Canning, 6 July 1808.

<sup>4</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/226, # 435, Lord Castlereagh to Spencer, 6 July 1808.

officers of the British fleet were invited as guests of honor.

Meanwhile, the units under General Dupont continued to march south. General Castaños, with his numerically inferior force, attacked the French north of Cordoba, at Bailen. Dupont, unaware of his numerical advantage, chose to surrender to Castaños and thus sealed the safety of Cadiz and the rest of Andalusia.<sup>5</sup> Dupont's defeat by a Spanish General commanding a mixed force surprised all of Europe. The French army could be defeated. The Austrians, who had been defeated previously by Napoleon in 1805, were also encouraged by the success of the Spanish at Bailen. If the Spanish could defeat a regular French army unit, could not the Austrians too?

The force of Spanish success sent shock waves through the rest of Europe. The fate of the French soldiers of Dupont were not those enjoyed by the soldiers of Junot after the Convention of Cintra. Rather, the Spanish authorities mistreated the French prisoners, subjecting them to torture, public display and abuse, and finally incarceration aboard rotting prison ships in the Cadiz harbor.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, Cadiz escaped the immediate French threat. The time between the next French military threat outside the gates, or, inside the harbor, would be another nineteen months away.<sup>7</sup> Cadiz would serve, during the next year and a half, as the central coordination point between the British and the Spanish. Its harbor and proximity to Seville would make it an ideal location for the awesome task of

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<sup>5</sup> Charles Oman. *A History of the Peninsular War*, (London, 1902-30), I, 191.

<sup>6</sup> Hamilton, *Annals*, p. 86.

<sup>7</sup> Cadiz would be invested by Marshal Victor's corps in February 1810, some 19 months after the Rosily fleet surrender.

coordination, communication, joint operations; and funneling financial aid from the British to the Supreme Junta.<sup>8</sup>

In the rest of the Iberian Peninsula during the following year, the contest between the British and her allies would consume increasing amounts of French manpower, material, and resources. After the Convention of Cintra and its subsequent Parliamentary Inquiry, the command of the Army in Portugal fell to Sir John Moore. Moore advanced with his Army into Spain to link up with Spanish Army by the order of Bartholomew Frere, the British Ambassador to the Supreme Junta. Moore was soon out-manned and out-generaled. He faced the new, numerically superior French Army under Napoleon's personal command. Moore, understanding the danger to his small Army, began the infamous march to La Coruña. Napoleon followed Moore as far as Astorga, and confident that affairs in Spain were almost concluded, left to return to Paris. Marshal Nicolas Soult then assumed command of the hotly pursuing French force. The British Army, under Moore, narrowly avoided capture with timely evacuation by the Royal Navy at Corunna. Moore was killed on 16 January 1809 during battle with Soult at Alvina.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, by early 1809, the French were again in control of much of Spain. On 24 March 1809, the French successfully captured part of the Spanish fleet in Ferrol, gaining several more ships-of-the-line for the French Navy. Later in 1809, Austria declared war on France and the British government, adhering to its treaty, shifted

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<sup>8</sup> P.R.O., F.O., 72/64, #38, George Canning to Viscount McDuff in Cadiz, 29 November 1808. His note dealt with sending 2.5 Million pounds in silver bars to Cadiz for use of the Spanish government.

<sup>9</sup> Severn, A Wellesley Affair, p. 86.



money from Spain to Austria. Inevitably, this weakened the British diplomatic and bargaining position in Seville. Frere, the ambassador, did little to explain his government's rationale in the decision, indeed he openly sided with the Spanish and their complaints.<sup>10</sup> Spencer Perceval, the first Lord of the Treasury, appointed the elder brother of Sir Arthur Wellesley, Richard, as the new Ambassador Extraordinary to the Supreme Junta. This appointment was crucial to the successful defense of Cadiz. On 31 July 1809 Richard Wellesley landed in the Cadiz harbor amid great ceremony and pomp.<sup>11</sup> Wellesley began the difficult task of negotiation and cooperation with the Supreme Junta.

Sir Arthur had already disagreed and quarreled with his Spanish ally, General Gregorio de Cuesta at Talavera. The Spanish government tried to induce the British Army to take to the offensive in the field, in order to boost its own falling popularity.<sup>12</sup> The Spanish populace, displeased with the continuing French success and the lack of Spanish governmental coordination, grew alienated toward the Supreme Junta. The British diplomatic position was strengthened because of the Junta's need of British troops, material, and specie; they appointed Wellington "Captain General in the Spanish Army".<sup>13</sup> The Junta's mismanagement of the war against the French, the incompetence of General Cuesta, and inability to supply the British Army with

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 43.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 46.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. p. 82.

<sup>13</sup> P.R.O. WO 1/238, Supreme Junta of Seville to the War Office, 8 August 1809.

promised supplies, caused Wellington to withdraw back into Portugal. With the British Army now garrisoned in Portugal, the southern half of Spain was in a precarious strategic position. No Spanish led force had beaten a French Army since Bailen. Andalusia, and consequently Cadiz, were now more exposed to a possible renewed French offensive. The French would eventually capitalize on by the fortuitous situation.

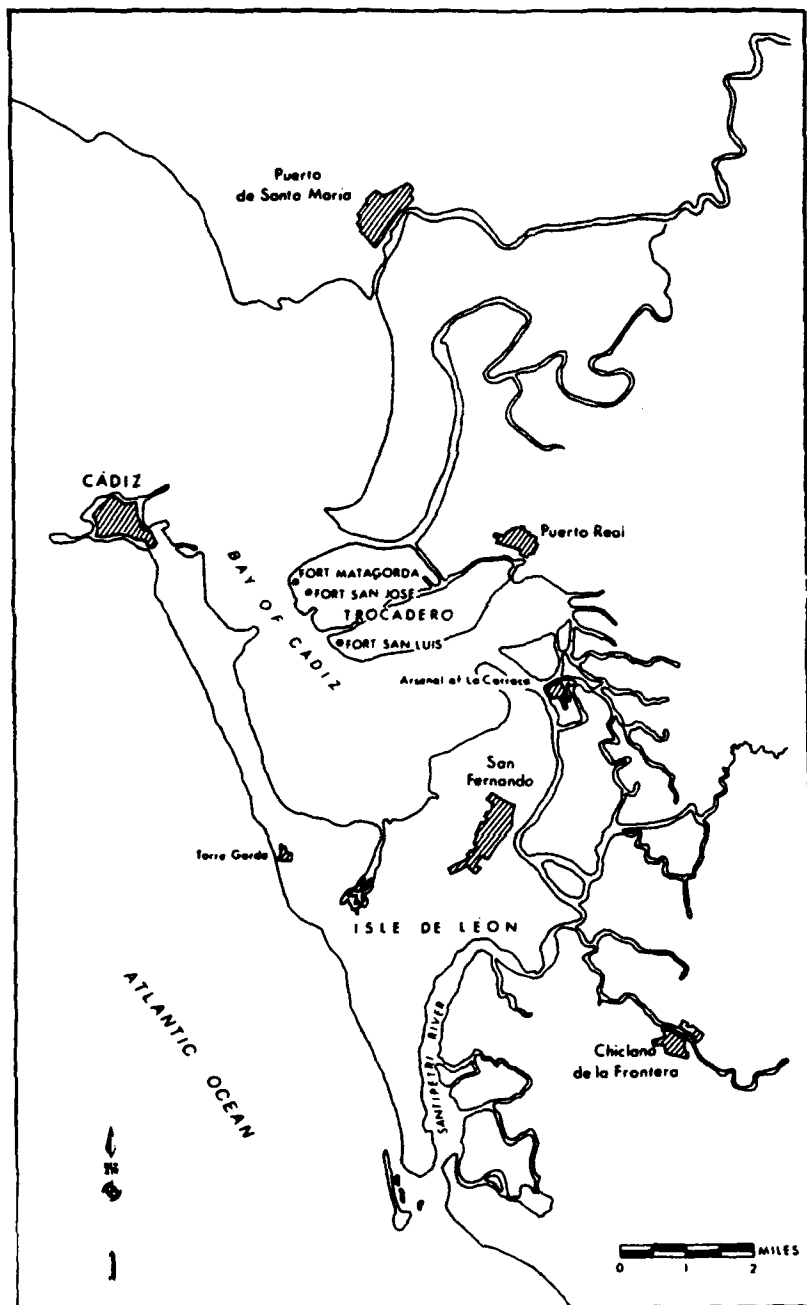
The importance of Cadiz in supporting the insurrection was paramount. Its location, some seventy miles south of Seville, made it the natural site for landing British specie, arms, and government officials. Its superb location, easily defendable harbor, and proximity to Gibraltar, made it an important strategic asset. In a letter to the Marquess Wellesley, George Canning wrote,

Cadiz would be essentially important. It is obvious that our operations in Spain must be defensive; that they cannot be connected with Portugal; that we must have a retreat upon Cadiz; and that retreat cannot be secure, unless Cadiz is in our hands. I am convinced, however, that the Spanish Government will never cede Cadiz.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Wellington Papers, #1/277, Canning to Richard Wellesley, 9 December 1809.

FORTS ON CADIZ HARBOR  
FIGURE 5: J. Severn. A Wellesley Affair.



The Spanish were understandably still mistrustful of British intentions concerning Cadiz. Cadiz had been attacked several times by the British in past centuries.<sup>15</sup> British attacks on Cadiz were repulsed repeatedly.<sup>16</sup> Yet the allied success in the Peninsula would eventually be underwritten by Cadiz's remarkable defense. Wellesley understood the strategic importance of Cadiz and in August 1809 he estimated that a garrison of 15,000 to 20,000 soldiers "would suffice for its defense".<sup>17</sup>

In October 1809 Arthur Wellesley, named Viscount Wellington after the battle of Talavera, began the construction of the Lines of Torres Vedras outside of Lisbon. These formidable fortifications would save the British Army from destruction in 1810-11 during the third invasion of Portugal. With Wellington blockaded behind the Lines of Torres Vedres, King Joseph and his new Chief of Staff, Marshal Soult, turned south for the next phase of Spanish subjugation.<sup>18</sup> Should the French capture Andalusia, along with Seville and Cadiz, Joseph would be able to consolidate his position in Spain and gain much needed additional tax revenues. The French prepared some 60,000 men

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<sup>15</sup> Ramon Solis. *El Cadiz De Las Cortes*. (Madrid, 1958). In early 1625, Cadiz was attacked by a combined British and Dutch fleet; in 1686 by the French; again in 1702 by the British Fleet. It had been suffering commercially and militarily by the effective British fleet blockade began in 1797, lost heavily later in the disaster at Trafalgar, and up until the Dos De Mayos was preyed upon by the English Fleet under Purvis and Collingwood.

<sup>16</sup> Marquess Wellesley was recalled to Great Britain; he departed Cadiz in November 1809 to prepare for his future cabinet position, as Foreign Secretary. His younger brother, Henry Wellesley, was posted to Cadiz in March 1810 in the Marquess old position.

<sup>17</sup> Wellington Collection, #1/277, Wellington to Richard Wellesley, 15 June 1809.

<sup>18</sup> On 19 November 1809 a numerically inferior French force destroyed the Spanish Army at Ocaña under the command of General Carlos Areizaga. Marshal Victor and General Milhaud commanded the smaller French force. Areizaga was relieved of his command in January 1810 for his poor judgement and command of the Army by the Supreme Junta.

for the invasion of Andalusia.<sup>19</sup> The Supreme Junta at Seville was unable to act concretely to combat the new threat. Intelligence received from Spanish spies clearly pointed out that a large force was being collected for offensive operations.<sup>20</sup> Panic began, the recent loss at Ocaña brought Spanish public opinion to a low point. After the stunning victory at Bailen, the Spanish Army had not acquitted itself well since.

At this period Marshal Sout, with an army of about fifty thousand men, was preparing to advance into Andalusia. The Junta, blind to the approaching danger, felt secure that the giant range of the Sierra Morena would oppose an impenetrable barrier to the progress of the enemy. The passes of these mountains had been fortified with care, and a force of about twenty thousand men, under Areizaga, was posted for their defense.<sup>21</sup>

The Spanish Army guarding the mountain passes commanded a good position on the dominant terrain. However the commander, Areizaga, failed to personally command the troops and was some twenty miles south of the Despena Perros pass, billeted in a comfortable castle. Sout took to the march on 7 January and by 20 January 1810, the Despena Perros pass was forced.<sup>22</sup> With four separate columns piercing into northern Andalusia, Sout rapidly destroyed all organized Spanish Army

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<sup>19</sup> The invasion force was as follows:

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| I Corps (Marshal Victor) . . . . .            | 22,664. |
| IV Corps (General Sebastiani) . . . . .       | 10,078. |
| V Corps (Marshal Mortier) . . . . .           | 16,009. |
| General Dessolles's Madrid Division . . . . . | 8,354.  |
| Royal Guard (Approximately) . . . . .         | 2,500.  |
| Enlisted Spaniards . . . . .                  | 2,000.  |

**TOTAL** 59,596.

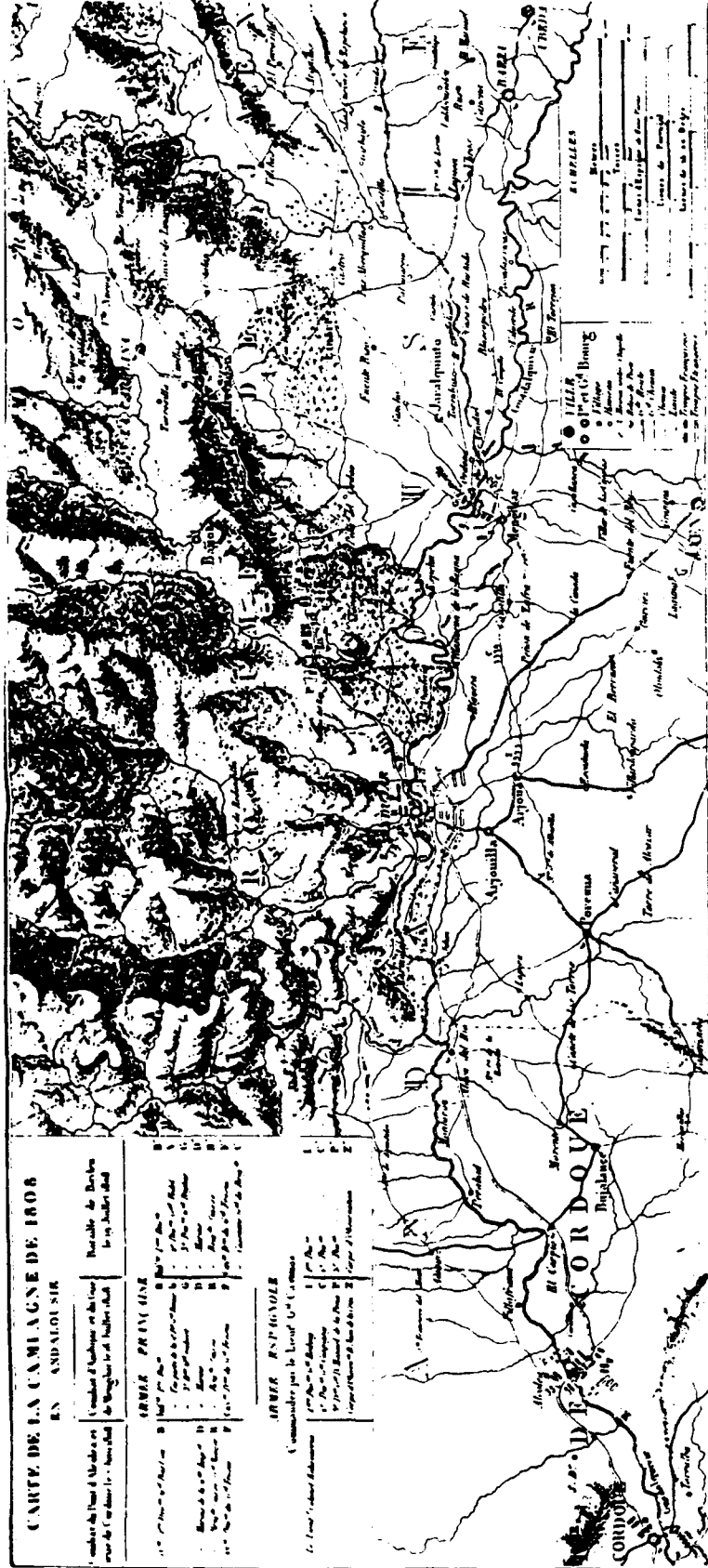
<sup>20</sup> Hamilton, *Annals*, p. 323.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* p. 323.

<sup>22</sup> Alexander Innes Shand. *The War in The Peninsula 1808-1814*, (London, 1898), p. 90.

ANDALUSIA CAMPAIGN MAP (1800)

FIGURE 6:



resistance. Each corps was given a different march objective. Victor's and Mortier's Corps, along with Soult and King Joseph, moved toward Seville. The French met with success against every threat, the advance was rapid and exhilarating for the French. By the 29th the advanced guard of Victor's cavalry struck the outer walls of Seville but met only scattered musket fire. The city citizens were in a state of panic and gave little organized resistance.<sup>23</sup> Inside of Seville, the population was angered at the inept Supreme Junta; many of its members had already defected to Cadiz in order "to prepare for the Cortes"<sup>24</sup> and to escape the justice of the French installed king. Conditions rapidly grew worse for the frightened population as more and more delegates of the Supreme Junta fled south and elsewhere. By nightfall on 23 January 1810 the Supreme Junta had ceased to function. The townsfolk appointed a new ruling council and five representatives were chosen to represent the citizens of Seville.<sup>25</sup> The new Junta sent unrealistic orders to the remaining Spanish Armies in Andalusia to flank the French and attack with superior force. No general would answer the order or acknowledge the authority of the new Junta. It became apparent that the remainder of the French Army was converging on Seville so the five member council also fled.<sup>26</sup> Without an organized ruling body the town of Seville was leaderless. By 31 January the city sent out a peace delegation to arrange a surrender.<sup>27</sup> Seville had been the seat of the

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<sup>23</sup> Fortescue, *British Army*, VII, 360-62.

<sup>24</sup> Solis, *Cadiz de las Cortes*, p. 249.

<sup>25</sup> Fortescue, *British Army*, VII, 362.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p. 362.

<sup>27</sup> Hamilton, *Annals*, p. 324.

revolutionary government and had directed the insurrection against King Joseph. Now the same monarch prepared to enter the city in triumph on 1 February 1810. The loss of Seville was not only symbolic, it was also militarily significant:

The French thus became masters of nearly two hundred pieces of serviceable cannon, of immense magazines, and of the great foundry, which was left uninjured. In truth, the resistance offered in Andalusia to the progress of the French arms was so slight, as to lead Joseph to believe that the spirit of the people had a length been effectually humbled.<sup>28</sup>

At this point the French had gained control of most of their objectives in Andalusia. Captain William Stothert, the Adjutant of the 3rd British Foot Guards wrote, "Victor is in possession of Seville, and the immense magazines collected by the late Junta in that city, which he entered without opposition, in the same manner as he did at Jaen, Cordova and Granada."<sup>29</sup> At Seville King Joseph held a royal war council and solicited advice on future operations; notably the capture of Cadiz, the only remaining insurrectionist held city in Andalusia.<sup>30</sup> If Cadiz were taken, then the final refuge of the recalcitrant Junta would be conquered and no organized governmental resistance would remain in Spain. It seemed that the French

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

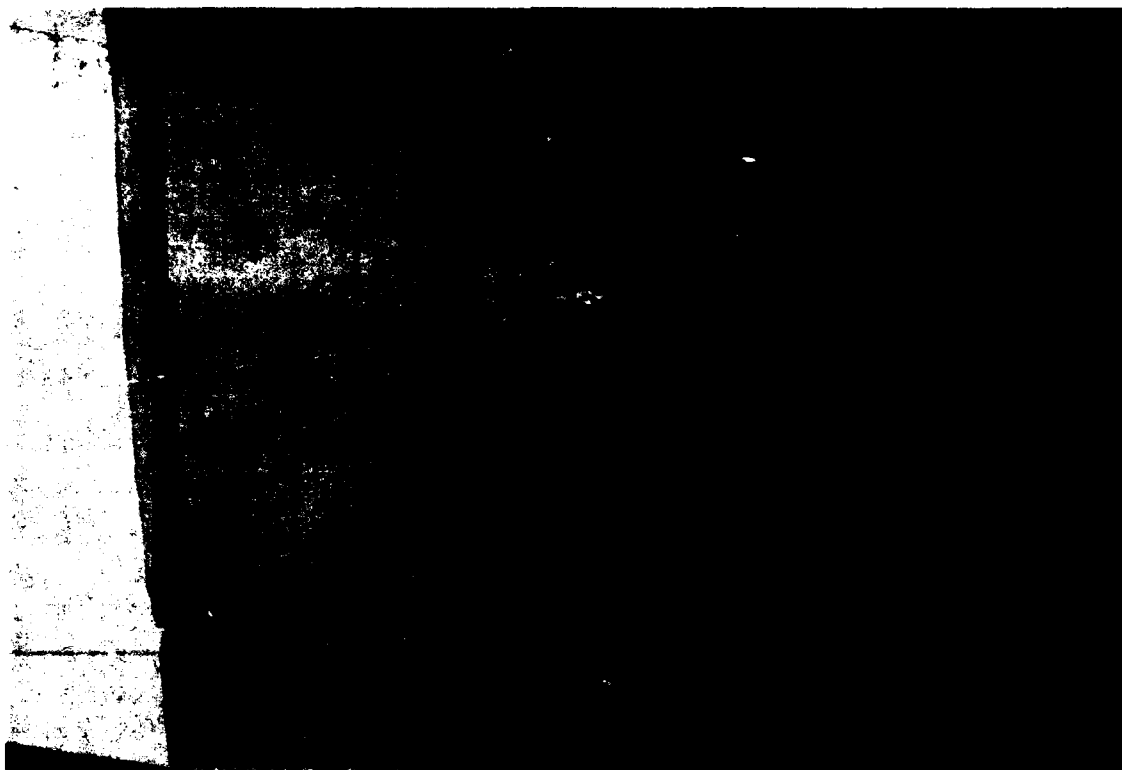
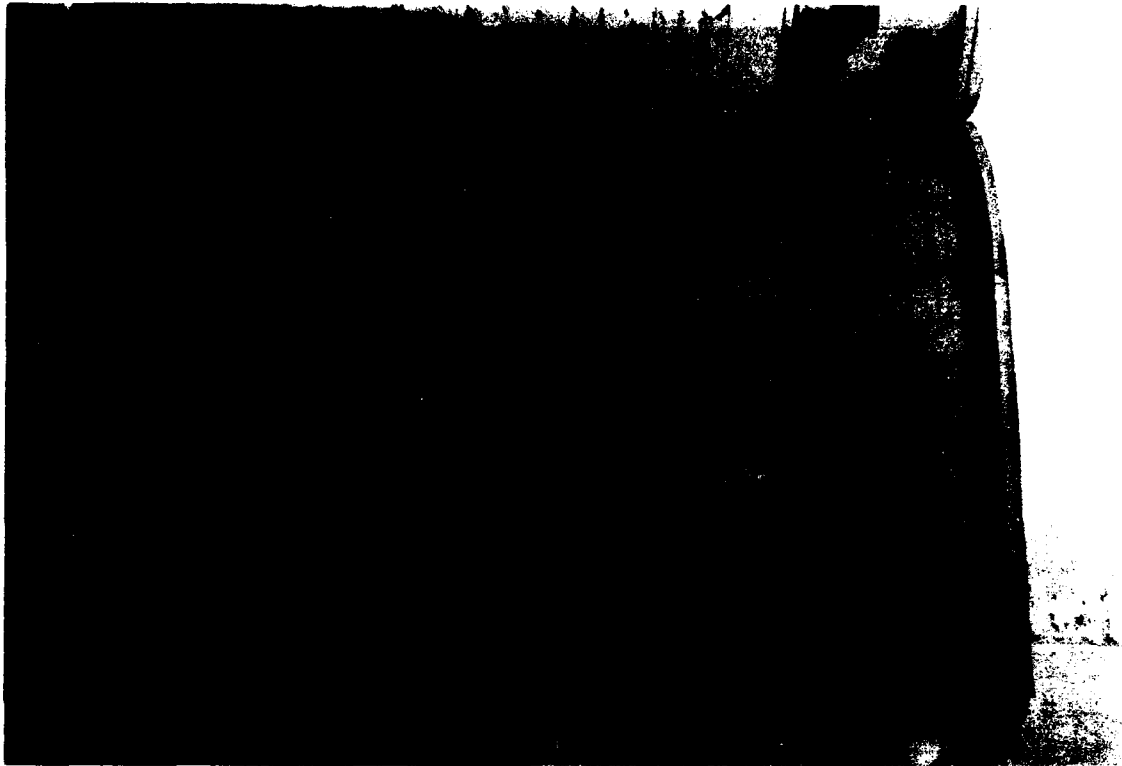
<sup>29</sup> William Stothert. A Narrative of the Principal Events of the Campaigns of 1809, 1810, & 1811, in Spain and Portugal: interspersed with Remarks on Local Scenery and Manners (In a series of Letters). (London, 1812), p. 151.

<sup>30</sup> While Seville was still resisting the French in late January the people of Cadiz began to work feverishly on barricades and embankments in preparation of the impending French threat. Gabriel H. Lovett, Napoleon and the Birth of Modern Spain. (New York, 1965), I, 362.



ISLA AND CADIZ HARBOR SKETCH

FIGURE 7: Unpublished Diary, LT Daniel Robinson, RM.



could do it easily; almost all the cities of Andalusia gave in without a fight, why should Cadiz be different?

French intelligence on the Cadiz garrison estimated the defenders strength at some 2,000.<sup>31</sup> In the council, Soult opposed Joseph's strategy of seizing the city, declaring that "If any one will answer to me for Seville, I will answer for Cadiz."<sup>32</sup> This delay of two days was no doubt one of the great mistakes made by one of Napoleon's marshals.

