

## The Napoleon Series

### The Peninsular Journal of Major General John Randoll Mackenzie 1808-1809: February 1809

Transcribed, edited and annotated by [Moisés Gaudêncio](#) and [Anthony Gray](#)

Source: Mackenzie Papers Vol, XV Diary of Maj. Gen. J. R. Mackenzie 1808-09

1st General Cameron arrived with his command. About 2 o'clock p. m. I embarked aboard in the *Semiramis* 36 guns frigate, Captain Granger<sup>1</sup>, who is to be our convoy for Cadiz. A very fine ship almost new. Major Tidy<sup>2</sup> as Assistant Adjutant General & Captain Kelly, Deputy Assistant Quarter Master General, besides Captain Balneavis<sup>3</sup>, Brigade Major & Mr. Stewart [sic] A.D.C., were the party. Were received most cordially & hospitably by Captain Granger.

2nd Sailed from the Tagus at day break, with light breezes, tolerably fair, but made little way. Were off St. Ubes (or Setuval [Setúbal]) at night.

3rd Continued our course, nothing extraordinary occurring.

4th The breeze freshened this morning, but rather scanty, spoke some vessels, but none that gave us any news. Hailed the *William & Elizabeth* on board of which General Stewart [sic] & his staff are embarked. All well.

5th Arrived in Cadiz bay about six o'clock p. m., after a very fine passage. The town looks beautiful as it is approached, and has a singular appearance, being built on a point of land, connected with Cadiz island by a low neck of land. Waited on Rear Admiral Purvis<sup>4</sup> immediately after anchoring. His flag is flying on board of the *Atlas* of 74 guns. Afterwards went on shore & saw Sir George Smith<sup>5</sup>, who has a diplomatic mission to Cadiz. Mr. Frere the British Minister to Spain is at Seville. Mr Stuart<sup>6</sup> is acting

---

<sup>1</sup> William Granger. "A Brief Service Biography: Three Decks - Warships in the Age of Sail". Retrieved 26 March 2017. [https://threedecks.org/index.php?display\\_type=show\\_crewman&id=1487](https://threedecks.org/index.php?display_type=show_crewman&id=1487)

<sup>2</sup> Francis Skelly Tidy, 14th Foot Regiment.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Balneavis, 27th Foot Regiment.

<sup>4</sup> John Child Purvis. "A Brief Service Biography: Three Decks - Warships in the Age of Sail". Retrieved 26 March 2017. [https://threedecks.org/index.php?display\\_type=show\\_crewman&id=2544](https://threedecks.org/index.php?display_type=show_crewman&id=2544)

<sup>5</sup> Sir George Smith, colonel in the British army; appointed by the British government in December 1808 to go to Cádiz to observe the events and open a communication with the Spanish authorities. See: Muir, R.. The British Government and the Peninsular War, 1808 to June 1811. Thesis submitted to the University of Adelaide. 1988. pp. 137-138.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Stuart (1779-1845), afterward Baron Stuart de Rothesay. At the time a British diplomat in Spain, sent to Cadiz by Mr. Frere, ministry plenipotentiary to the Spanish Central Junta established in Seville. See: Fryman, Mildred L.. "Charles Stuart and the 'Common Cause': The Anglo-Portuguese Alliance, 1810-1814." Dissertation submitted to Florida State University. 1974. p. 23.

at Cadiz for him. Many difficulties appear as to the place of our landing, and from the usual slowness of the Spanish proceedings, they are not likely to be speedily removed. There seems to be a fatal security here. They either do not know, or will not believe, the reverses their armies have suffered. Are buoying themselves up with chimeras, and I fear will be surprised by their indefatigable enemy, before they are in any condition to receive him.

