

# **The Battle Of Saguntum**

October 25th 1811

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## **The Background**

With the fall of Figueras in the August of 1811 Napoleon ordered Suchet to plan and execute the invasion of Valencia. Leaving a very strong force to hold down NE Spain Suchet advanced on Valencia in a series of concentric columns which converged on the fortified position of Saguntum. After a bloody and unsuccessful attempt to storm the place Suchet sat down to await his siege artillery. Once it arrived it was only a matter of time before Saguntum would fall and Blake, the Spanish general in command of the Valencian army, knew that he must act to save it.

Blake's forces were a mixture of the good, the bad and the downright ugly. The good consisted of the two weak divisions of Zayas and Lardizibal, the "Expeditionary Force". These veterans of Albuera had marched round with Blake from Cadiz when he had taken over the post and were probably the best troops Spain had at that time. The bad were the Valencian army who had never won a battle and whose morale was, at best, shaky. The downright ugly were the Murcians under Mahy who came to Blake's aid in time for the battle but whose performance was simply execrable. Their general, in his letters to Blake is simply scathing about them both before and after the battle, and deservedly so.

## **The Armies.**

Suchet commanded a force of veterans of many nationalities, French, Polish, Italian and Neapolitans. The Neapolitans may have been of dubious worth but the rest had seen hard campaigning in Spain and were more than a match for any Spanish army, however much they might be outnumbered. Their field artillery is factored into their foot brigades in this scenario.

The Spanish contain both good and bad troops with their foot artillery scattered amongst the foot and with a few horse artillery batteries. The bulk of the army is classed as raw and it could be argued that to get any real historical accuracy these raw troops should break as soon as they lose a combat rather than when their strength is reduced to zero. If you want to do that, feel free to do so though this may make the French victory all too easy.

## **The Battle.**

Blake envisaged a grand envelopment on the left. On his right he had gunboats along the shore to bombard the French and there he placed his best two "Expeditionary" divisions backed by some Valencians. This flank's task was to engage the French along the shoreline and main road while on the left the Valencians and Murcians swept round the French flank and cut them off from Saguntum. There was even a division under Obispo coming from the far flank to aid in this attack. In response Suchet put two strong brigades in the hills on his right, Robert and then Chlopiski's Poles while the rest of his men faced what he considered the more dangerous frontal attack along the main road. Both sides horse were greatly hampered by the low lying land on either side of the road being covered in carob trees which meant that they were restricted to the area either side of the road or further inland.

The battle was a disaster for the Spanish. On the right the expeditionary force threw back the French and the Spanish horse, for once, defeated their opponents. But these latter were, in turn, defeated by French reserves and eventually fled. Over on the left the first shock of action between the Valencians and the French made the former scatter in panic. The panic transferred itself to the Murcians and, in a trice, the whole wing was in flight. The French and Poles pursued but even they had to eventually halt exhausted. This left Zayas and Lardizibal outflanked and in danger of being surrounded for they had pushed forward quite a way against the French along the road. It was with considerable difficulty, and with not a few casualties, that they extricated themselves and formed the rearguard of the retreat to Valencia. Utterly depressed by what they had seen from their hilltop fortifications the defenders of Saguntum surrendered as soon as they were summoned.

### The Wargame.

It will be difficult for the Spanish to perform as badly on the tabletop as they did in real life unless you change the rules on raw troops as noted above. Deployment is as per the map. This shows deployment as per the actual battle in GA brigades for the French and in set up areas for the Spanish. Both sides horse are very weak and should be carefully husbanded. Note also that some force commanders appear twice. Just use different figures to represent them in their different roles as if they were separate people.

### The Scenario:

The weather is Normal, with no variation. The ground is hard. The game's Basic Length is 6 turns.

Streams count as obstacles. Horse may not enter the Carob groves which are all land to the NE of the streams between the Expeditionary Corps and the French except for a 3" area along the Valencia-Saguntum road. Horse may not enter any upland area

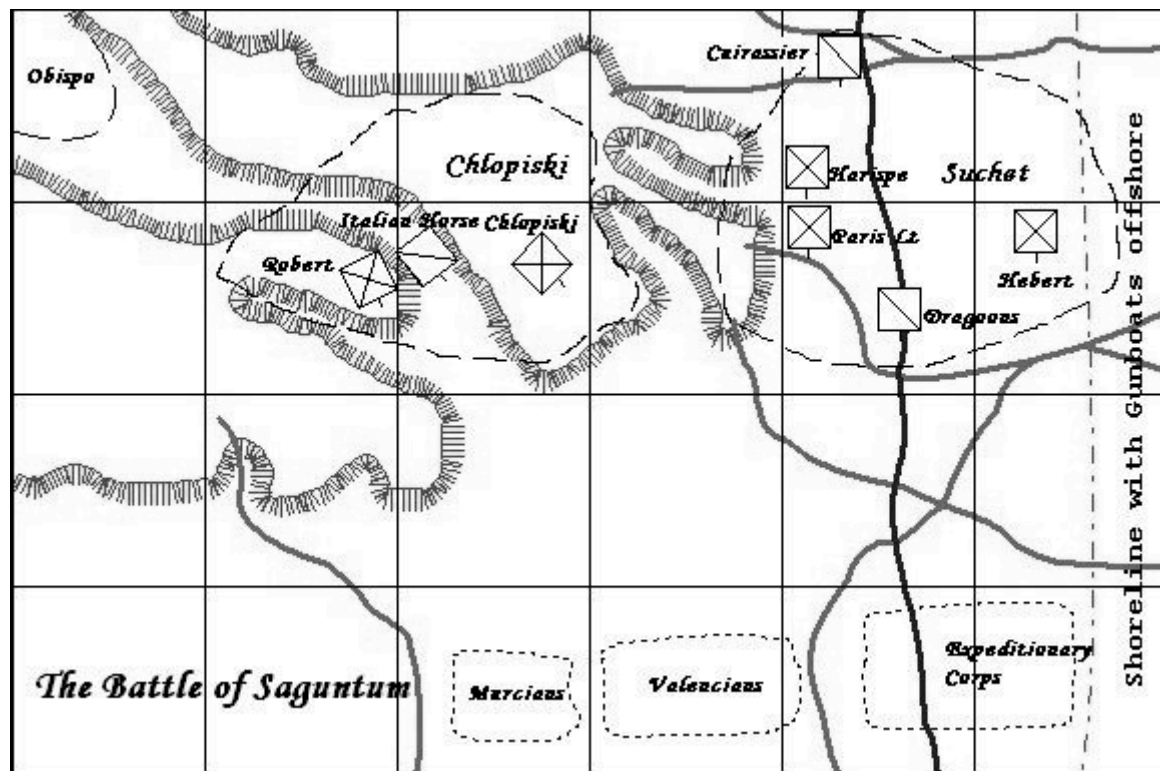
Both sides set up at the same time within the areas identified for them on the map.

