

## Chapter five

### Military aspects of British participation in the First Carlist War

*Benito Tauler Cid*

Institute of Military History and Culture

Translated by Linguaserve

#### Abstract

The United Kingdom's participation was total: political, economic and use of military resources. The military intervention was directed from London and through the relations of the ambassador in Madrid, who exerted a great influence on Spanish political and military action. A key tool was the observation teams stationed in the Liberal operational armies.

At the operational and tactical levels, the British intervention with its supplies of weapons and material was essential, as well as the participation of the British Navy with two squadrons; that of the Cantabrian providing a vital plus to the British Legion, and that of the Mediterranean. In this environment, it is necessary to contextualise the actions of the British Legions and Brigade, which over time, acquired cohesion, and counting on British maritime and Spanish land support, they ended up joining the liberal manoeuvring force.

#### Keywords

Liberalism, Carlism, politics, economy, regular army, Royal Navy, legion, recruitment, drill, military training, cohesion, professionalism, marine corps, observers.



## Overview

The First Carlist War has long been regarded as a bloody civil conflict between national entities, far removed from the concept of a war between States. Indeed, it was not a war between governments, nor was it, by any means, exclusively a civil war, as it pitted the two competing schools of thought other amongst the powers of the time, giving rise to notable interventions and participation by other states. At that time, Europe was divided between the «Northern Powers», which supported the Old Regime<sup>1</sup>, and the «constitutional monarchies»<sup>2</sup>, in line with the new models.

The Carlist War of 1833-40, unlike the War of 1936-39, has not received much publicity, remaining hidden in the memory of our History. There may be many reasons for this, perhaps the main one being how bloody it was. With a much smaller population in Spain than in 1936, half the inhabitants, the number of deaths was undoubtedly higher, which makes it much more traumatic than a matter of succession, which was the aim at the time of the victors, rather a real breakdown in the social fabric of the Nation.

Within this darkness that surrounds it, the most opaque point is related to foreign participation in the war. If we compare it again to the crisis of 1936, here the interventions were planned and organised by the governments based on the interests of each state, although sometimes they participated with the tools of state power (navies, ambassadors, etc.) and other times through «parallel» non-state efforts.

Over the next few pages, we will look at the United Kingdom's participation among these foreign participants, focusing on the intervention of its «human resources». As always, there was no single reason for participation, so here it was not only political reasons, but above all economic ones: «Liberal political thought opens the way to trade, to free trade» and this was essential for a leading industrial power of the time. Regardless of whether the British government was «Tory/Conservative or Whig/Liberal», it would follow this thinking, supporting the Isabelline-Liberal camp, relegating other inclinations to an internal debate.

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<sup>1</sup> Austria, Prussia and Russia. The Italian Bourbon monarchies were aligned with this concept.

<sup>2</sup> UK and France.

The necessarily short length of the article prevents us from focusing on major issues such as arms assistance and the economic aspects of the British intervention<sup>3</sup>.

### Background to Britain's participation in the 1st Carlist War: the Quadruple Alliance

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the relationship between the governments of the United Kingdom and Spain went through periods of crisis with long years of confrontation, but also situations of collaboration. Between the latter, following the period of «Revolutions in Europe in 1830», and the dynastic crises in Portugal and Spain, the Treaty of the Quadruple Alliance was signed in 1834, with a civil war almost over in Portugal and another on the rise in Spain that would mark a new opportunity for collaboration between Her British Majesty's Government and the Government of Spain. The collaboration would come in the political-military, economic, arms and naval areas.

Prior to this collaboration and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were others. The «Riego uprising» took place after the Peninsular War and the first period of Ferdinand VII's government. It was Liberal in nature and aroused sympathy in England, as a result of the symbiosis between Liberalism and the economy, where there was an idea to create a British military unit to back it up. These sympathies were transformed into material support and the creation of a military unit, which was reduced to a small core led by Sir Robert Wilson<sup>4,5</sup>, which did not intervene operationally but did do so politically, both on the Iberian Peninsula and in the United Kingdom. This was 10 years before the intervention and participation of British naval and military personnel, within the framework of the Quadruple

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<sup>3</sup> These aspects are further explored by Professor BULLÓN de MENDOZA. The First Carlist War.

<sup>4</sup> From June 1823, England's aid to the Liberals of Galicia in the form of arms, clothing and money became very effective. Wilson's appeals were reiterated in the press, urging his countrymen to provide financial assistance through the Voluntary Donations Board, created months earlier by our illustrious leader. Wilson was a significant figure: an aristocrat, soldier, politician and Liberal MP in the UK, he was also a prolific writer and historian. 245 MEIJIDE PARDO A. Civil War of 1823: Speech by English General Wilson. p.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Robert Wilson, a British officer who participated during the Napoleonic Wars in many areas, especially Portugal, Spain and Russia. On the Iberian Peninsula, he organised and commanded the Lusitanian Legion, 1808-11. He fought among others in Puerto de Baños, Fuentes de Oñoro, Albuera, etc. He held all the posts in the British Army, was Governor of Gibraltar and died in 1849.

Alliance in the First Carlist War. Two years later, that participation increased with the arrival of the British Auxiliary Legion<sup>6</sup> (BAL). Another attempt to create a British armed land unit to intervene in Spain was made at the beginning of the first Carlist War with «the formation of a unit comprised of Scottish and Irish soldiers, 5,000 men» which was rejected on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1833, because there was a dislike for «contracting foreign officers having Spanish officers on retirement, half-pay leave and on compulsory leave of absence»<sup>7</sup>, which would change two years later with the officers and men of the BAL.

The Quadruple Alliance began to take shape in 1828. The social and dynastic situation in Portugal reached a peak, when Prince Miguel took over after stripping his niece, Maria II, of the crown on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. In 1832, a crisis broke out into a military confrontation between Maria II, whose rights were defended by her father, the Liberal elements and the constitutional monarchies and Spain, on the one hand, and Miguel with the supporters from the Old Regime, on the other. In the case of Spain, the military participation was with General Rodil and his Army of Observation<sup>8</sup>. But the European interventions were not based on any agreement.

This political and family situation was similar to those that would serve as an excuse for the outbreak of the First Carlist War in Spain between Queen Isabella II and her uncle, Infante D. Carlos, on the death of Ferdinand VII on 29 September, 1833. A day earlier, a key figure in the British involvement had arrived in Spain, British Ambassador to Her Catholic Majesty, Sir George Villiers<sup>9</sup>, who would acquire great knowledge of Spanish society and its political and military leaders, including the Queen Regent. His extensive influence was channelled through his correspondence with British Foreign Secretary Palmerston<sup>10</sup>. In November 1833, Palmerston

<sup>6</sup> BRETT M Edward. The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> PORRAS Y RODRÍGUEZ DE LEÓN G. The Rodil Expedition and the foreign legions in the First Carlist War. P. 126 Vid Act of 12/08/18333 on surplus chiefs and officers from the War of Independence. Proposal by D Enrique O'Shea of the Madrid Commerce Company.

<sup>8</sup> That also included personnel from the Carabineros Corps commanded by Rodil.

<sup>9</sup> Career diplomat since 1804, after finishing his studies at Cambridge. He was assigned to Russia, where he became an expert in customs and tariff issues. He was then assigned to Madrid until July 1840. United and linked to Secretary Palmerston, who appointed him, and to the policy of economic Liberalism.

<sup>10</sup> Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston. He began his political career in the Conservative Party and later moved to the Whig Party in 1830. He was Secretary of

ordered the British Navy, on based on the «Lisbon squadron», to control the Spanish Cantabrian Coast, so that, as it was still a unilateral decision, so it would be reduced to Spanish ships<sup>11</sup>.

In early 1834, the conflict in Portugal and Spain continued and the intensity of fighting increased. The Carlists took the initiative, and it was necessary to increase the level of aid from the Liberal powers to the government in Madrid, seeking to quell the uprising and impose themselves in the theatre of operations. At the same time, there was still no formal agreement giving legal backing to the interventions. As a result, two aspects originated from the Quadruple Alliance Treaty signed on 22 April, 1834 by France, the United Kingdom, Spain and Portugal in London<sup>12</sup>. One, circumstantial, was the situation of dynastic and social confrontation in Portugal and Spain with the presence of the Pretenders, and another, organizational, was the need for a figure to define the form and quality of aid.

The Quadruple Alliance was established to unite the interests of four unequal states, governed in different ways and situated at two different levels of power. The United Kingdom and France were two world powers, while Spain and Portugal were seen by the other two signatories as «territories that could be established as a protectorate». But there were more differences. The British Monarchy was a consolidated institution with defined commercial interests. Meanwhile, France, «the Monarchy of Louis Philippe» was newly established and was trying to consolidate itself. Louis Philippe, a moderate, sought to be accepted by the «traditional powers of the North», especially by the arbiter of the time, the Austrian Chancellor Metternich. Therefore, the Treaty was basic, legalising the participation of the States, seeking to drive «the pretenders»<sup>13</sup> from the Peninsula and outlining the contribution and participation of the signatories: The United Kingdom with its naval resources, Spain

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State for Foreign Affairs for a very long period between 1830-34, 1835-41, and 1846-51. In this role, Palmerston is seen as a good resource manager, making extensive and effective use of the naval resources to drive British trade policy.»

<sup>11</sup> The blockade of the Cantabrian Coast was ordered by the Government of Madrid almost a year later on September 151834.

<sup>12</sup> The representatives of the four nations were: United Kingdom, Palmerston, the main promoter of the Treaty, the French representative was the Prince of Talleyrand, the Portuguese ambassador Morais Sarmiento and on the Spanish side Manuel Pando Fernández de Pinedo, Marque de Miraflores.

<sup>13</sup> Charles would leave Portugal with English help, moving to the United Kingdom and then to Spain.

and Portugal with their armies and the «French participation» was «arranged» in a general and vague way.

The end of the conflict in Portugal and the situation in Spain<sup>14</sup>, which was becoming increasingly complicated for the Liberal forces, reduced the value of the Alliance, so on 18 August, 1834 «Four Additional Articles» were added defining the different obligations of France, the United Kingdom and Portugal to assist Her Catholic Majesty in the Carlist crisis. The focus for France and Great Britain was the contribution to the closure of land borders and maritime control. Thus, «Art. 2. H.M. the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland undertakes to give H.C.M. the aid of arms and munitions of war needed and to assist further, if necessary, with a naval force». The way was open for maritime support, although there was no mention of land-based participation.

The uprising marked a turning point for Tomás Zumalacárregui. The situation was getting out of hand for Madrid, and this led to greater involvement by foreign and, by extension, British intervention.

On 15 September 1834, the blockade of the Bay of Biscay was approved by Spain. Thus, on October 16<sup>th</sup>, the Royal Navy with a unit created ad-hoc, the «Northern Squadron», under the command of Lord John Hay,<sup>15</sup> could take actions in support of the Spanish Liberal armies operating in the North, while the British ships of the «Mediterranean Squadron» sailed in the Levant and the South of the Peninsula with support in the Spanish ports with «colonies» of British merchants. A second element of the increased participation took place almost at the same time as the appointment in September of Colonel Wylde<sup>16</sup> as an «observer» in the Northern Army, and the participation began with observers in the army-level

<sup>14</sup> The Battle of Asseiceira, on 16 May, and the Évora-Monte Agreement, 26 May, ended the Civil War in Portugal.

