

The Battle Of Vitoria

21 June, 1813

Vitoria was the crowning allied triumph in the peninsular war. The French were swept from Spain in chaos, a victory celebrated by the allies across Europe. Beethoven was moved to compose his famous "Wellington's Victory." The battle shows Wellington at the height of his powers, leading the biggest and best army he will ever command, against a dispirited French army on the run from Madrid. Although casualties were not severe on either side, the French army was utterly routed, leaving behind over 150 guns and a vast sum of treasure: the accumulated spoils of Joseph Bonaparte's star-crossed reign as king of Spain.

Despite his spectacular victory at Salamanca, the year 1812 had ended in frustration for Wellington, who was forced to retreat to Portugal to rest his exhausted army. The winter of 1812-13 was spent rebuilding the allied army, and for the coming Spring campaign, Wellington would have numerical superiority over his French foes for the first time. In addition to the excellent British and Portuguese forces, the British had trained and equipped a new Spanish army—a vast improvement over previous Spanish forces. Altogether Wellington could muster over 100,000 men.

The French were in a very different situation. Although most French troops in Spain were by this time seasoned veterans, Napoleon had pulled troops out of Spain to rebuild his shattered *Grande Armée* in Germany. (Most of the best soldiers in the Spanish theatre were taken away for the reconstituting of the Imperial Guard.) French forces were scattered across northern and central Spain in various small "armies." They had long since lost the South. Joseph's throne in Madrid was no longer secure, and he was planning an evacuation North to Valladolid. Knowing this move would tempt Wellington to pursue, Joseph and his military chief, Marshal Jourdan, hoped to prepare an ambush for the allied army in the hills of northern Spain.

It was Wellington, however, who was planning to ambush them. By this point the French were absolutely swarmed by Spanish guerillas—so much so that any supply convoys required entire French divisions for escort. The allies thus knew the location and movements of the French as the two armies moved North, but the French were nearly blind. Joseph's forces prepared to make their stand in the valley around the town of Vitoria, but even though they were there two days ahead of Wellington, the French were negligent at blowing bridges, scouting the region, or preparing for much beyond an allied frontal assault. Wellington, however, had planned a huge four-column envelopment.

Wellington's plan did not come off perfectly, and the French infantry resisted fiercely, but by mid-day on the 21st, the flanking allied forces, led by Longa's Spaniards (which shows how much the Spanish had improved) had cut the French main road and path of retreat. Outnumbered and under pressure from three directions, General Gazan quit the field without orders, exposing the other two French corps to annihilation. It is a measure of the leadership quality of French general officers that D'Erlon's and Reille's corps were not totally overrun in the envelopment that resulted.

As the French army collapsed, Wellington's great victory was spoiled by the huge amounts of loot found in the French baggage trains. The British infantry became so drunk that there was no effective pursuit after the battle.

The Scenario:

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

The town of Vitoria is Hard Cover. Other towns are Soft Cover. All towns are 1 base. The Zadorra river is impassable, except at the bridges, and at the one ford shown on the map.

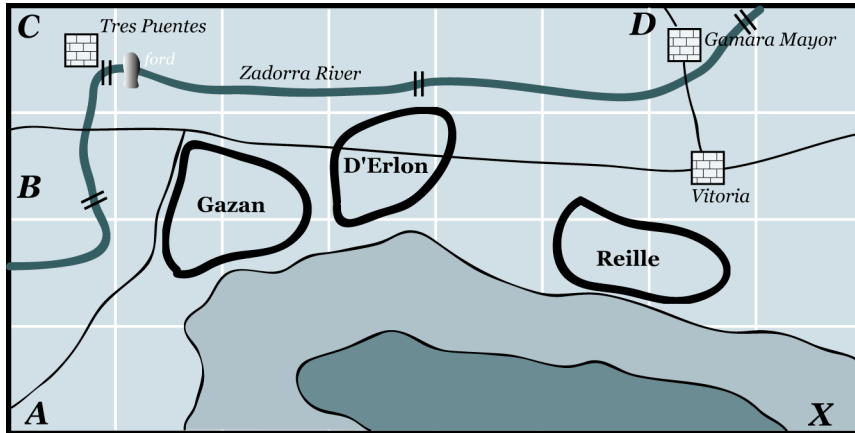
The French deploy first. The allied forces all enter on their first pulse of Turn one, at their respective entry points, shown on the map: (A) Hill, (B) Cole, (C) Dalhousie, (D) Graham.

