

Translated by Greg Gorsuch  
Part 11

# **HISTORICAL SUMMARY**

## **OF THE**

# **PENINSULA WAR,**

FROM 1807 TO 1814,

SERVING AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE JOURNALS OF THE SIEGES MADE  
OR SUSTAINED BY THE FRENCH IN THIS WAR.

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### **CAMPAIGN OF 1811**

#### **II**

The poor outcome of the Portuguese campaign had made Napoleon feel the urgent need to build a barrier to the Anglo-Portuguese army near Badajoz. To this end, Marshal Soult received four thousand reinforcements from the Army of the North and as many from the Army of the Center; in addition, General Drouet was on the march to join him with eight thousand men from the disbanded Ninth Corps. Marshal Marmont was ordered to head for the Tagus and support the operations of the Army of the South. In his absence, Marshal Bessi eres, who was tasked with guarding the Portuguese border, remained at Valladolid with a reserve of ten thousand men and sent an advance guard to Salamanca to observe the Ciudad Rodrigo debouchment. General Bonet left Asturias, leaving only a regiment on the Deba to cover Santander, and took up position on 16 June on the  rbigo near Leon to contain the Spanish army of Galicia. Astorga was evacuated and partly dismantled.

Napoleon ordered the fortification work to be accelerated at Burgos Castle<sup>1</sup>, which he considered to be a very important position to support the army in the event of a retreat; to build a bridgehead over the Ebro and another over the Bidasoa at Miranda; to occupy, by entrenched posts and model towers, the heights and defiles of Vitoria and Irun<sup>2</sup>. He also ordered the construction of a stronghold at Santo a, by erecting a citadel behind the Isthmus of Beria, to defend the entrance to the peninsula, and to cover the port with batteries, which, being the best on the coast, could contain a large fleet, and serve as a landing point for troops sent from Bayonne to operate on the flanks and rear of the enemy, in the event of a retreat of the French armies. A division under the command of General Vandermaesen entered Spain and formed part of the Army of the North; a reserve corps of forty thousand men, formed by the Reille, Caffarelli, and Souham Divisions, and an Italian division commanded by General Severoli, was organized on the border and occupied Biscay, Navarre, and part of Old Castile, where guerrilla bands were becoming increasingly

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<sup>1</sup> See supporting documents, no. 76.

<sup>2</sup> See supporting documents, no. 77.

dangerous. Four reserve brigades, under the command of General Monthion, formed a camp in Bayonne, from where they successively entered Spain. At the end of the year, they were replaced by a new reserve division of six thousand men. One million biscuit rations were prepared in each of the fortresses of Bayonne, Burgos, and Valladolid. Finally, a sum of forty million francs was sent to Spain in various convoys for the needs of the armies. The strength of French troops in Spain was increased to 368,000 men, including 314,000 presently in service.

Lord Wellington left Almeida with two divisions, leaving the remainder of his troops on the Côa under the command of General Sir Brent Spencer, and arrived at Elvas on May 19<sup>th</sup> to take charge of operations on the Guadiana. On the 30<sup>th</sup>, he reopened the trenches in front of Badajoz. The siege was vigorously pursued. The enemy simultaneously attacked the castle and Fort San Cristobel. He breached the fort and stormed it but was repulsed with considerable losses.

Marshal Marmont left Alba de Tormes on June 3<sup>rd</sup> with thirty-one thousand men, including three thousand cavalry, and thirty cannons. He drove back the English vanguard near Ciudad Rodrigo and then headed for the Tagus via the Baños Pass and Plasencia. His army found itself without stores and without a single caisson to transport its provisions, all the horses and mules of the train of military equipages having perished in Portugal. It removed from the country all the cattle, all the mules, all the donkeys, all the carriages, and carried off all the wheat it could collect. The province found itself completely ruined over an immense radius, and the inhabitants were reduced to despair. Marshal Marmont crossed the Tagus at Almaraz on a bridge of boats. He led a strong column to Medellin; and, with the rest of his troops, he went to Mérida, where his advance guard entered on the evening of 17 June. Marshal Soult, for his part, having received part of the reinforcements that had been sent to him, reunited his army at Llerena, and marched 12 June on Badajoz, which was on the point of succumbing. He arrived on the 15<sup>th</sup> at Fuente del Maestro, where he was joined by General Drouet's column arriving from Cordoba. He advanced to Almendralejo on the 17<sup>th</sup> and communicated the next day with Marshal Marmont's advance guard at Mérida.

The Anglo-Portuguese army had advanced to Albuera where it expected to fight Marshal Soult a second time; but, upon Marshal Marmont's arrival on the Guadiana, it retreated on 19 June to Olivenza, abandoning its camps near Badajoz. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, Marshals Soult and Marmont entered Badajoz<sup>3</sup>. General Godinot, tasked with following the enemy with a division and four regiments of light cavalry, entered Olivenza on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Lord Wellington withdrew behind the Guadiana, folded back his bridge at Juromenha, and took up a fortified position behind the Caia, where he was joined by General Spencer who, upon hearing news of Marshal Marmont's movement, had left the banks of the Côa with five divisions to move to the left bank of the Tagus. On the other hand, General Blake's Spanish corps had moved into the county of Niebla to threaten Seville.

On 22 June, Marshals Soult and Marmont pushed their cavalry to Elvas and Campo Mayor to reconnoiter the English army. Their forces numbered over fifty thousand men. The opportunity was favorable to defeat the enemy, who was only a day's march away; but Marshal Soult, learning that Andalusia was once again threatened, hastened to return with his reserves. Blake had come on 13 June to besiege the castle of Niebla, located on the Rio Tinto and defended by three hundred men. He had also detached a body of troops to Seville, and General Ballesteros,

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<sup>3</sup> See supporting documents, nos. 78 and 79.

descending from the mountains of Ronda, was advancing on that capital by the left bank of the Guadalquivir. General Darricau, Governor of Seville, had been forced to withdraw with the civil and military administrations, the depots, and a few invalids to the Cartuja redoubt, where he found himself blockaded. Granada was also threatened by the Army of Murcia. Upon the arrival of Marshal Soult, Blake, who had already attempted to scale the castle of Niebla, lifted the siege and re-embarked for Cadiz.

General Godinot withdrew from Olivenza after blowing up the fortifications and rejoined Marshal Soult. General Drouet, who had taken command of the Fifth Corps, remained in Extremadura with two infantry divisions and a cavalry brigade, for a total of twelve thousand men. He was tasked with ensuring Badajoz's communication with Seville and covering the passes leading to Andalusia. He had the breaches at Badajoz repaired and Mérida fortified as a depot and crossing point over the Guadiana.

Marshal Marmont remained on the Guadiana until 15 July to supply Badajoz; after which he crossed back to the right bank of the Tagus and took up quarters at Plasencia to replenish his troops and wait out the heat wave. He left Foy's division at Trujillo to support General Drouet and scour the countryside. He drew supplies from the province of Toledo, which King Joseph ceded to him, despite the difficulties the central army was experiencing in surviving. He received orders from the Emperor to be ready to assist Badajoz or Ciudad Rodrigo if necessary, depending on whether Lord Wellington threatened one or the other of these two cities<sup>4</sup>. He had to build a solid bridge at Almaraz, covered by a double bridgehead, and fortify Alcántara, which offered him another outlet on the left bank of the Tagus. He had entrenchments built at the Baños Pass, repaired the road to Salamanca, and began to form stores at Talavera. The Army of the North remained responsible for protecting Ciudad Rodrigo and guarding the Portuguese border from Salamanca to Leon. Marshal Soult received orders to be ready to act with thirty thousand men in Extremadura, to link up with Marshal Marmont if necessary and to rescue Badajoz if this place came to be threatened again.