<sup>15</sup> Lord John Hay (1793-1851) British naval officer, 1804, and politician. Whig from 1833 to 1840, he commanded the Northern Naval Squadron, with a «naval brigade» on board with a battalion of Marines and detachments of the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers. With both these elements he provided some of the greatest British support for the government during the war. His participation and support was notable in the Convention of Vergara and the «Fueros y Libertades» movement.

<sup>16</sup> A regular officer, he received his Royal Commission in the Royal Artillery in 1803, reaching the post of Lieutenant General in 1863. His career can be followed in the London Gazette.

operation headquarters, with direct communication with the generals in chief.

The international political situation had not changed. The British government<sup>17</sup>, despite its sympathy for the Isabelline cause, had always publicly stated that its position was one of «non-intervention», which prevented the use of regular military contingents in direct combat actions in favour of one of the sides. But this would not prevent *private participation* by the British in the conflict, except for the existence of domestic legislation that prohibited the military/naval service of the British under other flags, the «Foreign Enlistment Act<sup>18</sup>»: This provision could be modified/derogated, to eliminate the problem, as would happen later in 1835.

This position of His Majesty's British Government would not prevent its ships from gradually assuming a greater intervention, 14 March, 1836<sup>19</sup>, going on to provide transport and security support to fire actions by cooperating in short range land actions such as the defence of ports, as in the case of San Sebastian. Traditionally, the concept of maritime operations, the projection of naval power on land, has been highly developed by the British Navy, through a significant capacity for projection on the coast based on the action of strong detachments of «Royal Marines»<sup>20</sup>, of landing columns of sailors or Army Corps.

### The framework for foreign participation on land

The political and social conditions in Spain made the Carlist uprising a people's war that went beyond the provincial, regional and foral level. In 1833, no one questioned it, and it affected all of Spain.

To deal with the uprising, at the beginning of the war the armed men at Queen Isabella's disposal included about 65.000 regular soldiers, which with the army reserves, provincial regiments and

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<sup>17</sup> The Carlist ideology had numerous supporters in the UK including the King himself, the Tory Conservative Party and the House of Lords and all the Conservative press.

<sup>18</sup> Officer and Troop Recruitment Systems at HOLMES Richard Redcoat, Harper Collins Publisher. London 2001

<sup>19</sup> Palmerston received approval from King William for a more active participation of Lord Hay's ships on 14 March 1836. This enabled direct intervention of the regular units with fire support and landing in San Sebastian on 5 May and later.

<sup>20</sup> The Royal Navy reinforced with about 800 men the crews and Marine detachments on the ships that operated in the Cantabrian Zone during the Carlist conflict.



other institutes would reach just over 115.000 men. These data always refer to theoretical forces, which in reality decrease in a large percentage due to illnesses, commissions, postings, leave and even lack of weapons and in the case of cavalry corps due to lack of mounts.

Throughout the war, the total forces employed from the Army, including Provincial Regiments, Free Corps, Navy, Carabineers and National Militia would reach some 500.000 men, who had to be maintained and armed. With them, many tasks had to be fulfilled:

- Protecting Royals and the Institutions.
- Guarding and securing the entire National Territory.
- Acting against Carlist guerrilla parties, throughout the Peninsula.
- Facing the Carlist armies in the various theatres of operation.

Every army at «war» is divided into two major cores: on the one hand, the garrison forces capable of security, defensive or offensive actions of limited scope or complementary effort, and the more capable and motivated manoeuvring force for the offensive actions of the main effort, and carrying the weight of the resolute operations. Therefore, the Liberal Government needed a large amount of human and material resources to achieve the transformation of men into armed men and finally into soldiers capable of the jobs indicated.

To this, we must add the feelings of a large part of the Spanish people, especially the rural population who were not at all inclined to Liberal thinking. This would result in a high rate of desertion<sup>21</sup> in the government forces, beginning with the most «professional», the Royal Guard, and the entry into the Carlist ranks of a great many Isabelline men and soldiers. This caused a problem, adding to the lack of material and the need for men a break in trust and security. It was not possible to assign security tasks for facilities and institutions to just any unit.

In conclusion, the nature, ramifications and extent of the uprising meant that the Government of Madrid could only use a very small portion of the force as a manoeuvring element operating

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<sup>21</sup> BULLÓN de MENDOZA, p.132, The First Carlist War indicates a total of 33,442 deserters, losses or AWOL for the Royal Guard, Army and Provincial Militia, with 7,049 coming from the Guard.

in the hottest areas of the Basque Country and Navarre. General Córdoba, head of the Army of Operations, in his Memoirs, stated in 1835 that the real force to operate was a maximum of some 30,000 armed men.

That is why the option of counting on foreign forces was no trivial matter. At first, the problem of switching to the other side seemed less than in the case of nationals, as those switches would not be for ideological reasons rather simply for economic or logistical reasons. These men would, then, provide an initial boost of confidence. A different issue would be their quality and real combat capability, which would enable them to be integrated into the offensive-operational core, or simply to act as elements of garrison and/or internal security. In either case, the «allied legions» freed men for the response and garrison units.

In the same vein, the Madrid government was faced with another major problem: the availability and manufacture of weapons, which determined the real possibility of arming men to be useful and thus truly increase the size of the army. Here, too, having foreign forces was a help. The same could be said about the uniforms and equipment. For all the above reasons, and as 1835 progressed, the arrival of foreign units, dressed, equipped and armed, was a solution for a government that, economically, could hardly sustain the army it had on the ground. In addition, the perfect thing would be to obtain the foreign units that are regulated and tested. Implementation of the «Four Additional Articles» made it easier for the Government of Madrid to change its initial idea of rejecting the presence of Portuguese, French and British troops and to begin the process of achieving them.

In the Portuguese case, participation was theoretically easy by virtue of merely applying the Treaty, but for the other two powers it would be complicated. In both cases, political and legislative opposition had to be overcome. The matter was discussed in Parliament in May, and it was decided that intervention was appropriate.

Thus, the three contingents would arrive in Spain with a theoretical number of men, close to two-thirds of the operational strength of the Northern Army, 22.000»soldiers», with very different quality, instruction and training<sup>22</sup>; the professional French Foreign Legion,

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<sup>22</sup> The Portuguese Auxiliary Division with a force of 6,000, expandable to 10,000 theoretical men, from the Regular Army, comprised of two brigades, with weapons from the United Kingdom. The Unit was assigned to security/rear-guard missions. The French

the regular Portuguese soldiers and the men recruited for the British Legion.

### **The British Auxiliary Legion: a reality**

Since the implementation of the Treaty articles, the British participation was providing significant results:

1. The surveillance and blockade actions of the Spanish ports, mainly in the north, reduced the supply of the Carlist side. This isolation was also sought with French participation and land control of the Pyrenean border.
2. The intervention of the British Navy<sup>23</sup>, with its projection, fire and transport capabilities, was important to Spanish Army operations, as in the case of the First Siege of Bilbao, and also as a deterrent, particularly in the Mediterranean.
3. The quantities of weapons and material provided would make it possible to arm many Isabelline units, including the Portuguese Auxiliary Division, throughout the conflict<sup>24</sup>.

This made the participation of the British armed forces the most complete. The intervention was reinforced by Lord Palmerston's political vision from the Foreign Office. The Napoleonic Wars brought the consolidation of the British Empire and peace in Europe, which led to a key role in the foreign policy for the British Navy, which Lord Palmerston made good use of. However, when European policy was discussed, the importance of land forces increased, as Wellington pointed out. Therefore, Palmerston was inclined to add a pure ground-based auxiliary force, to consolidate his objectives.

On the Spanish side, it is necessary to consider two Liberal personalities: Juan Álvarez Mendizábal and Miguel Álava, who drove the process. In Spain, the government of Cea Bermúdez was replaced by the moderate Francisco Martínez de la Rosa, June 1834, who did not have the resources to pay the Isabelline army.

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Auxiliary Division, based on the Algerian Foreign Legion, 4.843 men, which could be increased to 12,000, initially armed and equipped by France under the command of «Field Marshal» Bernelle, a colonel in the French Army. From an operational perspective, it was a professional, trained and hardened group. The Foreign Legion would have six infantry battalions, two squadrons of lancers and one battery with six pieces.

<sup>23</sup> With its maritime projection capabilities: The Royal Marines and Artillery,

<sup>24</sup> DE PORRAS Y RODRÍGUEZ DE LEÓN G. The Rodil Expedition and the Foreign Legions in the First Carlist War, p 127

In this situation, Mendizábal presented his services from London to obtain a loan for Spain, and that would not be his only contribution to increasing British support for the Liberal Government.

With the arrival of the Hundred Thousand Sons of Saint Louis in September 1823, Juan Álvarez Mendizábal left Spain for London, where his interest in business and the financial world put him in contact with the «British establishment» and the circles of British power, which would also allow him to promote the creation of the British Auxiliary Legion in 1835<sup>25</sup>.

The second man to make the British Auxiliary Legion feasible was General Miguel Ricardo de Álava y Esquivel, a Liberal, moderate man with relations in British society, particularly with the Duke of Wellington,<sup>26</sup> who was always critical of British involvement in the conflict, opposing the participation of regular units and the recruitment of professional officers for the Legion<sup>27</sup>. In 1833, Álava, the ambassador in London, focused on implementing the Quadruple Alliance agreements in the economic and military aspects. It reflected not only the feelings of the political establishment but also those of the military, as reflected in the requests made by the commanding officers of the Spanish operational divisions<sup>28</sup>.

Achieving direct participation of British personnel in the conflict required the official request of the Spanish government to the British, which was made by letter on 5 June 1835: the political agreement existed but it was necessary to cancel the legal provision promulgated by George III that prohibited his subjects from serving with arms in the armies and navies of other states, the «Foreign Enlistment Act of 1818». This was achieved by the «Royal Order promulgated on 10 June, 1835, allowing the entry into military and naval service of Her Majesty the Queen of Spain both as an officer or as a soldier, sailor or crew member».

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<sup>25</sup> In that summer he returned to Spain and on 14 September 1835 he became Prime Minister.

<sup>26</sup> In Wellington there was a knowledge of Spain, in particular of the northern regions where he fought most, of the character of the Spanish people, their knowledge and sympathy for Don Carlos and his membership in the Conservative Party, which was inclined towards the traditionalists of Don Carlos.

<sup>27</sup> In 1827, Wellington was appointed commander-in-chief of the British Army, a post he would hold for almost the rest of his life, except for his term as Prime Minister.

<sup>28</sup> An example are the requests collected from the Oraa Division on 1 June 1835, highlighting the importance of cooperation with foreign forces. Fernández de Córdova Luis Justification Report.

The next step was to determine the commander of the force, although there were some other possible candidates, which was made in favour of Colonel Lacy-Evans, on 23 June 1835. This proposal was made by Álava, who had worked with Evans at Wellington HQ. The proposal, endorsed by Mendizábal, was approved by the Council of Ministers in Madrid on 18 June. This aid would have its counterpart, which was none other than a trade agreement aimed at achieving a monopoly for its textile and manufactured products<sup>29</sup>.

The Council also approved the organisational basis for the British Auxiliary Legion, including relationship, command and employment procedures:

- As for the command, «Colonel Lacy-Evans» would initially receive the «rank» of Lieutenant General of the Army and would exercise direct command of the Legion.
- The Legion would «always» be used together. (Condition not met).
- The Legion would report operationally to the General in Chief of the Northern Army; that is, Evans would receive orders directly from the General in Chief.

