

Wellington's Peninsular War

Scenario design notes

Wellington's Peninsular War (or WPW for short) is the second Peninsular War game and a follow-up title to Bonaparte's Peninsular War (or BPW). Whereas BPW focussed primarily on the French attempts to conquer Portugal and culminated, chronologically, with the British capture of Badajoz in April 1812, this second game covers the subsequent Allied attempts to drive the French out of the Peninsular and into southern France itself. Since, geographically the first game was principally concerned with Portugal rather than the entire Peninsular conflict, this second title also includes a fair amount of pre-1812 material, in particular the battle of Coruna and Suchet's battles in Eastern Spain.

There are several new optional rule gameplay features which have been introduced into the Napoleonic series with this title. **Movement Threat Disorder** means that units moving in proximity to good order enemy troops – in particular enemy cavalry – may become disordered or even rout. This feature works in the same way as attempting to change formation in the vicinity of the enemy, so the greater the threat and the lower quality the unit making the test, the more likely it is to become disrupted. The main reason for introducing this feature was that previously gamers were able to move infantry units – including even “E” quality militia in line formation – right up next to an enemy cavalry unit with total impunity. While the feature enables cavalry within charge range to exert this threat, it also allows guns and un-disordered infantry to exert a similar threat at close range, representing the potential reluctance of troops to approach the enemy until he had been “softened up.”

In addition, several new features have been carried over from the recent Seven Years War title. These include the **No Detached Melee** optional rule, which prevents out of command units from initiating offensive melees, while units defending in Melee now fire at 100% effectiveness. Also melees across a hex-side or into a hex that would cause Disorder results in the same Melee penalty as if the unit was already disordered. In addition, **Command Ranges** now apply to all organizations including Corps, Wing and Army. Clearly all of these new features will have an impact on gameplay and, overall, will no doubt shift the advantage away from the attacker, especially one who tends to launch rapid direct frontal assaults on un-disrupted enemy formations.

For gamers who are not already familiar with Bonaparte's Peninsular War I'd also like to point out that while there are standard scenarios with the familiar 15 minute turns, pdt fire-factor values and gun batteries, I felt it would give gamers more choice if I also created variant scenarios of most of the battles using an alternative pdt with 10 minute turns and also incorporating a number of other changes to the pdt values. These include a cavalry charge factor of 5 instead of 3, but with reduced cavalry stacking to compensate. Infantry stacking is also reduced and fire factors increased, so firepower will be more effective and the use of melee tactics more difficult, especially against fresh, undisrupted units. The fatigue and movement parameters are also different and the line movement disorder values are slightly increased.

Apart from the use of an alternative pdt, players will also notice other differences in the variant scenarios, notably the use of gun sections instead of batteries. Gamers familiar with the ACW series will already have encountered gun sections, but for those who only play the Napoleonic series I'll outline the reasons why I felt that the introduction of gun sections was worthwhile. Firstly, most batteries contained several different gun types and breaking them down into sections allowed the howitzer element to be represented. Secondly, gun sections were sometimes deployed independently, so this permits a more accurate deployment of the guns. Thirdly, from a gameplay perspective, batteries can't easily stack with large infantry units and – especially since there's no “gun capture” feature in this series - are more vulnerable to enemy cavalry. In contrast, gun sections can be deployed in adjacent hexes and their field of fire can cover more ground.

Due to the hilly, sometimes mountainous terrain of the Peninsular theatre, the elevation levels vary from scenario to scenario and this is reflected in the pdt combat penalties as well as the elevation movement cost and this can have a significant impact on gameplay. For instance, whereas in some scenarios such as Maria, Belchite and Cardadeu, there are 10m elevation levels and the combat penalty is just -10%, in other scenarios such as Castalla and Vitoria there are 25m or 30m map elevations and the penalty is -25%. The mountainous Somosierra scenario has 50m elevations and a heavy combat penalty of -50%. So, since this penalty can vary a lot and may potentially make attacking uphill extremely difficult in a handful of battles, it is worthwhile checking this value in the Parameter Data file when starting a scenario.

- Richard White

Notes on the Orders of Battle

For a game with so many individual battles represented, there was an inevitable need for a large number of separate orders of battle, covering the armies of four different nations over five years of war. Unlike the first game in this series, Bonaparte's Peninsular War, I was working on the OOB research and composition from scratch and the result was that it was possible to standardise the approach to a far greater level. One thing that has been done throughout has been to include not just the troops that took part in a given action on the day, but also those that were in the area but unengaged, or part of the organisation of one of the forces deployed even though not involved in the campaign in question. For example, the OOB file for the Battle of Vitoria includes the British 6th Division along with the whole of the Spanish IV Ejército and Ejército de Reserva de Andalucía even though nearly all of these troops were deployed elsewhere; likewise, the whole of the French Armées du Nord and de Portugal are present in the OOB even though nearly all of the former and a large part of the latter were likewise not on the field. There are also a number of OOB files included for battles that have not made it into the final game release. Possibly these will be added in later updates, but for the moment, since the files exist, they – and the extra troops in the core OOB files – can be used by players to create what-if scenarios of their own. This is aided by the fact that some of the terrain that was fought over in 1808 was again fought over in 1812-1813, so if players want to create a battle around Vitoria in 1808, or at Burgos in 1813, the means exist to do so.

It should also be noted that all orders of battle are set up with the artillery units available either both as a full battery, and in sections of 1-3 guns. There are also a few variants where a departure from the usual forms have been employed to reflect the circumstances of a particular action. Thus, the Corunna Campaign OOB has the cavalry in squadrons rather than regiments, to better replicate the small cavalry actions at the beginning of that campaign; a similar approach has been employed for the Somosierra OOB where the French cavalry was deployed in individual squadrons in its famous uphill charge, and likewise for Garcia Hernandez to better replicate the charge of the KGL heavy dragoons (that OOB also uses the brigade level to represent regiments, and the division to represent brigades, so as to allow for more command levels in what would otherwise be a very 'flat' organisational structure for a small action). Lastly, a company-level version of the Battle of Maya has been included. In this, as with the company level scenarios in Bonaparte's Peninsular War, the full range of command structures from wings to brigades has been utilised. Thus, a brigade is now a battalion; a division is now a regiment; a corps is now a brigade, and a wing is now a division. Where known, commanders' names have been given down to the battalion level, but there are a fair few "Anon"s in there too. Grenadier companies have been given guard attributes, light companies light attributes. It will be noticed in the case of the Portuguese Caçadore battalions that distinction is made between musket-armed companies and the rifle-armed Attiradores; in the battalion-scale scenarios, this mix of weapon types is given a code of its own.

Many of the sources for the Spanish orders of battle give organisation down only to divisional level, particularly for the early years of the war. In a few instances, this has been retained and there is no brigade echelon. For the most part, though, to make it easier for the player to control their troops, and to aid the AI scripting, a brigade structure has been incorporated even when it is not 100% certain if that is how troops were organised. In these cases, troops of the same type, or troops that were known to have fought alongside one-and-other, have been brigaded together. For the most part, though, and to a greater extent than in Bonaparte's Peninsular War (which recreated the Spanish forces in 1809-1811 when their organisation was at its most confused) it has been possible to identify the correct brigade structure. If the sources for the battle give the names of brigadiers as well (not always the case), these have of course been used; if not, the senior regimental commander (if known) or at least a known regimental commander from the brigade, has been given the brigadier's slot: only if none of these options is possible has recourse been made to "Col. Anon".

