

Translated by Greg Gorsuch  
Part 15

# **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 1813**

### **II**

The French army, defeated at Vitoria, found itself on the Pyrenean border; and the enemy, held back by the good will of a few rallied divisions, dared not undertake anything. Marshal Soult, sent in haste by the Emperor to take command of the army, arrived at Bayonne on 12 July. Soon, through his firmness and activity, he had restored order and reorganized everything. He covered his positions with numerous forts and put the fortified posts along the border into a state of defense. Bayonne and Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port were covered by a vast entrenched camp and became the pivot of his operations. The French army still numbered sixty-nine thousand men, including six thousand cavalry, not including nine thousand men distributed among the fortresses. The infantry was divided into three corps of three divisions each, plus a reserve division. Command of the right wing was given to General Reille; General Drouet commanded the center, and General Clauzel commanded the left wing. The cavalry consisted of two divisions of dragoons and one division of chasseurs or hussars. The artillery operated eighty-six cannons. These troops guarded the Pyrenean passes from Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port to the mouth of the Bidasoa. Marshal Soult was stationed at Ascaïn. Lord Wellington had established his headquarters at Lesaca. His army was ninety thousand strong, namely sixty thousand Anglo-Portuguese and thirty thousand Spaniards.

At the end of July, Marshal Soult wanted to resume the offensive, turning the enemy's right wing by the road from Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port to Pamplona, in the hope of relieving the garrisons of Pamplona and San Sebastian. To this end, General Reille's corps, the cavalry, and the artillery joined General Clauzel's three divisions at Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. General Drouet's corps held position near Ainhoa and Espelette and was forced to emerge through the Maya Pass. The reserve, commanded by General Villatte, moved to the Bidasoa River to observe the enemy and advance to the aid of San Sebastian if the opportunity became favorable.

After several days of delays caused by rain and poor road conditions, General Clauzel emerged from Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port on 25 July with his three divisions and captured a high rock defended by the vanguard of the English army. A thick fog that came before nightfall forced him

to postpone until the next day the attack on the Altobizkar plateau, which the enemy occupied in front of the Roncevaux Pass with three divisions and a cavalry brigade. General Reille, who was marching to the right of General Clauzel, was to have seized the Lindous plateau on the 25<sup>th</sup>, from where he would have cut off the enemy's communications; but the darkness of the fog and the difficulty of the roads prevented him from arriving in time.

For his part, General Drouet attacked the Maya Pass on the 25<sup>th</sup>, where three English divisions were stationed under the command of General Hill. He captured this position after a fairly fierce fight and pursued the enemy in the direction of the Vilate Pass, through which they were retreating.

On July 27<sup>th</sup>, General Clauzel continued his movement along the Pamplona Road, supported on his right by General Reille, who was following the left bank of the Eugi River. The enemy retreated to Zubiri and took up positions between Oricáin and Huarte on all the heights commanding the outlets of the various valleys leading to Pamplona, notably on Oricáin Mountain, at the foot of which lies the small village of Sorauren. The enemy, reinforced by the Spanish troops blockading Pamplona, occupied this position with thirty thousand men, twelve thousand of whom were English. Marshal Soult was preparing to attack when a terrible storm forced him to wait until the next day. Lord Wellington thus had time to arrive during the night with four English divisions, 25,000 strong. Three of these divisions were those of General Hill, who had joined him after escaping from General Drouet.

On the 28<sup>th</sup>, Marshal Soult had the French divisions deployed at the foot of Mount Oricáin, and, after the necessary reconnaissance, he began the attack. The artillery and cavalry were unable to break through and remained in the narrow Zubiri Valley, unable to take part in the fighting. Several columns attempted to climb the mountain; but, stopped by the steep slopes and rocky points, crushed by enemy fire, they were constantly repulsed. The fighting continued until nightfall, and the attack resumed the next day without further success. At the same time, Marshal Soult maneuvered from his right to outflank the position. General Drouet, who had established communication with him, gained some advantage and for a time remained in control of the Pamplona Road via Lanza and Ostitz; but the reverses of Generals Reille and Clauzel in the centre and left forced Marshal Soult to withdraw. On August 1<sup>st</sup>, he headed for Saint-Estefan and returned to his original positions via the Etxalar Pass. This futile attempt cost the French army 1,908 men killed, 8,540 wounded, and 2,700 prisoners.