Lord Wellington did not remain long in the Alentejo; he crossed almost at the same time as Marshal Marmont to the right bank of the Tagus and established himself at Castelo Branco. An Anglo-Portuguese corps of ten thousand men, under the command of General Hill, remained at Portalegre, with five or six thousand Spaniards commanded by Castaños, the last remnants of the Army of Estremadura. It was believed that Lord Wellington's movement was intended to support the Spanish Army of Galicia, which had taken the offensive. This army, twenty thousand strong, commanded by General Abadía, had advanced from Astorga and appeared to be planning to break out into the plains of Castile. In July, General Bonet had driven it back for the first time; but this army had moved again to the Órbigo. General Dorsenne, who had replaced Marshal Bessières in command of the Army of the North, marched to the aid of General Bonet, with two divisions of the Imperial Guard and some cavalry corps, attacked the Spaniards on 24 August, overthrew them and drove them back in disorder to Astorga. The enemy evacuated this place on the 26<sup>th</sup>. It was pursued by General Bonet beyond Villafranca and forced to throw itself into the mountains of Orense. To deprive it of the means of resuming the offensive, General Bonet, on returning to Astorga, had the villages burned and the country devastated over an area of more than twenty leagues, a disastrous measure, which exasperated the inhabitants and

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<sup>4</sup> See supporting documents, nos. 80 and 81.

deprived the army itself of part of its resources. Lord Wellington did nothing to protect the Spaniards; but, after assembling a siege force at Porto, he moved to the Côa on August 1<sup>st</sup>, and then approached Ciudad Rodrigo, which he had blockaded with some troops, pushing some troops as far as Tamames on the road to Salamanca.

General Dorsenne had the Astorga post restored to a defensive state and came to Salamanca, where, after infinite difficulty, he had managed to assemble a convoy of 950 wagons loaded with provisions to supply Ciudad Rodrigo. The presence of Lord Wellington forced him to reinforce himself with the divisions of Vandermaesen and Souham, which he brought from Navarre. Marshal Marmont also recalled Foy's division, which he had left at Trujillo, and had it take up post at Plasencia to cover the Tagus valley against the Spanish troops of Castaños, who were stationed near Alcántara. and he himself, with five divisions and his cavalry, approached Salamanca to link his operations with those of General Dorsenne. Marmont's army numbered twenty-two thousand men, Dorsenne's was twenty-four thousand strong: these two armies joined forces at Tamames on 22 September and marched on Ciudad Rodrigo. A major battle was expected; but Lord Wellington withdrew to an entrenched camp he had established in front of Fuenteguinaldo, supporting his right at the Águeda. On 26 September, the French armies presented themselves before this position. Lord Wellington, unwilling to risk a battle, and fearing being outflanked on his left, where his defensive work was not yet completed, retreated during the night to Alfaiates. The two French armies, having achieved their objective, which was to resupply Ciudad Rodrigo, did not follow the enemy any further. They retraced their steps and separated. General Dorsenne returned to Valladolid, and Marshal Marmont came to resume his positions in the valley of the Tagus. He had to prepare for the siege of Elvas<sup>5</sup>; but the lack of supplies, an invincible obstacle that he encountered in all his operations, prevented him from executing this project<sup>6</sup>.

The campaign ended without further events on the Portuguese border. Lord Wellington established his headquarters at Almeida, whose fortifications he rebuilt to secure his depots and magazines. In the Alentejo, General Hill occupied Portalegre with ten thousand men, where he had entrenched himself. Under his support, General Castaños attempted several excursions between the Tagus and the Guadiana to gather supplies. On 18 October, General Girard advanced against him, from Mérida to Cáceres, with the First Division of the Fifth Corps and General Briche's Light Cavalry Brigade. He remained there for a few days to establish communication with a column of the Army of Portugal, which was to emerge from Alcántara, after which he slowly retraced his steps. This flank march, in the presence of the enemy, was dangerous. General Hill took advantage of it to pursue General Girard, who, surprised at Arroyomolinos with a single brigade, found himself surrounded on all sides, lost eighteen hundred men killed, wounded or prisoners, and could only save himself by throwing himself into the mountains, from where he managed with the greatest difficulty to recross the Guadiana. General Hill captured Mérida on 28 October; and, after remaining there for some time, he returned to Portalegre.

In the last days of December, Lord Wellington, who was already preparing to besiege Ciudad Rodrigo, wishing to deceive Marshal Marmont about his true intentions and make him believe

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<sup>5</sup> See supporting documents, no. 82.

<sup>6</sup> See supporting documents, no. 83.

that the majority of the English forces had remained on the left bank of the Tagus, ordered General Hill to attack Mérida again and threaten the borders of Andalusia. As the English approached, General Drouet, commanding the Fifth Corps, concentrated his troops at Santa Martha and retreated to Llerena. General Hill reached Almendralejo on January 1<sup>st</sup> and conducted a strong reconnaissance as far as Los Santos, where his cavalry even gained some advantage. This expedition caused alarm in Andalusia. General Hill, satisfied with having achieved his goal, recrossed the Guadiana and resumed his headquarters on the Portuguese border.

However, the regency of Cadiz, undeterred by the lack of success of its attempts, had entrusted General Blake with the mission of attempting with the army of Murcia against the left of Marshal Soult, what had not been successful on the right. Blake came down to Almeria in June, with the divisions of Zayas and Lardizabal, which had fought under his orders at Albuera; and having joined General Freire's army at Baza, he found himself at the head of twenty thousand good troops. He took up post in an entrenched camp at the Venta del Baúl, a formidable position, covered by a deep ravine. From there he made his way to the gates of Granada and Jaen, threatening to cut off the communications of the Army of the South. General Sebastiani, weakened by the detachments of the Fourth Corps that he had provided for the expedition to Estremadura, was not in a position to repel the Spaniards. He even found himself for some time almost blockaded in his places. Marshal Soult joined him in Granada in the first days of August. He left with the Fourth Corps and General Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, reserving the right to attack the enemy from the front, while General Godinot, coming from Jaen via Meda with a division, would take them from the rear. The attack took place on 9 August; but General Godinot, instead of charging headlong into the enemy's midst, groped around Baza. Blake, realizing the danger threatening him, hastened to decamp to Lorca, hotly pursued by Marshal Soult, who routed his corps, but was unable to collect all the trophies he had hoped for.

Marshal Soult, having returned to Seville, then turned his attention to Gibraltar, where Ballesteros was spreading terror and threatening communications with the blockading corps of Cadiz. General Godinot, detached against him in October, succeeded, after several maneuvers, in driving him back to the camp of Saint-Roch. Marshal Soult led three brigades to attack him; but Ballesteros retreated under the cannon of Gibraltar, where the English, reluctant to receive him, nevertheless protected him with fire from the town. The enemy landed a corps at Tarifa to relieve Ballesteros. Godinot advanced along the coast against this corps, hoping to capture the city by force; but, struck down by the English fleet, he lost some brave men to no avail, and returned to Seville, where, sharply reprimanded by Marshal Soult, he blew his brains out in despair. Ballesteros then resumed the offensive. General Leval, who had replaced General Sébastiani in command of the Fourth Corps, maneuvered to surround him and confine him once again under Gibraltar.

Tarifa was a highly useful point for the English and the Spanish to deploy troops on the coast between Cadiz and Gibraltar, either to act in the rear of the First Corps before Cadiz, or to support Ballesteros's movements in the mountains of Gibraltar and Ronda. These reasons persuaded Marshal Soult to lay siege to Tarifa. This place was especially necessary for communication with the African coast, where he had purchased a large quantity of grain and livestock. These resources became all the more necessary as Andalusia was threatened with

complete famine. Wheat was selling in Seville for up to 120 francs per hectoliter. Extremadura had been so ravaged that there was not even enough food to feed the garrison of Badajoz.

Marshal Victor was tasked with leading the expedition against Tarifa. It took place in December; But, after thirteen days of open trenches and a fruitless assault on the main body, the French troops, deprived of supplies and beset by terrible rains that submerged part of the coastline, were forced to withdraw. (*See the account of this siege, Volume III.*)

In northern Spain, General Dorsenne left Valladolid in the last days of October and settled in Leon, in order to be able to support General Bonet, who was ordered to return to Asturias to support the army's right wing and prevent the enemy from expanding along the coast towards Santander. On November 6<sup>th</sup>, Oviedo and Grado were occupied by General Bonet, and Gijón on the 7<sup>th</sup>. General Thiébault, who had remained in Salamanca with a few troops, managed on November 1<sup>st</sup>, by deceiving the enemy, to bring a convoy of 180 oxen and ammunition into Ciudad Rodrigo. It carried with him General Barrié, who was to command the place in place of General Reynaud, who had been taken prisoner during a sortie.

