

**A critical assessment of Sir John Thomas Jones’
*‘Journals of the Sieges undertaken by the allies in
Spain in the years 1811 and 1812’.***

by

James Michael Mc Donough

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Abstract

During the Peninsular War (1808-1814) the Anglo-Portuguese army conducted seven major sieges in its struggle with the French invaders. In 1814 brevet Lieutenant-Colonel John Thomas Jones published *Journals of the Sieges undertaken by the allies in Spain in the years 1811 and 1812* about the conduct of the sieges. Because Jones was a high-ranking Royal Engineer who had served in five sieges *Journals of the Sieges* ... became the yardstick by which all other accounts were judged. In the 200 years since its publication more and more sources of information about the sieges have become available to researchers, from the publication of personal diaries or memoirs to the opening of various archives to the public. Yet despite this wealth of information many British (English language) historians still have an uncritical view of *Journals of the Sieges* and have made no attempt to check on the accuracy of its contents.

This thesis is a critical assessment of Jones' *Journals of the Sieges*, to examine how it became to be regarded in such an uncritical light, if Jones is a reliable historian of the sieges and are his conclusions valid? Much of this thesis is an examination of the evidence presented by Jones in *Journals of the Sieges* compared with evidence gleaned from a variety of other sources that include Jones's personal journal, journals of other engineers present at the sieges and several French sources.

However, because not many people are *au fait* with the details of early C19th fortifications or the processes involved in siege-warfare my thesis contains a chapter, which covers these issues. It also discusses the history, training and practical experience of both the French military engineers and their British counterparts. Such a comparison underlines the gulf in training and practical between the different sets of engineers.

Besides literary sources, I decided to examine the physical remains at Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo to see if I could learn anything that had been omitted from the written accounts and to check whether the breach sites chosen by the engineers were the best available options. As Wellington was in overall command it was felt necessary to examine his role in the decisions made during the sieges, to see if they had a positive or negative impact on the sieges.

At the conclusion of this thesis, I will draw together all the evidence from the literary sources, the field survey data and the exploration of Wellington's involvement with the decisions made during the sieges to answer the three questions I set out in the introduction.

Acknowledgements

When I retired, I elected to go to university rather than vegetate watching day-time TV. After I had completed my master's degree, I decided that I had had enough of the delights of Academia and sought out new challenges. But in June 2010 I was invited to help survey a site called Burgos in Spain. That one phone call eventually led to my decision to write a thesis about the sieges of the Peninsular War. A process I have found at times to be absorbing, challenging, frustrating, rewarding but ultimately enjoyable. I know that I could not have completed this thesis without the help and assistance of other people. So, I wish to acknowledge all the help I received from these individuals.

In the initial stages of my research, I visited several archives collecting the raw data for my thesis. First, I would like to thank Rebeca Cheney and her staff at the Royal Engineers Museum and Library, Chatham who were extremely helpful in guiding me through the various RE records for the Peninsular War. Next, I would like to express my gratitude to the staff at both the National Archives, Kew and at the National Army Museum, Stevenage. Also, I acknowledge the help I received from Sian Wilks and the staff at the Special Collections, in the University of Liverpool library. They not only helped me find numerous personal accounts from soldiers who had fought in the Peninsular War, but they also arranged several inter-library loans for material that was housed elsewhere, most notably the 'Dickson Papers'.

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Finally, my sincerest thanks must go to my tutor Philip Freeman who over the years has been a tower of strength. He has me guided through my thesis, providing advice, suggestions, encouragement and an honest critical appraisal of my work. I feel that without the time and effort he put in I doubt whether I would have finished this thesis. Thank you, Phil for all you have done for me.

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Abbreviations

ADC	Aide-de-Camp
DOW	Died of Wounds
HM	His Majesty's
GPS	Global Positioning System
KGL	King's German Legion
KIA	Killed in action
RA	Royal Artillery
RE	Royal Engineers
RSC	Royal Staff Corps
WO	War Office

Glossary

<i>Adjutant</i>	A military appointment given to an officer who assists the commanding officer with unit administration, mostly the management of human resources in the army unit.
<i>Afrancesados</i>	Spaniards who were sympathetic towards the French.
<i>Banquette</i>	Firing step c.1m high built along the rear of the parapet.
<i>Barbican</i>	Fortified outpost or gateway.
<i>Bastion</i>	Large solid pentagon shaped artillery platforms located at regular intervals along the <i>enceinte</i> .
<i>Batardeau</i>	A coffer dam.
<i>Battery</i>	Fortified emplacement for heavy guns.
<i>Breach</i>	A gap or opening made in the curtain wall, either by artillery or a mine.
<i>Çaçadores</i>	Portuguese light infantrymen armed with rifles.
<i>Cantonments</i>	Temporary quarters for troops during a military campaign where army units were encamped for longer periods than during advances or retreats, e.g., winter quarters.
<i>Cavalier-de-tranchée</i>	Earthworks usually built behind a retrenchment, which were higher than the retrenchment and were designed to hold batteries to attack besiegers and their approach works.
<i>Chevaux-de-frise</i>	Defensive structures consisting of portable frames or logs covered with many long iron or wooden spikes, which are used to block breaches.
<i>Communication</i>	A trench linking parallels or offering a safe approach from the rear.
<i>Corps du Génie</i>	The Corps of French military engineers.
<i>Counterguard</i>	A low rampart located in front and parallel to a bastion to protect it from gunfire.
<i>Counterscarp</i>	The outer side of a ditch, usually encased in stone.

<i>Coup-de-main</i>	A swift attack that relies on speed and surprise to accomplish its objectives in a single blow.
<i>Covered way</i>	Walkway along the top of the counterscarp.
<i>Cropmarks</i>	Variations in the depth or colour of crops growing in a field which, viewed from the air, can show the presence of a structure beneath the soil.
<i>Crownwork</i>	This is an expanded hornwork. It consists of a full bastion with the walls on either side ending in demi-bastions from which longer flank walls run back towards the main fortress.
<i>Cunette</i>	A small trench dug along the bottom of the main ditch of a fortification to act as an additional obstacle.
<i>Curtain</i>	The outer wall of a fortification between two bastions.
<i>Demi-lune</i>	An outwork in front of a fortification, shaped like a crescent moon.
<i>Embrasures</i>	Openings in a fortification through which guns or muskets are fired.
<i>Enceinte</i>	The main defensive enclosure or the enclosing wall of a fortified place.
<i>Enfilade</i>	Gunfire directed from a flanking position along the length of an enemy battle line.
<i>Escalade</i>	To gain access to a fortification by using ladders to scale the walls.
<i>Fascine</i>	Cylindrical bundle of sticks bound together for use in construction of earthworks and fortifications.
<i>Fausse-braie</i>	A second rampart, exterior and parallel to the main rampart, but considerably lower than it.
<i>Flèche</i>	An arrowhead shaped earthwork with two sides and an open gorge.
<i>Forlorn Hope</i>	A small group of men and an officer, who have volunteered to precede the storming party during an assault on a breach.
<i>Fougasse</i>	Improvised mine buried in front of a fortification.
<i>Fraise</i>	Defensive barrier of pointed inclined stakes.

<i>Gabion</i>	Cylindrical wicker basket filled with earth and stones, used in building fortifications.
<i>Glacis</i>	An open slope in front of the covered way.
<i>Gorge</i>	A narrow rear entrance to a bastion, outwork or other fortification.
<i>Hornwork</i>	An outwork of a fortification, where its face is flanked by a pair of demi-bastions.
<i>Junta</i>	Council or committee for political or governmental purposes.
<i>Lodgement</i>	A trench dug inside a work after the enemy have been driven out, which is used to provide cover from the fire of the main fortress.
<i>Lunette</i>	A fortification that has two projecting faces and two parallel flanks.
<i>Merlons</i>	The solid part of a crenelated parapet between two embrasures.
<i>Orillon</i>	An ear-shaped projection of masonry from the end of the face of a bastion.
<i>Palisade</i>	Fence of wooden stakes forming a defensive barrier.
<i>Parallel</i>	A trench dug parallel to the curtain of a fortification.
<i>Parapet</i>	The top of the curtain above the level of the ramparts, designed to protect the defenders from enemy fire.
<i>Petard</i>	A small bomb made of a metal or wooden box filled with powder, used to blast down a door or to make a hole in a wall.
<i>Pontoon</i>	A flat-bottomed boat or portable float used in building temporary bridges.
<i>Ramparts</i>	A defensive wall, having a broad top with a walkway and a stone parapet.
<i>Ravelin</i>	An outwork, with two faces forming a salient angle, constructed in front of the curtain.
<i>Redan</i>	An arrow-shaped embankment forming part of a fortification.
<i>Redoubt</i>	A small fully enclosed outwork.

<i>Retrenchment</i>	An extra interior fortification to reinforce outer walls.
<i>Revetted</i>	A wall or embankment faced with stones.
<i>Saucisson</i>	A long tube of linen, thin leather or other suitable material filled with gunpowder and used a fuse for firing explosives.
<i>Salient angle</i>	The outward pointing angle of a defensive work.
<i>Sap</i>	Trench dug towards an enemy position.
<i>Sapeurs du génie</i>	French combat engineers.
<i>Sapeurs-ouvriers</i>	French engineer artificers.
<i>Sortie</i>	Armed attack, especially one made from a place surrounded by enemy forces.
<i>Tambour</i>	Small external works, like miniature bastions, designed to bring flanking fire along the curtain wall.
<i>Terreplein</i>	The top horizontal surface of the ramparts, on which cannon are placed.
<i>Tête-de-pont</i>	Fortification to protect the end of a bridge.
<i>Total station</i>	Is an electronic/optical instrument used for surveying, which consists of a theodolite integrated with an electronic distance measurement device to measure both vertical and horizontal angles. The whole system is controlled by an on-board computer, which collects data and performs triangulation calculations.
<i>Trace italienne</i>	System of fortification, which was developed in Italy in response to the development of cannons.
<i>Voltigeurs</i>	French military skirmish units created in 1804 by Napoléon.
<i>Windage</i>	The difference between the bore of a firearm and the diameter of the projectile, which lets the propellant gases escape thus reducing the muzzle velocity of the firearm. It also reduces accuracy, as the ball takes a zig-zag path along the barrel, emerging at an unpredictable angle.

Chapter 1

Introduction and Context

1.1. Questions and Aims

At the beginning of the C19th, the French army was the pre-eminent military force in Europe, in large measure because of the training and tactics introduced by Napoléon Bonaparte. Yet, during the Peninsular War (1808-1814) Wellington's Anglo-Portuguese army won a series of battles against the occupying French forces. Despite the string of victories achieved by Wellington's men, they were unable to translate their achievements on the battlefield into success at siege-warfare. The Anglo-Portuguese army was involved in seven major sieges during the conflict, four of which ended in failure: the first and second sieges of Badajoz, the siege of Burgos and the first siege of San Sebastián. The successes at the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, the third siege of Badajoz and the second siege of San Sebastián, were all marred by the high number of allied casualties sustained during these operations. I therefore decided to investigate why Wellington's army seemed to perform so poorly when it came to the execution of its sieges.

The basis of any description and so analysis of the army's performance must start with the primary authority on the subject Sir John Thomas Jones. Jones who as a consequence of his service in Spain as a Royal Engineer authored *Journals of the Sieges undertaken by the allies in Spain in the years 1811 and 1812*, which purports to be an account of the sieges as well as a critical assessment of the events. Over time it is clear that most British historians – and indeed many French and Spanish writers - have accepted without question Jones' account of the sieges. Since its publication *Journals of the Sieges* has been regarded as the definitive text on Wellington's Peninsular War sieges. So much so, that over the last 200 years every British writer on the subject has deferred to Jones' account to the almost total exclusion of other sources. In the light of a critical reading of Jones's text combined with being able to visit the sites he described, a number of problems with his accounts began to emerge and which have not hitherto been recognised, let alone acknowledged. Consequently, I found the unquestioning acceptance of Jones' version of events hard to understand.

There are several inherent problems in relying on a source of information, such as *Journals of the Sieges*. First, the unwary reader is presented with just one version of events and

is not given the opportunity of examining any other viewpoint. Second, if a writer had been present at an incident, he/she would record the event from his/her perspective but may have failed to observe other crucial elements of the incident. Third, if a person witnessed an event, he/she might still misinterpret what they had observed, because they were not in possession of all the facts. Fourth, the information provided might be factually incorrect, where another source might contain the correct information. Fifth, at the start of a work a writer might have a specific agenda which he/she wishes to pursue, so from the outset their account is deliberately skewed to meet that end. Thus, in every field of study the researcher should critically examine all the available evidence before making an informed decision based on an analysis of the existing material. Yet this had not happened regarding *Journals of the Sieges*, why? Instead, what has happened is that those who write about the sieges and in turn associated aspects of them, almost invariably omit to include any other contemporary sources. Just occasionally some English writers might cite odd French accounts, and more usually where French accounts, many written as counterblasts to Jones, have recourse to details from within his text. Rarely, if ever, has there been any critical analysis of the core of Jones' text and just as little appreciation of the fact that his accounts can be read against a number of less well-known or otherwise unpublished versions of the same things. This thesis, in part, brings to the fore the range of such English authorities and uses them to assess the reliability of Jones' recollection of events, actions and consequences of the sieges.

