

The Battle of Alcaniz, 23rd May 1809.

A scenario for:

Grand Manoeuvre:

Black Powder & Blue Steel



Napoleonic Miniatures

Wargames Rules

By Michael Collins.

The Battle of Alcaniz, 23rd May 1809.

Notes for Umpires:

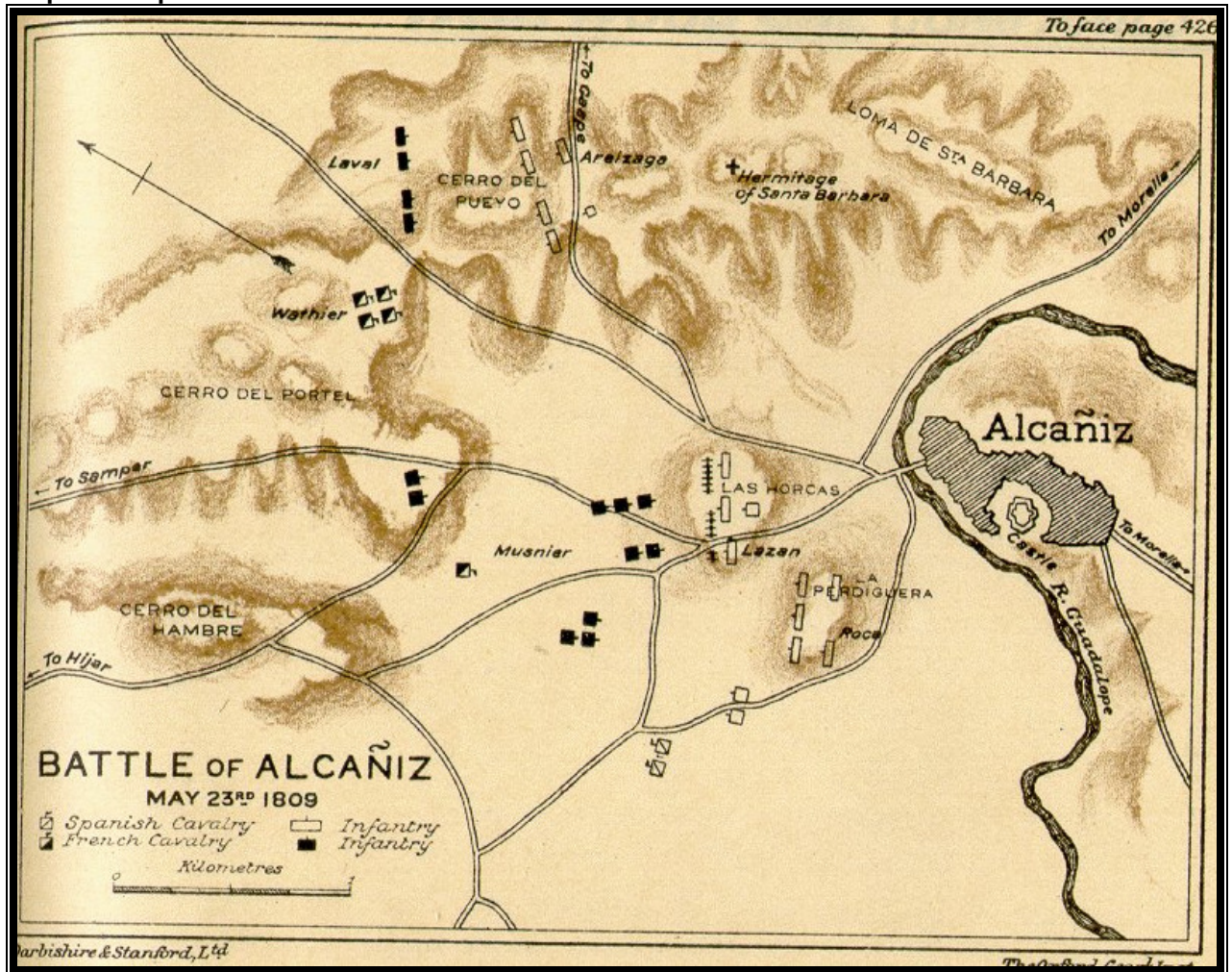
I believe that the map below is probably from an early edition of Oman's History. It provides some good detailed information for the Spanish battle arrays which may be helpful to either side's players if they wish to re-fight the battle historically.