In the last days of December, the Emperor, wishing to restrict the number of commanders-in-chief charged with operating on the Portuguese border, placed Souham's division, which occupied Old Castile, and General Bonet's division, which was in Asturias, under the command of the Duke of Ragusa.<sup>7</sup> The Army of the North, reduced by these two divisions, was to be placed in the second line, to support the Army of Portugal if necessary. The Duke of Ragusa received orders to move his headquarters to Valladolid, and General Dorsenne to establish himself at Burgos. The Imperial Guard and several infantry and cavalry corps were to go to Vitoria and be ready to return to France, if circumstances required it. In the meantime, they were to replace in Navarre the reserve divisions of Reille and Severoli, which entered Aragon, from where they then joined Marshal Suchet who was marching against Valencia. The frontier of Portugal was thus weakened by about twenty thousand men; but it was essential to maintain the provinces of Biscay, Navarre and Aragon, which were in the greatest ferment. By April, Mendizabál, having landed in Biscay, had stirred up the country, and found himself at the head of ten thousand men. Potes had become the seat of his government. The English supplied him with arms and ammunition by sea, and he carried his wares as far as the walls of Vitoria and Burgos. The bands of Duran and Empecinado formed another army in Castile, which advanced into Aragon and, after a nine-day siege, captured the fortified convent of Calatayud, defended by five hundred men. For his part, Mina, who was operating in Navarre and Aragon with ten or twelve thousand men, stirred up the country with his incendiary proclamations<sup>8</sup>. He threatened Zaragoza, seized the fortified posts of Ejea, Huesca, and Sangüesa, and came to blockade Pamplona. There were even fears of an invasion in the department of the Basses-Pyrénées, and the troops stationed at Bayonne were directed to the border to occupy the Baztan Valley.

In Catalonia, on the very day that the Marquis of Campoverde lost the elite of his troops, and the convoy that he wanted to introduce into the fort of Figueres, General Suchet appeared under the walls of Tarragona. (*See the account of this siege, Volume III.*) This place succumbed on 28 June, after nine assaults, the last of which, given to the upper town, cost the Spaniards more than

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<sup>7</sup> See supporting documents, no. 84.

<sup>8</sup> See supporting documents, no. 85.

four thousand men. The remains of Campoverde's army dispersed, and he himself was obliged to embark to escape the fury of his soldiers and the Catalan peasants. Without giving the enemy any rest, General Suchet seized on 24 July the Montserrat, a steep mountain, fortified by nature and by art, on the side of which was a very large convent, occupied by the Baron of Eroles, with two thousand men<sup>9</sup>. This position had acquired some notoriety since the defeats suffered in 1808 by Generals Schwartz and Chabran. The insurgents had established an arms and munitions depot there, and the seat of their government. As a reward for his successes, General Suchet was elevated to the rank of Marshal of the Empire. This choice had the unanimous approval of France and the army.

The Figueres garrison surrendered on 19 August, after four and a half months of a rigorous blockade, during which Marshal Macdonald, to prevent the garrison from escaping, had erected a continuous line of entrenchments nearly eight thousand meters long around the square and two hundred meters from the covered ways. This line, drawn in steps, racks, or bastions, was protected by several rows of abatis; it was armed with a large number of batteries and defended by twenty-five battalions. The Spaniards made several major sorties and fired sixty thousand cannon shots. They lost nearly fifteen hundred men. The fall of Figueres completely destroyed the Catalans' hopes.

Blake, foreseeing that Marshal Suchet's full efforts would be directed against Valencia, had rushed there in all haste from Murcia. He made a mass levy of all the men in the province capable of bearing arms; he called to his aid the divisions of Obispo and Villacampa, which were on the borders of Castile and Aragon; he received weapons, provisions, and money by sea, and soon found himself at the command of an army of twenty-five thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry. He had as his reserve the Army of Murcia, commanded by General Freire, and, as his strongholds, the fortresses of Alicante and Cartagena, where he had garrisons and to which the English also sent troops. He pressed ahead with the work on the fortified camp that the Valencians had begun around their city. He had Alcira fortified on the Júcar River to defend the road to Alicante, and the walls of Gandia rebuilt, as well as those of Dénia, a maritime stronghold. He had the forts of Sagunto and Oropesa, which command the main road to Tortosa, put in a defensive state, as well as the small fortress of Peniscola, located on the seashore, and whose garrison, reinforced by landing troops, could exert some influence on this same road.

On 25 August, Marshal Suchet received orders from the Emperor to march on Valencia. His army was thirty-six thousand strong; but he had to leave General Musnier in Aragon with seven or eight thousand men, and place General Frère's division at the disposal of Marshal Macdonald, to occupy the places of lower Catalonia, guard the plains of Urgell and protect the navigation of the Ebro. The Army of Aragon was thus reduced to twenty-two thousand men. Marshal Suchet obtained wheat and barley for money from Castile, Navarre, and Aragon. Tortosa became his main depot; the siege crew was reorganized there; large stores of provisions were created there which were supplied from Mequinenza, by fourteen boats permanently on the lower Ebro. Another depot was formed at Morella. Each regiment had to bring with it the herd intended to feed it.

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<sup>9</sup> See supporting documents, no. 86.

Marshal Suchet left Tortosa on 15 September. He advanced along the main road along the coast, leading a first column consisting of Habert's division, Robert's brigade, which formed the reserve, General Boussard's cavalry, and the entire army's field artillery. A second column, composed of General Palombini's Italian division and General Compère's Neapolitan division, marched from Morella along the poor San Mateo Road, which joins the main road to Tortosa behind Oropesa. A third column, formed by Harispe's division, set out from Teruel, leaving the main road to Segorbe on the right, and advanced along a very difficult path through the Rubielos mountains to join the army near Vilafamès.

On the first day of the march, Marshal Suchet reached Benicarló, where he left a battalion and twenty-five horses to contain the Peniscola garrison and protect communications. The next day, he approached the fort of Oropesa; an advance guard reconnoitered it and routed two Spanish squadrons that had advanced in front of the village. The fort, built at the top of a hillock, was armed with four cannons and defended by two hundred men. It dominated the road and completely blocked the passage of vehicles. To avoid it, Marshal Suchet turned right and reached the Morella Road, near Cabanes, where he was joined by the Palombini and Compère divisions. At Vilafamès, he rallied the Harispe Division and returned to the main road behind Oropesa.

Thus assembled, the army marched to meet Blake, who, according to reports, had advanced to Morviedro, having his vanguard at Almenara and a post of a few companies of grenadiers and eight hundred horse at the bridge of Villarreal, on the Mijares. This post was covered in front by the ruins of the castle of Almazora and by some entrenchments serving as a bridgehead, but which did not inspire enough confidence in the Spaniards to withdraw there. They lined the right bank of the torrent. On the morning of 21 September, Marshal Suchet had them attacked by the Twenty-fourth Dragoons, who forced the passage over the bridge, routed the and sabered about fifty men. They expected to encounter the enemy at Almenara; but Blake, who had only moved forward to replenish the garrison and supplies of the Sagunto fort, had withdrawn to his lines below Valencia, leaving Obispo's division in the mountains of Segorbe to disrupt French communications, and another corps at Lliria, under the command of Charles O'Donnell, to support this division.

On 27 September, Marshal Suchet entered Morviedro. He successively defeated Obispo's and Charles O'Donnell's troops. He captured the Oropesa fort, which intercepted the artillery passage on the main road, and immediately began the siege of Sagunto. (*See the account of this siege, Volume IV.*)

Blake, having been joined by a corps of the Army of Murcia, commanded by General Mahy, marched from Valencia on 24 October with about thirty thousand men to liberate Sagunto. Marshal Suchet marched to meet him, defeating him on the 25<sup>th</sup> within sight of the town, and forced him to recross the Guadalaviar. The French army then took up positions at Lliria, Bétera, Alvaete, and Puig. The Sagunto garrison, no longer hoping to be rescued, capitulated the next day.

Immediately, the French army moved to the left bank of the Guadalaviar, opposite Valencia. Blake defended the right bank over a distance of about three leagues, with his left at the fortified

villages of Manises and Quarte, his center at Valencia, and his right at the port of El Grao, at the mouth of the river. Before attacking the Spanish line, Marshal Suchet wished to await the reinforcements that had been announced to him. The Emperor had thought that the complete pacification of Spain depended on the fall of Valencia, one of the last bulwarks of the insurgents; and, exaggerating the difficulties of this undertaking, he marched troops from all points to contribute to it. Marshal Suchet's army was reinforced by several regiments sent from Catalonia, and the two reserve divisions, Reille and Severoli, drawn from Navarre. King Joseph sent General D'Armagnac to Cuenca, with a division of the Army of the Center. General Montbrun was detached from the Army of Portugal, with two infantry divisions, one cavalry division, and thirty cannons, to operate in Blake's rear. Finally, Marshal Soult directed a column from Granada to Lorca, which was to create a diversion in Murcia.