6th Went on shore again this morning. The Marquis de Villel<sup>7</sup> is here (in Cadiz) with certain powers which supersede those of the Governor in every thing not purely regarding the duty of the garrison. The Marquis is one of the Supreme or Central Junta, which is now at Seville. General Jones<sup>8</sup>, of English extraction, is Governor of Cadiz. I waited this morning on them both. After explaining to the Marquis the object of our coming, and expressing a wish to be immediately landed in Cadiz, he regretted he could not permit it, without orders from the Central Junta, but considered himself authorized to permit our landing in Port St. Mary's [Puerto de Santa Maria] on the opposite side of the bay. This I positively objected to, as inconsistent with my orders. A reference is of course made to the Central Junta, and I have written to Mr. Frere, whose instructions I am bound to obey. The present Spanish government seem very weak & timid, and it is evident the objection to our occupying Cadiz, arises from their uncertainty how it might be received by the populace. Sir George Smith, Mr. Stuart (who is acting here by authority from Mr. Frere), Brigadier General Stuart, & Mr. Duff the Consul General, accompanied me on these visits. That to General Jones was nearly a visit of ceremony. I dined afterwards with all my staff, General Stuart & his staff and Captain Granger of the *Semiramis*, on board of the *Atlas*, with Admiral Purvis. Cadiz is certainly the most beautiful, & clean town I have ever seen. In this last respect it is a perfect contrast to dirty Lisbon. Slept on board of the *Semiramis*.

7th Went on shore looked about the town of Cadiz. Saw the Noble Church new building, but going on very slowly for want of money. It is said it will require a million of dollars to finish it. Looked at the defences at Landport Gate, which will be made a very strong work. Dined at Mr. Duff's the British Consul, a most respectable old gentleman, almost as much a Spaniard in his wishes, as a Briton. He has lived in the town the best part of fifty five years, and is now above 80 years of age. Went to the Theatre, a handsome building. Slept again on board of the *Semiramis*.

8th Went on shore this morning. Received a message from the Marquis Villel to desire to see me. Waited on him with Mr. Stuart. The Marquis informed us he had received a dispatch from the Central Junta, intimating that we might be permitted to land, to march to Port St. Mary, Xeres [Jerez de la Frontera] or any other place that might be fixed on, but that we could not be permitted to occupy the barracks in Cadiz, as two thousand men were intended to come there from Seville, besides some troops from other places.

---

<sup>7</sup> Marqués de Villel, Juan Antonio de Fivaller y Bru. At the time member of the Spanish Central Junta and his commissioner in Cadiz. A brief biography: "Gil Novales, Alberto". *Diccionario Biográfico de España (1808-1833). De los orígenes del liberalismo a la reacción absolutista*. Retrieved 28 March 2017. <http://diccionario.historia.fundacionmapfre.org/bio.php?id=89592>

<sup>8</sup> Félix Jones (1740-1821). Spanish Mariscal de Campo. Acting governor of Cádiz since December 1808 to November 1809. See: Martinez, op. cit. pp.455-456.

Thus they have given us to understand that we shall neither now, nor at any future period, occupy Cadiz. I have not yet received my answer from Mr. Frere, for which I wait. Went to see the new work carrying on, upon the isthmus, about two miles advanced from the Landport Gate. It is very well placed, but will take years to finish it, in the substantial way they are proceeding, and the small number of workmen. A field work would be much better suited to the pressure of the present times.

9th Spent the whole of this day on shore in making up my dispatches for Lord Castlereagh & Sir John Cradock. It being now resolved that we are not to occupy Cadiz, I have determined to remain on board our transports for farther orders from Sir John Cradock or from England. A very stormy day with a gale from southwest. Slept on shore.

10th Nothing extraordinary this day. The wind has moderated & got on board to dinner. Slept there.

11th Very bad weather. Have arranged for landing our sick in the Royal Hospital. The *Elvin* sloop of war arrived from England, but brings no news having left it on the 17th January. Reports of Austria having taken arms. The *Saracen* has passed the straits with a treaty of peace between England & the Porte, signed on the 5th January at Constantinople.