At Seville the Army remained for two days inactive, when a corps under Mortier was detached into Estremadura for the reduction of Badajos, and Victor was directed to march on to Cadiz. Had the latter been at once pushed forward with that celerity of movement for which the French army is generally remarkable, and to which it has been indebted for many of its most splendid successes, there can exist little doubt that Cadiz would have fallen.<sup>33</sup>

The force inside of Cadiz in late January, consisted of little more than a reinforced brigade, depending on limited resources.<sup>34</sup> Victor's I Corps had almost 20,000 effectives and a covering force of cavalry. Many of these troops were veterans and well

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<sup>31</sup> Solis, Cadiz and the Cortes, p. 191.

<sup>32</sup> Oman, Peninsula War, III, 135.

<sup>33</sup> Hamilton, Annals, p. 324.

<sup>34</sup> There is considerable differences in opinion in the size of the defending Spanish garrison and the ability of the city to hold off the French. Hamilton, Annals, p. 324. states "The city, in truth, was utterly unprepared for attack; the garrison was insufficient to man the works and there were not a thousand men in the Isla de Leon." Ramon Solis, Cadiz de las Cortes, argues that the city would have held out in the past, given the garrison already in place and the large number of naval gunships and ships-of-the-line in the harbor and on the Santi Petri river. Oman concludes that Cadiz would have followed in capitulation like the other cities in the province. Alexander Shand in The War in the Peninsula p. 91, says, "They had taken no precautions; it was weakly garrisoned and practically undefended."

trained. Even if Cadiz had a brigade of competent troops, its unlikely they could have held off the I Corps. However, Soult's momentous mistake was the Spaniard's reprieve.

Not all of the Spanish armies in the field had faced the French or responded to the Supreme Junta's dying directives to save Seville. One effective general, the Duque José R. Albuquerque with his corps of 10,000 men, was in Andalusia. This capable officer, who disregarded his instructions from the Junta, was convinced that the French would try to take Cadiz following Seville. If he moved his force rapidly from Cordova, he could probably reach Cadiz before Joseph's units could.

In such circumstance was it that Cadiz was saved from her impending danger by the vigor and promptitude of the Duke of Albuquerque. That general, placing little faith in the talent and prudence of the Supreme Junta, no sooner received intelligence that the French had passed the Morena, than, disregarding the orders of the Junta, who directed him to repair to Cordova, he marched on Cadiz with the greatest rapidity, and threw himself into the Isla de Leon.<sup>35</sup>

This wise and timely decision enabled the last readily available combat force to come to the aid of Cadiz. Albuquerque reached the city on 4 February 1810, only some twelve hours before Victor's cavalry arrived.<sup>36</sup> Immediately after moving his troops across the Punto Zuarzo bridge (the only bridge connecting the Isla with the Spanish mainland), he destroyed it and set up several artillery batteries to halt any French effort to force the position or throw up a temporary bridge.<sup>37</sup>

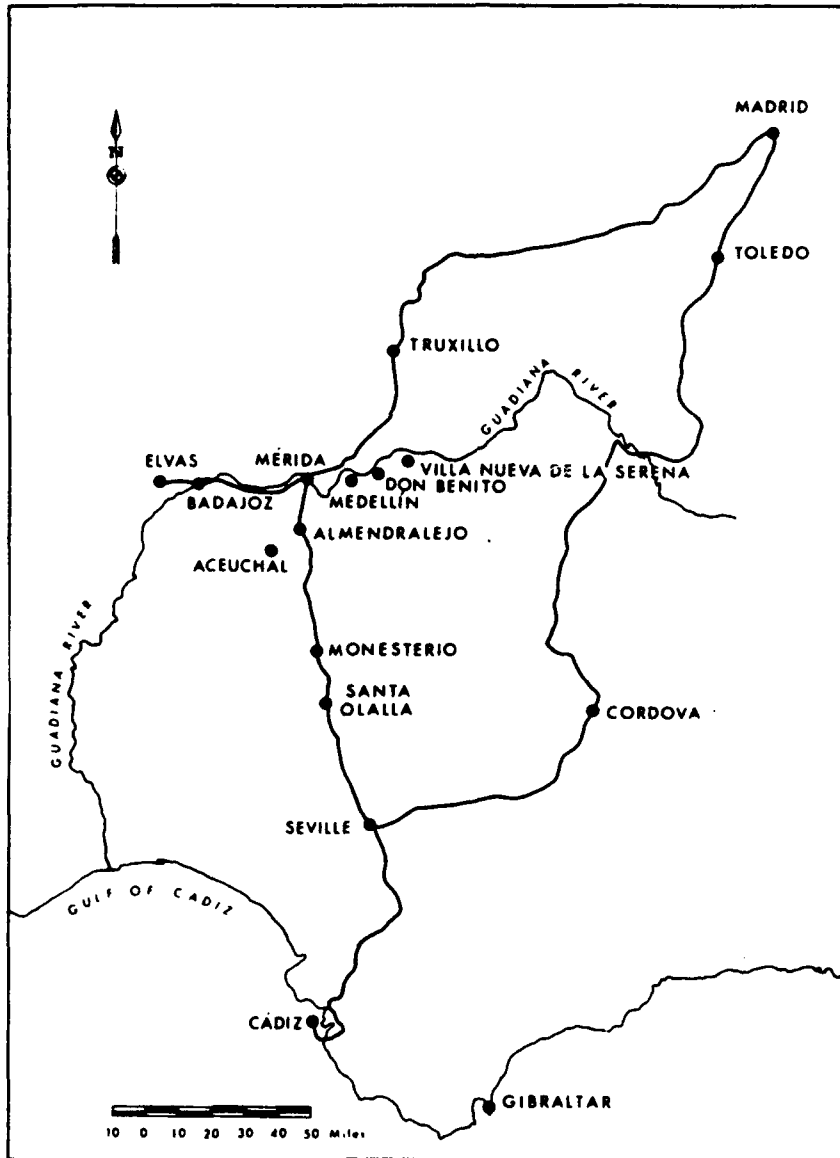
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<sup>35</sup> Hamilton, Annals, p. 325.

<sup>36</sup> The follow on elements of the I Corps arrived two days after Albuquerque had closed on Cadiz. Fortescue, British Army, VII, 364.

<sup>37</sup> Hamilton, Annals, p. 325.

INVASION ROUTES INTO ANDALUSIA  
FIGURE 8: J. Severn. A Wellesley Affair.



As the imminent French threat became clear to the citizens of Cadiz, a change in attitude towards the British became very apparent. After refusing entry to the British troops into Cadiz twice the preceding year, the late request seemed desperate indeed. It had been the desire of Liverpool, Wellington, and Richard Wellesley to garrison Cadiz, in order to deny its naval and commercial benefits to the French Empire.<sup>38</sup>

The task of preparing the city to face the victorious French Army, which had easily crushed some 50,000 Spanish troops in only one month, could not be accomplished with the limited Spanish assets. The Cadiz Junta reluctantly agreed for the British to occupy the city and the Isla in order to secure the new seat of Spanish government. A request was sent to Gibraltar for British troops on 28 January 1810. On 7 February 1810 a detachment from Gibraltar, under the command of General William Bowes, landed on the Isla de Leon. They were refused admittance to the city proper, as a result of the same old anti-British sentiment. Bowes then took his command of 1,000 men and marched them across the Isla, to a position near the town of Isla near the islands center and adjacent to the Santi Petri river.<sup>39</sup> On 11 February 1810 General William Stewart, detached from Wellington's Army in Portugal, landed with 2,146 soldiers.<sup>40</sup> He received detailed instructions from Wellington prior to his departure from Lisbon. Wellington insisted that the Spanish government honor its

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<sup>38</sup> Wellington Papers, #11304, Wellington to Stewart, 7 February 1810; Wellington to Liverpool, 9 February 1810; To Wellington to Henry Wellesley, 27 March 1810.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, # 11304, Wellington to Liverpool, 9 February, 1810.

<sup>40</sup> P.R.O., F.O., 72/92, Frere to Marquess Wellesley, 10 February 1810.

logistical commitments.<sup>41</sup> General Stewart, the senior British officer, took command of the English troops and reported to the Duke of Albuquerque, the newly named Governor of the Cadiz,<sup>42</sup> on the state of the defense and gave his estimate on the required works for the island's defense.

While Stewart attended to the military aspects, the new foreign secretary, Richard Wellesley, briefed the new Ambassador to Spain, Henry Wellesley. Henry Wellesley departed England on 12 February 1810 and arrived two weeks later. The "Wellesley triad" was in place, and would soon function with great effectiveness. Henry Wellesley arrived on 28 February 1810 and was met by Albuquerque.<sup>43</sup> The fall of Seville was difficult for the junior Wellesley to comprehend; when he left London the Supreme Junta was still in power and he was prepared to deal with them; the new situation would require flexibility and change. He displayed great vigor and assisted Stewart in securing admission of the British soldiers to the city. He also met with the ruling Junta and began laying the groundwork for future negotiations. As Henry Wellesley and Stewart began the process of preparing Cadiz to resist the growing might of Marshal Victor's siege force, the War Office decided to dispatch a

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<sup>41</sup> Wellington Papers, # 11304, Wellington to Stewart, 7 February 1810. This note gives details on Wellington's instruction on the chain of command, maintaining unit cohesion, instructions on sorties from Cadiz, troop rations to be issued in accordance with British Army requirements but supplied by the Spanish Government, and other military issues.

<sup>42</sup> The Duke of Albuquerque was named Military Governor of Cadiz by the newly appointed Council of Regency, which was made up of Don Pedro De Quevedo y Quintana, Bishop of Orense; Don Antonio de Ascano; General Castaños; Don Francisco de Saverdra; and Don Esteban Fernandez de Leon.

<sup>43</sup> P.R.O., F.O., 72/94, Henry Wellesley to Marquess Wellesley, 7 March 1810.

new commander to undertake the defense of this important and strategic city. On 20 February 1810 Lord Liverpool sent word to Wellington in Lisbon that he had decided, with George III's concurrence, that Major General Thomas Graham was the best choice for this crucial command.<sup>44</sup> Liverpool considered Cadiz absolutely "vital" to British peninsular plans.<sup>45</sup> General Graham had already served with distinction in several expeditions, and had been on the late Sir John Moore's staff in 1809. His appointment to command the Cadiz garrison would prove to be one of the high points in his already illustrious career.

At the age of sixty three, Thomas Graham set sail for Cadiz to confront one of the greatest challenges of his career. He would serve for the next eighteen months as the commander of the British Cadiz garrison, and indirectly, as the task force commander for the Royal Navy, defending Cadiz. Cadiz would serve as the stage for the upcoming contest between one of Napoleon's distinguished marshals and one of Scotland's toughest soldiers.

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<sup>44</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 6/50, #35, Liverpool to Wellington, 20 February 1810.

<sup>45</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 6/50, #40, Liverpool to Wellington, 27 February 1810.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SIR THOMAS TAKES CHARGE

Thomas Graham's remarkable career was highly successful by his day's standards. He did not begin to soldier until he became a grieving and angry widower at the age of forty-four. In response to French revolutionaries despoiling his recently deceased wife's body on dubious grounds, he raised a regiment in his native Scotland, the 90th Light Infantry, and became its colonel in 1795. He served in several expeditions—the Peninsula, Toulon, Malta, and in the disastrous Walchern expedition of 1809. He enjoyed a hard earned reputation as a demanding leader who expected the best from his subordinates. He was very popular with the soldiers in the ranks; he relied more on mutual dignity and meeting the needs of his men, rather than the corporal's cane to enforce authority. Wellington thought highly of him, as did Liverpool who declared:

I have now to communicate to your Lordship that the king has been pleased to select Major General Graham to command the British Forces assembling at Cadiz, with the local rank of LT General in Spain & Portugal, but subject to the Orders of your Lordship, as Commander of all his Majesty's Land Forces in the Spanish Peninsula.<sup>1</sup>

Graham was not known in the Army as a master tactician, but rather, as a solid and competent officer who carried out his orders no matter the challenge. This proficient,

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<sup>1</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 6/50, Liverpool to Wellington, 27 February 1810.



and candid, commander would be tasked to the utmost in dealing with the scheming government officials, inept and unreliable officers, and in fighting a chronic eye disorder aggravated by Andalusia's hot weather.<sup>2</sup>

The initial British troop strength of the Cadiz garrison was only a little over 4,000 in early February. Working quickly to take advantage of the long sought opportunity to garrison Cadiz, the British government sent additional ships and men as rapidly as possible to reinforce the new Spanish seat of government.<sup>3</sup> Stewart sent a request to Wellington for additional forces, however, Wellington was himself in need of men. However, recognizing the importance of adequately garrisoning Cadiz, Wellington sent the Portuguese 20th Line Caçadores to Stewart.<sup>4</sup> The allied strength in Cadiz by 20 February 1810 was approximately 11,200 men. Wellington was hard pressed to find more men for Stewart and was obliged in turn, to appeal to Liverpool

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<sup>2</sup> Graham's eyes were so bad that in some cases soldiers and sailors accompanying him on dangerous reconnaissance missions frequently commented on his bad eyesight. Graham, later on a waterborne recon near Matagorda, took a small boat so close to Fort Luis that the sailors on the boat heard the fort's French soldiers "speaking plainly."

<sup>3</sup> P.R.O., Admiralty (henceforth cited as Adm.), 2/1369, Crocker to Various Ship Captains, ie. Terminne, Achilles, Tomahawk, 15 February 1810: "You are hereby required and directed to proceed without a moment's loss of time in the ship you command to Cadiz, land, putting yourself under the command of Vice-Admiral Lord Collingwood, follow such orders as you may receive from his Lordship, or Vice Admiral Purvis, for you further proceedings. Your are to approach the Port of Cadiz with great caution, and not to enter it until you are will satisfied that the same is not in the possession of the enemy, but in case it shall appear, that Vice Admiral Purvis has withdrawn from thence, you are to proceed to Gibraltar and remain there until you receive further orders."

<sup>4</sup> They landed on 16 February 1810, and were sent to the north end on the Isla de Leon for posting and billeting.

for additional men for the Cadiz garrison. Liverpool responded on 24 April 1810, giving Wellington a very limited increase in personnel; he estimated that the garrison could properly count on only a total of 8,000 British or Portuguese troops.<sup>5</sup> Spanish troops were landed in Cadiz by the joint fleet, primarily from the remnants of previously scattered field armies. Fortunately for the allies, the British Ordnance Board had shipped sufficient arms and ammunition to equip the new soldiers.<sup>6</sup> By the end of February, allied strength in Cadiz reached almost 19,000 soldiers, not counting the five volunteer city guard battalions of Cadiz.

England had finally established its soldiers in Cadiz, not by force of arms but by treaty. Great Britain had wanted her soldiers in Cadiz, because of its strategic importance, since the insurrection broke out. Several offers to land British troops were made prior to 1810 but they were refused by the Supreme Junta as well as the Junta of Cadiz. Now that the Cadiz Junta, the Council of the Regency, and the

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<sup>5</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 6/50, Liverpool to Wellington, 24 April 1810. "The following force has been allotted for the defense of Cadiz and the Corps of which it is composed, are either actually in that place, or are under orders to proceed there.

|                              |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>CADIZ</b> Artillery ..... | 500          |
| Foot Guards .....            | 1200         |
| 30th/2nd Batt/ .....         | 650          |
| 44th/2nd/ " / .....          | 610          |
| 79th/1st/ " / .....          | 1000         |
| 87th/2nd/ " / .....          | 700          |
| 88th/2nd/ " / .....          | 680          |
| 94th/ .....                  | 700          |
| 95th/5 Comps/ .....          | 500          |
| Detch of Cav/ .....          | <u>250</u>   |
|                              | 6,790        |
| Portuguese Regt. ....        | <u>1,210</u> |
|                              | 8,000        |

<sup>6</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 72/92, Frere to Marquess Wellesley, 11 February 1810.

Duque of Albuquerque concurred with the decision to admit British troops for defensive purposes, it became obvious the British would be very reluctant to leave.

Lord Liverpool wrote to Wellington:

How far it may be expedient for your Lordship to reinforce the garrison of Cadiz, or to withdraw any part of that garrison, for other service in the Peninsula must depend upon circumstances which are left to your discretion-but considering the importance of Cadiz as a naval station—the security of the Spanish Fleet as connected with it. The difficulties which so long prevented the introduction of a British Garrison into that place, and which, might be expected to arise again, if the British Garrison were once wholly withdrawn it does not appear likely that any circumstance should arise, which could render it expedient to remove altogether, the British force now in Cadiz, from that quarter.<sup>7</sup>

Meanwhile, elements of the Spanish navy fled to the Cadiz harbor since Ferrol and Barcelona had been captured by the French. They maintained stations on the Canary and Balearic Islands, and Cartagena also, but the lack of naval stores gradually reduced the capabilities of the fleet. When Henry Wellesley arrived in Cadiz, he was surprised by the number of Spanish vessels in the harbor<sup>8</sup>, and much alarmed, at the prison ships holding the remnants of Dupont's command, captured at Bailen in July 1808.<sup>9</sup> Wellesley was unable to effect the transfer of the prison ships to suitable sites; he even proposed to transport half of the French prisoners to England, if the Regency would send the other half to the Canary islands or other Spanish possessions. As a result on 4 March 1810 when a gale struck Cadiz and several ships were damaged, and

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<sup>7</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 6/50, Liverpool to Wellington, 24 April 1810.

<sup>8</sup> "... and there were in the bay twenty-three men of war, four of the line and three frigates being British." Napier, *War in the Peninsula*, II, 336.

<sup>9</sup> Severn, *Wellesley Affair*, pp. 119-20.

some French prisoners made an escape.<sup>10</sup>

Victor began an aggressive siege works program with plans calling for almost twenty-five miles of redoubts, artillery batteries, and the construction of a small fleet. Victor wisely occupied the island of Trocadero, adjacent to the peninsula of Matagorda, the closest point of mainland to the Isla de Leon. Almost immediately after Victor's arrival at the bay of Cadiz, the Spanish artillery unit which occupied Fort Luis on the Trocadero, the 27th Artillery, destroyed part of the fort and withdrew to the Isla by the British fleet. Thus, the French were able to occupy the only two mainland areas which could reach the Isla and Cadiz with long range cannon.<sup>11</sup>

Wellesley had growing problems with the "governments" in Cadiz. Through a series of disagreements and published mutual indictments, the Cadiz Junta and the Duke of Albuquerque became alienated. The feud became so bitter that Albuquerque resigned his position in mid March 1810.<sup>12</sup> As a result, General Francisco X. Castaños was appointed commander in chief and General Joaquin Blake, a conservative anti

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 119.

<sup>11</sup> "From Matagorda to Cadiz was above four thousand yards; but from Puntales it was only twelve hundred, and was therefore the nearest point to Cadiz and to the isthmus, and the most important point of the offense. From thence the French could search the upper harbor with their fire, or throw shells into the Carracas and the fort of Fernando; while their flotilla, safely moored in the Trocadero creek, could quickly reach the isthmus, and turn the Isla, with all the works between it and the city: nevertheless, the Spaniards dismantled and abandoned Matagorda." See Napier, War in the Peninsula, II, 333.

<sup>12</sup> Albuquerque was posted to London where he died after several months. While in London he composed and published the Manifiesto de Albuquerque which detailed his role in the new Spanish government and his actions with the Spanish Army, prior to his assignment on the Isla de Leon. This one sided document failed to mention several key points, notably the role of the British fleet in Cadiz's defense and his failure to hold Fort Matagorda.

British Spaniard, was made his principal assistant on the Isla de Leon.<sup>13</sup> Wellesley hoped that the new appointee's would make better progress on Cadiz's defenses. Things began to improve in Cadiz. The new Regency began to assert its authority and made significant military gains in readiness.<sup>14</sup> However, the increase in military efficiency did little to encourage the citizens of the city. The effective French investment had cut off the city from its fields and pasture land. Grain became as important as bullets; without sufficient food, at reasonable prices, the citizens of Cadiz would not long support the allied defensive efforts. Wellesley, aware of the growing shortage, was told by the Cadiz Junta that the warehouses were full.<sup>15</sup> Wellesley arranged to have food shipped in to Cadiz, to safeguard the city from possible famine and a subsequent loss of enthusiasm to carry on the fight.

Compounding the military and social situation of the siege, the Junta and Wellesley had to contend with a French "fifth column" inside of Cadiz.<sup>16</sup> French spies made frequent forays to Victor's lines and the Spanish Admiral Antonio Alava, the commander of the Spanish Cadiz fleet, was lethargic in his military duties, if not

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<sup>13</sup> Severn, A Wellesley Affair, pp. 121-22.

<sup>14</sup> "Writing to Richard Wellesley, he (Henry Wellesley) sic. reported that the regency was beginning to show greater vigilance and activity. Attention was finally directed toward supplying the armies with money and arms. Spanish troops were paid regularly, their discipline was improved, and they were clothed in the national uniform." See Severn, Wellesley Affair, p. 126.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p. 129.

<sup>16</sup> Wellington Papers, #11304, Wellington to Liverpool, 6 March 1810.

openly sympathetic to Victor.<sup>17</sup> On 2 April 1810 Wellesley, with Castaños's support, was able to have Alava reassigned to a port position. This was largely symbolic and actually reduced his influence in the fleet's chain of command. Meanwhile, difficulties arose in the growing power struggle between the Junta of Cadiz and the Regency, a struggle which would continue until the siege was lifted. The failure of the two parties to centralize power and combine their efforts in coordinating guerrilla and regular army activities against the French were a constant source of friction for Wellesley and the British government.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, Wellington declared Spanish infighting made the defense of the city difficult. The mixture of British soldiers and sailors, their Spanish counterparts, Portuguese soldiers, and undisciplined guerrillas compounded the difficulty of the coordination and consolidation of some of the essential defensive tasks, such as bay patrol and sentry posting. An increasingly recalcitrant and difficult General Blake, made the garrison's tasks more difficult. His conduct became so obstructive that it later caused Graham to request his reassignment.<sup>19</sup>

Great Britain continued to ship large amounts of military equipment and supplies.<sup>20</sup> Depots were established both in the city and on the Isla. The British fleet

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<sup>17</sup> Richard Wellesley wrote to his younger brother, "Admiral Alava has delayed, or positively neglected the exertions indispensably necessary to the security of the Spanish ships, to the safe custody of the French prisoners, and even the defense of the city of Cadiz against the approach of the enemy." See P.R.O., F.O. 185/18, Richard Wellesley to Henry Wellesley, 12 March 1810.

<sup>18</sup> Wellington Papers, #11304, Wellington to Henry Wellesley, 27 March 1810. He declared, "if [Cadiz] were lost then it would be the fault of Her Majesty's government."

<sup>19</sup> Severn, Wellesley Affair, p. 129.

<sup>20</sup> P.R.O., Adm. 2/1370, John Barrow to LTC Ponsbury at Cadiz, 21 April 1810; Barrow to the Captain of the Regulas, 21 April 1810.

conveyed specie, arms, and dispatches to Cadiz. The role of the fleet in providing communication with London allowed Henry Wellesley to negotiate more effectively with the Spanish government, especially in the area of governmental reform, military reorganization, and trade agreements.

General Graham boarded the HMS Atlas on 1 March 1810 and after four weeks of storms and rough seas, completed the passage and landed in Cadiz harbor on 24 March 1810.<sup>21</sup> His arrival precipitated a dramatic increase in defensive readiness of the garrison, as well as his level of frustration. The French outworks were visible to Graham when he sailed into Cadiz. He undoubtedly realized the magnitude of his task and the paucity of resources to accomplish it. Shortly before his arrival, Stewart sent a detachment of the 94th Foot to retake Fort Matagorda from the French.<sup>22</sup> Thus Graham was presented with a "fait accompli" on the successful capture of Fort Matagorda. He decided not to make any changes until he became more oriented to the area and situation. Other exchanges took place preceding his arrival; on 15 March 1810 a joint detachment of Spanish and British soldiers under the command of Major James Sullivan attempted to land a raiding party on Trocadero Island, adjacent to Matagorda, to silence the large French battery which was firing on the Spanish battery at Puntales.<sup>23</sup> The raid was canceled when some of the boats were stranded on shoals

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<sup>21</sup> Oglander, Freshly Remembered, p. 205.

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter Five, this work for details on the Matagorda action.

<sup>23</sup> The Spanish battery at Puntales had 44 guns, and a great deal of powder. The frequent harassment fire from the French on Trocadero, hampered British and Spanish efforts at position improvement, and, was a constant source of danger in starting fires which might set off the powder prematurely.

with several getting swamped in the rough waters.<sup>24</sup> A severe storm swept into Cadiz on 7 March and lasted though 10 March 1810 causing a number of allied ships to be wrecked on the French held mainland. This underscored Henry Wellesley's premise that the severe congestion in the harbor helped the French and harmed the alliance.

Graham, after landing and meeting with Henry Wellesley and Stewart, rode along the island and inspected the works in progress and the plans for anticipated improvements. He was appalled by the state of defense.<sup>25</sup> The failure of the Regency and the Cadiz Junta to allow British engineers to emplace guns and dig parapets was dangerous and posed a significant threat to the security of Cadiz. According to a contemporary,

They were so indifferent to the progress of the enemy, that to use Graham's expression, they wished the English would drive away the French, merely that they might go and eat strawberries at Chiclana.<sup>26</sup>

The British government was at fault for some of the delays of the engineers. Incomplete and faulty sapper tool sets were sent to the Cadiz garrison, making digging and revetment building slow and frustrating. The French, on the other hand, had plenty of siege supplies and did not suffer for lack of the proper tools.<sup>27</sup> Graham

<sup>24</sup> Napier, War in the Peninsula, II, 336.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, II, 337.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>27</sup> Jean Jacques Pelet. The French Campaign in Portugal 1810-1811 An Account by Jean Jacques Pelet. Edited, translated, and annotated by Donald D. Horward. (Minneapolis, MN., 1973), p. 43. "Although we had devoted considerable time to preparations for the attack, we were not quite finished by the end of May because of the sieges of Tarragona and Cadiz had absorbed all the personnel and material brought into or found in Spain."; "We could not rely on the siege equipment attached to the Army of the South and in use before Cadiz." p. 331.



complained to Henry Wellesley and wrote to Wellington on his need for more men and equipment. On 3 April 1810 approximately 3,000 more British troops arrived to bolster Graham's thin ranks.<sup>28</sup> This at least gave him more leverage with Castaños, who had hinted that the composition of the Spanish contingent of Cadiz's defenders outnumbered the British almost three to one.