The morale of the allied army is Confident. Its Break Point is 16

The morale of the French army is Shaky. Its Break Point is 9

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The Battlefield of Vitoria:



The Allied Army

Commander: Wellington (Great)

This is a Napoleonic Army of 4 Forces. Wellington has 2 Generals.

(Although there was no formal corps system, Wellington had organized his army into four major "columns" from the outset of this campaign, each of which was semi-independent and tasked with a specific mission, very much like an army corps. Since these "corps" were commanded by men who were also supposed to be divisional commanders, it is assumed that their staffs handled much of the paperwork for their divisions.)

Army Artillery Reserve: Dickson

The Wellington player may deploy these artillery units with any of his corps, or he may create a grand battery at the outset of the game, deploying General Dickson (his artillery officer). This would count against his allowable Generals.

R: British 9-pdr Foot A ___

R: British 9-pdr Foot B ___

R: British 9-pdr Foot C ___

R: British 9-pdr Foot D ___

R: Portuguese 9-pdr Foot A ___

R: Portuguese 9-pdr Foot B ___

R: Portuguese 9-pdr Foot C ___

I Corps: Hill 2 / 18"

2nd Division: (Hill)

I/2/1 Cadogan (Highlanders)

Elite 9SP _____

I/2/2 Byng

Veteran 8SP _____

I/2/3 O'Callaghan

Veteran 8SP _____

Portuguese Division: Silveira

I/P/1 Da Costa

Veteran 6SP _____

I/P/2 Campbell

Veteran 7SP _____

1st Spanish Division: Morillo

I/S/1 Leon

Trained 5SP _____

I/S/2 Doile

Trained 5SP _____

Corps Cavalry:

I/C Alten (mixed light)

Elite 6SP _____

Corps Artillery:

6-pdr Horse ___

II Corps: Cole (V) 2 / 18" Aggressive

Light Division: C. Alten

II/L/1 Kempt

Veteran 5SP _____

II/L/2 Vandeleur

Veteran 4SP _____

II/L3 Portuguese Cazadores

Veteran 4SP _____

4th Division: (Cole)

II/4/1 W. Anson

Veteran 7SP _____

II/4/2 Skerrett

Veteran 5SP _____

II/4/3 Stubb (Portuguese)

Veteran 7SP _____

Corps Cavalry:

II/C/1 Grant (Hussars)

Elite 8SP _____

II/C/2 Posonby (Dragoons)

Elite 6SP _____

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| II/C/3 D'Urban (Portuguese) | Trained 3SP _____ |
| II/C/4 Hill (Guards) | Guard 6SP _____ |
| Corps Artillery: | |
| 6-pdr Horse A ____ | |
| 6-pdr Horse B ____ | |

III Corps: Dalhousie 4 / 6" Cautious

3rd Division: Picton

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| III/3/1 Brisbane | Elite 9SP _____ |
| III/3/2 Colville | Veteran 6SP _____ |
| III/3/3 Power (Portuguese) | Veteran 6SP _____ |

7th Division: (Dalhousie)

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| III/7/1 Barnes | Veteran 6SP _____ |
| III/7/2 Grant | Veteran 7SP _____ |
| III/7/3 LeCor (Portuguese) | Trained 5SP _____ |

IV Corps: Graham 3 / 18"

1st Division: Howard

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| IV/1/1 Stopford | Guards 9SP _____ |
| IV/1/2 Halkett (KGL & Lights) | Elite 10SP _____ |