12th Nothing extraordinary today. Dined on board the *Invincible* man of war Captain Donnelly<sup>9</sup>.

13th This day has passed like the preceding. Still in anxious suspence [sic] as to the fate of our friends at Corunna, and for our own future proceedings. Nothing is suffered to transpire by this foolish government, that can be constructed into anything like ill fortune to their arms. This is the most absurd system ever followed. The people are deceived, and no exertion is made to resist the enemy. The precious time procured by the diversion made by Sir John Moore's army, is absolutely lost, and whenever the French turn their arms to this side, I fear they will meet with as little resistance from the Spaniards as in the north. Dined this day on board the *Fisguard*, Captain Bolton<sup>10</sup>. We had a long and curious conversation for the meridian of a man of war, on religion. In which, as usual, in politics or religion, every man ended in the persuasion that he was right, and every other person wrong.

14th Dined today with Admiral Purvis on board the *Atlas*. Sir George Smith who was rather better, has today had a relapse, and is in great danger.

15th This morning about 3 o'clock died Sir George Smith, a man for whom I had contracted a higher esteem & regard, than almost any other I have known, on so short

---

<sup>9</sup> Ross Donnelly. "A Brief Service Biography: Three Decks - Warships in the Age of Sail". Retrieved 26 March 2017. [https://threedecks.org/index.php?display\\_type=show\\_crewman&id=349](https://threedecks.org/index.php?display_type=show_crewman&id=349)

<sup>10</sup> William Bolton. "A Brief Service Biography: Three Decks - Warships in the Age of Sail". Retrieved 26 March 2017. [https://threedecks.org/index.php?display\\_type=show\\_crewman&id=2005](https://threedecks.org/index.php?display_type=show_crewman&id=2005)

an acquaintance. His death at this time is a public misfortune. The barbarous custom of catholic countries to refuse the rites of burial to all without the pale of their own church, renders it necessary that his remains should be sent for interment to Gibraltar, for which purpose, Admiral Purvis has ordered a sea conveyance. After much difficulty I have at last got a lodging on shore. Billets are not granted in this town, as in every other part of Spain. Last night I slept at our worthy consul's Mr. Duff, who has now lived nearly fifty five years in Spain, and is attached to the character & manners of the Spaniards, more probably than they deserve. But this at his advanced age can scarcely be called a fault. He is universally & unaffectedly kind & hospitable to all his countrymen, and his strict honor & integrity have gained him the respect and esteem of all ranks of Spaniards.

16th The season of Lent has shut up all the public places of entertainment. Indeed during the Carnival which preceded it, these amusements were but few, and by a silly interference on the part of the Marquis Villel (the deputy from the Supreme Junta) they were considerable curtailed. The public theatre, and assemblies for dancing constituted the whole of the public diversions. The assemblies were latterly prohibited, on account of the bad aspect of public affairs. Such is the folly & inconsistency of this silly government. While they affect to be successful against the enemy, and shut up every channel of information, they betray the falsehood of their own Gazettes, and throw a gloom precisely where they ought to encourage every kind mirth & hilarity. It is by these public meetings, in times when popular enthusiasm begins to flag, that it is again roused, and brought into action. But in this strange nation, we are doomed to see every axiom that regulates other states, reversed.

17th Today the remains of Sir George Smith, deposited in a leaden coffin, were embarked in a schooner, commanded by a Lieutenant in the navy, to sail tomorrow morning for Gibraltar, Captain Stewart of the 82nd Regiment accompanies them. A funeral party consisting of the Grenadier Company of the 27th Regiment, with arms, & the Grenadier Company of the 9th without arms, to carry the coffin were landed, with the band of the 29th. All the officers of the navy & army, and almost every British subject here attended the procession, as did some noblemen & gentlemen of the first rank in Spain. Minute guns were fired from the time of the embarkation of the body in the boat, until its reception on board the schooner.