In August 2010, a few years prior to the start of my thesis, I assisted with a field survey at Burgos. One day I surveyed the San Miguel hornwork and discovered that it was 13.7m high, which was 6.1m higher than the figure given in *Journals of the Sieges* (Jones 1814, 86). This sparked a discussion about the reliability of *Journals of the Sieges* and the value of survey work in Peninsular War studies. It also raised the question: what else had Jones got wrong in his text? Unfortunately, due to the uncritical acceptance of Jones' account of the sieges that question has never been asked, let alone answered. Since the publication of *Journals of the Sieges* it has been used as source material by numerous historians, so much so that over time many of Jones' mistakes have been continually repeated time and time again, albeit innocently, so that they are now regarded as being factually correct. One example is the height of the San Miguel hornwork, which has been shown to be 13.7m high. Yet numerous publications maintain that its height was 7.6m, these include: *A History of the War in the Peninsula and in the South of France* (Napier 1836, 263); *A History of the Peninsular War* (Oman 1922, 25); *Fortresses of the Peninsular War 1808-1814* (Fletcher 2003, 24); and *British*

Sieges of the Peninsular War (Myatt 2008, 126). Although, this can be regarded as a minor error in *Journals of the Sieges* my analysis has revealed that this is just the tip of the iceberg. There are far more serious errors and omissions in the text, which drastically alter our perception about the conduct of some of the sieges. Yet, scholars continue to repeat these errors and omissions as well, thereby ensuring that we never get an accurate account of the sieges.

Between the 1830's and the end of the First World War three eminent military historians, William Napier, Charles Oman and John Fortescue published influential works about the Peninsular War, however during this period they had limited access to material about the sieges.¹ Thus they were forced to rely on *Journals of the Sieges* for their information. The same cannot be said for historians working between the 1920's and the present day as most of the restrictions, which had forced Napier, Oman and Fortescue to use Jones, were removed during this period. Thus, they could have used many of the same unpublished sources I have referred to in this thesis. Yet, that has not happened, why? It difficult to pinpoint why there is such an uncritical regard of *Journals of the Sieges* among modern authors. One of the few scenarios that make sense, is that modern authors have mistakenly assumed that such eminent historians as Napier, Oman and Fortescue had carried out the necessary research on *Journals of the Sieges* prior to writing their own works and have therefore presumed that the data was correct.

In his introduction to the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges*, Jones acknowledged that he had written his book to explain why the British troops were so poor at siege-warfare, despite their superiority over the French on the battlefield. However, he refused to accept that the problem lay with either the Royal Artillery or the Royal Engineers the two units most involved in siege operations, as he wrote:

“As the Artillery and the Engineers are the most prominent actors at a siege, it is natural to conjecture that one or the other of those corps is deficient in knowledge of its duty: but the former is universally and deservedly ranked amongst the best in Europe; and Lord Wellington's express declaration that the attacks were carried on by the Engineers with the greatest ability, and that by their conduct on these occasions they had augmented their claims to approbation, must forever silence any suspicion of want of talent or zeal in those officers” (Jones 1814, vi).

In 1812 the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers were controlled by the Board of Ordnance and not the army. So, it seemed to me that, as Jones was a member of the Royal

¹ Chapter 9.2 for a detailed discussion on this topic.

Engineers, he had a vested interest in trying to protect the reputations of both corps. Because of the uncritical acceptance of Jones' account of the sieges, my survey work at Burgos and my suspicion that Jones had an ulterior motive for writing his book, viz his defence of the Engineers, I decided to change the topic of my thesis and to critique Jones' *Journals of the Sieges*. I believe that such an assessment sheds new light on an important facet of the Peninsular War that has not been previously investigated. Thus, I intend to evaluate the contents of Jones' *Journals of the Sieges* with the aim of answering three questions.

1. Why has there been such an uncritical regard for *Journals of the Sieges* among British writers?
2. Is Jones' reputation as a reliable historian of the sieges justified?
3. Are, or were, Jones's conclusions about why the British army was so 'bad' at siege-warfare valid?

1.2. *Journals of the Sieges* in the context of the Peninsular War

The sieges and captures of Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo by the Anglo-Portuguese army were two important turning points in the Peninsular War, as it gave Wellington control of the Portuguese/Spanish border. It meant in turn that the French were unlikely to mount another successful invasion of Portugal. It also allowed Wellington to go on the offensive and advance into Spain, safe in the knowledge that his lines of communication were secure. Given the importance of these sieges it is necessary to provide a brief explanation of the events that led up them, so that this important phase of the conflict can be viewed in its proper context.

The Peninsular War was just one theatre in a larger European conflict that began in 1792 and lasted for 23 years, but for a short period of peace from 1802 to 1803. By 1806, Napoléon controlled most of continental Europe, but was unable to defeat Britain. The Royal Navy's mastery of the sea meant that he could not realistically contemplate an invasion of the country. Napoléon therefore decided to use economic warfare to force Britain to sue for peace. On 21st November 1806, he issued the Berlin Decree, which banned all trade between Britain and all the countries under French control upon pain of death (Bryant 1944, 231; Harvey 2007, 535). Portugal continued trading with Britain despite the decree, so Napoléon decided to invade the country. In October 1807, France and Spain signed the Treaty of Fontainebleau, which granted French troops free passage across Spanish territory en route to Portugal (Bell 2007, 275; Bryant 1944, 250). On 18th October 1807, General Jean-Andoche Junot crossed the

Spanish border with 28,000 troops and began his march on Lisbon, which he reached on 30th November (Bell 2007, 275; Robertson 2008, 37).

Once the French had occupied Portugal, Napoléon turned his attention to Spain. On 16th February 1808, 100,000 French troops crossed the Pyrenees and marched on Madrid, which they entered on 23rd March, four days after the Spanish king Carlos IV was made to abdicate by supporters of his son Fernando. On 6th May, Fernando was forced to renounce his claim to the throne, and Napoléon's brother Joseph was installed as king of Spain (Bryant 1944, 250; Roberts 2002, 32; Robertson 2008, 38). On 2nd May the population of Madrid rebelled against the French occupation. Although the initial rising was crushed in a matter of hours, throughout May the rebellion spread across Spain (Bryant 1944, 250-251; Harvey 2007, 576-587; Robertson 2008, 38). On 24th May, the Principality of Asturias revolted, and on the 30th their local *junta* sent envoys to Britain asking for aid against the French (Harvey 2007, 587). By June, the insurrection had reached Portugal. It started in Oporto but quickly spread throughout the rest of the country. In mid-June, the Oporto *junta* sent envoys to Britain to ask for help (Bryant 1944, 257; Robertson 2008, 38). The envoys from both countries were graciously received by HM Government and within weeks the British had agreed to help the rebels (Longford 2012, 91; Robertson 2008, 39).

The Spanish envoys only wanted arms and financial assistance from Britain. Thus, the British government sent an expeditionary force to Portugal to help defend the county. On 1st August, the 9,500-man vanguard commanded by Sir Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, began disembarking at Mondego Bay, some 160kms north of Lisbon (Harvey 2007 614; Robertson 2008, 39). By 8th August, Wellesley's men were ashore, and were reinforced with 4,000 men from Gibraltar commanded by Brig.-Gen. Brent Spencer. The next day Wellesley moved south to meet the French. On 17th August, he defeated a French army under General Henri François Delaborde at Roliça. Four days later he was again victorious at the Battle of Vimeiro (Roberts 2002, 35). After the arrival of Sir Hew Dalrymple and Sir Harry Burrard, who were in overall command of the army, Wellesley was ordered not to pursue the French but to wait for the arrival of the rest of the expeditionary force commanded by Sir John Moore (Harvey 2007, 617; Longford 2012, 102).

Realising that he was in a perilous situation Junot offered to withdraw all French troops from Portugal. The negotiations led to an agreement known as the Convention of Sintra. This treaty contained some surprising terms; the French army was to be evacuated by the Royal Navy to French ports; the troops would retain their arms, baggage and personal property; and

the men could re-join the war after they reached in France (Bryant 1944, 282; Harvey 2007, 617-618). Once the agreement became public knowledge there was a huge outcry about its terms. In November, a government inquiry was set up to investigate the matter and Burrard, Dalrymple, and Wellesley were summoned to give evidence. Thus, command of the Peninsular Army passed to Moore (Bryant 1944, 284-285; Harvey 2007, 618-619).

When news reached London that the French had retreated from Madrid to Burgos, Moore was ordered to help the Spanish armies in northern Spain expel the French from the country (Robertson 2008, 56). On 16th October, Moore left Lisbon, with 20,000 men, but on reaching Salamanca, he discovered that the situation had changed. Napoléon had entered Spain, with an army of 250,000 troops, and between 31st October and 23rd November all the Spanish armies which Moore was supposed to co-operate with had been defeated and dispersed (*ibid* 2008, 66). After Madrid fell on 4th December, Napoléon moved north to attack Moore. On 23rd December, Moore learnt of Napoléon's approach and retreated towards Coruña, where the army could be evacuated by the Royal Navy (Grehan 1990, 20-21; Harvey 2007, 627). Moore reached Coruña on 11th January 1809, a few days before Marshal Nicolas Jean-de-Dieu Soult's pursuing French army (Harvey 2007, 629). On the afternoon of 16th January, Soult attacked. In the ensuing battle, Moore was mortally wounded, but survived long enough to learn that the French assault had been repulsed (Napier 1852, 18). This enabled the British to complete their evacuation unmolested and on 17th January the remnants of Moore's army sailed for England (Bryant 1944, 329; Harvey 2007, 631).

Despite the failure of Moore's campaign, the British Government was still committed to helping Portugal. On 7th March, Wellesley, who had been exonerated for his part in the Convention of Sintra, sent a memorandum to Viscount Castlereagh, the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies outlining his views on the defence of Portugal (Gurwood, 1851, 248; Robertson 2008, 97). As a result of this memorandum Wellesley was formally appointed Commander-in-Chief of the army in Portugal. By 22nd April he was back in Lisbon to take command of the army (Robertson 2008, 97).

Following the evacuation of Moore's army, Soult had occupied Portugal as far south as the Douro River. In April 1809, he was stationed at Oporto with an army of 23,000 men. At the same time, a French army of 25,000 men, commanded by Marshal Claude Victor, was approaching the Portuguese border from Mérida, while a smaller force of 6,000 men under General Pierre Lapisse was near Ciudad Rodrigo. Along with these three armies threatening Portugal, there were a further 200,000 French troops strategically stationed across the Iberian

Peninsula (Bryant 1944, 343; Harvey 2007, 696; Richards 2002, 64). The situation meant that Wellesley had to adopt a strategy to defend Portugal that accounted for the enormous disparity in numbers between the French and the Anglo-Portuguese armies (Oman 1913, 50).

Wellesley's initial strategy was to eject Soult from Portugal first and then advance into central Spain to conduct a mobile campaign in conjunction with General Gregorio Cuesta's Spanish army. On 12th May Wellesley achieved his first objective when he crossed the Douro River and routed the French at Oporto. This defeat forced Soult to retreat northwards into Spain after abandoning all his wheeled transport and artillery (Bryant 1944, 346; Harvey 2007, 698).

However, circumstances surrounding the Battle of Talavera caused Wellesley to change his strategy. First, from what he had witnessed during the battle Wellesley realised that Cuesta's army was not the efficient fighting force he had believed it to be (Gurwood 1838a, 120). So, he informed Castlereagh that he intended to operate independently as he had no faith in the Spanish armies (*ibid* 1838a, 86). Besides the deplorable state of the Spanish army, there was another reason why Wellesley changed his strategy. Prior to entering Spain, he had arranged for the Central *Junta* to supply his army (Napier 1856, 138; Robertson 2008, 108). Despite repeated promises the Central *Junta* failed to provide enough supplies for the Anglo-Portuguese army (Richards 2002, 68). Thus, Wellesley decided to return to Portugal to save his army from starvation (Gurwood 1838a, 50).

The Anglo-Portuguese army reached the Spanish border fortress of Badajoz on 3rd September, where they stayed for nearly four months (Robertson 2008, 138). During his stay, Wellesley was notified that he had been created Viscount Wellington of Talavera and of Wellington (Richards 2002, 78). On his retreat to Badajoz, Wellington had decided that he would defend Lisbon, rather than the whole country (Gurwood 1838a, 89; Jones 1829, 1). So, in October he visited Lisbon to confer with his chief engineer, Lt.-Col. Sir Richard Fletcher RE, about the construction of defences to protect Lisbon. These fortifications came to be known as the Lines of Torres Vedras.

Lisbon lies on the tip of a peninsula bounded by the Atlantic to the south and west, and the River Tagus to the east. North of Lisbon the peninsula consists of a mass of large hills over 600 metres high, which were ideal for defence (Oman 1908, 419). In October 1809, construction began on two lines of defences across the width of the peninsula, as well of a third defensive position, south of Lisbon, that was to be used as a refuge by the army while waiting to be evacuated, should the French break through the first two lines (Jones 1829, 5-6). The

most northerly line ran diagonally across the peninsula for 46kms. It consisted of two roughly parallel chains of redoubts and batteries extending from Sizandro on the Atlantic coast to Alhandra on the Tagus. In addition, there were two large redoubts situated in front of this line, at Torres Vedras and Monte Agraça (Oman 1908, 419-420; Robertson 2008, 172-173). The main line was located nine kilometres further south, centred on the Cabeça de Montachique, the highest peak in the area. This ran for 38kms, from the Atlantic coast just north of Mafra to Póvoa de Santa Iria on the Tagus. When completed the lines consisted of 152 individual redoubts or forts, which were equipped with 534 pieces of ordnance (Jones 1829, 107).