On 26 December, Marshal Suchet, joined by the divisions of Reille and Severoli, crossed the Guadalaviar above Valencia, turned Blake's left, and seized the Murcia road, at the very pass of this road between the mountains and Lake Albuféra. Blake, having thus cut off his retreat, was forced to retreat to Valencia. Two of his divisions, under the command of General Mahy, alone managed to escape by the Murcia road. The place was immediately invested and besieged. (*See the account of this siege, Volume IV.*)

Valencia surrendered on 9 January, as did Blake's army. The Emperor imposed a war contribution of fifty million francs on the province, which was successively paid. On the very day of Valencia's surrender, General Montbrun, who had left Toledo on 13 December, arrived at Almanza. Ten days earlier, he had reportedly captured the remains of General Mahy's corps retreating to Murcia. Instead of returning immediately to Toledo, as he had been ordered to do, he made an unsuccessful attempt on Alicante, and did not return to the Tagus until 24 January.

The Catalans took advantage of Marshal Suchet's absence to recover from their defeats. They reorganized under the support of the fortresses of Cardona and La Seu d'Urgel, which still remained to them, and entered the field once more. Led by Sarsfield, they attempted for the first time an excursion into France through the Carol Valley and carried the alarm to the gates of Toulouse. They then captured the fortified posts of Montserrat, Cervera, and Bellpuig, after several days of siege, and forced General Frère to withdraw to Barcelona with his division. At the same time, the English appeared on the coast of Catalonia with a considerable fleet.

The French army of Catalonia, commanded by Marshal Macdonald, was extremely weakened by the losses it had suffered from disease before Figueres. It had more than ten thousand men in the hospitals and barely five thousand men available in addition to the garrisons. Marshal Macdonald, having himself fallen ill, was replaced by General Decaen. The army received some reinforcements, and on 2 December, General Decaen left Girona with a convoy for Barcelona, which had been without communication with France for seven months. The Spanish tried to stop its advance but were defeated. General Decaen then returned to Girona.

No. 76.

*Letter from Prince Berthier, Major General, to Marshal  
Bessières, Duke of Istria.*

Paris, 8 June 1811.

The Emperor's intention, Marshal, is that you work with the greatest diligence on the works at Burgos. His Majesty deems it necessary that there be six mortars and six howitzers in this fortress, in addition to some twenty field guns of all calibers, and that a large quantity of supplies and ammunition be gathered there.

The Emperor wishes, Marshal, that you send me every two weeks an update on the progress of the work, and that you specifically inform me whether the ouvrage à cornes that His Majesty ordered to be built on the heights is complete, and whether the masonry of the redoubt has begun.

*Signed: ALEXANDRE.*

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No. 77.

*Letter from Prince Berthier, Major General, to General  
Count Caffarelli.*

Paris, 11 June 1811.

The Emperor orders, General Caffarelli, that you have a bridgehead marked out and work carried out at Miranda to ensure that, in any event, the crossing of the Ebro is assured. The localities require that this bridgehead be of the appropriate size; a second-class masonry tower will be built there, which will serve as a guardhouse, a storehouse, and a redoubt. The Minister of War must send me the plan of this tower, and I will forward it to you. The bridgehead must be such that the army is always assured of crossing the Ebro without difficulty.

His Majesty also instructs me to inform you, General, that it would be advisable to build a few towers on the heights and in the defiles from Vitoria to Irun. A dozen of these towers, placed on the summits and providing retreat for about thirty men, would be of great benefit. They would be patrol boats that would light the heights and keep us in constant control. The Emperor believes that each of these towers cannot cost more than ten thousand francs, which would make ten towers an expenditure of one hundred thousand francs, and that this would be money and labor well spent.

Inform me, General, of the arrangements you have made regarding the subject of this letter.

*Signed: ALEXANDRE.*

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No. 78.

*Letter from Marshal Marmont, Duke of Ragusa, to Prince  
Berthier, Major General.*

Badajoz, 21 June 1811.

I have had the honor of reporting to Your Highness all the efforts I had made to prepare the army to enter the field and maneuver to assist the Army of the South. As I was unaware of the enemy's precise situation, I believed it necessary first to approach them, in order to take advantage of any circumstances that fortune might offer me, and secondly, to disguise my true intentions for a while. Consequently, I deployed my troops along the Ciudad Rodrigo and Plasencia roads, and on the 5<sup>th</sup>, I personally advanced to Ciudad Rodrigo with most of the cavalry and a strong advance guard. I took advantage of this circumstance to throw a lot of supplies into the town; I left during the night, heading for Gallegos, in the hope of surprising General Craufurd's division, which was stationed three leagues from Ciudad Rodrigo. A few hours were enough for this general to be informed of my arrival at Rodrigo; and he set out immediately to withdraw beyond the Côa, leaving his cavalry under observation, and abandoning various stores of provisions. General Montbrun maneuvered with his cavalry on the enemy cavalry, pushed them back with great vigor, and took some prisoners. I learned that Lord Spencer, who commanded the army in the absence of Lord Wellington, had at his command five divisions spread out from the banks of the Côa to Castelo Branco. I concluded that a part of these troops was intended to cross to the left bank of the Tagus at the first appearance of need. It seems obvious to me that Marshal Duke of Dalmatia, who already had before him the old army he had fought, reinforced by two divisions, would never have the means to raise the siege of Badajoz, and that a detachment from the Army of Portugal itself would be insufficient, since it could always be neutralized by a detachment of such strength which would preserve the enemy's superiority. I therefore decided to march with the whole army. I sent orders to General Reynier to leave Fuente Roble and Los Santos, where he was with two divisions, to move on Baños and Plasencia, taking care to establish the opinion that these two divisions alone were those which were going to the Tagus. It appears that Lord Spencer was completely deceived about this movement, and that Lord Wellington was informed only very late of the army's march. The pontoon bridge on which I was counting to cross the Tagus had not arrived from Madrid, and my march was delayed. However, it was urgent to arrive; for all the reports announced that the town of Badajoz was attacked with great vigor, that three breaches had been opened, that two assaults had already been made, and that the enemy wanted at all costs to take control of this important city. Whatever the obstacles that arose from the circumstances, we made such great diligence that my advance guard arrived at Mérida on the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup>, from where it linked up with the posts of the Army of the South. On the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup>, the Duke of Dalmatia and I consulted on the movements that should be made to drive the enemy from his entrenched positions at Albuera and liberate Badajoz; but the enemy retreated in all haste, recrossed the Guadiana, and returned to Portugal without our having had any means of reaching them. It is unfortunate that they did not dare to risk their fortune, for a single victory would have infallibly marked our arrival in these regions. We entered Badajoz yesterday, where we were able to see with our own eyes the vigor General Philippon, Governor of Badajoz, and his brave garrison have displayed in the defense of this place, and how worthy of praise they are.

I cannot refrain from praising the excellent spirit that animated the army during a long and arduous march in a scorching season and amidst many privations, but one cannot expect too much proof of devotion to the service of His Majesty from the brave regiments that make up the Army of Portugal.

I have the honor to be, with respect, etc.

*Signed:* MARSHAL DUKE OF RAGUSA.

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No. 79.

*Report from Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, to Prince  
Berthier, Major General.*

Badajoz, 22 June 1811.

Monseigneur,

I hasten to report to Your Serene Highness that the fortress of Badajoz has been cleared, and that the troops besieging it have withdrawn into the interior of Portugal to join the remainder of the Anglo-Portuguese army, commanded by Lord Wellington, which has taken the same direction.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of this month, I left Llerena with the troops of the Army of the South, which I had assembled. General Drouet, Count d'Erlon, whom I knew would be joining two days later, followed suit; the head of his column arrived on the 13<sup>th</sup> at Usagre, where the Fifth Corps was located. I moved to Los Santos, where I found myself among the enemy army's establishments. On the 15<sup>th</sup>, I took up position at Fuente del Maestro; and on the 17<sup>th</sup>, at Almendralejo, from where on the 18<sup>th</sup> I communicated with the Imperial Army of Portugal, whose vanguard was arriving at Mérida. The same day, I coordinated the movements of the two armies with Marshal Duke of Ragusa.