Meanwhile, the town of San Sebastian was under severe pressure. Marshal Soult decided to make a new effort to relieve it. On 31 August, General Reille crossed the Bidasoa below Biriattou with three divisions and the reserve, and attacked the mountain of Saint-Martial, which the enemy occupied with thirty or forty thousand men. General Clauzel crossed the river at Bera at the same time with three divisions. This column obtained some advantages; but the first was repulsed. For its part, the enemy, having successfully attacked the center of the line towards Urdax, the French troops had to withdraw. They had suffered a loss of three thousand six hundred men, and the Bidasoa, swollen during the night by the rains, made their retreat very difficult.

Left to its own devices, the garrison of San Sebastian put up a heroic defense. After fifty-nine days of open trenches and five assaults, it was finally forced to withdraw to the castle. The unfortunate population of San Sebastian then had to suffer every imaginable horror at the hands of its allies. By September 6<sup>th</sup>, the fortress was nothing more than a smoking heap of ruins. Reduced to twelve hundred men, with no shelter for its wounded, and deprived of any means of defense, the garrison was forced to capitulate on the 8<sup>th</sup>. This memorable siege cost the enemy nearly six thousand men; it was the last glimmer of French glory in Spain. Lord Wellington, having been joined by seven thousand men arriving from England, ten thousand Spaniards drawn from Andalusia, and the fourteen-thousand-strong army of Mina, found himself at the command of one hundred and thirty-four thousand men, namely: one hundred and fifteen thousand infantry, fifteen thousand cavalry, and four thousand four hundred artillery. On 7 October, he took the offensive along the entire line. He surprised the crossing of the Bidasoa, guarded by two divisions, and seized almost without resistance the positions of the Croix des Bouquets, in front of Saint-Jean de Luz, the Baionnette Heights, in front of Ascain, and the high plateaus of the Rhune mountain<sup>1</sup>.

The garrison of Pamplona, 3,500 strong, surrendered to the Spanish army on October 31<sup>st</sup>, due to lack of supplies, after four months of blockade or siege. (*See the account of the defense, Volume IV.*) Several times it had disrupted the enemy's efforts in their vigorous sorties. Santoña, better supplied and only blockaded, continued to resist.

Marshal Soult received reinforcements of 16,000 conscripts, who were sent to the depots near the border to be clothed, armed, and given some training. From September, his intention had been to debouch via Jaca with 50,000 men, to link up in Aragon with Marshal Suchet, who would have sailed up the Ebro with 30,000 men and 100 cannons; but this project, submitted to the Emperor and long discussed, could not be executed due to the successive reductions experienced by the Army of Aragon. Marshal Soult pressed the works with which he covered his line on a chain of heights bordering the left bank of the Nivelle behind Sare. The right rested at Saint-Jean de Luz, and the left on the Pyrenees Mountain range near Urdax. The brigade of General Paris, 3,700 strong, came to reinforce General Foy at Saint-Jean Pied de Port, who found himself at the head of 10,000 men.

On 10 November, Lord Wellington resumed the offensive and directed his main attack against the central divisions through Sare. After a most stubborn fight, which lasted all day, he forced the line towards Pont d'Amotz and penetrated as far as Saint-Pée<sup>2</sup>. The French army lost 4,000 men that day. Forced to retreat, it took up position on the 11<sup>th</sup>, the right at Bidart, the left at Arrauntz. On the 12<sup>th</sup>, it withdrew to Bayonne. At the time of the battle, General Foy, who was on the far left near Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, successfully created a diversion in the enemy's rear and captured some of their baggage; however, finding himself stopped in front by superior forces, he was forced to withdraw to the right bank of the Nive, via the Cambo bridgehead, which he was tasked with defending. He linked up on his right with General Drouet, who, with three divisions, was guarding this same bank from Ustaritz to Bayonne.

