

Albuera – A Volley and Bayonet Scenario with help from Jeff Glasco

By Steven Thomas on 21 Mar 2015 | Last Updated 1 Oct 2015

Here is my first attempt at a [Volley & Bayonet](#) scenario for the Battle of Albuera (16 May 1811). The [Order of Battle is by Jeff Glasco](#) and I contributed the rest.

Introduction

I have become impatient and want to bring my [Albuera Project](#) to fruition. The project has been stewing rather unproductively in the “I’ve got a few figures painted but there are masses more to do and I’m not sure what to do about it” stage for quite some time. I thought I’d force the issue and post a scenario.

So here it is. Of course, being for my [Albuera Project](#), the scenario is for the Battle of Albuera (16 May 1811). The game features a large mixed British, Spanish and Portuguese force facing elements of the French Army of the South at the small Spanish village of Albuera, about 20 kilometres south of the frontier fortress-town of Badajoz. Historically it was a bad day for all concerned. Except, perhaps for the Spanish who, all things

considered, made rather a good showing.

I've gone for [Volley & Bayonet](#) for [several reasons that I've explained before](#).

Because I've not had the time to convert my [Orders of Battle at the Battle of Albuera](#) for a V&B scenario I've used [Jeff Glasco's Albuera Order of Battle for V&B](#).

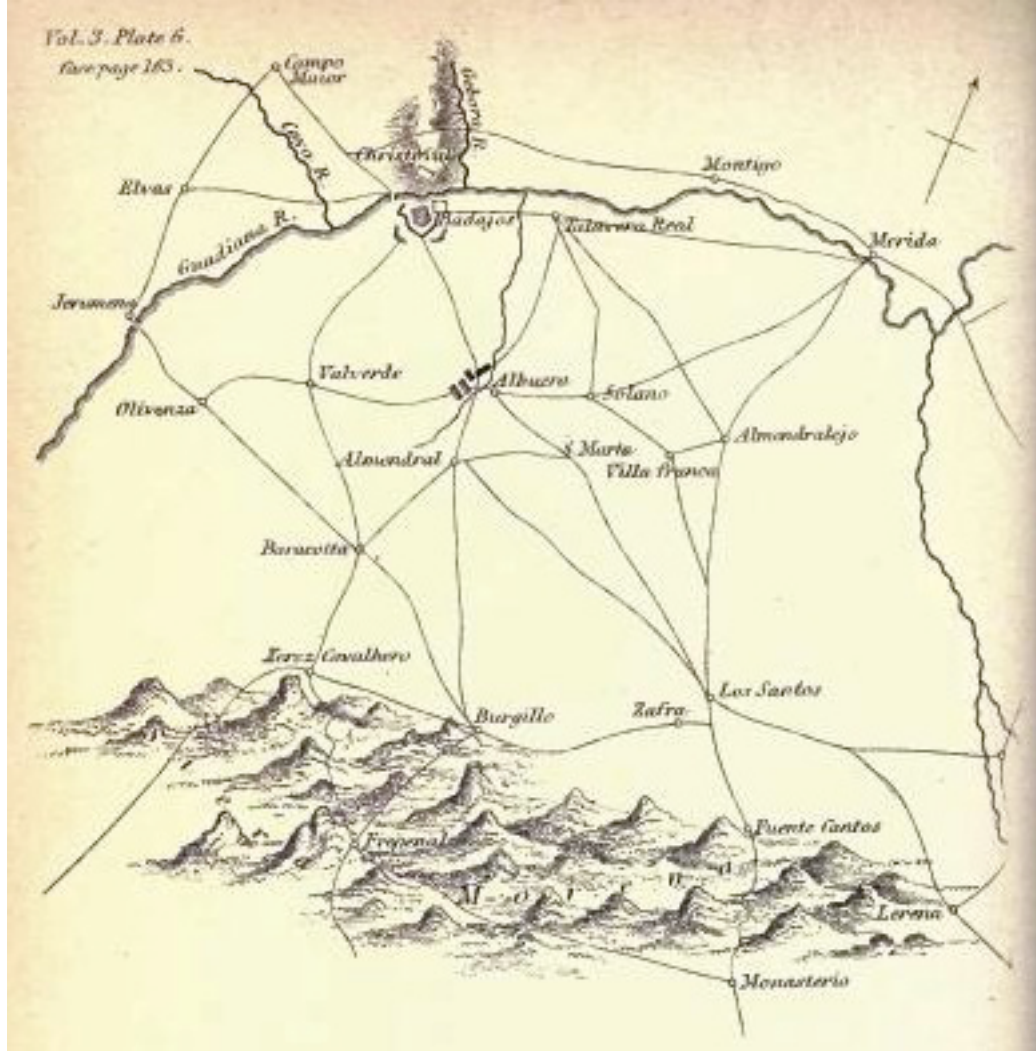
Glasco only provides a Orbat so I supplemented with other material to round it out.