The Lines of Torres Vedras were just one element of Wellington's strategy to defend Lisbon. Wellington was going to use the French policy of living of the land as a weapon against them. He ordered a scorched-earth policy to be applied to a large area north of the Lines. The population of the area, some 200,000 people and their livestock, were ordered to move inside the Lines. All mills and ovens were to be destroyed, as well as any excess food that could not be moved (Robertson 2008, 169). Wellington's plan was to lure the French into a trap by sacrificing two of the border fortresses, retreating to the Lines of Torres Vedras and letting the French army starve.

When Wellington devised his strategy to defend Portugal in 1809, he knew that because of the mountainous nature of the border between western Spain and eastern Portugal there were only three routes between France and Lisbon (**Figure 1**). From the French border all routes followed the same road along the coast to San Sebastián, where the road turned inland and ran south-westwards to Burgos. At Burgos, the road divided, one route ran south to Madrid, while the second continued south-westwards to Salamanca and onto the Spanish border fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo. At Ciudad Rodrigo, the road divided again. The northern route crossed the border to Almeida, and then ran westwards to Coimbra before turning south-west to Lisbon. A second road ran south from Ciudad Rodrigo for 100kms to Alcántara, where it swung west and followed the Tagus valley to Lisbon.

The southern route ran south-westwards from Madrid through Talavera de la Reina and Mérida to Badajoz, 200kms south of Ciudad Rodrigo. From Badajoz, the road crossed the border to the Portuguese fortress of Elvas and then continued west to the Tagus estuary. The estuary was controlled by the Royal Navy, so any invading force would have to move north-east to cross the river at either Santarém or Vila Franca before moving south-west towards Lisbon (Bryant 1944, 396).

When Junot had invaded Portugal in 1807 he had taken the central route along the Tagus valley. The road was a rough track that was almost impassable to wheeled vehicles, as the French had to abandon all but six of their guns. Also, the route passed through a barren mountainous landscape without any resources, the French who lived off the land found just enough food to prevent their troops from starving (Bell 2007, 275; Robertson 2008, 37). Wellington reasoned that after their experience in 1807 the French would not invade Portugal by the same route. Therefore, his strategy was based on just two routes: the northern route via Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida and the southern route between Badajoz and Elvas.

Wellington believed that the main invasion would come via Ciudad Rodrigo, but he kept a portion of his army south of the Tagus in case the French invaded via Badajoz (Oman 1908, 157-158). On 15th June 1810, the French besieged Ciudad Rodrigo, which surrendered on 10th July (Bryant 1944, 418; Harvey 2007, 708). Almeida fell on 27th August, after a short siege (Oman 1908, 275). The 65,050 strong French Army of Portugal, under Marshal André Masséna, then began its march on Lisbon. Wellington retreated, pausing briefly to defeat Masséna's army at Bussaco. On 10th October, Wellington's rear-guard entered the Lines of Torres Vedras (Jones 1829, 35).

Unable to support his army near the Lines of Torres Vedras, Masséna withdrew first to Santarém, but he was eventually forced to retreat on 3rd March 1811. Corporal Johann Maempel, a German serving in the French Light Infantry, recorded that when the remaining provisions were divided between the troops each man received just 13 biscuits. Within two days most of the soldiers had eaten their rations and then went to desperate lengths to find something to eat. Maempel recalls soldiers searching through horse dung to find undigested corn, which they washed and ate (Maempel 2008, 133).

Of the 65,050 men that had left Spain in 1810 only 39,546 men re-crossed the border on 5th April 1811. Masséna lost just under 25,000 men or 38% of his original army, with 8,000 captured, 2,000 killed in action and 15,000 dying of sickness and starvation (Oman 1911, 202-203). Wellington's strategy for the defence of Lisbon was vindicated by the large number of French troops who had died from sickness or starvation, as it represented over 23% of Masséna's army who had died without putting any allied lives at risk from combat.

However, events at Badajoz prevented Wellington's plan from being a complete success. Soult had besieged Badajoz on 26th January in the hope that Wellington would detach troops to protect the town, which he refused to do (Napier 1831, 427). On 11th March Soult

captured Badajoz after a 2-month siege (Oman 1911, 61). This meant that three of the four fortresses, which controlled the east-west routes between Portugal and Spain were now in French hands. The temporary loss of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida had been allowed for in Wellington's plan. He had been confident that he could recapture them quickly with his army of nearly 60,000 men, given the weakened condition of Massena's army (Bryant 1944, 473, Thompson 2015, 85). The loss of Badajoz meant that Wellington was obliged to split his forces and send two divisions to retake the town (Grehan 1989, 25; Robertson 2008, 192).

On 8th April, Wellington blockaded Almeida as he had received intelligence that the town had a limited supply of food. The garrison however, escaped on 10th May, having first destroyed its fortifications. Although Wellington occupied Almeida the next day, he was still faced with the task of capturing Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo (Robertson 2008. 206).

1.3. Thesis Structure and Organisation

Because this thesis is an examination of *Journals of the Sieges*, it will focus mainly on Jones' view of the sieges. Therefore, I will only be exploring those sieges where Jones was present, those of Badajoz (in 1811 and 1812), the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo (1812) and that of Burgos (1812). There are numerous primary and secondary sources about the sieges which are now available to students of the Peninsular War.² What is surprising is that a number of them have long been available to researchers, being paper archives in the likes of museums and libraries (e.g., National Archives, Kew; National Army Museum, Stevenage; and Royal Engineers Museum, Chatham). Admittedly some of them were not available to leading writers prior to the First World War. But more recently the opening of such archives, and in turn the evolution of digital indexes and search engines has made it easier to locate and in turn visit and explore such material, much of which remains unpublished. Among these sources are the personal journals of some of the officers and men who took part in the various sieges. Several of these journals, such as that of John Fox Burgoyne RE, provide a different perspective of the sieges from that of Jones. However, as the main focus of this thesis is on the content of *Journals of the Sieges* the other sources will only be used to verify whether or not a point raised by Jones can be substantiated. The narrow focus on *Journals of the Sieges* also precludes the use of any material, such as newspapers or parliamentary reports, which provide public or political opinions about the sieges in Britain.

² See Chapter 2.4 for a full discussion of all the sources used in this thesis.

Chapter 2 begins with an examination of Jones' career and the circumstances which led to him writing *Journals of the Sieges*. This is followed by a discussion about the reasons why there are three different editions of *Journals of the Sieges* published in 1814, 1827 and 1846.³ Most scholars just refer to the 1827 edition. They appear to be unaware that the 1814 edition was written with one specific aim in mind. In 1827 Jones published a new and expanded version of *Journals of the Sieges*, which was written with a different purpose than the 1814 edition. The chapter then concludes by discussing the main primary and secondary sources used in the thesis, including several French sources.

In order to provide a background to how sieges were conducted in the early C19th Chapter 3 explores a variety of topics: the development of the *trace italienne* system of fortifications; Vauban's logical method for capturing fortresses; the accepted rules of siege-warfare; the structure, training and practical experience of the French military engineers; and the structure and training of the British military engineers.

Chapter 4 is the first of three chapters which examines the conduct of the sieges. In this chapter the events of the first two sieges of Badajoz and that of Ciudad Rodrigo are explored. The chapter follows a similar arrangement to that of *Journals of the Sieges*, with an initial description of the fortress being besieged followed by a day-by-day account of the siege. Chapter 5 is solely devoted to the third siege of Badajoz and follows the same structure as the previous chapter.

An account about the unsuccessful siege of Burgos is covered in Chapter 6. It also follows the same structure as the previous two chapters. On 4th October 1812 Jones was wounded and became delirious for ten days. Thus, when he wrote his account of Burgos in 1813 or 1814, he must have obtained his information about the latter half of the siege from another source or sources. The question about what sources Jones' used to complete his account of Burgos will be addressed in this chapter.

All literary sources are to some degree subjective, as they are governed by what the author decides to include or omit from his personal recollections. However, archaeological field surveys can be used as an objective way to assess the reliability of written records. During my research I could find no evidence that anyone had ever surveyed Ciudad Rodrigo or Badajoz for archaeological purposes, so I decided to conduct field surveys of both towns. Chapter 7 is

³ The 1846 edition is an expanded version of the 1827 edition, which was published after Jones death. See Chapter 2.3 for further details.

an account of these surveys. It begins by explaining what early C19th maps I was able to find to assist me in my task of surveying both towns. Before continuing with a description of the methodology used in the surveys. The survey results were used to evaluate the reliability of the written records, as well as judging if the engineers involved in the sieges had chosen the best locations for the various breaches.

Chapter 8 is an exploration of the development of Wellington's autocratic style of command, his relations with his subordinates, and the part he played in the conduct of the sieges. Wellington's career up to the Battle of Talavera is explored to show how his background, education and military experience shaped his autocratic style of command. The chapter also reveals how Wellington's experience of siege operations in India influenced some of his decisions at the sieges in Spain. Although the decisions he made at Ciudad Rodrigo contributed to the successful conclusion of the siege, it also reinforced Wellington's belief that the successful tactics he had used in India could be applied in Spain. Unfortunately, the allied army's experience at the third siege of Badajoz and the siege of Burgos showed that this was not the case.

In Chapter 9 all the points raised in the preceding chapters are drawn together to answer the three questions I set myself at the start of this thesis:

1. Why has there been such an uncritical regard for *Journals of the Sieges* among British writers?
2. Is Jones' reputation as a reliable historian of the sieges justified?
3. Are, or were, Jones's conclusions about why the British army was so 'bad' at siege-warfare valid?

All the evidence for each question is analysed in turn to provide a satisfactory answer to the question. This is followed by a few suggestions for other areas of study that would increase our knowledge and understanding of the sieges. The chapter closes with a short summary of the thesis.

Chapter 2

John Thomas Jones' *Journals of the Sieges* and other sources

2.1. Introduction

A critique of Jones' *Journals of the Sieges* must start with a discussion of its author and an explanation of how he came to write it. This chapter opens with a short summary of Jones' career up to the siege of Burgos (2.2). It continues with an explanation of the circumstances behind the writing and publication of *Journals of the Sieges*.

The next section (2.3) is an examination of the sources that Jones is known to have used and those that he could have to write *Journals of the Sieges*. In the end three editions of the *Journals* were published in 1814, 1827 and 1846. This section explores the differences between those editions and examines why Jones revised *Journals of the Sieges* in 1827.

We are in a good position to reconstruct from where Jones derived his information for the *Journals*, being a combination of his own notes made during the sieges at which he was present as well as him having access to 'official' reports and comparable documents. As previously emphasised, the tradition among Peninsular War scholars has been to regard Jones' account as definitive. The majority of (English language) historians make two mistakes when discussing the Peninsular War sieges. First, they tend to use the 1827 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* and to ignore the 1814 edition. Second, they do not use the full range of available sources. For in addition to Jones, there also exists a substantial corpus of material that he did not use, whether he chose to ignore it or it being unavailable to him. The material ranges from 'other' British official documents, French accounts, the personal memories and other accounts of several (British) contemporaries of the sieges. Such sources, as discussed here, in fact preserve a considerable volume of information which can be used to 'test' or at least corroborate Jones' recollection, description and explanation of key events in the various sieges. What seems especially inexplicable is how modern scholarship has not factored in that information, either to substantiate Jones' version or to refute it. Section (2.4) reviews the range of such different sources of information and which, in tandem with Jones' version, are used in writing this thesis. As with an assessment of Jones, it assesses the reliability, usefulness and

limitations of these sources, as well as examining how, if at all, they have been used by other writers on the sieges.

The concluding section (2.5) summarises the themes discussed in this chapter. It explains why Jones was probably the only person who could have written *Journals of the Sieges* between 1813 and 1814. This is followed by a discussion about Jones' decision to write *Journals of the Sieges* and where it is suggested that Jones had an additional motive for writing it: that he was trying to persuade the British Government to create a professionally trained Corps of Sappers and Miners to assist the Royal Engineers. This is followed by an exploration of Jones' decision to revise *Journals of the Sieges* in 1827.

2.2. Sir John Thomas Jones (1783-1843)

John Thomas Jones was born at Landguard Fort, Felixstowe, Suffolk on 25th March 1783, the eldest child of John and Mary Jones of Cranmer Hall, Fakenham, Norfolk. Educated at Ipswich Grammar School, he entered the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich in the spring of 1797. In late August 1798 he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers. Then aged 15 years and 5 months, he was the first officer to join the corps without having any previous service in the Royal Artillery. He was posted to Gibraltar in October 1798, where he remained for the next four years. Shortly after his arrival Jones was appointed adjutant to the corps. On 14th September 1800 he was promoted to Lieutenant. In May 1803 Jones returned to England, where he was posted to Essex to construct defences designed to protect London (Vetch 1892, 141-142).

Jones was promoted to Second Captain on 1st March 1805 and over the next eighteen months served in Malta, Sicily and Italy before returning to England in December 1806. On 1st January 1807 Jones was appointed adjutant at Woolwich, where he spent the rest of the year reorganising the Royal Military Artificers. In July 1808, after the outbreak of the Peninsular War, he was sent to Spain as part of a military mission to liaise with the *juntas* in northern Spain. He returned to England in early 1809 and was promoted to Captain on 24th June. Jones was appointed Brigade-Major on 9th July before participating in the ill-fated Walcheren Campaign (30th July – 9th December 1809), where he took part in his first siege at Flushing (Colburn 1843, 110; Vetch 1892, 142).⁴

⁴ This was not a regular siege like those conducted in Spain but rather a joint enterprise with the Royal Navy, for further details see Chapter 3.7.

