

PENINSULAR WAR – A GLOBAL WAR FOR PORTUGAL¹

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During its long history, Portugal has endured all types of war, including wars to maintain its independence. These wars at times were concentrated in one region and at others spread across the globe. The “First Portuguese Global War”, from 1640 to 1668, also called “Campaigns of the Restoration (or Acclamation – for independence)” in which Portugal fought for more than 28 years in Europe, Brazil, Africa and Asia, in a Herculean effort that guaranteed Portugal’s survival as an independent and sovereign nation.

In the “Second Portuguese Global War”², Portugal with her allies fought against France (and allies) globally. This war was much more than the 3 years of the French Invasions or the 7 years of the Peninsular War. The War lasted for 24 years from 1793 till 1817 forcing Portugal into a prolonged and exhausting effort on land and at sea; in Brazil, Africa, the Mediterranean, India, Spain, France, Prussia and even on the frozen steppes of Russia. Like so many times in Lusophone history, the Portuguese endured great pain, sacrifice and suffering, but in the end, prevailed.

Portugal did not decide to go to war; the war came to Portugal and forced its participation. In the XVIII Century, the old policy of neutrality in European conflicts was no longer possible. Portugal had to participate in Queen Ann’s War (1701-1714), in the Matapan’s campaign (1717), the Seven Years War (1756-63), and in the last decade of the XVIII Century, Portugal participated in this global conflict that started immediately after the French Revolution in 1789.

HOW PORTUGAL JOINED THE WAR

In 1792, France was in crisis with violence spreading through the country and pressure from neighbouring countries. The King of France asked for help from

¹ This text was reviewed by Colonel UK Nick Lipscombe and Lieutenant – Colonel USA Michael M. Brant Stephenson.

² We decided to call it “Portuguese global wars” because it provides an overall picture of a war much more enlarged than the typical “Peninsular Wars” or “French Invasions”;

other Monarchies in Europe but French Republicans considered this as an act of treason and condemned the King to die. When the European monarchs saw what happened they decided to take action against a dangerous revolutionary country that could spread these new ideals across the continent. Portugal, although trying to avoid involvement, was forced to join in, but did it in the most discrete possible way, evoking its old prerogatives as a neutral country in Europe (several old international treaties recognized Portugal as a neutral nation: with Spain through the Prado Treaty 11 March 1778 “*neutrality and commerce*”; 13 July of 1782 with Russia through the Treaty of “*friendship, navigation and trade*”; the role of mediator on the conflict opposing France, Spain and Great Britain in 1790 - Nootka Sound at the American coast of the Pacific, etc.).

D. Maria I, the Queen of Portugal, did try to keep the country neutral, with close relations with Spain and by remaining loyal to the old alliance with Great Britain. But, it was impossible to sustain such an important goal as neutrality without having a strong and very persuasive armed forces.

1793: AT WAR ON LAND AND AT SEA

In 1793, a coalition formed against France, and Portugal decided to indirectly, take part in that coalition. To maintain her neutrality, Portugal joined the Coalition helping Spain as an Auxiliary Power, by land, and later helping Great Britain, by sea, to protect the English Channel (La Manche).

The first, helping Spain is the “so called” *Roussillon’s Campaign* and a Division size (5.200 men³) Portuguese expeditionary force got the mission to integrate and help the General Ricardos’s Spanish allied army. Because Portugal did not formally join the coalition, the Portuguese were not included in the peace negotiations that led to the Treaty of Basileya. This treaty required Portuguese forces to return to Portugal; however, when Spain joined the French

³ Composed by 5.052 men (1 division with 6 infantry regiments - 4.377 men and 1 artillery brigade with 8 companies, 22 guns - 447 men), commanded by Lieutenant General Forbes Skellater, a Scottish officer who joined the Portuguese army during the seven years war in 1762; besides the infantry and artillery forces, the force included a staff body, engineer officers, civil departments (secretary, hospital and pharmacy) and servants. They were transported on Vice-Admiral Pedro Mariz de Sousa Sarmento’s Portuguese fleet composed by 19 ships (5 combat and 14 transportation).

alliance, the retreating Portuguese forces found themselves in hostile territory. The expedition demonstrated the need to further prepare and improve the Portuguese military. The expedition brought changes to the culture, doctrine, and equipment, as well as gave new experience to the troops. These changes forced the politicians to consider a new strategy for Portugal, specifically since 25% of the Portuguese infantry had fought in the Pyrenees Mountains. As an immediate and positive result, the Portuguese Army developed light Infantry units which were to prove very effective during the Peninsular War.

During the second expedition, at the same time, the Portuguese sent out an important naval force to help Great-Britain to defend the English Channel. On 3rd July 1793 Lieutenant General José Sanches de Brito's 7 ship fleet left Portugal to join Admiral Howe's British Fleet which totalled 31 tall ships, 7 ships, 1 hospital-ship and 3 "*brullots*"⁴. The mission was to "*navigate in front of French harbours preventing French fleets and corsairs to go out the sea*"⁵. Due to health (a plague amongst the crew) problems, the Portuguese Fleet returned in October. During the next year, 12 July 1794, a new Portuguese fleet deployed to the English Channel, 8 ships under the command of Vice-Admiral António Januário do Vale. It returned to Portugal 1 March 1795, during its deployment it carried out several key missions such as escorting a 600-ship convoy and blockading several French ports. In 1793, Portugal fought against France, on land and at sea, without any formal declaration of war. But these battles were still far away from its territories.

A significant event took place at Cape St. Vicente's Naval Battle in 1797. Portugal deployed a fleet from the Algarve with the mission to fight French corsairs operating from Spanish ports and constantly attacking merchant ships. Britain deployed Admiral Jervis's Fleet for the same purpose. Later Admiral Jervis also battled a Spanish fleet. Portugal, once assured that no French ships were taking part in the enemy's fleet decided not to participate. However, when the Portuguese commander saw Admiral Nelson's ship in trouble, the "Tritão"

⁴ Originally brûlot meant a fire-ship, an retired wooden ship that a navy would load with explosives, set on fire and then propel in the direction of the enemy fleet, the idea being the enemy ships would then catch fire; but later the name was also used to small "fast" ships loaded with artillery to attack other;

⁵ José Rodrigues Pereira, *Campanhas Navais 1793 – 1807*, pg. 41

engaged and saved the Admiral's ship. Spain took this Portuguese action as another offence and immediately began preparations to invade Portugal, requesting help from France for 45.000 additional troops and 25 ships. After the British fleet sailed from Portugal to conquer Mahon/Minorca⁶, Spain subsequently deployed a 27.000 strong invasion army near the Portuguese border.

In this time period, Portugal was trying, by all possible political, diplomatic and finally military means to prevent an attack from either France or Spain. Portuguese diplomat António de Araújo Azevedo was sent to France with the mission of trying to "buy neutrality" while at the same time preparations were made with regard to the land defences, concentrating the army in the strategic location at Azambuja. António de Araújo Azevedo returned in 1797 empty handed and Portugal had to rely on its land defence and naturally Portugal asked for help from its oldest ally, Britain. On the 21 June 1797, Sir Charles Stuart's 6.000 men and 39 ships, landed in Lisbon. A new plan was then developed to defend Portugal focusing the main effort in the capital, Lisbon⁷.

Luís Pinto de Sousa, the Portuguese Prime Minister, increased the local recruitment and formed a first line army of 34.000 soldiers; when adding the Militia Regiments the total force would be 60.400 men in arms⁸. As in previous instances, whenever the armed forces needed reforms, a foreign General was brought in to deliver the task. In 1797, Vienna sent General Waldeck who was given the position of Field Marshal in the Portuguese Army and assigned as deputy commander to the Commander in Chief, the Duque of Lafões. He died without attending the great exercises he had planned at the Camp do Quadro, Azambuja from October to December 1798.

Meanwhile in France, the new emerging General, Napoleon Bonaparte, who commanded an expedition to Egypt, initially avoided confrontation with Admiral Nelson's British Fleet, conquered the Island of Malta but was not able to prevent his French Fleet's destruction at Aboukir Bay. Portugal decided to send

⁶ António Ventura, A Guerra das Laranjas, pg. 35

⁷ João Centeno, pg. 56-57;

⁸ Ferreira Martins, História do Exército Português, pg 206

a Portuguese Fleet⁹, under the command of Marquis of Nisa, D. Domingos Xavier de Lima, to join Nelson's fleet in the war against France. Among several important missions the Portuguese ships participated in the sieges of Malta and Naples, gave support to the attack on Livorno, executed actions against pirates from Argel and Tripoli and provided transportation and escorts for important people, including some of the Cardinals to be present at the *Concilium* to elect the new Pope.