As with details of brigading and other aspects of minor organisation, the sources are varied when it comes to giving unit strengths. My initial reason for becoming involved in this pair of Peninsular games was my having offered the use of data on British Army unit strengths collated as part of the research for my doctorate. This data is now available online at http://www.napoleon-series.org/military/organization/Britain/Strength/Bamford/c_BritishArmyStrengthStudyIntroduction.html (and, for those who are interested, the doctorate has since been turned into a book published by the University of Oklahoma Press under the title *Sickness, Suffering, and the Sword*). This set of data meant that I had no difficulty in providing accurate unit strengths for all British units in the game, although since it was taken from monthly returns I have only used my own data on those

occasions where there is no printed source for the actual strength on the day of a given action.

For the other armies, things were more difficult unless it was possible to obtain a printed order of battle with unit strengths for the action or campaign in question. The George Nafziger collection was particularly useful in this regard, particularly for the French, and Wellington's *Dispatches* and *Supplementary Despatches* also contain a lot of useful strength data for the British and Portuguese. Otherwise, for the most part, data in Oman's *History of the Peninsular War* and the Spanish Army's own 1822 listing, *Estados de la Organizacion y Fuerza de los Ejercitos Espanoles Beligerantes en la Peninsula, Durante la Guerra Espana contra Bonaparte*, meant that divisional totals at least could be made accurate, but thereafter there are some cases where exact unit strengths have had to be estimated. In these cases, attention has been paid to the known strength of units at an earlier or later stage in the relevant campaign, and total divisional strength allocated to sub-units in rough proportion. For Spanish irregulars, a larger amount of educated guesswork has inevitably been deployed.

Another vexed issue has been that of unit quality ratings and allocation of unit type capabilities. Different approaches have been taken for different armies, reflecting differing experiences of the war and different experiences of manpower management.

In a sense, the simplest and most consistent army is the French, product of a centrally organised military system with the conscripted manpower resources of the Empire at its disposal. That said, the Peninsula was – apart from a few months in late 1808 and early 1809 when Napoleon deigned to grace it with his presence – a secondary theatre of war, and the resources that it received were frequently commensurate with that. Thus, for the bulk of the conflict elite units such as the Old Guard and the cuirassier and carabinier regiments of the Reserve Cavalry were rarely if ever seen south of the Pyrenees. Elements of the Young Guard and Guard Cavalry did serve with the Armée du Nord in 1811 and 1812, but saw little action, and a handful of heavy cavalry detachments served in the earliest campaigns. Otherwise, the blue-coated line and light infantry and the green-coated dragoons and chasseurs made up the bulk of the French forces in the Peninsula, with only the odd foreign unit or gaudily-dressed hussar regiment to add a splash of colour. Thus, for the most part, the French armies seen in these games are solid, homogenous, but rarely outstanding forces. An exception are those forces that served on the East Coast of Spain, where a far greater proportion of the units came from France's allies and satellites. Quality of these units ranges from the well-thought-of Vistula Legion, through the army of the Kingdom of Italy which was generally on a par with its French equivalents, down to a decidedly mediocre Westphalian division and the Neapolitan contingent of which the less said the better. In the final campaigns of 1813 and 1814, elements of the Chasseurs de Montagne and Garde Nationale will be encountered; some of the former were also converted into regular infantry so there are occasions where a regular battalion will appear in the brown Chasseurs de Montagne uniform. Lastly, French commanders expecting to be able to blast their way to victory with massed cannon will need to think again; far less artillery was available in the Peninsula than in central Europe, and such as was to be had was frequently of a smaller calibre, with even

foot batteries still fielding 4pdr cannon in many cases. Up until 1813, batteries were often of mixed calibres and fielded fewer than the regulation number of guns; the reorganised and re-equipped armies under Soult in the final months of the war had more homogenous batteries, but mostly composed of lighter pieces.

In the case of the Spanish, early scenarios show a sharp distinction between units of the old regular army – often weak, but generally of average or good quality – and the mass of newly raised units. The Provincial Militia, it may be noted, were effectively regulars and have been treated as such. A good sense of the distinctions can be found in the Ejército de Galicia in the 1808 Campaign OOB, with some of the best Spanish regulars in La Romana's division comparing with recently-raised Asturian levies. Spanish armies with a decent core of regulars could often give a good account of themselves, but those with a higher proportion of new troops, such as Palafox's Ejército de Aragón, were prone to crumble in the open field and only fought with any success behind fortifications. As time went on, the regulars became diluted by replacement manpower whilst the quality of the surviving volunteers began to marginally improve. However, frequent defeats and reorganisations meant that by 1810 things had reached something of a nadir. The army that was trained at Cadiz in 1810 and 1811, which was blooded at Barossa and Albuera (for which, see Bonaparte's Peninsular War), indicates the first instance of an across-the-board improvement in quality, although this is seen hand-in-hand with the disappearance of much of the substantial forces of cavalry and artillery that can be found in the earlier campaigns. However, the bulk of these troops were then sent to take part in the doomed defence of Valencia, and were lost when that city fell in early 1812. However, that year also saw the emergence of the VI Ejército, operating out of Galicia; reinforced and renumbered as the IV Ejército in 1813, this force formed the backbone of the Spanish contingent operating alongside Wellington's Anglo-Portuguese through to the end of the war. The continuation of this process of rejuvenation can be seen in the armies fielded elsewhere in the 1813 and 1814 campaigns, by which time the process of retraining, reorganisation, and re-equipment was largely complete, and the best of the irregular forces and their commanders had been taken into the line.

For the British, there is a tendency to assume that the solid veteran force that Wellington had shaped by the end of the Peninsular War serves as an accurate reflection of the British Army throughout that conflict. In fact, the British Army collectively, and each unit within it individually, had a substantial learning curve to undergo upon deploying to the Peninsula. This related not only to combat performance, but also to coping with the climatic conditions, food, and water of the Iberian Peninsula. Thus, many British units suffered an initial dip in quality on arriving in the theatre before increasing experience began to put things right. It should also be understood that there was a definite distinction in the British Army between the first and second battalions of a regiment. Unlike the continental model, multiple battalions of a regiment did not typically serve together; rather, the first was supposed to be available for overseas service whilst the second remained at home. In reality, however, not all regiments could even raise a second battalion, whilst those that did often found that they were obliged to send it on service as well as the first. Whether a regiment had one, two, or more battalions on active service naturally had a bearing on how many recruits the regimental depot would be able to send

to each of those battalions, with junior battalions – such as the 3/1st and 3/27th, from regiments whose first and second battalions were also on active service – sometimes having to make do with very limited resources. The very first contingent of troops that were sent to Portugal in 1808 were the pick of the Army, but thereafter other theatres of war had priority and it was not until 1810 and 1811 that Wellington again obtained first call on Britain's resources. Thus, many of the battalions sent out in 1809 and 1810 were inexperienced second battalions, which took time to evolve into the veteran units they eventually became. Another batch of new units arrived from late 1813 onwards, and were grouped into a special 'nursery' brigade under Lord Aylmer where they could be employed in second-line roles whilst gaining experience. Finally, some regiments and battalions were known problem units, some of which were eventually sent home, whilst others remained in-theatre but could not be entirely counted upon – the badly-led 2nd, and the notoriously sickly 1/26th and 77th here come to mind. In reflecting this, as well as the well-known excellence of some other units such as the 52nd, 71st and 88th, the orders of battle give the British commander a collection of units far more mixed in size and quality than those found in the armies of the other nations featured in this game.