In March 1810, 18 months into the Peninsular War, Jones was sent to Lisbon. There he was employed on constructing the Lines of Torres Vedras, which were designed by Lt.-Col. Richard Fletcher RE (1768-1813). Fletcher was the son of an Ipswich vicar. In July 1788 he was gazetted as a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery, before transferring to the Royal Engineers in June 1790. Between 1791 and 1807 he served in the West Indies, Turkey, Syria, Egypt, Portsmouth and at the siege of Copenhagen⁵, by which time he had risen to the rank of Major. In 1808 he was sent to Portugal, where he assumed command of the Royal Engineers, a position he held until his death in 1813. In June 1809 Fletcher was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel (Vetch 1889, 319-320). He was summoned to Wellington's headquarters at Celorico in June 1810, leaving Jones to complete the Lines. Over the next six months, Jones was in constant correspondence with Wellington, reporting on the progress of the works, as well as suggesting improvements to the existing plans (Colburn 1843, 110). In November he was appointed Brigade-Major and transferred to army headquarters (Jones 1842, 38; Vetch 1892, 143).

During his time at Wellington's headquarters Jones participated in the three sieges of Badajoz and that at Ciudad Rodrigo. He was gazetted brevet Major on 6th February 1812. On 28th April he was promoted to brevet Lieutenant-Colonel, and on 17th May he resigned his position as Brigade-Major (Jones 1812, 159). In June 1812 Jones was appointed commanding engineer of an expeditionary force, commanded by Gen. Thomas Maitland, which was sent to capture Tarragona. The mission however, was aborted because of a lack of support from the local Spanish forces, so Maitland sailed to Alicante (Jones 1842, 60-61). In August Jones was sent to Madrid with a dispatch for Wellington, who then ordered him to accompany his army as it moved north to deal with the Army of Portugal (*ibid* 1842, 65-66).

On 19th September Wellington commenced the siege of Burgos, where Jones was one of five Royal Engineers who served there. On 4th October, midway through the siege, he was hit in the ankle by a French musket ball. Due to infection in the wound Jones was delirious for ten days, before he was evacuated to Lisbon (Esdaile & Freeman 2015, 8; Vetch 1892, 143). By April 1813 Jones had still not recovered and so was sent back to England. Back home his wound became worse rendering him unable to walk for twelve months. It was in this period of enforced inactivity that Jones wrote the *Journals of the Sieges* (Jones 1842, 77-78).

⁵ See Chapter 3.7 for further details.

In 1814 Jones wrote to Wellington to inform him that he had finished his *Journals of the Sieges* and asked for permission to publish it. Wellington replied that because he was unaware of its contents he could not approve of its publication. Despite Wellington's lack of endorsement Jones published *Journals of the Sieges* the same year. Although it appeared without Wellington's sanction, he nevertheless praised it and remained on good terms with the author (Jones 1842, 79; Vetch 1892, 143).

2.3. Sources and editions of *Journals of the Sieges*

When Jones began writing *Journals of the Sieges* the Peninsular War still had about another year to run its course. Given that he was housebound in England during this period what sources did he use to write what was to become the first edition? As Brigade-Major he was involved in the three sieges of Badajoz and the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, the details of which he recorded in his private journal. Three volumes of the journal are kept in the Royal Engineers Museum, Chatham, and cover the period from 11th December 1810 until 10th June 1812 (Accession Numbers 5501 59/1; 5501 59/2; 5501 59/3). Thus, Jones was able to draw on notes from his journals, as well as his personal recollections when compiling the accounts of these sieges. However, after he was wounded at Burgos Jones took no further part in the siege. Thus, his account of the latter stages of the siege must have been based on other sources. The same is also true of the siege of the Salamanca forts. Even though Jones had not been present he included an account of it in *Journals of the Sieges*.

At the conclusion of each siege, the Royal Engineer in charge of the operations wrote an 'official' account of the siege. Because Jones was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Royal Engineers he undoubtedly had access to such reports. 'Official' accounts exist for three sieges, Ciudad Rodrigo, the Salamanca forts and Burgos. The account of Ciudad Rodrigo, which was purportedly written by Fletcher is in the National Archives at Kew (WO 28/1203).⁶ Lt.-Col. John Fox Burgoyne RE, wrote the official reports of the sieges of the Salamanca forts and Burgos, both of which are kept in the Royal Engineers Museum (Accession Numbers 1812.10; 1812.16; 1812.17).

One of Jones' responsibilities as Brigade-Major was to deal with the engineers' official correspondence, thus he was privy to private communications between Fletcher, Wellington and other senior officers. An examination of Jones private journal reveals that he

⁶ A discussion about the authorship of this report can be found in Chapter 4.9.

copied the contents of 14 such papers. Jones was also responsible for compiling the engineer's monthly returns, dealing with the requisitions for supplies and distributing orders to the other engineers. Thus, Jones had access to a wide range of information, which must have been used when compiling the first edition of *Journals of the Sieges*.

The 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* consisted of one volume divided into 12 chapters. These covered the sieges conducted by Wellington's army during 1811 and 1812. However, in 1813 the allied army captured San Sebastián after two sieges (7th – 25th July and 19th August – 8th September) so Jones added a supplementary chapter to provide an account of these operations (Jones 1814, 228-244). The original 12 chapters recounted the period from the French siege of Ciudad Rodrigo in 1810 to when the allied army reached Ciudad Rodrigo on 18th December 1812, after its retreat from Burgos. Only six of the chapters dealt with the actual sieges, the other six consisted of a narrative of the events between them. In the preface Jones explained that the aim of *Journals of the Sieges* was to explain why Wellington's army, which had an excellent record in pitched battle, performed so badly at its sieges (*ibid* 1814, vi). Thus, after the supplementary chapter Jones inserted two discourses about the sieges, both of which highlighted the problems encountered and suggested several improvements (*ibid* 1814, 247-278).

In January 1827, an English translation of *Histoire de la guerre de la Péninsule sous Napoléon* by the late Général de Division Maximilien-Sébastien Foy (1775-1825) was published in Britain as *History of the war in the Peninsula under Napoleon*. Foy was by training a 'gunner'. He was born on 3rd February 1775 at Ham, Picardy. In 1790 he enrolled at the La Fere artillery school. Upon graduating in 1792 he was appointed a Sub-Lieutenant in the 3rd Regiment of Foot Artillery. In 1793 he was promoted to Captain. He was made Colonel of the 5th Regiment of Horse Artillery in 1803. In 1808 Foy oversaw the artillery during the French invasion of Portugal. But for two brief sojourns in France he served on the Iberian Peninsula throughout the war. In November 1809 he was promoted to General of Brigade and in 1811 he was appointed General of Division. In 1819 he attained the rank of Lieutenant-General and the same year he was elected to the French Chamber of Deputies, a post he held until his death in 1825 (Chisholm 1911, 771-772; Foy 1827, iv-ix).

Foy began writing his *History of the war* in 1814. By 1817 he had completed four volumes before ill health forced him to stop. In 1827 his widow arranged for the translation of *History of the war* to be published in England (Foy 1827, iii). In his *History of the war* Foy was extremely critical of both the siege tactics employed by Wellington and the inefficiency of

the Royal Engineers (*ibid* 1827, 208-210).⁷ In response to Foy's criticism Jones published a fully revised second edition of *Journals of the Sieges* (Jones 1827, xix). Thus, the 1827 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* was written to protect the reputations of both Wellington and the Royal Engineers.

The 1827 edition of Jones comprised of two volumes, which dealt with all the British blockades and sieges of the Peninsular War as well as sieges in Italy and the Netherlands during the same period (1808-1814). In volume 1, devoted to the 1811 and 1812 sieges, Jones discarded all the narrative chapters from the previous edition and expanded his accounts of the sieges by incorporating information from other sources, most notably that of Sir Alexander Dickson who had served in the Portuguese Artillery throughout the conflict. Jones also discarded the two discourses at the end of the first edition as he stated that the deficiencies he had highlighted in 1814 had since been rectified (*ibid* 1827, iv).

In 1846, three years after Jones' death, a third edition of *Journals of the Sieges* was published by his brother Sir Henry David Jones, and who added his brother's earlier *Memoranda Relative to the Lines Thrown up to Cover Lisbon in 1810* (Jones 1829) at the end of the 1827 edition to create a three-volume work. Although Henry Jones did not make any alterations to the text, he interspersed extracts from Wellington's dispatches and several French sources as footnotes throughout the text. He hoped that if these extracts were read in conjunction with the text it would enhance the value of the book (Jones 1846, viii).

It can be seen from the previous paragraphs that in reality there are only two versions of *Journals of the Sieges*: the 1846 edition was in essence a copy of the 1827 edition. But each edition was written for subtly different purposes. In the 1814 edition Jones set out to explain why Wellington's army performed so poorly at sieges despite its excellent performance on the battlefield. Thus, from the outset the narrative of *Journals of the Sieges* was skewed in such a way that it explained this apparent anomaly without openly criticising the Royal Artillery or the Royal Engineers, the two principal units involved in siege-warfare. Thirteen years later, Foy's criticism of Wellington and the Royal Engineers in his *History of the war* prompted Jones to revise completely *Journals of the Sieges* to defend the reputations of both Wellington and the Royal Engineers. Thus, one should be circumspect when using whichever edition of *Journals of the Sieges* because of the obvious bias in the various editions of it.

⁷ See Chapter 3.6 for the organisation and training of the Royal Engineers and the Royal Military Artificers.

2.4. Other Sources

It has been noted that there are two different versions of *Journals of the Sieges*, each of which was written for a specific purpose. Therefore, to appraise the accuracy of *Journals of the Sieges* it is necessary to examine all the available sources. The British sources include: - Jones' private journal and his *Autobiography*; other contemporary private journals, letters and accounts by other Royal Engineers; the official British reports of the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Burgos; Wellington's *Dispatches*; the private papers of letters, journals and accounts from officers and men from other army units; and the British Army Muster Rolls. The French sources are fewer in number but include:- the official French accounts of the three sieges of Badajoz, the sieges Ciudad Rodrigo and Burgos; Maximilien-Sébastien Foy's four volume *Histoire de la guerre de la Péninsule sous Napoléon* published in 1827 and republished in an English translation as *History of the war in the Peninsula under Napoleon*; Jacques-Vital Belmas' *Journaux des Siéges faits ou Soutenus par les Français dans la Péninsule, de 1807 a 1814* (vol.1 1836; vol.2 1836; vol.3 1837; vol.4 1837); and Antoine-Marie Augoyat's *Précis des Campagnes et des Siéges D'Espagne et de Portugal de 1807 a 1814*, a single volume abridged version of Belmas' *Journaux des Siéges* published in 1839.

Jones' private journal constitutes the single most important primary source of information about *Journals of the Sieges*. Its three volumes contain a daily record of Jones' wartime experiences which include contemporaneous notes about the three sieges of Badajoz, and the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. This format was repeated in the *Journals of the Sieges*, where the narrative was arranged with descriptions of events, developments and interpretations as day-by-day entries (and including overnight operations). This arrangement of the material, in turn influenced how some, if not all the, French 'counter-versions' of the sieges were composed. The entries in the private journal range in scope from pages which only have brief comments about the weather, to whole pages which are filled with detailed information about siege operations. Thus, it is possible to directly compare details in Jones' private journal with the information in *Journals of the Sieges*. By such a comparison it can be shown that on several occasions Jones omitted material, whether deliberately or otherwise is to be determined, from *Journals of the Sieges*, which showed either the Royal Engineers or the Royal Artillery in a poor light. It should however, be borne in mind that Jones made subjective decisions about what to record and what to omit from his journal. Thus, he only recorded details which he thought were relevant and omitted other information, which might have proved useful.

In 1842 Jones wrote his *Autobiography*, which contained limited details about military operations during the Peninsular War. There are however, a few snippets of personal information relating to the sieges which are not recounted in his private journal or *Journals of the Sieges*. This suggests that Jones wrote this section of his *Autobiography* from his personal recollections some 30 years after the event and not from notes made at the time, so his memory of events is likely to have become hazy. In addition to a selective or fading memory there are also several assertions made by Jones which evidence from other sources show are untrue. Thus, the information in the *Autobiography* also must be treated with caution. There are however, some details which contribute to our understanding of the sieges. One such example is the reason Wellington decided to attack the San Vincente bastion at Badajoz in 1812, even though such an attack was not envisaged in his original plan (Gurwood 1838c, 32).⁸ The capture of this bastion caused French resistance at the breaches to collapse and ultimately led to the capture of Badajoz. Yet, the rationale behind this important attack is only recorded in the *Autobiography* (Jones 1842, 55-56).

In addition to Jones' version of the course of the sieges, first-hand, 'eye-witness' information about the sieges can be found in the letters, journals, and accounts of other Royal Engineers who were present at the sieges. They include those of Capt. John Fox Burgoyne, Lt. Rice Jones, Lt. William Reid and Capt. John Squire and which in turn can be compared against Jones' versions of events.

John Fox Burgoyne (1782-1871) was the eldest son of Lt.-Gen. John Burgoyne but was brought up by the 12th Earl of Derby (a nephew of his father's late wife) following his father's early death. Educated at Eton, he entered the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich in October 1796. In late August 1798 he was gazetted Second Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers. He was promoted to Lieutenant in July 1800, and later in the same year he participated in the siege of Malta.⁹ From Malta he went to Sicily, where he became aide-de-camp to Gen. Henry Fox, and he was promoted to Second Captain in March 1805. He was sent as commanding engineer with Gen. Mackenzie Fraser's force to Egypt in February 1807. In April 1808 Burgoyne became the commanding engineer on the staff of Sir John Moore and went with Moore's army to Sweden in May 1808 and to Portugal in September 1808, after which he was evacuated from Vigo in January 1809 (Stephens, 1886a, 342-343).