Napoleon then said: "*Time will come when the Portuguese nation will pay with tears of blood the humiliation imposed to the French Republic*"¹⁰.

At the same time that a Portuguese fleet was fighting Napoleon, politicians were still pursuing the intensive diplomatic campaign whose "*impossible*" aim was to keep the status of neutrality and simultaneous collaboration with traditional allies. Portugal gained more time: fighting at sea, preparing the land defence and remaining very active diplomatically, including the use of bribes (17 bags of diamonds in Amsterdam, 200.000 florins, etc.¹¹). The obvious result was that the only possible successful strategy would have been to reinforce the armed forces in order to ensure a strong dissuasive capacity – but the politicians saw it differently. Although some investment was undertaken in the Navy, the Army saw its numbers reduced and consequently did not reorganize or modernize and wasted the lessons learned from the Roussillon Campaign's. Another confrontation was about to start – The War of the Oranges "*A Guerra das Laranjas*" in 1801.

1801: THE "FIRST INVASION"

In 1800, Portugal confused with an apparent French troop withdrawal in Europe, ordered its Army to be even further reduced and, as an immediate consequence, Britain concluded that Portugal "*is not committed in its own defence*"¹² and, encouraged by the Portuguese Army Commander, D. João

⁹ 6 Ships called the "Esquadra do Oceano", on duty from 1798 till January 1800, its services with the British Fleet were considered excellent, their main mission was monitoring Vice-Admiral François Paul Brueys D'Aigalliers' French Fleet that after being destroyed by Nelson, stayed at the Port of Toulon.

¹⁰ Chartrand, 2000, pg. 4

¹¹ José Rodrigues Pereira, pg. 53

¹² Manuel Amaral, Olivença, pg. 11

Carlos de Bragança Sousa Ligne, 2nd Duque of Lafões (he had always refused any kind of foreign influence), Britain withdrew from Portugal in December 1800.

The order to mobilize the army to War only came in February 1801. Although the Army had seen several reforms, still many of the senior officers were from the “*old school*”, chosen for promotion by the degree of nobility and not for their military merit and, to aggravate the situation even more, not in sufficient numbers because of a lack of noblemen volunteers to serve in the Army.

The Army was composed of 24 Infantry Regiments, which on “*paper*” had 1.600 troops each but in reality none of them reached the number 1.000, 12 Cavalry Regiments, 4 Artillery Regiments, Light Troops Legion, who will become famous with the *Caçadores Battalions* during the Peninsular War; the Royal Engineers Corps (Real Corpo de Engenheiros) and maritime/ land borders garrisons from Algarve to Minho, on the seashores and on the border with Spain.

Besides first line Army Regiments Portugal also had the Militia Regiments (since 1797, before they were called Auxiliary Terços “*Terços de Auxiliares*”) with more or less 800 troops each for the 43 “*Batalhões das Comarcas*” and the Ordenanças “*Volunteer*” Companies, under the command of Pamplona. Later all were under the unified command, in one single body of Ordenanças, of Lieutenant-Colonel Francisco da Silveira, future Count of Amarante and one of the most famous Portuguese Generals of the Peninsular War). The main mission for Militias and Ordenanças was to provide a first line of contact with the enemy.

In a very different situation, at the beginning of the XIXth century, Portugal had a very powerful Navy, the 5th world naval power with more than 65 oceanic ships¹³.

When war was declared by Spain (with strong pressure from France) the fighting started on several different fronts. Portugal defended and backed up in

¹³ José Rodrigues Pereira, pg. 7

Alentejo¹⁴, prepared for major operations in Beira, defended and attacked in Minho and Algarve, executed a major offensive in Brazil¹⁵ and tried to control the British support “*help*” in Madeira, India and Macau.

After the war, Portugal “*did the math*”. As stated by Manuel Amaral¹⁶, “we have to understand the campaign objectives through a global view, with losses and gains both in the Continent and Brazil. Even today people talk about this war remembering the loss of Olivença on Alentejo border but we should take into consideration the enlarged territory gained in Brazil (Brazil enlarged its territory by 1/5th and sovereignty was assured on both sides of the Amazon River on the north¹⁷), the strong defence of the Minho and Algarve borders which further deterred Spanish and French intentions in our Country.” But it was just a “*postponing*” of an inevitable conflict or, as described by António Pedro Vicente, it was just the first of the French Invasions.

Portugal had to prepare for future aggressions and that included shaping better the relations with its traditional ally, Great Britain. The British, as soon as the war started with Spain, sent immediate “*reinforcements*” to areas where they were not needed, instead of deploying forces in Alentejo they went straight to the famous “*strategic Portuguese choke-points*”: Madeira, Goa (India) and Macau (China) – in Madeira landed Colonel Clinton’s 4.000 troops and a failed attempt to disembark a British force in Macau in 1802 (which the Portuguese Governor was able to deter). This “*spontaneous British help*” in our overseas territories would happen again during this long global war.

When the War of The Oranges in 1801 was ending, the Portuguese Army Commander, the Duque of Lafões, was dismissed and, on the same day,

¹⁴ “*main objective was not to defend Alentejo. The main goal was to defend Lisbon and that is why the Duke told Forbes that all efforts should be done in order to prevent the crossing of river Tagus from Abrantes to Valada*”. Manuel Amaral, www.arqnet.pt

¹⁵ “*(...) on 4 July, Lieutenant-General Veiga Cabral (...) informed the population about the declaration of War (...) an order was given to assembly the Militias, requested money from the most important families (...) the military forces, divided in two different corps started the movement towards the borders, the clear mission was to occupy the land in order to establish the new borders to the natural boundaries of Brazil, the Rivers Uruguay and Plata*” - Manuel Amaral, pg. 90

¹⁶ Manuel Amaral, pg. 6-8

¹⁷ “*The Kingdom of Portugal gained 90.000 km² of territory in Brazil, meaning that the overall result of this campaign was positive. In Brazil, in the missions’ area close to Paraguay, that had been the cause of so many problems between Portugal and Spain, won in 1750, lost in 1777, was finally incorporated in the Brazilian borders*” João Centeno, pg. 66

Marshal Count of Goltz, a Prussian General, was appointed as the new Army Commander. D. José Maria Botelho de Sousa, best known as Morgado de Mateus, was appointed as Secretary for the Army replacing Garção Stockler.

On 10th August 1801 Goltz started implementing his new Portuguese defence plan which basically consisted of “*abandoning borders, creating obstacles on the way to Lisbon and, if the enemy every got close to the capital, defending it at all cost, until help could arrive*”¹⁸. But his orders were constantly revised, forcing the troops to move back and forward, ultimately, leading to his replacement by another foreigner in November that same year, a French General working in Russia, Vioménil¹⁹. And on 4 November, the Morgado de Mateus was also replaced by Colonel D. Miguel Pereira Forjaz Coutinho.

One of the outcomes of this war was a big division among the Portuguese officers; for their conduct during the war, many were condemned, others continued working but with great bitterness because, as usual in all wars, different reports were written about how the war was handled. All these divisions, together with the natural ideological and political differences, will be very much present inside the armed forces for the forthcoming decades in Portugal.

It is important to note the role of foreign officers in the King of Portugal’s service. Many Portuguese officers were humiliated at the appointment of foreigners to lead the Army after the War of the Oranges.

1802: NEW PLANS TO REORGANIZE THE ARMY

In 1802, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs and War, João de Almeida de Mello e Castro, created a working group composed of 9 generals, considered among the best, to implement a new army organization²⁰. The plan was presented in January 1802 and approved by the Minister in March. 2.000 copies were distributed in order to get feedback from the army but, due to French

¹⁸ Manuel Amaral, pg. 71

¹⁹ Commander of the army unit that invaded Corsica in 1768, Brigadier in French Army that helped the independence of USA from 1780 to 83, started his duties in Portugal as Army Field Marshal.

²⁰ António Pedro Vicente, Portugal no Tempo de Napoleão, pg. 106

influence and pressure, the Minister resigned and the plan was never implemented.

In 1804/ 1805, the Marquis of Alorna, who had not participated in the planning (and strongly opposed to it), presented his own plan to reorganize the army and in 1806, Gomes Freire de Andrade, another very famous Portuguese Officer, also presented his own personal project. In 1806 some decisions were finally made that took into consideration all the previous three projects but the majority of them never even *left the desk*.

Meanwhile, Napoleon was getting stronger and more dominant in Europe, although losing at sea, (Trafalgar in 1805). He won in Austerlitz, Jena, Auerstadt, Eylau and Friedland; defeating the major continental powers in Europe: Austria, Prussia and Russia. On the 11 November 1806 Bonaparte declared a continental blockade against Great Britain and signed the Treaty of Tilsit with Russia in 1807. Besides Britain, there is only one other country left that still opposes France: Portugal.

