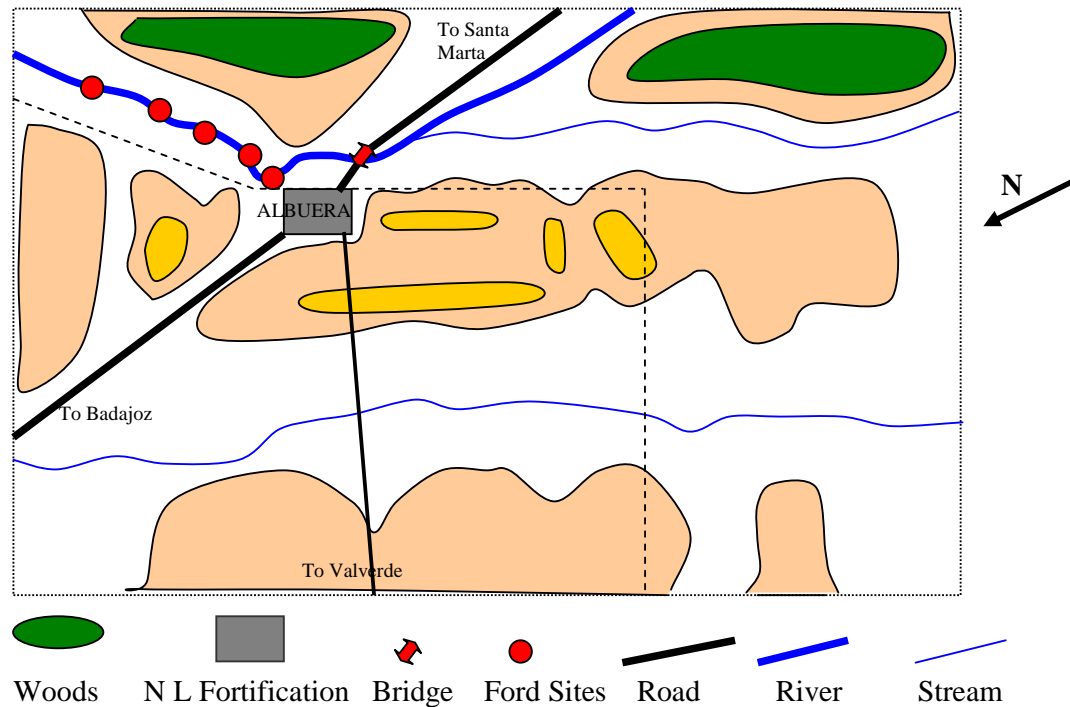


ALBUERA 16 May 1811

On 12 May 1811, when hearing that Marshal Soult was advancing against him from the South with 25,000 men, General Beresford abandoned the siege of Badajoz and moved to take up a defensive position centred on the town of Albuera.

Beresford's Anglo-Portuguese force of 22,000, was joined during the afternoon of the 15 May by 15,000 Spanish, commanded by General Blake, but they were not properly established by the time the French launched their attack early the next day.

Initially the French had the advantage as they approached from the South rather than the East, as Beresford had anticipated. They attacked with a huge column of infantry supported by the cavalry which took the ill prepared Spanish left flank by surprise, who, although they fought gallantly, had to be rapidly reinforced by Stewart's British 2nd Division. At the critical moment in this reinforcement a sudden rainstorm burst over the battlefield rendering muskets unable to fire. At the same time the French cavalry launched their attack on the 2nd Division's poorly defended right flank causing massive casualties, before they were eventually repulsed. Indeed so successful was their assault that they managed to reach Beresford and his staff; it was here that the General, a large unusually strong man, achieved everlasting notoriety by grasping a French lancer by the scruff of his neck and unhorsing him! The rain finally eased and the battle degenerated into a firefight that neither side seemed either prepared to or unable to resolve. The impasse was finally ended by Lowry Cole, on his own initiative, bringing up his Anglo-Portuguese 4th Division to join the fray. The French, despite being reinforced themselves, finally broke and retreated, but the Allies were so exhausted and dispirited by their own losses that they were unable to pursue. The Allies claimed a victory, but at considerable loss of life and, retrospectively, considerable criticism of Beresford's handling of the encounter.

The Battlefield. The game is fought on a 4 Foot x 2 ½ Foot table. Albuera is classed as a Fortification. To the north of the bridge the River Albuera is impassable except at a ford, whilst below the bridge it is passable to all except artillery, the streams are easily fordable by all units and are classed as in Bad Going whilst crossing. The Allied Deployment Zone is marked on the map as the area inside of the dotted line.

Forces Involved:

Allies:

Anglo-Portuguese Command

1 x CinC (*General Beresford*)
3 x Ms (British)
1 x LI (KGL Light Bns)
1 x HC (British)
1 x HA (British)
3 x Ms(M) (Portuguese)
1 x LC(M) (Portuguese)

Reserve – 4th Division

1 x Ms (British)
1 x Ms(M) (Portuguese)

Spanish Command

1 x CinC (*General Blake -1 CAP*)
1 x Ms (Walloon and Spanish Guard)
4 x Ms(M)
1 x LI
1 x LC(M)
1 x IC.

Total: 22 Units

French:

1 x CinC (*Marshall Soult +1 CAP*)
1 x Ms(E) (Combined Grenadiers)
6 x Ms
2 x Ms/LI
2 x LC
1 x LC (Vistula Legion) (Classed as HC in Close Combat)
1 x LC(M) (Spanish)
1 x FA
1 x HA.

Total: 16 Units

Gaming Notes:

1. Deployment. The Allies deploy first within the designated Deployment Zone. The French then deploy anywhere outside the Zone at least 400 paces from it or any table edge, and take the first Bound.
2. Allied CAP Dice. The Allies are two separate commands and therefore can not share CAP points.
3. 4th Division. In order to simulate the delayed involvement of the 4th Division one Unit of British and one of Portuguese arrive, in column on the road from Valverde, on the Turn following a 5 or 6 having been rolled on the Anglo-Portuguese Command CAP dice.
4. Finding the Ford. Five counters are placed, evenly spaced and face down, along the Northern half of the River Albuera, but only one is marked on the underside as the crossing place. Either side moving a Unit into contact with a counter and 'secretly' examining it can find the ford. Once identified the ford may be used in the next Turn, units are considered to be in Bad Going whist crossing.
5. Hills. All the hills or contours 'Plateau' after the first 200paces, therefore any unit more than 200paces back from the front edge of a contour is out of sight to units on a lower contour.
6. Weather. As the weather played such a significant part it would be unhistorical to ignore its effects. The weather is decreed each Turn by the throw of a D6 as follows:

It starts raining on a 5 or 6.

On the following Turn it either stops if it is a 1, 2 or 3 or turns to torrential rain if a 4, 5 or 6.

The effects of the weather are as follows:

In Rain. When raining Infantry and Artillery fire at -1 to their Combat factor.

In Torrential Rain. In torrential rain all firing ceases, Infantry and Artillery are -1 when in Close Combat and mounted movement is reduced to 200 paces.

Victory Conditions.

The French can claim a victory by destroying 5 Units from the Anglo-Portuguese Command **and** 3 from the Spanish Command.

The Allies can claim victory by destroying 6 French Units.

For French victory calculation the capture of Albuera and the exit point for the Badajoz road each count as the equivalent of 2 enemy Units (a total of 4 Units shared equally between the two Allied commands).