⁸ See Chapter 5.5 for an explanation about Wellington's decision to attack the San Vincente bastion.

⁹ See Chapter 3.7 for details about the siege of Malta.

Burgoyne returned to Portugal in April 1809 to join Sir Arthur Wellesley's army. During Wellesley's advance into Spain he was left behind in Portugal to help construct the Lines of Torres Vedras. Promoted to Captain in July 1809, Burgoyne became the engineer officer for the 3rd Division, in which role he participated in the second siege of Badajoz and the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. Promoted to brevet Major in February 1812, he led the storming parties at the third siege of Badajoz. Promoted to brevet Lieutenant Colonel in April 1812, he took part in the Battle of Salamanca, and directed the siege of the Salamanca forts and the unsuccessful siege of Burgos (*ibid* 1886a, 343).

In 1873 Burgoyne's son-in-law Lt.-Col. George Wrottesley published *Life and Correspondence of Field Marshal John Burgoyne*, a selection of Burgoyne's letters and private journals (Wrottesley 1873). The usefulness of this source is limited as Wrottesley omitted large sections of the original journals concerned with the sieges, preferring instead to insert extracts from William Napier's *History of the War in the Peninsula and in the South of France*. Fortunately, the Royal Engineers Museum at Chatham has a large collection of Burgoyne's letters, private journals (Accession Numbers 4601-72 1811; 4601-72 1812.12; 4601-72 1812.14; 4601-72 1812.15) and official reports (Accession Numbers 4601-72 1812.10; 4601-72 1812.16; 4601-72 1812.17), all of which provide a wealth of information about the sieges. Burgoyne was a contemporary of Jones, both men were gazetted as Second Lieutenants in August 1798, and by April 1812 they had risen to the rank of brevet Lieutenant-Colonel. Burgoyne was not averse to criticizing the conduct of the sieges in letters to friends such as Captain Charles Pasley RE (Burgoyne 1812, 1-24). Thus, his writings provide a well-informed but different view of the sieges.

In 1913 Henry Shore published *An Engineer Officer under Wellington in the Peninsula*, extracts of the letters and personal journals of Lt. Rice Jones (and republished in 1986). Information about (Rice) Jones (d. 1854, aged 65) is limited. He was a military engineer by training and by 1806 was a Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers. In 1807 he took part in the ill-fated expedition to South America. In April 1809 he was sent to join Wellesley's army in Portugal. He served on Fletcher's staff throughout the Oporto and Talavera campaigns, before returning to Portugal in 1810 to assist in the construction of the Lines of Torres Vedras. He was promoted to Second Captain in May 1811. Along with being at the battles at Duoro, Talavera and Albuera, (Rice) Jones served at the first two sieges of Badajoz and that at Ciudad Rodrigo, before returning to England in February 1812 (Shore 1986, i).

There are two reasons why *An Engineer Officer under Wellington in the Peninsula* should be used with caution. First, Shore omitted pages of the journal concerned with the sieges, stating that (J.T.) Jones had already given full details of the siege-works (*ibid* 1986, 106). Second, a close inspection of the extracts from (Rice) Jones' journal about the first two sieges of Badajoz reveal that on several occasions sections of his text are almost identical to those in (J.T.) Jones' private journal. There is even an instance where both journals recorded, incorrectly, that the allied army suffered 200 casualties during the investment on the northern bank of the Guadiana (Jones 1810-1811, 144; Shore 1986, 100). However, (Rice) Jones does not employ the same day-by-day structure used in (J.T.) Jones' journal, also there are no copies of any orders or other reports in it. This suggests that as both men were stationed on the southern bank of the Guadiana during these sieges, they must have consulted each other when writing their journals, although neither man copied from the other's journal.

A major writer on the sieges who is almost totally overlooked by modern historians is William Reid (1791-1858) who authored a critical set of observations about Peninsular War siege-warfare. Reid was born at Kinglassie, Scotland, the eldest son of Church of Scotland minister James Reid. Educated at Musselburgh and the Edinburgh Academy, Reid entered the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, in 1806. He was gazetted a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers on 10th February 1809 and promoted Lieutenant 23rd April 1810. The same month he joined the British army at Lisbon. On landing in Portugal, he was employed in the construction of the Lines of Torres Vedras (Vetch 1896, 440).

Reid served at the three sieges of Badajoz, the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, and those of the Salamanca forts. On 23rd June 1812, during the siege of the Salamanca forts, he led an unsuccessful assault on Fort Gayetano. After the capture of the forts Reid took part in the Battle of Salamanca, before moving north to participate in the siege of Burgos. On 22nd September he participated in the unsuccessful assault on the exterior defensive line at Burgos. However, the next day he fell ill and did not resume duty until 17th October (*ibid* 1896, 440-441).

In 1836 Napier published the fifth volume of his *History of the War in the Peninsula...* which covered the sieges of the Salamanca forts and Burgos. Reid disagreed with Napier's accounts of the assaults on Fort Gayetano, the San Miguel hornwork¹⁰ and the first assault on the exterior defensive line at Burgos.¹¹ So, in 1837 Reid published an article about these assaults in *Papers on subjects connected with the duties of the Corps Royal Engineers*.

¹⁰ See Chapter 6.5 for details about the capture of the San Miguel hornwork.

¹¹ See Chapter 6.6 for details about this assault.

Although written 25 years after the event it contains important first-hand information about Fort Gayetano and the first two attacks carried out at Burgos, which directly contradicts Jones' (and Napier's) account of these assaults (Reid 1837, 5-19). In *Précis des Campagnes et des Sièges D'Espagne et de Portugal de 1807 a 1814* Augoyat disputed Jones' (and Napier's) account of the first assault on the exterior line at Burgos, but approved of Reid's version (Augoyat 1839, 327).

A particularly interesting primary source that could not have been available to Jones is a volume of Squire's journal, which covers the period 12th May - 22nd July 1811 and records details about the second siege of Badajoz. The journal was discovered in May 2016 in a bookshop in Hobart, Tasmania, over 200 years after Squire's death. After the journal had been authenticated, it was donated to the National Army Museum, Stevenage (Accession Number 2016-07-24).

John Squire (1780-1812) was born in London the eldest son of Dr. John Squire. He was educated at Charterhouse, and after passing through the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, was gazetted Second Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers in January 1797 and was promoted to Lieutenant on 29th August 1798. In August 1799 he took part in the Helder expedition, returning to England in October. In 1801 he went to Egypt and served throughout the Egyptian campaign. Squire was promoted to Captain Lieutenant in February 1803, and Second Captain on 19th July 1804. On 1st July 1806 he was promoted to Captain, and appointed commanding Royal Engineer of the South American expedition. Two years later in April 1808 Squire accompanied Moore's army to Sweden, and then to Portugal, before returning to England in February 1809. In July of the same year he took part in the ill-fated Walcheren Campaign (Vetch 1898, 437-438). On 28 March 1810 Squire joined Wellington's army in Portugal, where he was employed on the Lines of Torres Vedras. In March, the next year Squire accompanied Marshal William Carr Beresford's corps to Badajoz. There, Squire directed the siege-works on the north bank of the Guadiana during the first two sieges (5th –12th May and 25th May–10th June). He was promoted to brevet Major on 5th December 1811. In March 1812 Squire was one of the two directors, along with Burgoyne, of the third siege of Badajoz. He was promoted to be brevet Lieutenant-Colonel on 27 April. Squire died of fever at Trujillo on 19th May 1812 (*ibid* 1898, 438-439).

During the 1811 sieges at Badajoz, Squire oversaw operations against San Christóbal on the northern bank of the Guadiana, whereas Jones' was in command on the opposite bank of the river. Thus, it is possible to compare the details in Squire's journal with

both Jones' private journal and *Journals of the Sieges*. There are several instances where Squire's account of events differs from Jones' descriptions (in the private journal and *Journals of the Sieges*). Because Squire was stationed north of the river his account about the attack on San Christóbal is probably more accurate than that recorded by Jones.

Another important primary source are the official reports of the sieges, which were produced by both the Royal Engineers and the French *Corps du Génie*. Unfortunately, only three British official accounts exist for 1811-1812: Ciudad Rodrigo, the Salamanca forts and Burgos. There is evidence that some of details in the report of Ciudad Rodrigo are incorrect, so again caution must be exercised when using this account.¹² The official reports of the sieges of the Salamanca forts and Burgos were written by Burgoyne and contain valuable material about both sieges.

Central to any discussion of virtually all and every aspect of the management and execution of the Peninsular campaign, are the official correspondence of the Duke of Wellington, otherwise his dispatches. The publication of this information has an evolving history. The first series of published dispatches consist of 12 volumes of Wellington's official reports and private correspondence edited and published by Col. John Gurwood, between 1837 and 1839. The contents cover the period 1799-1818, and relate to Wellington's service in India, Denmark, Holland, Portugal, Spain and France. Unfortunately, the information in the first series of dispatches is incomplete because Gurwood was denied access to many of Wellington's more confidential letters, whilst the published papers were heavily censored (Oman 1913, 9). In many cases this meant omitting the names of officers and their regiments, who had displeased Wellington for one reason or another (*ibid* 1913, 10). A prime example is that of Maj. Andrew Lawrie, who commanded the failed assault on the exterior defensive line at Burgos on 22nd September 1812. Wellington's letter to Lord Liverpool was censored to read:

They did not take the line because _____, the field officer who commanded, did that which is too common in our army (Gurwood 1838c, 573).

In order to discover the names or regiments of those officers whose details were censored in Wellington's *Dispatches* it is necessary to check alternative sources. Gurwood's edition of the *Dispatches* also lacks a proper table of contents and an adequate index; as well as the comprehensive tables of casualty figures, which Wellington used to attach to his official communications with Horse Guards (Oman 1913, 11-12). A partially improved version of the

¹² See Chapter 4.9 for details of the errors in the official report about the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo.

Dispatches was published, the *Supplementary Dispatches*, between 1858 and 1872 by Wellington's son, the second Duke. Although the *Supplementary Dispatches* contains many of the papers omitted from the first series of dispatches, as well as many letters written to Wellington, there is a limited amount of material about the sieges (*ibid* 1913, 12).

As previously noted, information about the sieges can be found in the letters, journals and memoirs of officers and men from units other than the Royal Engineers. These include the letters of Capt. George Bowles, Coldstream Guards (Glover 2008) and George Hennell a volunteer attached to the 94th Foot (Glover 1979), the journal of Capt. John Frederick Ewart, 52nd Foot (Glover 2010) and the memoirs of Capt. John Kincaid, 95th Rifles (Kincaid 1830). The quality and reliability of these writings vary enormously. Letters and journals kept at the time are the most reliable sources of information, but even these must be treated with caution because their writers made subjective decisions about what to write. Thus, in a letter home a writer might omit the horrors he had witnessed or downplay the seriousness of situation. On the other hand, the published papers of Sir Alexander Dickson provide useful information about the part the artillery played in the sieges (Leslie 1908).

There are numerous memoirs of British soldiers who fought in the Peninsular War, which again vary greatly in quality. Memoirs written shortly after the end of the conflict are generally more reliable than those written long after the war, when the writer's recollection of the events was beginning to fade. In fact, there are several memoirs where the writer has filled the gaps in his narrative by inserting extracts of Napier's *A History of the War in the Peninsula and the South of France*. There is even evidence that French Gen. Baron de Marbot used Napier when writing his memoirs (Oman 1913, 23). Thus, soldiers' memoirs should be used with care.

Perhaps the most reliable information is provided by the data taken from the Muster Rolls and which are now held in the National Archives at Kew. This is another instance where a potentially highly pertinent body of evidence has been totally ignored when it comes to writing about the Peninsular sieges and their execution. Muster Rolls were registers of a regiment's troops, which recorded the pay of individual soldiers. In peacetime the roll was called once a month but was taken much more frequently in wartime. Although the Muster Rolls were only intended to be used for accounting purposes there is other information that can be gleaned from the registers such as names, ranks, occupations, and marriages; in wartime this also included a record of those who were killed, wounded or missing. Sometime after the end of the conflict the data from the Muster Rolls was transcribed into a ledger called *Returns of Absences* (WO 25/3223), which is now in the National Archives. *Returns* contain the details of

the numbers, ranks, and regiments of all the allied troops killed, wounded and missing from 1809 to 1814. Because the Government used the data from the Muster Rolls to calculate how much to pay the army the figures are extremely accurate. From the casualty records we can establish which (regimental) battalions, and where and when, were deployed during the sieges. This sort of information then can, for instance, be compared against Jones' day-by-day approach to describing the course of the sieges. Such a comparison, as will be shown below, often reveals anomalies and contradictions between the two sources, where Jones' describes one thing but *Returns* suggest otherwise.

On 2nd February 1811 Napoléon ordered the Major-General in charge of the *Corps du Génie* to produce reports of all the sieges undertaken by the French army in Germany from 1806 onwards. These reports were to include accounts of both the capture and defence of fortresses. The purpose of this directive was twofold. First, Napoléon wanted to create a library of reports that could be used to teach useful lessons about siege-warfare to future generations of engineers. Second, these reports would be used to honour those who had distinguished themselves in these sieges by providing a permanent record of their deeds. On 9th July, the same year Napoléon ordered that the scope of the reports be widened to include the sieges in Spain (Belmas 1836, xvi). The project was suspended in 1814, due to the lack of funds and Napoléon's abdication, before being abandoned after the restoration of Louis XVIII (*ibid* 1836, xvii).