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<sup>1</sup> See supporting documents, no. 112.

<sup>2</sup> See supporting documents, no. 113.

On 9 December, after a month of hesitation, the enemy forded the Nive above Cambo, and despite all the efforts made against him, reached Ustaritz, where he intercepted the road from Bayonne to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. Returning to Bayonne that same evening, Marshal Soult conceived the plan for one of those military operations that Napoleon himself would not have disavowed. The fortress of Bayonne, with its position on the Nive, offered him solid bridges that allowed him to move at will with all his forces to either bank; while the enemy army found itself divided in two by this river, and did not yet have easy means of communication. Taking advantage of this, he gathered the mass of his troops at Bayonne during the night, debouched onto the left bank of the Nive, via the main road to Spain, and attacked the Anglo-Portuguese army in its camps at Bidart, Arcangues, and Arrautz. This plan, however, skillfully conceived, was not decisively successful. The enemy was favored by the advantage of the terrain and by rain that fell in torrents all day. He was also reinforced by fifteen thousand men from the right bank, who arrived in haste during the attack. He lost six thousand men, including one thousand prisoners, and was about to retreat.

To face this attack, Lord Wellington had left only twenty thousand men on the right bank of the Nive at Saint-Pierre d'Irube. Marshal Soult, having noticed this, sent General Drouet with five divisions on the night of December 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> to attack the enemy on this bank; but, through a lack of foresight, the fires of the bivouacs of the divisions leaving the left bank were allowed to go out, while other fires appeared on the right bank; which Lord Wellington having noticed, he immediately directed thirty thousand men to the threatened point. Already the position of Saint-Pierre d'Irube was attacked from the front on the main road to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, by General Abbé, and turned towards old Mouguerre, by General Foy. The enemy was beginning to retreat when Wellington appeared with his reserves and re-established the fight. It was only afterward with unheard-of efforts that Marshal Soult succeeded in containing the Anglo-Portuguese army. This battle was most bloody; by his own admission, the enemy lost eight thousand men, and the French had no fewer than five thousand nine hundred men out of action. It ended the 1813 campaign of the Army of the Pyrenees and paved the way for the great events that took place a few months later.

In Catalonia, Marshal Suchet had retreated to Barcelona, guarding the Llobregat line. He was reinforced by the troops of General Decaen and found himself at the command of forty thousand men, not including the garrisons of the fortresses. On 29 July, Lord Bentinck, having crossed the Ebro at Amposta below Tortosa, invested Tarragona by land and sea with considerable forces; and on 3 August, he began the siege of this fortress. The Spanish army of the Duke of Parque, coming from Andalusia, and that of Catalonia, commanded by General Copons, participated in this operation. On 14 August, Marshal Suchet advanced to Villafranca with four infantry divisions and all his cavalry; then, maneuvering to his right to outflank the enemy, he reached Tarragona without having a single engagement. The garrison had been working night and day since 18 July to prepare blast furnaces to blow up the walls of this fortress. On 19 August, thirty-two furnaces, loaded together with thirty-seven thousand eight hundred and sixty pounds of powder, were ready, and at the signal of three cannon shots given at nightfall, the ramparts of this famous city collapsed with a horrible crash<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> See supporting documents, no. 114.

After this expedition, the French troops retook their positions behind the Llobregat. During this retreat, an Italian battalion, stationed at Sant Sadurni, was captured by the bands of Manso. A squadron of hussars and an infantry battalion were also surprised by the same bands at Pallejá and were partly massacred. To erase the impact of these two setbacks, Marshal Suchet attacked the vanguard of the Anglo-Portuguese army stationed at the Ordal Pass on the night of 12-13 September, putting it to flight, beating the Villafranca position, and forcing the enemy to fall back on Tarragona. During this brilliant expedition, General Decaen destroyed the bands of Manso and Baron de Eroles. Soon after, he left the army to organize a reserve corps on the Gironde.