British ships continue to arrive in and trade with Portugal and Napoleon takes the decision to invade Portugal in 9 October 1807. A Treaty with Spain is signed 27 October, at Fontainebleau, in which it is decided to divide Portugal in three parts to be distributed among French and Spanish, eventually some would be left with the Portuguese.

1807: STRATEGIES FOR THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

Portugal tried in every possible way to avoid confrontation with France but, as with so many other nations in Europe, it was forced into a war that it did not want. Right up to the last minute, Portugal tried to demonstrate neutrality but, one is not neutral just because you want to be, one can only be neutral if one has the power to impose that neutrality. And Portugal, in 1807, had no conditions to impose its neutrality because:

- Geography didn't allow it: it was impossible either to be neutral or to be an ally with its only bordering neighbour, Spain, which itself no longer had the autonomy to contain French ambitions. Also because

Portugal was in the middle of the fight of the two European superpowers – the land power (France) and the maritime power (Britain): from the land power because the maritime power should be stopped by using our shores and from the maritime power because Portugal could be used as platform to release Europe from Napoleonic aggression²¹;

- Ideology did not allow it: population and politicians were divided in pro-French, pro-British, liberals and absolutists, bourgeois, nobles and peasants, politicians, military and clergy: everybody was in “*ideology-convulsion*” after the French Revolution and the Portuguese society was no exception being subject to intense international pressure from all parties;
- The defence forces had little deterrence: Since the War in 1762/63, primarily the army was abandoned, and had no real investment on soldiers, equipments or organization.

Portugal could not be neutral just because it wanted to be. Portugal had to adapt its own strategy taking in consideration the real situation in Spain and analyzing the strategies coming from Britain and France.

France had three big moments with regard to its “Grand Stratégie”; first the indirect approach, 1798, against British influence through the Egypt campaign, but it didn’t work; second through a direct attack against Britain in 1804, a large force of “200.000” prepared to launch an attack across the Channel but the naval defeat at Trafalgar in 1805 forced this plan to be aborted; finally the land approach through the European continent. After Napoleon’s victory against Austria, Prussia and Russia the only major power left was Britain and its ally – Portugal, so the strategy was:

²¹ António Barrento, *Invasões Francesas: Portugal na Fronteira do Poder Terrestre e do Poder Marítimo*, pg. 278, 279

- Prevent Britain reaching the coast line and draw it out of its sanctuary (Portugal), deny the control of the most important Ports in the Iberian Peninsula “*Junot to Lisbon, Soult to Coruña, Dupont to Cadiz*”²²;
- Occupy the Iberian Peninsula in order to control the major cities using the French supporters “Afrancesados” and neutralizing the rest;
- Use successful Napoleonic tactics; pursue to get the enemy engaged on decisive battles through the concentration of forces.

Great Britain also evolved in its strategy, first it tried to get on to the Continent through the Netherlands in 1793, but the Duke of York’s allied Army suffered a severe defeat which forced them back to Britain – this way to the Continent was tried again in 1809 at Walcheren, another failure, and Britain would have to wait until 1813 to finally get a foothold..

The “Grand naval/expeditionary British Strategy” had its high after the allied naval victory at Trafalgar in 1805. The strategy was designed to attack French interests and territories in all continents, deny the use of the Channel and Mediterranean, deploy expeditionary corps to areas of high geopolitical interest like Egypt, the Italian Peninsula, Spanish America and some of the Portuguese territories like Goa, Mozambique, Macau and Madeira.

Part of this grand strategy was the need to control/ neutralize other major naval powers as we can see by Admiral’s Ducan destruction of the Dutch Fleet at Camperdown in 1797, the Spanish in S. Vicente in 1797, the Danish in Copenhagen in 1801 and 1807²³ and the Italian in Naples 1801.

In 1808, one it was apparent that the *northern route* to central Europe was not possible and in control of the seas, Britain redefined its strategy to include the Iberian Peninsula²⁴:

²² Mendo Castro Henriques, pg. 178;

²³ “*The British, after another bombardment at Copenhagen, took back to England 13 Ships and 14 Frigates captured from the Danish Fleet without a declaration of War*”, José Rodrigues Pereira, pg. 11

²⁴ “*It was defined in 1808, in a time that France had the control over two thirds of Europe, it was at the top of power in the continent and possessed an Army ten times larger than the British*”, António José Telo, pg. 311

- Ensure the use of the “sanctuary” (Portugal) as main logistic base and force provider to support military campaigns in Spain and later in France;
- Attract the French Forces to the Iberian Peninsula in order to weaken other French armies in Europe (Austria, Prussia, Russia, Italy, etc.);
- Force the dispersion of the French corps in the Peninsula avoiding the Great Napoleonic confrontations and using, the best way possible, the support/ reinforcements of all types of forces available, including the use of Militias and Ordenança in Portugal and the Guerrillas in Spain;

In 1807, Portugal was not the “*worst in Europe*”. Due to all political “*chaos*”, international pressure, effects caused by War of the Oranges’ leading to a certain sense of defeat and the absence of a true investment in the armed forces, Portugal was not capable, to defend against the biggest and best army of the world – Napoleon’s Army – which was strongly reinforced by the Spanish Army. Portugal started to establish the Light Infantry, and kept the organization in three lines of forces, 1st Line, Militias and Ordenanças, some (very few) good cadres and a determined (although divided) Nation against invaders, but it was not enough.

Portugal was divided and its armed forces were divided as well and deliberately reduced. If the reforms decided in 1806 had been implemented, probably could have modernized the army and instigated new doctrines but the Armed Forces are an integral part of the country and Portugal did not live in isolation from all the external and internal influences of a rapidly changing society.

Portugal was forced to change and adapt its strategy in accordance with the dominant strategies and, faced with an imminent invasion, the “*reactive*” Portuguese strategy could be defined as:

- Ensure the possession of the naval fleet and keep the government legitimacy by transferring the Royal Family, part of the government

and the Navy to Brazil, accepting the French occupation in order to avoid a bloody reaction;

- Once confirmed the real intentions of Napoleon, make clear the alliance with Britain, integrating great part of its army in an Allied Army under British command;
- Avoid decisive combats against French forces, organize the populations to resist and conduct military operations in the rear area and logistic lines of the occupying forces;
- Maintain the Portuguese participation in the allied Army to ensure the liberation of Spain and fight all the way through to France to value the role of Portugal and, in that way, secure a seat at the negotiating table at the final peace treaties.

1807: JUNOT'S INVASION

When General Andoche Junot, commander of the French and Spanish invading troops, arrived finally in Lisbon on 27 November 1807, he was still able to see at a distance the last ships of the Royal Convoy on the way to Brazil²⁵. Napoleon never forgave Junot for not capturing the Royal Family and allowing the transfer of the Portuguese Government to another area of the Empire, Rio de Janeiro – Occupying Lisbon didn't mean conquering Portugal and Napoleon knew this only too well. The Queen of Portugal was still the Queen ruling Portugal from other parts of its territories.

Napoleon writes to Junot: *“disarm all inhabitants, dismiss all Portuguese troops, give harsh examples, keep a severe attitude that will make people fear you ... anything that you leave in possession of the Portuguese will turn against us, because you know, Portuguese people are a brave nation”*²⁶.

²⁵ The Fleet was composed by 15 War Ships, the bulk of the Portuguese Navy. The remaining Ships that were being repaired were captured by the French. Besides this 15, another 20 merchant ships having aboard all people that decided to go along with the Royal Family (meaning almost all the high Portuguese society) – total around 15.000 people together with their own belongings.

²⁶ Letter from Napoleon Bonapart to Junot, António Pedro Vicente, no Tempo de Napoleão, pg. 258 and also João Centeno, pg. 100.

Not surprisingly, the French occupying troops soon started to show their real intentions and severe repression was imposed on the country and all troops were completely dismissed the fastest way possible.

The Portuguese “first line” Army was reduced to less of 25% by a decree of 22 December – From 24 to 6 Infantry Regiments, 12 to 3 Cavalry Regiments, 4 to 1 Artillery Regiment – and all these few remaining Regiments were deployed to Spain to fight alongside the French Troops under the designation of *Portuguese Legion* (around 9.000 troops under the command of Marquis Alorna, including very famous Portuguese Officers – Pamplona, Gomes Freire de Andrade, Corte Real, Freire Pego, Marquis Loulé, Mascarenhas, etc. – organized in 16 January 1808 in 5 Infantry Regiments, 4 Cavalry Regiments and 1 Light Infantry Battalion, later in June reorganized in two Infantry Brigades and 1 Cavalry Brigade - see more in coming chapters).