Fortunately, official French accounts exist for all the five sieges examined in this thesis. The French reports are useful because they give a different perspective on the sieges, that of the besieged. Thus, they can provide details of conditions and events that occurred inside the besieged towns, which the allied troops would have been unaware of at the time. The official French reports were one of the sources Belmas acknowledged he had used to compile his *Journaux des Siéges*... In this, after his account of each siege Belmas added a section called 'Pièces Justificatives' (Supporting Documents), which listed all the sources used to write each chapter. He acknowledged the use of the official French reports of Badajoz, Ciudad Rodrigo and Burgos. Belmas also used *Journals of the Sieges* and Napier's *History of the War in the Peninsula*. *Journaux des Siéges* contains copies of several of Wellington's orders. The orders in question were published by Gurwood in 1838 a year after the publication of *Journaux des Siéges* (Gurwood 1838; 1838a; 1838b). These orders are however, quoted in full in *Journals of the Sieges*, thus Belmas must have got his information from that source.

Jacques-Vital Belmas (1792-1864) was born in Paris. In 1810 he was admitted to *L'École Polytechnique*, and then to *L'École d'Application*, he was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the *Corps du Génie* in 1813. He was posted to Italy, where he distinguished himself at the battles of Caldiero and the Mincio River. Upon promotion to Captain 1817, he became aide-de-camp to General Joseph Rogniat. In 1832 he served as Battalion Chief at the siege of Antwerp, and he retired as a Colonel in 1833 (Vapereau 1858, 157).

The importance and influence of Jones' description of the sieges spread rapidly after the publication of the second edition of *Journal of the Sieges*, so much so that Belmas produced a French counter-version on the same subject. Belmas titled his work *Journaux des Sièges Faits ou Soutenus par les Français dans la Péninsule, de 1807 a 1814 rédigés, d'après les ordres du gouvernement, sur les documents existant aux archives de la guerre et au dépôt des fortifications* (vol.1 1836; vol. 2 – 1836; vol. 3 – 1837; vol 4 - 1837) as a direct reference to Jones' work. In turn Belmas (and his epitomiser, Augoyat), followed Jones in setting out his description in a day-by-day format. The leading early twentieth century historian on the Peninsular War, Charles Oman was full of praise for Belmas' *Journaux des Sièges*, as it contained copies of original documents relating to the sieges as well as statistics about garrisons, losses, ammunition expended etc:- (Oman 1911, 21).

Antoine-Marie Augoyat (1783-1864), another engineer by training, was admitted to *L'École Polytechnique* in 1801. He then entered the *Corps du Génie* as a Lieutenant. After the restoration of Louis XVIII, Augoyat left active service and took up post at *L'École d'Application* at Metz, teaching a course on fortifications. After 1830 he was promoted to Colonel and appointed curator of the map gallery in *Les Invalides*. In 1844 he was awarded the Legion of Honour (Vapereau 1858, 77).

In 1839 Augoyat published an abridged version of Belmas' 1836 *Journaux des Sieges*, entitled *Précis des Campagnes et des Sièges D'Espagne et de Portugal de 1807 an 1814*. Augoyat had the advantage of being able to call on material which had been published after Belmas. Thus, his account contains references to the early volumes of Wellington's *Dispatches*, Napier's history, and Beamish's history of the King's German Legion (1803-1816). Despite being critical of Jones, Napier and Belmas at times Augoyat's work should be used with caution as it contains a number of silly errors.

2.5. Conclusion

It is doubtful if anyone without the contacts and access to information which Jones had acquired during his career could have written *Journals of the Sieges* between 1813 and 1814. In the 14 years since his commission as a Second Lieutenant in 1798, Jones had risen to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel by 1812, when he was just 29 years of age. During that time, he had gained a wealth of practical experience in constructing fortifications but more significantly some of the functions he performed gave him unrivalled access to important contacts and information. Jones' appointment as Brigade-Major in November 1810, meant that he had first-hand knowledge about the conduct of the sieges at Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo, because of the role he played in them. It also gave him access to the Royal Engineers correspondence, details of which he used to write the first edition of *Journals of the Sieges*. Thus, when Jones was incapacitated by his wound, he was ideally placed to write *Journals of the Sieges*.

Jones freely acknowledged that the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* was written to explain why the British troops were so poor at siege-warfare, despite their superiority over the French on the battlefield (Jones 1814, vi). Jones' opinion of the prowess of Wellington's army on the battlefield was reiterated by Friedrich Karl Ferdinand Freiherr von Müffling, a Prussian Major-General, who served as Field Marshall Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher's liaison officer in Wellington's headquarters during the Battle of Waterloo. Von Müffling wrote:

“The British soldier is vigorous, well fed, by nature highly brave and intrepid, trained to the most vigorous discipline, and admirably well-armed. The infantry resist the attacks of cavalry with great confidence, and when taken in the flank or rear, British troops are less disconcerted than any other European army. These circumstances in their favour will explain how this army, since the Duke of Wellington conducted it, has never yet been defeated in the open field” (quoted in David 2012, 499).

It would however, appear that *Journals of the Sieges* was also written as a means to persuade the Government to create a professionally trained Corps of Sappers and Miners to assist the Royal Engineers. Towards the end of January 1812, Jones had written to the Inspector-General of Fortifications at the Ordnance Department urging the creation of such a corps, for which he received a strong rebuke from the Ordnance Department (Jones 1842, 51). Undeterred by this response, in his second discourse in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges*, Jones argued for the creation of a unified and professionally trained corps of soldiers that would contain sappers, miners and artificers, as well as sufficient stores and available

transport to be able to carry out siege-warfare (Jones 1814, 274). One of the many social changes that Britain experienced in the late C18th was a dramatic increase in adult literacy, which in turn saw the proliferation of newspapers, periodicals and books (Porter 1983, 251). Throughout the Peninsular War newspapers had kept the public informed about the progress of the Peninsular War. This interest in the conduct of the war meant that when the first edition of *Journals of the Sieges* was published in 1814 it sold out in a few months (Jones 1827, iii). Thus, Jones was able to spread his idea about the formation a professionally trained Corps of Sappers and Miners to a wider audience, and thus hopefully stimulate a debate about the idea which might prompt the Government to act.

In 1827 Jones chose to re-write *Journals of the Sieges* in response to Foy's criticism of Wellington and the Royal Engineers in his *History of the war in the Peninsula under Napoleon*. Thus, the second edition of *Journals of the Sieges* has a different emphasis to that of the first edition. Jones also made use of other sources, which were not available to him when he wrote the first edition of his book. Unfortunately, most British writers instinctively use the 1827 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* when writing about the sieges and fail to make any use of the earlier edition. This means that they are unaware of the original aim of *Journals of the Sieges*, as well as being oblivious to the fresh material from other sources that Jones used in the 1827 edition. I believe that it is not possible to truly assess Jones reputation as an historian of the sieges without examining both editions of *Journals of the Sieges*. Thus, in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 there is a detailed examination of both editions to assess both the contents of the *Journals of the Sieges* and so make any assessments on their value.

This brief summary of the sources used in this thesis shows the wealth of material that is available to historians. Unfortunately, most English historians make two mistakes when discussing the Peninsular War sieges. First, they tend to use the 1827 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* and thus fail to realise the subtle differences between the different editions. Second, they fail to make full use of the wide variety of resources that are available. Despite the value of the French sources these are usually ignored by English writers. I believe that two sources have been better exploited in this thesis and not previously used in any examination of the sieges. These are the Army's Muster Rolls and the *Returns of Absences* (WO 25/3223), which give an accurate picture of the casualties throughout the whole conflict. The second source is Squire's journal, not least because it has been unavailable to anybody writing up to 2016 about the sieges in general or the individual actions.

Chapter 3

Fortifications and Siege Craft

3.1. Introduction

Before examining the British sieges of the Peninsular War there are several subjects concerning artillery, fortifications, siege-craft and military engineering which must be explored to provide a basis for understanding siege-warfare in the early C19th. The technological advances in artillery design during the C15th had rendered mediaeval fortifications obsolete, so a new system of defence, the *trace italienne* was developed to address this problem. Badajoz, Ciudad Rodrigo and Burgos were all protected by the *trace italienne* system. Thus, the first section of this chapter (3.2) outlines the development of the system and describes its main component parts.

The next section (3.3) is an examination of the methodical method for conducting siege-warfare developed by the great French military engineer Marshal Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban (1633-1707). By the middle of C17th it had become extremely difficult to capture *trace italienne* fortifications using traditional methods (Duffy 1979, 88). However, between 1667 and 1672 Vauban developed a system to capture such fortifications that was invariably successful. Although Vauban died in 1707 most of his methods were still as valid during the Peninsular War as they had been 100 years earlier (Bruce *et al*, 2010, 200).

This is followed by a section (3.4) which explores the accepted rules of siege-warfare. During this period there were no internationally recognised laws about the conduct of sieges, although European combatants did adhere to certain universally accepted conventions.

Because engineers played a major role during sieges, when they were either attacking or defending a fortification, it is important to understand the calibre of the different units involved. Thus, the development, structure and training of the French military engineers is covered in the next section (3.5). This is followed by a similar exploration of the Royal Engineers (3.6). Because of the fractured nature the British military engineering services during this period, this section also encompasses the Royal Military Artificers and the Royal Staff Corps. The section serves to highlight the huge gulf in the training, experience and structure between the *Corps du Génie* and the British military engineering services.

3.2. The development of fortifications

The technological advances made in gunpowder and artillery in the C15th meant that the advantage in siege-warfare had swung towards the attackers. Military engineers sought ways to design fortifications that would nullify these improvements. The main impetus for the development of fortifications that could withstand cannon came from Italy. Between 1450 and the 1520s a system of defence evolved that became known as the *trace italienne*. This provided the three basic requirements for defence against armies equipped with modern cannon: a ditch and walls sufficiently formidable to deter escalade; low-lying ramparts to serve as stable artillery platforms; and third, a ground plan so arranged as to leave no blind spots or dead ground by which an enemy might reach the rampart unscathed (Kingra 1993, 433).

During the 1500s there were numerous publications on military architecture written by Italian engineers and architects,¹³ which spread the knowledge of the *trace italienne* across Europe. So much so that by the end of that century Italians were employed by almost every state in Europe to build their fortifications (Hughes 1974, 103). If an engineer had the opportunity to design a new fortress on level ground, he would invariably choose a multi-sided and regular *enceinte*. The more sides used meant that there were a greater number of equally spaced bastions around the *enceinte*. This allowed the construction of obtuse-angled bastions, which were less vulnerable to bombardment as well as a shorter and more easily defended curtain walls (*ibid* 1974, 111). Two figures illustrate the relationship between the four main components of the system: the curtain wall, bastions, the ditch and *ravelins*. The first is the plan of part a *trace italienne* fortress (**Figure 2**) and the second is the cross-section X-Y on the plan (**Figure 3**).

The curtain or curtain walls, which surrounded the *enceinte*, were between 14m and 16m wide. There were three separate elements which made up the top of the wall: the parapet, the ramparts and the *banquette*. The parapet formed the outer portion of the wall and was c.5.5m wide. Its function was to protect the troops on the ramparts from enemy fire, thus it was about 2m or 2.5m above the level of the ramparts. In the interior of the fortress the ramparts were between 3m and 6m above ground level. The ramparts were level platforms between 7m and 9m wide, which ran along the top of the walls and the adjoining bastions, so that the defending troops could move easily from place to place when needed. However, if cannon were placed on the ramparts, then the area where the guns were located became the

¹³ Girolamo Cataneo, Pietro Cataneo, Alghisi da Carpi, Iacomo Castriotto, Girolamo Maggi, Francesco de Marchi and Niccolò Fontana Tartaglia.

terreplein. Often a *banquette*, a step about 1.1m wide and 1m high, for the defenders to stand on and fire at the enemy was built along the rear of the parapet (Muller 1968, 27).

The single most important innovation during the C16th was the development of the bastion (Hughes 1974, 77). Originally this was little more than a large solid triangular artillery platform open to the sky located in front of the fortress walls, with the apex of the triangle projecting outwards (Pepper & Adams 1986, 3). The purpose was to provide as wide a field of fire as possible, whilst retaining the tower's role of providing cover to adjacent parts of the fortress (Kingra 1993, 434). Over time, the bastion evolved from a triangular shape to that of the more effective pentagon.

Bastions provided three advantages over older systems of defence. The batteries of guns sited along a flank of a bastion could provide an effective enfilading fire across the face of the adjoining bastion (Duffy 1979, 25). Thus, attackers could only reach the bastion by passing through a barrage of cannon fire (Hughes 1974, 77). Second, the apex of the bastion created an angular salient which eliminated the area of dead ground that had existed in front of circular mediaeval towers. Finally, the long straight sides along the faces and flanks of the bastion meant that the defenders could mount more guns on the bastion, than a circular bastion with similar dimensions (Duffy 1979, 25).

Although there was no uniform design for bastions, the two most common types of bastions designed by Vauban (**Figure 2**). In the first example, bastion A consists of a simple pentagon in which the flanks joined the curtain at oblique angles. However, in the second example, the flanks of the bastion B are concave, thus the juncture of the flank and the curtain could not be seen from the front. To protect these retired flanks, the faces of the bastion were joined to the flanks by rounded stonework called *orillons*, which were harder to destroy because of their curved shape (Muller 1968, 30-31).