Of course, the army that Wellington led in the Peninsula was not strictly the British Army at all, but rather an Anglo-Portuguese army. The original Portuguese Army had been disbanded on Junot's orders after his 1807 invasion of the country, and many of its troops were incorporated into the French service (some of them, indeed, fought at the sieges of Saragossa, and can be found in the French OOB for the siege). During the course of the insurrection and eventual liberation of the following year, many of the disbanded regiments began to re-form, and became the nucleus of a revived national army. During the defence of Portugal 1809-1811, covered in Bonaparte's Peninsular War, much reliance was placed on the Milicia and Ordenanza as second- and third-line forces but these home-defence forces remained behind and were not involved in the offensive campaigns of 1812-1814 covered in this game. By this time, the quality of the regulars was good, but manpower remained a problem, as did finding sufficient horses for the cavalry, so most Portuguese units are small- to medium-sized.

Other allies can be found in the scenarios featuring the British on the east Coast of Spain, where Italian troops in British service can be encountered as well as elements of the army of the Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

National characteristics aside, most allocations of unit type within the coding of the OOB files are fairly self-explanatory. Guards units get type G (or F – two ranks – for the British); light units get type V (U for the British), and so forth. Some Spanish unit nomenclature does confuse this; Voluntarios, for example, could signify regular light infantry (eg, *Voluntarios de Navarra*); regular line infantry (eg *Voluntarios de la Corona*); or new volunteers (eg *1^a Voluntarios de Sevilla*). Care has been taken to establish which were which, generally using Partridge and Oliver's *Napoleonic Army Handbook* as a guide. The émigré Chasseurs Britanniques serving under Wellington were organised – name notwithstanding – as a line infantry battalion and are therefore coded as such; conversely, in the 1808 campaign, the 20th Foot had been put through light infantry training by their then commanding officer, Robert Ross, and are accordingly coded as

lights. Foreign regiments in French service were, at least nominally, light infantry and have been coded as such unless, as with the case of the *4e Etranger* (ex-*Regiment de Prusse*) their combat reputation suggests this to be unwarranted.

Artillery has been coded as foot or horse depending on designation, with anything below 8pdrs being classed as light artillery. Players will also encounter British Congreve Rockets in some of the late-war scenarios, as well as a variety of siege guns, mortars, and carronades.

Cavalry coding for the most part is self-explanatory, with units being set as heavies or lights depending on designation. The K type Cossack cavalry has been used for some Spanish irregular or newly-raised units, reflecting a limited combat effectiveness. The Portuguese had only generic cavalry, which has been coded as light to reflect its usage. Light cavalry is generally coded to have carbines, thus permitting a limited mounted fire capacity.

The one point where some difference will be seen between the cavalry of the different armies is the way in which dragoon regiments have been coded, reflecting different usages of the term. Only the French have received the type D dragoon coding, allowing a small bonus in melee and also conferring the ability to dismount. It should be noted that in the current game engine there is nothing to prevent type D dragoons from using their muskets to deliver fire whilst mounted, but this should be avoided as ahistorical. This coding reflects the French usage of dragoons as all-purpose cavalry for much of the Peninsular War: with only a handful of heavy cavalry in the form of detachments of the Guard Cavalry and some provisional heavy cavalry units in the earliest campaigns (the survivors of which would eventually form the famed *13e Cuirassiers* under Suchet) French dragoon regiments had to be used as heavy battle cavalry when necessary, but also for other duties. The British, by contrast, focussed to a greater degree on the mounted charge, and to all intents and purposes their regiments of dragoons and dragoon guards (the latter not guard units as such, but converted from the last of the old 18th Century regiments of heavy horse) were their heavy cavalry. Thus, these regiments have received the type H coding which should give them a justified edge over French dragoons in combat. The Salamanca campaign was the moment of glory for these regiments, with Le Marchant's Brigade at Salamaca itself and Bock's at Garcia Hernandez both proving their worth. Thereafter, although even larger numbers of British heavies were deployed to the Peninsula, including the Household Brigade, the terrain over which the 1813 and 1814 battles were fought offered few opportunities for large-scale mounted action. With the Spanish, on the other hand, things have gone the opposite way and dragoons are treated as light cavalry. This reflects both the poor quality of Spanish horseflesh, and the various schemes in motion at the outbreak of the war to convert these regiments into light horse. However, the graphics for the game have been set up so as to allow the option of using the D coding for Spanish dragoons if desired so as to give the small melee advantage and the ability to dismount should a particular historical example warrant it, and this has been used on a small number of occasions where the troops were deployed in an urban environment.

Historical Background

The Peninsular War was one of the longest and most drawn-out campaigns of the Napoleonic War; a piece of Imperial regime-change designed to close off the last European ports open to British trade, which instead developed into the ‘Spanish Ulcer’ that sapped the strength of Napoleon’s empire and left him to fight a two-front war that would ultimately destroy him.

From the outset, it was clear that it would be impossible to incorporate all the actions of this conflict into a single game. It also quickly became apparent that neither a strictly chronological, nor a strictly geographic, distinction could be made to divide the war into two manageable portions. The first title in this series, ‘Bonaparte’s Peninsular War’ focussed on the defence of Portugal from the three successive French efforts to capture that country in 1807-08, 1809, and 1810-11, with the last of these campaigns also including the fighting for the strategically vital border fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo, Almeida, and Badajoz during 1811 and early 1812, as the allies began to shift back to the offensive. In addition, that title also included the battles fought in Spain in the immediate aftermath of the uprising of 1808, and the battles fought in south-western Spain during 1809 and 1810.

This second title completes the picture. The focus is on four main campaigns. Firstly, that of late-1808 into January 1809 when Napoleon intervened in the Peninsula in person and led the veterans of the Grande Armée to join the survivors of his failed first invasion attempt and sought to crush the armies of the Spanish Juntas and the British under Sir John Moore who sought to come to their aid. The climax of this campaign was the French capture of Madrid and Moore’s posthumous victory at Corunna which bought time to evacuate his troops. The next campaign is that by the French to secure Eastern Spain, culminating, after a series of initial setbacks, with Suchet’s advance from Saragossa to Valencia over the course of 1809-1812, snapping up fortresses and defeating the armies that were sent to cover them. His victory, however, was never entirely complete and 1813-1814 in this theatre saw British troops land to aid the resurgent Spanish forces. The last two campaigns represent Wellington’s attempts to liberate Spain. The first of these, in 1812, saw what was arguably his greatest battlefield victory at Salamanca but ultimately ended with overstretch and a dangerous retreat back to Portugal. The second, launched in the summer of 1813, saw the combined French armies crushed at Vitoria followed by an advance that eventually took the allies over the Pyrenees to Bayonne and Toulouse. Also included in the game are a small number of standalone battles that fall outside the main four campaigns, most notably the 1806 Battle of Maida – fought in Italy rather than Spain, this nevertheless saw many future Peninsular commanders and was the first British victory against the French since the conclusion of the Egyptian campaign five years previously.

The following historical background is intended to introduce the nature and course of the war as a whole, and to sum up the background to the campaigns covered in this second Peninsular title. Battles and sieges highlighted in **bold** are featured in the game.

Prelude – The Maida Campaign

In 1806, Napoleon's forces occupied the mainland portion of the Bourbon Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (Naples), which became the French satellite Kingdom of Naples. Under the French, the throne was given firstly to Joseph Bonaparte and then, after he was 'promoted' to the poisoned chalice of the Spanish crown, to Marshal Murat. The Bourbon rulers evacuated to the island of Sicily and ruled there with British help whilst the island itself became a jumping-off point for British expeditions around the Mediterranean. Later adventures took elements of this force to Eastern Spain, but the first operations were against the Italian mainland where an insurgency had broken out in Calabria. To draw French troops away from the insurgents, a division-sized force was landed on the Calabrian coast on 30 June 1806. Commanded by Major General John Stuart, subordinate officers included future Peninsula divisional commanders Lowry Cole and John Oswald, and future brigade commanders James Kempt, Wroth Acland, and Robert Ross. Sent to deal with the British were three French brigades under *Général de Division* Reynier, later a Peninsular corps commander. The two armies clashed on the morning of 4 July. Although for many years the action was held up as the first example of British line versus French column, more recent research has demonstrated that the French in fact deployed in line to attack the British light infantry on Stuart's right flank and were defeated in a line vs line battle. A second French attack, against the British centre, also collapsed and Reynier's forces were broken and dispersed. In the grand scheme of things little was achieved – the British soon withdrew to Sicily and the insurgency was crushed for the time being, but the British feeling of moral ascendancy over the French that had begun with Abercromby's victory in Egypt was reinforced.