In January 1808, the strategic force reserve of the nation was also dismissed – all the Militias and Ordenanças: soldiers with more than 8 years of service were sent home leaving their weapons with the French (they were allowed to keep their uniforms) and all the horses with the French Dragons. In Portugal the only permitted national troops were the *Royal Police Guard* (predecessor of today’s GNR) because the senior ranks were all French or pro-French.

Consequently, by the end of January 1808, Portugal was occupied by French and Spanish troops, subject to forced war contributions, its churches, convents, palaces, shops had all been looted, and it had no army (militias/ ordenanças were dismissed), navy and no weapons with which to defend itself, the best commanders were in Brazil or in France (with the Portuguese Legion) and all the horses had been confiscated.

The reports of the actions ordered by Junot led to a formal declaration of War against France from Portugal’s future King João VI on 1 May 1808²⁷. Spain was also forced to change its position towards its French ally following the 2nd May Madrid’s Revolt that will lead to the departure from Portugal of Spanish

²⁷ Carlos Bessa, *Nova História Militar ...*, pg. 236. News took over one month to travel from/to Brazil and that is why that the declaration of War was only known in Portugal in June 1808.

occupying troops. The Portuguese population which, since the first acts of resistance in Lisbon December 1807, never stopped resisting the occupiers, after knowing the formal declaration of War from the King of Portugal, will make life *Hell* for the French from North to South across the Country.

1808: PHOENIX – COMING BACK FROM THE ASHES

With the help of the Spanish occupying troops Oporto was taken in the beginning of June and throughout the country, French troops were being attacked, forcing Junot to decide to reassemble his troops around the bigger cities and especially around the capital, Lisbon.

The secret of the huge emerging force in the summer of 1808 is explained through the traditional organization of the country's Militias and Ordenanças. That is why "*from nothing thousands of troops appear*"²⁸ and, although largely disarmed, the forces were under a certain degree of control and coordination because, since almost the foundation of Portugal in the 12th Century, the Portuguese armed forces were the nation's armed forces (King's army and only army) and, in contrast to what happened in many other European countries with their small private armies, feudal or regional.

In fact, the only existing operational Portuguese army had been sent to France under Napoleon's orders – the Portuguese Legion – but, using the centuries old Militias and Ordenanças organization, and with the few first line officers and troops left, a new Army, a popular force, a nation in arms, came back from the ashes in a spectacularly short time period. But although the will to fight was big, everything else was missing: weapons, uniforms, money, commanders, horses, doctrine, tactics, and training. Everything!

France will suffer its first defeat in the Iberian Peninsula when Silveira's Portuguese forces made Loison retreat at the Great Battle dos Padrões de Teixeira and Régua in June 1808²⁹. Junot soon found out that he could never

²⁸ "*The spontaneous rebirth of the army from June 1808 was very orderly compared to what was going on in Spain at the same time*", René Chartrand, Vimeiro, pg 42

²⁹ To re-conquer Porto, Junot ordered Loison to leave Almeida with 2.600 men well armed and equipped but he never got there. In the first great battle against the Portuguese, armed with whatever was possible, under the orders of Colonel Silveira (Future Count of Amarante) the French are defeated in the mountains

sustain this fighting throughout the territory and so he decided to withdraw his troops and reassemble them in a small area of the country, around Lisbon with a logistic line through Alentejo to Spain. Thousands of Portuguese died defending “*the impossible*” (Leiria, Beja, Évora, Tomar. etc.) but the result was that by the end of August Junot only had the control of Lisbon, a small area in the centre of the country and the access to Spain through Alentejo. The main fortresses were controlled by the Portuguese or under siege. Portugal controlled large areas of the territory and enough free ports on the shore, a determined nation in arms and a new 1st line army being formed. The conditions were created to allow old allies, the British, to disembark calmly and in safety their well equipped, well trained and properly commanded army.

“In a little bit more of one month the uprising had reached all the country. All that was left was the capital and the surroundings under the control of the French Army”³⁰

“Before Wellington (still Wellesley) put a foot on land the uprising had liberated 9/10th of the country”³¹

The British forces deployed to Portugal in August 1808 to help to defeat the French would not be, by themselves, enough. If Portugal was to be defended, as we know this was also important for the British strategy, much more than expeditionary armies, money, weapons or equipment was needed. The Portuguese Army had to be recreated again in order to, once more in our long history, fight side by side, with the British Army in another global war, in Europe, America or Asia.

First arrived the money, weapons and supplies and, only in the autumn, the first-line troops landed in Portugal, the *Loyal Lusitanian Legion*, created from the Portuguese émigrés exiled in Britain during the French Occupation and commanded by the charismatic Sir Robert Wilson.

of Teixeira and Régua – The Battle of Teixeira (or also known as the Battle of Padrões de Teixeira and Régua) – from the author: 200 anos da Batalha do Vimeiro, Revista Militar.

³⁰ António Pedro Vicente, pg. 86

³¹ Vasco Pulido Valente, pg. 7

From Portugal's new capital, Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, D. João VI and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and War, D. Rodrigo Sousa Coutinho, prepared a major attack against French territories in South America (described in chapters ahead) and, at the same time, D. Miguel Pereira Forjaz (Delegated Minister of War, Foreign Affairs and Navy in the continent) starts a comprehensive plan to prepare Portugal's defence implementing the 1803's reforms plan³².

To fill the units an order was given to all officers and soldiers dismissed by the French to report immediately to their old units, all the deserters received a pardon from the King and all the soldiers that had sick-leave from 1801 till November 1807 were forced to report.

At the end of 1808 the following units had already been recreated³³ on the Continent (they will continue to grow and develop in the forthcoming years): 24 Infantry Regiments (for instance at that time the total of men was very much below the 1.550 men each Regiment was supposed to have and there were huge shortages in weapons and uniforms - 21.094 men, 19.113 weapons and 6.912 uniforms); 6 Caçadores Battalions; 12 Cavalry Regiments (with lots of problems - 3.641 men, 2.617 horses and only 629 uniforms); 4 Artillery Regiments (not in such bad condition, many of the guns were taken from the fortresses and later, when the Portuguese Royal Arsenal was working again, new guns were immediately forged and assembled); 48 Militia Regiments (52.848 men assembled by December 1808) and the Ordenanças companies (it is difficult to be precise about the numbers for the Ordenanças, in theory they could add up to 1.536 companies, but we can state that from the Ordenanças more than 60.000 men were moved to the Militias and first line troops).

Many Volunteers corps were created but, as a general rule, in the forthcoming years many of them were absorbed by the Militias like the Legião Transtagana, Volunteers of Portalegre, Beja and Coimbra, etc. Just to highlight some of this very important corps: Royal Commerce Volunteers of Lisbon and Oporto, the Oporto Volunteers (heirs of the Clergy's Company from 17th century

³² *"This organization was possible due to the dedication and meritorious services of General Bernardim Freire de Andrade and his brother in law, D. Miguel Pereira Forjaz"* João Centeno, pg 113.

³³ As we can find in different tables at René Chartrand, Portuguese Army (I, II e III)

commanded by a bishop with 600 monks and priests organized as a Regiment with two Battalions, The Academic Coimbra Corps (whose origin goes back to the 17th century as well) composed by the students of the university and having the teachers as commanding officers.

The Loyal Lusitanian Legion was composed of 2.300 men in 3 Caçadores Battalions and 1 Artillery Battalion – in 1811 the Legion was absorbed in the first line Army as Caçadores Battalions.

The Royal Engineer Corps, with long tradition and prestige in the Portuguese Army, with 100 engineers in the continent, 9 in Brazil, 1 in India and 1 in Angola³⁴ (reorganized in November 1808 with 8 Colonels, 13 Lieutenant colonels, 27 Majors, 22 Captains and 22 Lieutenants and later in 1812 a “craftsmen” Battalion was added to provide for the engineering work)

The Royal Arsenal which had, since the Restoration (1640), produced ammunitions and muskets for the Army, immediately started operating after the French left Portugal. They were organized with 33 officers, 50 masters and around 2.000 workers with the priority to produce artillery guns for Portugal and Brazil.

The Telegraphic corps became famous after the Lines of Torres Vedras in 1810 – although they had been created in 1808 they only started operating in 1809 building formidable telecommunications lines between the most important army positions in Portugal, like Abrantes and Elvas, using an effective semaphore system, or the naval “balloon” system, as can be seen today at the Lines of Torres Vedras.

The Fortification, Artillery and Drawing Royal Academy founded in 1790, at the same time as the Naval Academy – Royal Navy Academy (1779), reopened immediately when the French left and was very important providing new officers to the army.