At this point it is worth stressing the political and social importance of this agreement and those signed with France and Portugal in the military context, which enabled some 20,000 armed people to be deployed. This support could be seen as an acknowledgement of the lack of ability of the army, generals or officers to impose themselves on the «guerrillas of the Pretender». It would be difficult to answer this thought affirmatively, as the process was driven by professionals who felt that the armed institutions needed weapons, equipment, material and men to hold terrain and, above all, the economic capacity to obtain soldiers, support the Units and impose themselves on the adversary led by Zumalacárregui in the spring of 1835, who threatened Isabelline survival.

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<sup>29</sup> The treaty was signed, but not ratified by the British Parliament, realising that it would affect Catalonia and the Basque Provinces very negatively, so its main objective, the cessation of the war to facilitate full trade, would not be achieved. DE PORRAS Y RODRÍGUEZ DE LEÓN G. The Rodil Expedition and the Foreign Legions in the First Carlist War. (Library of Congress: Miscellaneous Collection. Series F. Vol. 30 Brochures. «Agreements with England» p. 162. Signature: H 2857.

## Organisation of the Legion

Following the above decisions, the process of recruitment and organisation began. The organisational basis of the process was the *Agreement to organise the British Auxiliary Legion in the service of the Spanish Government, between Mr. J. A. y Mendizábal on behalf of His Excellency Miguel Ricardo de Álava, Minister to Her Catholic Majesty in London, and Major General Sir Loftus Otway, on behalf of Colonel Lacy-Evans M.P.* signed in London in June 1835, with 8 articles, and its derived document «Conditions of admission to the service of Spain of the British Auxiliary Legion», developed also in 8 articles<sup>30</sup>.

The Convention determined the total force: 10,000 men. Most of the articles outlined the conditions for Colonel Lacy-Evans, with the exception of Article IV, which referred to the conditions for officers and troops, which would be set by Evans.

The next document was the «Conditions», addressed to the members of the Legion. It stated that the Unit would be governed by the provisions of the British Army, both in service matters and administratively. Thus, staff pay and emoluments would not be due monthly, as in Spain, but monthly in advance. As regards pensions, they would be British, and generous rewards would be offered after service.

Due to its importance in subsequent events, it is important to highlight the first of the conditions which stated that the «term of service shall not exceed two years» and would generate subsequent problems, especially in the Scottish regiments. The enlistment was for two years, if not otherwise specified by the enlisted man.

Similarly, «the Third Condition» stated that personnel would be «subject in military service to British ordinances and in other circumstances to Spanish legislation». Thus, the service would be provided according to the «Rules and Regulations of British Service» and the «British Military Articles of War». Once on the Peninsula, for the purpose of maintaining discipline and with regard to riots, the regulation would be the «Provision of the

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<sup>30</sup> OLIVART Marquess of Collection of Treaties, Agreements and International Documents. Volume I Madrid «El Progreso Editorial» 1890 - NRXIV, 273 pages. DE PORRAS Y RODRÍGUEZ DE LEÓN G. The Rodil Expedition and the foreign legions in the First Carlist War, pp. 120 and 260-261.

English Mutiny Act 1819». Under these conditions, recruitment began on 23 June at 9 p.m. in London.

For a more detailed study of the organization, see the document «The Army List of the British Auxiliary Legion<sup>31</sup>». The document is not complete, it covers just the interval of participation in the period August 1835 and April 1837, and according to the time gives ample details regarding the officers<sup>32</sup>, and the same is not true for the classes and the troops. A negative aspect for its organisation and effectiveness was the fact that it could not initiate training in the United Kingdom, due to the existing legislation (in particular the aforementioned Mutiny Act), which prohibited it, as the Legion was not in the service of the British Crown.

The Legion was a unit organised according to the parameters of the British Army, but paid and supported by the Government of Madrid, solely serving the orders of the latter. Even so, the British Auxiliary Legion would not receive the traditional insignia of the regular units of the Spanish Army, but were given those used in the National Militia since 1820,»that is three bands of equal width respectively red-gold-red»<sup>33, 34</sup>

### General George De Lacy Evans

Lacy took command of the Legion in Spain at the age of 47 with a brilliant military record, but, strangely enough in the British Army, after many years of being in a half-paying situation<sup>35</sup>. Born in Ireland into a family of smallholders, «not very British looking could pass for peninsular; wiry, short and dark skinned».

<sup>31</sup> In this document, the eight articles relating to the conditions, appear in eleven more specific The text of the literal contract relating to time of service was»the time of service to be for either one or two years as may be preferred by the individual engaging to Her Majesty's Service». DE PORRAS Y RODRÍGUEZ DE LEÓN G. The Rodil Expedition and the foreign legions in the First Carlist War, pp. 147, 177

<sup>32</sup> The information regarding them can be completed with newspapers and other sources, to obtain an overview of their processes and situations.

<sup>33</sup> CANALES TORRES C. «The First Carlist War 1833»- Medusa Ediciones. DE PORRAS Y RODRÍGUEZ DE LEÓN G. The Rodil Expedition and the foreign legions in the First Carlist War, p. 47

<sup>34</sup> They are held in both the Toledo Army Museum (2) and the National Army Museum Chelsea (1). CAIRNS Conrad, the First Carlist War a Military History. p. 70. Sheets 40743 and 40747 MILES Documentary System for the Management of Historical and Movable Heritage. ARMY ARMED FORCES MUSEUM TOLEDO.

<sup>35</sup> On the officer corps, the situation of half-paid and purchase of commissions HOLMES Richard Redcoat , BRIGHTON Terry Hell Riders.

He attended the Royal Military Academy of Woolwich (London)<sup>36</sup>, as a «Gentleman Cadet», but in 1806, he entered into service in the «volunteer»<sup>37</sup> class in the Indian Army, becoming an ensign in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment without buying a commission and moving to the British Army, 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Light Dragoons in order to participate in the Spanish Peninsula War.

Later, he participated in the War of 1812 (1812-15), linked to the Royal Navy, and gained experience in maritime operations<sup>38</sup>. At the end of that one, he joined Wellington's HQ where he had a stellar career based on brevet-ranks that ended after Waterloo as a Graduate Lieutenant Colonel, was half-paid and went into politics in the radical party<sup>39</sup>. He was a member of the British Parliament on several occasions from 1830 to 1865, finally participating in the Crimean War (1854) commanding a Division.

One point to consider in Evans's career is the fact that in an army like the British one where the system of promotion of officers, even colonels for infantry and cavalry, was essentially based on purchasing commissions, Evans was one of the very few officers who was promoted in all his ranks and jobs based on merit. In the Spanish Army, he was initially promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General, later consolidating his employment, by Royal Order of 11 October, 1835. «He was a controversial man, loved or slandered and vilified»<sup>40</sup>.

### Command and personal relationships

«Of all the men I have dealt with or heard during the two years I have been observing what is going on around me, I have found only three: Álava, Córdova and Mendizábal, on

<sup>36</sup> Woolwich offered a three-year engineering course to graduate and serve as an officer in the Royal Artillery or the Royal Engineers. In those corps, buying commissions was not an option.

<sup>37</sup> The status of «volunteer knights» in the British Army is studied by HOLMES at Redcoat. Their situation was very similar to that of the «distinguished soldiers» in the Spanish Army. Their purpose was to get the Commission without having to buy it. His promotion was motivated by acts of valour in the field. His casualty ratio was very high.

<sup>38</sup> Referred to in the terminology of the time by General Harry SMITH as military-naval-guerrilla-punishment operations.

<sup>39</sup> The radical party, gathering disenchanted elements from other political currents, coming from the proletariat and the middle class, advocated a parliamentary reform and other additional aspects, such as freedom of religion, free trade, extension of the right to vote, freedom of the press and economic inequality.

<sup>40</sup> AGMS, STAFF, CELEB. BOX 82. EXP. 4LACY, EVANS.



whose moral or physical value, honour, disinterest, prudence, justice and honesty I would fully rely. These three men have these qualities; the others are lacking most of them, and I know this<sup>41</sup>».

The organisational and command structures in war direction and management are theoretically structural and independent of the individuals who perform them. This, when analysing the cases, shows that the above statement is theoretical, as empathy and personal relationships are essential. This situation also occurred in the 1833-40 conflict between the main Spanish protagonists, Commanders in Chief of the Armies and the British acting officers with command or influence in the operational context.

The first case, the first relations were those maintained by Don Luis Fernández de Córdoba with the British command. Don Luis can be defined with four adjectives: young, romantic, impassioned and, above all, brilliant. But as his biographers and his service record also highlight, «firstly he is an ambitious man and secondly he is a political general in the truest sense of the word, his achievements as a diplomat being the backbone of his rapid military career, but he also proved to be one of the best generals the Queen had.» Militarily he was an officer of tradition, professionally trained in the best school of the Army, the disciplined Royal Guard commanded by Charles of Spain. Politically he was temperate and moderate, making no secret of his orientation in international politics towards France, where he had been ambassador.

His relations at the diplomatic level with Villiers were good, but the opposite occurred at the military level. The clash with Evans was quick, motivated by two opposing characters, Cordoba being much more disciplined, moderate and political against an impetuous, radical and daring character, and therefore incidents such as the change of the Legion's itinerary from Bilbao to Vitoria and the subsequent disagreements in Vitoria and Arlaban only increased the lack of empathy. The resentment gave way to mistrust and, in time, perhaps led Evans to leave command of the Legion, and the Legion suffered from receiving more supplies than it needed.

On 16 September 1836, Baldomero Espartero was appointed General in Chief of the Northern Army. His relationships with

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<sup>41</sup> Correspondence from Villiers to Edward Villiers 13 December 1835, RODRÍGUEZ ALONSO M. Private correspondence J. Villiers.

British politicians and with Lacy-Evans were not going to be «good» either, given his personality, «impassivity, reckless courage, conceit, fear, respect, discipline and love of her» and those already mentioned of Evans.

However, Espartero had extensive knowledge of the political and military situation. He was therefore aware of the need for foreign «aid», and of the financial shortfalls for the maintenance, sustenance, and endowment of the Army. As a professional soldier he knew the human material and quickly catalogued the foreign corps praising the French Legion, «qualified as arrogant» and the British initially «who were good people and arrogant officers», but he changed and so in correspondence with his wife in February 1836, and after «the first Battle of Arlabán» he stated «it is useless, it is a hindrance because all of it is destroyed with a medium company»<sup>42</sup>. As for Lacy Evans, his initial impression was good; his appointment was well validated. In addition, Evans had a good academic military background, his early career origins were similarly «distinguished soldier,» and «Volunteer in the Indian Army,» he had varied combat experience; Spain, America, Europe and India, i.e. there were many points in common; even a physical resemblance, «both Spanish and British soldiers confused them»<sup>43</sup>.

On the other hand, the opinion that the British had of Espartero was not good at any level. His appointment as Northern Commanding General was disliked, and every effort was made to prevent this from the British Embassy in Madrid<sup>44</sup>. These initial judgements did not change during the war, as can be seen from the correspondence of Ambassador Villiers, who never had any appreciation for Espartero. Thus, in August 1837, he described him as «the curse of his country» and considered him the «instigator of a coup d'état».