18th By a courier from Mr. Frere I have received a proposition to march with my detachment to the frontier of Estremadura [Extremadura], leaving a small part in Cadiz. I believe this proposition to have arisen from the fears of the Central Junta at Seville. I do not approve this movement, but I am ready to execute it, if Mr. Frere determines on it.

19th Dined today with Mr. Duff, and went in the evening to the party of a Mrs. Strange. Both she & her husband are of English extraction, and speak English pretty well. She has never been out of Cadiz. There were a good many ladies, but a small share of beauty. As few of them spoke French, I had not much conversation except with two or three who spoke English. The Duchess (...) was there, a good figure and fashionable manners, with the countenance of a creole. She claims a descent from one of the branches of our Stuart family. The Spaniards seem very fond of gaming. Men, women

& children have a rage for it. A game somewhat like Lansquenet was the favorite this evening. The prettiest woman there, I found to be an Englishwoman. I did not know that, nor her history, till she was gone. When the war with Spain was announced by the unjustifiable act of attacking their four frigates laden with treasure, her present husband was Captain of one of them, and had his wife with ten children (three of whom they say were very beautiful young women), and almost all his fortune on board. From some disorder appearing on board one of the other ships, he found it necessary to quit his own to, assume the command of it. He had not left his own ship above ten minutes, when it blew up, and every creature on board perished. Ultimately the other three ships surrendered, and a case so deplorable could not fail to interest the British Government. As some compensation, they restored him all that he claimed as his personal property in the ship blown up, amounting to about forty thousand pounds. He was carried prisoner into Plymouth, where his singular misfortune occasioned much sensation in his favor. A Miss Ward in particular seemed to sympathize in his loss, and before he left England she consented to repair that part of it, which the Government could not. They were married, have now two children, and she seems in the fairest way of giving him a third.<sup>11</sup>

20th Nothing extraordinary this day, paid a few morning visits, and dined with Major Doyle.

21st Went to see the *Caraccas*, the great dockyard of Cadiz, and the *Isla* as it is commonly called, properly the Island of Leon. The dockyard is very extensive & commodious with plenty of storehouses, but at present very empty. It would appear that the poverty of its present aspect occasions the disinclination of shewing [sic] it to strangers. However this is equally forbidden in all dock yards. The *Isla* has a very large well built town upon it. It is capable of a strong defence, and should be disputed before the enemy is suffered to approach the isthmus that connects it with the town of Cadiz. We had a fine ride of about twenty miles out and home. The isthmus which connects the *Isla* with Cadiz cannot be less than four miles in length, probably five.

22nd This morning a most sudden & unexpected popular commotion broke out. A kind of revolutionary scene which had not been acted here for centuries, except in the case of Solano<sup>12</sup>, last year. I shall give its whole progress, from notes I took as circumstances passed.

---

<sup>11</sup> This episode relates to the naval action off Cape Santa Maria on 5 October 1804 and his consequences. See: Millar, Stephen. "Seizing the Gold of Spain: the action off Cape Santa Maria". 2007. The Napoleon Series. Retrieved 30 May 2017. [http://www.napoleon-series.org/military/battles/1804/c\\_santamaria.html#17](http://www.napoleon-series.org/military/battles/1804/c_santamaria.html#17).

<sup>12</sup> Francisco Maria Solano y Ortiz de Rosas, Marqués del Socorro (1768-1808). Spanish Lieutenant General. Divisional commander in the Spanish forces that invaded Portugal in November 1807. Murdered in May 1808 during a popular mutiny in Cádiz, under the accusation of *afrancesado*, after his refusal to attack the french naval squadron of Admiral Rossilly, anchored in that harbour. See: Martinez, op. cit. p. 841.