³⁴ “many officers of ability and Intelligence” René Chartrand, Portuguese Army, pg. 19, Vol 2

The Intelligence Corps³⁵ – D. Miguel Forjaz had a very good intelligence network working from inside the Spanish territory under the coordination of Joaquim José de Oliveira. There were officers in Galicia, in León, Castilla, Estremadura, Andalucía and the Asturias, informers were paid 1.000 reis a week and these “*Portuguese eyes*” were so efficient that Wellington did everything he could to have them under his direct authority (*Mr. Oliveira* like the Duke called him)³⁶.

The Army Guides created in 1806 would later, in 1812, adopt the designation of Mounted Guides, composed of foreigners and Coimbra University’s volunteers with a good knowledge of English and French.

The Garrisons at the major fortresses, were organized with a governor (usually a general officer) 1 major and an aide-de-camp, based on the traditional medieval organizations known as Pé-de-Castelo (of around 200 men).

The Royal Police Guard with 1.000 Infantry and 229 Cavalry in Lisbon and a squadron in Oporto, that proved essential in keeping law and order in these cities after 1808.

For logistic support we highlight the Army treasuries, the food supply and medical care, this last area being much disorganized in 1808 and had a large restructuring under Marshal Beresford in 1809.

THE PORTUGUESE GLOBAL DEFENCE

In Madeira, as a strategic point (choke-point) to control maritime routes, Britain “*reinforced and deployed forces*” in 1801 and 1807³⁷. Besides the British troops it is important to highlight the artillery group with its 6 batteries.

³⁵Mendo Castro Henriques, SALAMANCA 1812, pg. 19

³⁶Mendo Castro Henriques, SALAMANCA 1812, pg. 19: Intelligence produced was so relevant that Wellington was always asking updates from Mr. Oliveira’s agents at all time.

³⁷ Or occupied, depends the way we understand “read” the events, but the fact is that our sovereignty was at the end respected, in both cases: in 1801 and in 1808 after our King arrived to Brazil. Strategically, both countries, Portugal and GB, defended their interest guaranteeing the territories: the same occurs in Macau and India but, in the end, all of them were still Portuguese territories.

In Azores there was 1 infantry battalion with 8 companies and one important Militia organized in 3 “Terços” (a kind of Regiment) that provided more than 3.000 troops.

Brazil was the territory where more action happened. The most important Portuguese territory, that would acquire the status of United Kingdom to Portugal has, with the King’s (future King) presence, an exhaustive reform program that in the end would create one of the best/ modernized armed forces at the time:

- The regional division in 17 “*capitanias*”, each with one Captain-General, organized with regular troops and Militias;
- First line troops in 1808: many of them came from the continent/Europe and, besides the deployment of men some units were deployed as a whole (Moura, Estremoz, Bragança, etc.);
- After the arrival of the Royal Family the armed forces in Brazil were reorganized in:
 - Viceroy’s Cavalry Guard as an adaptation from the previous two Viceroy’s Cavalry Guard squadrons;
 - From the disembarked naval infantry (or marines) were created 1 Marine Regiment with 3 Battalions;
 - 1 Horse Artillery Corps, 1 Royal Arsenal in Rio de Janeiro, 1 Royal Police Guard Corps and 1 Military Academy;
 - Light Infantry “Caçadores” Legion with 3 Battalions;
 - 2 Infantry Regiments (besides the 3 deployed from the continent/ Europe) 1 Artillery Regiment, several territorial garrisons spread around the gigantic territory of Brazil reinforced with local Militias and Ordenanças – many of the Militia Regiments were later transformed in first line Regiments by a Royal decree;

A large combined/joint operation was executed from Brazil to conquer French Guiana that we will briefly describe:

The goal of the expedition was to conquer French Guiana and everything was prepared in Belem, by the Governor of Pará, General José Narciso de

Magalhães de Menezes³⁸. In November 1808 an Anglo-Portuguese fleet blocked the capital, Cayenne; and in December LTC Marques de Sousa's Portuguese 1.200 army force conquered Oyapoc. Part of that force embarked on the ships and together with the 80 British Royal Marines, took Cayenne on the 12 January 1809. Portugal held Guiana until 1817.

On the other [South] side of Brazil, important military expeditions were planned and executed (the fact is that, at anytime some kind of confrontation could occur between Portugal and Spain, there were direct consequences on the borders of Brazil and the many Spanish colonies: since the 16th century Portugal had the ambition to have Brazil's southern border on the Plata River). It is a good example of how global this war was, in 1806 and 1807 Beresford captured Buenos Aires but it was recaptured by Linieres; Portugal executed several incursions towards the Plata River, among them we should highlight:

- In 1808, through the Minister Count of Linhares, offers protection to Governor Linieres, but he does not accept;
- In 1809 tries to establish an agreement with Britain and reinforces the number of troops in southern Brazil;
- In 1811, although with British opposition, invades territory in the south with D. Diogo de Sousa's "*Pacification Army (Exército de Pacificação)*" and takes Cerro Largo on 23 July, Santa Tereza on 5 September and Maldonado on 3 October. On 10 June 1812 the Portuguese King orders the troops to withdraw from the "*Banda Oriental*" but kept all the territories "*between the rivers (Entre os rios)*";
- In 1816 a new expedition was prepared, under the command of one of Portugal's best Generals, Lecor.

In Mozambique there was 1 regiment with 10 companies adding around 1.000 troops and 1 artillery battery of 100 men. The French Corsairs had been attacking this colony since 1790; in 1796, the Capital Lourenço Marques, was

³⁸ "Fought in the Roussillon Campaign (1793-1795) as an 2nd Oporto Regiment's Lieutenant-Colonel. Rio de Janeiro Base Commander in 1806 and, as Lieutenant General was assigned as Governor of Pará" Rodrigues e Mimoso, A conquista da Guiana Francesa, pg. 11. "The King awarded for this campaign with the rank of Portuguese Army Marshal", Carlos Bessa, pg. 239

attacked, sacked and destroyed³⁹ and in 1797 another attack was executed by 2 French frigates. Mozambique was in the middle of the *crossroads* of conflicting interest that mirrored the situation in Europe: on one side there were the British Cape of Good Hope and on the other, French Mauritius and Reunion. Portugal issued an order in 1803 to maintain neutrality and so, trade and commercial exchange, continued to flow among all, with sporadic events. In 1808, Francisco Amaral Cardoso, Mozambique's Governor, signed a 6 articles convention with French General Caen, which authorized the continuation of trade despite formal declarations of war.

But some incidents occurred: on 10 November 1808, 4 Portuguese ships were attacked close to Mauritius and another ship in the Mozambique Channel; the captured crew and passengers were able to escape later. On the other side, Portugal captured the ship *Aurore*. In December 1810, Portuguese merchants were very important as intelligence providers in support of the British campaign against the French Islands and immediately after that the trade among British and Portuguese in the region was increased.

In Angola there was 1 Infantry Regiment, 1 Artillery Group and 1 Cavalry Squadron but there are no important events reported during those time period.

In India, the Portuguese Viceroy had authority over the Governors of Mozambique, Macau and Timor and so, he had a strong armed forces detachment present in Goa, composed of 2 Infantry Regiments, 1 Artillery Regiment and the Royal Volunteers Legion making a total of 5.400 troops (1.200 from Europe). As had happened in Madeira, where British "*reinforcements*" had landed in 1801 and 1807, from 1808 forward a Bengal British Battalion was deployed. Some of the maritime fortresses were also occupied by British Naval forces due to "*possible French attacks using those locations*". The British Governor, Marquis of Wellesley (Arthur Wellesley's Brother) had indeed been alerted to the French threat in that region, specifically against Goa and Bombay⁴⁰. Admiral Rayner's British Fleet had been sent in

³⁹ Oliveira Marques, pg. 638

⁴⁰ Rodrigues Pereira, pg. 64 and also Carlos Bessa, pg. 307 "*knowing Sultan Tipu's plans in conjunction with the brave and energetic French soldier Dupliex (...) Stuart agreed being urgent Goa's defense (...)*

1799 and the Admiral offered protection to the Portuguese Governor, Francisco Veiga Cabral despite the fact that he had not requested any kind of protection.

They did withdraw but came back later and deployed a close distance from Goa. In December 1799, 200 troops landed in the Portuguese territory Diu and other 200 in Damão, all of this against Portuguese will. The British even tried to make a trade: “*Goa for Malaca, or Goa for a good amount of money*”⁴¹. The reality is that these forces only left Portuguese domains in 1808 but some came back and occupied the fort of *Aguada*. On 25 May an Anglo-Portuguese convention was signed between Viceroy Count of Sarzedas and General Governor Lord Minto. Until 1811 Britain enlarged the force and in 1812 the majority of the British troops left the Fort leaving only 4 companies composed of Portuguese and British soldiers. Finally in 1814 the last British soldiers left Goa.