5th Division: Oswald

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| IV/5/1 Hay | Veteran 6SP _____ |
| IV/5/2 Robinson | Veteran 5SP _____ |
| IV/5/3 Spry (Portuguese) | Veteran 6SP _____ |

Ad-Hoc Portuguese Division: Pack

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| IV/P/1 Pack | Veteran 6SP _____ |
| IV/P/2 Bradford | Trained 5SP _____ |

2nd Spanish Division: Longa

| | |
|---------|-------------------|
| IV/2S/1 | Trained 6SP _____ |
|---------|-------------------|

Corps Cavalry:

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| IV/C/1 Anson & Bock (Lt. Dragoons) | Veteran 7SP _____ |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|

Corps Artillery:

6-pdr Horse ____
 Spanish 6-pdr Horse ____

The French Army

Commander: Joseph/Jourdan (Poor)

This is a Napoleonic Army of 3 Forces. The French have 2 Generals available.

*If using the optional rule for Baggage Trains, deploy **four** such units within 12" of Joseph's headquarters.*

"Army of the South:" Gazan 4 / 16" Cautious

1st Division: Leval

S/1/1 Moncquery (Légère) Veteran 7SP _____

S/1/2 Morgan Veteran 6SP _____

3rd Division: Villatte

S/3/1 Rignoux Veteran 7SP _____

S/3/2 Lefol Trained 7SP _____

4th Division: Conroux

S/4/1 Rey Veteran 9SP _____

S/4/2 Schwitter Veteran 7SP _____

5th Division: Maransin

S/5/1 (Légère) Veteran 7SP _____

6th Division: Darricau

S/6/1 St. Pol Veteran 7SP _____

S/6/2 Remond (Légère) Veteran 8SP _____

Corps Cavalry:

S/C/1 P.Soult (Chasseurs) Trained 5SP _____

S/C/2 Tilly (Dragoons) Veteran 8SP _____

S/C/3 Digeon (Dragoons) Veteran 7SP _____

Corps Artillery:

S: 12-pdr Foot A ___

S: 12-pdr Foot B ___

S: 12-pdr Foot C ___

S: 6-pdr Horse A ___

S: 6-pdr Horse B ___

"Army of the Center:" D'Erlon 2 / 14"

1st Division: Darmagnac

C/1/1 Chasse Veteran 6SP _____

C/1/2 Neuenstein (various German) Trained 6SP _____

2nd Division: Cassagne

C/2/1 Braun (Légère) Veteran 7SP _____

C/2/2 Blondeau Veteran 7SP _____

Spanish Division: Casaplicos

C/S/1 Guy (Sp. Guards) Veteran 7SP _____

C/S/2 Spanish Line regiments Conscript 5SP _____

Corps Cavalry:

C/C/1 Treillard (Dragoons) Veteran 6SP _____

C/C/2 Spanish & German Lt. Cav Trained 3SP _____

Corps Artillery:

C: 12-pdr Foot ___

"Army of Portugal:" Reille 2 / 12"**4th Division: Sarrut**

P/4/1 Fririon (Légère) Veteran 7SP _____

P/4/2 Menne Veteran 7SP _____

6th Division: Lamartinière

P/6/1 Gauthier* Veteran 7SP _____

P/6/2 Merrier Conscript 5SP _____

Corps Cavalry:

P/C/1 Mermet (Chasseurs & Hussars) Veteran 6SP _____

P/C/2 Boyer (Dragoons) Veteran 6SP _____

Corps Artillery:

P: 12-pdr Foot ____

P: 6-pdr Horse ____

* Technically, these two regiments were conscripts, but they performed so well during the battle that I decided to classify them as veterans.