Historical Situation

Setting: Albuera, Spain; 16 May 1811

In October 1810 Wellington's Allied forces were entrenched in and behind the Lines of Torres Vedras. Marshal Masséna's Army of Portugal was facing them, but lack of supplies meant the army began to waste away.

In early 1811 Marshal Soult led an expedition from Andalusia into Extremadura in an attempt to lure the Allies away from the lines in Portugal. But Soult moved too late to help Masséna. The later had already begun his withdraw towards Spain. Soult did, however, capture the fortress at Badajoz from the Spanish. Later, in March following Marshal Victor's defeat at the Battle of Barrosa, Soult returned to Andalusia. However, Soult left a strong garrison in Badajoz.



Albuera Strategic Situation (Napier)

In April 1811 General William Beresford, with the Anglo-Portuguese 2nd and 4th divisions, set out to retake Badajoz. The Anglo-Portuguese cleared the surrounding area of French and began the siege.

Soult marched again, this time to relieve the siege. His army consisted of elements of the French forces in Andalusia supplemented by troops retreating before Beresford. Soult's plan was to interpose himself between Beresford and General Joaquín Blake's Spaniards. Unknown to the Marshal, the Spanish army had already joined Beresford's Anglo-Portuguese force. This union gave the combined Allied army 35,000 men. Soult had

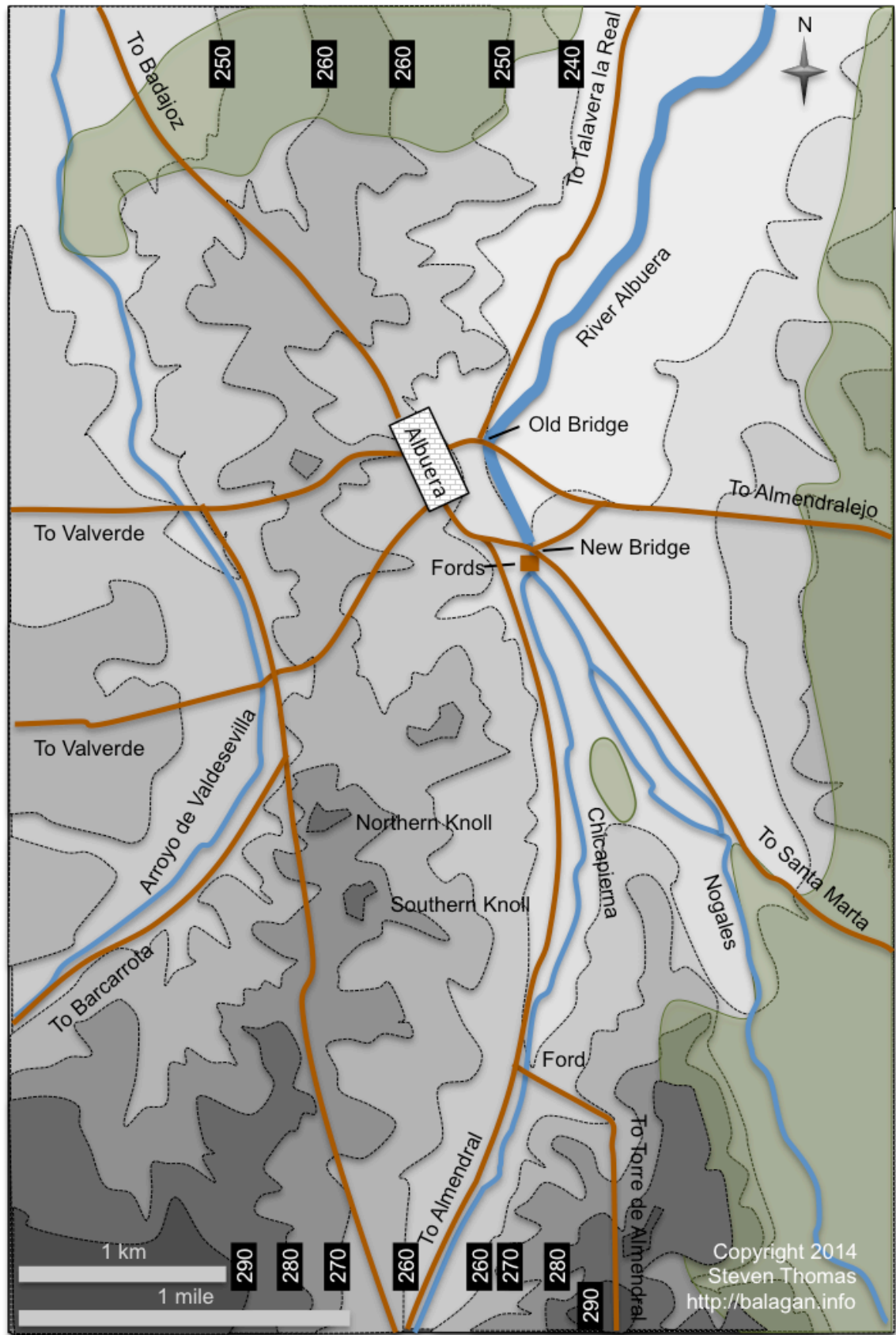
only 24,000 men but he believe the valour of his troops would compensate.