The Spanish army is "Shaky." Its Break Point is: 4. Non-raw Spanish troops are Sk1

The French army is "Confident." Its Break Point is: 3. French troops are all Sk2

### The Saguntum Battlefield:

Each square represents 1 foot square



## The French Army

Commander: Suchet (Good) 20"

This is a Napoleonic Army of 2 Forces..

Note that the Commanders control radii are in excess of the norm

### Left Wing: Suchet 1 / 12"

|                            |                |       |
|----------------------------|----------------|-------|
| Hebert's Brigade           | Trained<br>9SP | _____ |
| Harispe's Division         | Veteran<br>9SP | _____ |
| St. Paul's Italian Brigade | Trained<br>6SP | _____ |
| Cuirassiers                | Veteran<br>3SP | _____ |
| Dragoons                   | Trained<br>2SP | _____ |

### Right Wing: Chlopiski 1/12" (V)

|                  |                |       |
|------------------|----------------|-------|
| Poles            | Elite<br>6SP   | _____ |
| Robert's Brigade | Trained<br>8SP | _____ |
| Italian Horse    | Veteran<br>2SP | _____ |

## The Spanish Army

Commander: Blake (Average) 20"

This is a Traditional army of 3 Forces

### Expeditionary Corps: Zayas (V) 2 /9" Aggressive

|                       |                |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Zayas' Division       | Veteran<br>8SP |
| Lardizibal's Division | Veteran<br>7SP |
| Velasco's Valencians  | Raw<br>5SP     |
| Loy's Cavalry         | Trained<br>1SP |
| Murcian Horse         | Raw<br>2SP     |
| A.Horse battery _____ |                |
| B.Horse battery _____ |                |

### Valencian Corps: O'Donnell 3/6" Aggressive

|                       |            |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Miranda's Division    | Raw<br>6SP |
| Villacampa's Division | Raw<br>6SP |
| Obispo's Division     | Raw<br>5SP |
| San Juan's Horse      | Raw<br>4SP |
| A.Horse Battery _____ |            |

### Murcian Corps: Mahy 4/6" Aggressive

|                       |            |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Creach's Brigade      | Raw<br>3SP |
| Montijo's Brigade     | Raw<br>4SP |
| A.Horse Battery _____ |            |

### Special Rules:

1. Because of the Carob Groves horse may not operate north or east of the network of streams which commence north of the Expeditionary Force except in a 3" strip along the road. They have no other effect.
2. Any French forces straying closer than 6" from the east edge of the map will sustain heavy gun attack from three batteries located at far range on gunboats offshore.
3. Horse may not enter the hills.
4. Obispo starts off table and will only appear at the NW corner at the start of any pulse where the red dice comes up a 6. He will move on in the Spanish move that pulse. Note that he is part of the Valencian Corps and is out of control on arrival.

## **Ready-Made Labels for the Saguntum Scenario**

### **Suchet (Good)**

#### **Left Wing: Suchet 1 / 12"**

L/1 Hebert SK2  
L/2 Harispe SK2  
L/3 St. Paul SK2  
LC/1 Cuirassiers  
LC/2 Dragoons

#### **Right Wing: Chlopiski (V) 1 / 12"**

R/1 Hebert SK2  
R/2 Harispe SK2  
R/3 St. Paul SK2  
RC/1 Cuirassiers  
RC/2 Dragoons

### **Blake (Average)**

#### **Expeditionary Corps: Zayas 2 / 9"**

E./1 Zayas SK1  
E/2 Lardizibal SK1  
E/3 Velasco  
E/C/1 Loy's Cavalry  
E/C/2 Murcian Horse  
E/A Horse battery 4lb  
E/B Horse battery 4lb

#### **Valencians: O'Donnell 3 / 6"**

V/1 Miranda  
V/2 Villacampa  
V/3 Obispo  
V/C San Juan's Horse  
V/A Horse battery 4lb

#### **Murcians: Mahy 4 / 6"**

M/1 Creach  
M/2 Montijo  
M/A Horse battery 4lb

Note: I habitually use labels with more information such as SP and class of troops on them with each force in a different background colour. I will endeavour to provide this for Saguntum on the yahoo group site.