Marshal Soult had already proposed to Marshal Suchet to operate with him against Lord Wellington by way of Navarre. Marshal Suchet, without entirely adopting this plan, had offered to Marshal Soult to go with thirty thousand men to Aragon, and to join him by way of Jaca, taking one hundred pieces of cannon for the two armies. The Minister of War approved this junction; but it could not take place, Marshal Suchet finding himself deprived successively of the troops of General Paris, of ten thousand conscripts on whom he was counting, of the Italian troops of General Severoli, who had to return to their country, of several German regiments which were disarmed, of a thousand gendarmes who returned to France, and of two thousand elite men who were sent to the depots to organize the reserves. At the end of December, his army was reduced to twenty-five thousand five hundred men. Having to leave four thousand men in Barcelona, and complete the garrisons of the border places, he was obliged to abandon all plans for an offensive, and to confine himself to containing the enemy who had no less than fifty thousand men, including sixteen thousand English.

**No. 112**

*Letter from Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, to the Duke of  
Feltre, Minister of War.*

Saint-Jean de Luz, 26 October 1813.

Monsieur Duke,

When I took command of the army last July, I made sure to inspire confidence in everyone, and I personally demonstrated a great deal of it. Your Excellency will recall my first reports. I did not, however, conceal from myself the fact that an army that had just suffered a famous defeat could not recover as quickly as one might expect, especially given the losses it had suffered and still lacking artillery. But I considered the state of the border and the situation of the fortresses of Bayonne and Saint-Jean Pied-de-Port, which would not have held up the enemy for four days if he had taken the trouble to present himself before them. I also considered it of the utmost importance to prove to France, to Europe, and even to the enemy, that there still existed a French army on the Pyrenean borders, and that it was at least capable of halting their advance. From then on, I determined to enter into operations immediately, in the hope that perhaps a favorable opportunity would present itself, which would enable me to achieve the goal I had set for myself. It was not that I counted on great success, for I felt well that, being unable to support the army in the country where I was going to bring the theater of war, and having nothing in store, nor even the possibility of having provisions transported after me, I would be forced to return, whatever advantage I might have obtained elsewhere.

Your Excellency knows the result of the operations I undertook to clear the fortresses of Pamplona and San Sebastian; and he undoubtedly considered that if these operations did not achieve their apparent objective, at least they delayed those of the enemy, and gave time to put themselves on the defense on the border. Thus the towns of Bayonne and Saint-Jean Pied de Port, which in principle were embarrassing, will soon be able to offer assured support to the army, and serve as places of arms; and it was much more urgent, being inferior in forces, to put ourselves on the defense than to take the offensive, especially after the consideration that in this part we could not obtain any advantage that would balance the losses that we would incur.

I also examined the army's military position with the greatest care, and I recognized that I could only establish a good defensive line by supporting the right at Saint-Jean-de-Luz, and extending the line through the foothills of the Rhune mountain, the heights behind Sare and Ainhoa, on the Mondarrain rock, and along the course of the Nive towards Bidarray, as far as Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. I had this position entrenched; and from that moment on, I regarded the Bidasoa position only as an advance guard, not being strong enough to hold the troops necessary for its defense, and not even being able, in the event of an attack, to bring relief there in time.

I had reason to applaud my foresight when the enemy forced the army's right, which was on the heights of the Bidasoa, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of this month. It is a fact that if my battle line had not been fortified, the next day the army would have been forced to cross the Nive, and the fortress of

Bayonne, whose large, entrenched camp is not yet in a state of defense, would have been insulted.

I have therefore gained a great advantage by losing the heights of the Bidasoa, which would have been almost impossible for me to hold in winter, due to the difficulty of sustaining the troops there; and if the enemy occupies them during the rainy season, he will soon realize that he has lost much more than gained by seizing this position.