At half past ten o'clock in the morning Mr. Duff informed me of the commencement of the tumult, which took its rise from the determination of government to introduce a corps composed of Poles, Swiss & other foreigners (lately raised from among the French prisoners) into the town of Cadiz, which the people were resolved to resist, and took up arms & assembled for that purpose. The people also complained that the men raised for the army, in Cadiz, were to be sent away, to make room for these Poles; that they were given to understand also, that it was intended to take away the arms from the Volunteers of Cadiz, as had been proposed at Port St. Mary's, all which they were also resolved to resist. Mr. Duff also heard they had stopped a courier with dispatches for the Marquis de Villel from Seville.

In consequence of the information I sent an order to prohibit all officers & men of the British detachment from coming on shore, and I instructed all those who were already in the town, not to interfere in any manner with the people. I also sent immediate notice to the Admiral, who recalled the *Ambuscade* frigate, which was still in the offing, to give notice of the event to Mr. Stewart [sic] then on board, going on a secret mission. About half past one, I heard from Mr. Duff, that the populace had arrested the Marquis de Villel, and were carrying him to the Castello. At the same time a message was brought to me from General Jones, the Governor, requesting a British officer might be sent to his house, to satisfy the people that the British took no part in the differences subsisting in the town. I accordingly sent my Aid-de-Camp [sic], and the Vice Consul Mr. Archdeacon. The A.D.C. delivered a message from me to Mr. Jones, "That he might assure the people, that the British troops were ready to defend the town against the common enemy, but would by no means take any part, in what related to their interior or domestic concerns." This message was interpreted by Mr. Archdeacon, to one of the principal Capuchin friars, *Padre Maguer*, who was then present, and promised to convey it to the people. A short time afterwards in order to prevent the Marquis de Villel from being sent to the common jail, the same friar, *Padre Maguer* took on himself to be responsible for his appearance, in case, upon the examination of his papers, he should prove to be a traitor. Of all these particulars I sent my A.D.C. to inform the Admiral, and about 3 o'clock, I went to dine at Mr. Duff's. About half past 4 (soon after dinner), four friars with other persons came to Mr Duff's, and one of the friars said the people were extremely tumultuous in the town, from the apprehension of its being betrayed, and that the only way to appease them would be a declaration from the British general, "that the British would assist in the defence of the town against the common enemy, and appoint two officers (one of them of the artillery), to assist with two Spanish officers in the preparation for this purpose". To this I repeated the message I had sent to the Governor in the morning, and consented to send two of the British officers to the Governor to receive his instructions, along with two Spanish officers, for examining the defences of the place, and giving their advice & assistance for placing them in a situation to resist the common enemy. The friars then went into the balcony and harangued the populace under the window in my presence and the officers of the British staff, whom they had requested to attend. The purport of the harangue was to repeat my promise, and the good wishes of the British nation to the country at large, and to beg the populace to go home; which they did, after giving some huzzas.

I, in consequence, sent Captain Landmann of the Royal Engineers, and Lieutenant Wills of the Royal Artillery to the Governor about nine o'clock in the evening, who thanked them for this farther proof of the goodwill of the British nation, and requested them to come back the next morning at ten o'clock.

In addition to the reasons placed above for this commotion, there seems to have been others, personal towards the Marquis de Villel. Such as his having released five or six of the persons arrested & confined for their attachment to the French cause, and having declared that the rest had only to petition, to be allowed the same indulgence. He had also interfered very injudiciously in the private amusements & concerns of the people. He had even confined some ladies in the Hospicio (or house of industry) threatening many others with the same disgraceful punishment. These I heard from common report.

23rd In the morning, there is a report that Count Montijo<sup>13</sup> arrived here two days ago incognito from Algeciras [Algeciras], and remained here three hours. This is the great apostle of the revolution in Spain. If his visit be true, it may account for what has happened.