The Peninsular War – Background

Napoleon's interest in the Iberian Peninsula stemmed from his desire to close Europe's ports to British trade as part of his Continental System. The campaigns of 1806-07 had secured this objective so far as northern Europe was concerned, but Portugal remained outside the French orbit. Napoleon's initial plan called for cooperation with the Spanish in a campaign against Portugal, in which venture he was able to obtain the apparent cooperation of the power behind the Spanish throne, Manuel Godoy. In November 1807, a French army under *Général de Division* Andoche Junot invaded Portugal in cooperation with Spanish troops; Junot pushed his men hard to get them to Lisbon, but the Portuguese managed to stay one step ahead and their fleet and royal family were evacuated to Brazil, safely out of Napoleon's clutches. Nevertheless, the country was occupied, its army disbanded, and Napoleonic hegemony over Europe apparently secure.

Then, however, the Emperor turned his gaze to Spain. Napoleon had strong suspicions, not without reason, that the Spanish had been preparing to turn against him had his campaigns of 1806 and 1807 gone badly for the French. The Spanish Bourbons had little love for the French – who had, after all, executed their kinsman Louis XVI less than twenty years before – and there was growing unease as more and more French troops poured into Spain, ostensibly as part of the war effort against Portugal, but in practice showing no sign of moving on that country, and taking great interest in Spain's own fortresses. King Carlos IV was widely regarded as a fool, with the real power being Godoy, who was both chief minister and lover of the Queen Maria-Luisa. Far more

popular was the young heir, Prince Fernando, which led to Madrid becoming a hotbed of plots and counterplots between the various royal factions. These conspiracies eventually saw Godoy dismissed and Carlos abdicate in favour of Fernando, only to retract his abdication and appeal to Napoleon for help. Calling the Spanish royal family to Bayonne, Napoleon had the whole pack of them arrested and handed the throne of Spain to his brother Joseph, brought in from Naples.

Before Joseph could arrive, however, the Spanish had risen in revolt. Beginning with the Dos de Mayo uprising in Madrid, ruthlessly suppressed by Marshal Murat's French troops, the revolt spread like wildfire throughout Spain, with local Juntas establishing themselves, assuming regional power, and beginning to organise military forces with which to meet the French. Refusing to accept the settlement made at Bayonne, they recognised Fernando VII as their king, even though he remained a prisoner of the French; this lack of central authority meant that, for a time at least, each region of Spain directed its own war effort through its own Junta. In Portugal, too, resistance grew and, with British aid, the French were evicted. Thus, by October the French were back behind the line of the Ebro and the Spanish armies were massing against them whilst the British, having cleared Portugal, were preparing to join them. At this point, enter Napoleon...

1808 Spanish Campaign

For the campaign that was meant to decide the war in the Peninsula, Napoleon mustered an Armée d'Espagne of six corps plus the Imperial Guard and a cavalry reserve. Of the line corps, I, V, and VI were veteran formations from the Grande Armée and IV Corps had a veteran division as well as two divisions of Poles, Germans, and Dutch. II and III Corps were the survivors of the original invasion force, to which would be added VIII Corps made up of the troops evacuated from Portugal after Junot's defeat. The various forces operating on the east coast of Spain were denominated VII Corps but to all intents and purposes remained separate. Napoleon had over 200,000 troops available, with more coming up in reserve.

The Spanish, meanwhile, had substantial numbers of troops massing on the line of the Ebro but these formed the armies of the various insurgent Juntas and there was no overall control. The British under Moore were marching up from Portugal and another contingent under Sir David Baird had been landed at Corunna. Napoleon therefore sought to destroy the Spanish armies before either the Spanish reserves or the British could reach the front. However, Marshal Lefebvre, commanding IV Corps, made a premature attack against Blake's Ejército de Galicia at **Zornoza** (Pancorbo) on 31 October. Although defeated the Spanish were able to withdraw and regroup and thus the northern wing of Napoleon's advance was compromised from the outset. Reinforced by a veteran division under La Romana that had been deployed to Denmark but evacuated back to Spain by the Royal Navy, Blake was even able to counterattack and struck against Marshal Victor at Valmaseda on 5 November; however, Victor was out for revenge and eventually defeated Blake in a two-day battle at **Espinosa de los Monteros** 10-11 November. The surviving Galicians fell back into their home province, where La Romana replaced Blake.

Meanwhile, the Ejercito de Extremadura was defeated on 10 November at **Gamonal**, near Burgos, by a French force under Bessieres in an action which was marked on the Spanish side by the desperate rearguard fight put up by the guards regiments of the old regular army. This cleared the way for a French advance towards Madrid, with the final obstacle being the mountains of the Sierra de Guadarama. These Napoleon sought to force at the **Somosierra Pass** in the famous action of 30 November wherein elements of the Polish Chevauxlégers of the Imperial Guard charged uphill to over-run Spanish batteries whilst infantry worked up the slopes on either side. The Spanish defending force of 9,000 men was defeated and the road to Madrid was open to Napoleon's troops.

There was, however, no rest to be had in the conquered capital for Moore had united the various elements of his force at Salamanca and marched north-east to attack Soult's French II Corps. Cancelling the attack when it became apparent how isolated the British were now that the Spanish had been driven back, Moore sought to withdraw whilst Napoleon force-marched reinforcements to aid Soult. The British got the better of two cavalry actions at Sahagun and Benavente – in the latter, defeating the Imperial Guard Chasseurs à Cheval and capturing their general – but fell back thereafter into the Galician mountains. A number of smaller actions were fought, some in conjunction with La Romana's rallied Spaniards, before the British were able to reach the ports of Vigo and Corunna. The small force of light infantry sent to the former was got off without interference, but Moore had to turn and fight outside the walls of **Corunna** in order to buy time for the Royal Navy to embark his men. On 16 January, the British successfully defeated Soult's attacks but Moore was mortally wounded in the process and died before the last of his men could be taken onboard ship.

The strong resistance by the Galicians and British had compromised the northern element of Napoleon's advance and had drawn a substantial portion of the French forces into northern Spain such that they would begin the campaigns of 1809 (covered in Bonaparte's Peninsular War) divided and dislocated. Meanwhile, resistance to the southern prong of the French advance was also held up by determined resistance at **Zaragoza**. There had already been one attempt to capture this city during the initial French invasion (covered in this game, since it was entirely separate from the other French operations at this time covered in Bonaparte's Peninsular War). Although there were few regular Spanish troops available, the populace was rallied by a young guards officer, José de Palafox, who was proclaimed Captain-General of Aragon and led an active defence. Although the French broke into the city in August 1808, they could not subdue the populace and were eventually compelled to withdraw as part of the response to the French defeat at Bailen. Palafox's forces then formed the nucleus of a large, but very raw, Ejercito de Aragon which he led in the autumn/winter campaign.