The last week of April taxed Graham's patience and his eyes. The growing hot weather inflamed his right eye especially, and made him easily irritated. Relations with General Blake deteriorated, and Graham was increasingly angry at the Junta of Cadiz which had assumed a more dominant position. The next challenge to await him was the artillery duel between his lodgement at Fort Matagorda and the French batteries on Trocadero and the Matagorda Peninsula.

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<sup>28</sup> Three companies of Royal Artillery, six companies of the 2nd Battalion 1st Guards, three companies of the 2nd Battalion of the Coldstream Guards, three companies of the 2nd Battalion 3rd Guards, the 2nd Battalion of the 44th Foot Regiment, five companies of the 2nd and 3rd Battalion of the 95th Rifles arrived on 3 April 1810. See Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 392, for details.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DUEL AT MATAGORDA

In late January 1810, when the forces of Marshal Victor initially attempted to force the bridge at the Zuarzo, they were turned back by the artillery battery established by the Duque of Albuquerque. In his haste to move his Army across the Santi Perti to garrison Cadiz, the Duque of Albuquerque failed to man the important peninsula called Matagorda. This thin strip of mainland was shaped like a dagger, with its point almost impaling the Isla de Leon. Since it was only 4,100 yards from the city, heavy cannon could hit targets both in the inner harbor and in the city proper. The Duque, either unfamiliar with terrain, or simply in haste, abandoned this decisive terrain to the approaching French.<sup>1</sup> The Fort of Trocadero, called St. Catalina, was hastily abandoned too and its artillery moved onto the island.<sup>2</sup> With all the Spanish artillery on the island, none were available to command the approach to either 778 Matagorda or Trocadero.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, Admiral Purvis, the British station commander, either did not know of the tactical importance of Matagorda or he chose to ignore its

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Fraser, LTC H.F.N. Jourdain, The Connaught Rangers, (London, 1926), II, 158.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 158.

abandonment. This error eventually cost the British both lives and materiel.<sup>4</sup>

When General Stewart arrived in February, he immediately reconnoitered the battlefield. One of the results of this tactical survey was recognizing the importance of Matagorda as an forward artillery position. If the British or Spanish held this key spot of terrain, then the western edge of the Isla of Leon would be protected from indirect enemy artillery fire.<sup>5</sup> Also, it would give the British artillery cross-fire with the batteries at the Puntales. If this point of land could be retaken, then the safety of the fleet gunboats and ships in the harbor would be increased. General Stewart wisely decided to retake the position.<sup>6</sup> After waiting several days for the proper weather conditions, a detachment of sailors, royal marines, and soldiers crossed the channel and stormed the French position.<sup>7</sup> Captain Archibald McLean<sup>8</sup>, of the 94th Foot, led his 142 men to the French artillery site, still under construction, and began to orient the guns to the north.<sup>9</sup> Captain McLean had several officers to assist him in the technical

<sup>4</sup> "Our Navy has not shown foresight either." See Alex Delavoye, Life of Thomas Graham, Lord Lyndoch. (London, 1880), p. 337. "...the error of abandoning which was to be attributed as much to Admiral Purvis as to the Spaniards." See also Sir William Francis Patrick Napier, History of the War, II, 336.

<sup>5</sup> "General Stewart on his arrival considered the holding of Matagorda fort to be of vital importance, since it countered two other forts on the Trocadero peninsula; they had been abandoned by the Cadiz Spanish garrison, which the French had occupied and on which they were mounting guns." See Fraser, Connaught Rangers, p. 158.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> "...a detachment consisting of fifty seamen and marines, twenty five artillery-men and sixty seven of the ninety-fourth regiment, the whole under the command of Captain M'Lean of the Ninety-fourth, pushed across the channel during a storm, took possession of the dismantled fort and effected a solid lodgement." See Napier, War In the Peninsula, II, 336.

<sup>8</sup> Fraser spells his name "Maclaine", Delavoye and Napier spell it as "McLean".

<sup>9</sup> Napier, War in the Peninsula, II, 336. Also see Delavoye, Life of Thomas Graham, p. 336.

aspects of artillery emplacement: relaying the piece, measuring charges, etc.<sup>10</sup> This detachment manned the guns and remained in constant communication with headquarters on the Isla de Leon despite the danger to the men of the 94th foot. Sergeant Donaldson, serving in the 94th recalled,

Here we were wrought like slaves without intermission, out all night under the rain on piquet (at low tide on the marshy fringe of the mud flat as near to the enemy on the Trocadero as could be risked), or carrying sandbags and digging trenches up to the knees in mud. We were driven from guard to working-working to piquet-piquet to working again, in a gin-house round of the most intolerable fatigue.<sup>11</sup>

The French returned harassing fire periodically, but no concentrated effort was made to recapture the position until April.<sup>12</sup>

On 24 February 1810, Lieutenant General Thomas Graham, the new British commander, landed to assume defenses of the city; he concurred with Stewart's decision to retake Matagorda. Indeed, this small artillery outpost would withstand the French for 55 days<sup>13</sup>, sending harassing fires toward the encroaching French earthworks, which were spreading from Point St. Mary's in the west, past the town of Puerto Real,

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<sup>10</sup> Delavoye, Life of Thomas Graham, p. 334. Fraser, Connaught Rangers, p. 158.

<sup>11</sup> See Joseph Donaldson, Eventful Life of a Soldier, (Edinburgh, 1863), p. 57.

<sup>12</sup> Napier, War in the Peninsula, II, 338. Delavoye, Life of Thomas Graham, p. 334. However, Donaldson gives accounts of sporadic contact with French patrols: "On occasion night patrols were sent out to reconnoitre the ground in front of the fort and had brushes with the French pickets who "were in the habit of coming close down on us when it was dark." See Donaldson, Life, p. 62.

<sup>13</sup> The outpost at Matagorda was supported by considerable naval gunfire to fend off French attacks and fire on their troops and workers. "We were supported by a Spanish man-of-War and six or eight gun-boats and with them we used to bombard the small village at Fort Lewis and annoy the working parties coming down from Porto Real to build batteries." See Donaldson, Life, p. 59.

and toward the Chiclana heights in the east.<sup>14</sup> Captain McLean, in cooperation with General Stewart, decided to send forces to raid nearby French artillery positions.<sup>15</sup> On 18 March, troops under the command of the Ensigns of the 94th Foot, along with a mixed force of Royal marines and sailors, conducted seaborne assaults against the French targets. "An attack was meditated on the French positions, and a number of troops were landed on the fort for that purpose. A strong party of seamen was also landed at Fort Catalina; they succeeded in storming it, and spiking the guns. When some signals were made by adherents of the French in Cadiz, the alarmed seamen and troops were obliged to return without achieving their goal."<sup>16</sup> Soon after General Graham had solved some of the logistical difficulties at Cadiz, he went out to visit the small fort. He found the men of the garrison at work forming a counter guard to cover the walls of the fort, 15 feet high. By scuttling old Spanish gun-boats in the mud it was proposed to set up also a flanking battery. General Graham considered the defense of the place hopeless.<sup>17</sup>

On 19 April the French began to seriously challenge the small but well supplied garrison at Matagorda. Additional naval artillery fire was requested by McLean and the Spanish vessel, St. Pablo with 74 guns, gave dedicated fire support on the morning of

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<sup>14</sup> "One day in particular I remember, we brought down an officer who was riding on a white horse at the head of the party, and we saw them carry him off in a litter from the place where he fell." See Donaldson, Life, p. 59.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 64.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 64.

<sup>17</sup> Delavoye, Life of Thomas Graham, p. 334.

the 20th to McLean.<sup>18</sup> Unknown to either McLean, Graham, or the Spanish ship's Captain, Juan Gallegoes, the French had moved additional artillery, cleverly masked and camouflaged,<sup>19</sup> to open up on the 21st with hot shot and explosives. According to Donaldson, "A volley of red-hot shot at the Spanish man-of-War succeeded, which set her on fire and obliged her to slip her cable and drop down the bay. A volley of two more of the same kind scattered the gun-boats: and we were then left to bear the brunt of the battle alone."<sup>20</sup> The scalding hot shot drove off the supporting Spanish gunship but the small detachment maintained its dangerous position despite the withering fire. Donaldson recalled, "they piled us so fast with shell, that I saw six or eight in the air over us at once."<sup>21</sup> General Graham went to visit the battle site; he landed at Matagorda on the 21st at 11:15 a.m. to personally reconnoiter the plight of the artillerymen and to judge the site's defensibility. He then visited Admiral Purvis to discuss the state of the defense and likelihood of additional naval support.<sup>22</sup> Matagorda was almost in complete ruins, the walls and gun positions were dangerously exposed. After Matagorda, Sergeant Donaldson wrote of McLean's bravery, "The commandant was moving from place to place giving orders and exposing himself to

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<sup>18</sup> Napier, War in the Peninsula, II, 338. Delavoye, Life of Thomas Graham, p. 334.

<sup>19</sup> "They commenced their operations by blowing up the houses which had hitherto masked the batteries." See Donaldson, Life, p. 65.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 65.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 65.

<sup>22</sup> Delavoye, Life of Thomas Graham, p. 334.

every danger. No one could doubt that he was brave."<sup>23</sup> Despite such deadly fire, McLean was determined to hold the position and return fire.

The action was kept up the whole of that day, during which we lost the best and bravest of our men. Our guns had been well directed at first, but, towards evening, the most of the artillery who had commanded them were either killed or wounded and the direction of them was then taken by men who knew little about it. The consequences was that much ammunition was used to little purpose.<sup>24</sup>

The people of Cadiz, hearing the tremendous artillery exchange, crowded the roofs and church steeples of the city and watched the action with telescopes.

That night the British sent additional reinforcements; these units included men of the 2nd battalion of the 88th Foot Artillery and some of the 87th Artillery.<sup>25</sup> General Graham sent word to Captain McLean that should he wish to retire he (Graham) would relieve the 94th. Captain McLean politely declined.<sup>26</sup> Later in the afternoon of the next day, following General Graham's visit, two naval officers from the HMS Temeraire, joined the garrison to replace some of the wounded artillery officers and, thereby, increasing the accuracy of the remaining guns.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Donaldson. Life. p. 66. For his bravery at Matagorda Captain Maclaine was promoted, without purchase, to Major and assigned to the Royal Irish Fusiliers on 4 October 1810. He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in 1813, Major General in 1841, Lieutenant General in 1851, and General in 1855. He died in London in 1861. He was also appointed Honorary Colonel of the Regiment of the 52nd Foot. Throughout his long service career he was known as the "Hero of Matagorda".

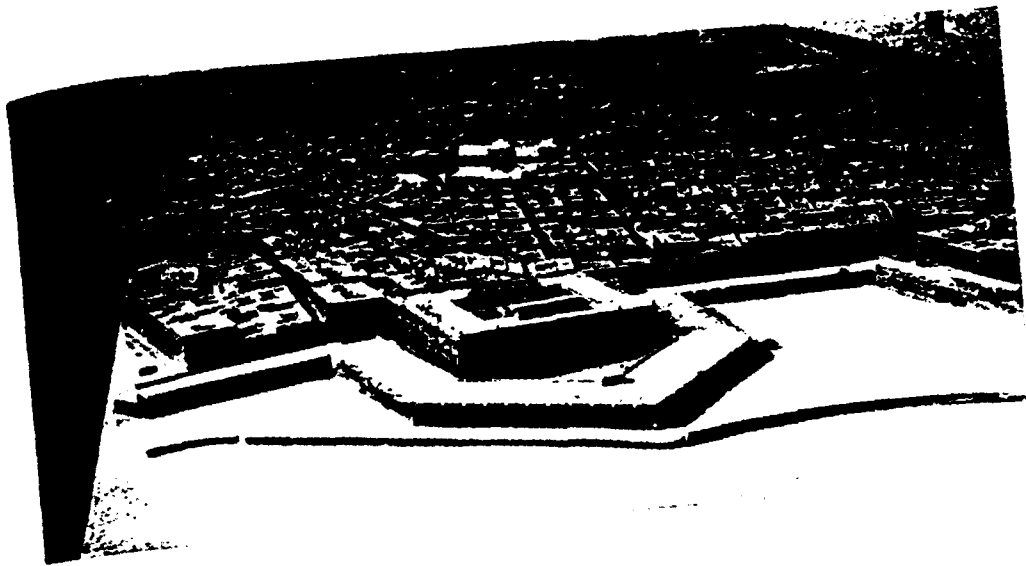
<sup>24</sup> Donaldson, Life, p. 67.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 70.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 64. Lt's Chapman and McPherson of the Royal Navy and Lt. Wright of the Royal Artillery joined the garrison on the 22nd.

SCALE MODEL OF CADIZ'S WALLS  
FIGURE 9: R. Garofano. *La Constitucion Gaditana de 1812.*





At one point in the afternoon the battery at Matagorda ran out of powder. A small crew of soldiers in a British gunboat went in search of additional powder for the guns. They rowed to the nearby fort of Puntales, which lay on the Isla of Leon, due south of their position and well within view of the deadly duel. A Spanish artillery officer refused to give the desperate Englishmen any powder, so the crew returned empty handed and reported empty handed to McLean.<sup>28</sup> A nearby British naval officer, Captain Saunders, offered to retrieve it for the beleaguered battery. He succeeded in gaining the powder from the uncooperative Spanish officer at Puntales and transferred it to the artillerymen at Matagorda aboard his ship the HMS Atlas. Although no details are given on Saunder's conduct, it would be safe to surmise that the threat of force or bodily harm, may have been the venue of persuasion. He also brought reinforcements from the 1st battalion, 87th Artillery.<sup>29</sup>

General Graham was not idle while his artillerymen were fighting so difficult a battle. He labored to organize the British gunboats, which had been driven off earlier, to form a battle line and storm the channel of Trocadero and fire on the French positions in the rear, which were not covered with hostile artillery fires.<sup>30</sup> The Spanish government refused his request.

The firing continued throughout the day on the 21 April 1811. The accuracy of the French guns was remarkable. The standard of the garrison, a Spanish flag, was

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<sup>28</sup> Fraser, Connaught Rangers, p. 163.

<sup>29</sup> Delavoye, Life of Thomas Graham, pp. 334-35.

<sup>30</sup> "From sending British gunboats up the Trocadero channel to take the French batteries in reverse and relieve the pressure on Matagorda." See Fraser, Connaught Rangers, p. 163.

cut down six times by French artillery fire. "We had a flag-staff of the usual size, on which was hoisted the Spanish colours. They cut it across with a cannon ball, it was repaired and again replaced, but was not five minutes up when another shot brought it down again," recalled an observer.<sup>31</sup> During this deadly fire the wife of a soldier, Mrs. Reston, showed repeated bravery in fetching water for the gun crews and aiding wounded men. She, along with two other wives, stayed at Matagorda for the entire defense; they were eventually evacuated to Cadiz along with the rest of the garrison.<sup>32</sup>

Even with the additional powder, the small fort could not hold and was ordered evacuated by Graham on the 22nd. By 10:00 a.m. the British forces cleared Matagorda.<sup>33</sup> The losses for the British were 83 killed or wounded in action.<sup>34</sup> To deny British supplies to the enemy and to reap benefits from the improvements made in its structure, the fort had to be destroyed. Before evacuating the fort, Graham instructed his engineers to destroy the supplies and blow up the site. Captain Lefebre,

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<sup>31</sup> Donaldson, *Life*, p. 80.

<sup>32</sup> Fraser, *Connaught Rangers*, pp. 165-66. Mrs. Reston died in poverty. After her husband's death in 1825, his pension payments were halted and she was reduced to begging. A newspaper drive was started for a relief fund for the "the loyal wife on Matagorda" but little was collected.

<sup>33</sup> "On his return the evacuation of the fort was ordered and a naval officer, Captain Stacpole, was sent with boats from the British squadron to bring off the garrison." See Fraser, *Connaught Rangers*, p. 164.

<sup>34</sup> Delavoye, *Life of Thomas Graham*, p. 334 gives only 8 killed and 14 wounded. Napier, *War in the Peninsula*, II, 338, however, gives a much higher number: a total of 64 either killed or wounded. Both contrast to Fraser who cites, "The defenders casualties at the end of the thirty hours bombardment numbered 83 out of the 147 who had originally formed Captain Maclaine's command. The 94th had had four killed and 28 wounded, and the 2188th party two killed. The Royal Artillery gunners had ten casualties, the Marines twenty, the Navy nineteen." See Fraser, *Connaught Rangers*, p. 164. This author believes Fraser is the most accurate in citing killed and wounded in action.

put in charge of this operation, supervised the placement of explosives and saw to the spiking of the remaining guns. Unfortunately, this officer, through either neglect or enemy fire, was killed when the explosives were prematurely detonated.<sup>35</sup>

The consequences of the Matagorda duel exemplified the difficulty in communicating with both the British and Spanish Navy. The small fort had already been retaken when Graham arrived at Cadiz although the hasty action of the Royal Navy and local authorities had allowed the post to be lost in the first place.<sup>36</sup> The refusal of the Spanish government to permit British gunboats up the narrow Trocadero channel to assault the rear of the French positions was difficult for Graham to accept. General Graham wrote to the Secretary of War,

The defence of Matagorda has been witnessed by everybody with admiration and I should not have been justified in allowing it to be continued so long but from the expectation of the possibility of some diversion being made in its favour, which however was found to be impracticable.<sup>37</sup>

The price for Matagorda had been paid with only British blood and a few damaged British and Spanish ships. To Graham it was an unfortunate loss that was reflected in his dispatches to both Wellington and to the War office.<sup>38</sup>

General Graham issued a special order of the day on 23 April 1810. He offered,

<sup>35</sup> Napier, *War in the Peninsula*, I, 338.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, I, 336. See also Delavoye, *Life of Thomas Graham*, p. 337.

<sup>37</sup> Fraser, *Connaught Rangers*, p. 167.

<sup>38</sup> See P.R.O., W.O., 6/50 and WO 1/1122 for the details of the engagement, the destruction of Matagorda, and the death of Captain Lefebre, Graham's most capable and trustworthy engineer. See Delavoye's, *Life of Thomas Graham*, pp. 334-54. There is detailed information on the Matagorda action, from Graham's own correspondence to the War Office and Wellington.

"his best thanks to everyone of the Matagorda garrison for the steadiness and bravery by which so severe and unequal a contest was so long maintained."<sup>39</sup> He gave special praise to Captain McLean. "The troops having witnessed the gallant defense of the little redoubt of Matagorda against the powerful efforts of the enemy, it is unnecessary to hold up the conduct of Captain McLean of the 94th Regiment as a noble example of fortitude and patience."<sup>40</sup> Following their trying experience at the small fort the men of the 94th Foot returned to Cadiz. "Half naked and blackened with smoke of gunpowder we looked more like chimney sweeps than soldiers."<sup>41</sup> These men returned to the rest of the Regiment who were stationed in the lines on the Isla the following morning.<sup>42</sup> An eyewitness recorded in his journal that after some rest and hot food,

our comrades turned out to receive us, and our hearts thrilled with exultation at the encomiums passed on our bravery. The poor fellows flew with alacrity to procure wine to treat us... Next day we were called out. The Regiment formed squares and the remains of our party were marched into it. We were then addressed by our commanding officer in terms of the highest eulogy and held out to the regiment as a pattern.<sup>43</sup>

The French quickly capitalized on the recapture of Matagorda. Soon a new French battery was in place and began shelling the city on a regular basis. Matagorda

<sup>39</sup> Fraser, *Connaught Rangers*, p. 167.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p. 167.

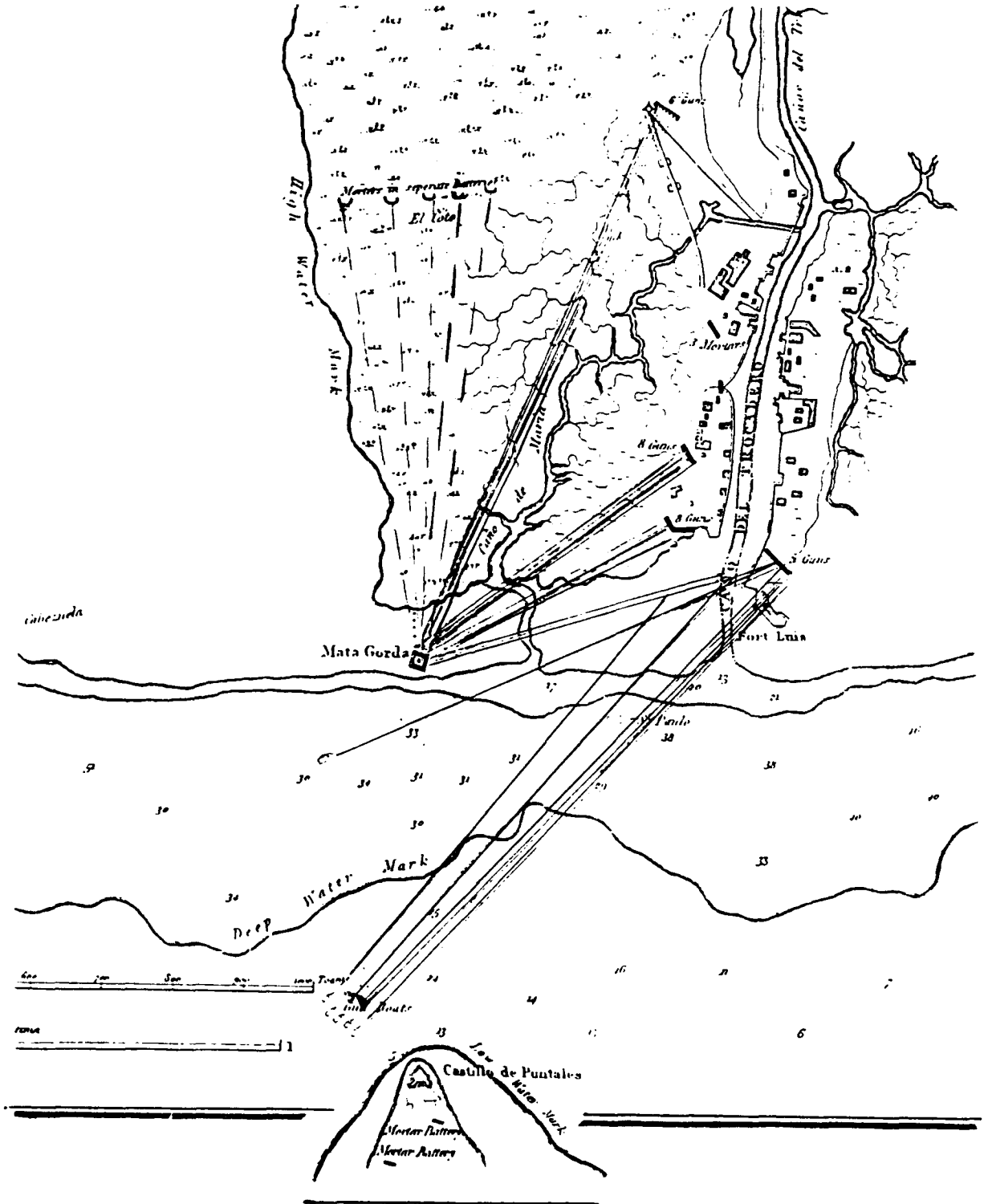
<sup>41</sup> Donaldson, *Life*, p. 72.

<sup>42</sup> The 94th Foot was generally stationed along the marshes of the Santi Petri river, adjacent to the Caracas works, along the left side of the defensive line.

<sup>43</sup> Donaldson, *Life*, p. 73.

MATAGORDA (21 APRIL 1810)

FIGURE 10: Captain George Landman, Sketch. PRO WO 78/5638



became the eventual home of several huge brass mortars which were specially cast, in the captured national cannon foundry in Seville.<sup>44</sup> These mortars allowed the French to fire rounds onto the streets of Cadiz, but generally they had little effect.<sup>45</sup> They caused Graham's artillerymen to answer many of the incoming rounds with a return of fire, for the Spanish population of Cadiz expected a rebuttal to each French "insult."<sup>46</sup>

With Matagorda lost, Graham turned again to making the Isla de Leon impregnable. By May, he would be somewhat better off; instead of dealing with the "Cerberus" of Cadiz<sup>47</sup>, he took his military supply and logistical problems to the new Commander of Cadiz, General Josquin Blake. Although Blake, the son of Irish patriots who had been forced to flee their native Ireland by the British, pledged to assist Graham, he was not overly fond of the English. Matagorda had taught Graham a valuable lesson—that the Royal Navy and the Spanish government made costly mistakes; consequently, it would be up to him to minimize his losses in future

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<sup>44</sup> Hamilton, *Annals*, pp. 62-63. Following the siege these large mortars would be transported to the United Kingdom; one was placed in St. James Park in London as a war trophy.

<sup>45</sup> "...formed entrenched camps in the intervals between them; and at the point of Trocadero established batteries, from whence by means of huge mortars, constructed for the purpose at the cannon foundry of Seville, they succeeded in throwing shells into the city. In this immense line of batteries, extending from Rota to the mouth of the Santi Petri, they had upwards of three hundred pieces of cannon." See Hamilton, *Annals*, p. 327.

<sup>46</sup> Repaying the French insults cost large amounts of precious powder. Graham had to write frequently to the War Office for additional powder for his, and for the Spanish artillery. See P.R.O., F.O., 185/1, Graham to Henry Wellesley, 6 April, 1810.