A Portuguese Goan Regiment detachment was deployed in Macao and, as in India and Madeira; British presence was noted in 1801 and 1807. Later, a joint Portuguese-Chinese-British naval operation was launched, but in this case, against pirates and not French troops. In 1808 India’s British Governor sent Admiral’s Drury’s Fleet to Macao. Before being allowed to land the Portuguese Governor forced the signing of a convention. Later, 21 September 1808, 1.182 troops landed and occupied 2 forts in Macao. However, following strong pressure from China, the British left Macao in 19 December and never came back⁴².

In São Tomé e Príncipe, the islands of *Fernão Pó* and *Ano Bom* were transferred to Spain in 1778. A very limited defence capability was present in the area, some infantry, artillery, 4 fortress’ garrisons⁴³, 5 local ordenanças companies (with European commanders) and other 5 completely local

urgency grew with the news of Napoleon’s victories in Europe. Goa, besides being an excellent operation base, was the perfect location to allow the passage of troops from Egypt towards Malabar or directly to Europe”.

⁴¹ Carlos Bessa, pg. 307

⁴² See complete description of the events in Carlos Bessa, pg. 315

⁴³ Carlos Agostinho das Neves, pg. 57

Ordenanças. Both the French and British tried to occupy the Islands⁴⁴, the global *actors* with their *global goals*:

- In 1793 Admiral Drury's British Ship offers "*protection*" to S. Tomé: "*I have clear orders from His British Majesty (...) to give the Portuguese all protection and take in my convoy all the Portuguese Ships (...) I will protect them against the French, our common enemies*"⁴⁵. In that same year one of the Forts came under a British Frigate fire due to alleged Portuguese help to the French. The Portuguese Governor ordered the arrest of all French citizens in the Island.
- A French Fleet, commanded by Captain Jean François Landolph, invaded the Island of Principe in 1799 without any kind of resistance and forced the signature of an agreement by which Portugal should provide assistance to France as long as the war lasts in Europe⁴⁶.
- In 1804/05 several confrontations were registered against the King of Dahomey but with no connection to the War with France⁴⁷;

In Cape Verde, as happened in 1712, the French attacked and sacked the Island of Brava in 1798 and, at the same time, the British, with and without the use of force, tried to create bases in different Islands⁴⁸.

In Guinea Bissau and Timor small army garrisons composed by Infantry and Artillery were in charge of the defence. Only in Timor confrontations were registered between the Dutch and British, in 1797 and 1810, the Dutch eventually surrendered in 1811 but all these events didn't bring any consequences to Portuguese territories.

THE PORTUGUESE LEGION

Outside of the Portuguese territories it is important to describe the operations executed by one of our expeditionary armies, the Portuguese Legion. The Legion got some attention during the sieges in Zaragoza (1808) where the first 300 casualties were registered and thousands of deserters (from the 9.000

⁴⁴ Carlos Agostinho das Neves, pg. 61

⁴⁵ Carlos Agostinho das Neves, pg. 414-415

⁴⁶ Carlos Agostinho das Neves, pg. 434-445

⁴⁷ Carlos Agostinho das Neves, pg. 443-446

⁴⁸ Oliveira Marques, pg. 629

thousand that left Portugal only 6.000 reached Burgos). After the Sintra Convention in 1808 many thought that the country would negotiate their return to Portugal in exchange of Junot's troops, but they were indeed forgotten and many felt abandoned by their own country.

In 1809, three elite Battalions were established in one Demi-Brigade under the command of Colonel Freire Pego and went in combat during the German/Austrian Campaign. During the Battle of Wagram in 1809, as part of Oudinot's II Corps (General Grandjean's 3rd Division), in the Baumersdorf's attack – 3.000 thousand Portuguese participated resulting in 600 casualties. Napoleon commended the Portuguese troops: *"I am very happy with your Portuguese: they always fight with gallantry in this War and for sure, there are no better troops in Europe than the Portuguese"*⁴⁹. As a reward they were appointed as the Paris Garrison for one month. Later reinforced with new recruits, Germans, Suisse, Italians and French; in August 1810 the number rose to 12.000⁵⁰.

For the 3rd Invasion of Portugal in 1810, some of the Legion's Officers came with Masséna (Alorna, Pamplona, Marquis of Valença and Loulé, Count of Sabugal, Brigadier Manuel de Sousa, etc. ... many did manage to escape). In 1811 the Legion was once more reorganized into 3 Infantry Regiments, 1 Cavalry Regiment and 1 Elite Regiment (1 Caçadores Battalion and 1 Grenadier Battalion).

During the Russian Campaign in 1812, the remaining 5.600 Legionnaires in 3 Infantry Regiments and 1 Cavalry were distributed throughout different French Corps. The Legion fought at Smolensk *"always in the front line"*⁵¹, suffering 200 dead, and at Borodino under Marshal Ney's orders (III Corps). During the assault on the redoubts in Bagration, at the Russian centre, the Legion lost 500 men and when it reached Moscow only one Regiment remained. Only 100 Portuguese soldiers survived the Russian Campaign.

⁴⁹ Teotónio Banha, pg. 48, also Américo Henriques, Guerra Peninsular, Soberanias Atlânticas, pg. 124 *"From Napoleon – Yes from Napoleon himself! The title of the best soldiers in the world, shouted by him in front of his entire Staff, when the Portuguese did a Bayonet charge during the Battle of Wagram"*

⁵⁰ Teotónio Banha, pág. 50

⁵¹ Teotónio Banha, pg. 70

The Portuguese Legion Commander, Marquis Alorna, died in Königsberg. “La Légion Portugaise combattit vaillamment dans nos rangs à Wagram, à Smolensk, à la Moskowa, et avec tant des nôtres, trouva son tombeau dans les glaces de la Bérézina: avant la mort, à Königsberg, de son digne chef, le général de division marquis d’Alorna et la perte de ses éléments nationaux les plus purs, elle a payé, de son sang, l’honneur d’avoir fait partie de la Grand-Armée.”⁵²

In 1813, replenished with French recruits the rest of the Legion is based in Grenoble with 4 companies and after the Battle of “Leipzig” the troops are disarmed and sent to Bourges where they stay till April 1814. Some decided to stay in France but the majority returned to Portugal and presented themselves back to their old units, many were judged and arrested, but the majority were reintegrated and some of them were promoted and awarded with high responsibilities (Pamplona and Castro Pereira as State’s Ministers, Madureira as parliamentarian, José Xavier as Colégio Militar’s Director, etc.). However, Gomes Freire de Andrade was executed.

THE EXPEDITIONARY and DEFENCE FORCES DEVELOPMENT

In 1809 Nicolas Soult is ordered by Napoleon to invade Portugal but he was to find it extremely difficult to defeat the new Portuguese forces. For almost two months the Portuguese forces: Militias, Ordenanças and a few regular troops were to make life *hell* for the French occupiers. It was to be the Portuguese forces which were to cause the majority of the 6.000 casualties from Soult’s troops and force him to abandon much of his equipment.

The French plans for the Second French Invasion of Portugal required the Soult capture Oporto by February 5 and Lisbon by 16 February; supported by Lapisse and Maupetit’s troops by the Beira’s border and Marshal Victor’s troops by Alentejo’s border. Despite the fact the Portuguese army was very weak, unarmed and under equipped, lacking organization and discipline, the fact is that these forces were distributed alongside the Portuguese border ready to defend from any possible attack. Generals Bernardim Freire de Andrade and

⁵² P. Boppe, La Legion Portugaise 1807-1813.

Silveira in the North, General Pinto Bacelar at the Beiras, General Miranda Henriques between Tejo and Mondego, General Francisco de Paula Leite in Alentejo and the Count of Castro Marim in Algarve.

It is, in fact, remarkable the defence of Portugal during this second invasion. First, Soult needed to redirect his whole offensive from Minho to Trás-Os-Montes, however, due to the very well organized defence at the river Minho by Portuguese and by the coordinated action with Spanish troops in Galicia, in particular at Vigo and Tuy. Second, the movement of the French Corps to reach Oporto is difficult and hard with major casualties caused by the enthusiastic Portuguese defence that, although having no chance of defeating an organized force such as the French, with bravery and determination, used constant attacks, ambushes, deterrence positions and, in some cases, open battles to defend key positions. Immediately after Oporto was in French possession the way back to Spain was cut by the Portuguese defence isolating the French Corps and not allowing Soult to proceed towards Lisbon. Chaves was again in Portuguese hands, all the area east River Tâmega was completely controlled and south of Douro the forces described before were still controlling all borders.