Palafox's forces, along with elements of the Ejercito del Centro under Castanos, the victor of Bailen, formed the right wing of the Spanish armies resisting Napoleon's drive into Spain. Facing them was the French III Corps under Marshal Moncey and – initially – parts of Marshal Ney's VI Corps. These troops were collectively placed under the command of Marshal Lannes. Initially, Moncey had been deployed with orders simply to pin the Spanish in place while the main French attack went in against the troops in the

north; having arrived with reinforcements, Lannes was now able to take the offensive and struck the Spanish at **Tudela**, on the Ebro, on 23 November. Castanos, in over-all command as the senior officer present, had superior numbers but Palafox's army failed to successfully cooperate and was slow in coming to his aid. The result was a Spanish line with substantial gaps that the French were able to exploit, leading to an impressive victory for Lannes. The surviving Spanish fled in two directions, with Palafox's forces, along with detachments cut off from Castanos' army, seeking shelter in Zaragoza which now came under siege for a second time.

The **Second Siege of Zaragoza** would rightly become an epic of the Spanish struggle for liberation. For three months, from 20 December 1808 until 20 February 1809 when the city finally fell, the French struggled to take Zaragoza in the face of a desperate resistance inspired by Palafox's cry of 'War to the Knife'. Lannes had Moncey's III Corps and his own former V Corps which was now under Marshal Mortier, along with an impressive engineering train and heavy guns. Even so, it took nearly a month to clear the Spanish outworks, and then a further month to breach the walls. Finally, on 27 January, Lannes ordered a massed assault which stormed through the breaches and into the city. By rights, surrender should have followed. Instead, the Spanish continued to resist. Only by occupying a block of houses at a time – usually achieved only by reducing them to rubble – could the French advance within the city. As the dead piled up, sickness ravaged both armies and the civilian inhabitants. When Palafox, himself dangerously ill, finally sued for terms on 20 February some 54,000 people were dead.

East Coast of Spain - Catalonia

As noted above, the French forces operating on the East Coast of Spain – the Corps d'Observation des Pyrenees Orientales of the original 1808 invasion force which eventually became VII Corps of the Armée d'Espagne – were to all intents and purposes operating in a separate theatre of war, detached from the main struggle. With a few exceptions, when troops were shifted from one theatre to another, this distinction was maintained for much of the war. This element of the first and second French invasions of Spain is therefore to all intents and purposes a single campaign and is covered in full in this game.

The initial invasion by Général de Division Duhesme's two-division Corps d'Observation was successful in seizing Barcelona but ran into trouble soon thereafter as the Spanish recovered from the shock that followed the French coup. On 6 June a sizeable French force was defeated by a small Spanish force of irregulars at **El Bruch**. When the French returned on the 14th they found that the Spanish too had been reinforced and the result was a second defeat. Duhesme now sought to secure his communications back to France by seizing **Girona**, 60 miles to the north. He was unable to capture the city and fell back to Barcelona, where his corps was effectively trapped until reinforcements could arrive from France.

The first of these reinforcements comprised a division under Général de Division Reille. However, Reille's initial objective was to capture the coastal citadel of **Roses**. Although small, the Spanish garrison put up a stiff fight, aided by gunfire support and landing

parties from Royal Navy warships, and the siege lasted nearly a month – from 7 November to 5 December 1808 – before Roses fell. By this time, Général de Division Gouvion St Cyr had arrived to take over command of the French forces in the area but the delay at Roses meant that it was now a matter of urgency to relieve Duhesme at Barcelona. The time had also allowed the Spanish to bring regular troops across from the Balearic Islands, and these, along with new levies and the local irregulars, allowed the formation of a sizeable field army commanded by Juan Miguel de Vives. Rather than waste more time by attacking Gerona, Gouvion St Cyr marched inland to swing around the Spanish strongpoint and march directly on Barcelona. Vives met him at **Cardedeu** on 8 December but his lines were broken when Gouvion St Cyr's French and Italian troops attacked before all the outlying Spanish forces could be brought in.

Gouvion St Cyr's victory cleared the road to Barcelona and allowed him to relieve Duhesme, thus reuniting all elements of what had now become the VII Corps d'Armée. However, the Spanish field army remained a threat and the French commander sought to drive them away from Barcelona completely. The Spanish were drawn up on the line of the Llobregat, under the temporary command of the Swiss-born Tediato Reding. At **Molins del Rey** on 21 December, Gouvion St Cyr forced a crossing of the Llobregat and put the Spanish to flight. Vives, who had re-joined his army only as it fell back in defeat, was replaced by Reding who sought to mount an operation the following February to retake Barcelona. However, Reding made the mistake of dividing his forces in an attempt to snap up the whole French force. Gouvion St Cyr concentrated first against the Spanish left at Igualada and defeated it on 16-17 February 1809. Reding gave up his offensive and sought to reunite his troops, managing to bring all his remaining forces into action against the isolated French division of Souham at **Valls** on 25 February. However, Souham held out long enough for French reinforcements to reach the battlefield, at which point Gouvion St Cyr, who had arrived to take command in person, ordered a massed attack which broke the Spanish forces. Reding, leading a desperate cavalry counterattack, was mortally wounded but the bulk of his army escaped into the hills.

Having dispersed the Spanish field army, Gouvion St Cyr was now at liberty to undertake a **Second Siege of Girona**. However, this would turn out to take up most of the rest of the year due to delays in bringing up artillery, Spanish relief attempts, and valiant defence by the garrison under the command of Mariano Alvarez de Castro. The French and their allies took heavy casualties, suffering particularly badly from sickness, and it was not until 12 December, after seven months of siege, that the Spanish surrendered. By this time, Gouvion St Cyr, blamed by Napoleon for the slow progress, had been replaced in command by Marshal Augereau.

East Coast of Spain – Suchet's Campaigns

In the aftermath of the French capture of Zaragoza, the battered III Corps was left to hold the ruined city. Commanded in the siege first by Moncey and then by Junot, it was now newly under Louis-Gabriel Suchet, previously a divisional commander in V Corps. Suchet had a hard job on his hands to shape his battered command, soon to be re-designated the Armée d'Aragon, into an effective force. Faced with an equal challenge was Joaquín Blake, transferred from Galicia to command the Spanish Ejército de Derecha

tasked with recapturing Zaragoza. Blake occupied **Alcaniz**, 55 miles from Zaragoza, and awaited reinforcements only to find that Suchet had marched out to meet him. Suchet attacked on 23 May 1809 but his infantry were stopped by Spanish musketry and artillery, and then broke when a rumour spread that Spanish cavalry were upon them. For the first time since Bailen the previous year, the Spanish had won a clear open-field victory over the French.

Blake's victory saw a flush of volunteering that brought fresh troops to his army, increasing its numbers but diluting its quality. With this in mind he sought to fight another defensive battle by manoeuvring against Suchet's communications and forcing the French to attack him. Accordingly, he began to advance along the line of the Rio Huebra. Uncertain of the route by which the French would advance against him, Blake moved the main body of his forces along the left bank, whilst detaching Areizaga's division to advance on the right bank and cover that flank. Since the two wings of the army were separated by only seven miles, it must have seemed to Blake that it would be easy for one to support the other if required. However, when Blake encountered Suchet's forces, slightly reinforced to 10,800 men, at **Maria del Huevre** on 15 June, he would be forced to fight the battle alone. Suchet detached a division to pin Areizaga and advanced against Blake with the remainder of his own reorganised army but refused to attack the Spanish position and, in the end, Blake made an attack of his own to try and bring on a general action. This was met with a French counterattack before a sudden hailstorm reduced visibility to nearly nothing; when the visibility cleared the French put in another attack and the right wing of Blake's army collapsed. Defeated, the Spanish withdrew in reasonable order to **Belchite** and linked up with Areizaga, but Suchet attacked them there on 18 June and, aided by the lucky detonation of a Spanish ammunition caisson by a French shell, routed the demoralised Spanish force. Zaragoza was saved for the French, and Blake's army ceased to be an effective force.