<sup>47</sup> The "Cerberus of Cadiz" referred to the three main groups in power in the City of Cadiz. The Regency, military Governor, and the local Cadiz Junta. Each had a hand in the ruling of Cadiz and were often at odds with each other. Graham was continually frustrated with each group, preferring to deal with only one man or agency.

missions. He realized he would have to enlist the "good offices" of Henry Wellesley in order to assure the cooperation of the British fleet and especially, its admirals.

## CHAPTER SIX

### JOINT FRUSTRATIONS

The result of the engagement at Matagorda rang throughout the Isla de Leon. The example of the men of the 94th Artillery Regiment gave Graham much justifiable pride. Before the duel, the citizens and some of the Spanish soldiers of the town questioned the fighting ability of the red uniformed soldiers of the English garrison, but the conduct of the British detachment demonstrated the fighting prowess of the smartly dressed British troops, earning considerable respect for Graham and his men.

The fierce action fought by the British (with limited Spanish help) goaded the Spanish into taking the offensive. General Sebastiani had moved into the province of Murica and had taken Malaga. With the town under his control he began to establish a regular system to administrate and control the province.<sup>1</sup> He was interrupted in his attempts at consolidation when previously subdued insurgents just south of the Sierra Morena mountains, began operating on his rear areas, thus threatening his lines of communication with Soult. Along with Sebastiani's difficulties, General Girard, of the V Corps, was battling increased insurgent activity in the mountains south of Ronda. Intercepted correspondence confirmed the difficult position of the two French units.<sup>2</sup> The Regency wanted to dispatch a force to put pressure along the coast near Malaga,

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<sup>1</sup> Fortescue, British Army, VIII, 395.

<sup>2</sup> Delavoye, Graham, p. 379.



to draw the French away from the mountains. Thus, the French Army would have to move from one end of the province to the other, disrupting and exhausting themselves in the process. Graham was asked to send part of his force to take part in the disruptive activities, but he declined.<sup>3</sup> He did support the soundness of the concept and the British fleet agreed to carry the force to Algeciras if required.<sup>4</sup> The Regency, however, abruptly dropped the plans in early May 1810, but Spanish general, Henry Joseph O'Donnell, operating in Catalonia, continued a successful guerrilla war. French forces were repeatedly tied up trying to follow him into the mountains after a raid or other offensive action. The French responded with fast flying columns; and the time "cushion" between the guerrilla strikes and the French reaction grew smaller.<sup>5</sup> The Spanish Government of Cadiz directed, supplied, and partially coordinated the growing guerrilla actions in Spain. The steady flow of British war material continued, the depots grew and the equipment of the island's soldiers was upgraded. Graham remained calm in public with his Spanish contemporaries, but his private correspondence relayed his frustration and anger at Spanish inefficiency and harsh treatment of the soldiers. Since Graham's arrival on 24 March 1810, he had observed several significant joint operations; the successful use of Spanish gunships in support of the Matagorda detachment, the 20th Portuguese line, under British and Portuguese officers, effectively holding the east line of the Santi Petri, and Major Samuel Ford

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 383.

<sup>4</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 185/22, Captain of the HMS Atlas to Henry Wellesley, 16 April 1810.

<sup>5</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/1, Henry Wellesley to Richard Wellesley, 26 April 1810.

Whittingham's scheme to raise a Spanish cavalry unit, using British tactics, equipment, and methods.<sup>6</sup> In a letter to his brother-in-law, newly promoted Major Whittingham wrote:

I still remain in command of the cavalry, and I have every reason to believe that I shall have the honor of introducing a complete new system of tactics for the cavalry of this country. It is incredible the opposition that I have met with, but thanks to the steady friendship of the Duke in the first instance and subsequently of General Castaños, I am in a fair way of conquering all difficulties. Nothing would enable me to do the Spanish cavalry so much good as clothing, arming, and equipping one corps in the English style.<sup>7</sup>

The two allied naval fleets continually planned joint operations and coordinated actions; in early May 1810 Spanish Admiral Ricardo Valdes and British Admiral Purvis discussed possible operations against the growing French small fleet of assault boats in the Trocadero channel.<sup>8</sup>

Graham worked hard to harness all the good will available to make the coalition work. His positive and cooperative leadership and Henry Wellesley's sound statecraft could not radically change the military structure of the Spanish Army or Navy in the short time available. The Spanish line officers cared little for the welfare of the men under their command. A situation comparable to the British system prior to the Duke

<sup>6</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/1, Henry Wellesley to Richard Wellesley, 21 March 1810.

<sup>7</sup> Samuel Ford Whittingham. A Memoir of the Services of Lieutenant-General Sir Samuel Ford Whittingham. Derived chiefly from his own Letter and from those of Distinguished Contemporaries. Edited by Major-General Ferdinand Whittingham. (London, 1868), Whittingham to Michael Davis, p. 128.

<sup>8</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/1, Henry Wellesley to Richard Wellesley, 5 May 1810.

of York's reorganization.<sup>9</sup> Graham was obviously dissatisfied with these inefficient methods of Spanish leadership, the tactical situation continued uninterrupted despite allied difficulties.<sup>10</sup>

Major Hugh Browne, commander of Tarifa garrison and the commander of the 2nd Battalion on the 87th Foot, carefully observed Victor's men. Since the Spanish peasant had successfully hid food and provisions and made confiscation difficult, Victor was forced to send out forage parties to supplement his men's meager diet. These parties were directed to the plains of Chiclana, which was just east of Cadiz. The forty five mile distance between Cadiz and Tarifa, was covered by French forage columns, who easily captured herds of abandoned cattle, driving them to the siege lines for the hungry French troops.<sup>11</sup> Major Browne, without permission, sent some flying columns to interrupt the resupply operations of the French. He met with little success, the French dragoons were well disciplined and drove off the British party.<sup>12</sup> Robert Blakeney, an ensign in the 28th Foot, stationed in Tarifa with Major Browne, took part in a unique joint operation. A British merchantman, taken by a French privateer near Vejer, only some three miles from Tarifa, was still moored in the vicinity. A British midshipman, commanding a gunboat from Gibraltar, asked Browne for some men to help him retake the craft. Blakeney and some forty soldiers of his

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<sup>9</sup> Severn, *A Wellesley Affair*, pp. 170-73.

<sup>10</sup> Oglander, *Freshly Remembered*, p. 216.

<sup>11</sup> Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 339.

<sup>12</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 177/1, Henry Wellesley to Richard Wellesley, 10 May 1810.

light company boarded the gunboat and approached the captured prize.

While some of the sailors and soldiers in turn used every exertion to row, or rather sweep, we kept up as quick a fire as possible with a long twelve-pounder and a twenty-four pounder at the boat from shore. On boarding her, we placed bales of wool or cotton, to cover us from musket fire. Having succeeded in carrying her off, we returned next day to Tarifa, where we landed in triumph from our prize, as she was termed.<sup>13</sup>

The continued instability in the Spanish government was temporarily abated when General Castaños was appointed to head the Regency. Graham and Henry Wellesley pressed him for additional resources and troops to fortify the island. Wellington and Liverpool both wrote Graham, reinforcing the importance of his task and demanding prudence in dealing with the Spanish officials. As Graham's frustrations became well known, a knowledgeable Lord Liverpool wrote to him on 4 July 1810:

The difficulties and delays you have met with in procuring the stores necessary for the construction of the works essential to the defence of the Island of Leon must have been extremely vexatious, and it has afforded His Majesty great pleasure to observe the command of temper and the prudence with which you have conducted yourself and by which you have effected the great object of preserving without interruption a friendly understanding with the Spanish authorities.<sup>14</sup>

The power struggle between the Junta at Cadiz and the Regency continually involved Graham. The growing movements for independence in the New World made the merchants of Cadiz and the Junta anxious and angry. The appeal of the revolutionaries for British aid in exchange for open ports and commercial treaties made

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<sup>13</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy*, pp 137-41.

<sup>14</sup> Oglander, *Freshly Remembered*, pp. 210-11.

Henry Wellesley's position uncomfortable. Compounding the tense atmosphere was the unannounced arrival of the Duke of Orleans on 24 June 1810 to request command of a Spanish army in the field. The Junta, when questioned by the exasperated Henry Wellesley, denied any knowledge of Orlean's petition and admission into Cadiz. Later, the Regency sheepishly admitted to inviting the Duke, but prior to the arrival of strong British support.<sup>15</sup>

Henry Wellesley's desire to have the French prisoners in the rotting prison ships moved to a more secure location was another point of contention in his diplomatic efforts.<sup>16</sup> Earlier in March a severe storm had hit the port and some of the prisoners escaped. On 5 and 6 May 1810 another harsh storm struck Cadiz and the desperate efforts of the French prisoners enabled them to make an escape. The cables were cut on two of the prison hulks while the tide and storm were driving the anchored ships toward Victor's lines near Point St. Mary. In all, some 1,500 "miserable creatures" escaped, a fact which embarrassed the Spanish government sufficiently to produce a change in leadership.<sup>17</sup> The successful French escape did have some positive effects; it strengthened Henry Wellesley's hand and renewed enthusiasm greeted Graham's requests for fortifications.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Severn, A Wellesley Affair, pp. 140-70.

<sup>16</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/1, Henry Wellesley to Richard Wellesley, 30 May 1810.

<sup>17</sup> Napier, War in the Peninsula, II, 339.

<sup>18</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/1, Henry Wellesley to Richard Wellesley, 30 May 1810.



The safety of the island was still in question:

Be assured (but this is entirely *entre nous*) that unless the work at Santi Petri is finished in a proper manner before the French can attack us in force, the island will be lost, and if this unfortunate event should take place, Cadiz must at last fall!<sup>19</sup>

The original offensive plans which the Regency had dropped in early May was to make a diversionary landing in order to help the guerrillas south of the Ronda mountains. This was again introduced. More British soldiers continued to arrive and some 4,000 regular Spanish troops from Murcia landed on 3 June 1810. With the increased number of defenders available to man the island's defenses, the rulers of Cadiz planned to make a landing near Algeciras to support the Ronda irregulars.<sup>20</sup> The Spanish landing force was commanded by General Manuel Lacy. After landing near Tarifa, he ineptly insulted the struggling guerrillas, angered the governor of Gibraltar, and lost a crucial battle to the French General Louis Rey, all within three weeks.<sup>21</sup> On 4 July 1810 he set sail, while under enemy pressure, from Estipona and returned to Cadiz.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Whittingham, *A Memoir*, p. 128. Letter from Major (Major General-Spanish Army) Whittingham to his brother in law, 28 July 1810.

<sup>20</sup> Napier, *War in the Peninsula*, II, 340.

<sup>21</sup> Napier rightfully complains of the misuse or non use of joint British operations to tie up the French in Andalusia. "Here it is fitting to point out the little use made of the naval power, and the misapplication of the military strength of the allies in the southern parts of Spain. It is true that vigilance, temper, good arrangement and favorable localities, are required in the combined operations of a fleet and army; and soldiers disembarking also want time to equip for service. What coast-siege undertaken by the seventh or third corps, could have been successfully prosecuted, if the garrison had been suddenly augmented with fifteen or twenty thousand men from the ocean? After one or two successful descents, the very appearance of a ship of war would have stopped a siege and make the enemy concentrate; where the slight expeditions of this period were generally disconcerted by the presence of a few French companies." See Napier, *War in the Peninsula*, II, 341.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 340-41.

In late July 1810 two companies of the 2nd Battalion of the 95th Rifles arrived and immediately were put into the line. Lieutenant William Surtees, the new provisional quartermaster of the 95th, wrote of his arrival:

We had a favorable passage, and landed at Cadiz on the 29th of that month...consequently, when we arrived, we were amused by seeing immense shells flying from one party to the other, but without doing any serious injury to either, the distance being too great to produce any effect of moment...we remained for the night in the barracks situated in the barrier, on the land-side of the town, and which is remarkably strong...I suffered dreadfully from the myriads of fleas which preyed upon me during the night, and was glad when morning appeared.<sup>23</sup>

Cadiz was becoming more secure, but along with the increase of perceived security came arrogance. Henry Wellesley, hoping to use money as the fulcrum to force a more constructive path for the Regency and Junta, was frustrated in his efforts by several untimely arrivals of South American specie.<sup>24</sup> The sporadic infusions of money allowed the Regency and Junta to work around Wellesley's efforts for military and political reform. Eventually however, the Regency and Junta, under pressure from Wellesley and some of the city's citizens, agreed to assemble a Cortes in August or September of 1810. The Cortes was finally assembled and had its first session on 24 September 1810.<sup>25</sup> The expectations of the populace and of both Wellesley and Graham were short lived; the Regency (led by General Blake) merely voted themselves into the new leadership of the Cortes and again proved less than effective in planing

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<sup>23</sup> Surtees, Twenty-Five Years, pp. 101-02.

<sup>24</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/1, Henry Wellesley to Richard Wellesley, 12 June 1810, 13 June 1810.

<sup>25</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/1, Henry Wellesley to Richard Wellesley, 2 October 1810, 16 October 1810, 24 October 1810. See also Severn, A Wellesley Affair, p. 160.



the city's defense or coordinating the actions of the guerrillas in the province.<sup>26</sup>

While the Cortes met and discussed its role in the new government of Spain, Marshal Victor was not idle. He continually inspected his soldiers, and set up an effective and very timely telegraph system. When a British ship was seen to be entering or leaving the harbor, his "coast watchers" sent signals to his headquarters midway between Chiclana and Puerto Real. An accurate count of allied naval strength was always available to the French.<sup>27</sup> The giant brass siege mortars were emplaced in Matagorda and began to shell the city. Graham was forced to demonstrate to the locals that the destruction caused by the mortars of Matagorda would have little effect on Cadiz.

The first trial, an empty shell was put in, with not less than thirty-two pounds of powder in the chamber. On firing it, the shell flew all to atoms, from the violent shock occasioned by so great a quantity of powder; and the shell being too weak for that description of mortar, another was tried filled with sand, to give it more weight and solidity; this answered the purpose, for it fell on the land on the opposite coast, but still, from the great range, much uncertainty must naturally attend the practice,...the French thus showing us that they were better able to play at long bowls than we were.<sup>28</sup>

The continual firing of the two combatants used large amounts of precious powder. Graham was forced to write to London numerous times to request additional powder. The Spanish artillery units, unable to gain resupply from the Junta or

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<sup>26</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/1, Henry Wellesley to Richard Wellesley, 24 October 1810. See also Severn, A Wellesley Affair, p. 161.

<sup>27</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/402, Leguete to Victor, 7 March 1811; Grabes (siege commandant) to Victor, undated captured document in French.

<sup>28</sup> Surtees, Twenty-Five Years, p. 107.

Regency went to British units and took powder from them. Major William Duncan, the senior British Artillery officer in Cadiz, wrote to Major General Andrew MacLeod on 5 July 1810:

I mentioned to you in my last letter my fears respecting a want of gunpowder; and which since no supply has arrived for the Spanish. In so much, so that they have made severe demands on our stock; and not content with receiving by order of General Graham 2,500 barrels, they have taken from these Magazines (where a great part of our powder was lodged) no less than 1,200 more, without any requisition.<sup>29</sup>

The Spanish battery at the Puntales, directly south some 1,100 yards from the French occupied fort of Matagorda, suffered a tremendous bombardment from the enemy's fire. Their need for additional powder was quite real. Surtees relates;

On one occasion I happened to be looking out from a high tower near Isla, and I happened to be looking towards the point of Trocadero, in a moment the smoke rose from at least 100 pieces of artillery, fired by signal, and the noise they made was tremendous. Our poor little fort of Puntales appeared almost enveloped in the dust raised by the striking of the shot, and the smoke from them which fell about it, and seemed as if almost deprived of power by so sudden and unexpected a salute; but she began at length to return the complement, although feebly in comparison of the tremendous volleys she had received.<sup>30</sup>

Artillery exchanges were commonplace, "this and such like were of frequent occurrence, scarcely a day passing without something interesting taking place".<sup>31</sup>

Cadiz was rapidly becoming the "cannon capital" with the largest concentration of artillery in all of the Peninsula. The French had 472 pieces trained on the Isla and

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<sup>29</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 185/18, Duncan to MacLeod, 5 July 1810.

<sup>30</sup> Surtees, *Twenty-Five Years*, p. 106.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

the city. The British had almost 150 guns, and the Spanish offered more if needed.<sup>32</sup> Cadiz had been the home of the Spanish Royal Artillery School for over 200 years and had as a result, a large number of cannon for school use and for swapping out guns on the ships going to the colonies.<sup>33</sup> The number of guns available to the Spanish government was phenomenal: in Cadiz alone there were 731 cannon, all above 6 pound in size.<sup>34</sup> Victor wisely demanded all available cannon from Soult to counteract the dominant allied firepower.<sup>35</sup>

The British War Office, also concerned with allied power at Cadiz, decided to

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<sup>32</sup> The following batteries of British Royal Artillery were stationed on the Isla de Leon or in Cadiz up until December 1811: 8/5th Battalion, Commanded by H. Owen; 6/9th Battalion, Commanded by P.J. Huges; 6/10th Battalion, Commanded by W. Roberts; 4/10th Battalion, Commanded by A. Dickson (his 2IC at Cadiz was R. Birch, Dickson was with Wellington in Lisbon); 5/10th Battalion, Commanded by W. H. Shenley. The above information was extracted from Collingwood Dickson's The Dickson Manuscripts Being Diaries, Letters, Maps, Account Books, with Various Other Papers of the late MG Sir Alexander Dickson, Royal Artillery. (Woolwich, United Kingdom, 1908), p. 538.

<sup>33</sup> For a detailed examination of the use of Artillery in Cadiz and its role in Cadiz's defense see Vicente Perez's, La Artilleria Espanola En el Sitio De Cadiz, (Cadiz, 1978).

<sup>34</sup> Perez, La Artilleria, pp. 313-34.

<sup>35</sup> The following is extracted from Perez's, La Artilleria, pp. 348-49. "The report of the French shells falling into Cadiz between 1810 and 24 August 1812, and where:

|                                |            |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Barrio de Candelaria .....     | 65         |
| " de Santa Cruz .....          | 25         |
| " de San Carlos .....          | 36         |
| " de San Antonio .....         | 06         |
| " de La Cuna .....             | 19         |
| " de San Felipe .....          | 02         |
| " de Capuchinos .....          | 05         |
| " de Santiago (Catedral) ..... | 34         |
| " de Pilar .....               | 01         |
| " de Nuevo Mundo .....         | 01         |
| " de Santa Maria .....         | 60         |
| " de Ave Maria .....           | 153        |
| " de San Roque .....           | 65         |
| <b>TOTAL SHELLS .....</b>      | <b>472</b> |

introduce the Congreve Rocket to the British force. Sir William Congreve, working for the Ordnance Board, found the challenge of arming Cadiz a particular delight. He wrote to the War Office on 2 May 1810:

For the equipment of the Rockets and of the ten Marine Howitzers for Cadiz, I beg leave to take the following arrangement will be necessary.

1. That a requisition be made for the Secretary of State's office to the Board of Ordnance to authorize Mr. Congreve to prepare an equipment of 2000 Rockets on board the Ceries Transport, now lying off Woolrich and occupied in the Rocket service-with such apparatus and such artificers as may be required.
2. That a similar requisition be made to the Admiralty that orders may be given for three officers and thirty men of the Marine Artillery to attend at Woolwich in readying to embark with an equipment of Rockets, and marine mortars for Cadiz.<sup>36</sup>

By the end of August 1810 the marine rocket force took part in a preemptive raid on the growing French assault squadron which was under construction in the Trocadero channel.<sup>37</sup> Surtees, an observer near the Puntales, recounted the attack:

Our folks took gunboats and boats with rockets, the intention being to set fire to the enemy's craft. They reached the place where the French craft were lying, and fired a considerable number of rockets, but without being able to effect anything farther than burning one boat.<sup>38</sup>

The small raid delayed French naval construction, but a number of French marines and naval engineers who arrived later in September confirmed Graham's fears of a seaborne assault across the narrow Santi Petri.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/1120, W. Congreve to LTC Bungurey, 2 May 1810.

<sup>37</sup> "The French, intent upon completing their lines and constructing flotillas at Chiclana, Santa Maria, and San Lucar de Barmeda, made no attacks". See Napier, War in the Peninsula, II, 341-42.

<sup>38</sup> Surtees, Twenty-Five Years, p. 107.

<sup>39</sup> Oglander, Freshly Remembered, pp. 215-16.

Additional English royal marine gunners arrived for gunboat and sea mortar duty in the harbor. The bay was crowded but the efforts of Admiral Richard Keats made the harbor patrol's duty less difficult by limiting the number of vessels in the bay. Congreve pushed for a greater role for the marine gunners; his newly designed "deep mouth" mortars would give the allies more accurate, high angle, indirect fire.<sup>40</sup>

Graham met almost daily with Henry Wellesley, General Blake, and his major subordinate commanders. He understood that inter-cooperation was crucial; if he were to maximize his combat power to defeat the experienced French I Corps, then all parties would have to understand and know each other.<sup>41</sup> Graham's role was not only that of Corp commander and siege commandant; indirectly, he was also the task force commander for the Royal Navy Squadron under the command of Admiral Richard Keats. In a letter dated 12 July 1810 from the Admiralty to the new Cadiz Fleet commander Keats, Richard Croaker instructed Keats to assist Graham:

You are to cooperate cordially and confidentially with the General in the command of the British troops at Cadiz, as well for the surveyance of the enemy as for the assistance of his majesty's Allies in the defense of the place; and you are to be prepared to give any possible assistance to Lord Wellington in the event of his Lordship's finding it expedient to proceed from Lisbon with the army under his command.<sup>42</sup>

Graham's new chief engineer, Captain George Landmann, coordinated the fortification

<sup>40</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/1120, from Congreve to the Duke of York, 14 September 1810.

<sup>41</sup> "Graham was a firm believer in the value of dinner-parties for promoting cordial relations between Army and Navy, British and Spanish officers and diplomats. In this he was to a large degree successful, but the cost was more than his private purse could bear, and he was obliged to apply to Lord Liverpool for a special table allowance." See Ibanez Blasco, General Graham, 1748-1844, (London, 1959), p. 194.

<sup>42</sup> P.R.O., Adm. 2/1370, Crocker to Keats, 12 July 1810.

works, and defenses. Thus, Graham was the proponent for the joint and combined plan of the defense.

At the end of September 1810 Wellington won the important battle of Bussaco in Portugal. Instead of advancing to meet Masséna in the open, he wisely withdrew behind the lines of Torres Vedras and waited while the French slowly starved in front of his army. About a month later Masséna pulled back to Santarem, thirty miles in the rear, to wait out the worst of the winter. Graham in Cadiz had to caution Blake not to launch any attacks against Masséna's rear prematurely. Graham felt any attempts to breakout of Cadiz and launch a major campaign into Portugal would have little chance of success. If however, a sizeable portion of Victor's corps departed the area to reinforce Masséna, then a seaborne assault on the rear of Victor's lines might just raise the siege and allow the Spanish regulars in Andalusia to link up with the guerrillas of the Sierra Morena. Such a plan, with the proper naval support, would have a greater chance of success.

The conditions for such an attack came in the spring of 1811. Barossa would be the test case for a joint command and it would have a significant impact on both sides.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### BAROSSA

The Battle of Barossa, planned and conducted as a deliberate attack against elements of Victor's Corps, would allow the British and Spanish Joint command to finally exercise offensive initiative against their mutual enemy. However, the intended results would not be as fruitful as the allies had hoped; indeed, with the exception of dead French soldiers and a captured Eagle, the battle did little to relieve pressure on Cadiz.<sup>1</sup>

For General Graham and the officers and men of his command, waiting for the French to attack across the narrow Santi Petri River became increasing tedious. The works along the island had been vastly improved so the French would have a difficult time reaching the city of Cadiz, should they make a successful crossing and secure a beachhead. The allied artillery batteries enjoyed cross-fire throughout the island and the gun crews fired routinely. The pickets on night duty, along with Spanish irregulars, patrolled the dark shores of the Isla of Leon hunting for French infiltrators. Except for a regular exchange of artillery fire and occasional Spanish "bandits" taking French sentry lives and ears, the siege itself had settled down to a monotonous wait for both sides.

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<sup>1</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 6/44, #64, Wellington to Graham, 30 March 1811; P.R.O., W.O., 1/252, #185, Graham to Liverpool, 25 March 1811; #177, Graham to Liverpool, 20 March 1811; #217, troop strength manifest sent to the War Office, 25 March 1811.

The enemy, as mentioned before, had their sentries at some parts pretty far into the center of this marsh, and there were some fellows, in the Spanish service, called by the name of "creepers", they obtaining their livelihood by killing sea-fowl and other animals in this marsh; and so dexterous were they at this creeping, that they could steal upon the birds unperceived, which enabled them to get them with ease. Sometimes a fellow of this calling would set off on a creeping excursion, and instead of bagging a wild-duck, or some other such bird, would plunge his stiletto into the heart of an unsuspecting French sentry, and leave him weltering in his gore; this inhuman act, of course, was perpetrated in the dark.<sup>2</sup>

The Spanish politicians had campaigned extensively to send expeditions out of the city on ill conceived sorties against Victor's forces. General Graham was not convinced of the ability of the Spanish troops to implement such an operation and he was even less certain of the tactical validity of these plans.<sup>3</sup> Since the British had occupied Cadiz for almost a year, the island was secure and the inhabitants of Cadiz were safe.

We might defy the power of France to expel us from hence if all were done that might be done...but we have only British troops at work on this important position, and our numbers will not permit the progress which the exigency of affairs requires... We have in our respected General Graham a confidence which is daily on the increase. He has a mind and a temper well adapted to encounter difficulties which less favoured dispositions could not bear. We may possibly retain our ground. If we do, although our success may have none of the brilliance of victory, yet his merits, who, by patience, prudence, and self-possession, shall have kept all quiet within our lines, preserved tolerable harmony, and kept an enterprising enemy off with very

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<sup>2</sup> Surtees, *Twenty-Five Years*, pp. 103-04.