On the 19<sup>th</sup>, we received information that the siege of Badajoz had been lifted, and that the enemy had abandoned their position at Albuera, evacuated Olivenza, and was withdrawing their troops to the right bank of the Guadiana, towards Elvas. In the afternoon of the same day, the army moved forward, and I received a letter from General Philippon, Governor of Badajoz, confirming the enemy's retreat. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, our troops arrived on the Guadiana, in front of Olivenza and Badajoz. The Army of Portugal maneuvered by the right bank and followed the road to Talavera; that of the South one emerged by Santa Martha and Albuera, while a column skirted the mountains on the left. The cavalry of both armies is today reconnoitering Villaviciosa, Elvas and in front of Campo Mayor, in order to learn the movements and dispositions of the enemy. On the basis of the reports that will be made, we will agree with Marshal Duke of Ragusa on the new operations that the Army of Portugal and that of the South should undertake.

The junction of the two armies on the banks of the Guadiana is one of the most remarkable events of the Spanish Civil War; it will subsequently have the greatest effect on the Emperor's service. Its first result was to save Badajoz. The southern provinces of Spain are completely freed from Portugal, and tranquility, which was momentarily disturbed in several places, will be restored. Marshal Duke of Ragusa and I intended to give battle to the enemy; but Lord Wellington prudently withdrew before we could join him. However, his forces consisted of sixty thousand men, thirty thousand of whom were English, including the divisions commanded by General Spencer, which he had just withdrawn from the north, fourteen thousand Portuguese, and sixteen thousand Spanish; among this number were five thousand cavalry.

It is unfortunate that a general engagement could not have taken place; success would not have been uncertain; but it is to be hoped that the opportunity will present itself, especially if the Army of Portugal maintains operational contact with the Army of the South and communicates with it, as happened today. I cannot entertain the slightest doubt on this subject: the eagerness with which Marshal Duke of Ragusa came, with all his available troops, to the aid of Badajoz and the Army of the South, is so glorious to him, that I conclude that the Marshal will always be willing to organize his movements in the most advantageous manner for the Emperor's service, pending His Majesty's deign to express his intentions regarding the operations of the campaign.

I must now report to Your Highness the situation in which we found the town of Badajoz, and the glorious defense of its brave garrison. Brigadier General Philippon, who commands it as governor, has had the rare merit of creating resources and using for defense all the French in Badajoz, while with a vigorous hand he contained the inhabitants and even employed them in the fortification work, which has been constantly improved. I will soon have the honor of sending Your Highness a copy of the siege journal that was kept; today I can only inform you of the principal events that occurred and ask you to be kind enough to present General Philippon to the Emperor as having deserved to experience the effect of his good graces. I have the honor of requesting for him the title of count and an endowment; I will also solicit rewards for various soldiers of all ranks who have distinguished themselves by brilliant actions.

By May 16<sup>th</sup>, the time of the battle I delivered to the allied army at Albuera, it had been nine days since the enemy had opened the trench in front of Badajoz, and six days since the firing had begun against the place. On the evening of the 15<sup>th</sup>, the besiegers withdrew all their troops and reunited them with the rest of their army at Albuera; they did not reappear until the 19<sup>th</sup>. During their absence, General Philippon had all the works they had erected razed, and he brought back into the town the platforms and fascinages he found there. He even captured some convoys from the enemy, who prepared to resume the work of the siege; but they did not open the trench for the second time until the night of May 30<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>. The firing against the town began again on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, and it continued without interruption until the lifting of the siege. By the 6<sup>th</sup>, three breaches had already been made, one at the castle and two at Fort San Christobal. The breach at the castle, located between the Trinity Bastion and the Guadiana, to the left of the Saint-Roch lunette, was passable; but General Philippon had it made steep and ordered an interior entrenchment to be built behind it in the castle embankment. This latter arrangement was perfectly understood; the enemy only made a false attack at this point.

At Fort San Christobal, only one of the two breaches was passable. During the night of the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup>, fifteen hundred Englishmen rushed into the fort's ditches, set up ladders, and attempted to assault it. Three times they returned to the charge; seventy-five brave men, commanded by Captain Chauvin of the Eighty-eighth Regiment, constantly repelled them and inflicted very heavy losses. We had soldiers wounded by bayonet wounds at the top of the breach. The success was complete; the dead, the wounded, and the ladders remained in the ditch.

In the following days, the enemy continued their fire on Fort San Christobal and sought to widen the breach. Captain Joudion, of the Twenty-first Light Regiment, commanded this fort with a garrison of 140 men. Each soldier had four loaded fusils at his side, and General Philippon had placed a large quantity of loaded bombs on the parapets, which were commanded by Sergeant Brette of the Fifth Artillery Regiment (this same soldier had already distinguished himself in the first assault). During the night of the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup>, two thousand Englishmen appeared again in the ditch. They had already applied forty ladders, the head of their column arrived at the top of the breach; Sergeant Brette cried out: *My captain, should we blow up the first mine?* The bombs and grenades descended, and, bursting, they broke the ladders and spread death and terror among the enemy, while the garrison threw them from the breach with bayonets. In an instant, the ditches were filled with dead and wounded, among them several English officers. In this confusion, some English officers asked for help; the brave Joudion ordered them to set up a ladder and climb into the fort to surrender themselves, which was carried out. At daybreak, the enemy general wrote to General Philippon to ask for a three-hour truce, in order to remove the wounded who had remained in the ditches or under fire from the fort; the request was granted. The loss of the English, in this circumstance, was more than six hundred men. We did not have ten men out of action. It is one of the finest feats of arms known.

It is estimated that the English lost at the Siege of Badajoz at least three thousand men. The Portuguese and Spanish also lost many.

In sending Your Serene Highness the journal of the siege, I will have the honor of presenting the names of the soldiers of all ranks who distinguished themselves and who deserved the Emperor's favors, so that you may be so kind as to request them.

Battalion Commander Lamare commanded the engineers, Battalion Commander Colin the artillery. The latter fell ill during the siege; he was perfectly supported by Colonel Gonzalès and Battalion Commander Horré, both in the service of His Majesty. I deeply regret not being able, in this first report, to name all the brave men.

General Philippon praises the firmness of character shown by Mr. Theran, the royal commissioner of the province, as well as the principal leaders of the Spanish administration who were in Badajoz.

On the 12<sup>th</sup>, the enemy, having learned of the movements the armies were making, began to withdraw their siege artillery. By the 17<sup>th</sup>, all enemy troops had disappeared. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, communication with Badajoz was reopened, thanks to parties that arrived there from both banks of the Guadiana. On the 20<sup>th</sup>, I arrived in Badajoz with Marshal Duke of Ragusa.

Thus, the enemy gained nothing from their last expedition to Extremadura and their attack on Badajoz except the shame of having undertaken these two undertakings. The English lost at least eight thousand of their own troops; the Portuguese, three to four thousand men, and the Spanish as many. These losses have ensured new triumphs for the Emperor's armies, and they have confirmed, in favor of the Imperial Army, the victory won on May 16<sup>th</sup> in the fields of Albuera signals where I fulfilled the first objective I had set myself, that of creating a diversion in favor of Badajoz and putting the place in a position to prolong its resistance. Today, it is clear that the Battle of Albuera gained at least twenty days, and that, during this time, arrangements could be made to bring in new reinforcements and give the Army of Portugal the means to take part in the operations. Thus, the second objective I set myself in making my first move has also been fulfilled, and the troops that fought at Albuera have not ceased for a single day to maintain the offensive against the enemy.

I have the honor of placing before Your Highness the daily order that I gave to the army yesterday. I am, with deep respect, etc.

*Signed:* MARSHAL DUKE OF DALMATIA.

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No. 80.

*Letter from Prince Berthier, Major General, to Marshal  
Marmont, Duke of Ragusa.*

Paris, 10 July 1811.

The Emperor, Your Excellency the Duke, after reading your latest dispatches, has instructed me to inform you that one division is not enough at Trujillo; that two divisions, part of your cavalry, and fifteen cannons are required. You will give command of this corps to either General Reynier or General Montbrun. You must draw supplies from Mérida and Medellín and not allow the enemy to establish a foothold there. You will maintain immediate communication with Badajoz and the Fifth Corps. The rest of your army must position itself at Almaraz, Talavera, Plasencia, etc., on the banks of the Tagus, to rest and be in a position to reunite promptly.

A bridge must be built across the Tagus, either at Almaraz or at Garrovillas, where one once existed.

You must have the bridge built on piles and create a bridgehead there, so as to have a substantial structure on the Tagus, safe from incursions by guerrillas and any other faction. You could have works built similar to those the Emperor had built at Spitz, but on a smaller scale. Alcántara must be occupied and fortified as a post; this will provide another bridge over the Tagus and a new direct connection to Badajoz. This objective is of the utmost importance and will become very advantageous when it comes to operating against Portugal, since Alcántara will provide a depot that will serve as a support.