The third major component was a deep wide ditch that surrounded the *enceinte* of the fortress. Ditches were usually between 30m and 40m wide and provided several benefits to the defenders (Hughes 1974, 104). It made it more difficult for an enemy to tunnel under the walls and detonate a mine (Duffy 1979, 12; Pepper & Adams 1986, 18). Second, the ditch made the possibility of escalade much harder, as the attackers would have to climb down into the ditch and cross it before scaling the walls, all the time they would be under persistent fire from the defenders (Pepper & Adams 1986, 18). The third function of the ditch was to shield the lower part of the walls from artillery fire. If a fortress with walls 20m high was sunken into a

10m deep ditch, only the top 10m of the wall would be visible. Thus, a breach made in the wall would be 10m above the bottom of the ditch and anyone attacking the breach would be faced with similar problems to those mentioned above. Because the ditch was invulnerable to bombardment it would have to be filled in or bridged before the attackers could reach the walls (*ibid* 1986, 18). However, a deep wide ditch meant that the rubble from a breached wall would not fill the ditch and thus create a bridge which the attackers could use to reach the breach (Hughes 1974, 67).

In most fortresses built according to the *trace italienne* system the ditch was usually dry. However, in low-lying marshy areas such as the Netherlands water-filled ditches were extensively used. A *cunette*, a small ditch about 3m or 4m wide and about 2m deep, was often dug along the middle of the large dry ditch as an additional defensive measure, which would be filled with water during sieges (Muller 1968, 216). The exterior side of the ditch was delimited by the counterscarp, a stone-clad vertical wall. On top of the counterscarp was the covered way, a walkway that was cut into the top of the outer rim of the ditch. This was first suggested by the Venetian military engineer Niccolò Fontana Tartaglia in 1556. His idea was rather than have all the defenders crowded in a single line along the curtain and bastions, some infantry could be stationed on the far side of the ditch to provide defence in depth. Troops on the covered way were protected by a palisade of wooden stakes constructed along its edge and a mound of earth built up in front of the ditch to create a bare slope called a *glacis*, which acted as a parapet to the covered way. The *glacis* also helped to screen the masonry of the curtain, bastions and *ravelins* from artillery (Duffy 1979, 34).

When strengthening the defences of Sarzanello in 1497 the Genoese constructed a *ravelin*, a free-standing triangular outwork, in front of the barbican to protect the gate in the curtain. However, towards the end of the C16th engineers realised that *ravelins* could be used to protect both the curtain and provide crossfire over the ground in front of adjoining bastions. Thus, they began to be constructed as isolated works in front of sections of the curtain that were devoid of gates. (*ibid* 1979, 34). A *ravelin* was formed like a broad arrow with its faces some 60m to 75m in length. *Ravelins* were designed to slow down and hinder an attack. If during an assault the enemy captured a *ravelin* they would find themselves isolated in the middle of the ditch, from where they would have to attack a bastion or part of the curtain in order to capture the fortification (Hughes 1974, 104).

By the end of the C16th all the elements of the *trace italienne* had been developed, so that fortifications began to be built that incorporated these ideas (Duffy 1979, 33). During

the French Religious Wars (1562-1598) and the Eighty Years War (1568-1648) several sieges of towns protected by the *trace italienne* system demonstrated that they could not be captured by the traditional methods of assault. These included the unsuccessful siege of La Rochelle (December 1572 - July 1573), as well as the successful siege of Ostend (July 1601 – September 1604) (*ibid* 1979, 88). Thus, engineers began to consider ways to capture a fortress protected by a *trace italienne* system that would be both successful and not result in too many casualties.

3.3. Vauban's system of siege craft

Prior to the 1670s there was no systematic way for conducting a siege. In most cases the attacking force, whilst under constant bombardment from the fortress, would dig a zigzag trench or sap to the edge of the ditch. Then, the attacker's artillery would create a breach in the curtain opposite the head of the approach sap. Once the breach was practicable the attacking troops would leave the trench and storm the breach. However, there were several drawbacks to this form of attack (Langins, 2004, 108). First, as soon as the attackers started to dig the approach sap the defenders would know where the enemy intended to make the breach. Thus, they could create retrenchments and other defences behind the intended breach site while the enemy were still inching towards the ditch. Second, because there was only one approach trench, it was extremely vulnerable to sorties by troops inside the fortress. Finally, since there was only one sap the attacking troops had to leave the trench individually to form up in the ditch before they attacked the breach. Thus, the defenders could concentrate all their fire on the head of the sap, causing innumerable casualties among the attacking troops as they emerged from the trench (*ibid* 2004, 108).

Vauban is famous for designing over 160 fortresses, many of which did not vary greatly from the *trace italienne* system of defence. However, his true genius lay in his development of a methodical system for conducting successful sieges, which eliminated all the drawbacks mentioned above (Hughes 1974, 129; Langins 2004, 109). Vauban's introduction to siege-warfare was in the 1650s, when he served as an engineer for Louis XIV at seven sieges between 1653 and 1656.¹⁴ By 1657 he was skilled enough to direct his first siege at Montmedy. Over the next 16 years as he gained experience he took elements from previous sieges and developed them into a methodical system for attacking fortresses. His system was based on the construction of a series of trenches parallel to the walls of the besieged fortress. There is evidence

¹⁴ Vauban served as an engineer at the following sieges: Sainte Menhould (1653), Stenay, Clermont-en Argonne (1654), Landrecies, Conde-sur-L'Escaut, Saint Ghislain (1655) and Valenciennes (1656).

that there was some use of the siege parallel in Holland and France in the C17th, but its first recognised use was by the Turks, during their prolonged siege of Candia on Crete (May 1648 - September 1669).

Sometime between 1667 and 1672 Vauban wrote his *Mémoire pour servir d'instruction dans la conduite des sièges et dans la défense des places*, a treatise on siege-craft, which is an instruction manual on how to conduct a siege (Vauban 1968, x). Vauban first put his theories into practise in 1673 at the successful siege of Maastricht (Duffy 1985, 10; Hughes 1974, 129; Langins 2004, 105).

In Vauban's method, after the point of attack was selected, work commenced on the construction of a trench parallel to the walls of the fortress. This was dug about 600m from the fortress, between the salient angles of the two bastions located on either side of the proposed breach site. Once the first parallel had been completed, zigzag approach trenches were dug from the first parallel towards the fortress. When these trenches were about halfway to the fortress a second parallel was constructed (Hughes 1974, 129). Batteries were then built along the second parallel. These batteries were designed to use ricochet fire to clear men and guns off the parapets (Duffy 1985, 79). In a ricochet shot an underpowered cannonball, which used half the regular powder charge, was lobbed onto a bastion, as it did not have the force to embed itself into the surrounding earth, it bounced around the *terreplein* causing indiscriminate death and destruction among the artillerymen and their guns (Langins 2004, 110).

Once the fire from the guns in the fortress had been suppressed by ricochet fire, the zigzag approaches were continued up to the *glacis*. A third parallel was then dug along the foot of the *glacis*, after which breaching batteries were constructed on the *glacis* (Duffy 1985, 79). Once a practicable breach had been made in the walls, the covered way was crowned, and the attacking troops descended into the ditch, from where they could storm the breach if the commander of the fortress refused to surrender (Hughes 1974, 131).

Parallels solved several problems inherent with digging a single sap up to the ditch. The length of the parallel meant that artillery batteries could be placed in a wide arc along the length of the trench, thus increasing the potential points of attack. This meant that initially the defenders would not know where the attackers intended to breach the walls. Thus, they could not take any action to reinforce their defences until after the construction of the breaching batteries on the *glacis*. Second, the parallels were less vulnerable to enemy sorties as they were manned by troops, who were stationed in them to provide covering fire for the men constructing

the saps. Thus, these troops could deal with any sorties. Finally, when an attack was imminent the defenders could not concentrate all their fire on a single point but were forced to fire on the whole length of the parallel (Langins 2004,108). Vauban's system of siege-warfare was so effective that it remained almost unaltered in Europe for well over a century (Duffy 1985, 78; Langins 2004, 108).

3.4. Conventions of siege-warfare

Prior to the first Geneva Convention of 1864 there were no internationally recognised laws on the treatment of combatants or non-combatants in wartime.¹⁵ However, during the Middle Ages certain accepted conventions developed across Europe, which related to how a captured town was to be treated after a siege. Many of these principles can be discerned in Classical antiquity and in the period immediately afterwards. If a besieged town surrendered before the enemy stormed the place, then the lives of the garrison and the townsfolk were spared even if other conditions might be imposed on the population by the victorious commander. However, if town had to be captured by an assault, then the lives of all the inhabitants (combatants and non-combatants) were regarded as forfeit. Almost anything was condoned; the garrison and adult males could be massacred, the women raped and everything in the town could be looted. In theory only the churches and the clergy were exempt from such barbaric treatment, but in some cases even this exemption was ignored (Keen 1965, 120–121).

The rationale for such vicious measures was taken from the Bible. Religion was an extremely important facet of daily life during the mediaeval period and biblical texts were regarded as being the word of God. Thus, if a town was captured by an assault the Bible verses relating to sieges were used to justify such barbaric practices (Barker 2015, 183):

“When you draw near to a city to fight against it, offer terms of peace to it. And if its answer to you is peace and it opens to you, then all the people who are found in it shall do forced labour and shall serve you. But if it makes war against you, then you shall besiege it; and when the Lord your God gives it into your hand you shall put all its males to the sword, but the women and the little ones, the cattle and everything else in the city, all its spoils, you shall take for booty for yourselves; and you shall enjoy the spoil of your enemies, which the Lord your God has given you” (*Deuteronomy* 20:10-12).

Although these conventions began to formalise in the mediaeval period they were still being adhered to during the Peninsular War. By this time, the concept of reasonable

¹⁵ The first of four treaties and three protocols that established the standards of international law in the humanitarian treatment of combatants and non-combatants during wartime.

defence had arisen, which meant that a defence could be mounted until the position became untenable. This was usually interpreted as being when a ‘practicable breach’ had been made in the walls. At this point the garrison would be summoned to surrender, and if they did so the town would be spared. But if they offered further resistance the town would be sacked (Pepper 2000, 578-579).

A savage sack of a town captured by an assault, besides being justified by the mores of the time, served two other purposes. The prospect of booty, drink and women were major incentives for the attacking troops to persevere with the rigours of a siege prior to the assault (Keen 1965, 122). Second, the wholesale massacre of a garrison could be used as a deterrent to show other towns what would happen if they resisted (Pepper 2000, 578). Storming a breach was costly in men’s lives and so anything that could prevent such an assault was preferable to such an attack.

During the Peninsular War, the Anglo-Portuguese army did not follow the convention of killing the garrison in any of the towns they captured by force. After the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, the French forces occupying other Spanish towns would have quickly learnt that the garrison had not been harmed. Thus, when the allied army besieged Badajoz, Burgos and San Sebastián the French defenders refused to surrender, even when there were ‘practicable breaches’ in the walls, safe in the knowledge that it was highly unlikely that they would be massacred if the town was captured by force.

3.5. French military engineers

In the late C18th and early C19th the French *Corps du Génie* were regarded as the pre-eminent military engineers in Europe (Bruce *et al* 2010, 200). The Prussian general Heinrich von Zastrow wrote:

“Any soldier must be filled with the deepest respect for the French engineering corps, looking back on the past or the more recent episodes of fortress warfare in which French engineer officers have played a part, whether as defenders or assailants of strongholds. These officers fight not only with intelligence but with most selfless courage and they are as adept with the sword as the pen” (quoted in Duffy 1985, 78).

French pre-eminence in siege-warfare stemmed from decades of practical experience, coupled with the development of a disciplined and structured *Corps du Génie* commanded by well-trained officers. Between 1632 and 1748 France was involved in numerous wars which were dominated by sieges. Vauban himself directed 48 sieges between

1657 and 1707 (*ibid* 1985, 71). Due to the large number of sieges during this period, the French realised the importance of military engineers and began to invest men and resources into the development of an engineering corps, unlike other European nations, such as Prussia and Russia, who invested their resources in the infantry to the neglect of military engineers (Bruce *et al* 2010, 200).

Prior to 1691 there were two branches of French engineers. The Ministry of Marine controlled the *Ingénieurs de places*, civilian engineers responsible for coastal and interior fortresses. In addition, the War Ministry oversaw the *Ingénieurs de tranchée*, a unit of predominantly semi-military attack engineers, who also maintained the frontier defences (Duffy 1985, 75). These attack engineers were French infantry officers who had been detailed to serve apprenticeships under senior engineer officers, to learn their trade (Bruce *et al* 2010, 200). In July 1691, both branches were united as the *Département des Fortifications des Places de Terre et de Mer* with *Directeur Général* Michel Le Peletier de Souzy as its head (Duffy 1985, 75).

By 1696 the *Département des Fortifications...* possessed an officer-only establishment of 280 engineers. Vauban recognised the need for a unified Corps of Engineers consisting of officers, NCOs and privates as early as the 1670s. In 1672 and again in 1675, he requested permission from the Secretary of State for War, the Marquis de Louvois, to form 'Brigades' of trained sappers, gunners, miners and artificers. Vauban had argued that these 'Brigades' would help the engineers to conduct siege-warfare and build field fortifications. However, Louvois would not agree to the formation of the 'Brigades', although he did authorise the formation of companies of skilled miners in 1679 (*ibid* 1985, 78). But, contrary to Vauban's original concept the miners were assigned to the artillery not to the engineers (Bruce *et al* 2010, 200).