<sup>3</sup> "Graham regarded the proposal as unsound, and even dangerous. But in his anxiety to maintain cordial relations with Spanish Headquarters, he unadvisedly agreed to it. Later, when reporting this to Wellington, he admitted disliking the scheme. The Spanish troops, he felt, were incapable of a successful attack on Victor's army in position. On the other hand, a refusal to co-operate might blunt his present excellent relations with Blake." See Oglander, *Freshly Remembered*, p. 212.



inadequate means, should be rewarded by his country's good opinion, although none by those who have witnessed them can fully estimate the value of his exertions.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the stalemate was exactly what Graham detested, a non decisive action which only expended British time, troops, material, and specie. If an opportunity to strike at the rear of Marshal Victor's Corps could be found, then the siege might be raised and the French would be forced to retire from Andalusia.<sup>5</sup> If not, then continued stalemate seemed the only other option. Graham's troops could be put to better use by the hard-pressed Wellington, who was facing the capable Marshal André Masséna in Portugal.<sup>6</sup> If the siege of Cadiz could be raised, then this allied victory would be a tremendous propaganda boon for both the Spanish revolutionary government and Great Britain. However, the loss of Cadiz and the British forces holding it, weighed against a successful sortie to destroy the siege, was a balanced risk well known to the War Office. General Graham was uncomfortable with the Spanish schemes and recommendations for the sortie. A letter from the British Cabinet provided him with an "honorable way out, with out losing face" should Graham judge Spanish plans too impractical for execution.

Your despatches have been received and laid before the King. His Majesty has observed with peculiar regret...the fatal effects which have been proved by experience to result from hazardous and ill-concerted attacks of the Spanish armies upon the forces of the enemy...The object of His Majesty in sending a force to

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 209. Letter from Captain Birch, Royal Engineers, who with Captain George Landman, replaced Major Lefebre; who had been killed in action, during the destruction of Matagorda. Undated.

<sup>5</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/252, #41, Graham to the War Office, 10 February 1811.

<sup>6</sup> For the French perspective of this crucial campaign see: Pelet's, The French Campaign.

Cadiz was the security of that city and the Isla of Leon. If the situation... should render an attack upon the enemy advisable, the advantages might be of such a nature that it would not be right that you should decline affording the assistance of the force under your command for such an expedition. But you will consider yourself possessed of discretion to abstain from co-operation in any offensive operation which may appear to you to be unnecessary or inexpedient, and you are fully at liberty to make use of the authority of His Majesty's Government in this respect...<sup>7</sup>

By early January of 1811, after a short holiday season, characterized by inactivity between the two forces, the tactical and strategic situation became fluid once again. Marshal Victor was ordered to send a sizeable detachment for service into Portugal to aid the unsuccessful Masséna in his operations against Wellington. The ability of the British to use the information gleaned from the peasants of Andalusia, greatly assisted Graham and Wellington in forming effective counter strategy.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the British had enjoyed an effective spy network in Spain for most of the war.<sup>9</sup>

General Joachim Blake, now a member of the new Regency Council in Cadiz, put forward a plan for an assault against the French. After the allies debated several plans, it was decided that an Anglo-Spanish force, under Graham, should attack the French near the town of Chiclana. One unit would cross the Santi Petri by a pontoon bridge and establish a beachhead, while another, making a beach landing several miles

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<sup>7</sup> Liverpool to General Graham, 12 July, 1810. See also Oglander, *Freshly Remembered*, pp. 212-13.

<sup>8</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/1124, #431, British Spy (unnamed) to Lord Liverpool, 23 February 1811.

<sup>9</sup> P.R.O., F.O., 185/18, #4, Richard Wellesley to Henry, 20 January 1810.

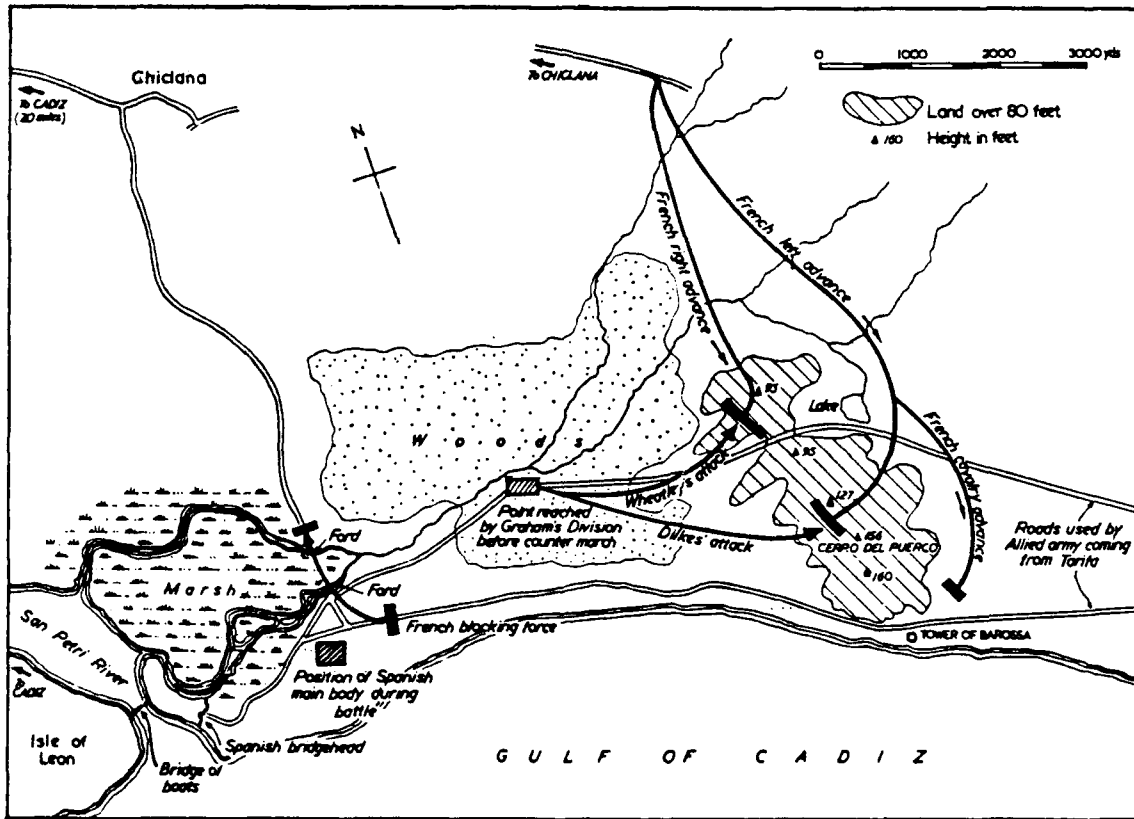
to the south, would attack the French from the rear.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Oglander, *Freshly Remembered*, p. 217.

Barossa BATTLE MAP (MARCH 1811)

FIGURE 12: R. Cannon. 87th Foot. Historical Records.



After much debate and discussion, the allies agreed to launch the attack as proposed. If conditions changed, the commander on the scene could modify the plan accordingly. After some additional discussion the new Spanish government chose to modify a principle feature of the plan; the commander in charge. The Spanish proposed to deploy 9,000 troops for the assault, supported by only 5,000 British troops. With a ratio of almost two to one, the Spanish wanted General LaPeña to be the overall commander.<sup>11</sup> General LaPeña's conduct in battle had already been observed by Graham at the Battle of Tudela when LaPeña withdrew his forces and returned to safety, leaving the British to face the French alone.<sup>12</sup>

General Graham must have had his doubts about LaPeña's leadership and military ability; however, with his 5,000 troops providing stability and his position as second in command, the campaign still had a good chance of success. If LaPeña attacked alone, he would probably be defeated; such a loss would be a disaster for the new government. A loss of large numbers of troops, even Spanish troops, from the city's walls would jeopardize Cadiz. Graham acquiesced to the plan and promised full cooperation.<sup>13</sup> He also ensured good relations with the Spanish; however, if the British forces refused to support the offensive, and the Spanish Army under LaPeña was destroyed, then the cry of "perfidious Albion" would again arise, but with some

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<sup>11</sup> General LaPeña had an unflattering nickname in Cadiz, "La Dona Manuella".

<sup>12</sup> Oman, Peninsular War, I, 442.

<sup>13</sup> "If was left to my choice, to go or to stay; at the same time the advantage of the example of British troops was mentioned. I did not hesitate to determine to go, as otherwise it might have been considered as peevish objection arising from the command having been withdrawn from me." See Oglander, Freshly Remembered, p. 218.

tangible rationale. Graham, perhaps having a soldiers' premonition, wrote his friend, Lady Asgill, and told her of his devotion and reasons for going on the dangerous operation.<sup>14</sup>

The joint task force, under the overall command of General Thomás LaPeña, left Cadiz on 21 February under a stiff breeze. The British troops were the first aboard the ships, but they had to remain in the harbor until the entire British force was ready to embark. The seas grew rougher, with heavy rain blowing horizontally across the rough seas. General LaPeña was overheard to speak about the discomfort of his seasick soldiers, "No importa, Son bien acostumbrados a padecer."<sup>15</sup> The seas were so rough that the British contingent of the expedition had to sail past Tarifa, the original point of debarkation, and travel some additional thirty miles around Gibraltar to the bay of Algerciras. This bay, on the Mediterranean side of the Peninsula, was much calmer than the stormy Atlantic side. The allies began to disembark the soldiers and horses in the morning of 23 February. It took all day to unload the troops, and the soldiers spent the evening outside the walls of Algerciras and cooked their rations. The British

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<sup>14</sup> After Graham's wife died, he took up correspondence with several ladies in his native Scotland and in London. After 1809 he wrote mainly to Lady Jane Asgill, a Scottish widow. He wrote often with his letters being very personal and loving. Unfortunately for both, she died before Graham returned from the peninsula. Graham to Lady Asgill, 20 February 1811. "I go because I was determined there should be no handle for it being said: 'Since he is not in command, he will not assist.' We shall give an honest assistance; and I trust that whatever may be the result, I shall be considered as acting on the principle I have ever professed -an anxious wish to be useful without any selfish view or personal ambition actuating me. Remember what I have said in the first paragraph is the truth. God bless you ever. Addio." See Oglander, *Freshly Remembered*, p. 220.

<sup>15</sup> "No matter, They are used to suffering." See Anthony-Brett James, *Life in Wellington's Army*, (London, 1972), p. 202.

force numbered approximately 4,500 men.<sup>16</sup> General Graham, while the debarkation/landing took place, sailed across the bay to Gibraltar where he met and dined with the governor, General Colin Campbell.<sup>17</sup> The next morning, after enduring a rain filled night with no tentage, the allied infantry began to move toward Tarifa, to link up with the artillery and cavalry. With cold and rainy weather the march was both tiring and difficult.<sup>18</sup> Graham's force was joined by the 28th Foot at Tarifa, which had for months, fought off French skirmishers and light cavalry. Unknown to Graham, the second convoy of troops from Cadiz, the Spanish contingent, had remained in the Cadiz harbor because of harsh winds with the heavy weather which had made his landing at Tarifa impracticable.<sup>19</sup> This weather delayed the Spanish two additional days. Their passage had not been easy; "Delayed by contrary winds, exhausted by the conditions to which they had been subjected, they were obliged final discomfort and foretaste of worse to come; to wade ashore because most of their boats could not come close in."<sup>20</sup> The British soldiers were entertained

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<sup>16</sup> Surtees, Twenty-Five Years, p. 110. "Our force consisted of a brigade of artillery, with ten guns; two battalions of Foot Guards; the 28th, 67th, and 87th Regiments; a battalion composed of flank companies from Gibraltar; two companies of the 47th Regiment, and two of the 20th Portuguese, with six companies of our corps [95th Rifles] sic. and one squadron of cavalry, -in all about 4,500 men." Glover gives an exact number of Portuguese troops, 332. See also Glover, The Peninsular War, p. 123., and Oglander, Freshly Remembered, p. 220.

<sup>17</sup> Oglander, Freshly Remembered, p. 220.

<sup>18</sup> A member of the British landing party made this remark: "On arrival at Tarifa that evening, the weather was cold as ice with blinding sheets of rain; there was further difficulty over supplies; and the soaked troops spent another uncomfortable night in the open." See Oglander, Freshly Remembered, p. 221.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> James, Wellington's Army, p. 202.

by the local populace, one that was heavily influenced by Moorish culture.<sup>21</sup> The mixed force rested in continual rain and stiff breezes. The following day the allied army began a march toward the west. They reached Casas Viejas by the next evening. The fresh water lake of Blanco Medina, a shallow body of water which was in a central plain, lay in the march path of the task force. The lead elements, commanded by Spanish General Francisco Lardizabal, halted just before the lake and rolled up pant legs, removed boots, and then attempted to cross the lake. The slowness of the operation was difficult for Graham to bear. The longer the force took to make the rear of Victor's lines, the more time Marshal Victor would have to gain intelligence on the approaching force. Graham sent word up to LaPeña that he was taking the lead British elements through the lake. He led the force and soon the lead battalion of the 95th Rifles was across.

My Battalion lead the van, and were ordered to march straight through it with out any picking of steps, and to go forward in regular sections, one man supporting another. They went in a marched right through it, as if it had been plain ground, the water taking them generally about mid-deep. The rest of the British Army followed, and were all through in less than half an hour; a one-horse cart, indeed, stuck fast in the middle of it, from the wheels having got entangled between the large stones at the bottom. General Graham seeing this, instantly dismounted, and plunging in, set his shoulder to the wheel, and fairly lifted it clear of the obstruction.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> "Colonel Brown of the 28th, who was then a most wild and eccentric character, could not relish this hiding of their beauty by the modest dames of Tarifa. All, therefore, that he met in the streets he stopped, and made them open the mantilla, that he might have a fair peep at them, to the great scandal of the good ladies of this still moorish town." See Surtees, *Twenty-Five Years*, p. 110-11. For more information on this eccentric officer see Digby Grist's, "El Comandante Loco-A Peninsular Original" *The Army Quarterly and Defense Journal*. (London, October, 1978), pp. 444-50.

<sup>22</sup> Surtees, *Twenty-Five Years*, pp. 111-12.



The Spanish were shamed into greater action and by nightfall the Army was across the lake.<sup>23</sup> A British officer reported that, "the Spaniards were going into the water one at a time, -here one, another one,-while the creatures of officers were making the men carry them on their backs." The force moved westward again and reached the small village of Veger, which sat on a high hill, overlooking Cape Trafalgar. The men spent the night in an olive grove, with little fire wood available to cook rations and dry their wet uniforms. Unfortunately, it turned colder and the soldiers suffered the effects of the unhealthy mixture of wet clothes and cold weather. The army remained at Veger the next day to rest. That evening the force again began its march toward Cadiz. Graham recalls the march and the following day.

After a night march of sixteen hours from the camp near Veger, we arrived on the morning of the 5th on the low ridge of Barossa, about four miles from the Santi Petri River.<sup>24</sup>

While the allies were moving onto the Chiclana Heights, overlooked by the hill of Barossa, the remainder of the Isla based force prepared to conduct its supporting operations. The Spanish commander of the Isla, General Jorge Zayas, had received a letter of instruction from the overall commander, LaPeña, before the allie's departure on the expedition. In conjunction with the allied approach, the Cadiz garrison was expected to throw a pontoon bridge across the Santi Petri, and attack the French on the edge of the pine forest. Thus, the French forces would be hit on both sides, and if the allies met failure, the pontoon bridge would give the force an escape route back

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 112.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 113.

on to the Isla de Leon. The plan made good tactical sense. However, it depended on timing, coordination, and execution by two separate forces. The loss of time, due to poor Spanish guides and the bad weather, made the plan impracticable. LaPeña, to his credit, wrote to Zayas on 27 February and informed him of his intention to arrive near the Isla De Leon on 3 March.<sup>25</sup> However, the delays and lost time made the proposed schedule invalid.

General Zayas, acting on his last written instructions, bridged the Santi Petri on the night of 3 March. On the morning of 4 March when no British or Spanish troops appeared, the bridge formed a defensive liability. "The enemy, taking advantage of this delay, attacked the bridge on the night of the 4th with their piquets and small detachments; they killed or wounded many Spaniards, took three hundred prisoners and cut the bridge."<sup>26</sup> The bridge would have been seized by the French troops, but a British battery of ten inch howitzers, commanded by Captain A. Hunt of the Royal Artillery, supported a counterattack by Spanish infantry and prevented the French from seizing the bridge.

The allies were very fortunate that the French failed to coordinate their efforts.

Blakeney, an eyewitness observed:

But if Marshal Victor had been more active, and had marched down six or eight thousand men during the 4th and screened them behind Bermeja Castle until night, and then made his attack with such a force, instead of with some six or seven hundred, there is not the slightest doubt but that he would have taken the Isla, and then either defended or destroyed the bridge. Under

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<sup>25</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy*, p. 181.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p. 181.

such circumstances the allied army would have been compelled to retire to Gibraltar to avoid Sebastiani, who, upon learning that Victor was in possession of the Isla, would of course have come forward with an overwhelming force.<sup>27</sup>

Had Victor taken proper advantage of this new bridge to the Isla, the city might have fallen. Early in the morning on the 5th, LaPeña ordered General Lardizabal to go to the bridge point and establish communication with the garrison command. General Zayas's soldiers on the Isla did not see the allied soldiers until they burst from the forest, only some 900 meters from the bridge.<sup>28</sup> Without firing a shot, General Lardizabal's men<sup>29</sup> attacked and scattered a French force and reestablished contact with the force under Zayas. "On this occasion Lardizabal acted gallantly," a British observer recalled, "Having beaten away a strong force of enemy from the Santi Petri point, he established communication with Zayas, thus enabling him with three thousand Spanish troops and an immense park of artillery to pass from the Isla over the bridge."<sup>30</sup> Concurrently, the allies moved toward Chiclana and, inevitably, the French.

General Graham and General LaPeña met and discussed various aspects of the terrain. The discussion soon turned heated with Graham refusing to obey LaPeña's

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 181.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 182.

<sup>29</sup> The Allied forces on the Isla de Leon had worked out a system of signals to communicate to each other. During the day a series of flags, riders, and cannon shot could relay quickly to the main garrison in the city proper, if the French were attempting a crossing or some other offensive operation against the Isla. At night, different colored rockets, red for the British and green and blue for the Spanish, served the purpose.

<sup>30</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy*, p. 182.

order to post his soldiers near the Isla bridge to maintain communication with the garrison. Graham wanted to gain the important height of the Barossa Hill which was the dominant terrain feature. "Like an experienced soldier, [Graham] pointed out to LaPeña all the advantages which the ground offered, insisting on the absolute necessity of occupying the ridge of Barossa with the strongest force, it being the key of the whole ground."<sup>31</sup> Finally Graham was able to induce LaPeña to "post on the heights of Barossa, a Spanish force at least equal to that commanded by the British General."<sup>32</sup> Following this discussion Graham joined his command but not before posting LTC John Frederick Browne with his battalion to the western edge of Barossa Hill.<sup>33</sup> These troops were then joined by two Spanish units, the Walloon and Ciudad Real Regiments. Later, three other Spanish battalions joined them, supported by four guns.<sup>34</sup> Graham and the rest of the British contingent moved towards their designated objective and went through the pine forest toward Bermeja. At the same time the French were moving along the coast road, attempting to flank the advancing British. Marshal Victor, a capable and courageous officer,<sup>35</sup> was not completely unaware of allied objectives and methods. Victor understood that they were attempting a double envelopment of his forces. The boat bridge on the Santi Petri and the intelligence he

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 183.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> "The dominating position of Barossa Hill makes it necessarily the key of the isthmus." See Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 47.

<sup>34</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy*, p. 183.

<sup>35</sup> Le Beau Soleil, or happy sun, for his cheerful and optimistic disposition, was promoted to Marshal on 13 July, 1807, and titled Duc de Bellune on 18 September 1808.

had received<sup>36</sup> gave him the necessary intelligence to develop a counter plan. Victor had his 3rd Division destroy the boat bridge to halt the Spanish troops from crossing. He ordered General Eugene Casimir Villatte's division to move along the coastal road and establish positions on the narrow isthmus where the Santi Petri's creek system was wider, to block the allied advance. With the two remaining division of Generals' Anne Gilbert Leval and Francois Amasle Ruffin, he then moved toward Chiclana to implement his plan. Thus, the "city threat" would be neutralized, and the remaining French troops at the siege site, in an application of economy of force, would pin down the city elements while giving Victor the largest concentration of troops for the upcoming battle. Villatte was expected to delay the advance of the allies. If successful, the remainder of Victor's forces would flank and then destroy the allies. If General Zayas attempted to regain the bridge, then Villatte could disengage while Leval and Ruffin attacked the allied flank. He could then wheel around and once again prevent a Spanish beachhead.<sup>37</sup> The French continued to move toward the approaching British and Spanish force.

The advance guard of the Spanish cavalry, under General Samuel Whittingham, rode up the hill of "Boars Head"<sup>38</sup> and failed to encounter any French. However, they did spot some enemy to the west on a ridge approximately a mile and a half from

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<sup>36</sup> Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 46.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p. 46.

<sup>38</sup> Named after the large number of wild pigs found on its slopes and vicinity. The British named it Barossa hill since it stands near the ruined watch house called the Vigia de la Barossa. The proper Spanish name for this prominent hill is the Cerro De Puerco. As a result of this battle, the British refer to the action as the Battle of Barossa, the Spanish call it the Battle of Chiclana.

the Santi Petri river.<sup>39</sup> This force confronted the division of Villatte. LaPeña ordered the allied forces toward the French and sent word to Graham to send a security screen of German Hussars<sup>40</sup> up toward the high ground to the north to watch the Chiclana plain while he engaged the blocking French.<sup>41</sup> Graham did so while the Spanish Force advanced upon the French. The Spanish advance guards, under General Lardizabal, attacked the hastily dug in French. After a short time the two forces, almost in strength, were at a stalemate, but, with Villatte still holding the defensive position. LaPeña then threw several battalions of the second division under General Anglona against Villatte's troops, putting severe pressure on the French. Concurrently, the Spanish on the Isla de Leon, hearing the firing and noise, repaired the pontoon bridge, rushed across, punched through the lightly defended siege line, and threatened the rear of Villatte's division. General Zayas' timely display of initiative, allowed the allies to close the developing gap and put extreme pressure on Villatte. Recognizing the superior positions of the two forces moving against him, Villatte withdrew to the north.<sup>42</sup>

The first phase of the intended plan had worked, not according to schedule, but its outcome was what had been desired. The Spanish now held the initiative; they had

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<sup>39</sup> Thus placing them about one mile from the allies.

<sup>40</sup> 2nd Battalion, Kings German Legion, commanded by Major Von Der Busche.

<sup>41</sup> Sir William F. Napier, English Battles and Sieges in the Peninsula and South of France. (London, 1854), p. 76.

<sup>42</sup> Fortescue, British Army, VIII, 48. "with General Zayas providentially marching south from his reconstructed bridgehead, Villatte quitted his position and retired by a ford to the far side of the Almanza Creek." See Oglander, Freshly Remembered, p. 223.

united with the forces of the Isla, thereby gaining an additional 3,000 troops and several guns. The French division of Villatte, driven from its defensive position, was isolated from the remainder of Victor's force. Additionally, Villatte was unable to see the heights of Chiclana, and thus, unable to influence the upcoming battle. The allied situation seemed to hold all the advantages. However, the inaction of LaPeña, and the skill of Marshal Victor, would soon change this favorable situation. LaPeña did not want to jeopardize his initial success with a possible French reversal. He wanted Graham to advance upon Bermeja, and probably, on to the Isla. Graham protested, and demanded that the allies hold the Barossa Hill with infantry, in order to deny its advantages to the French. LaPeña reluctantly agreed.<sup>43</sup> LaPeña ordered additional cavalry and infantry up to the Boars Head hill. In all the Spanish contingent on the hill would number approximately 1,300 men.<sup>44</sup> Thus on Barossa hill a sizeable portion of the allied army was left to thwart any French attempts to capture it. Graham was in the process of marching his remaining force, less LTC Browne's Battalion, toward the boat bridge, to carry out LaPeña's intent to secure communications with the Isla. General LaPeña and his staff were on top of Barossa Hill when a scout from the German Hussars returned shouting that three large columns of enemy were moments behind him. LaPeña's reaction was unexpected. After a German Hussar arrived and told LaPeña of the French threat, LaPeña ordered

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<sup>43</sup> Napier, *Sieges and Battles*, p. 75.

<sup>44</sup> Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 49.

his men to abandon the hill and move to a new location.<sup>45</sup> Shortly after setting out, a rider from Browne's battalion arrived, giving Graham the grave news that three columns of French were approaching the hill.<sup>46</sup> He was unaware at that point that the Spanish forces were abandoning the hill and Browne. The Spanish units on the hilltop, sensing the panic in the commander and chief, LaPena, lost whatever unit cohesion and discipline, and began to scatter. Whittingham with his Spanish cavalry, after giving Browne a warning of the approaching danger, used his force to cover the movement of the baggage and command group to another location.<sup>47</sup>

The loss of this large force would be dangerous for the remaining British troops.<sup>48</sup> Browne then directed his force into a long oblong square, with one flank along the wall of a ruined chapel. Lieutenant Robert Blakeney, an officer in the 54th Regiment, present at this event and privy to the following exchange relates the conversation between LTC Browne and General Whittingham,

By this time the greater part of the Spanish troops had passed between us and the coast road and were soon in rapid march towards the beach leading to Bermeja. Colonel Browne strongly and rather indignantly remonstrated against their conduct. At this period Colonel Whittingham rode up, and addressing Colonel Browne said, "Colonel Browne, what do you intend to do?" the reply was, "What do I intend to do, sir? I intend to fight the French." Whittingham then remarked, "You may do as you please, Colonel Browne, but we are decided on a retreat." "Very well, sir," replied Browne; "I shall stop where I am, for

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 50.

<sup>46</sup> Oglander, Freshly Remembered, p. 224.

<sup>47</sup> Fortescue, British Army, VIII, 50.