Suchet was now free to begin one of the most impressive campaigns of the whole war, which would bring him his Marshal's baton. His ultimate goal, assigned by Joseph Bonaparte as early as autumn 1809, was the capture of Valencia but it would take two years of fighting for him to get there and there were several other fortresses to be reduced along the way. The first of these was **Lerida**, which was placed under siege in April 1810. Enrique O'Donnell had replaced fellow Spanish-Irishman Blake and led a relief attempt but this was defeated at **Margalef** on 23 April. Thereafter the siege was tightened and on 7 May the French batteries opened fire. On 13 May the French stormed the town, but were unable to capture the citadel into which the garrison withdrew. Suchet sought to drive the civilian population into the citadel as well, where they would eat up supplies to no military benefit, leading to heavy civilian casualties which were exacerbated when a bombardment of the citadel was begun. Rather than accept these casualties the Spanish commander, Garcia Conde, sued for terms on 14 May.

Next on the list was the coastal city of **Tarragona**. Suchet had previously taken the fortress of Tortosa, whilst the capture of Figueras by a French force under Marshal Macdonald (who had replaced Augereau in Catalonia) meant that the Spanish armies in the area were divided after having moved to resist the various French strikes. However,

British command of the sea meant that Spanish reinforcements could be brought into Tarragona and so, potentially, could British troops. Suchet began his siege on 2 May 1811 and the rest of the month saw serious fighting for the outworks. On the 30th, the Spanish commander, Campoverde, left by sea to try and raise a relief force but was unable to do so. Juan Contreras assumed command, but relations with his subordinates were fractious. On 21 June, the French stormed the Lower Town and the surviving garrison retreated into the Upper. Matters were now serious, so much so that when a British brigade arrived by sea its commander, Colonel Skerrett, refused to risk his men ashore. Finally, on 28 June, the French stormed the upper town and captured it after a fierce fight – over 2,000 civilians were killed in the fighting or the subsequent sack, but Suchet received his Marshal's baton for his bloody victory.

Finally, the French were able to move against Valencia. The Spanish forces covering the cities comprised the weak 2^a and 3^a Ejércitos, the latter barely more than a division's worth of troops and all of them repeatedly defeated in earlier battles. To reinforce them, an Expeditionary Corps was sent from Cadiz consisting of troops that had fought there and at Albuera. These veterans were under Joaquin Blake, who assumed command of the combined Spanish forces. Suchet had also been substantially reinforced, with a division of Italian troops joining his field army and two more divisions on their way to help mount the planned-for siege. Blake was unwilling to meet this force in the open and instead ordered the construction of a strong entrenched line covering Valencia, whilst fortifying the old Roman citadel of **Saguntum** as an outwork. His hope was that these measures would delay Suchet's advance and allow other Spanish forces to operate in his rear and force him to retreat. However, Suchet could call on troops from elsewhere to cover his communications, and calmly sat down to besiege Saguntum, where the garrison, though composed only of new levies with little artillery, repulsed repeated attempts to storm the place. Blake was now hoist by his own petard, for the populace began to demand that he relieve Saguntum. Blake mounted his offensive on 25 October, and his veterans did good work pushing back the French left; however, the French right wing was able to advance and quickly disperse the less effective troops of the Spanish left so that the whole army was compromised and Blake had to withdraw. The bulk of his army withdrew into **Valencia**, which Suchet placed under siege. Blake, despondent, mounted a lacklustre defence and eventually capitulated on 10 January 1812.

After the fall of Valencia, Suchet's army mounted no further offensive campaigns and instead garrisoned and held the area that had been conquered. However, such of the Spanish forces as had escaped Blake's debacle continued to harass the French in a series of smaller actions. On 2 July 1812, José O'Donnell, commanding the combined Spanish armies, sought to cut off one of Suchet's divisions at **Castalla** but was badly defeated. Also in 1812, a British force from Sicily landed to reinforce the Spanish and this was built up over the next year, as were the Spanish armies (which included the División Mallorquina re-equipped from British supplies and commanded by the Englishman Samford Whittingham), so that it was again possible to face Suchet in open battle. The allied army was under the British Lieutenant General Sir John Murray, who had been tasked by Wellington to tie down as many French troops as he could. Suchet concentrated his forces to face Murray, destroying a Spanish force at Yecla on 11 April 1813 and

attacked Murray's outpost at **Biar** the next day only to have his nose bloodied in a successful rearguard action. The allied forces now fell back to Castalla, where Suchet attacked them on the 13th. The **Second Battle of Castalla** was a rare defeat for Suchet, whose attack stalled in the face of a stiff resistance by the Anglo-Spanish, and he was obliged to retreat.

Murray then moved his army by sea to attempt to retake **Tarragona**, which had been stripped of troops when Suchet concentrated his forces. However, unnerved by reports that the French Marshal was about to fall on him and that a second French force was advancing from Catalonia, Murray withdrew his men prematurely and abandoned the siege when there was no need to do so. He was relieved of command, later facing a court martial, and replaced by Lieutenant General Lord Bentinck. Suchet, meanwhile, was obliged to withdraw his army northwards in the aftermath of the French defeat at Vitoria, and the Anglo-Spanish forces followed him up. On the night of 12 September 1813 Suchet turned and mauled Bentinck's advance guard at **Ordal** but this tactical success did not change the strategic picture. Suchet was eventually obliged to fall back to the Pyrenees, leaving many of his veteran troops as useless garrisons to hold the fortresses he had captured, so that by the end of the war had only a reinforced division available for field operations. Bentinck, meanwhile, shifted his attentions to northern Italy and redeployed many of his British troops to that theatre so that the active campaigning on the East Coast of Spain largely petered out as the war drew to a close.

Wellington's 1812 Campaign

Late-spring 1812 found the Anglo-Portuguese army commanded by Lord Wellington poised on the Portuguese frontier and ready to take the war into Spain for the first time since 1809. Of the four vital border fortresses, Elvas had never fallen to the French whilst Almeida, Ciudad Rodrigo, and Badajoz had been recovered after a series of bloody sieges. Facing Wellington were two major French armies; Marshal Soult's Armée du Midi in the south, and Marshal Marmont's Armée de Portugal based at Salamanca but with detachments further north. Backing these was the small Armée du Centre based at Madrid under King Joseph's personal direction and Général de Division Caffarelli's Armée du Nord in the Biscayan provinces. Taken together, these French armies substantially outnumbered the allies; Wellington's strategy therefore relied on keeping them apart. After initially considering a strike against Soult, which would have had the effect of forcing the French to raise the ongoing siege of Cadiz, Wellington eventually selected Marmont as his target. To contain Soult, a detached corps under Lieutenant General Sir Rowland Hill was left in the southern sector, comprising two divisions of infantry and one of cavalry. This was facing a detached corps from Soult's army under Général de Division d'Erlon; however, Hill was able to detach a large portion of his force for a strike against the strategic bridge over the Tagus at **Almaraz** which was captured and destroyed on 19 May 1812. This operation prevented easy communications between Soult and Marmont and, along with the continued presence in the south of Hill's covering force, meant that Wellington could go after the Armée de Portugal without undue fear of interference from Soult.