French Forces Which Might Have Arrived at Vitoria**"Army of the North:" Clausel (V) 2 / 12"****1st Division: Abbé**

1/1 Soulier (Légère) Veteran 9SP _____

1/2 Cassan Veteran 8SP _____

2nd Division: Vandermaesen

2/1 Roguet Veteran 9SP _____

2/2 ? Trained 8SP _____

Italian Division: St. Paul

Italian Line & Legere Trained 4SP _____

Cavalry:

Chasseurs Trained 5SP _____

Corps Artillery: 2 6-pdr horse BTYs

N: 6-pdr Horse A ____

N: 6-pdr Horse B ____

Northern Detachment: Foy (V) 2 / 12" Aggressive**1st Division: Bouvier**

1/1 Trained 5SP _____

1/2 Bonté Trained 6SP _____

2nd Division: Barbot

2/1 Veteran 5SP _____

2.2 Berlier Veteran 8SP _____

3rd Division: Taupin

3/1 (Légère) Veteran 8SP _____

3/2 Storm-de-Grave Veteran 7SP _____

4th Division: Sarrut

4/1 Fririon (Légère) Veteran 7SP _____

4/2 Delpiré Veteran 6SP _____

Allied Forces Which Might Have Arrived at Vitoria

Elements of the Spanish Fourth Army: Giron 3 / 6"

1st Division: Losada

4/1/1 Trained 6SP _____
 4/1/2 Trained 5SP _____

2nd Division: Barceña

4/2/1 Conscript 4SP _____
 4/2/2 Conscript 4SP _____

3rd Division: Porlier

4/3/1 Trained 5SP _____

British 6th Division: Pakenham

6/1 Stirling Veteran 6SP _____
 6/2 Hinde Veteran 6SP _____
 6/3 Madden (Portuguese) Veteran 6SP _____

Alternative Victorias, Play-Balancing, and What-Ifs:

Because this scenario so obviously favors the allies, you might consider using it to teach a new player. The more experienced player can take the French side, and let the "new kid" be Wellington. If you'd prefer a more balanced scenario, however, there are many interesting what-ifs, none of which require too much bending of history:

Play-Balancing for the French Side:

1. Jourdan Isn't Sick

Marshal Jourdan was ill and feverish right up until the day of the battle, and definitely wasn't at his best. He neglected to take rudimentary precautions like reconnaissance of the various valleys and river crossings. King Joseph, of course, was not up to the task of army command. This variant assumes that Jourdan is in better mental and physical condition.

- A. Jourdan's Skill rating is improved to "Average."
- B. Due to the posting of French pickets, much of Wellington's surprise has been lost. The allies deploy first. The French may then deploy anywhere in the valley, but never within 12" of any allied unit or entry point. Finally, the French may choose any one bridge to mine for demolition. After the allies deploy, the French may then destroy the bridge.

2. The Weather Doesn't Improve

The weather had been miserable in the week leading to the battle: unseasonably cold and rainy. But then the sunshine broke right as Wellington needed it. This variant assumes that the rain continues for another day. The Wellington player now has to make a choice:

- A. If you want to go ahead and fight today, the weather will be Overcast and Variable. (This could be a huge problem — remember how spread out the allied army is.)
- B. If you choose to wait until tomorrow, when the sun comes out, then you've given the French another day to prepare, and thus General Clausel's Force will be present on the French side, deployed as desired.

3. Clausel Clears a Path on the 21st

General Clausel and his "Army of the North" were trying to get to Vitoria, but were slowed by constant action with Spanish guerillas. He was only 15 miles from the battlefield when the French army collapsed; half a day's march would have brought his 20,000 men into action. This variant assumes a battle fought as Clausel marches to the guns.

- A. Starting at the end of Turn 2, the French player should roll one die. If the roll is equal to or less than the number of the current turn, then Clausel's Army of the North will enter from Point X. Keep rolling at the end of each turn until Clausel arrives.
- B. The arrival of this Force increases the French break-point by 2, and the number of Forces in the French army by one.