The English, who had first repaired Almeida, blew it up and razed it entirely, with the intention of taking the war to the south.

The Emperor believes, Duke, that before returning to the Tagus, you will have ensured that the fortifications of Badajoz are repaired and the city supplied for six months. Assuming this, it remains to be seen what the English general will do. It does not seem likely that he would want to restart the campaign during the heat wave, and especially to begin it with a siege during the worst season in Spain. If, against all probability, he did so, Duke, it is to the aid of Andalusia that you must march with your entire army.

The Emperor has given command of his Army of the North to General Dorsenne. This general will soon be able to cover Ciudad Rodrigo, present a strong column to worry the enemy near this place, and threaten Portugal. He could even, in the unlikely event of an emergency, assemble forces large enough to cover Ciudad Rodrigo.

The Emperor recommends that you have the Baños pass entrenched so as to maintain a post there which will ensure, in this direction, your communications with the Army of the North.

As soon as General Dorsenne's army is larger, he will be given full responsibility for the province and the town of Ciudad Rodrigo, which will likely take place around 15 August. Then the Army of the North would have a corps on the Côa. The Army of Portugal would guard Alcántara and straddle the Tagus, with its left supported by the Guadiana.

The Army of the South would occupy Badajoz with an observation corps to support this town. In this state of affairs, Marshal, if the enemy advanced on Ciudad Rodrigo with all his forces, the Army of Portugal would march to the aid of this town, in concert with the Army of the North; which would bring together a force of seventy thousand men at Ciudad Rodrigo.

If, which is much more likely, the English general marched on Badajoz, the Army of Portugal would move towards the Guadiana, joining up with twenty-five thousand men from the Army of the South; which would make sixty-five thousand men. Finally, if the enemy army were to debouch on the Army of Portugal by one or the other bank of the Tagus, the Army of the North could send ten thousand men to the aid of the Army of Portugal; the Army of the South, fifteen thousand men; and that of the center, six thousand: which would form a combined force of more than seventy thousand men. For, before the enemy had crossed the distance from Alcántara or Alaiates to Almaraz, the Army of Portugal would have had time to receive all its support. You can well imagine, Duke, that this project is being discussed to speak of everything, for the localities must make this enemy operation considered impracticable; but the Emperor wished to run through these various possibilities in order to further convince you that the enemy can have no other goal today than to attack the Army of the South.

His Majesty therefore desires that your headquarters be on the Tagus, at the point closest to the Guadiana; that the army be positioned on both banks; that your right be on Plasencia, instead of having your center there, since it is more likely that the Army of Portugal will be forced to move toward Andalusia than toward the north. So much for the defensive.

As for the offensive, Marshal, the Army of Portugal can do nothing but rest, replenish itself, reorganize, harness its crew to eighty-four cannons, appoint all officer positions (send me the work promptly), replenish the generals, form magazines, firmly secure the Tagus crossing with pile bridges, build double bridgeheads, and finally occupy and fortify Alcántara.

After the heat wave, if the offensive against Portugal is to take place, this operation will be carried out by a combined movement of three army corps: the northern, the Portuguese, and the southern, forming a total of more than 100,000 bayonets, with an immense artillery and all the necessary means of transport.

The Emperor, Marshal, will have time to give his orders and learn of your plans, as you are informed on the ground. The Portuguese War is no longer an expedition. We must no longer consider going to Lisbon in one campaign, but in two, if necessary.

So, Duke, all you can do at this time to prepare for the offensive is to occupy Alcántara and fortify it to make it a depot for supplies and munitions.

The Emperor, Marshal, is counting on your zeal and activity, and on your resources to ensure that nothing disastrous can happen to the Army of the South.

You must, Duke, have a cipher with the King, the Duke of Dalmatia, and General Dorsenne, for important dispatches.

*Signed: ALEXANDRE.*

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No. 81.

*Letter from Marshal Marmont, Duke of Ragusa, to Prince  
Berthier, Major General.*

Naval Morale, 5 August 1811.

Monseigneur,

Your Highness has informed me that His Majesty's intention was for me to establish stores, and I understand the full importance of this. According to the inventory I had made of all the means of transport that the country can provide, and that I can dispose of, there is no relationship between their quantity and our needs: consequently, I have the honor to renew in this regard the requests I have made to you on several occasions. The Prince of Essling had three hundred harnessed food crates in the army; he left me ten that still exist, and the war has completely destroyed all the wagons in the country. Your Highness will undoubtedly find my request legitimate, and I dare hope that His Majesty will deign to grant it and order that it be granted; for these transports are at least as necessary to prepare for the campaign as to wage it. I have the honor to be, etc.

*Signed: MARSHAL DUKE OF RAGUSA.*

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No. 82.

*Project of operation for the Army of Portugal, addressed  
to Marshal Marmont, Duke of Ragusa, by Prince  
Berthier, Major General.*

Compiègne, 18 September 1811.

Marshal, when you have eighty pieces of artillery well harnessed, when General Vandermaesen has joined you, as well as all your depots left in the north, when you have received the clothing intended for your army, the Emperor expects that you will then have an army of forty-one thousand seven hundred men, and we will be close to 1 October. When you are certain that Ciudad Rodrigo has been supplied for three months, the Emperor, Marshal, leaves you in charge, in this situation of things, to move on Badajoz, to invest Elvas, and to flood the Alentejo. In this case, His Majesty orders that the Fifth Corps be entirely under your command with three thousand cavalry men that the Duke of Dalmatia will provide you, which will give you an army of fifty-seven thousand three hundred men, supported in Extremadura and in the place of Badajoz. You could lay siege to Elvas, take the town and one of the forts, which is not considered very difficult, worry the English as far as Abrantès and Lisbon, and take a good position to await them if they wanted to give battle to lift the siege of Elvas. If they let you lay siege to Elvas, without attacking your position, you still achieve a real success, you clear the whole north, and by this single blow you throw the enemy into Lisbon. Elvas could be taken before 15 November, except for one of the forts which is of little importance, which would direct things in such a way that before the month of February the campaign would be completely engaged in the interior of Portugal. If the enemy then wanted to take the offensive and move on Salamanca and Valladolid, he would find Salamanca fortified and supplied for two months; and General Dorsenne would have to fall back on Valladolid, and even on Burgos, where he would find himself with an army of fifty thousand men, not including a division in the Asturias and the troops remaining in the Third, Fourth and Fifth governments. But the movement of the English not being probable, they will run to the defense of Lisbon, and they will be pursued on the Côa by an army of twenty-five thousand men, detached from the Army of the North, which will hold two divisions in check. The operation of which I have just spoken to you, Marshal, is the only one which can restore honor to our arms, make us leave the defensive where we are, make the English tremble, and march to the great denouement. The twenty-five thousand men of the Army of the North who would be on the Côa, would follow the English army; and, if it were to concentrate entirely on the Tagus, the northern army would detach fifteen thousand men to join you, which would bring your army to seventy-two thousand three hundred men.

The capture of a stronghold under the eyes of the English army, the conquest of a part of Portugal, which covers our southern army, the joining of twenty-five thousand men from the Army of the South to your army, are reasons for glory and success for you.

On the other hand, Marshal Suchet will march on Valencia, and everything suggests that this place will be taken when you take the place of Elvas, which will allow you to reinforce yourself with another good division.

You will note, Duke, that to carry out the operation I have just described, the enemy must have no siege artillery on Ciudad Rodrigo; for if the siege of this place were to begin, it would first be necessary to march to clear it, since the northern army is not capable of doing so alone, and its role is to retreat if, which is unlikely, the enemy army were to fall upon the Army of the North when you march south. But, if you are in a position to do so, and Ciudad Rodrigo is not besieged, you can, with the reinforcements of the Fifth Corps, attack and overthrow from all its positions the line that the English have left on the left bank; this would raise alarm and worry Lord Wellington so much that it is to be presumed he would return at great speed to Lisbon. In the event of a meeting with the Army of the North to march on Ciudad Rodrigo if the enemy besieges it, His Majesty gives you command of both corps.

Enclosed you will find a duplicate order to place the Fifth Corps under your command when you decide to march on Elvas, as well as a duplicate order to General Dorsenne if you march on Ciudad Rodrigo.

*Signed: ALEXANDRE.*

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No. 83.