<sup>48</sup> Blakeney, A Boy, p. 184.



it shall never be said that John Frederick Browne ran away from the post which his general ordered him to defend."<sup>49</sup>

He waited for the onslaught.<sup>50</sup>

French cavalry came from the south road and split into two sections, with each one attacking a side of the square. With this opening maneuver, Browne saw the French artillery advancing to support them. At the same moment, the French infantry were also moving up to join the attack. The situation was tenuous for Browne's battalion. He was facing almost an entire French division, with less than a battalion. Browne wisely ordered his unit off the slope and tried to anchor his formation against the treeline on the lower slope, in order to deny the exposed flanks to the dragoon threat.<sup>51</sup> The French cavalry continued to fire on the 54th Foot until they reached the safety of the trees and then the horsemen withdrew.<sup>52</sup> General Graham, after receiving word that the main French army had attacked the hill,<sup>53</sup> hurried to investigate. Graham rode up to the wood's edge and yelled at the pressed Browne.

Browne, did I not give you orders to defend Barossa Hill?" "Yes Sir," said Browne; "but you would not have me fight the whole French army with four hundred and seventy men?" "Had you

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> "They left four hundred and seventy British bayonets bristling on the neck of the boar." See Blakeney, *A Boy*, p. 185.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, pp. 185-86.

<sup>52</sup> Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 52. Browne's battalion was covered in its retreat toward the tree line by a squadron of German Hussars. This differs somewhat from Blakeney's report; Fortescue accuses Blakeney of fabricating "one long tissue of falsehood, written mainly for self-glorification." Footnote #1.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. Fortescue states that Graham was told the news by a German Hussar, Blakeney states that two peasants told him, while Graham in his dispatches does not say how he was informed of this news.

not," replied the general, "five Spanish battalions, together with artillery and cavalry?" "Oh!" said Browne; "they all ran away long before the enemy came within cannon-shot." The general coolly replied, "It is bad business, Browne; you must instantly turn around and attack." "Very well," said the Colonel; "am I to attack in extended order as flankers, or as a close battalion?" "In open order," was the reply, and the general returned to the troops in the wood.<sup>54</sup>

Just after Browne deployed his battalion along the treeline, with one flank toward the enemy, Graham returned, ordering Browne to form a compact battalion column. As Browne did so Graham raced back to bring forward reinforcements. The situation for Browne's men was precarious; they were facing almost an entire enemy division holding the high ground which they had held previously. Browne realized what he was asking his troops to do was dangerous and also a great risk. He communicated his intent to attack to the scared soldiers in his own flamboyant style.

Colonel Browne rode to the front of the battalion and taking off his hat said in a voice to be heard by all, "gentlemen, I am happy to be the bearer of good news: General Graham has done you the honor of being the first to attack those fellows. Now follow me, you rascals!" He pointed to the enemy, and giving the order to advance broke into his favorite air.<sup>55</sup>

Singing "Hearts of Oak" at the top of his lungs, Browne began battle to gain the heights of Chiclana.

This small force soon was in the thick of battle, against the seasoned men of General Ruffin's division. Ruffin, clever in his use of combined artillery and musket fire, waited until Browne's battalion was close enough to have a withering effect. The

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<sup>54</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy*, p. 187.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 187-88.

54th Foot lost almost one half of its men to this "first shot."<sup>56</sup> Ruffin's division was joined by two battalions of elite grenadiers under the command of General André Rousseau. Browne tried to rally his men into a third line, but a second shot of grape killed an additional fifty soldiers and several more officers. The survivors refused to advance further and took shelter among the ground cover.<sup>57</sup> As Browne's battalion was fighting for its very survival, two companies of the 95th Rifles came out of the woods, formed a skirmish line and prepared to advance up the slope. The British artillery was close behind; it set up a combined battery and began firing on the French divisions which now included General Leval's division. The two British Infantry brigades came out of the woods, and as a result of the "fog of war" some of the companies and elements became intermixed.<sup>58</sup> Colonel Dilke's brigade, with the Guards leading the formation, began the difficult march up the slope. Ruffin's gunners waited until the guards cleared the "dead space"<sup>59</sup> of a deep ravine at the base of the hill, and then opened up with heavy musket fire and a salvo of artillery fire. Despite an accurate and intense fire, the brigade continued to advance in line up the hill until it came within easy musket range of Ruffin's men. However, Ruffin's men were still

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 189. Blakeney declared, "Ruffin's whole division pointing at us with muskets, and eight pieces of ordnance sending forth their grape, firing as one salvo. Nearly two hundred of our men and more than half of the officers went down by this first volley, thus opening the battle propitiously for them."

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, pp. 190-91. See also Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 54.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. 54.

<sup>59</sup> "Dead Space-an area within the maximum effective range of a weapon that cannot be covered by fire because of intervening obstacles, the nature of the ground, or the characteristics of the trajectory." See FM 101-5-1, *Operations*, p. 1-22.

in column, so the British were able to achieve fire superiority. Marshal Victor, now on the hill, brought forward the 96th Line and the two of Rousseau's grenadier battalions on the right. As these units began to fire upon Dilke's battered brigade, the men of the Browne's battalion, no longer the recipient of the earlier deadly fire, began to mass their musket fire on the 96th Line. Concurrently, the British 67th Foot and the two companies of the 95th Rifles, passed through the Guards and poured musket fire on the combined forces of both Ruffin and Rousseau.<sup>60</sup> This combined fusillade seemed to be the culminating point<sup>61</sup> of the battle. With increased British fire, Ruffin's division began to waver; this was further exacerbated when both he and Rousseau were badly wounded. Seeing the French formation beginning to collapse, the British officers gave orders to charge. The exhausted British troops moved toward the French. The French then broke apart and fled the hill without an ordered retreat. Ruffin's division, reeling from the British infantry attack and the effects of Duncan's guns, lost its cohesion and dispersed. The French left two cannons on the hill top.<sup>62</sup>

While Dilke's brigade was advancing up the deadly slope, the remainder of the British force was still coming out to the woods. Four companies of the 95th Rifles and two companies of the Portuguese 20th Line formed to the left of the hastily positioned British battery; they began to advance on the approaching troops of the General Leval. Leval's men were in squares and thus at a disadvantage since the British were in line

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<sup>60</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy*, p. 191.

<sup>61</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*. [Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret], (Princeton, 1984), p. 528.

<sup>62</sup> Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 56.

and were able to pour maximum firepower into the hapless French. The remainder of Colonel Wheatley's brigade was still in the process of forming when it also came under intense fire. Graham himself went to the head of the brigade to rally the men and to set a brave example. Major Alexander Duncan with his ten gun battery gave good fire support to the deploying brigade, firing grape and shrapnel at the French. Meanwhile, as they received this deadly mixture of artillery and musket fire, the French began deploying in two long lines to face the advancing English.<sup>63</sup>

The French troops were in a large convex shape, with approximately 2,700 men in the formation. The British had a total of 1,400 infantrymen facing this superior French force. The British used their riflemen, armed with the Baker rifle, to act as skirmishers. After each of these skirmishers fired two rounds at the leading French officers, they retreated through the ranks and reformed in the rear of the lines. The British troops advanced and met the enemy. The 87th Foot was in the vanguard. After coming within close range, both armies began to fire. With three lines, the British produced greater fire power. Thus they were able to achieve fire superiority at a ratio of almost 3:1.<sup>64</sup> The 87th Foot continued to move toward the enemy, and slowly the French soldiers stopped firing and then began to withdraw to the rear of their own formation. General Graham, perhaps sensing that the battle's climax had arrived, ordered the Coldstream Guards and the 87th Foot (Royal Irish Fusiliers), to charge. The battle hardened Irishmen of the 87th Regiment aggressively advanced with

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid, VIII, 57.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, VIII, 58.

fixed bayonets against the French. After closing, the 87th Foot, defeated the enemy.<sup>65</sup> While the 87th Foot met with and broke the 8th French line, General Leval moved up the 45th Line to stop the battle from becoming a rout. However, he was too late to save the first Eagle lost to the British.<sup>66</sup> The 87th Foot, seeing this new threat, reformed under the orders of Major Hugh Gough, and faced the approaching 45th. Gough gave the order to charge and the Irishmen advanced again, with the results being not what they expected. The French 45th Line had a numerical advantage and were relatively fresh, while the Irish 87th Regiment was quite fatigued. Nevertheless, the Royal Irish Fusiliers broke the French while only 50 yards away, without even closing for hand to hand exchange.<sup>67</sup>

Colonel Wheatley's brigade, still under fire, fought off the French 54th Line which had unsuccessfully tried to turn its flank. The rest of the brigade continued its advance, gradually gaining the high ground and pushing the demoralized French back. Marshal Victor, now used the power of his personality to rally and steady the defeated French units. The British kept the pressure up and slowly crept forward. French cavalry, putting extreme tension on the right side of the advancing British line, caused the Guards to begin to form squares. Although General Whittingham was in a position to see the battle, he did not release his large force of cavalry to turn the

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p. 58.

<sup>66</sup> Sergeant Masterson, an Irishman in the 87th, had the privilege of taking the Eagle after a heated hand to hand exchange with the color bearers of the 8th Line. For his efforts, Masterson was later promoted to Captain and sired several generations which served well also, with one earning the Victoria Cross in 1900.

<sup>67</sup> Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 59.

victory into a rout. He was under the Spanish commander and he did not receive permission or instructions to attack the French. Only a small detachment of German Hussars, too far for him to recall, clashed with the French dragoon threat, successfully stopping their sorties against the Guards.<sup>68</sup> Victor, gradually uniting the two divisions, moved them northward toward Chiclana and then back to their previous positions.<sup>69</sup> The British, with their own recruited allies; the 20th Portuguese Regiment and 2nd Hussars of the Kings German Legion, had fought successfully together and defeated a force almost three times larger. While this desperate action took place, General LaPeña, and his 7,000 men, waited at the southern edge of the forest, on the high ground and watched the fray. No support came from this quarter.

The British troops, after marching sixteen hours through the ravine-filled countryside, fought a relatively fresh, numerically superior force and won. Graham let the French retire, indeed, his force was incapable of following them.<sup>70</sup> The battle yielded for the British several types of spoils: 400 prisoners, two general officers mortally wounded, almost 2,000 French wounded or dead, six guns, and the first Eagle captured by the British.<sup>71</sup> The British also had suffered; they had lost almost 1,200 men and many horses.<sup>72</sup> With the French leaving the vicinity, Graham posted guards

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<sup>68</sup> Napier, *Sieges and Battles*, p. 78.

<sup>69</sup> Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 61.

<sup>70</sup> Delavoye, *Life of Thomas Graham*, p. 224.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, p. 224.

<sup>72</sup> The British Foot Regiments had lost heavily with the 87th Royal Irish losing the most, 236 men. See Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 65.

and assessed damage. He had the wounded put onto litters and the slain buried.<sup>73</sup> He then directed his efforts to withdrawing his remaining force across the bridge and onto the Isla.

Graham was incensed with LaPeña's inaction.

Immediately after our army began to move off towards the Isla, our General being, as I understood, so much exasperated with the apathy evinced by the Spanish General, that he would no longer co-operate with him, and consequently drew off our troops into the Isla of Leon.<sup>74</sup>

General Graham sent Colonel Roger Stanhope to LaPeña's headquarters near the river and to appraise LaPeña of the situation and to give him the news that the British were in the process of returning to the Isla. "Why did not General Graham acquaint me earlier," exclaimed LaPeña, "so that we might have retired also? I cannot remain here without the British."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Surtees, *Twenty-Five Years*, p. 122. Surtees's claimed, "Major Duncan, with great humanity, (approved of course by our excellent General) cast off from the artillery-carriages all the spare ammunition, in order to make room for as many of our wounded officers and soldiers as those carriages could accommodate, and thus a considerable number of them were carried from the field immediately."

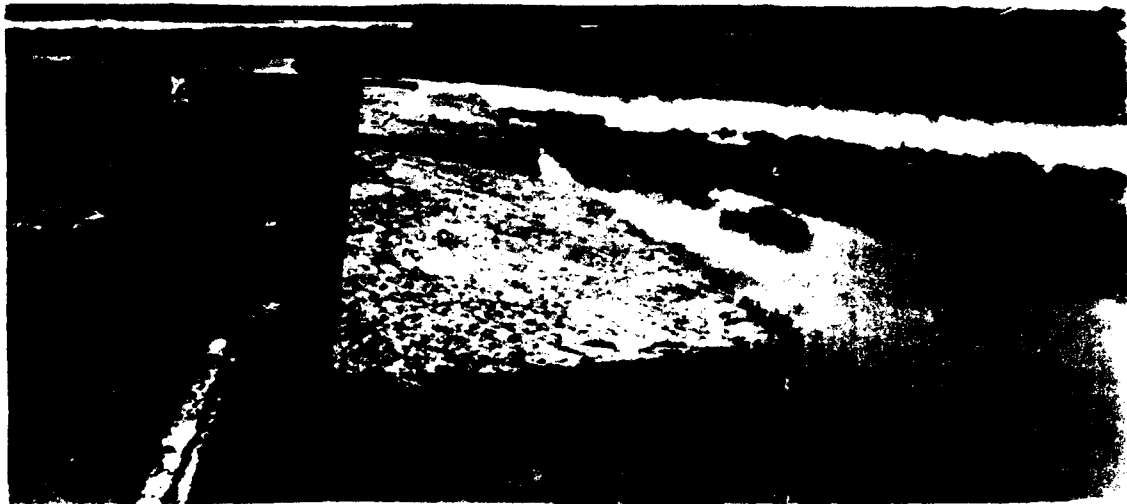
<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, p. 122.

<sup>75</sup> Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 65.



POST BAROSSA RECROSSING SITE

FIGURE 13: R. Garofano. *La Constitucion Gaditana de 1812*.



Graham did not care any longer about the pretense of maintaining good relations with the Spanish general; his dead British soldiers had confirmed his belief that LaPeña was a coward. Later on in the morning of 6 March, Graham visited LaPeña's quarters, and denounced him for his inaction.<sup>76</sup> When Graham returned to the city, he contacted Henry Wellesley; he provided details of the operation and complained of LaPeña's incompetence.<sup>77</sup>

Little did General Graham know that the victory his soldiers had won, would be claimed by the selfsame general who had abandoned them at the worst possible moment.<sup>78</sup> The second battle of Barossa would be fought in the city of Cadiz, minus the French.

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p. 66.

<sup>77</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/252, #139, Graham to Henry Wellesley, 6 March 1811. Graham gave details on the battle and his frustration and anger with LaPeña.

<sup>78</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/252, #143, LaPeña to Graham, 6 March 1811. He was complaining of the "English retreat" following the Spanish victory.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### TEDIOUS STALEMATE

The outcome of the British victory at Barossa was indecisive for the allies and a lucky occurrence for Marshal Victor.<sup>1</sup> Some elements of the Spanish force did comport themselves with valor, such as Lardizabal's division on its attack against Villatte's French division near the Santi Petri, followed by the successful link up with the Isla bound Spanish division of General Zayas.<sup>2</sup> A French I Corps officer attached to the 3rd Division recounts the Spanish attack:

Hardly had the 3rd division arrived at Camp Saint Petri when it was assailed by a flock of sharpshooters by the heads of the columns which attacked by way of crossing the sand dunes bordering the same place. The Spanish Army at first was put in flight and cornered at the sea but so the English Army which was all in reserve presented itself in front of our lines and was beaten with all the fierceness of desperation. The Spanish rallied and we returned to the other side of the river. I, along with the brave General of Division, Villatte, were wounded.<sup>3</sup>

This Spanish holding action had enabled Graham to advance his force up the hill at Barossa and opened up an escape route back on to the Isla. Several Spanish units,

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<sup>1</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy*, p. 203. As an eyewitness Blakeney exclaimed, "The battle, although it lasted little more than two hours, was extremely fierce and bloody, and its results marked the gallantry of the two nations by whom it was fought."

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 182.

<sup>3</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/402, Lequetel to Victor, 7 March 1811.

notably the Ciudad Real Battalion and the Walloon Guards, stood their ground and stayed with the British.<sup>4</sup>

Other Spanish units, which were under General LaPeña's direct command, did not take part in the hill battle where the British had fought.<sup>5</sup> The German Hussars who had been attached to Whittingham's Cavalry Regiment, were ordered by Colonel Reginald Ponsonby (Graham's Quartermaster) to charge the French Dragoons. They did so brilliantly routing the battered French divisions.<sup>6</sup>

To Graham and his officers, it seemed evident that the British had been left to fight the bulk of the French; while LaPeña, in plain view, chose not to assist.<sup>7</sup> At several points in the battle had the Spanish had entered the fray the outcome could have been decisive, instead of simply a hollow victory.

It would be difficult to give a just idea of the impetuosity with which the common enemy was driven back from all the heights by the English bayonets; the same enemy who had charged us with such insolence and confidence as if he had already gained the victory. His force was double that of the English: but the victory, though costly was complete, and decided by the point of the bayonet. The fruits of this distinguished day would have been gathered beyond the principal object, if the enemy-who in their precipitate retreat abandoned their wounded of all ranks and

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<sup>4</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy*, p. 197.

<sup>5</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/252, #115, from Graham to the Cadiz Garrison: General Orders, 6 March 1811.

<sup>6</sup> Whittingham, *Memoir*, p. 137. See also Blakeney, *A Boy*, p. 197.

<sup>7</sup> "But with respect to his taking four guns, General Cruz-Murgeon was partly right, that term "taking" only being erroneous. After the action was over, the Spanish General found his own guns on the same spot where he had abandoned them in the morning, silent and cold, that though they should have been loudly pouring forth their hottest fire against Rousseau's division when they were advancing against Colonel Browne's position." See Blakeney, *A Boy*, p. 200.

description, three guns and two ammunition wagons had been charged in the flank and threatened in the rear.<sup>8</sup>

The French had fought hard, the 3rd Division, under Villatte, made a successful counterattack on Lardizabal's first bridging attempt on 3 March 1810. An eyewitness, Colonel Eugene Lequetel, Victor's 1st Corps Engineer, recounts in his report to Victor on 7 March 1810:

Villatte received the order to attack the enemy at Santi Petri and to force them, if possible, to recross the river. As an eyewitness to this brilliant affair, I will tell you faithfully that which happened. Our movement had to begin at one o'clock in the A.M.; at midnight the Colonel Ronzleve of the 95th Regiment had taken the dispositions most proper to assure the success of their attack; the Spanish were on 4 arranged lines with 200 yards between them-their reserve was at the head of the bridge, their batteries and some cannons, launches flanking the terrain they occupied. The Spanish were overthrown in a tangle at their trenches; there the troops who guarded the bridgehead made a terrible fusillade holding for 10 minutes, but our voltigeurs broke through. We took two flags, 34 officers of which five were colonels, and 495 enlisted prisoners.<sup>9</sup>

Victor had known of the impending attack on his siege works; earlier he had requested reinforcements to be detached from the IV Corps and be given to him, but Soult refused.<sup>10</sup> The lack of additional forces may have played a crucial role in the battle.

Graham, back on the Isla de Leon, turned his attention to tending the wounded, restructuring the lines, and making his reports. He also took the time to address his victorious soldiers:

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<sup>8</sup> Whittingham, *Memoir*, p. 141.

<sup>9</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/402, Lequetel to Victor, 7 March 1811.

<sup>10</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/402, Victor to Soult, 1 March 1811.

No expression of mine, could do justice to the conduct of the troops throughout. Nothing less than the almost unparalleled exertions of every officer, the invincible bravery of every soldier, could have achieved such a brilliant success against such a formidable enemy so posted.<sup>11</sup>

He was dumbfounded when, on the afternoon of 6 March 1811 after waking up from a short nap, an orderly came in with a letter from LaPeña. The letter from the nominal allied commander expressed LaPeña's "surprise at the British retreat".<sup>12</sup> Graham chose not to answer; he had already given LaPeña some choice words in person. This was a mistake on Graham's part. LaPeña's aide returned without a written response from Graham. LaPeña then seized the initiative and began to berate Graham and the battlefield conduct of the British soldiers in public, and even more significant, in the Cortes, for not following his orders and for withdrawing to Cadiz without permission. The charges were so serious that it prompted Henry Wellesley to write Graham and inform him of LaPeña's actions and of the Regency's questions concerning the battle.<sup>13</sup>

Graham immediately responded to Henry Wellesley's queries and gave him the details of LaPeña's actions.

that the same anxiety for the success of the cause would not have secured to the Spanish army the utmost efforts of the British division during the whole of the enterprise, had we been supported as we had a right to expect. There is not a man in the division who would not gladly have relinquished his claim to glory, acquired by the action at Barossa, to have shared with the Spaniards the ultimate success that was within our grasp as it were. The people of Spain...; the hearts and hands

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<sup>11</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/252, #115, Graham to his command, 6 March 1811.

<sup>12</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/402, LaPeña to Graham, 6 March 1811.

<sup>13</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/402, # 139, Henry Wellesley to Graham, 6 March 1811.

of British soldiers will ever be with them; the cause of Spain is felt by all to be a common cause.<sup>14</sup>

He explained the actions of both the allies and those of the enemy; he was careful to convey to Wellesley that he did not wish to make public accusations against the Spanish commander or his soldiers. It would only assist "our common enemy". He did not want to send out any counter proclamations to the citizens of Cadiz, who were being told that it was LaPeña who had beaten the French.

Graham was completely disgusted with LaPeña. His subordinates did take up the "press battle" with LaPeña's supporters and had some degree of success. Graham wrote a lengthy account to Henry Wellesley on 9 March 1811 to furnish a detailed rebuttal to LaPeña's allegations of "timidness and lack of vigor".<sup>15</sup> LaPeña continued expressing his complaints to the Regency and Cortes. Henry Wellesley soon grew furious with LaPeña's tactics and outrageous charges.<sup>16</sup> He demanded an investigation into the actions of the Spanish element's conduct since their arrival at Tarifa. The Regency granted his request and as a result LaPeña was removed from active troop command until a final decision could be made.<sup>17</sup> LaPeña, angered at losing his command, continued his assaults on Graham's character and the battle. He published

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<sup>14</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/402, #151, Graham to Henry Wellesley, 6 March 1811.

<sup>15</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/252, Graham to Henry Wellesley, 9 March 1811. A second copy was sent by packet to Lisbon for Wellington.

<sup>16</sup> Severn, *A Wellesley Affair*, p. 175. "So distressed was Henry that three days after the battle he demanded an inquiry by the Cortes into the proceedings of the Spanish army from the time it left Tarifa to the night of March 5, 1811. The Cortes agreed to the demand but only because a refusal would cast a doubt on the Spanish claims. At the same time, the Cortes sought to mollify British anger by conferring on General Graham the titles of duke and grandee for his services."

<sup>17</sup> Oglander, *Freshly Remembered*, p. 227.

an attack on Graham's integrity and valor and it was published in most of the city's daily papers.<sup>18</sup>

Graham, deeply angered and wounded by the public attack, was now forced to defend himself and his soldiers, from a questioning and vaguely hostile citizenry. On 24 March 1811 Graham wrote to Henry Wellesley an official response to LaPeña's latest outrage.<sup>19</sup> Wellesley read the letter to the Regency and also forwarded a copy to his brothers in Portugal and in London. The Regency, headed by the anti-British Blake, would "take the matter into consideration". Unfortunately Graham's official response did not appear in print until 6 May 1811. It was published in the Gibraltar press. Wishing to put the distasteful business behind him, Graham turned his efforts again to readying the Isla to hold off the French I Corps.

Graham's bold action and decisive leadership provided the British ministry with the necessary popular support to continue the war. Graham received a vote of thanks for his actions at Barossa and passed on the congratulations to his troops.<sup>20</sup> He turned down the Spanish government's dukedom, explaining he did not believe in foreign awards but instead would appreciate a vote of thanks.<sup>21</sup> Wellington wrote to Graham:

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<sup>18</sup> El Espanol. 20 March 1811. p 2.

<sup>19</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/252, #229, Graham to Henry Wellesley, 24 March 1811.

<sup>20</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/255, Liverpool to Graham, 15 April 1811.

<sup>21</sup> "Graham's personal example had carried them on to victory; and from the King and Parliament downwards honors and congratulations were showered upon him. He was knighted with the Order of the Bath; he received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, and the freedom of the City of London." See Oglander, Freshly Remembered, p. 226.



I congratulate you and the brave troops under your command on the signal victory which you gained on the 5th instant. I have no doubt whatever that their success would have had the effect of raising the siege of Cadiz if the Spanish corps had made any effort to assist them; and if your attack had not been a most vigorous one, the whole allied army would have been lost. I concur in the propriety of your withdrawing to the Isla on the 6th as much as I admire the promptitude and determination of your attack on the 5th; and I most sincerely congratulate you...<sup>22</sup>

Graham grew tired of the politics of stalemate. He was defending an Island which was now reasonably secure; he had beaten a superior enemy but won only incomplete victory, but the French still controlled the land around the Isla de Leon. He was disenchanted with the political life in the Spanish capital. The LaPeña affair left him sad, angry, and anxious to join Wellington in Portugal. His new pet dog, now named "Rouge," had been the favored pet of General Rousseau, who had been killed at Barossa. The new pet became Graham's constant companion, and he tried to make him "the happiest dog in Christendom".<sup>23</sup> More mischief came out of LaPeña's claims at Barossa when his former chief of staff, Colonel Lacey, published an unflattering account of Graham and his soldiers. Graham paid a personal visit to Lacey and the plans for the publication were dropped.<sup>24</sup>

Henry Wellesley continued his efforts at reorganizing the Spanish military. He saw some success when the Regency granted permission for General Whittingham to establish a new infantry division, to be trained and stationed on Majora. Wellesley

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<sup>22</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/252, Wellington to Graham, 25 March 1811.