In mid-June, Wellington began his advance on Marmont's base at Salamanca. The Armée de Portugal was dispersed, with two divisions detached in the north, and Marmont was unable to contest the allied occupation of the city. He did, however, leave a garrison in three fortified convents before withdrawing to the north. Wellington left his 6th Division to besiege the **Salamanca Forts**, whilst taking the rest of his army northwards after Marmont. On 17 June, a bombardment of the Salamanca Forts began, and three days later Marmont marched back south to try and raise the siege. Wellington took position on the **Heights of San Cristobal**, a classic reverse-slope position that played to his defensive strengths. The two armies faced off for several days but Marmont dared not attack so strong a position whilst Wellington refused to be drawn down onto the plain. On 22 June, Marmont withdrew; five days later, after having driven back one attempted assault, the French garrisons in the Salamanca Forts capitulated.

The coming weeks saw a campaign of manoeuvre as Marmont first fell back beyond the Douro and then, having finally brought together all his forces but lacking any support from the other French armies, feinted to throw Wellington off-balance and began an offensive back towards Salamanca. The multiple options for the next few days can be explored as alternatives in one of the game's campaigns, but the reality saw fighting at **Castrejon** and Castrillo on 18 July and then a tense period of parallel marching as the two armies moved southwards. Marmont was hoping to drive the allies back onto their lines of communication, which meant heading off Wellington's march southwards and pushing him back to the west. On 22 July, by which times the armies had crossed the Tormes and were on the open plain south of **Salamanca**, it seemed to the French that Wellington had begun to withdraw. In their haste to steal a march on the allies, however, the French had let themselves become dangerously extended and ripe for a counterstroke. Bringing up the 3rd Division from reserve, Wellington was able to begin a counterattack that roled up Marmont's divisions one after another with a combination of infantry and cavalry attacks including the famous charge by Le Marchant's heavy cavalry. Marmont was wounded by a shell early on, but Général de Division Clausel took command and organised a counterattack which repulsed the allied 4th Division but was insufficient to stem the rout. The French fell back eastwards across the Tormes; the following day, their rearguard at **Garcia Hernandez** was attacked by the British cavalry where the KGL heavy dragoons broke a French square in an epic charge. Wellington had pulled off a tactical masterpiece, and the road to Madrid was open.

Having liberated **Madrid**, which had been evacuated by the troops of the Armée du Centre (less a garrison in the Retiro, which was soon compelled to surrender) Wellington was left with a new set of choices. His victory at Salamanca had badly dislocated the French armies. Soult and Joseph had fallen back to the east, linking their forces but abandoning Andalucia to the allies and raising the siege of Cadiz, whilst Clausel had withdrawn to the north. Wellington brought Hill up to Madrid and left him with a reinforced corps whilst taking the remainder of his forces northwards. His advance was checked at **Burgos**, where a French garrison occupied the castle. Wellington had outstripped his logistical support and had only a limited siege train to reduce the castle. From 19 September to 21 October the British attempted to capture Burgos but were unable to achieve anything and were eventually compelled to withdraw. With the French

armies now regrouping, the allies were potentially in trouble – Wellington claimed it was the ‘worst scrape’ that he was ever in during the whole war but he was eventually able to reunite his forces around Salamanca. There, on the old battlefield south of the city, he faced off the combined French forces before withdrawing to the Portuguese frontier when Soult and Joseph balked at attacking him. The allies lost heavily from straggling and due to the appalling weather, but the French, too, had been on the road for months and were willing to allow a reasonably unhindered withdrawal to Ciudad Rodrigo. Thereafter, both sides went into winter quarters.

Wellington’s 1813 Campaign

After the conclusion of the retreat from Burgos, there was no major movement by the Anglo-Portuguese army for several months. During this time, Wellington rebuilt and reorganised his forces, receiving substantial reinforcements but also being obliged to send home some units that had been weakened by long service. Other weak infantry units were paired to form Provisional Battalions; experienced veterans, notwithstanding their unprepossessing name. The Spanish armies were also reorganised, and placed directly under Wellington’s command although this was not without ongoing political issues. Meanwhile, the French armies were substantially reduced by the need to draft off reinforcements to help rebuild the Grande Armée after the Russian debacle. Many infantry regiments lost one or more battalions, with the officer and NCO cadres being sent home to train new conscripts for the war in Germany and the effective rank and file concentrated in one or two large battalions. The last of the Imperial Guard units were also withdrawn from Spain at this time.

Notwithstanding Wellington’s withdrawal to Portugal, the French had not fully reoccupied western Spain and had made no attempt to recover Andalucia. Madrid was treated more as an outpost than as a capital. Command of the French armies had been consolidated under Joseph, who had Marshal Jourdan as his chief of staff. Under them, the Armée de Portugal was under Reille, the Armée du Midi under Gazan, Soult’s long-time chief-of staff (Soult himself had been recalled to Germany), the Armée du Centre was under d’Erlon and the Armée du Nord under Clausel. The French working assumption was that Wellington would have to again advance by way of the Great Road that ran up from Salamanca through Burgos to the Pyrenees, and that he could be checked as he had been in 1812. However, Wellington had shifted his whole axis of operations to the north and sent only Hill’s corps by the Salamanca route, accompanying it himself to give the impression that this was indeed the main effort. Meanwhile, Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Graham led the bulk of the army far to the north through the mountains to turn the French flank. By the time that Joseph and his commanders realised what was happening they were already badly wrong-footed and had no choice but to fall back. The French situation was made worse by the fact that a sizeable portion of the Armée de Portugal had been sent to reinforce the Armée du Nord in a campaign against the guerrillas on the Biscay coasts and was not available to face Wellington. Joseph thus had only in the region of 66,000 on hand men to face Wellington’s much larger army. Burgos was abandoned without a fight and the castle blown up, but the allies continued to flank the French as the armies grew closer together. Pushing northwards to secure the flank, Reille ran into the allies head on at **Osma** on 18 June with two divisions, and was obliged

to withdraw in the face of superior numbers. A third Armée de Portugal division, that of Maucune, was on its way to join him but was caught on the march at **San Milan** by the Light Division and very roughly handled. The French now withdrew to Vitoria where they intended to make a stand.

The position at **Vitoria** that Joseph hoped to defend was a rectangular area of relatively flat land in the Zadorra valley, roughly seven miles by four on an east-west axis. The Great Road from France entered this plain, along with the Zadorra, by a pass at the north-east corner, and both left by a second pass at the south-west. However, whilst the road, once it had passed through the town of Vitoria, ran directly across the valley bottom, the river hugged the northern edge of the plain for the bulk of the time, and then swung south in a series of lazy loops. Joseph deployed his forces in three successive north-south lines, blocking the anticipated allied advance along the axis of the Great Road. Wellington, meanwhile, had the bulk of his troops concentrated in the hills to the west by the evening of 20 July, ready to attack the French in the flank. Hill, commanding the allied right with a division apiece of British, Portuguese, and Spanish, would attack the Puebla Heights at the south-western extremity of the valley, and in doing so hopefully attract the attention of the enemy, whilst the rest of the army, in three columns, would hook around to the north and come down on the French flanks. Two of these columns would make a fairly direct attack, under Wellington's own eye, but the last, under Graham on the far left, would make a more circuitous march so as to emerge from the mountains almost at the north-eastern extremity of the valley where it could threaten the French rear. As the French deployed to meet Hill, they weakened their positions and thus facilitated the advance of the allied centre. Nevertheless, the non-arrival of the 7th Division briefly compromised things until a spirited attack by Picton's 3rd Division restored the situation. Soon the allies were across the Zadorra and pushing the French back, but Graham had been checked by Reille's troops around Gamarra Mayor and only after a bloody fight was he able to take the village and its bridge, and cross the river. Thus, the road to the north was open for much of the battle and the surviving French were able to extricate themselves but only at the cost of almost all of their artillery and baggage. To Wellington's disgust, his troops fell to looting the baggage and thus it was some time before an effective pursuit could be mounted.