*Letter from Marshal Marmont, Duke of Ragusa, to Prince  
Berthier, Major General.*

Talavera, 21 October 1811.

Monseigneur,

I have the honor to report to Your Highness that, as subsistence difficulties are increasing, I have found it necessary to establish my troops as far as Toledo. The army is established as follows: the Sixth Division, at Plasencia and on the banks of the Alagon; the Fifth, in the Vera de Plasencia, positioned to support it; the Second Division at Avila, charged with ensuring the subsistence of the Fifth and Sixth Divisions with shipments of wheat; the Third Division having posts at Béjar, from where it is able to know everything that is happening on the Águeda, as well as at Talavera, in the Tagus Valley, and on the upper Tiétar. the Fourth Division, behind Talavera, on the communication of the road to Madrid; the First Division, at Toledo and in the province; the latter two are responsible for sending supplies to Talavera. The dragoon division will be placed on the left bank of the Tagus, between Toledo and Talavera; and the light troops, between Talavera and the Arzobispo. By this means, the army will be able to live for some time and will occupy enough country so that I can hope to form some stores. If I can achieve this, my intention is to make the greatest efforts to collect a certain quantity of supplies at Naval Moral; this store will also be well placed for all the movements that the defensive could require, and it would be a first echelon for the offensive. As soon as the offensive is indicated, if I have the means of transport, I will take this store to Galisteo (on the road from Plasencia to Coria), an excellent post that I am having prepared, which requires very few personnel to guard, and which will keep my stores perfectly secure. If these stores can be proportionate to the army's needs, they will be of great assistance to the expedition to Portugal, at least as I understand it.

Although His Majesty is perfectly informed of the nature of things, I ask your permission to send you a plan of operation as it seems to me it would be appropriate to execute it.

Upon my return from Ciudad Rodrigo, I stayed in Plasencia for two weeks to be better informed of the enemy's movements. The English have done nothing more than move their posts closer to Ciudad Rodrigo; but the greater part of their army has remained behind the Côa, and no detachment has crossed the Águeda. According to the latest news I have received, the enemy has approached the Tagus; it seems quite likely to me that, feeling their inferiority in the offensive, they will undertake nothing serious, and that their only objective, in changing their position and leaving the high country where they had settled during the heat, is to return to the one they were previously in, which is no longer as unhealthy and offers them more comfortable living conditions. I am not placing any troops on the left bank of the Tagus, since, for them to be safe and able to survive there, they would need to be supported by a large amount of cavalry. I have so little of it, and it melts into this region with such rapidity that it must be carefully preserved for a specific operation. Nevertheless, I am firmly establishing myself on the heights of the Tagus, so as to always be able to break out easily and fall upon the enemy should they attempt any operation on the Guadiana.

I have established good crossings on the Tiétar, which are covered by a good entrenched camp, where the Plasencia division could hold its own against the entire enemy army. This division is covered by the Alagon, which presents great obstacles, especially in the late season; thus, this division is perfectly safe.

I have the honor to be, with respect, etc.

*Signed: DUKE OF RAGUSA.*

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No. 84.

*Letter from Prince Berthier, Major General, to King Joseph.*

Paris, 13 December 1811.

The Emperor orders me to inform Your Majesty of the arrangements I have just prescribed for the new organization of the armies of the North and Portugal.

I inform the Duke of Ragusa that the Emperor has deemed it appropriate to entrust him with the defense of Ciudad Rodrigo, Astorga, the provinces of Avila, Plasencia, Salamanca, Palencia, the Kingdom of Leon, Asturias, and finally the entire territory forming the Sixth and Seventh Governments; so that the new district of the Army of Portugal now includes these two governments, the province of Asturias, that of Avila, that of Plasencia, and part of Extremadura. By means of this territorial increase, the Duke of Ragusa will return to the Army of the Center the portion of the province of Toledo, which Your Majesty recently ceded to him.

I order the Marshal to immediately move his headquarters to Valladolid, and even, if possible, to Salamanca.

The division of Souham, which is in Salamanca, is placed under his command; it will form his Seventh Division; and Bonet's division, which is in Asturias, will form the Eighth Division of his army.

All the other troops of the Army of the North, now in the provinces ceded to the Army of Portugal, will assemble at Burgos. General Dorsenne will establish his headquarters there; he will retain command of the Army of the North, whose new district will be composed of the provinces forming the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Governments.

The Emperor hopes that Valencia will be taken during this month, which will allow the return of Caffarelli's Division to the Army of the North; and it is possible that His Majesty will then withdraw part of his Guard from Spain, if the clouds obscuring northern policy do not clear.

It is likely that the English will undertake nothing between now and February, and everything suggests that they will remain on the defensive. Should the case arise that they advance, the Duke of Ragusa has orders to assemble his eight divisions and march directly against them to give battle, supported by General Dorsenne, who, from Burgos, would advance with all his forces to support the Army of Portugal.

I order the Duke of Dalmatia to reinforce, as much as possible, the corps on the Guadiana, in order to stop and contain General Hill's corps in the Alentejo, force the English to remain on the left bank, and thus prevent any attempt against Madrid.

I recommend that this marshal do everything possible to supply Badajoz for a year, and to support, with a strong diversion on Murcia, the very important capture of Valencia.

*Signed: ALEXANDRE.*

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No. 85.

*Proclamation of Mina, Commander of the Spanish  
Volunteers in Navarre.*

At the Camp of Honor, 14 December 1811.

The atrocious and scandalous conduct of our enemy is pushed to the extreme in this kingdom. Consistent in his plans for usurpation, he has filled this country with carnage and horror. Neither feelings of humanity, nor the laws of war observed between civilized nations, nor the generous conduct of the volunteers of Navarre, have been able to change the bloodthirsty and devastating spirit of the French generals and authorities. The cities live in consternation, and the villages are crushed. This class of men, whom their holy ministry has made respected by barbaric nations, are led from the dungeon to execution, and the sanctuary of God, abandoned by His servants,

mourns their loss. One cannot take a step without hearing the cries caused by tyranny. Navarre, finally, is covered in desolation; everywhere tears are shed for the loss of their best friends; the father sees his son's body hanged for having had the heroism to defend his country; the son sees his father consumed in prison, and end up expiring in misery, without having committed any crime other than that of being the father of a defender of his homeland. A spirit of moderation, proper to our religion and the character of the inhabitants of Navarre, made the volunteers observe a system contrary to that of the tyrants. So terrible on the battlefield, they were kind and generous to the enemy who had surrendered; several of their captured officers were received at the table of our leaders, and one could see with what gentleness our soldiers treated their own; we fulfilled, in a word, the duties of good soldiers, while they forgot even the laws of reason.

The mayors, nobles, and priests were ruined and taken to France, victims of the ferocity of our enemies. I have often wept over the fate of some officers and many volunteers whom they hanged or put to the sword. I have also written often to the French generals commanding in Navarre, to stop these excesses and restore good order. I have done my best to soften the horrors of war, and to convince the public of the necessity and justice of the present decree. Some weak inhabitants may find these measures violent, but they are the fruit of long meditation on the state of the country. Powerful reasons would have persuaded me to postpone their execution, if the latest declaration of the French and the perfidy of some wicked Spaniards had not come to determine me irrevocably. I saw twelve peasants shot in Estella; sixteen in Pamplona; and four officers and thirty-eight volunteers put to the sword in two days. I have patiently suffered many imprisonments, and the continual assassinations of the enemy on ecclesiastics, soldiers and peasants; he has finally filled the measure, and I can no longer suspend the present resolution.

1<sup>st</sup> ARTICLE. Navarre declares war to the death and without quarter against all French soldiers and officers, as well as against their Emperor.

ART. II. Any French officer or soldier captured, armed or unarmed, whether in combat or not, shall be hanged on public roads in uniform, and their name and the body to which it belongs shall be affixed to their corpse.

ART. III. Any officer, soldier, or citizen, of whatever class or condition, who aids or allows a Frenchman to escape shall be hanged without remission.

ART. IV. Those convicted of having censured or spoken ill of this decree shall be shot, and their property confiscated for the benefit of the division; those who wish to take their side shall be sentenced to eight years in irons.

ART. V. If it is proven that a French officer or soldier has been hidden in any village, the house where he or she is found will be burned, and those occupying it will be shot.

ART. VI. Anyone convicted of having notified the French that there are volunteers in any village, no more than eight, will pay a fine of five hundred ducats, and anyone who places a volunteer in their hands will be shot, along with four others from his or her village, who will be chosen by lot.