In the rest of the Iberian Peninsula military activity was very intense and in February Zaragoza surrendered and Aragón was now in French control. By the end of March all the south of Spain was under strong French pressure and the French Army that was ready to help Soult in his efforts to reach Lisbon, was now close to PortugueseGuadiana border. All Portugal south of Douro and Spanish Andalucía, Murcia and Valencia are now the only regions in the Peninsula free from the French.

The truth is that the Portuguese forces are in control of the logistic lines, which delayed Soult's movement back to Spain for more than 15 days and continued defending the rest of the territory⁵³. As during the First French Invasion, the arrival of British troops⁵⁴ were fundamental to expel the French

⁵³ To learn more see the book of General Carlos Azeredo about the Second Invasion, in the bibliography.

⁵⁴ British Expeditionary Forces: Commander - general Arthur Wellesley, general Mackenzie with 4400 men; generals Paget, Sherbrooke and Hill, each commanding one Division and Major General Tilsit with a Brigade; Total: 22 000 H.

but, it was essentially through the Portuguese forces in the north that, once more, created the conditions to allow a successful allied counter-attack.

“All the nation of Portugal was under arms fighting for its Independence. This was a general feeling and we could not beat them by force. It would have been easier to exterminate the entire nation than make them give up” (Soult memoirs. Pg. 59)

Meanwhile, the Portuguese Government in Rio de Janeiro requested the British Government to appointment a capable officer to rebuild and reorganize the Portuguese Army; General Beresford was selected and, by a Portuguese Royal decree of 7 March 1809, he was appointed Commander in Chief.

Immediately after assuming the command of the Army, Beresford, in accordance with instructions coming from the Portuguese Secretary, Miguel Pereira Forjaz, started an intense training program and introduced new doctrinal practices in line with the best armies of Europe. About Forjaz, allow me to quote the words of one of the best experts on the Peninsular War, Donald Howard:

“He was the Portuguese hero of the Peninsular War, Dom Miguel Pereira Forjaz” (Donald Howard, Guerra Peninsular, Soberanias Atlânticas, pg. 117)
“no other country implemented a so global strategy against Napoleon’s Armies, no one” (...) *“England had Castlereagh, Austria had Metternich, Prussia had Von Stein and Portugal had Dom Miguel Pereira Forjaz”*

Beresford established his Headquarters at Tomar and started his effort with the units from centre and south of Portugal because all the units to the north were engaged with the enemy. In accordance with Forjaz, British Officers were integrated in the Portuguese Army at the most relevant positions. All the NCOs and soldiers were Portuguese, the majority of the Division/ Brigade commanders were British, half of the Regiment/ Battalion commanders and a quarter of the rest of the unit officers.

After some resistance, the regulations were adapted along the lines of British doctrine with the main goal to keep the coherence inside the allied, Anglo-

Portuguese army. This reform included new cadres, an age limit for active officers and compulsory retirement for the ones who had already passed that limit.

After Soult's withdrawal Wellesley thought that the opportunity had come to execute a combined Anglo-Portuguese / Spanish attack and so, he gave the northern Portugal's defence to General Silveira's troops, and together with Beresford's Portuguese troops prepared an attack towards Madrid. The operations lasted until 30 September but the armies had to come back to Portugal and prepare the defence against a possible third invasion.

Maintaining the Portuguese Army⁵⁵ from 1808 to 1814 was only possible due to the generosity of Britain, resulting from an agreement between the two nations. In November 1808 Britain agreed to subsidize wages, weapons, uniforms and equipment⁵⁶ for the first 10.000 line troops, and later, in 1809, 20.000 (due to the Portuguese decision of opening the Brazilian ports to British ships) and finally 30.000 in 1810, during the construction of the Lines of Torres Vedras. Portugal supported the remaining 25.000 first line troops, the Navy, all the Militias and Ordenanças and the overseas units in an estimated cost over 45 million cruzados⁵⁷.

1810: THE DEFEAT OF THE "BELOVED SON OF VICTORY"

In 1810 there are more than 150.000 men in the Portuguese Armed Forces, only accounting for the first line troops⁵⁸ and the Militias Regiments. In 1810, the Portuguese forces in the Anglo-Portuguese Wellington's Army fight side by side with the British, as proven in Buçaco and later in the Lines of Torres Vedras and all of this with the complete operational integration of Militias and Ordenanças.

⁵⁵ Mendo Castro Henriques, pg. 24,25

⁵⁶ From GB came 160.000 rifles, 2.300 carbines, 3.000 for the Cavalry, 7.000 pistols, 15.000 Cavalry swords, 190.000 uniforms, etc.

⁵⁷ Américo Henriques, Guerra peninsular, Soberanias Atlânticas, pg. 130

⁵⁸ Personnel in the Portuguese army: 1808 – 42619; 1809 – 47958; 1810 – 51841; 1811 – 54558; 1812 – 56808; 1813 - 51431. Mendo Castro Henriques, pg. 21. Other source (Fernando Pereira Marques, Exército, Mudança e reorganização, pg. 46) in 1811 Portugal had a "huge mass of soldiers comparing with the population, 335 439 men bearing arms, 60 508 first line troops, 58 500 Militias, 82 834 ordenanzas with rifles and 135 588 armed with spears".

What the Militias and Ordenanças did – today we call it: Deep Operations – against Soult’s logistic lines in 1809, Masséna’s reserves in 1810 or directly against Marmont’s attack in 1812 – was fundamental for the allied success in the campaigns. One third of all allied troops deployed were part of the Militias and Ordenanças and, if we add all the population that built the formidable Lines of Torres Vedras, we can say for certain, that Portugal had a true “*Nation in Arms*” defending the national territory.

“(…) concerning the Portuguese, justice was not done for their contribution in the Peninsular Wars. Less cruel, much more disciplined than the Spanish and with a calmer courage, they formed, in the Wellington’s Army, several of the Divisions and Brigades that, commanded by British Officers, were as equal as the British Troops but, because they were less boastful than the Spanish, historians spoke little of them and of their deeds and the reputation was than less known” General Marbot’s Memoirs, pg. 141.

“(…) the Portuguese soldier, intelligent, austere and unflinching walker, commanded by British Officers and adapted with the British discipline, were as efficient as the Anglo-Hanoverians, and in some cases, better than them, because the Portuguese are often possessed of strong feelings of enthusiasm and honour (…)” Masséna’s Memoirs, General Koch, The 1810 and 1811 Portuguese Campaigns, pg. 95.

After being expelled from Portugal in 1811, Masséna made another attempt to invade but, after the Battle of Fuentes de Oñoro, in May, he was defeated and forced to withdraw to Salamanca where he was replaced by Marmont who will try, for the last time, to attack Portugal, this time through the Beiras border.

Marmont’s invasion in 1812 is an action of no strategic value whatsoever with the sole purpose of distracting Wellington from Badajoz. But Marmont soon realized that the moment he invaded Portugal he was against, not only the cohesive and well disciplined Wellington’s Army, but also (and mainly) the territorial Portuguese forces, which although badly equipped and organized, were operating under one authority, the King of Portugal and one strategic plan, Wellington’s plan.

On the 20 January 1812 Ciudad Rodrigo was captured by the Allies and, on the 7 April, Badajoz. Marmont regrouped in Salamanca with 52.000 (out of 230.000 French troops in Spain) men waiting for a next opportunity to invade Portugal. Napoleon is preoccupied with his Russian Campaign and his confusing orders trying to control, from a distance, the operations in the Iberian Peninsula, provided the perfect opportunity for the Allies to plan and execute a major offensive from Portugal.

1812: THOUSANDS OF PORTUGUESE LIBERATING SPAIN

Wellington's plan had a global strategic vision: launch the offensive with the Anglo-Portuguese and Spanish armies, ensure the safety of the operational bases in Portugal using the Portuguese territorial troops, equally, ensure the safety of the operational bases in Spain on the Portuguese border, encourage the guerrillas in all of Spain to coordinate their efforts and to make use of "surgical" naval amphibious operations to outflank French positions. 28.000 British, 18.000 Portuguese left Portugal to attack Salamanca. It was a very important victory but with high number of casualties⁵⁹: 3129 British, 2038 Portuguese and 6 Spanish, but Wellington's strategy had proven right once more.

Following his triumphal entrance into Madrid⁶⁰ this was not to be the last Allied offensive, the French resistance was hard and after 5 attacks against Burgos Wellington decided to return to *Sanctuary Portugal*⁶¹. The "Burgos retreat", due to a strong concentration of French troops caused over 5.000 casualties among the Allies.