4. Max Foy Gets Into the Act

General Maximilien-Sébastien Foy, one of the best divisional commanders in the French army, was in charge of a large, corps-sized detachment to the North of the main army. He, too, figured out what was happening and tried to march to Joseph's support, but he too was held up by narrow roads and Spanish guerillas. His Force was about 25 miles from the battlefield when he realized the French were retreating, and the battle was already lost. One day of hard marching would have brought him and his three divisions to Vitoria. As it was, he and Graham fought a series of running battles across northern Spain that summer. This variant can be played in two ways. In either case, it is *very* damaging to the allies.

- A. Foy's arrival would have completely changed the mission of Graham, who would have been unable to outflank the French army. Spanish guerillas would have alerted the allies to Foy's approach, and thus Wellington's attack would have become a simple frontal assault, albeit broken up by the difficult terrain. Under this variant, starting at the end of Turn 1, the French player should roll one die. If the roll is equal to or less than the number of the current turn, then Foy's Force will enter next turn, along the main road from France (Point Y). The allied IV corps' starting positions are moved back 24" West of their normal entry point D, still along the northern edge of the board.
- B. Alternatively, Foy's approach would have drawn off Graham and Longa's strength, and a separate battle, "off-board," would have developed. If you choose this variant, Foy does not enter, but then neither will Longa's Spanish division, nor will Oswald's 5th Division. The allied IV Corps at Vitoria is reduced to the British 1st Infantry division, and Pack's Portuguese division. The rest goes off to handle Foy.
- C. Whichever option you choose, be sure to adjust both armies' break-points accordingly.

Play-Balancing for the Allied Side:

1. Wellington Gets Over His Tiff with Picton

Wellington's choice of Lord Dalhousie to command the center column was surprising, since Sir Thomas Picton was clearly the better field commander for a major attack. In fact, during the battle, Dalhousie delayed so much that Picton finally acted on his own and attacked the French without waiting for Dalhousie's orders. Some historians have speculated that Wellington deliberately slighted Picton because the two men had been arguing lately. This variant assumes that Wellington swallows his pride and gives the command to the better man.

- A. Picton commands the center column. His ratings as sub-commander are:

Picton (V) 1 / 9" Aggressive

2. Giron Makes It To the Battlefield

Wellington was operating in conjunction with a corps of Spanish troops under General Giron, whose mission had been to swing broadly around the French army and prevent a retreat, thus pinning Joseph at Vitoria for the knockout blow. As it turns out, this was unnecessary, since Joseph had been planning for days to fight at Vitoria. The result was that Giron's 12,000 men were too far away to participate in the battle, and even though they made force-marches all day, arrived after the allied victory was complete. In this variant, Wellington decides to keep Giron on a tighter leash. *Note that this is a very powerful addition to the allied flanking force, and will make the French position utterly hopeless, unless using one of the French play-balance options.*

- A. Giron's Force will be arriving behind Graham. Starting at the end of Turn 2, the allied player should roll one die. If the roll is equal to or less than the number of the current turn, then Giron's Force will enter next turn, at the same entry point "D" as Graham's Force.
- B. Giron's arrival increases the allied break point by 2 and the number of Forces by one.

3. Pakenham Arrives in Time

Pakenham's 6th Division never made it to Vitoria, but was nearby, watching Wellington's left and rear, in the event that the French relief columns appeared unexpectedly from that quarter. Under this variant, Wellington includes Pakenham in the center column. Add Pakenham's division to Dalhousie's corps, increasing Dalhousie's radius to 9", and increasing the allied Break Point by 1.

Ready-Made Labels for the Vitoria Scenario

Wellington (Great)

Artillery: Dickson

R: 9-pdr Foot A

R: 9-pdr Foot B

R: 9-pdr Foot C

R: 9-pdr Foot D

R: 9-pdr Foot (Port) A

R: 9-pdr Foot (Port) B

R: 9-pdr Foot (Port) C

I Hill 2 / 18"

I/2/1 Cadogan SK2

I/2/2 Byng SK2

I/2/3 O'Callaghan SK2

I/P/1 Da Costa SK2

I/P/2 Campbell SK2

I/1S/1 Leon SK1

I/2S/2 Doile SK1

I/C Alten (Lt.)