This morning a proclamation was posted up on the walls to quiet the people, promising a withdrawing of the Regiment, whose approach gave offence, and appointing the *Guardianne* of the Capuchins<sup>14</sup>, and General Jones, government pro tempore of Cadiz. About 12 o'clock, I received a message from the governor, requesting two British officers (one of whom understood the Spanish language) would endeavour to pacify the populace, who had proceeded to the Castle of Sta. Catalina<sup>15</sup>, and demanded General Caraffa<sup>16</sup>, late 2nd in command of the Spanish troops in Portugal, and some other prisoners, who they were resolved to put to death. I sent Colonel Roche<sup>17</sup>, who had just arrived from Seville, and another officer. They succeeded in appeasing the people. Indeed it was now evident, that the people were anxious for the admission of the British troops in to Cadiz, and if I had been inclined to take advantage of the moment, I might have landed & taken possession. This would have however, been considered in such a light by those whose business it would be to misrepresent the British proceedings, that I thought it most honorable and prudent to decline the

---

<sup>13</sup> Conde de Montijo, Eugenio Palafox y Portocarrero (1773-1834). Spanish general officer and politician. Close supporter of Ferdinand VII against Godoy and Carlos IV. In September 1808 was appointed member of the Junta Militar and Central Junta's representative to the army of Castaños. See: Martinez, op. cit. pp. 681-682.

<sup>14</sup> Fra Mariano de Sevilla. See: Southey, Robert. *History of the Peninsular War*, volume II. London: 1827. p. 96.

<sup>15</sup> Castillo de Santa Catalina.

<sup>16</sup> Juan Carrafa Bocella (1755-1833). Spanish Lieutenant General. Divisional commander of the Spanish forces that invaded Portugal in November 1807; in June 1808 was arrested in Lisbon by the French, was later liberated by the British. Arrested in Cádiz in February 1809 was imprisoned at the time. See: Martinez, op. cit. pp.180-181.

<sup>17</sup> Philip Keating Roche. British agent in Spain, Lieutenant-Colonel in the British army. See: *The Royal Military Calendar*, 1820, vol. IV, p.352 and Gil Novales, Alberto. *Diccionario Biográfico de España (1808-1833). De los orígenes del liberalismo a la reacción absolutista*. Retrieved 28 March 2017. <http://diccionario.historia.fundacionmapfre.org/bio.php?id=106093>

opportunity. Shortly afterwards, before a British officer could be found to interfere to save him, Don Joseph Herredia, who had been just displaced from his office (Commandant of the Rents or Excise) was seized by the populace, as he was getting into a boat to cross to St Mary's, and killed on the spot. This was the single instance of bloodshed during the whole commotion, which I think was very much owing to the interference of the British officers, and the deference paid to them by the populace. The priests & friars were busy all this afternoon, and evening in preaching & exhorting the people to order, and they at last succeeded so effectually, that I did not hear of a single instance of outrage during the whole night of so tempestuous day.

24th A degree of calm seems to have succeeded the storm. I have had today a long conversation with Colonel Roche, on the subject of my mission hither, and he goes off tomorrow for Mr. Frere with a proposition from me, to march myself with one regiment to join the 40th at Seville, provided the other two are admitted into the town of Cadiz, to occupy the barracks.

25th Colonel Roche set off early this morning, and in the afternoon Captain Kelly returned, with a verbal message from Mr. Frere, purporting that Soult was on his march for Portugal from Galicia, in three columns, but promising to write more particularly.

26th This night about 11 o'clock received Mr Frere's letter enclosing the intercepted letter from Soult, stating the particulars of his proceedings, and intended march into Portugal. He proposed being in Oporto on the 22nd, and spoke with as little idea of opposition, as if he had been in France. I have determined now to return to Lisbon the instant I receive the decision on my proposition, if it is not accepted.

27th Have given the necessary orders, and hold every thing [sic] prepared for Colonel Roche's return. Dined today with the Admiral. Went in the evening to Mrs Strange's.

28th Waiting with anxiety for the arrival of Colonel Roche, having written a letter on the 26th and sent an express yesterday on the same subject. Dined today at Mr. Duff's.

Placed on the Napoleon Series: January 2018