The clash occurred around the village of Albuera on 16 May 1811. The battle was a blood bath with both sides suffering heavily. Soult feinted down the main road towards Albuera itself but sent the bulk of his forces on a flank march to the left. Unexpectedly Blake's Spanish met and held the French flank attack. The British moved up to support their Allies, engaged in a gruelling firefight with the French, and eventually drove them off.

On 18 May the French withdrew. Otherwise the battle had little impact on the strategic situation. In June 1811 the reconstituted French Armies of Portugal and Andalusia forced the Allies to abandon the siege of Badajoz.

Battlefield

I haven't drawn a specialised wargaming map for this so the map is of the historical terrain.



Map of the Battle of Albuera

The published ground scale of Volley and Bayonet is 1" on table = 100 yards. So the map is almost perfect for a 6'x4' table. Admittedly this is a small battlefield by Volley and Bayonet standards but the map takes into account

quite a lot of area that other rule systems ignore (for example, the [Shako Scenario for Albuera](#) covers the ridge and the only part of the river line).

The Allies deployed on the ridge to the west of Albuera. Apparently this was undulating terrain and good cavalry country. The Northern and Southern Knolls were high points, relative to the surrounding terrain, but not "heights" as such.

The French approached from the south-east. Large wooded hills obscured the French advance and subsequent flank march.

The village itself is at the confluence of the River Albuera and two tributary streams (Nogales, Chicapierna). A third stream, the Valdesevillas, was to the west of the ridge. All of the streams contain a mere trickle of water. The River Albuera was more substantial but carried little water at the time of the battle. On paper none of the waterways should be a major obstacle to troops, however on the day they had a major impact on the battle. The Nogales and Valdesevilla should not be a serious obstacle to troops but should inconvenience cavalry and artillery. Both the Chicapierna stream and the River Albuera should pose greater obstacles and channel troops towards bridges and fords – as happened historically.

The following terrain types are present:

- **Chicapierna Stream and the River Albuera:** Both

are "rivers" in V&B terms so impassable except at bridge or ford

- **Nogales and Valdesevilla Streams:** Both are "stream" in V&B so cost half the movement allowance to cross
- **Vegetation:** All vegetation is forest in V&B terms so movement costs of massed brigades is doubled (but not of infantry skirmishers or commanders).

The respective Lines of Communications (LOC) are the road to Valverde (Allies) and road to Santa Marta (French). The Valverde road in question is more northern of the two, which was the main road to Valverde and the road Beresford paid particular attention to when he thought about retreating from Albuera.

Allied Player (Defending)

Deploys first. Moves second.

Objective

Prevent French capturing the main road to Valverde and destroy the French army's offensive ability.

Forces Available

The Allied player has an Anglo-Portuguese army and parts of two Spanish armies. Beresford is the overall commander.