In the weeks that followed, the surviving French forces struggled back across the Pyrenees and the allies followed them up. However, Wellington was not yet ready to advance into France. For one thing the situation in Germany was uncertain, with the French having the ascendancy there for the moment, and he had no desire to push into France only to find Napoleon had ended his northern campaign and turned his army south once more. Of more immediate import, the French had garrisons in San Sebastian and Pamplona and these needed to be neutralised before the allies could move on. Wellington left the Spanish to blockade Pamplona, and set Graham's corps the task of besieging San Sebastian. Meanwhile, the rest of the army occupied the Pyrenean passes to cover the siege operations. Graham opened siege operations against **San Sebastian** on 7 July, but an assault on 25 July failed with heavy casualties. Meanwhile, the French armies defeated at Vitoria had been reorganised into a single Armée d'Espagne under Soult with ten divisions of infantry and two of cavalry. Gazan resumed his old role as chief of staff, with

Clausel, Reille, and d'Erlon as corps commanders and Villatte commanding the Reserve. Soult planned for an offensive to relieve the besieged fortresses, which was launched on the same day that the first assault on San Sebastian failed.

Due to a lack of coordination by the allied divisional commanders, Soult was able to capture the passes at Roncesvalles and **Maya**, inflicting heavy losses on elements of the 2nd Division at the latter. The bulk of the allied centre and right fell back on Pamplona and occupied a defensive position at Sorauren which was steadily increased in strength over the coming days. Meanwhile, on the left, Graham abandoned the siege of San Sebastian. Soult's leading forces reached **Sorauren** on 27 July but did not attack until the following day by which time Wellington had brought up reinforcements and taken command in person. When the French attacked on the 28th they were checked and then counterattacked, but Soult remained in the field. Only on the 30th did he try a new gambit, attempting to manoeuvre so as to get between Wellington and San Sebastian. However, as the French began to march off they were compelled to cross the allied front and, seeing them thus vulnerable, Wellington ordered an attack. This **Second Battle of Sorauren** put an end to Soult's offensive and over the next few days he was hard pressed to safely extract his forces from the mountains.

With Soult thus out of the picture, Graham was able to mount a **Second Siege of San Sebastian** culminating in a renewed assault on 31 August. For a time it seemed as if the attack had also failed, and Graham in a desperate measure ordered his siege guns to reopen fire on the breach in the walls – firing directly over the heads of his own troops. With the French swept from the breach the allies were able to storm the town but the survivors of the garrison withdrew into the castle and did not surrender until 5 September by which time much of the town had been destroyed by fire. Even as Graham's men were attacking the breach, Soult made one final effort at relieving the fortress, but his offensive across the Bidassoa at **San Marcial** was defeated by elements of the Spanish IV Ejercito under Manuel Freire with minimal British help; the victory helped underscore how successful the rejuvenation and reorganisation of the Spanish army had been. This action would prove to be Soult's last offensive, and thereafter the French were reduced to defending their own territory.

The Invasion of France

By the autumn of 1813, the strategic situation had shifted such that an invasion of southern France was now a viable prospect for the allies. Events in Germany had shifted against the French, with Austria now in the war. More locally, San Sebastian and Pamplona had fallen and Soult's army was on the defensive after its earlier repulses. However, the French position along the **Bidassoa** was a strong one and Wellington preferred not to tackle it head on. Instead, when the offensive opened on 7 October Wellington feinted against the French centre but then made his main offensive against their right flank, close to the sea. Caught off balance the French struggled to respond and the allies were soon across the river. Soult fell back to the line of the **Nivelle**, where Wellington again attacked him on 10 November. This time there was little scope for subtlety but Wellington's numbers meant that he was able to make a major attack in the

centre that came close to splitting Soult's army in two. Defeated again, the French fell back to their base of operations – Bayonne, on the Adour river.

Wellington's advance on Bayonne was complicated by the fact that whereas the Adour flowed westwards into the sea, it was met at Bayonne by the Nive which ran northwards to meet it. An allied advance must necessarily straddle both banks of the **Nive**, but the only bridges close to Bayonne were within the town itself. Thus, Soult could shift troops from one bank to the other and concentrate a large part of his force against one wing or the other of Wellington's army. Wellington elected to make his major effort east of the Nive, where responsibility was delegated to Hill. On the western bank, Lieutenant General Sir John Hope, who had replaced Graham, made a diversionary attack with a weaker force. On 10 December Soult attacked Hope in force and drove him back but the allied lines held and they fell back in good order. That night, the Frankfurt and Nassau troops in Soult's army defected to the allies. Soult now sought to try his luck on the other bank of the Nive, and attacked Hill on 12 December. This is sometimes considered a separate action, the Battle of **St Pierre**. As with the attack on Hope, the allies were initially driven back but then rallied and repelled the French. Wellington was now able to invest Bayonne, but only when a pontoon bridge was thrown across the lower Adour the following February was the French position rendered untenable. Soult, who had already sent off a substantial part of his army to reinforce Napoleon in northern France, left a further division to reinforce the Bayonne garrison and withdrew to the west with a field army now reduced to six divisions of infantry and one of cavalry, plus a few miscellaneous forces. Wellington left Hope's corps to besiege Bayonne and took the rest of his army after Soult.

Wellington hoped to drive Soult away from Bayonne by manoeuvre, but the French Marshal stood to fight at **Orthez**. In an inversion of the Peninsular stereotype, the French were on the defensive holding a ridge and the allies were the attackers. Initial attacks by the 4th Division against the French right on the morning of 27 February 1814 drove the French outposts back on their main position but could not take the ridge itself. Wellington therefore converted a diversionary move against the French centre into a full-scale attack which broke the French resistance. However, cut-up terrain prevented an effective cavalry pursuit and the French were able to disengage and fall back on Toulouse. Wellington moved his army in pursuit, although the 7th Division was detached to occupy Bordeaux, which had declared for the Royalists, and was replaced by two divisions of Freire's Spaniards.

On 10 April 1814, having driven Soult back into the defences around **Toulouse** itself, Wellington opened his last Peninsular battle. The struggle was more akin to the preliminaries of a siege, and the French fought well from prepared fortifications. The main allied objective was to seize the Calvinet Heights east of the city. Hill and Picton were to demonstrate against other sectors of the defences whilst Freire's Spanish and the 4th and 6th Divisions under Beresford made the main attacks; the Spanish were repulsed with some loss, and a second attack in conjunction with the Light Division also failed to gain ground. However, Beresford gained a foothold on the heights and then attacked along their length to clear the French redoubts. It was a bloody and unsatisfactory allied

victory, as a result of which Soult evacuated the city and fell back towards Carcassonne to link up with the remnants of Suchet's army. Before Wellington could move further, news arrived of the abdication of Napoleon and the end of the war. There was, however, a final tragic act when the **Bayonne** garrison mounted a sortie on 14 April that did considerable damage to the besieging forces who lost their commander, Hope, wounded and taken prisoner. Only on 27 April did the commander, Thouvenot, surrender Bayonne on direct orders from Soult.

Thus the war in the Peninsula ended. It had broken the reputation of many of Napoleon's generals, and had made that of Wellington who landed in 1808 and unknown and junior lieutenant general and went home six years later a field marshal and a duke. Spain had been liberated, but the cost had been huge and the political upheavals and popular resistance had created a liberal tradition that was at odds with the absolutism of the restored Ferdinand VII. Civil strife would continue to wrack Spain for much of the next century.