The first impressions of Lacy-Evans, a man of action, impatient, and subject to much outside pressure, as a foreign general in an army that was not his own but that paid him and gave him orders, were not good either. He did not consider that Espartero had the necessary qualifications to be the General in Chief: «Espartero is brave and honest. But it is doubtful, if not impossible, to have confidence in his ability to judge.»<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> SHUBERT A. Espartero the Peacemaker. Galaxia Gutenberg, p. 111.

<sup>43</sup> SHUBERT A. Espartero the Peacemaker. Galaxia Gutenberg, p. 117.

<sup>44</sup> SHUBERT A. Espartero the Peacemaker. Galaxia Gutenberg, p. 141.

<sup>45</sup> SCHUBERT A. Espartero the Peacemaker, (Evans correspondence to Villiers from 5 September 1836), p.143.

The clash of personalities between the commander and the subordinate was bound to happen, as can be seen from the correspondence in November 1836 that Espartero sent to Evans, and the subsequent correspondence to Villiers. They show that there is no mutual conviction and even lack of trust towards Espartero, «We must protect ourselves from him by having a minimal relationship with him», «if it were not for Wylde's perseverance Espartero would never have come to Bilbao»<sup>46</sup>. Espartero combined boldness and personal courage with a calm attitude; the disagreement became apparent in the spring actions of 1837, when Espartero first reinforced the «Evans Army Corps» with Spanish troops, moving to their area of action and employing part of the British units in a decentralised manner, even in his own escort.

Initially, Espartero's relationship with his Chief Observer Colonel Wylde was the same, noting that «it was an unfortunate choice». After the second Arlaban bout, with time together, Wylde was still concerned about Espartero's lack of initiative<sup>47</sup>. This working situation changed to function fully both on a personal and professional level with Wylde saying that «Espartero was the only officer he could trust» and on 19 June 1839 Wylde supported Espartero's theses against Palmerston's opinion<sup>48</sup>.

It is clear that relations between Lacy Evans and the Spanish commanders were never good. However, this was not the reason why the Legion sometimes did not receive material support and payments; its situation was no different from that of other Spanish units.

### Command units

Recruitment to provide officers and equivalent to the Legion followed some of the procedures used in the British army and society of the time, but with one fundamental premise: King William IV and the army commander, the Duke of Wellington, opposed service by regular officers in Spain. This closed the door to the most technically qualified and up-to-date professionals.

<sup>46</sup> SCHUBERT A. Espartero the Peacemaker, p. 147 Correspondence from Evans to Villiers and from Evans to Espartero 18 November 1836.

<sup>47</sup> Correspondence from Wylde to Palmerston 22 June 1836 WYL1 Durham University

<sup>48</sup> SCHUBERT A., page 143 Espartero the Peacemaker, p. 95 Correspondence from Evans to Villiers 5 September 1836 Oxford Bodleian MS Clar 461.

The officers in the service of the India Company were in a similar situation.

So the necessary officers had to be found, about 400, from other backgrounds, such as retired, half-paid, former commissioned officers for the operations in Greece, Colombia and above all from the war in Portugal, those known as «Portuguese officers, or Pedroites,» and those commissioned by Evans himself from his family and friends. They were joined by some 40/50 commissioned sergeants<sup>49</sup> in the Legion, a group that provided the experience and knowledge of training<sup>50</sup>. There were some 20 officers from the Regular Army and the East India Company, who received one or two more ranks in the Legion than their jobs warranted, and went on to command battalions. The most numerous were the «Pedroites» group, who did not have a good relationship with the various groups from the British or Indian Army.

The officer corps was a group with little previous command experience, and who had not been required to undergo a prior selection process, differing in many respects from the archetype of the British officer-knight, the basis of their type of command. Thus, it is common to read in the memoirs and experiences that the «junior officers» were immersed in the long training sessions, to which the units were subjected, an unusual situation, since the training rested on the NCOs, in the British model. The main problem presented by the officers was their lack of preparation, which translated into a lack of leadership, transmitting this lack of confidence to the troops and causing a break in the cohesion of the group and having to resort to excessive punishment of the troops in order to maintain discipline, which undermined their prestige in the eyes of the latter. Command relations were not the most appropriate, and cases of fragging occurred<sup>51</sup>.

The officer corps was not a homogeneous group and during the campaign many of them were dismissed and many others had to resign after action.

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<sup>49</sup> The proportion was 10%, much higher than in the Regular Army, increasing the age of junior officers and exercising leadership and command in a different way.

<sup>50</sup> An initial, incomplete list of the officers in the Times newspaper of 30 July 1835.

<sup>51</sup> This term developed especially after Vietnam as a synonym for death, assassination, of officers/non-commissioned officers at the hands of their troops during combat: The word comes from the procedure of performing it by throwing a fragmentation grenade at them.

## Troops

Troops were recruited by the officers commissioned to command the Legion, in the three major areas of the United Kingdom: England-Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Recruitment was quick, as social and working conditions in the 1830s were not good in the UK, both in the countryside and in industry, which led to rapid enlistment.

The enlisted men came from the traditional sources of candidates: army veterans, deserters, fugitives, low social status, poor, unemployed, alcoholics, with marital and family problems, vagrants, maladjusted adventurers and many hungry people. But in this case, unlike with recruitment, for regular units, practically no selection process was passed, and in many cases no physical exam or at most a very brief one. In the words of their recruiters, they were defined as *cannon fodder*.

Into 1801, 30% of England's population lived in the big cities and had left the countryside. This situation would increase and would always be greater than in the rest of Europe. This meant that potentially and actually most of the new army soldiers came from the urban environment, a situation that was fully realised in the Legion, where the majority, especially the British, Welsh and Scots were working class or suburban men, used to very poor hygienic and sanitary conditions. This circumstance was resolved in the recruitment of the regular units with medical exams that screened the enlisted recruits and with the fact that large numbers of men were not needed in a short time, so that the personnel could be eliminated without the conditions but in the case of the Legion neither of the two conditions was met. This would be demonstrated by the Legion's own health personnel. An eighth of the force was considered unfit for military service in the medical exams that were later carried out in Bilbao, which had not been properly verified at the time of enlistment. In other words, practically every regimental-type unit had in its ranks between 150/100 soldiers unfit for field service «a fifth of the force is made up of individuals without adequate physical conditions<sup>52</sup>. This situation was better in cavalry and artillery.

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<sup>52</sup> VARIOUS AUTHORS: BRETT E. M The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War. SOMERVILLE A. History of the British Legion, London, 1839.

This was one of the reasons for the large number of casualties and very high mortality rates due to the diseases<sup>53</sup> and<sup>54</sup> epidemic of Christmas 1835-36 in Vitoria<sup>55</sup>. This, too, was the reason why orders were soon issued, on 23 January, 1835, to recruit some 3,000men in order to maintain the effective strength of the Legion estimated at 8,500men, which by March had already been reduced by 5,763 *bayonets*<sup>56</sup>. Later, due to natural wear and tear, the strength of the infantry would be stabilised at 4,500 *bayonets*.

If the social situation was bad in general, it was even worse in Ireland, so about a third of the Unit's troops would be Irish<sup>57</sup>, serving both in the Irish and in the Scottish and English regiments. This number was in line with what was happening in the Regular Army, where 42% of the total troops came from Ireland in 1830. This proportion had been rising since the American War of Independence and would continue to rise until the «Great Famine of 1846» and emigration to the US. A significant difference is that many of the personnel from Ireland came from the countryside, which meant that they were in better physical shape for campaign life<sup>58</sup>. The proportion of Irish in cavalry and artillery was high.

#### Articulation and composition

The Legion initially consisted of 10 Infantry Regiments, between line and light, and a Rifle Regiment,<sup>59</sup> 2 Lancer Regiments, Headquarters, Engineers, Artillery, Health (Medical Corps)<sup>60</sup> and Logistic Support, (commissionership) with a total of 10,000men<sup>61</sup>. The Units that comprised it were:

<sup>53</sup> This situation was not uncommon in England, where cholera in 1832 caused some 31,000 deaths.

<sup>54</sup> For a more complete view of the Legion and the epidemic unleashed in the winter of 1835-36. The British Legion in Vitoria p. SANTOYO Julio Cesar.

<sup>55</sup> The artillery and most of the lancers, especially the 2nd Regiment, were not initially moved to Vitoria

<sup>56</sup> BRETT E. ., The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War, pp. 62-63

<sup>57</sup> DE PORRAS Y RODRÍGUEZ DE LEÓN G. The Rodil Expedition and the foreign legions in the First Carlist War. P.125. Of the first 7,800 enlisted men, 3,200 were British, 2,800 Irish and 1,800 from Scotland. The Welsh were generally integrated into English units. Subsequently, except for certain Welsh Regiments (24th Infantry)

<sup>58</sup> HOLMES R. Redcoat.Harper Pp. 53-56 Collins Publishers. London, 2001

<sup>59</sup> Differences between Light Infantry units and the Rifle Corps in The Royal Green Jackets.WILKINSON-LATHAM C. Osprey Men-At-Arms. London 1978.

<sup>60</sup> They were only officers or equivalent, and the same was true of the commissionership.

<sup>61</sup> 8,448 marines and light infantry, 552 «rifles», 700 horsemen and 300 artillerymen, figures collected in the LONDON GACETTE of 10 June 1835.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment. Dissolved in the winter of 1836, due to the victims of the typhoid epidemic<sup>62</sup>.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Westminster Grenadier Infantry Regiment.
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Queen's Fusiliers Regiment.
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Scottish Infantry Regiment<sup>63</sup>. Dissolved in the winter of 1836, due to the victims of the typhoid epidemic.
  - 6<sup>th</sup> Scottish Grenadier Infantry Regiment.
  - 7<sup>th</sup> Irish Light Infantry Regiment
  - 8<sup>th</sup> Scottish Infantry Regiment.
  - 9<sup>th</sup> Irish Infantry Regiment.
  - 10<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Regiment of Munster.
- Rifle Corps.
- Queen Isabella's 1<sup>st</sup> Lancers Regiment.
- Queen's 2<sup>nd</sup> Irish Lancers Regiment.

Artillery, sappers, health, headquarters and commissionership.

It is interesting to note that five of the ten infantry units are specially designated as grenadiers, riflemen or light infantry.

The Legion also established four depots with recruitment, accommodation and transit missions and a weapons depot. The main ones were in London and two on the Peninsula, Santander, Pasajes, at the natural ports of arrival.

### Infantry

The Infantry was comprised of ten regiments from a single battalion<sup>64</sup>, of which three—the 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>—were considered light infantry/riflemen<sup>65</sup>, two of grenadiers—the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>—and five

<sup>62</sup> Its final action was the battle of Arlabán. BRETT M Edward. *The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War*, p. 74.

<sup>63</sup> Legion Reorganization: BRETT Edward. *The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War*, p. 77.

<sup>64</sup> MISCELLANEOUS: SANTOYO J. C. *The British Legion in Vitoria* and BRETT E. M. *The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War*.