Anglo-Portuguese Army (Beresford)

Army Troops Exhaustion [] [] []

1st KGL Light Infantry Bn (588) M6 [s]

2nd KGL Light Infantry Bn (510) M6 [s]

Collins' Portuguese Brigade (985) M5 [] [] linear stand,
Note 1

5th Cacadores Bn (400) M5 [s]

Hawker's (British) 4th Bn/RFA M6 [] Field

Lefebvres (British) D/Troop/RHA M6 [] Field, horse

Cleeves' 2nd Co/KGL FA M6 [] Field

Symphers' 4th Co/KGL FA M6 [] Field

Arriaga's (1st Portuguese) FA M5 [] Field

Braun's (2nd Portuguese) FA M5 [] Field

2nd British Division (Stewart) Exhaustion [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

Colborne's (British) Brigade (2066) M6 [s] [] [] []

Houghton's (British) Brigade (1651) M6 [s] [] []

Abercrombie's (British) Brigade (1597) M5 [] [] []

3 cos/5th Bn/60th Rifles (146) M6 [s]

4th British Division (Cole) Exhaustion [] [] [] [] []

Myer's (British) Brigade (2180) M6 [s] [] [] [] Shock,
Note 4

Harvey's (10th Portuguese) Brigade (2355) M5 [] [] [] [] [] []

Light Bn/Loyal Lusitanian Legion (572) M5 [s]

Portuguese Division (Hamilton) Exhaustion [] [] [] [] [] [] []

Campbell's (4th Portuguese) Brigade (2390) M5 [] [] []

Blake's Spanish Army: Blake (AC)

Army Troops:

Army Artillery (8-pdr) M4 [] Field

Advance Guard Division, Lardizabel (DC) (2398)

Exhaustion [] []

Campomayor Light Infantry Bn. M4 [s] NE

Canarias Infantry Regt. + 2nd of Leon Regt. M4 [] [] PT, NE

Murcia Infantry Regt (2 bns) M4 [] []

3rd Division, Ballesteros (DC) (3525) Exhaustion [] [] []

1st Catalonian Light Infantry Bn. M4 [s], NE

Barbastro Light Infantry Bn. M4 [s], NE

Pravia, Lena, Cangas de Tineo Inf. Regts. M4 [] [] [] PT

Castropol + Infiesto Infantry Regts. M4 [] [] PT, NE

4th Division, Zayas (DC) (4882) Exhaustion [] [] [] [] []

2nd, 4th Bns/Spanish, 4th Bn Walloon Gds M5 [] [] []

Irlanda Infantry Regt. (2 bns) M5 [] []

Toledo Infantry Regt. (2 bns) M4 [] []

Patria/Legion Extranjera/Ciudad Rod. Regts. M4 [] [] [] PT, NE

Cavalry Division, Loy (DC) Exhaustion —

Santiago Line Cavalry Regt. M4 [] Medium

Hussars de Castilla + Granaderos Cavalry M4 [s] PT, Light

Castanos Spanish Army: Castanos (AC)

Army Troops:

Army Artillery (8-pdr) M4 [] Field

Infantry Division, de Espana (DC) (1778) Exhaustion [] []

Rey/Zamora Infantry Regts. (2 bns each) M4 [] [] []

Voluntarios de Navarra Light Infantry Bn. M4 [s], NE

Cavalry Division, Penne Villemur (DC) (721)

Exhaustion —

Guard Carabiniers, Reina & Borbon Regts. M4 [] Medium

Algarve, Lusitania, & Hussars de Extremenda M4 []

Medium

Notes:

(1) All Spanish infantry is represented with either infantry linear (regiment) or infantry skirmisher stands – no infantry brigade stands.

(2) All non-Poorly Trained (PT) Spanish infantry regiments have elites (grenadiers) present, the others do not.

(3) The targets of Poorly Trained (PT) infantry skirmishers receive a saving throw from fire from them but not hits from melee.

(4) All Spanish cavalry is mounted on linear stands.

(5) Regardless of rating, all Spanish Cavalry moves as heavy due to the poor quality of their horses.

Deployment

The game starts with the troops on both sides deployed as they were on the morning of the 16 May 1811. The

Allied forces must deploy between the River Albuera and the Arroyo de Valdesevilla, and north of the North Knoll (at least 6" away from the knoll).

Cole's Division arrives in March Column on the Badajoz road.