I have also gained the advantage of having the army more concentrated, and of being better prepared to execute the planned operations on the Ebro, which Y. Exc. had to submit to the Emperor for approval. You will be able to judge this, Mr. Duke, when you have before you the map that I am having drawn up, on which will be shown the positions of the army, as well as those of the enemy, and all the defensive works that I have had built on the line.

By an ill-considered move, I could lose part of the army and make the invasion of the southern departments of the Empire inevitable. I have no doubt that if this misfortune were to occur, the whole of France would rise up to halt the enemy's advance; but the harm would be extreme, and the Emperor could learn of it only with the greatest displeasure. I must therefore maneuver in such a way as to avoid such dire consequences and always keep myself in a position to give battle to the enemy without compromising anything, while waiting for ideas to be fixed on the plan of operations to be followed, and especially until H. M. has deigned to make his intentions known on this subject.

With this in mind, I intend to complete the defensive works I am having established along my entire line, as well as the entrenched camps of Bayonne and Saint-Jean Pied-de-Port, in order to reduce this defense to the minimum number of troops necessary, and to dispose of the surplus, either in the event of an attack against the enemy corps that has forced one of the points of the line, or to reunite with the Duke of Albuféra, if the plan of operations I have proposed is approved by the Emperor.

*Signed:* MARSHAL DUKE OF DALMATIA.

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**No. 113**

*Letter from Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, to the Duke of  
Feltre, Minister of War.*

Serres, 10 November 1813.

Monsieur Duke,

This morning at daybreak, the army was attacked along the entire line. The Seventh and Ninth Divisions, as well as the Reserve Division, which were on the right where I was, and the Sixth, which was on the heights of Serres and Ascain, defended their positions perfectly. The enemy did not achieve the slightest success against them, despite being superior in forces.

The Fourth, Fifth, and Eighth Divisions, commanded by Lieutenant General Clauzel, occupied the heights behind Sare and two redoubts in front; they also had a brigade on the Petite Rhune. The enemy attacked them with twenty or twenty-five thousand men and forced them (back). General Clauzel complains that not everyone has done their duty. This evening, he took up position on the heights of Saint-Pé; the enemy has entered this village. I fear that the battalion of the Eighty-eighth Line Infantry, which had been placed in a redoubt and was not supported, has been captured. Major General Conroux has been wounded.

The divisions under General Clauzel's command having left the position behind Sare, Count d'Erlon could no longer maintain his position behind Ainhoa, where the enemy had advanced from the right in very strong force. The position was vigorously defended; but Count d'Erlon had to give way to numbers and fell back to Habancenborda. He sent orders to the brigade occupying Mondarrain and Chapura to withdraw to Cambo.

General Foy's division was at Bidarray; I had placed it at the disposal of Count d'Erlon, and it was to join him in front of Espelette, to maneuver on the enemy's right flank. This afternoon, Count d'Erlon still had no news of it; I hope, however, that this division will have made its move towards Cambo, as his orders required in the event of a retreat.

Not yet having sufficient information, I cannot provide Your Excellency with a detailed report on what happened during the day; I will deal with it as soon as the lieutenant generals have reported to me.

In the current position of the army and given the great superiority of forces the enemy has demonstrated, I do not believe I can hold the Nivelle. I intend to take the position from Bidart to Arrauntz tomorrow, occupying the Sainte-Barbe Mountain and Arbonne; but it is likely that I will not stop there and will continue my retreat to Bayonne. I will leave the troops necessary to occupy the entrenched camp there, and then I will take up position on the right bank of the Nive, on the heights of Cambo, occupying Mount Ursuya, where I will be equidistant from Bayonne and Saint-Jean Pied-de-Port, and thus cover these two places.

The enemy has such a superiority of forces that it is no longer possible for me to occupy positions as extensive as the one I had, which I kept to cover the countryside. I will now regroup and maneuver as an army. By keeping the troops assembled and constantly under my watch, they will have more confidence in their valor, and I will force the enemy to remain united as well, to avoid the losses they might suffer, which will also harm them and prevent them from undertaking any undertakings. Unfortunately, the country will suffer more, and the troops will often be exposed to shortages of supplies.