<sup>65</sup> The 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment was English and the other two Irish. The 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment had slow recruitment. It rose in the West of England, not in the city of London. Correspondence from Captain Losack. P. 44 BRETT. Edward M. *The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War*.

of line all organised according to British parameters. On paper, all had ten companies; two of them «preferential», grenadiers and light with more, select personnel and eight «centre», but in reality they had eight to six centre and two preferential—and their ranks were different from the British standards<sup>66</sup>, which was completed with the Rifle Corps—six companies—<sup>67</sup> raised in London. «The Rifles» in the British Army were quality units, which claimed to have both highly trained officers and high quality troops trained in skirmishes and «precision» shooters equipped with rifles. The unit did not have the level mentioned.

In addition to all this organic infantry, the Legion had a permanent battalion of Chapelgorris<sup>68</sup>, a light Spanish unit, from the Auxiliary or «Free» Corps<sup>69</sup>. These units, paid one peseta a day, were voluntary, made up of men from the «province», even deserters, under the command of officers from different backgrounds, and were very effective for light actions and combat. Members were hardened, tough and bloodthirsty combatants, who sometimes acted on the legal limits of the law of war. Permanent integration into the Legion highlights the need for light troops with a real capacity to reinforce the «British light units»<sup>70</sup>.

The Irish regiments were the 7<sup>th</sup>Light, the 9<sup>th</sup>Line, and 10<sup>th</sup>Light, Infantry, and the 2<sup>th</sup>Lancers. In addition to these regiments, there was a presence of Irish in other regiments<sup>71</sup> such as the 8<sup>th</sup>Scottish Regiment. Perhaps 25% of the entire Legion's troop personnel would have been of Irish origin<sup>72</sup>.

The Scottish Regiments, although called Highlanders, had mostly been recruited from the Lowlands, Edinburgh, Glasgow and the North of England, but also had their share of personnel from the Irish counties. They were numbered as the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, with the 5<sup>th</sup> being considered «light» in some documents. The physical

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<sup>66</sup> 68 DE PORRAS Y RODRÍGUEZ DE LEÓN G. The Rodil Expedition and the foreign legions in the First Carlist War, p. 130. The actual number of troops was for battalions of six companies, with the «preferential» ones.

<sup>67</sup> The Rifles were raised in London, Union Street Borough, their companies being less numerous BRETT E. M. The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War, p. 45.

<sup>68</sup> In Euskera, basque language, «Txapelgorri» means «Boinaroja».

<sup>69</sup> The First Carlist War BULLÓN de MENDOZA, p 145.

<sup>70</sup> BRETT M Edward, p. 74. The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War. The Legionnaires were not used to moving and fighting on varied terrain, laden with their equipment.

<sup>71</sup> This situation was not new, as KEAGAN J. explains in the Face of Battle, and also Holmes in Redcoat.

<sup>72</sup> BRETT Edward M., p. 32. The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War.



condition of their men was inferior to that of the Irish, but better than that of the English recruits and their social background similar to the British.

There would be four English regiments: 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. Recruited in London and in the various southern counties, many of them from the London suburbs, they were the least physically able.

### Cavalry

It was based on 700 men who comprised two Regiments of about 350 men. The organisation of the British Cavalry followed the old Wellington rules by organising each Regiment into ten companies, of which the last two were depots and theoretically each company would have around 60 riders. The tactical unit was the two-company squad. In our case, two squadrons would be formed per regiment, with companies of around 40/50 riders being very common.

Recruitment of these Regiments was easier, and the men better disposed than in the infantry. Thus, the 1<sup>st</sup> Lancers Regiment, recruited in England, included in its ranks Poles with war experience, Belgians and Germans; that is, men used to deal with cattle and action. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Lancers Regiment was raised in Ireland. Its troops were from the countryside. From its arrival, it acted with Spanish forces, leading a life of some independence from the rest of the Legion.

### Artillery

The recruitment of personnel for artillery was completely different. In the case of the officers, it was easier for regular officers, especially those on half pay, to receive the commission. For the troops, the process was similar, with the Royal Artillery Command making it easier for sergeants, corporals and soldiers assigned to active units to enlist and, at the end of their time in the Legion, to return to their posts. Also, in order to have trained personnel, retired or reserve artillerymen were admitted as «pensioners», which meant that in general there were more professional personnel, distinguished by their discipline and training. The artillery units were the last to leave the United Kingdom. They were equipped with English material, 9-pound pieces, 5.5-inch mountain guns<sup>73</sup>. Among their actions, the Battle

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<sup>73</sup> There is a record of their use in the 1st Siege of Bilbao.

of Oriamendi was outstanding, where it and the Artillery of the Marines<sup>74</sup> provided fire to cover for the retreat, with a total of 12 pieces. The remaining units were recruited in London and the Southern Counties of England.

#### The preparation of the units

Discipline was the main concern of the Legion's troops as had been seen during both recruitment and transport<sup>75</sup>. The men were not accustomed to military life, as they lacked the time needed to transform from armed men into soldiers, and the situation was complicated by the fact that they were physically located in a foreign country with a very hostile and close enemy and a largely unprofessional cadre of junior officers. Another added difficulty for discipline in maintaining relations with the population is that only three men out of the total had knowledge of Spanish<sup>76</sup>.

Due to the provisions in force in the United Kingdom, «Provision of the English Mutiny Act», the Legion was in a new situation for a British contingent in a conflict. The men had not been able to train in the United Kingdom, so they arrived in Spain without a previous knowledge of the militia, without any combat training, and the weapons were issued on the Peninsula<sup>77</sup>. However, Evans would not accept delaying the action.

As soon as the Unit arrived on the Peninsula it had to carry out a very intense but very short period of instruction, based on 8/9 hours of drill and manoeuvres per day in two sessions. This system of instruction was contrary to the usual British procedures, which since Wellington had endeavoured to train men thoroughly, to prepare them as soldiers, both in movements of arms and in evolutions, tabulating the appropriate time in a year. There was another difficulty: this type of instruction sought to achieve an automation and capacity to fight on European field that would be of little use in the type of actions carried out in the «Carlist campaign», on hard, mountainous terrain. With this initial period, an attempt was made for the troops to acquire the habits and customs of obedience.

<sup>74</sup> The First Carlist War: a Military History. CAIRNS C. P. 90.

<sup>75</sup> In transport, there were riots in the 1st, 3rd and 10th Regiments. The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War. BRETT M Edward, p. 48.

<sup>76</sup> This incident was related by THOMPSON in the work 12 Months in the British Legion.

<sup>77</sup> SANTACARA C. The First Carlist War as seen by the British, p. 94. Palmerston agreed to deliver rifles to the United Kingdom for the first 2.000 enlisted personnel.

However, this was not enough to acquire the skills, instruction and training in mountain and guerrilla combat actions, which required basic good physical condition, which many of the enlisted men lacked. They needed to acquire the endurance to march more than 12 leagues over varied terrain in adverse conditions, a capacity that any Spanish unit on either side already had. Finally, it was necessary to acquire personal initiative, mental and physical, which was difficult to achieve or instil in many of the British candidates, and to unite them.

This time is inherent to the history of armies and war, and without it, a group of armed men have never become a unit capable of executing decisive combat and manoeuvring actions, and that was not acquired on 30 August 1835, the date of the first action<sup>78</sup>. It was necessary to combine discipline, training and minor combat actions to shorten the time and put the Legion on the ground with some solvency for the limited combat of the security actions due to the garrison troops.

The training of the Legion's units improved, but their level did not reach that of the British regulars. For that reason, when the Legion did not have support elements, the units based performance on the individual courage of their men that in closed formations charged with bayonets, a procedure with which the units obtained their best results in both victory and defeat. In contrast, the fire training, which had been very careful in British regular units since Wellington, and which was outstanding in the Royal Marines, was not adequate in any of the actions. This demonstrates the courage and aggressiveness of the men, but also highlights their technical deficiencies in their instruction and especially in training, which was the responsibility of the officers.

It was necessary for the units to acquire the necessary speed of movement to move around the difficult terrain of northern Spain, with a high degree of mobility to fight in the agile skirmishes with the Carlists. This was a major shortcoming of the Legion, because although there were nominally several regiments and light companies on its staff, in reality there was always a deficit of initiative and versatility. Thus, during the total period of service, units of light infantry or Spanish free corps had to be added, in addition to the permanent unit assigned to the Legion.

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<sup>78</sup> In this sense, there was the order given to the Espartero Division to protect the movement of the Legion in Castrobarra in the winter 1836, SHUBERT A., Espartero the Peacemaker, p. 112.

Without cohesion and discipline, in a combat zone, the Legion was at the mercy of the enemy and neither could be achieved in the very short initial phase of San Sebastian and Santander. Therefore, the concentration in Bilbao and the trip to Vitoria, which had to be extended to the interior of Castile to travel hidden from the threat, had to be considered as periods of instruction and cohesion for the Legion.

### The 1835 campaign and the arrival of the Legion

In 1835, the war expanded into the nationwide and great changes took place in the plans and methods. Both sides went from acting with «columns» to acting with «divisions». Zumalacárregui died and Luis Fernández de Córdoba took command of the Isabelline Army. This materialised, on the Carlist side, with the beginning of «expeditions» outside their area of influence, and on the Isabelline side with the new strategy that sought to economically isolate and suffocate Carlism in the north and operationally regain the initiative. In the summer of 1835, the Carlist failure in the First Siege of Bilbao, the death of Zumalacárregui and in August the arrival of British land participation coincided.

Within this framework, two key Liberal areas were Bilbao and San Sebastian, both for their political and economic value. Both were isolated from the territory of the Liberal territory, but the sea allowed communication with the government and the arrival of resources, which was assured by the British naval force. A different problem was the «encirclement» of the land, since the need for men throughout the territory did not allow for adequate garrisoning. Therefore, both cities would be linked to the ground action of the British participation. Bilbao, a fundamental Carlist objective, would be the first place on land where British supporters would be present from the forces of the Northern Squadron, materialising by means of officers and men to serve the pieces and ammunition, 20 quintals of gunpowder, materials for the «18» pieces and foodstuffs. The next would be San Sebastian<sup>79</sup>, receiving resources, advisors and staff for the pieces<sup>80</sup>, and producing the first British casualties.

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<sup>79</sup> ALCALÁ Cesar. First Carlist War. The Siege of Bilbao and The Royal Expedition (1835-1837)., pp. 32 and 42.

<sup>80</sup> VIGON Jorge. History of the Spanish Artillery. p. 203.

### The lines of defence of General Fernández de Córdova

With the victory of Mendigorria on 15 July and the Royal Order of the Duke of Amarillas, the «Isabelline» forces changed their operational planning, abandoning the incursions into the Carlist valleys that produced casualties and worn-out ranks to move to the fortified lines. «Where he could come to the aid of the threatened points that deserved to be attended to, and take advantage of all the occasions to attack the factionalists in areas where they could advantageously work all the weapons and recover their superiority, the superiority of our discipline. To make the strong points more resistant to the cannon»<sup>81</sup>.

The aim of the plan was to isolate the Carlists of the North, both from the rest of Spain and from abroad, and then to address the core of the «Carlist state». For this, apart from the land lines, of positions, it was necessary to close the sea and the Pyrenean passes. This meant the possession by the Liberals of the ports of Bilbao and San Sebastián and the towns near the French border of Irún and Fuenterrabía. In addition, the establishment of the lines would give the Liberals time to instruct and train their units, given the large number of new units including Evans's Legion or units reinforced with new recruits.