Reinforcements

None unless Cole's Division can't fit in which case it arrives as reinforcement on the Badajoz road.

French Player (Attacking)

Deploys second and moves first.

Objective

Capture the main road to Valverde. Of course you have to go through the Allied army to do that.

Forces Available

French Army (5th Corps) (Soult)

Army Troops Exhaustion [] []

Converged Grenadiers (1100) M6 [] [] Shock, linear stand, Note 1

27th Chasseurs a Cheval (431) M5 [s] Light, Note 4

Army Artillery M5 [] Heavy

1st Division/5th Corps (Girard) Exhaustion [] [] [] []

Brigade Brayer (34th/40th Line) (1847) M5 [] [] [] []

Brigade Heilande (64th/88th Line) (2157) M5 [] [] [] []

Division Artillery M5 [] Field

2nd Division/5th Corps (Gazan) Exhaustion [] [] [] []

Brigade Pepin (21st/28th Leger) (2215) M5 [s] [s] [s] [s]

Brigade Marandin (100th/103rd Line) (2028) M5 [] [] [] [] []

Division Artillery M5 [] Field

5th Corps Cavalry Division (Latour-Maubourg)

Exhaustion [] [] [] []

Brigade Briche (2nd, 10th Hus., 21st CaC) M6 [s] [s] Light

Brigade Eclats (14th, 26th Dra, 4th Sp. CaC) M5 [] []

Medium

Brigade Digeon (17th + 27th Dragoons) (567) M5 []

Medium, linear stand, Note 4

Composite Brigade (4th + 20th Dragoons) (533) M5 []

Medium, linear stand, Note 4

1st Polish Vistula Lancers (591) M6 [s] Light Lancers,
linear stand, Note 4

Division Artillery M5 [] Light, horse

Brigade/4th Corps (Werle) Exhaustion [] [] [] [] [] [] []

]

12th Leger Regiment (2222) M5 [s] [s] [s] [s]

55th Line Regiment (1815) M5 [] [] [] []

58th Line Regiment (1625) M5 [] [] []

Division Artillery M6 [] Field

Brigade/1st Corps (Godinot) Exhaustion [] [] [] []

16th Leger Regiment (1673) M5 [s] [s] [s]

51st Line Regiment (2251) M5 [] [] [] [] [] []

Notes:

(1) All French infantry is represented with infantry brigade stands, except the converged grenadiers which are mounted as a linear (regimental) infantry stand.

(2) French Leger infantry regiments may break down into skirmisher stands.

(3) All French infantry counts as having elites (grenadiers) present.

(4) French 1 SP cavalry units are mounted as linear cavalry.

Deployment

The game starts with the troops on both sides deployed as they were on the morning of the 16 May 1811. The French deploy from the River Albuera through to where the road from Santa Marta leaves the table. Units within 12" of a bridge or ford can be deployed in any formation and off road, but other units must be in march column and on the road. Any troops that cannot fit arrive as reinforcements.

Reinforcements

Any troops that could not deploy on table arrive as reinforcements on the road to Santa Marta in march column from Turn 1.

Victory Conditions

The game begins with the 0800 hours turn, and runs through to the end of the 1400 hours turn, a total of seven turns.

If either player holds his opponent's line of communication at the end of the game, that player wins. The British line of communication is the main road to Valverde. The French line of communication is the road to Santa Marta.

Failing that, the player with the fewest exhausted divisions wins.

There are no draws; the Allied player wins all ties, so the burden of attack is on the French player.

Scenario Special Rules

All the special rules are mentioned about, particularly in the Orders of Battle.

Notes

Although I have problems with [Jeff Glasco's Order of Battle](#) as it relates to the Spanish, in the interests of getting a scenario published I've left it unchanged. I will [elaborate on my concerns in a separate post](#).

One specific grievance to note is that Jeff Glosco's Orbat has the Spanish separate from the Anglo-Portuguese. However, the Spanish cavalry operated under British

command during the battle. Prior to the battle they cooperated with Long and during the battle they fought under Lumley. So Loy and Penne Villemur should be under Lumley's command, not separate.

In reality the road to Badajoz were also part of the Allied lines of communication. It might be possible, but more complicated, to factor that into the victory conditions.

Categories: [Albuera](#), [Peninsular War](#), [Spain](#), [Volley and Bayonet](#) |