ART. VII. It is forbidden, under penalty of death, to bring money, goods, or provisions to Pamplona under any pretext whatsoever.

ART. VIII. I declare Pamplona under siege and classify its supporters as our enemies.

ART. IX. No person, without distinction of age, sex, or condition, may approach more than a quarter of a league from Pamplona. This line will be fixed at the stones located in the three cantons of the royal road, from Pamplona, Tafalla, Estella, and Tolosa, continuing from the road that is in front of the village of Artica and Ansoáin, the Capuchin convent, the Red House, Burlada, Mendillorri and the Fort of the Prince. Those who cross these limits and go to Pamplona will be hanged.

ART. X. If the volunteer detachments observing the line see anyone approaching, they will fire on them without waiting for orders from anyone; whether the individual is wounded or not, they will be arrested immediately and hanged from a tree.

ART. XI. Any person who voluntarily wishes to leave Pamplona will be received by us with the humanity proper to the Navarrese character. They will not be able to return to Pamplona while the siege of this place lasts.

ART. XII. The officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers of the French army who wish to defect to us will be received by the detachments, who will welcome them with friendship. They will be brought before me, and I will give them a cash gratuity, a full bag, and rations. They will have the choice of serving with us, going to England, or returning to their homeland. I will undertake to send them safely to a port where they will be recommended to the military commander and the civil authorities.

ART. XIII. Any officer, soldier, or resident who does not grant asylum to the French officers or soldiers who have crossed over to us will be shot; and if any individual kills or wounds them, or places them in danger of falling into the hands of the enemy, they will be hanged without remission.

ART. XIV. All those who voluntarily leave Pamplona, whether citizens or soldiers, will present themselves before me; and, when it is an entire family, it will be the head. I will give them a suitable destination.

ART. XV. Any person who leaves the limits of their village without a passport signed by the mayor, the priest, and the parish notary will be shot.

ART. XVI. All innkeepers in the province must have the passports of the individuals who lodge with them presented to them; those who do not have one will be arrested and handed over to the first of our detachments. If they are from villages bordering the provinces of Gipuzkoa, Alava, Castile, and Aragon, they will be invited to have their passports made.

ART. XVII. If any villages pay, or charge, the 40 francs per week imposed by the enemy on the relatives of volunteers, the property of the mayor, the manager, the notaries, the priests, and the two richest people in the village will be confiscated.

ART. XVIII. A contribution of 40 francs per week will be imposed on the relatives of Spaniards employed by the French government in Pamplona, and we declare that everything belonging to them: property, rights, etc., will be confiscated as long as they remain in their positions.

ART. XIX. Any individual who leaves their village to live in a town where there is a French garrison must return to their former residence within twenty days of the publication of this decree. Those who do not comply with this provision will be declared traitors to the country and punished as such, in person or in their property.

ART. XX. Judges, municipal and ecclesiastical councilors, administrators of convents or the properties of absent persons, who smuggle goods or news to the enemy, will be hanged without distinction of rank or rank. Within one month after the publication of this decree, all persons must report to the government secretariat to register their assets and income, or to designate the owner of the property under their management.

ART. XXI. If it appears necessary to advance the demarcation line, it will be executed and made known. However, we are warned that if the enemy takes up position in any village near Pamplona, the line may extend by half a league.

ART. XXII. This decree shall be printed and distributed in all towns and villages, etc.

ART. XXIII. Upon receipt of this decree, it shall be published. The priests shall read it every two weeks in their parishes; namely, on the first and third Sundays of each month, at the time of the offering. If some should dispense with it, the judges, priests, and notaries, and two of the most prominent figures in each village, shall be tried by military force within twenty-four hours.

*Signed: F. ESPOZ Y MINA.*

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No. 86.

*Letter from Marshal Count Suchet to Prince Berthier,  
Major General.*

At Montserrat headquarters, 25 July 1811.

Monseigneur,

I had gone as far as Vic, in Upper Catalonia, to complete the dispersal of the enemy army, which was deserting or hastily embarking on all sides. This movement, which I deliberately prolonged, not only could have been useful for the operations at Figueres, but it even appears, from the reports of captured Spanish officers, that it has prompted the enemy to blow up the fortifications at Berga. However, eager to return to Tarragona, where I hoped to find dispatches from Your

Highness, I set 24 July for the Frère and Harispe divisions to rally at Gualala via Manresa. I urged Division General Count Maurice Mathieu, Governor of Barcelona, to support this movement with a column coming the same day from Martorell to Esparreguera. I intended to reconnoiter the Montserrat, a formidable position, the support of the rebels, and the hope of the fanatics of all Catalonia. I went quickly with the Abbé Brigade to Reus on the 20<sup>th</sup>; on arrival I received the magnificent reward with which His Majesty was pleased to pay for my feeble services, and the order from Your Serene Highness to attack the Montserrat.

The arrangements were already made. On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Montmarie Brigade advanced from Montblanc to Gualala, ahead of the Frère and Harispe divisions. I followed with the Abbé Brigade, via Sarriol and Santa-Coloma. I was pleased to see the inhabitants staying or returning to their homes along the way, and I encouraged this first attempt at building trust, which seemed to be having positive results. On the 24<sup>th</sup>, all the columns were reunited at Gualala. The advance of the Manresa brigade had initially alarmed the enemy at Montserrat; but seeing that they were not attacking, they returned safely.

That same night, I advanced with the Abbé and Montmarie Brigades to Bruch, where I found General Maurice Mathieu, who hastened to assist me in this undertaking. By daybreak, I was at the foot of the mountain and in control of the first entrenchments at the entrance to the pass. Four companies of voltigeurs were placed there; two elite battalions remained in reserve with the troops of General Maurice Mathieu and General Montmarie. I instructed General Abbé to attack and capture the Montserrat at the head of the brave first light and one hundred and fourteenth line infantry, and a company of sappers.

Baron de Eroles defended this position with two thousand men, whose long and difficult avenues wound up the side of a steep mountain, presenting obstacles at every step that would have been insurmountable for anyone but the French. Entrenchments and cuts, and several redoubts placed on inaccessible rocks, where the cannon had been hoisted to a height of more than fifty feet, covered the entrance to the convent from afar. From all the nearby heights, peasants poured uninterrupted musketry fire on the marching column. Surprised at the first announcement of the French approach, Baron de Eroles initially wanted to show confidence and contented himself with ordering that eight days' worth of supplies be brought to the batteries. But the firm and assured march of our column soon showed them that we were heading not for a siege, but for an assault. The first cannon shots cheered our soldiers, accustomed to braving more formidable ramparts and batteries. After the first shots, General Abbé sent Grenadier Captain Ronfort, of the 114<sup>th</sup>, with two elite companies, running to the crag where the first battery was located. Sheltered from the fire, our brave men were overwhelmed by a hail of stones and rocks; but the momentum was given and could no longer be stopped. The voltigeurs boldly climbed the escarpment. At this sight, the terrified enemy lost their composure: the battery was scaled. All who did not flee were killed. Instantly, the guns turned against the second battery, towards which Battalion Commander Ehrard, of the 1<sup>st</sup> Light Infantry, was heading at the same time, with an elite battalion, attacking from the front and simultaneously turning the fortification. He soon had it under control; everything was taken with the bayonet: the Spanish artillery captain was killed on his pieces, as well as several of his own. From there, without stopping, we rushed on the battery which still defended the entrance to the convent, while fifty voltigeurs, having reached, I know not how, on the summit of the needles of the rocks with which the mountain is

everywhere bristling, and which are shuddering to see in cold blood, plunged the convent itself and all the surroundings, at an elevation of more than five hundred feet. A vain resistance in the convent only served to give time to the Baron de Eroles to flee, with the bulk of his troop, by impassable paths and ravines, where it was absolutely impossible to pursue him. The convent and the thirteen hermitages which crown it were occupied by our troops; only one officer and a few soldiers were able to be taken. We had a dozen men killed or wounded. Two officers of the First Light and the One Hundred and Fourteenth were killed; the Eagle-bearer of the One Hundred and Fourteenth was amputated. We remained in control of ten guns, two flags, a million cartridges, a large quantity of lead and powder, clothing and food stores, the statements of which I am sending to Your Highness, with a plan of the mountain and the works which defended it.

I am instructing Squadron Leader Ricard, my aide-de-camp, to deliver this dispatch to Your Highness, and I ask you to return it to me with the Emperor's orders.

I am, with respect, etc.

*Signed:* COUNT SUCHET.