I have the honor to be, etc.

*Signed:* MARSHAL DUKE OF DALMATIA.

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**No. 114**

*Letter from Marshal Suchet, Duke of Albuféra, to the Duke of  
Feltre, Minister of War.*

At El Vendrell Headquarters, 19 August 1813.

Monsieur Duke,

I informed you of the measures I had prescribed last month to disable nearly three hundred guns located in Tarragona, in order to then ensure, according to the Emperor's orders, the destruction of the last wall of this fortress. Six days and six nights of work by a company of miners were not enough to ensure the destruction of the ramparts, so I ordered that the work continue diligently, and on 24 July, I came to establish myself at Villafranca. From then on, I considered Tarragona only as an advanced post, which, linking up with the army through reconnaissance, provided me with daily reports.

On 27 July, six thousand English, believing Tarragona to be evacuated, came by sea to seize it; a few cannon shots were enough to drive them away.

On the 29<sup>th</sup>, Lord Bentinck advanced with thirty thousand men to invest the fortress. A column of three thousand English, emerging from the main road, deployed on the Francoli, and attacked a fort armed with one gun, which had been built on the ruins of the old Royal Fort. The enemy was repulsed in disorder and left on the ground more than one hundred and eighty dead or wounded. Nevertheless, the investment was completed, and from that day on it was impossible for my reconnaissance to communicate with the garrison, and I could not, at any price, send news to the governor of Tarragona. The Duke of Parque, established at Constanti, participated with his corps in the investment and in the preparations for the siege. The army of Copons, in daily contact with that of Lord Bentinck, threatened and worried my right flank. The combined forces of the enemy can be estimated at fifty thousand men and forty guns. They were increasing daily, and already the fall of the remnants of Tarragona was predicted to be imminent: the fire from the fortress could be heard day and night. Since the 30<sup>th</sup>, the aqueducts had been cut; the garrison felt the deprivation of water during the heat wave.

Lord Bentinck had written to the governor urging him to receive parliamentarians.

The disproportion of our forces was too great, compared to those of the enemy, for me to hope to operate successfully. I was forced to wait until General-in-Chief Decaen returned from Upper Catalonia with some troops, to attempt to liberate Tarragona, defeat the enemy, and blow up the remaining walls of this fortress. Our reconnaissance parties approached the enemy every day, and in all engagements, our cavalry constantly maintained the advantage over that of the English.

On 13 August, General Decaen brought four hundred carts loaded with provisions into Barcelona; and, on the same day, he sent his troops to sleep on the Llobregat. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, he joined me at Villafranca with eight thousand men, commanded by Generals Maurice Mathieu and Lamarque. I left the same day and pushed two infantry divisions and all my cavalry against Vendrell and Arc d'Embarre (Arc de Berà), threatening the entrenched posts of Altafulla. The enemy, convinced that I was going to operate by the royal road, made the divisions of Whittingham and Ross, who occupied the passes of Sainte-Christine and Roca de Lleure, withdraw during the night and stripped their strong positions at Brafine. I had hoped for this movement; for I deemed it too disadvantageous to operate along the royal road, under fire from a large fleet that could have flanked me within a hundred fathoms. During the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup>, I withdrew my troops from the main road and crossed the Roca de Lleure Pass, while the Army of Catalonia passed through Sainte-Christine. The Gaya Pass was not weakly defended, because the enemy soon realized that they were outflanked. The troops, with praiseworthy steadfastness, endured a twenty-hour march without complaint, in the most intense heat. Equal competition animated the two small armies; they aspired to consecrate the feast of our beloved Emperor with a victory.