The Córdova plan, in the land aspect, first required fortification works with a 250 km belt, linked by 60 fortified strong points<sup>82</sup>. In addition, it was necessary to have locations for operational bases in which to house the manoeuvring force that would push the rebels in. So, time was needed to execute it. The bases needed infrastructure to house the units and communications routes to the centre of the Carlist centres in the valleys of Biscay, Guipúzcoa and Navarre. Only Vitoria, in very poor conditions, and Pamplona could accommodate the troops of various capacities, about 20,000 men who would carry out firstly the various tasks of the plan, including the Legion<sup>83</sup>, and later the penetration.

<sup>81</sup> Royal Order of 23 July 1835 to Acting General-in-Chief of the Army Luis Fernández de Córdoba.

<sup>82</sup> FERNÁNDEZ DE CÓRDOVA. Luis. Justification Report that the General addresses to his fellow citizens in vindication. Paris 1837.

<sup>83</sup> It is difficult to specify the beginning of the implementation of the plan, the start of which varies from one author to another. The most realistic thing is to focus it in mid-autumn as BULLÓN de MENDOZA states in his work *La 1ª Guerra Carlista* (The First Carlist War) p. 278. On 10 December 1835, fortification work began in Ariñez, Álava.

The arrival of the first elements of the Legion, coinciding with the preparation of a new phase of the conflict, offered the possibility of having men to initially garrison significant positions. San Sebastian, an isolated stronghold since 1 December 1835, began to receive the British for two Spanish regiments, constituting the garrison. The first contingent left Portsmouth on 2 July 1835, arriving in San Sebastian on 11 July. General Lacy arrived in the Peninsula on August 17<sup>th</sup>, by which time there were already 1,819 British in Santander and 2,803 in San Sebastian which would end up being the main base<sup>84</sup>. The men needed time to train and educate themselves, but they did not have it. On 30 August was the first combat action for the Legion, in the area around San Sebastian. In it, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Regiments were involved. This action, in which Spanish forces participated, could be framed within the process of instruction/combat of the unit, as the forces encountered an enemy party and pursued it, but were counter-attacked and had to leave the terrain, leaving several casualties in the hands of the enemy and four prisoners who were subject to the Durango Decree<sup>85</sup> being shot.

On 5 September, the Legion was ordered to gather in Portugalete to participate in the relief of Bilbao, and the first «mass review» of the Legion was done by General Evans. His idea was to participate in actions, minor ones, and to continue with the instruction, particularly offensive, at the same time. On 11 September, some of Evans's new troops, under the command of Espartero, took part in the action in Arrigorriaga, 6 km from Bilbao, where the units were surrounded by the Carlists. Espartero, aware of the lack of training of the units, particularly the British, did not want to get involved by retreating over the Bolueta Bridge, where he would be defeated. After this action, the Legion continued to concentrate in Bilbao and by the end of October there were already 7,800 men<sup>86</sup> dedicated to hardening themselves with marches, exercises, and very low intensity encounters in order to become more experienced. On 30 October, Evans was ordered

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<sup>84</sup> Documentation collected by DE PORRAS Y RODRÍGUEZ DE LEÓN G. The Rodil Expedition and the foreign legions in the 1st Carlist War, p.127. Data from the General Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, number H2857.

<sup>85</sup> Decree of Durango, 20 June 1835, given by the Pretender Charles V: »the foreign corps that came to sustain the dominion of usurpation in the question of succession, which was something that concerned only the Spanish nation, were excluded from the benefits of the Treaty of Lord Elliot«, the death penalty being applied to those taking up arms.

<sup>86</sup> The First Carlist War BULLÓN de MENDOZA, p. 422.

to go to Vitoria to join the forces that were to undertake the Córdoba Plan.

General Córdoba ordered to go directly to Vitoria, but Evans, aware of the capacity of the Legion, took the opposite route, going to Castile keeping in his mind the previous combats. A longer and more sheltered route, which would give his men the possibility of continuing their instruction. This disobedience would be the first difficulty between the two generals, at the same time as British complaints about the lack of winter equipment began. The latter would become endemic and a source of discord.

The British Legion arrived in Vitoria<sup>87</sup> on 3 December 1835, and was stationed in the vicinity until April, when a «dark period» began. Diseases and epidemics, typhoid fever, coupled with the cold, poor housing and food conditions, lack of winter equipment plus the physical conditions of many legionnaires were about to wipe out the Legion. The losses of the Legion in the three months they were in Vitoria<sup>88</sup> could be estimated at about 1,200men amongst diseases, epidemics, deserters and the missing.

### Campaign of 1836. Reorganisation

In early 1836, the Carlists changed their strategy to break the Liberal blockade. To do this, they turned against the Liberal positions on the coast and in the valleys of the Pyrenees, and began the great expeditions. On the other hand, the Liberals, securing the «Arga line», tried to relieve the pressure of the Carlists in Guipúzcoa by reinforcing their garrisons. The British Legion was used for both tasks, first as part of the offensive unit launched from Vitoria and later to garrison Guipúzcoa.

### The Battle of Arlabán (16 and 17 January)

On 16 January 1836, the first offensive operation of the Legion integrated into the Córdoba forces took place. The Liberals left Vitoria and its surroundings to carry out a series of offensive reconnaissance and frontal attacks, and to reach and occupy the dominant points

<sup>87</sup> SANTOYO Julio Cesar. The British Legion in Vitoria. The Legion arrived split up, and the cavalry and artillery were later incorporated.

<sup>88</sup> BULLÓN de MENDOZA, The First Carlist War, p. 424 «Defecting to the Carlist ranks was of little help, so much so that 144 of them were sent to Bayonne because they were unsuitable for service in their ranks».

of communication of the «Plain of Alaves» with the Biscayan valleys of Arratia, Duranguesado and the Alto Deva in Gipuzkoa, while threatening Oñate, the court of the Pretender. The old Villarreal<sup>89</sup> and the port of Arlabán were to the west and north, the two key points to get, that are complemented to the east by Guevara.

The idea of manoeuvre was the frontal attack and the encirclement by the flanks. The force was articulated in three groupings:

- The first one, based on the experienced Espartero Division, was the main effort and would act on the «left flank»<sup>90</sup>.
- The second with Spanish units and «the professional» French Legion in the centre of the attack, oriented to the North and under the direct command of General Córdoba.
- The third under the command of Evans and his Legion, which was very much reduced, plus Spanish units, attending to the «right flank», complementing the efforts of the West and the North.

But if there is one thing that characterises this war, it was the superiority of Carlist intelligence/information over the practical absence of it in the Liberal ranks, and Arlabán was no exception, not knowing the entity and location of the enemy<sup>91</sup>. The advance on a wide front with three axes and bad weather conditions required a great deal of coordination between units that did not exist.

The initial actions of the Legion began on the 11 with a series of reconnaissance actions on the Vitoria - Salvatierra axis. The Legion, very much diminished as a consequence of casualties in Vitoria, was reinforced with more Spanish cavalry, in addition to the Chapelgorris battalion<sup>92</sup> which was employed independently, and could have been better employed, on this and other occasions, adding their companies to the British regiments, thus giving them a capacity which they lacked, as British officers point out<sup>93</sup>.

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<sup>89</sup> Historically, it has been considered the key to Álava and there have been constant military confrontations in its vicinity.

<sup>90</sup> The terminology of the time is used, right and left flanks in the present day West flank.

<sup>91</sup> In this case, the Carlists had deployed six battalions and one squadron, in the vicinity of Guevara. The objective was to be achieved by the «right flank», the third grouping under the command of Evans.

<sup>92</sup> The term assigned is used to refer to units which, without belonging to a command or organisation, remain available for operational use on a continuous basis.

<sup>93</sup> Thompson C.W. Twelve months in the British Legion.



After the mentioned reconnaissance, on 16 January with a fog that prevented vision, the Legion deployed to the front a force of 1,800 men<sup>94</sup> coming from six regiments<sup>95</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, reaching the proximities of Guevara Castle. The action was simple, a bayonet charge, and the Carlists withdrew. The following day, the Sierra de Arlabán was reached, the line of maximum advance, where the regiments endured another terrible night without winter equipment. These actions had nothing to do with the fighting that materialised the main effort, the conquest of Alto de Arlabán and the town of Villarreal, which produced high casualties, about 1,000<sup>96</sup>. British casualties in action were one sergeant and about a dozen soldiers. Attrition on the pawned units was heavy, and on the 18th retreat was ordered. That order did not reach Evans, increasing the bad relations that already existed, both because of the lack of coordination and the lack of resources. The Legion went to Treviño in a defensive attitude<sup>97</sup>.

Arlabán showed that the unit was improving in combat discipline but was not yet an offensive unit. It needed time to recover after Vitoria, six regiments had joined together for a battle group of 1,800men. The Legion, in particular its infantry, after 8 months of harsh existence and the casualties suffered, mostly from typhoid and desertion, needed to reorganise. The epidemic had not affected all the regiments equally;<sup>98</sup> the English were the most punished followed by the Scots. The 2<sup>nd</sup>and 5<sup>th</sup>Regiments, which had suffered the most casualties, disappeared in March, with officers also transferring and resigning. The new structure consisted of three brigades<sup>99</sup> with three regiments, seeking to form three groups with similar combat capacity:

The first was a Line Brigade with the 1<sup>st</sup>and 4<sup>th</sup>English Regiments and the 8<sup>th</sup>Scottish.

<sup>94</sup> BRETT M Edward. *The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War*, p.74.

<sup>95</sup> The fact that six regiments had to be brought together to form a battle group shows the terrible attrition that disease and desertion had caused in Evans's ranks

<sup>96</sup> These were very hard clashes in which the Prince and Princess Regiments would receive one Laureate each. PRINCE AND PRINCESS IHCM MADRID INFANTRY REGIMENT RECORDS.

<sup>97</sup> The 2nd Battle of Arlabán: On 22 May of the same year, General Córdova carried out another offensive action with no aim of occupying land. After four days of skirmishes, the Liberals withdrew.

<sup>98</sup> This dismantled the hypothesis of the poisoning of the food SANTOYO. The British Legion in Vitoria.

<sup>99</sup> BRETT M. Edward, *The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War*, p. 77.

The second, considered «Light», was formed by the Rifle Corps and two Grenadier Regiments, the 3<sup>rd</sup>English and the 6<sup>th</sup>Scottish.

The third was made up of two Light Regiments, the 7<sup>th</sup>and 10<sup>th</sup>and the 9<sup>th</sup>Line, all Irish, and comprised about 1.800 men, making it the strongest. About half of Evans's initial force had been killed, wounded/ill, deserters and stragglers<sup>100</sup>. The Chapelgorris battalion was under the command of the Legion.

### The defence of San Sebastian 1836

In April, between the 12 and the 25, the units, with the exception of the 2<sup>nd</sup>Lancers, left Vitoria for San Sebastian by sea. The route this time would be shorter through the Mena Valley, but secured by veteran forces, to avoid surprises to the Legion. The operational strength was 4.500 infantrymen, the 1<sup>st</sup>Lancers and supporters. The Legion had lost many men, but the rest were hardening. San Sebastian was assigned as a garrison to Evans's forces, reinforced with two Spanish regiments and, from 14 March, with greater support from the Royal Navy and the direct involvement of its Marines.