<sup>23</sup> Oglander. Freshly Remembered, p. 235.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, pp. 236-37.

hoped that the new organization; formed, clothed, and armed along British lines, with two British officers in each company, and wages and food paid by the Spanish government, would serve as a role model for a new army. This was a tremendous undertaking. Whittingham was to accomplish the task with mediocre Spanish officers and no British paymasters or cadre at the beginning. Nevertheless he left Cadiz on 12 June 1811 and went to Gibraltar to start the first leg of his new journey. Wellesley wrote to him on 8 June 1811:

Sir,- Upon your arrival at Gibraltar, you are to consider this letter as sufficient authority for you to draw from that place, on His Majesty's Treasury in London, for one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. I am, with much respect, Sir, your most obedient and humble servant.<sup>25</sup>

Without the active allied coalition in Cadiz, such a concept would never have been realized. Spain was very different from Portugal; she had a long proud self-reliant history as a great nation. A history in which she had almost beaten Great Britain several times in the past and still possessed a tremendous colonial empire. The efforts of Anglophobes like Blake were slowly undermined by Wellesley, despite their impassioned recitations of past glories.

Graham wrote to Lord Liverpool and Wellington requesting an appointment in the Army in Portugal for the upcoming summer campaign.<sup>26</sup> Wellington wrote to

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<sup>25</sup> Whittingham, *Memoirs*, p. 149.

<sup>26</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/252, #243, Graham to Liverpool, 12 April 1811; #255, Graham to Liverpool, 15 April 1811; #289, Graham to Wellington, 23 April 1811.

Liverpool and gave his concurrence with the assignment; on 30 June 1811 Graham received permission to depart Cadiz and report to Lisbon.<sup>27</sup> He left on 2 July 1811.

With Graham's departure the command fell on the next senior officer, General Sir Roger Cooke.<sup>28</sup> Cooke, who had been in Cadiz for over a year, understood the Spanish and knew the requirements for the Isla's defense. He demanded better cooperation from the Regency, and he appealed to Henry Wellesley to prod the Cortes into taking a more active role in defense planning.<sup>29</sup> Cooke worked diligently to extend the efforts of the allies in Andalusia. He supported Blake's efforts in joining Wellington near the Portuguese border. He also provided additional men for the recently detached brigade of Colonel Skerrett, which was now in Tarifa.<sup>30</sup> Wellington must have felt Cadiz was now secure, doubtless after speaking with the new 1st Division commander in Portugal—Graham.<sup>31</sup> In September 1811 he ordered three battalions out of Cadiz, two of which would join him in Lisbon and the other going to Cork in Ireland.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/252, #375, Liverpool to Graham, 30 June 1811.

<sup>28</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/252, #403, Liverpool to Cooke, 6 July 1811.

<sup>29</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/252, #407, Cooke to Henry Wellesley, 16 July 1811.

<sup>30</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/252, #359, Graham to Skerrett, 14 June 1811; #415, Cooke to Wellington, 25 July 1811; #427, Cooke to Wellington, 5 August 1811.

<sup>31</sup> Blakeney, *A Boy*, pp. 208-09.

<sup>32</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/152, #451, Wellington to Cooke, 23 September 1811.

Cooke, on Colonel Skerrett's request, sent additional troops to Tarifa.<sup>33</sup> Based on the intelligence gathered in the province, Skerrett and Cooke were certain that Soult had decided to crush all organized guerrilla activity in Andalusia. General Colin Campbell, promoted to Governor of Gibraltar, felt certain that Soult would try to cut off communication between Gibraltar and the various Spanish field armies and the partially organized guerrillas. Campbell asked Cooke for additional men to hold the town of Tarifa, which formed part of a narrow pass linking the mainland to the Gibraltar Peninsula. If Tarifa fell under the control of Soult or Victor, then Gibraltar would be cut off from land communication with the guerrillas. Tarifa also had a good harbor that could be used by Soult for his privateer smuggling operations and a possible link to the agricultural areas of North Africa.

Meanwhile, Henry Wellesley was not idle; he continued to encourage Spanish military reorganization. On 29 August 1811 he submitted a plan to the Regency for a Spanish military academy to train Spanish officers and soldiers to replace combat losses.<sup>34</sup> The commandant for the new training facility would be British Brigadier General William Doyle, who would be assisted by wounded British officers and sergeants who were ready for light duty.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> P.R.O., W.O. #471, Troop list to Tarifa from Cooke, 25 September 1811; #475, Troop manifest to Tarifa, 10 October 1811; #511, Troop manifest to Tarifa, 25 October 1811.

<sup>34</sup> Severn, A Wellesley Affair, p. 190.

<sup>35</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/402, #249, Wellesley to Liverpool, 27 August 1811. See also Severn, A Wellesley Affair, p. 190.

In late September 1811 yellow fever began to spread in Cadiz; Victor's troops also caught the malady and over 500 French soldiers died.<sup>36</sup> In fact, Victor lost his own aide-de-camp.<sup>37</sup> Activities in Cadiz appeared to be quieting down and the fever seemed to drain the offensive spirit of both sides. The ships in the harbor were quarantined and a lag developed in communication with London and Lisbon. Lt Daniel Robinson, a Royal Marine officer stationed on the HMS Dauntless, sailed into the Cadiz harbor on 21 October 1811 and commented:

Arrived off Cadiz and spoke with the HMS Revenge, Alfred, Standard, Conflict, and two Bombs lying in the Harbor. The French force of about 12,000 remain quiet and are blockading the Island towards the land, but there is scarcely any firing between the Posts.<sup>38</sup>

The temporary lull in action only was to last for five weeks. Soult formalized his plans against both the guerrillas and the Spanish field armies; he decided Tarifa must be taken. This became the next object in the subjugation of Andalusia.

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<sup>36</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/402, #377, Victor to Soult, 26 October 1811; #282, Henry Wellesley to Richard Wellesley, 23 August 1811.

<sup>37</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 1/402, #361, Victor to illegible, 7 October 1811.

<sup>38</sup> Daniel Robinson. Unpublished Diary. (In the possession of Dr. R.W.N. Thomas, Dorset, United Kingdom). Entry date, 21 October 1811.

## CHAPTER NINE

### TARIFA

The area around Cadiz, part of the Andalusian theater of operations for the French forces under Marshal Soult, was a scene of significant guerrilla action. Cadiz itself had long stymied and frustrated the French; it was one of several areas of Soult's "fifedom" of Andalusia, which had successfully resisted him despite his best efforts at subjugation. Cadiz, Gibraltar, and Tarifa, all supported or held by the British, were the only significant unclaimed portions of his province. These areas were not just troubling in themselves, but even more importantly, they gave succor, food, arms, and money to the guerrillas which engulfed the French held province in turmoil. Many times French flying columns would sally forth, engage the enemy, defeat and harry them only to find them disappear into the mountains to recover and begin the cycle anew. Even more embarrassing and frustrating was the ability of the British Navy to evacuate the guerrilla and Spanish armies just as Soult's troops were closing in to destroy them.<sup>1</sup>

With the approaches to Cadiz firmly under the control of Marshal Victor's Corps, which made infiltration into Cadiz difficult, if not impossible for the Spanish field Army, the port of Gibraltar posed the next crucial position to shut down. Soult

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<sup>1</sup> Fortescue, British Army. VIII, 326.

did not believe he could take this formidable fortress, certainly not with the Royal Navy in its harbor. However, the town of Tarifa, only some 20 miles from the "Rock" was different.<sup>2</sup> If the French were able to take this town, with its relatively good harbor, then land access to Gibraltar would be limited, thus making Spanish leaders like General Francisco Ballesteros<sup>3</sup> isolated from the British fleet and aid.<sup>4</sup> Soult too needed supplies for his Army; the nearby coast of northern Africa offered him an opportunity to gain much needed supplies, but more importantly, deny its resources to the British.<sup>5</sup> This mission to gain logistical support from the Barbary coast failed, but, the Marshal believed that Tarifa was still the key to halting the movement of supplies to the Spanish of Andalusia.

Marshal Victor, the Duc de Bellune, did not enjoy his thankless task of besieging Cadiz. His forces had invested the city since February of 1810, but they had failed to capture it from the allies. He was further humiliated by the outcome of the Battle of Barossa, in which forces under his command had the dubious distinction of

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<sup>2</sup> The Rock of Gibraltar, two square miles in area, lays at the southernmost tip of Spain. Only nine miles to the coast of Africa, Gibraltar was captured by the British in 1704. Due to its strategic location at the Atlantic entrance of the Mediterranean Sea, this "Rock" has been the site of much hostile action, and even today, is a source of friction between the Spanish and Great Britain. See Allen Andrews, Proud Fortress. (New York, 1959).

<sup>3</sup> General Francisco Ballesteros was defeated in Bilboa in 1809, but carried out the war in the south for several years. He did a good job at keeping Soult's troops busy by following his forces into the province of Andalusia. Ballesteros was arrogant and greatly resented Wellington being named Commander and Chief of the Spanish Army. Ballesteros protested and was removed from his duties by the Cadiz Cortes.

<sup>4</sup> Jacques Belmas, Journaux Des Sieges Faits Ou Soutenus par Les Francais Dans La Peninsule. De 1807 A 1814, (Paris, 1836), IV, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Fortescue, British Army, VIII, 326.

losing the first imperial eagle to the British.<sup>6</sup> Although his experience had been primarily in combined arms open warfare, Marshal Soult, deemed him the most capable in investing and taking the town of Tarifa. Victor earlier requested his recall from the siege of Cadiz, but Napoleon had refused.<sup>7</sup> Victor did not enjoy serving under Soult; both of them argued in person and in writing.<sup>8</sup> Victor's failure at both the siege and in the embarrassing loss of Barossa had much depreciated the Emperor's opinion of his efforts and capabilities.<sup>9</sup>

In early November 1811, Marshal Soult gave instructions to collect the needed supplies for the Tarifa siege.<sup>10</sup> Command of this force fell to Victor since the siege forces were made up primarily of men from the French I and IV Corps.<sup>11</sup> While Victor was collecting the necessary siege supplies and equipment, Marshal Soult took

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<sup>6</sup> See Chapter 7, this work, for details.

<sup>7</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/402, #377, Victor to Soult, 26 October 1811.

<sup>8</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/402, #397, Victor to Soult, 8 November 1811.

<sup>9</sup> Marshal Berthier to King Joseph. Paris, March 1811. "I was sorry to see the disasters which happened to the 1st Corps before Cadiz; that I cannot approve of the dispositions which he made in that quarter; that these misfortunes would not have occurred, and that the siege of Cadiz would not have run such risks, if, on leaving Estremadura, the Duke of Dalmatia had placed Godinot's division and General Sebastiani's corps under the command of the Duke of Belluno. The Duke of Dalmatia has 60,000 men under his orders; he might have given up 30,000 to the Duke of Belluno, and yet have had more troops than he wanted before Badajoz. The mania of attempting, in a moment of difficulty, to hold every point may be productive of great misfortunes. The Emperor is displeased that, whilst the siege of Cadiz ran great risks of being raised, the 12th, 32nd, 58th, and 43rd, altogether a division of more than 8,000 men, were scattered about in posts of trifling importance." See The Confidential Correspondence of Napoleon Bonaparte with His Brother Joseph, Sometime King of Spain, (London, 1855), II, 172.

<sup>10</sup> Belmas, Des Sieges, IV, 12. See also Fortescue, British Army, VIII, 327.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, IV, 12-13. See also Fortescue, British Army, VIII, 327.



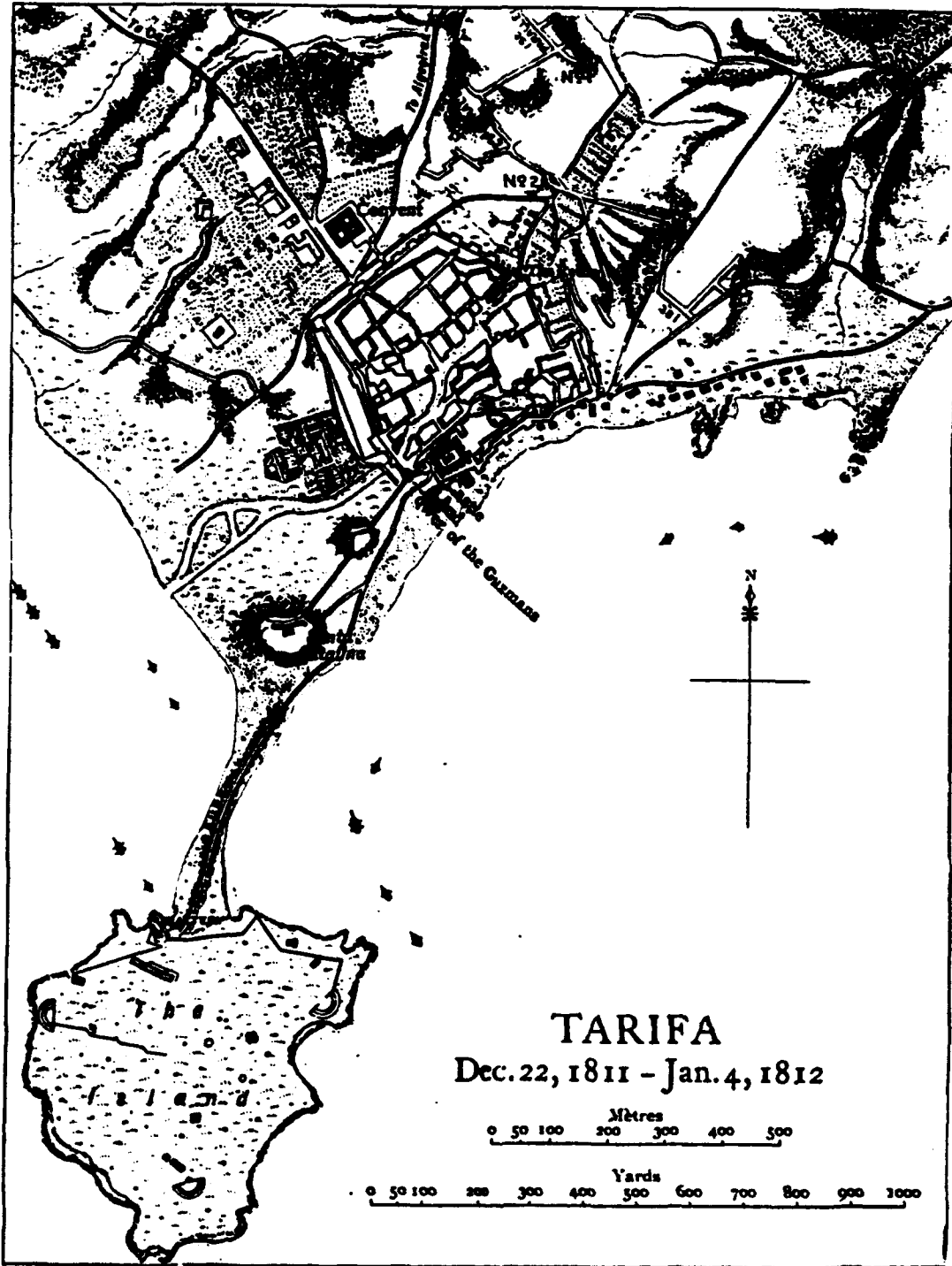
the initiative and moved against General Ballesteros who posed a threat to the proposed siege.<sup>12</sup> With

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<sup>12</sup> Marshal Victor sent General Barrois, commander of the 2nd Division of the I Corps to attack Barrios and Algeciras to put pressure on Ballesteros. See: Belmas, Des Sieges, IV, 12; Fortescue, British Army, VIII, 327-28.

MAP OF TARIFA

FIGURE 14: Napier. Battles and Sieges in the Peninsula.



Ballesteros now holed up before Gibraltar, the siege force should be secure from harassment. In a letter to Soult on 11 December 1811 Victor describes Ballesteros as "of the personage of Cortez."<sup>13</sup> The French believed that he posed a real threat and would have to be confronted firmly.

Ballesteros was in a dangerous position, but one that was also somewhat advantageous. His army was cut off from the rest of Andalusia by land; however, the sea and the British Fleet gave him some flexibility. Admiral Sir Arthur Kaye Legge and General Roger Cooke<sup>14</sup> at Cadiz were collaborating to supply Ballesteros with any aid he required.<sup>15</sup> Admiral Legge was in contact with Ballesteros and gave him supplies, food, ammunition, and most importantly, contact with the Spanish government in Cadiz. Admiral Legge was at the disposal of Ballesteros for any needed troop movements.<sup>16</sup> The British Fleet was indispensable for the protection and well being of the Spanish Army at Gibraltar.

While the Spanish Army under Ballesteros was harrying the French, the needs of the British Peninsular commander, Wellington, were felt in Cadiz. In consequence, a steady drain of troops and supplies began to leave the city for Wellington's use elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> The Allied forces in Cadiz were not threatened seriously by these

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<sup>13</sup> Belmas, *Des Sieges*, IV, 47. Victor to Soult, 11 December 1811.

<sup>14</sup> General Cooke assumed command of the Cadiz garrison following Graham's departure in late June. Cooke received official instructions as the commander from the War Office on 24 August 1811. See P.R.O., W.O., 6/50, #254, War Office to Cooke, 24 August 1811.

<sup>15</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/402, #441, Legge to Cooke, 22 November 1811.

<sup>16</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/402, #467, Legge to Henry Wellesley, 7 December 1811.

<sup>17</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/152, #451, Wellington to Disney, 23 September 1811.

redeployments, the defensive works were improved daily, and the arrival of supplies from Great Britain had upgraded the combat readiness of the remaining troops.

Following the allied success at Barossa in March, the Governor of Gibraltar, Colin Campbell, had additional troops posted in Tarifa. Campbell, loosely interpreting the boundaries of the British outpost of Gibraltar, had ordered the town of Tarifa garrisoned. The 47th Foot had already had elements posted in Tarifa for almost two years. However, the new intelligence on Soult's plans worried Campbell. He needed additional combat power if he were to hold the approach to the land side of Gibraltar. Since he had already send all the reinforcements he could spare to Tarifa,<sup>18</sup> he would have to get more forces from Cadiz. He sent word to Cooke at Cadiz, and within a week, fresh troops from Cadiz began to arrive.<sup>19</sup> Colonel William Skerrett, with his brigade, began to prepare the town of Tarifa for the upcoming siege. It was a difficult task, but, without the Royal Navy it would have been impossible. Equipment, food, and material were transported by the fleet for Skerrett's use.

The town of Tarifa had few natural barriers unlike those that existed at Cadiz, such as the Santi Petri river, the harbor, and the salt marshes. The defense work involved would be laborious and long. The British site engineer, Captain Smith, made an excellent defensive analysis and gave precise and clear recommendations to the British defense commander, Skerrett.

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<sup>18</sup> R.E.R. Robinson. *The Bloody Eleventh*. (Exeter, United Kingdom, 1988). I, 323-24. "On 26 June 1811 the light company under Captain Robert Wren was ordered to Tarifa...and to go with a company of the 82nd (2 Prince of Whales Volunteers-South Lancashire)."

<sup>19</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/152, #475, Disney to Wellington, 10 October 1811; #487, 14 October 1811.

Captain Smith, the Royal Engineer in charge of the defenses, realized that the enemy would be tempted by these dominating heights and also by the covered approach to the tower with the portcullis standing at the point where the torrent-bed went under the walls. He therefore made plans to meet an attack there and, in particular, prepared a fall-back position inside the walls behind the portcullis, fortifying and loopholing the houses, which were strongly built, and barricading the streets so that an attacker would be forced to follow the line of the torrent-bed. There were eleven guns mounted on the walls, towers and outworks and twelve on the island.<sup>20</sup>

Captain Smith's ability to "see" the proposed French offensive course of action would enable the allied defenders to hold the town, despite many strong assaults and intense bombardments.<sup>21</sup> The allied force which held the town was composed of 1,269 Spanish, and 1,774 British, all under the command of Spanish General Carlos Ramon Copons.<sup>22</sup>

On 28 November, Marshal Victor began the march toward Tarifa.<sup>23</sup> The rain, cold weather, and bad road conditions made progress slow and frustrating. By 2 December, Victor, along with three infantry battalions and two squadrons of cavalry, reached the town of Vejer, which lay at the half way point between Cadiz and Tarifa. Victor stayed until his siege train arrived on the 8th; the continuing rains greatly

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<sup>20</sup> Robinson, *Bloody Eleventh*, I, 325.

<sup>21</sup> Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 328-29.

<sup>22</sup> The French estimate of the allied troop was fairly accurate for the British, they cited approximately 1,500 men. They were quite off on the number of Spanish troops with an estimate of 3,000.

<sup>23</sup> Belmas, *Des Sieges*, IV, 12-16.

delayed the heavy siege carriages on the muddy unimproved roads.<sup>24</sup> The weather played a key role in this campaign and the rain became the determining factor in the attack. On 9 December the rain reached flood proportions and continued for 48 hours. Leval's Division, under orders to join the other Tarifa bound French forces, could not cross the plain from Cadiz to Malaga, due to the heavy rains making the plain impassable.<sup>25</sup> On 14 December the French once again began to move toward Tarifa. General Ballesteros made a sortie against the French in Venger on the 17th, but was beaten off with some losses. By 19 December the French arrived at the plain of Tarifa, exhausted, wet, and fatigued even before the hard work of digging and blasting would begin.

On 22 December, a small squadron of British ships and gunboats, bombarded a French supply train forcing it to seek shelter.<sup>26</sup>

...Colonel Skerrett immediately commenced an active campaign against the French; while the sloops of war, under the command of the Captains Shephard and Jones, and the boats of the squadron, directed by Lieutenant Davis, of the Stately, checked the advance of a body of one thousand five hundred French troops, going to attack the town of Tarifa. The boats and sloops of war, by their incessant fire, commanded the pass along the sea-shore during the night, and in the morning the enemy retreated.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 16. The rain got into the powder and ammunition wagons, wetting over 100,000 cartridges. See also Fortescue, British Army, VIII, 328.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 328. See also Robinson, Bloody Eleventh, I, 325.

<sup>26</sup> Belmas, Des Sieges, IV, 19. See also Fortescue, British Army, VIII, 328.

<sup>27</sup> Brenton, The Naval History of Great Britain, IV, 539-40.

However, this action had little effect on the siege preparations.<sup>28</sup> By the end of the month, all the trench supplies and equipment were on site. The most of December was spent in constant trench excavation, erecting batteries, and limited fighting.<sup>29</sup> The rain continued; the French parallels, continuously soaked with rain, became extremely unhealthy for the hard working troops. The platforms of the large siege guns were frequently adjusted, due to the shifting mud.<sup>30</sup> As the French struggled in the miserable weather, the allied forces enjoyed the comforts of garrison duty in a dry town.

On 21 and 22 December both forces opened fire; the French losing over twenty killed or wounded in action.<sup>31</sup> The British took the initiative and sent out small parties to harass and to gain intelligence on the enemy's progress.<sup>32</sup> The naval activities of the British garrison were a concern for the French. Especially when a ship

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<sup>28</sup> The French used four large mortars to drive the small British flotilla off of station. Victor's men suffered four men killed in action and 27 wounded. One British sailor was captured. See Belmas, Des Sieges, IV, 19.

<sup>29</sup> Victor had a total of eight officers and 305 enlisted miners, sappers, and engineers for the construction efforts. Like he did before Cadiz, Victor took General Garbe (General of Brigade, commandant of the Engineers of the I Corps) and put him in charge of the siege works before Tarifa. Uniquely, Garbe had a marine officer, Lieutenant Gibou, as his aide de camp, instead of an Army officer. Gibou was later wounded at Tarifa. See Belmas, Des Sieges, VI, 42.

<sup>30</sup> The French commander of artillery at Tarifa was General of Brigade D'Aboville, who was also the I Corp's chief of Artillery. Under D'Aboville's direction were nine officers and 460 enlisted men. Major Legay was appointed as the commandant of the artillery siege equipment and Major Marillac was the Chef de l'etat-major.

<sup>31</sup> Fortescue, British Army, VIII, 331.

<sup>32</sup> "Captain Wren and his light company distinguished themselves right at the beginning when, on 21st December, they make a sortie and caught an advanced French piquet which had approached the western wall. Swooping down upon them from the Santa Catalina, they accounted for the whole party; those they did not bayonet they took prisoner." See Robinson, Bloody Eleventh, I, 326.

was sighted leaving the harbor, Victor worried it might be for the purpose of conducting a hostile landing behind his lines.<sup>33</sup> No landing was made. The opening artillery exchanges signaled that the serious conquest of Tarifa had begun.

The French made significant progress, since many of these troops had over 18 months of practical experience before the walls of Cadiz. The speed and execution of the approaching entrenchments had an unnerving effect on the British leadership.<sup>34</sup> Colonel Skerrett, the British force commander, decided to request permission from General Cooke, to withdraw his force, lest he lose it to the French.<sup>35</sup> General Campbell was unhappy with the decision, since he had jurisdiction over several units and wanted to make the final decision.<sup>36</sup>

Skerrett's brigade was technically under Cooke's command in Cadiz, but the engineers, artillery, and part of the infantry forces at Tarifa, were under the direct command of Campbell. Hence, Skerrett was at a disadvantage, since he did not have direct control and authority over all the defensive assets in Tarifa. On 24 December Cooke ordered Skerrett and his brigade back to Cadiz.<sup>37</sup> That evening, Skerrett and his subordinate commanders, along with Captain Smith and Major King who represented Campbell, held a war council to make a decision on withdrawal. The vote was a deadlock, but the recently promoted LTC Hugh Gough who had performed so

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<sup>33</sup> Belams, *Des Sieges*, IV, 21.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, IV, 23.

<sup>35</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/152, #603, Skerrett to Cooke, 25 November 1811.

<sup>36</sup> Napier, *Battles and Sieges*, p. 142.

<sup>37</sup> Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 331.



well at Barossa with the 87th Foot, voted with Campbell; consequently, the force stayed.<sup>38</sup>

On 26 December the wind blew so hard, that the supporting British squadron had to move to the bay of Algeciras, for shelter.<sup>39</sup> Along with the fierce wind, heavy rain pounded the French lines for the next two days, filling the trenches with water and mud. The French persisted, despite the miserable weather, and emplaced the guns in new positions. They opened up at 11:00 a.m. on 28 December.<sup>40</sup> The attack had begun.