Possibly Areizaga's Company of Tiradores is shown in the second line as a reserve (this was probably its final position when Leval's brigade was engaged with Areizaga's line) and it would seem that the 1st Regiment of Valencia (3 Btns) was the first line of Roca's division.

It also shows, for the French; Musnier's attack on Lazan's division on Las Horcas as being in columns (battalion columns) and not a divisional column by battalions deployed in line formation.

But, given the rules for doing this, you may encourage the French player to try an attack in either formation?

Umpire's Map Number One:



Suchet was quite aware of his own units' poor morale, so you should inform the French player that his units' performance **may be** impaired because of their involvement in the siege of Saragossa and their pay arrears.

For the game, French units will actually be rated one class lower than the listing in the order of battle.

The Battle of Alcaniz, 23rd May 1809.

Notes for Umpires continued:

Considering their performance on the day, you may consider giving Areizaga's division a +1 to their random die roll scores in the first turn of combat.

Remember that in the rules, brigade commanders may attempt to disengage their commands from a combat by the use of initiative tests.

The battle starts in the early afternoon after Spanish advanced parties of light troops and cavalry had retired before the French advance; this had started at six in the morning. Time should not be an issue in this game, as there is a full eight hours of daylight for the battle to take place.

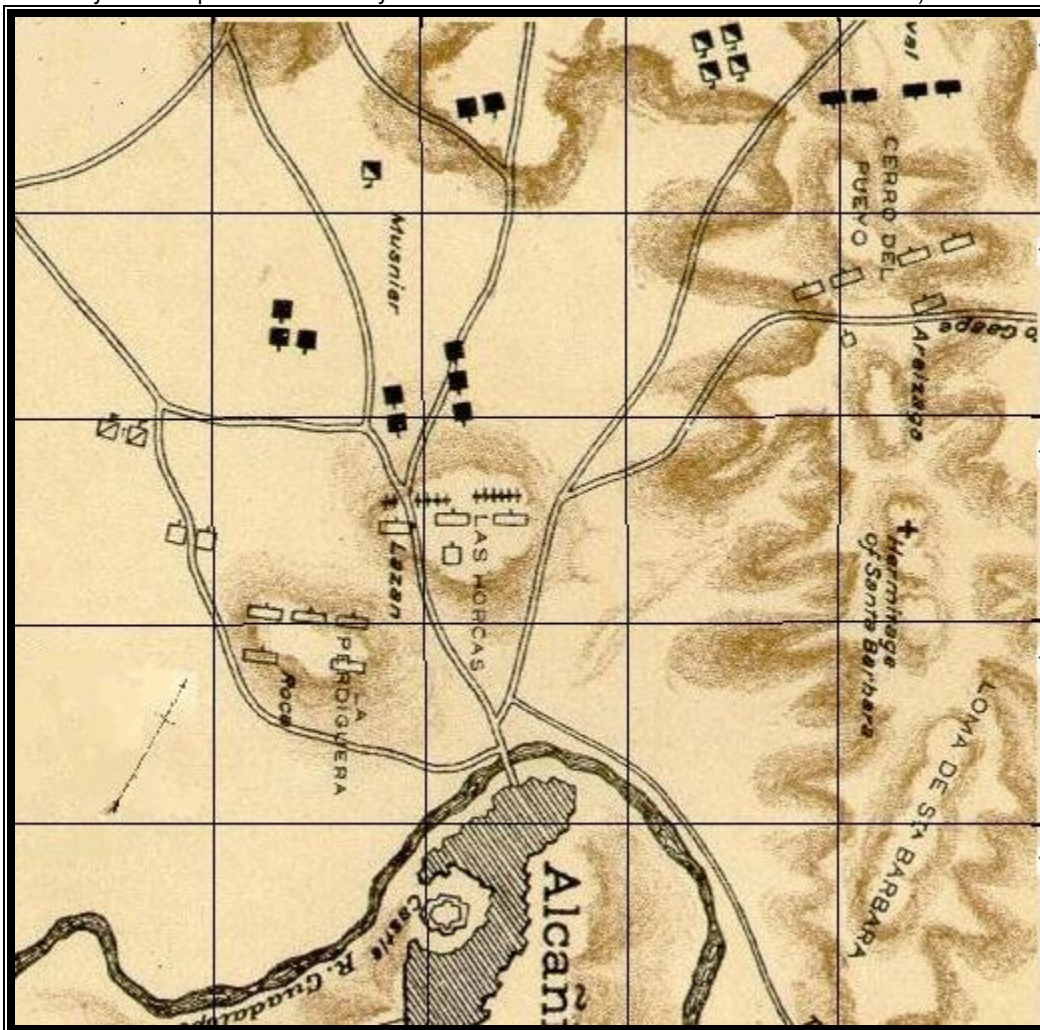
Variations in unit size:

Some small Spanish infantry battalions of approximately 200 men each, or half battalions have two bases and light infantry detachments in the roster have one or two bases if they are of about 100 or 200 men each.

The largest Spanish unit, the Batallon de Reserva de Aragon with 57 officers and 1,104 men has one additional base.

Umpire's Map Number Two:

Part of the Darbishire & Stanford Map with one foot grid superimposed for a historical game set up (the column/line symbols represent differently sized battalions and so therefore are not to scale).



Alcaniz. 23rd May 1809.

French Player's Briefing: 3rd Corps CinC: Suchet

Responding to General Blake's moves to relieve the siege of Saragossa you have advanced to Alcaniz with 7,292 infantry, 526 cavalry and 18 guns.

You have only just taken command of your corps and so you have had no time to reorganize, or to improve its morale. The corps has recently been involved in the siege of Saragossa, its officers are unhappy that the rewards and promotions have been given to the 5th corps. The men have been worn down by the guerilla war and their pay is in arrears. The Corp's newly raised regiments which include the 114th, 115th and the 121st are in a poor state. It should be no surprise therefore, that the battlefield performance of your units **may be** lowered in this battle. However the alternative of not engaging Blake's army would be ruinous to your military career and so battle is unavoidable!

At any one time Suchet must have given advance orders to at least one of his four available brigades.

As the personal escort to the CinC, the 61st Ligne and the Voltigeurs of 40th Ligne must remain with Suchet. Morale tests are by infantry/cavalry brigade.

Victory Conditions:

Suchet must defeat Blake and halt the Spanish advance on Saragossa.

French Player's Map:

The map shows the French deployment area (blue dashed & dotted) and the known Spanish positions (white dashed and dotted).



Alcaniz. 23rd May 1809.

Spanish Player's Briefing:

Spanish "Army of the Right" CinC: Joaquín Blake y Joyes.

With a force of 8,101 infantry, 445 cavalry and 19 guns you have advanced to relieve the siege of Saragossa.

Your army morale is good and you have reason to believe that the French forces now under Suchet's command have been demoralized by the guerilla war and their involvement in the siege works of Saragossa.

At the start of the game, all Spanish commands are to be issued with hold orders.

Morale tests are by infantry "wing" or cavalry brigade.

If detached, the Olivenza Cavalry Regiment with only one base does not have a unit class die roll. Otherwise, it is kept with the other cavalry regiment in the "brigade" and both are treated as one combined cavalry unit.

Victory Conditions:

Blake must halt and defeat the French counter-movement against him.

Spanish Player's Map:

The map shows the possible French deployment area (blue dashed & dotted) and the actual locations of Spanish commands in the battle (white dashed and dotted). Spanish forces must be deployed to defend these areas and the town of Alcaniz. These actual deployment areas of Spanish forces may be linked up, to form a more continuous line.

Garcia Loigorri's artillery batteries may be split up to support each body of the Spanish army.



Alcaniz: 23rd May 1809.