I: 6-pdr Horse

II Cole (V) 2 / 18" Agg

II/L/1 Kempt SK2

II/L/2 Vandeleur SK2

II/L3 Portuguese Cz SK2

II/4/1 W. Anson SK2

II/4/2 Skerrett SK2

II/4/3 Stubb (Port) SK2

II/C/1 Grant (Hussars)

II/C/2 Posenby (Drag)

II/C/3 D'Urban (Port)

II/C/4 Hill (Guards)

II: 6-pdr Horse A

II: 6-pdr Horse B

III Dalhousie 4 / 6" Cau.

III/3/1 Brisbane SK2

III/3/2 Colville SK2

III/3/3 Power (Port) SK2

III/7/1 Barnes SK2

III/7/2 Grant SK2

III/7/3 LeCor (Port) SK2

IV Graham 3 / 18"

IV/1/1 Stopford SK2

IV/1/2 Halkett (Lt) SK2

IV/5/1 Hay SK2

IV/5/2 Robinson SK2

IV/5/3 Spry (Port) SK2

IV/P/1 Pack SK2

IV/P/2 Bradford SK2

IV/2S/1 SK1

IV/C/1 Anson (Lt. Dr)

IV: 6-pdr Horse

IV: 6-pdr Horse (Span)

SP 4th Army Giron 3 / 6"

4/1/1 Spanish Line SK1

4/1/2 Spanish Line SK1

4/2/1 Spanish Line SK1

4/2/2 Spanish Line SK1

4/3/1 Spanish Line SK1

6/1 Stirling SK2

6/2 Hinde SK2

6/3 Madden (Port) SK2

Joseph/Jourdan (Poor)**South Gazan 4 / 16" Cau.**

S/1/1 Monquery (Le) SK2

S/1/2 Morgan SK2

S/3/1 Rignoux SK2

S/3/2 Lefol SK2

S/4/1 Rey SK2

S/4/2 Schwitter SK2

S/5/1 (Légère) SK2

S/6/1 St. Pol SK2

S/6/2 Remond (Le) SK2

S/C/1 P.Soult (Chas.)

S/C/2 Tilly (Dragoons)

S/C/3 Digeon (Dragoons)

S: 12-pdr Foot A**S:** 12-pdr Foot B**S:** 12-pdr Foot C**S:** 6-pdr Horse**S:** 6-pdr Horse**Center D'Erlon 2 / 14"**

C/1/1 Chasse SK2

C/1/2 Neuenstein SK1

C/2/1 Braun (Le) SK2

C/2/2 Blondeau SK2

C/S/1 Guy (Sp. Gd) SK2

C/S/2 Spanish Line SK1

C/C/1 Treillard (Dr)

C/C/2 Lt. Cav

C: 12-pdr Foot**Portugal Reille 2 / 12"**

P/4/1 Fririon (Le) SK2

P/4/2 Menne SK2

P/6/1 Gauthier SK2

P/6/2 Merrier SK1

P/C/1 Mermet (Light)

P/C/2 Boyer (Dragoon)

P: 12-pdr Foot**P:** 6-pdr Horse**North Clausel (V) 2 / 12"**

N/1/1 Soulier (Le) SK2

N/1/2 Cassan SK2

N/2/1 Roguet SK2

N/2/2 French Line SK2

Italian Line & Legere SK2

N/C Chasseurs

N: 6-pdr Horse A**N:** 6-pdr Horse B**Foy (V) 2 / 12" Agg**

F/1/1 French Line SK2

F/1/2 Bonté SK2

2/1 French Line SK2

2.2 Berlier SK2

3/1 (Légère) SK2

3/2 Storm-de-Grave SK2

4/1 Fririon (Légère) SK2

4/2 Delpiré SK2