Commander-in-Chief Decaen pushed forward reconnaissance on Valls, in order to drive back the enemy and cross the Francoli as soon as possible. My vanguard encountered nine hundred English horses in front of Nulles, commanded by Lord Bentinck's brother. General Mesclap, with two squadrons of the Fourth Hussars, overthrew the enemy, causing them to lose two officers and thirty to forty dragoons of the English Twentieth Regiment. We had two quartermasters wounded. The enemy cavalry withdrew in disorder, and the English presented us, in front of Tarragona, with a first line of twelve thousand men. The words of the prisoners led us to believe that a battle would take place the next day. Before daybreak, General-in-Chief Decaen took control of Valls and pushed reconnaissance beyond the Francoli. General Ordonneau took, at Villalonga, two officers, ten men and ten horses, and hastily withdrew the division of Whittingham. During the night the enemy began its retreat at all points. We arrived at Tarragona without firing a shot: a fleet of 180 sailboats covered the harbor. The brave garrison received us with transports of joy. General Habert and General Delort's cavalry pushed on Canonges to reach the enemy. A large number of deserters assured us that the English had re-embarked, and that the Spanish were retreating to Cambrils, Montbrió, and Riudoms.

With Tarragona free, my main focus was on hastening the fall of its walls, withdrawing the garrison and the various artillery and munitions that could be transported. Thirty-two mine shafts or furnaces and powder magazines had been prepared. It had been necessary to overcome the greatest difficulties, so strong was the Roman masonry's resistance to chisels and explosives. In some areas, cement was found harder than stone.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, my reconnaissance confirmed that the enemy had retreated by land to L'Hospitalet and the Balaguer Pass, flanked by its fleet, which followed its every move. On the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup>, the Westphalian chasseurs overthrew the English dragoons, killed an officer and several soldiers, and took four prisoners.

On the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup>, I recognized, ahead of Reus and Vila-Seca, that the English fleet was in the harbor of Salou and off L'Hospitalet. The enemy posts were at the same height, and, by their position, seemed to be trying to draw us into the mountains and under the narrow defile of the Balaguer Pass. It could not be advantageous for the army to seek the enemy in such difficult positions, which could yield only limited results. The important objective was achieved by freeing the garrison of Tarragona and completing the total destruction of all that still existed of the fortifications and establishments of this place, the demolition of which had been worked on for more than two years.

At nightfall, three cannon shots announced that all the mines would be fired in succession. The inhabitants had been ordered to move away, and the troops were under arms. The Cervantes Bastion, whose masonry was nine feet thick at its base, and which had required fifteen days of continuous work to create a suitable chamber, was the first to collapse completely. The successive explosions everywhere attested to the talent of our miners, who, twenty-five months earlier, had immortalized themselves by attacking the vast fortifications of this fortress with valor and constancy. All the artillery that could not be transported was thrown into the sea or buried under the rubble of the place. It was not until five o'clock on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> that this immense work was completed.

Tarragona, bombarded and burned by the French in 1811, by the English in 1813, and completely dismantled on the night of 18 August, now offers nothing but a heap of ruins. It has cost me, Duke, to be reduced to carrying out this measure, which the state of war requires; it would have been much more pleasant for me to have had to erase the harm I have had to cause. The English alone are stirring up and prolonging the Peninsular War and are pleased to see the French at odds with the Spanish, their natural allies.

Governor Bertoletti, after assuring himself that the explosion of the mines had produced all the expected effect, rejoined the army, which set out to return to the positions from which it had left, taking with it a hundred prisoners or deserters, the brave garrison of Tarragona, two hundred thousand cartridges, twenty caissons, and six guns. Thus, the Imperial Army, after occupying Tarragona for twenty-five and a half months, has, through a new effort, saved a weak garrison of two thousand Frenchmen attacked by a large army of land and sea. It remained for three days in the presence of three times its size; and, despite the enemy's efforts, it succeeded in fulfilling the Emperor's orders, which unforeseen circumstances had forced to be postponed. I submit to Your Excellency a sketch of the attacks made on the last wall of the fortress, and the report of the engineering officer who directed and ensured their destruction.

I am, etc.

*Signed:* MARSHAL DUKE OF ALBUFÉRA.