French order of battle:

French 3rd Corps CinC: Louis-Gabriel Suchet (Brilliant):

Escort to CinC:

Unit No:	Unit Class:	Unit name & notes:
1	D	61 st Ligne
2	D	1 Voltigeur Co. 40 th Ligne (one base)

Division: Louis François Félix Musnier (Average):

3	D	1/114 th Ligne
4	D	2/114 th Ligne
5	D	3/114 th Ligne
6	C	1/1 st Vistula
7	C	2/1 st Vistula

8	D	1/115 th Ligne
9	D	2/115 th Ligne
10	D	3/115 th Ligne
11	D	121 st Ligne

Artillery:

1	22 nd company, 3rd Foot Artillery Regiment (3 bases medium)	
---	--	--

Brigade Laval (Average):

12	D	1/14 th Ligne
13	D	2/14 th Ligne
14	C	1/3 rd Vistula
15	C	2/3 rd Vistula

Artillery:

2	18 th company, 3rd Foot Artillery Regiment (3 bases medium)	
---	--	--

Cavalry Brigade: General de brigade Wathier (Average):

16	B	4 th Hussars
17	B	13 th Cuirassiers (two squadrons; two bases)

Artillery:

3	7 th company, 5 th Horse Artillery Regiment (3 bases medium)	
---	--	--

The French army command rating is "brilliant."

Musnier's division has been divided into two brigades on the basis that the 114th and 1st Vistula were deployed as a column by battalions on the day.

The French artillery has been parceled up to the three French brigades. It is possible that it was used to provide long range fire and then reserves as rallying points for each brigade if needed.

Alcaniz: 23rd May 1809.

Spanish order of battle:

Spanish "Army of the Right" CinC: Joaquín Blake y Joyes (Average).

The Centre: Marquis de Lazan (Poor):

Teniente Coronel Hernandez

Unit No:	Unit Class:	Unit name & notes:
1	E	Voluntarios de Valencia
2	E	2 nd Batallon Fernando VII Infantry Regiment
3	E	1st & 2nd Cos Granaderos de America & de Traxler (4 companies)

Artillery: Commandant of the artillery: Garcia Loigorri.

1		Horse Battery (6 guns) (3 bases medium)
2		Foot Batteries (6 guns) (3 bases heavy)
3		Foot Batteries (7 guns) (3 bases heavy)

Guarding the Artillery Park:

4	E	3 rd Batallon de America Infantry Regiment
---	---	---

Right Wing: D. Juan Carlos Areizaga (Average):

Coronel Carbon

5	E	Batallon Ligero de Cazadores de Valencia
6	E	Batallon de Tiradores de Doyle (two bases Light Infantry)
7	E	2 nd Batallon de voluntarios de Aragon (two bases)
8	E	Compania de tiradores de Cartagena (one base Light Infantry)

Coronel Cucalon

9	E	Batallon de Reserva de Aragon (5 bases)
10	E	1st Batallon de Tiradores de Murcia

Left Wing: Roca (Poor):

Coronel Andriani:

11	E	3 rd Batallon of 2 nd Sovia Regiment.
12	E	2 nd Batallon de America Infantry Regiment

Coronel Gonzales

13	E	2/Cazadores de Valencia
14	E	1/Voluntarios de Zaragoza

Coronel Pirez

15	E	1 st Batallon 1 st Regiment de Valencia
16	E	2 nd Batallon 1 st Regiment de Valencia
17	E	3 rd Batallon 1 st Regiment de Valencia

Cavalry Brigade: Brigadier Ibarrola (Average):

18	E	Santiago Cavalry Regiment (2 bases)
19	E	Olivenza Cavalry Regiment (1 base)
20	E	Husares Espanoles (2 bases)

The Spanish army command rating is "poor".

Sources:

“The Napoleonic Source Book”: Philip J. Haythornthwaite.

809ESAG “French & Spanish Orders of Battle at Alcaniz 23 May 1809”: George Nafziger.

“A History of the Peninsula War Volume II January-September 1809”: Sir Charles Oman.

Umpire’s map from:

<http://www.napoleon-series.org/images/military/maps/peninsula/alcaniz.jpg>

“Napoleonic Wars Data Book”: Digby Smith.

“History of the Peninsular War”: Robert Southey