Relations between Evans and Cordoba were still strained, while the maintenance of San Sebastian and the control of the coast up to the French border were essential for the Liberals. This was seen by both the Spanish political and military command and by Villiers, who saw in San Sebastian the best situation for Evans and his men. In addition, the area bounded by the sea to the north and by the mountainous terrain to the south was the right setting for joint British operations, a narrow strip of land that allowed all the naval power to be developed in support of the land forces, both by precise and deep fire and logistically, facilitating movement, with material disembarked from pontoons to cross the rivers that run across the directions of attack. The security of the flanks, with franca/free or light units, was simple to execute on the coastal strip, so the British line infantry battalions could make the most of their attack. Eventually, Evans would be moved away from Córdoba. The replacement of the latter by Espartero in September consolidated both the allocation of San Sebastian as the base of the Legion and the closure plans for the border.

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<sup>100</sup> This number is too high for a unit even within the bloody conflict. For the number of total casualties in BULLÓN de MENDOZA. The First Carlist War. There are no accurate data on the total number of casualties in the conflict, and no data on civilian casualties.

The Carlists had reinforced the land blockade of San Sebastian with three construction belts. Evans, impatient to regain his independence and without the previous information, launched an attack on the very day of his arrival, 5 May, without waiting to be completed as he was missing two regiments. The aim was to keep the enemy away from the vicinity. The main effort of the Legion was carried out by the «Irish Brigade», with its three Regiments, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, which attacked with bayonets, reaching the first two belts and being rejected in the third. At that time they were supported by naval fire that opened up gaps, and by the arrival of the remaining units. The Carlists gave up ground until they had artillery support and halted the attack, causing the British to lose 18% of their force, approximately 800 men.

However, this combat was the first victory of the Legion and the first direct intervention in ground combat by the regular forces of the United Kingdom. The Infantry and Artillery of the «Royal Marines<sup>101</sup>», and of the Royal Artillery and Engineers, were very professional soldiers, with great discipline<sup>102</sup> and shooting training.

After the success, the conquest of the port of Pasajes, 5 kms east of San Sebastian, was planned, counting on maritime support. The action, with a lot of fire support, was a success, taking the port on 28 May. The scheme was repeated, fire and support from pontoonists to cross rivers from the boats and landing of the marines acting by closed discharges. The second phase of the plan remained, reaching the French border, and Evans had about 9,000 men between the British, who were receiving recruits, and the Spanish.

The centralised Carlist situation allowed them to act along internal lines and reinforce their units in contact, so Evans had to go on the defensive. A combined operation on Fuenterrabía was designed to take up the initiative again, but it ended in failure due to a lack of information. The terrain at the mouth of the Bidasoa was unknown, so the ships could not approach it,

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<sup>101</sup> VARIOUS AUTHORS, with the reinforcements received Lord Hay had 800 «marines» of which 100 were gunners and the rest an infantry battalion under the command of Major John Owen

<sup>102</sup> On 15 July 15 1837, the Pretender signed a decree in Ordizia in which he stated that the «Royal Marines» were regular units and therefore not affected by the Durango Decree. It really showed the appreciation that Charles had for them and the desire to facilitate their defection and move into his ranks. There is no record of any desertions from the Corps and their integration into the Carlist ranks.

and so their support was distant and the fire imprecise. Evans also had to leave his command due to illness, and the lack of unity of doctrine amongst the commanders of the Legion became apparent. In addition, several mutinies broke out that beginning with the Scots, would spread even to the cavalry. The reasons, the lack of payment and the completion of the year of service with which many Scots and riders requested their discharge. With the excuse of the Gómez Expedition, the most conflictive units were sent to Santander, while the discharge of personnel who did not want to serve was being studied<sup>103</sup>. This situation was complicated in August by the outbreak of the La Granja Mutiny with its constitutional and military changes when the Northern Army was transferred to Espartero.

Once the units had been subdued, the Legion was once again concentrated in San Sebastian, but the border campaign was also cancelled with the autumn, and attention turned to Bilbao.

In the actions of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Siege of Bilbao, 23 October to 25 December 1836 and the Battle of Luchana, British participation was of great value, with special emphasis on the support provided by Lord Hay's forces and the advice of observers. Already in April, the British presence in the area around Bilbao had been reinforced, with the presence of marines and artillery in the «El Desierto» fortress that protected the estuary.

For the liberation of Bilbao, the Royal Navy facilitated the transfer of Espartero's forces to Portugalete, provided men and pontoon equipment to force passage along the right bank by providing rafts to build a bridge, which was destroyed by the sea and another had to be built on 19 December. With the collaboration of Wylde, the plan for the secondary operation of crossing with boats and fire support was outlined, to facilitate the main action of breaking the right bank. The men from the ships HMS «Saracen» and the HMS «Ringdow» took part in this support and with them 30 transport boats and warships. In addition, the detachments of the Royal Engineers on board participated, with the construction of pontoons, and artillerymen of the Legion with their materials, to reinforce the only four pieces of Espartero. Espartero highlighted this participation in the report he sent to the government, «without which Bilbao would not have been freed by the end of the year».

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<sup>103</sup> SANTACARA, C., *The First Carlist War seen by the British*, p. 203. The opinion of Colonel Wylde advising Ambassador Villiers is recorded.

### The campaign of 1837. Guipúzcoa

The year 1837 did not start well for the Legion, financial problems made discipline snap with a new mutiny for the collection of payment. The Isabelline command continued to relish the idea of closing the flow of French resources. To this end, an action plan was devised with three simultaneous and converging efforts to reach the Upper Deva, but without any specific objective. The efforts would be materialised by the Sarsfield forces stationed in Pamplona, by Evans from San Sebastian and by Espartero's forces from Bilbao. The plan failed and led to Oriamendi's defeat.

In 1837, the Royal Expedition of the Pretender was the key milestone. Operationally, it meant that a large number of Carlist forces, with their offensive capability, moved out of the north, which translated into greater freedom and ability to intervene between May and October for the Liberal forces that remained.

Oriamendi 14 to 15 March. At the end of the first ten days of March, the implementation of the Liberal plan began with the three columns towards the heart of Carlist territory. But coordination and intelligence failed again. Sarsfield's, from Pamplona and Espartero's forces, from Vizcaya, did not arrive, and Evans's intelligence did not detect the arrival of the Carlist reserves. As a result of both failures, Evans's forces were left alone, not only facing the Carlist forces surrounding San Sebastian, but also facing the reserves.

Evans began his actions, his first target being Hernani located in the interior. During the 10, 11 and 12, he progressed by freeing the area of Loyola and from there he moved towards Hernani, managing to occupy its heights and the fort of Oriamendi on the 14<sup>th</sup>, but Sarsfield's forces had withdrawn, and Espartero was as far away as the Royal Navy's ships. On the morning of the 15, the Carlist reserves, moving along internal lines and driven by a young general, Prince Sebastian, launched two attacks, one feinting the left Liberal flank and the other in the centre, which broke the joint deployment at its weakest point, the union of the Spanish and British forces.

The Christino army had to retreat with great losses to San Sebastian, protected by a brilliant rear-guard action of the British lancers, combined with the fire of the Legion's artillery and that of

the Marines. That could not cover the entire front, and the battle was a disaster: 400 dead, 900 injured<sup>104</sup>.

After Oriamendi, in the first ten days of May, in accordance with the approach of the Commander in Chief, Espartero, the reorganised Legion was again involved in a series of joint and combined offensive actions aimed at closing the French border by dominating Hernani, Oyarzun, Irún and Fuenterrabía. Under the direct command of Espartero, who moved to Guipúzcoa, this phase was a success<sup>105</sup>. But the Legion would disappear on 9 June 1937 after two years of service. Previously, Evans left Spain on 3 June.

### The 2<sup>nd</sup> Auxiliary Legion 1837

In the summer of 1837, the time of service expired, but as the need for men still existed, the continuity of Evans was attempted, which was surely not achieved due to his clashes with the Spanish commanders and the Legion. The latter was not achieved either, the troops did not want to be re-enlisted, about 4,000 men were discharged, and suffering awaited them on their return home, where they were ignored and left penniless.

With much effort, a «New or 2<sup>nd</sup> Auxiliary Legion» was formed. An attempt was made by Espartero to make Colonel Wylde the commander, but he refused, motivated by Palmerston's criteria «that he was better off advising generals»<sup>106</sup> than commanding a Spanish unit and also by his involvement in recruitment and support work, declaring that «his state was one of shameful abandonment and discontent», and that his survival would be greatly compromised<sup>107</sup>.

The emphasis was on retaining the finest units, artillery and lancers, as well as men, and so princes were turned into artillerymen

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<sup>104</sup> DE APALATEGUI F. Oriamendi, p. 106. San Sebastian 1940. Also, in ALBI DE LA CUESTA J. STAMPA L, Campaigns of the Spanish Cavalry in the 19th Century. SHM. The death toll must have been significant since, according to tradition, «in the Caserío de Arizmendi, due to the large number of corpses, the bodies were piled up and set on fire». This happened with the bodies of Christians and in a very religious area, which shows the number of casualties and the feeling of violence of the war that did not stop with the death of the adversary.

<sup>105</sup> Espartero went to Guipúzcoa leading some 23,000 men by sea, reinforcing Evans's forces, which at that time had only two brigades, including the Chapelgorris battalion. The phase was officially completed on 29 May.

<sup>106</sup> Collected by SANTACARA C, The First Carlist War as seen by the British, p. 261.

<sup>107</sup> BRETT M Edward. The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War, pp.160-161.

and horsemen. The new corps had only 1,746 combatants, of which 122 were officers, 121 sergeants and 1,503 corporals and soldiers. It consisted of three small infantry regiments, rifles, Scottish and Irish with 350/310 sergeants and troops, a lancer unit with 293 men in ranks but only 80 horses, 56 sappers, 213 gunners and medical<sup>108</sup>.

Command was given to Brigadier Maurice O'Connell, who had served in the Legion since 1835, becoming Second Adjutant General. He was a regular officer and had served in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 77<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiments. A courageous officer, who did not know how to maintain good relations with either the Spanish authorities or his commander O'Donnell.

The summer of 1837 was marked by mutinies and murders of officers in the Liberal Army, precisely the first great service of the new unit took place in Hernani on 4 July, where the return to discipline of the Mirasol Division was achieved by the action of Leopoldo O'Donnell and the discipline of the artillery of the New Legion<sup>109</sup>.

Following the restoration of discipline and control of the French border in the previous cycle of operations, the Liberal effort changed direction, seeking to enter Guipúzcoa, occupy Tolosa and attempt to join the forces of Navarra. To do this it was necessary to break the Urnieta-Andoain line<sup>110</sup> which would open the way to Tolosa and the Leizarán valley.

On 1 September, Leopoldo O'Donnell was appointed commander of the army corps of the Cantabrian coast and although troop morale was still low, he decided to carry out an offensive action. These were the decisive times in the war with the Royal Expedition at the gates of Madrid on 12 September. On 8 September, 1837, O'Donnell began the advance towards the south, with Andoain as a target, with 7,000 men. The unit was comprised of two Spanish brigades covering the flanks and in the centre a much reduced

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<sup>108</sup> VARIOUS AUTHORS SANTACARA C. The First Carlist War as seen by the British 1833- 1840, p. 274 and BRETT The British Auxiliary Legion in the First Carlist War p. 160.

<sup>109</sup> BULLÓN de MENDOZA Journal of Military History Special Issue II 2017. Leopold O'Donnell and the First Carlist War, p. 66 .