But soon a new opportunity presented itself after the news coming from the catastrophic Russian Campaign. Between River Côa and Águeda the units

⁵⁹ According to Soult "the French casualties were 12.000 and the Anglo-Portuguese were around 6.000 (...) the consequences was the lost of half Spain" Soult's memoires, pg. 213

⁶⁰ "Oh, my good friend, our entrance was the most touching scene ever lived. All Madrid was waiting us in a celebration even better than Lisbon in Corpus Christi Day; All the noblemen, all people, everybody wanted to be the first to touch and embrace us and shouting repeatedly: Viva the Liberators, Viva the British, Viva the Portuguese! We crossed Madrid in the arms of the citizens and they embraced us and embraced each others. All demonstrations of pure joy, the most true you can feel". Luís do Rego Barreto, letter from 14 August 1812 to Pedro Gomes da Silva, Mendo Castro Henriques, pg. 41

⁶¹ The French new that it was not possible to enter Portugal again: "the enemy didn't take any similar risk. The worst could happen to them, after a defeat, was to reassemble again in Portugal where we were not capable of pursuing" Soult's memoire, Pg. 229

were reinforced, new plans were developed and a more comprehensive integration with Spanish troops was prepared.

1813: ON THE WAY TO VITORIA

In April 1813, as said by Soriano⁶² (with a little bit of exaggerated patriotism), the Portuguese forces are *“in a state so high of military perfection that, since then, there couldn't be any French army that, with the same number of troops, could beat them in open field”*. Truth is that everything had really been improved, the individual life conditions of each soldier, the discipline, training, new armament and equipments, new campaign tents, Regiments and Battalions at 100%, new horses that allowed the formation of 5 complete Cavalry Regiments (1,4,6,11 and 12) etc.

On the other side, the French situation was deteriorating. The continued action of the Spanish guerrillas and the disastrous Russian Campaign reduced the forces in the Peninsula to 200.000. In the spring of 1813, a large Allied army, 90,000 strong composed of British, Portuguese and Spanish troops (30.000 Portuguese), under Wellington's command started the offensive into Spain which would lead the way to the great Battle of Vitoria where the French suffered one of their biggest defeats in the Iberian Peninsula. 8.000 French casualties against 5.110 for the Allies (503 dead British, 201 Portuguese, 96 Spanish and 1.300 French)⁶³.

Madrid, Valencia and many areas from Castilla and Aragón were evacuated by the French. The Allies continued their advance towards the Pyrenees and established a siege at San Sebastián and blockaded Pamplona.

The news coming from the Iberian Peninsula encouraged the Austrian Francis I to join Prussia, Russia, Sweden and Britain in a new alliance against Napoleon. But the Emperor was not yet ready to capitulate and decided to send one of his best marshals to the Pyrenees, Marshal Soult.

⁶² Ferreira Martins, pg. 289

⁶³ Other sources present different, although similar, numbers: Barros Rodrigues: dead – 497 British, 154 Portuguese and 89 Spanish (total casualties – 3.398 British, 1053 Portuguese and 553 Spanish), for General Ferreira Martins the Portuguese Killed in action were 238.

It resulted in another hard campaign for the Allies culminating in the 2 day-battle of Sorrauren and, as at Buçaco, the Portuguese and British are equal in numbers against the French. When Wellington arrived from his HQ in Lesaca on 26 July, the troops from 7th Caçadores salute him, as they usually did since 1809, “*Douro, Douro*” and that was now the usual salute from all the Allied troops.

The next day started the Battle of the Pyrenees. 8.000 French casualties against 3.500 British and 2.500 Portuguese – Marshal Soult withdrew to the French border on 1st August. And so that ended the last French Invasion in the Peninsular War. Wellington, among several commendations and appraisals tells publicly that the Portuguese were “*The fighting Cocks of my Army*”.

1814: THE PORTUGUESE ARMY IN FRANCE

The campaign was very demanding until the last battle in Tarbes and Toulouse in March/ April 1814. During the Peninsular War⁶⁴ the Portuguese Army participated in 280 combat actions (15 battles, 215 combats, 14 sieges, 18 assaults, 6 blockades and 12 fortress defences) with a total of 21.141 casualties (without counting the Militias and Ordenanças). After the French left Portugal the Portuguese troops participated in 135 combat engagements in Spain and France⁶⁵. Besides the major battles we referred to in previous chapters we are reminded that from the 10.000 Portuguese present at Albuera suffered 389 casualties, Badajoz 730 killed in action, San Sebastián 577 casualties, Nivelle with 20.041 present 408 casualties, Nive 379 killed, 1.736 wounded and 308 lost and, at the last battle in France, 10 April 1814, from the 13.948 present Portugal suffered 533 casualties.

During the Napoleonic wars, the reforms undertaken by Miguel Pereira Forjaz and Beresford were a continual effort and the global result was indeed very positive for the Army. A new justice system, new uniforms (as an example: in 1812 new uniforms were given to the 12 Caçadores battalions that earned

⁶⁴ Ferreira Martins, pg. 300.

⁶⁵ António Ventura, Guerra Peninsular, Soberanias Atlânticas, pg. 112

such a high reputation during the war), an effective evaluation system to manage the careers, family support, regimental hospitals, etc.

It is also important to highlight that the Armed Forces were well trained and disciplined which also provided a strong effect internally with regard to home security. Through the armed forces, good governance reached all the territory, in Europe and overseas. The Armed Forces were the symbol of cohesion, unity, representation and the extension of the government everywhere – for good and bad – they were there.

1814: THE RETURN AND DEPARTURE

In 1814, with the return of first line troops from Toulouse the number of Army personnel was reduced to 40.840 men and 5.620 horses⁶⁶. *“The brilliant participation of the Portuguese army is wasted when Napoleon is defeated and Vienna Treaty is signed in 1815”*⁶⁷. Portugal had been asked to provide a 15.000 troop corps to fight under Wellington in Belgium, the Portuguese regency decided to ask permission from the King in Brazil, the time it took to send the request back and forward to Brazil, Waterloo was over and Wellington recognized the Portuguese absence *“If 40.000 of my Portuguese troops were here, the French Army wouldn’t have lasted more than 1 hour”*⁶⁸.

But the force was indeed prepared and ready to be deployed and so, it will be this same force that get orders to deploy in Brazil, 1 Division organized in 2 Brigades (each with 2 Caçadores Battalions). In a coordinated effort from Portugal and Spain this force will be deployed in south Brazil in order to take control of the *Colonia do Sacramento* (current day Uruguay). Under the name “Prince Volunteers” (all Officers were given promotion to upper rank, the soldiers got full pension retirement and the exemption of serving on the Militias on their return to Portugal). Lieutenant-General Carlos Lecor in command, later reinforced with local troops in Brazil, and the support of Count Viana’s naval

⁶⁶ Ferreira Martins, pg 317 – *“The army was reduced to: 24 Infantry Regiments (24.264 men), 12 Caçadores Battalions (6.012 men), 12 Cavalry Regiments (6.372 men and 5.220 horses) 12 Artillery Regiments (3.568 men), 4 drivers companies (276 men, 400 horses), 1 Engineers’ Battalion (348 men), at the total of 40.840 men and 5.620 horses”*.

⁶⁷ Mendo Castro Henriques, pg. 172

⁶⁸ Ferreira Martins, pág. 318

fleet, took S. Tereza Fort and Montevideo in 20 January 1817. The Portuguese continued at war, but this time it was not against France and so, with the order to abandon occupied French Guiana in 1817⁶⁹ we could say that the Global Portuguese war ended in 1817.

1793-1817: II GLOBAL PORTUGUESE WAR

Searching for impossible neutrality since 1793, Portugal could not avoid a French-Spanish invasion in 1801 and 1807. From almost nothing but with a Nation in arms, Portugal resisted in 1808, stopped the 1809 invasion and expelled the invader in 1810 and 1812, all with great gallantry and enormous sacrifice, side by side with her traditional British ally. Later the Allies, reinforced by the Spanish, defeated the French from 1811 till 1814. With the French Guiana's withdrawal in 1817 and the beginning of a new campaign in Uruguay, 24 years of war ended of this Global Portuguese War. As a result, the Portuguese, exhausted but brave with a devastated country, was still independent, with a consolidated stronger Brazil, and an expanded Portuguese Africa and some territories in Asia.

Nuno Correia Barrento de Lemos Pires

Lieutenant- Colonel Portuguese Army

⁶⁹ "8 November 1817, that is the date when Portugal gave back to France Guiana, with a demonstration of sadness by French and native people there. These demonstrations from the people, while the Portuguese were leaving surprised the French authorities in such a way that, the new French commander alluded that he would desire to have such a demonstration of friendship when time would come for him to leave" (José Rodrigues Pereira, pg. 53) and Carlos Bessa, pg. 239.

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