Shortly afterwards Skerrett gave the order to spike the large guns and withdraw. Campbell, by way of Major King, learned of Skerrett's plan and ordered the evacuation fleet moved off station.<sup>41</sup> Now the allies had to stay; the option of seaborne evacuation had been eliminated.<sup>42</sup> The French hammered the walls; after several days the breach was almost sixty feet across. The French assault force, under the command of General Laval, prepared to storm Tarifa.<sup>43</sup> The French had suffered horribly in the siege, the rain had made digging extremely hazardous, and the water filled ditches made

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<sup>38</sup> Napier, Battles and Sieges, p. 142. See also Robinson, Bloody Eleventh, I, 326.

<sup>39</sup> Belmas, Des Sieges, IV, 24. See also Fortescue, British Army, VIII, 331.

<sup>40</sup> Napier, Battles and Sieges, p. 142.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/152, # 651, Skerrett to Cooke, 23 December 1811.

<sup>43</sup> Belmas, Des Sieges, IV, 25-7. See also Fortescue, British Army, VIII, 332.

the soldiers sick.<sup>44</sup> Any further delays under such unhealthy conditions would find the French unable to launch an attack due to illness and weakness.

The evening of 30 December was the worst period yet for the suffering French; the rain came down "with unusual violence."<sup>45</sup> The creek which ran through the town flooded; French bodies, equipment, and siege material floated down the raging ravine, finally washing out to sea.<sup>46</sup> The terrible suffering the French endured were not immune to allied pity, even with Skerrett feeling some sorrow for them.<sup>47</sup> As bad as the French were suffering, they still made progress in making a breach. During the afternoon of 30 December, Laval's artillerymen reported, "a breach of 12 meters is seen as enough." Laval sent an aide de camp to request the surrender of the allies. Skerrett and Coupons returned an emphatic "no". Skerrett was very concerned with the enemy's progress despite the rain, he sent word to Cooke that the first French parallel was finished, a large breach was made, and as a consequence he ordered the streets barricaded.<sup>48</sup> Laval continued his shelling but the rain began again and his engineers could not run a sap to the wall.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> In a letter to General Leval on 2 January, A'Dboville explains that the "artillery cannot fire because they are sinking in the mud" and "hope is fading." See Belmas, Des Sieges, IV, 61.

<sup>45</sup> Napier, Battles and Sieges, p. 143.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 143.

<sup>47</sup> P.R.O., W.O., 1/152, # 697, Skerrett to Cooke, 30 November 1811.

<sup>48</sup> Belmas, Des Sieges, IV, 53-54, Skerrett to Cooke, 30 December 1811.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28.

At 8:00 a.m. on 31 December the French began to move toward Tarifa, with approximately 4,000 men. The attack started somewhat later than Laval's plan called for, at the break of day.<sup>50</sup> By 9:00 the grenadiers were advancing up to the breach, supported by musket fire from the rest of the assault force. Just short of the breach the attack stalled; the French soldiers sank up to their knees in the "mixture of mud and flooded grass" and were forced to return to their assault positions.<sup>51</sup> The first assault failed and the French retired to the outward siege works and the flooded pits. They had lost 107 men, the allies only 36.<sup>52</sup>

The French troops continued to suffer in the adverse weather with rain being constant until 2 January 1812. General Laval, moved deeply by his soldier's suffering, wrote to Victor on the evening of 1 January declaring, "Our soldiers want to attack to end the suffering...their valor could not conquer the difficulties which surpasses human efforts."<sup>53</sup> On the evening of 2 January, Marshal Victor was able to resume the bombardment and instructed Laval to open a breach in a different position. Laval strongly protested, citing the condition of the men and equipment.<sup>54</sup> However, Victor overrode his protests and the French officers tried to motivate the suffering

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 29.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, pp. 30-31.

<sup>52</sup> Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 334. Fortescue states the French lost 207 men; while Belmas cites only 107 men lost. See Belmas, *Des Sieges*, IV, 31.

<sup>53</sup> Belmas, *Des Sieges*, IV, 55, Laval to Victor, 1 January 1812.

<sup>54</sup> Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 334-5.

troops to continue.<sup>55</sup> The third of January was clear and warmer, and fortunately, the suffering French troops were able to dry their wet clothes and finally to eat since a supply train had arrived.<sup>56</sup> Things were beginning to improve; Victor boasted that if the weather cooperated for a week, then Tarifa would be his.<sup>57</sup> Tragically for the dejected and ailing French troops, the rain began again during the evening of 3 January. The continual and frustrating rain was simply too much to oppose; it was a natural obstacle which could not be overcome with elan or planning.

At this point, Marshal Victor gave up; his soldiers had suffered and worked laboriously with courage; however, they could not overcome the weather. He realized that to stay longer might destroy his weakened force. He gave the order to withdraw on 4 January 1812.<sup>58</sup> His letter to Soult, telling him of his failure and of the extreme suffering of his troops, took over four days to reach him, because of the flooded roads.<sup>59</sup> The evacuation back to Veger was also difficult, the inclement weather continued and many more soldiers and mules were lost to illness. As difficult as the retreat was, it was disciplined and orderly. Grabe, the siege commandant, had to use the equipment for the siege to make bridges so the French could return to the lines at Cadiz.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Belmas, Des Sieges, IV, 33-4.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 35.

<sup>57</sup> Fortescue, British Army, VIII, 335.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. 335. See also Robinson, Bloody Eleventh, I, 327.

<sup>59</sup> Belmas, Des Sieges, IV, 71-72. Victor to Soult, 5 January 1812.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, pp. 35-37.

The town of Tarifa would stay in allied hands until the end of the war.<sup>61</sup> As a consequence of the failed siege, General Ballesteros and his army were able to advance again into Andalusia and plague Soult. The failure at Tarifa seemed to illustrate the vexing problems of fighting against the allies in Andalusia.

The usurpation of command of Skerrett's brigade by Gibraltar's governor did not go unnoticed; Campbell was later admonished by the War Office for his conduct.<sup>62</sup> Wellington felt that the War Office had handled the matter fairly, giving Campbell an official censure, and he did nothing else to Campbell. Cooke was angered at Campbell's affront, he had ordered the brigade back to Cadiz. His complaints justly bore fruit with the War Office's actions.<sup>63</sup>

The unsuccessful French siege of Tarifa was fortunate for the British. If the weather had not been so inclement, the large force under Victor probably would have taken the town. The loss of the siege equipment, 500 men, and the morale drain to the I and IV Corps was severe. The allies had beaten them twice within ten months, and the continuing siege of Cadiz, still lay before them. Belmas's observations seems very appropriate, "And so ended the expedition, which, for fatigue, misery, and maladies, was one of the worst of the war in the Peninsula."<sup>64</sup> Tarifa marked the last external engagement of the French in the siege at Cadiz. Victor, the "Happy Sun,"

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<sup>61</sup> Elements of the 11th Infantry Regiment would stay in Tarifa until April 1812.

<sup>62</sup> Fortescue, *British Army*, VIII, 337.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Belmas, *Des Sieges*, IV, 38.

could not triumph against the inhospitable rain of Andalusia and the seeming luck of the allies.

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE SIEGE IS LIFTED

The allied victory at Tarifa became the last significant French offensive action in their almost twenty-five months of unsuccessful attempts to subjugate Cadiz. The last two years for Victor would be the lowest point in his military career.<sup>1</sup> Napoleon's refusal to allow Victor to depart the depressing siege of Cadiz, the only city in the continental Europe not to have fallen to the French, may have led to Victor's later disloyalty to the Emperor.

The allies in Cadiz realized that the weather had been primarily responsible for the success of Tarifa. The depots of Cadiz continued to grow so regular supply and support for the Spanish Army became more frequent in Andalusia. The Royal Navy continued to relay instructions and equipment to the insurgents along Andalusia's southern coast.<sup>2</sup>

Soult, hoping to rekindle élan in Victor's dispirited Corps, arrived in early February 1812, bringing even larger brass mortars from Seville. He hoped the increased range of 6,000 yard, would cower Cadiz into surrender.<sup>3</sup> The subsequent

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<sup>1</sup> See James R. Arnold's "Le Beau Soleil"-Victor. Napoleon's Marshals. Edited by David Chandler. (New York, 1987) pp. 510-24.

<sup>2</sup> P.R.O., Ad., 2/1373, Captain of the Spark to the Chief of Stores at Gibraltar, 9 January 1812.

<sup>3</sup> Fortescue, British Army, VIII, 384.

bombardments did increase the anxiety of the Spanish citizens, but after two years of minimal casualties, the intended effect was lost.

When Napoleon turned his attention away from the Peninsula and towards Russia in 1812, he began to siphon off combat assets and material for the intended invasion of Russia. Soult found some of his best units transferred to the north, while he was beginning to feel the growing pressure of Wellington. Activity was increasing from the guerrillas who were receiving better and more frequent supplies than his own men. During 1812, Soult was in constant anticipation of an invasion of Andalusia by Wellington. By mid-April intercepted correspondence of Soult's to King Joseph had relayed his fears of having to take the I Corps from the siege lines of Cadiz if Wellington forced him to fight in western Andalusia. The Spanish government was so delighted with Soult's unfortunate musing that debate erupted in the Cortes at what to do if the siege were suddenly raised.<sup>4</sup>

Diplomatic efforts continued in Cadiz. Henry Wellesley, acting as a mediator between the Spanish government and the rebellious Latin American colonies, offered to send a British ship to the colonies with the Cortes's latest proposals of compromise.<sup>5</sup> The Cortes concurred and the frigate Bloom departed on 12 May 1812.<sup>6</sup> The Cadiz recruit training depot, paid for and operated by Great Britain, produced almost 500 trained soldiers a month. Spanish officers, sent to the Isla to be

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<sup>4</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/1, #28, Henry Wellesley to Castlereagh, 12 April 1812.

<sup>5</sup> P.R.O., Adm. 2/1374, #96, Henry Wellesley to the Admiralty, 3 April 1812.

<sup>6</sup> P.R.O., Adm. 2/1374, #202, Cotton to the Admiralty, 12 May 1812.



"trained in the British method", did not take to the training as well as General Doyle, its commandant, had hoped. However, the additions of trained, clothed, and reasonably competent marksman, from the Isla de Leon's training depot made a qualitative impact in the combat readiness of the allied army.

Victor continued the bombardment of Cadiz into July 1812.<sup>7</sup> He was visited by Soult and the exchange between the two marshals was not cordial.<sup>8</sup> An increase in construction activity around the Trocadero indicated that more assault craft were being built.<sup>9</sup> This was in conjunction with renewed French privateer activity around the North African coast and near the Kingdom of Sicily, which puzzled the English Mediterranean command. In response to this naval activity, the Cadiz Squadron commander, Admiral Arthur K. Legge, committed more ships to sea and coastal patrol.<sup>10</sup> His efforts were rewarded with the successful combined action of the British gunbrigs Tuscan and Encounter, against two armed French privateers, loaded with stores and specie.<sup>11</sup> A partial success of a small Spanish gunboat detachment against the French assault craft in the Trocadero channel confirmed Legge's suspicion that the French had not given up on an assault across the Santi Petri channel.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/2, #57, Henry Wellesley to Castlereagh, 5 July 1812.

<sup>8</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/2, #59, Henry Wellesley to Castlereagh, 5 July 1812.

<sup>9</sup> P.R.O., Adm. 1/344, Legge to Martin, 6 July 1812.

<sup>10</sup> P.R.O., Adm. 1/344, General Orders from Legge, 16 July 1812; 1/345, Legge to Henry Wellesley, 15 July 1812.

<sup>11</sup> P.R.O., Adm. 1/345, #33, Legge to the Admiralty, 29 July 1812. Included in his report was a list of British killed and wounded in action along with a battle sketch.

<sup>12</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/2, Henry Wellesley to Castlereagh, 16 July 1812.

the French assault craft in the Trocadero channel confirmed Legge's suspicion that the French had not given up on an assault across the Santi Petri channel.<sup>12</sup>

Allied intelligence confirmed that Soult departed Point St. Mary's on 17 July 1812 to move toward the Portuguese border.<sup>13</sup> He took 5,000 men to face an alleged threat from British General Sir Rowland Hill who was supposedly accompanied by some 15,000 Spanish troops under General Ballesteros. Vital intelligence flowed into Cadiz; the allies had detailed knowledge of each French force in Andalusia. It was rapidly forwarded to Wellington for inclusion in his estimate of the Peninsular situation.<sup>14</sup>

Victor continued the active bombardment of Cadiz; he had accumulated large amounts of powder and shells and his gunners fired "at all points". Allied pickets, posted in the marshes of Leon, informed Cooke that the I Corps, reduced to 11,000 men, was no longer improving positions or repairing battle damage. This was a significant sign. Since February 1810 the French had been busy building and fortifying the almost twenty-five miles of trench works and revetments. Thirty-seven major artillery batteries had been erected and maintained. Numerous powder storage areas had been established. To see the inactivity of the I Corps must have had a significant effect on Cooke and the citizens of Cadiz.

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<sup>12</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/2, Henry Wellesley to Castlereagh, 16 July 1812.

<sup>13</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/2, #61, Henry Wellesley to Castlereagh, 18 July 1812.

<sup>14</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/2, Henry Wellesley to Castlereagh, 8 August 1812.

Victor still had his informants inside Cadiz's walls. Wellesley, as late as 19 July 1812, sent a "secret and confidential" report to Castlereagh on his knowledge of the intrigues of French partisans in Cadiz.<sup>15</sup> In July also, Wellesley informed the Cortes of the unhappy news that the United States of America had declared war on Great Britain.<sup>16</sup> Fortunately for England, her need for ships employed at Cadiz could soon be spared for battle against the surprisingly good American frigates.

As Wellington advanced on Madrid in July of 1812, Soult grew anxious to withdraw north in order to avoid being cut off from the remaining French armies. King Joseph, never a strong general, grew uneasy and ordered Soult to prepare to pull back to Madrid. Wellington, perhaps sensing the evacuation of Andalusia, ordered Cooke to send Skerrett's brigade and additional artillery to Lisbon.<sup>17</sup>

In August, Joseph ordered Madrid evacuated and the allies entered the Spanish capital. The loss of the capital of his kingdom was a deadly blow to Joseph's shaky confidence. He ordered Soult to bring his army north to link up with the army of the center to concentrate against Wellington. King Joseph's order to pull out of Andalusia had followed his order to invade it by two years and eight months.

French bombardment of Cadiz continued until the night before the withdrawal. Early on the morning of 24 August 1812, a Spanish soldier on sentry duty, opposite the Puntales, saw the guns that had fired at his battery for over two years, canted and

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<sup>15</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/2, Henry Wellesley to Castlereagh, 17 August 1812.

<sup>16</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/2, Castlereagh to Henry Wellesley, 16 August 1812.

<sup>17</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 2/1375, #73, Wellington to Cooke, 18 August 1812.

gunners, to light the fuses and permanently disable the guns which had hammered the Isla de Leon for so long. According to a contemporary:

On the 24th, the French broke up the siege; they threw shells during the preceding night; those which were filled with lead and discharged from howitzers with a velocity of about 2,000 feet per second, ranged to the astonishing distance of three miles. They burst their guns by overcharging them, placing their muzzles one against one another and exploding them by means of portfires and trains; and thus almost the whole of their artillery between Chiclana and Rota, consisting of 600 pieces, were rendered unserviceable.<sup>18</sup>

Word that the French had raised the siege was sent to London on the HMS Colombia on 26 August 1812.<sup>19</sup> A British officer, Captain Dallas, an eyewitness in Cadiz, made this observation:

It is impossible to describe the exhilaration of spirits which is excited by a sense of liberty after having been confined within a circle of fortified walls for many weary months. This was the state of the garrison at Cadiz when the retreat of the French left us free to leave our walls, and roam through the open country.<sup>20</sup>

Wellington was pleased with the results of the siege; the large number of relatively fresh soldiers of Cadiz would aid him in augmenting his formidable army.<sup>21</sup> Overland, 5,000 troops under Colonel Skerrett's command marched north to liberate Seville from a small French detachment.<sup>22</sup> Cooke remained at Cadiz, supervising the movement of troops to the interior for Wellington's use and garrison the defensive

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<sup>18</sup> Southey, Peninsular War, III, 533. See also Shand, The War, p. 181.

<sup>19</sup> P.R.O., F.O. 187/2, #76, Cooke to Castlereagh, 26 August 1812.

<sup>20</sup> Alex R.C. Dallas, A Second Portion of My Life, (London, 1860), p. 61.

<sup>21</sup> P.R.O., Adm. 1/345, #54, Wellington to Henry Wellesley, 25 August 1812; #50, Wellington to Cooke, 2 September 1812; #57, Henry Wellesley to Wellington, 29 August 1812.

<sup>22</sup> Dallas, My Life, p. 62.

Overland, 5,000 troops under Colonel Skerrett's command marched north to liberate Seville from a small French detachment.<sup>22</sup> Cooke remained at Cadiz, supervising the movement of troops to the interior for Wellington's use and garrison the defensive works. Wellington explicitly explained to Cooke that the state of repair of the defensive works must be maintained. Wellington was taking no chances. Cadiz was too important to be left lightly defended. If the allies should suffer a disastrous defeat, they could still retreat to Cadiz.<sup>23</sup> Peninsula reversals had happened before.

The British troop strength in Cadiz had reached its zenith with 14,800 soldier and 1,400 Portuguese. Regular Spanish units, excluding the Distinguished Volunteers of Cadiz, numbered 23,000. By 24 September 1812 Cooke had only 4,000 men left in his command. Wellington even asked for (and received) the Royal Marine Rocket gunners, with all appropriate apparatus, for interior service.<sup>24</sup>

The Wellesley triad, Thomas Graham, the Duque of Albuquerque, and along with Admiral Keats were the principal reasons for the failure of the I Corps to take Cadiz. Marshal Victor took his demoralized Corps north to join the remainder of Joseph's army. His two years in Andalusia probably haunted him the rest of his life. He passed away in Paris at the age of 77, while Graham, his chief nemesis, lived to be 96 before finally dying in December 1844 in London.

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<sup>22</sup> Dallas, *My Life*, p. 62.

<sup>23</sup> P.R.O., W.O. 6/44, #93, Wellington to Cooke, 12 September 1812; #95, Wellington to Cooke, 24 September 1812. Wellington Papers, 1/351, Wellington to Henry Wellesley, 9 September 1812.

<sup>24</sup> P.R.O., Adm. 1/345, # 74, Admiralty to Pellow, 30 September 1812.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### CONCLUSION

It can be conjectured that the Peninsular War, begun to enforce the continental system on an uncooperative Portugal, became a primary reason for Napoleon's defeat in Europe. This deadly struggle consumed 300,000 men of the Grande armée and shattered the previous myth of invincibility. As the rise of nationalism in France made possible Napoleon's subsequent rise; the rise of nationalism in Spain and Portugal contributed to its demise.

Spain and Portugal became a festering French sore; never healing yet never bringing the patient to death. Over a period of time, without vigorous treatment, the malady would spread, gradually causing the death of the host. The war in the Peninsula destroyed the previously exalted careers of marshals like Masséna and Marmont. Complete victory for the French was within grasp several times; yet British Army perseverance, the Royal Navy, Napoleon's miscalculations, and simply good fortune allowed the victory to go to Wellington.

If Spain had remained a loyal vassal of France, then total French combat power could have been focused on Portugal. Even if Wellington had managed to hold Portugal, had Spain not also rose in insurrection, Napoleon would have eventually ousted the British completely from Iberia. It can argued that it was a combination of

British commitment, Portuguese courage, and Spanish passion that overwhelmed the French.

Andalusia, and within it Cadiz, became the source of strategic consumption for the French in the Peninsula. At least one corps was employed in its siege works for almost thirty-two months with another Corps was forced to cover the besieging corps. The stalemate in front of Cadiz allowed the Wellesley visionaries to plan and execute a viable political, diplomatic, and military campaign to transform revolutionary Spain into an effective ally.

The amount of money which flowed into Iberia from Great Britain was tremendous. In a later treasury examination in 1829 it was disclosed that Britain had provided 54,179,416 British pounds for Peninsular expenditures.<sup>1</sup> Almost one half of this money came in to or was controlled from Cadiz. Had Cadiz not held out for the duration, directing the operations of the field armies and guerrillas, and giving the war weary British populace and government a focus for ultimate victory in Iberia, Wellington's task would have been more difficult. Another important outcome of the struggle of Cadiz was the birth of the Spanish Constitution of 1812, which was debated, drafted, and adopted in French besieged Cadiz. This Constitution proved to be one of the great achievements of the Spanish insurrection. The liberal constitution helped to spur on change in the reactionary Europe which followed Napoleon's exile. Had the liberal minded Cortes not met, then the subsequent history of Europe might

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<sup>1</sup> Wellington Papers, 9/4/2/1, Report of October 1829, comprised of the years 1809, 1810, 1811, 1812, 1813, and 1814. These monies were a combination of foreign aid, military pay and appropriations, and logistical allowances for local purchases.

have been altered. Cadiz served as an excellent example of early combined and joint allied command. The armies and navies of both Spain and Britain, with varying degrees of success, worked together to defend the Isla de Leon. The introduction of British military procedures and methods into the scared and antiquated Spanish military system increased it's battlefield effectiveness. By opening the Spanish American colonies to Britain, Spain made it possible for England to survive the Continental System, and secure necessary specie to arm the rest of Europe against Napoleon.

Wellington, Castlereagh, Liverpool, Marquess Richard and Henry Wellesley, and other British notables considered the successful defense of Cadiz vital to the defeat of Napoleon. The advice of noted Chinese tactician and strategist Sun Tzu made a germane comment concerning sieges, strangely pertinent to Cadiz:

The lowest is to attack a city. Siege of a city is only done as a last resort. When the enemy has called in its resources and is defending a city, to attack them in this condition is the lowest form of military operation.<sup>2</sup>

Sun Tzu, although dated and without knowledge of future siege complexities, understood that an easy, simple, and quick victory was generally not possible with a siege. Cadiz gave the British a host nation support network to funnel arms, men, and money to support the Spanish insurrection. The failure of the French to take Cadiz contributed to the ultimate failure of Napoleon in the Peninsula, which contributed directly to the disastrous loss in Russia, and later, in the Germanies.

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<sup>2</sup> Sun Tzu, The Art of War, [Translated by Thomas Cleary], (Boston, 1988), pp. 70-71.



APPENDIX 1

**BRITISH FORCES AT THE BATTLE OF BAROSSA OR CHICLANA  
HEIGHTS**

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| 2nd Hussars, K.G.L. (2 Squadrons) .....         | 206         |
| 2 Brigades, Royal Artillery .....               | 200         |
| Detachment, Royal Engineers .....               | 47          |
| Dilke's Brigade                                 |             |
| 2 composite Battalions of Guards                |             |
| 2nd Battalion, 95th Rifles ((2 companies) ..... | 1221        |
| Wheatley's Brigade                              |             |
| 1st Battalion, 28th Rgt (flank companies)       |             |
| 2nd Battalion, 67th Rgt.                        |             |
| 2nd Battalion, 28th Rgt.                        |             |
| 20th Portuguese (2 companies) .....             | 1764        |
| Barnard's Battalion                             |             |
| 2nd Battalion, 47th Rgt. (2 companies)          |             |
| 3rd Battalion, 95th Rifles (4 companies) .....  | 594         |
| Browne's Battalion                              |             |
| 1st Battalion, 9th Rgt. (2 companies)           |             |
| 1st Battalion, 28th Rgt. (2 companies)          |             |
| 2nd Battalion, 82nd Rgt. (2 companies) .....    | 475         |
| 1st Company, Royal Staff Corps .....            | 33          |
| <b>TOTAL .....</b>                              | <b>5100</b> |

Source: A History of the British Army. Fortescue, J. William, (London, 1917). VIII, 41.

APPENDIX 2

**ALLIED FORCES AT THE SIEGE OF TARIFA**

| <u>SPANISH</u>                                | <u>Officers</u> | <u>Men</u>   |
|---|-----------------|--------------|
| Infantry .....                                | 67              | 1073         |
| Artillery .....                               | 5               | 101          |
| Sappers .....                                 | 4               | 79           |
| Cavalry .....                                 | 1               | 16           |
| <b>Total Forces</b>                           | <b>77</b>       | <b>1,269</b> |
| <br><u>BRITISH</u>                            |                 |              |
| Light Companies, 11/Infantry Regiment         |                 |              |
| Light Companies, 2/47th Infantry Regiment     |                 |              |
| Detachment, 82nd Line                         |                 |              |
| Detachment, 2/87th Line                       |                 |              |
| 1st Company, 2/95th Rifles                    |                 |              |
| Detachment, Royal Artillery                   |                 |              |
| Detachment, 2nd Hussars, King's German Legion |                 |              |
| <b>Total Forces</b>                           | <b>67</b>       | <b>1,707</b> |
| <b>Grand Total-Allied Forces</b>              | <b>144</b>      | <b>2,976</b> |

Source: William J. Fortescue, History of the British Army. VIII, 330.

### APPENDIX 3

#### LIST OF BRITISH MILITARY AID GIVEN TO THE CADIZ GOVERNMENT FOR DISTRIBUTION

|                            |                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Artillery .....            | 342 pieces      |
| Artillery ammunition ..... | 128,040 rounds  |
| Muskets .....              | 22,141 each     |
| Carbine .....              | 2,600 each      |
| Rifles .....               | 2,600 each      |
| Pistols .....              | 5,640 each      |
| Swords .....               | 87,229 each     |
| Pikes .....                | 68,530 each     |
| Accoutrements .....        | 99,000 each     |
| Cartridges .....           | 43,385,455 each |
| Balls .....                | 8,459,142 each  |
| Powder barrel .....        | 28,924 each     |
| Flints .....               | 3,996,500 each  |

Source: John M. Sherwig. Guineas and Gunpowder. (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1973), p. 237. Data extracted from P.R.O., F.O. 63/120, 28 February 1811.

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