<sup>110</sup> Andoain is located in the Oria Valley extension, and surrounded by numerous mountains, crossed by the river Oria and its affluent the Leizarán, which forms the Leizarán Valley, enabling communication with Pamplona, Navarra, at present the Leizarán Highway (A-15).

«New British Legion», with only two battalions as the third, «Irish» decided that «without pay they would not obey orders».

The advance of the Liberal troops was not disputed, but a harsh policy was followed with the population as some 120 granaries were burned, which exasperated the population. Once again, the information was played on by attributing most of the fires to the British Legion, which would then unleash the wrath of the inhabitants against the legionnaires. Andoain was occupied and, further south, Urnieta, with the Carlists remaining on the Oria line and the Leizarán, the westernmost bank<sup>111</sup>. At dawn on 14 September the Carlists launched an attack with two successive efforts, the first on the Liberal left flank. Once again the information failed and O'Donnell reacted by modifying the deployment of the units, moving his most senior troops to this flank. At this point, the second Carlist effort was unleashed on the right flank, where the newest Christino units were now located. Their morale suffered by retreating in disarray and allowing the British forces that were fortifying themselves in Andoain to become involved.

The two British battalions involved tried to buy time and enable the artillery and other units to retreat to Hernani; one counterattacked with bayonets from below, and the other established a centre of resistance in the church. Also, the Lancers facilitated the withdrawal by conducting charges. The action was a courageous defeat, described as a massacre, with 25 officers and 300 troops killed, 18% of the Legion. This coupled with the lack of resources was the end. On 21 October in Guetaria, a maritime action with the Royal Navy would be the last operation of the Legion, which was dissolved on 19 December 1837.

### **British Auxiliary Brigade 1838**

After the dissolution of the previous one and in order to maintain the best capabilities of the Legion, «Lancers and Artillery», the British Auxiliary Brigade was formed in March 1838, until «the end of the war», commanded by Colonel Frederick La Saussageen, who had served in both the British and Spanish armies<sup>112</sup>.

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<sup>111</sup> A contingent of British regular forces, consisting of Marines and gunners, remained in reserve in Hernani throughout the action. But naval fire support could not be counted on.

<sup>112</sup> In the Spanish Army, he served in the Zaragoza Line Infantry Regiment.



At the time of its creation, the Brigade was made up of 30 officers, 31 sergeants and 341 soldiers, 50% of whom were cavalrymen and gunners, forming two units, but with a great shortage of horses and pack animals. As a result of internal problems, the artillery was disbanded and some of its men were converted into lancers, but contracts had to be terminated due to lack of mounts for all personnel. The lancers were integrated into the forces of General Diego de León where they participated fully and with distinction. Diego de León's group was the most select of the Christino Cavalry. Among the actions of the Lancers, the fight of Los Arcos on 3 December 1838 and in January the fight of Aguaviva stand out, and from 23 March 1839 they participated in the tasks of devastation of the territory dominated by the Pretender. Six months later, by General Order of 29 September in Logroño,<sup>113</sup> the Squadron of Lancers, as proof of its professionalism, was in the 1<sup>st</sup> Division, made up of units of the Royal Guard, the most elite of the Army. The unit was dissolved in January 1841.

The observer detachments: commissioned officers (1834 -1840)

The British Army's personnel commissioned to allied armies or areas of operation depended from the beginning on its Foreign Office commission. They were highly selected staff who could report directly to the Foreign Minister. Their actions went beyond those of mere liaison detachments, and were at the political and strategic levels without, of course, neglecting operational issues. They usually acted in teams of three officers, the oldest being a lieutenant colonel or colonel and they used to be engineers or artillerymen, due to their technical training. The «head of commission» used to receive an extra grade, to reach the rank of colonel. Relationships with management and authorities were fundamental to the success of their work and were not always easy, depending on the people. But, as time went by, they improved and worked very well as between Espartero and Wylde.

In September 1834, Lieutenant Colonel William Wylde received the order to move to Spain and join the Army of Northern Operations with the rank of Colonel, accompanied by Lieutenant George Turner<sup>114</sup>, later joined by Lieutenant James Lynn. In October he presented himself to General Mina, beginning his extensive missions that could cover almost everything, even as

<sup>113</sup> ALBI DE LA CUESTA J. The Carlist Army of the North 1833-39, p. 475.

<sup>114</sup> Details of the officers of the detachments in SANTACARA C. The First Carlist War as seen by the British.

Evans's adviser, except «accepting the surrender of the Pretender Carlos»<sup>115</sup>.

This team had great importance in the actions leading to the lifting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Siege of Bilbao, where he was involved in both the planning and coordination of fire support provided by the British Navy and the Legion Artillery and of combat support provided by the Royal Engineers and the Royal Navy crews, co-directed by Colonel Wylde.

Also, Wylde and Lord Hay intervened in the previous steps and talks of the Vergara Agreement, although since Espartero was always clear that the war was between Spaniards and therefore peace had to be agreed by Spaniards». Previously, British officials had been involved in the Elliot Agreement and the «Peace and Fueros» movement<sup>116</sup>. In this case, the mediators were Commodore Hay and Lieutenant Turner.

During the war, motivated by their achievements, the first team of commissioners under Wylde's command would be joined by two other teams, one for the Army of the Centre and a third for the Army of Catalonia. In total there were nine officers, six gunners and three engineers<sup>117</sup>. For the Army of the Centre, the team was activated on 22 September 1837 under the command of Colonel Richard Lancy with Captain Williams, an engineer, and Lieutenant Crofton, a gunner, who would receive the Cross of St Ferdinand. The two adjutants were relieved on 2 February 1838 by the captain of engineers, Alderson, and artillery lieutenant Askwith. Initially, too, relations between Oraa and Lacy were not good.

In July 1839, a decision was made to activate the group of observers for the Catalan Army, which would be commanded by Colonel Edward Mitchell and the commander of the engineers Du Plat and the artillery lieutenant Dickson. The team arrived in Catalonia in August with instructions not only from the military but also to sign the commercial agreement<sup>118</sup>.

The British presence at Espartero's headquarters did not end with Vergara, but was maintained during the subsequent campaign

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<sup>115</sup> SANTACARA C. The First Carlist War as seen by the British, p 75. Communication from Ambassador Villiers to the President of the Council of Ministers Martinez de la Rosa

<sup>116</sup> This movement with foral implications exempts the Provinces from paying taxes, which in the end affected commercial interests, which were of concern to the United Kingdom.

<sup>117</sup> Actually, 11 with the two relieved on the Army of the Centre staff.

<sup>118</sup> SANTACARA C. The First Carlist War as seen by the British. P. 376. N.A FO-72-539.

in Maestrazgo and Catalonia. When Colonel Wylde<sup>119</sup> returned to the United Kingdom, he was replaced by Lieutenant James Lynn, who remained in Spain as a military attaché at the end of the War in Catalonia<sup>120</sup>. In the autumn of 1840, London gave the order to dismiss the commissioners. Espartero, fully convinced of the usefulness of the commissioner system, ordered that each of the army corps that was to control the territory of Catalonia be assigned a British liaison officer from those that were with the Armies, appointing Du Plat, Turner and Lynn. Throughout the conflict, these officers would become increasingly important both politically, with their correspondence with Lord Palmerston, and militarily, with their advisors.

### **Regular British participation: Navy and Army**

In the First Carlist War, personnel from the Royal Navy belonging to the Navy, the Royal Marines and the Royal Navy Artillery, as well as from the Army belonging to the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers, integrated in naval detachments, participated. This participation was important for the Government of Madrid and for the cause of Queen Isabel II by covering the seven years of conflict and the peninsular coasts with one of its ports. In the east, their presence was a deterrent to the squadrons of Sardinia and Naples. In the North, its main task was the security and blockade actions and later the main support of the Legion in Guipúzcoa.

With its vision of projection, the British Government reinforced the Marine garrison of its ships on the Cantabrian coast and later facilitated the intervention in those of the Levant and South. Both the Royal Marines and the Royal Marine Artillery Corps were regular units with great tactical training and outstanding discipline and their officers were professional. These qualities became apparent as the confrontation dragged on and the Royal Navy and the detachments of marines and artillery were involved in ground actions, being employed as second-stage or reserve units; that is, safe troops to resolve crises such as in Oriamendi, Andoain and others. They, along with naval fire support, were

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<sup>119</sup> Wylde's final service was, at the end of the war and in Barcelona, on the occasion of the appointment of Espartero as a member of the Order of the Bath in the audience with the Regent where he tried to soften the confrontation between them by the Town Councils Act.

<sup>120</sup> SHUBERT A. Espartero the Peacemaker, p. 207.

the key elements in making sure that actions were victories or defeats were not disasters. The increase in maritime participation in the war would reach a qualitative peak in the summer of 1837, when Barcelona became the main British naval base in the Mediterranean, temporarily replacing Malta<sup>121</sup>.

The actions of Cabrera, the Royal Expedition and the popular uprisings made the British landings and collaborations in the Levant more and more frequent and committed, as in Barcelona and Valencia<sup>122</sup>, where the marines gave security and support to the authorities. The ships also participated in these support actions with their fire, as shown by the support given to the forces defending the Grao de Valencia during the Royal Expedition by HMS «Barham». These actions had their cost in lives and materials, with the HMS «Tribune» being lost in a storm. Finally, we must add the British crews of the Spanish ships «Reina Gobernadora», «Isabel II» and «Mazeppa» bought from the United Kingdom.

Artillery and engineering officers were few in number in the British Army but were key. Their total involvement in the conflict was about 10/20 officials. The Artillerymen served by directing both the land fires of the Legion and the landing columns, as well as in the batteries of the ships. The tasks of the engineers were mobility support, bridge construction and guidance and advice in the establishment and erection of fortified positions and sites.

Relations between the Spanish naval authorities and Lord Hay were not easy either. Thus, Lord Hay managed to gain, through his actions, the trust of the Spanish political authorities and, as regards the land commanders, his relations were developed through professional channels with little friction with them and with a little more intensity with Evans. However, the tension between Lord Hay and Admiral Ribera, the Spanish naval commander of the North Coast, was not so great that Ribera presented his resignation to the Government, which was accepted, in July 1837 and he was replaced<sup>123</sup>.

### An end and a beginning

The end of the British intervention would mean the end of the presence of foreign personnel in the ranks of the Spanish militia.

<sup>121</sup> SANTACARA C. The First Carlist War as seen by the British, p. 276

<sup>122</sup> SANTACARA C. The First Carlist War as seen by the British, pp. 257, 276.

<sup>123</sup> Bullón de Mendoza. The First Carlist War, p. 421.

As we shall see, more than 70 years will have to pass before we see non-nationals in the Spanish ranks again, and when that happens, it will be in the form of complete integration of both foreigners and nationals within the same unit.

We could expect an assessment of foreign intervention and particularly of British intervention in the conflict, which should be carried out by encompassing all its elements: political, economic, naval and military. There is no doubt that the British intervention was costly to Spain's political and economic coffers, but much was also achieved, particularly in the field of tactical procedures, especially in the joint field, and advice, and even the most select British units ended up in the Spanish military Parnassus.

To achieve this, personal interests and a high price in blood were left along the way. The British volunteers, as they were trained in different tasks, cohesive, and counting on British maritime and Spanish land support, ended up joining the Liberal manoeuvring force.