In 1697, Le Peletier decreed that officers wishing to join the engineers would only be admitted after they had undergone examination by Vauban, or in his absence the mathematician Joseph Sauveur. Initially candidates were subjected to tests in geometry, surveying, mechanics, arithmetic, geography, architecture and drawing. Having passed the examinations, the candidates were sent away for a period of one to two years to obtain practical engineering experience. At the end of this period, the candidates would be recalled for a final examination, which they had to pass to become an engineer (Duffy 1985, 78).

In 1748, *L'Ecole Royale du Génie*, an institution for the training of engineers, was opened in Mézières (Alder 1997, 57; Duffy 1985, 150). The college built on the experience of the examinations and training instigated by Le Peletier. Candidates would first have to pass an entrance examination that was so difficult, that only one candidate in six passed. Once accepted, the candidate began a six-year intensive training course. In the first year, students studied the subjects that had been introduced by Le Peletier; geometry, surveying, mechanics, arithmetic, geography, architecture and drawing. The second year was dedicated to practical engineering projects and military exercises at Mézières. Students were then posted as Second Lieutenants to the companies of miners in the artillery corps for a two-year period. For the final two years of training, the students were assigned to the engineers as Lieutenants, where they learnt the practicalities of engineering from experienced officers (Duffy 1985, 150-151). It was only after this exhaustive six-year training period that students joined the engineering corps.

The theoretical and practical aspects of the training course were designed to round out an engineer's experience and help him to be innovative when necessary. It was argued that if an engineer had just practical experience to rely upon, like that of the artisan, he would see problems in the same way and blindly follow the traditional method of solving them. Artisans invariably criticised new ways of tackling problems. However, the theoretical aspect of an engineer's training would broaden his approach to problem solving, as he could use his knowledge to theoretically test a solution before applying it in the field (Alder 1997, 63-64).

During their practical training engineers acquired a detailed knowledge of the tools and trades of the various artisans who comprised the rank and file of the engineering corps. This meant that the officers knew precisely what each artisan could do in a given situation, so they could issue orders that they knew were within their men's capabilities (*ibid* 1997, 65). Likewise, because the officers had executed many of the same tasks during their training that the troops were expected to perform whilst on campaign, it meant it was more likely that there would be mutual respect between the officers and their men.

In 1755 the artillery and engineers were combined into a single corp. However, this arrangement was short-lived and three years later the corps was again split into separate units. In an ordinance issued on 31st December 1776, the engineers were officially renamed as the *Corps Royal du Génie*. In these reforms the number of active officers in the *Corps Royal du Génie* was fixed at 329. These were divided into 21 permanent 'Brigades', which were ready to be sent anywhere they were needed (Duffy 1985, 150). In May 1781, the Ségur Ordonnance was issued which restricted the appointment of officers in the army to those of the nobility

(Langins 2004, 175). This retrograde step significantly reduced the number of applicants to the engineers, so much so that in 1787 the difficult entrance examination was abolished.

During, the French Revolution a series of laws were passed by the National Assembly which reorganised the French army and its training. In 1791 the number of engineers in the *Corps Royal du Génie* was fixed at 300 men, thus a fifth of the officers in the *Corps* were dismissed from the service (*ibid* 2004, 380). Then in 1794 the *L'École Royale du Génie*, at Mézières was closed and its students transferred to the newly opened *École centrale des travaux publics* in Paris. This institution, renamed *L'École Polytechnique* in 1795, was built to replace all the technical schools of the Old Régime, such as Mézières, the *École des Ponts et Chaussées* and the School of Mines (*ibid* 2004, 394).

Vauban's vision of a unified *Corps du Génie*, with engineer officers in command of trained regiment of sappers, artificers and miners was finally realised in 1793. In that year 12 battalions of *sapeurs du génie* (combat engineers) were raised to form part of the new Republican *Corps du Génie*. At the same time the mining companies were transferred from the artillery to the engineers. The efficiency of the *Corps du Génie* was further improved in 1806 when Napoléon ensured that individual units were equipped with engineer trains that were designed to transport their tools and equipment. Finally, in 1811 a company of *sapeurs-ouvriers* (engineer-artificers) was raised for work in the engineering depots (Bruce *et al* 2010, 200).

At the start of the Peninsular War the French *Corps du Génie* possessed the most efficient and well-trained military engineers in Europe. This was due to the French recognition of the vital importance of the role of the engineer in warfare, coupled with the willingness to invest men and resources into the development of a dedicated corps. The six-year officers training programme produced the best trained engineers in Europe, men who had unrivalled knowledge about what to expect from their subordinates. This training scheme also ensured that there was a close bond between the officers and their men.

The value of trained engineer and artillery officers was even understood by the Committee of Public Safety, the organisation which governed France throughout the Reign of Terror. During this period, many army officers of noble birth were condemned to death. However, all the artillery and engineer officers who had been dismissed in 1791 because of their noble birth were reinstated on 13th January 1794, because there were no suitably trained men to replace them (Bertraud 1988, 172).

Finally, the creation of 12 battalions of combat engineers in 1793 meant the *Corps du Génie* had a unified command structure of engineers, sappers, miners and artificers. These units were also supplied with their own engineer trains to carry all their equipment and supplies. Thus, during sieges the engineers could call on trained specialists to carry out tasks which the infantry could not perform.

3.6. British military engineers

Throughout the Peninsular War the engineering services for Wellington's army were provided by several different corps, the Corps of Royal Engineers, the Royal Military Artificers and the Royal Staff Corps. Additional assistance was received from the engineering corps' of the KGL, the Portuguese army and the Spanish army (Thompson 2015, 1). The situation was further complicated by the organisation of the British military at this time. Control of the Royal Engineers and the Royal Military Artificers was exercised by the Board of Ordnance and not the army. In contrast, the Royal Staff Corps was part of the Quarter-Master General's Department which fell under the jurisdiction of the army (Rogers 1979, 70).

On 26th May 1716, King George I issued a Royal Warrant instructing the Board of Ordnance to raise a Corps of Engineers to provide trained specialist soldiers for the military (Gander 1985, 7). Prior to this, only a small number of men were retained by the Board to advise on engineering matters. When the British army embarked on a military campaign, foreign engineers were generally hired to provide engineering services (Thompson 2015, 5). The initial establishment for the new corps was 28 men, who had to hire civilian labourers to form their workforce when required (Gander 1985, 7).

In 1741, King George II issued a Royal Warrant directing the Board of Ordnance, which was also responsible for the Royal Artillery, to create the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich to train officers for both the Royal Artillery and the Corps of Engineers (Gander 1985, 7; Thompson 2015, 233). Initially the training envisaged was limited in its scope. As the Royal Warrant read:

“ that it would conduce to the good of our service if an Academy or School was instituted, endowed, and supported, for instructing the raw and inexperienced people belonging to the Military branch of this office, the several parts of Mathematics necessary

to qualify them for the service of the Artillery, and the business of Engineers;” (quoted in Guggisberg 1900, 1).¹⁶

The evidence suggests that the “raw and inexperienced people” mentioned in the warrant were engineers, officers, NCOs and cadets of the Royal Regiment of Artillery. Thus, the original object of the academy was to train the ordnance corps in general in mathematics, engineering and artillery, as well as to prepare cadets for military service (*ibid* 1900, 2).

Unfortunately, in 1873 most of the records of the Royal Military Academy were destroyed in a fire, so our knowledge about its early years is limited (Marshall 1976, 94). Despite the lack of records, it is still possible to outline the development of the Royal Military Academy. The evidence shows that the entrance requirements, the discipline, the formal education and training at Woolwich were far below the rigorous standards that the French authorities had imposed on their students at *L’Ecole Royale du Génie*.

Between 1741 and 1774 there was no entrance examination for the Royal Military Academy. Instead, applicants had to make a direct request for admission to the Master-General of the Ordnance. In 1774, an entrance examination for the academy was introduced. This consisted of “... the first four rules of arithmetic, with a competent knowledge of the rule of three” and the elements of Latin grammar (Guggisberg 1900, 140; Thompson 2015, 235). However, even after the introduction of the entrance examination the Master-General of the Ordnance could still personally appoint cadets to the academy. There is evidence that such informal methods of entry co-existed alongside the entrance examination until the end of the C18th (Marshall 1976, 91).

Besides, the lack of an entrance examination, initially there appears to have been no minimum age for admittance to the academy. Records for 1764 show that age of the cadets ranged from under ten years to about 30 years. In the same year, the minimum age was set at 12 years, with an upper limit of 17 or 18 years although in some rare cases cadets as old as 25 years were still permitted to join the academy (Guggisberg 1900, 14). The lower age limit was raised to 14 years in 1782 (Guggisberg 1900, 15; Thompson 2015, 235).

In 1744, the students were formed into ‘The Company of Gentleman Cadets’, with an establishment originally fixed at 40, but increased to 48 in 1746 (Guggisberg 1900, 4). The number of cadets was further increased to 100 in 1798. These included 40 cadets being trained

¹⁶ Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg (1869-1930), a Canadian born Royal Engineer who wrote ‘The Shop: The Story of the Royal Military Academy’, the most comprehensive account of the Royal Military Academy.

for service in the East India Company. By 1810, the number of cadets had risen to 200, all who were destined for service with the Ordnance Department, as the East India Company had opened its own training establishment the same year (Thompson 2015, 235).

Because of the increase in cadet numbers, in 1766 the academy was divided into the lower and upper academies. The students had been divided into four classes based on academic ability in 1764 and these divisions were continued after the formation of the lower and upper academies. Military drill was the only martial activity the cadets in the lower academy had to perform. The rest of their education was comprised of mathematics, drawing, Latin and French. Once a student could prove to his instructors that he was competent in these subjects, he was promoted to the upper academy (Guggisberg 1900, 25).

The curriculum for the upper academy was finalised in 1772. It consisted of lessons in artillery, drawing, fortifications and all branches of mathematics (*ibid* 1900, 29). In 1776, the curriculum stated that there was field training in surveying, drawing, mining and field fortifications but unfortunately there are no records available to show to what extent these skills were practiced (Marshall 1976, 99). Except for the introduction of chemistry in 1788, the syllabus remained unchanged throughout the Napoleonic era (Guggisberg 1900, 31).

After 1788 a student in the upper academy had to pass a final public examination in five separate subjects to obtain a commission. These examinations were introduced in 1764 before being replaced by private examinations in 1768. Public examinations were reintroduced in 1786. However, there was no set period that a cadet had to attend the academy, the length of study could vary from one month to five years. Provided a cadet could pass the requisite examinations, he would be commissioned into the Ordnance Department (*ibid* 1900, 32-33).

Britain's entry into the French Revolutionary Wars in 1793 however, meant that there was desperate need for artillery officers, so the requirement that a cadet had to pass public examinations to gain a commission was dispensed with in 1794. By 1795, the demand for artillery officers had increased so much that the necessity for the cadets to pass any form of final examination was abolished. Instead, the Royal Military Academy staff were ordered to "... recommend for promotion such of the cadets of the upper and second Academies as may appear likely to prove useful at this moment as officers" (*ibid* 1900, 35).

In 1802, the Master-General of the Ordnance wanted to re-introduce the final public examination. However, it was pointed out that the pressure to provide officers for the ongoing war meant that many cadets had spent so little time at the academy, that they were totally

ignorant of all but the elementary parts of the curriculum. Thus, if they were to take part in a public examination it would reflect badly on the teaching at the Royal Military Academy. When faced with this argument, the Master-General decided not to re-instate the final examinations, which were eventually re-introduced in 1811 (*ibid* 1900, 36).

When the Corps of Engineers was first established it consisted solely of Warrant Officers. But in 1757 the Corps was re-organised, as a unit for commissioned officers only, and re-named the Corps of the Royal Engineers. For the next four years all the cadets graduating from the academy were commissioned as Second Lieutenants in the Royal Artillery. After several years of training in that branch, those officers who had opted to serve in the Royal Engineers were transferred. But, from 1761 onwards graduates were commissioned directly into either the Royal Artillery or Royal Engineers (*ibid* 1900, 6).

On 18th November 1807, the total establishment for the Royal Engineers worldwide was 172 men. This rose to 201 in June 1809 (MacArthur 2009, 350). By the end of 1809, only 17 Royal Engineers had been sent to join the British Peninsular Army (Haythornthwaite 1979, 92; Rogers 1979; 68). Additional engineers were sent out to the Iberian Peninsula throughout the conflict, mainly to replace men who had been killed or wounded in action. Between January 1811 and October 1812, the number of engineers who served on the peninsula fluctuated between 23 and 33, not all of whom were involved in the sieges (Thompson 2015, 279).

As the Royal Engineers was an officers-only corps, it relied on the Royal Military Artificers to provide it with skilled tradesmen. This was a corps of NCOs and men under the control of the Board of Ordnance. The origins of this corps can be traced back to 1772. Prior to that year, the Royal Engineers who worked on Gibraltar's defences used to hire local civilian artisans to provide the labour force for the construction of the fortifications. Unfortunately, these workmen were hired on a daily basis. Thus, they were free to come and go as they pleased. They were also accused of being indolent, disorderly and not amenable to army discipline, so that little progress was made on the fortifications (Conolly 1992, 1).

Faced with this situation the chief engineer, Lt.-Col. William Green RE, suggested to the Governor of Gibraltar the creation of a company of military artificers to replace the civilian artisans. A Royal Warrant was subsequently issued on 6th March 1772 authorising the creation of 'The Soldier-Artificer Company', which was composed of four sergeants, three corporals, 60 privates and one drummer. All the men had to be skilled in one of the following

trades: stonecutters, masons, miners, lime-burners, carpenters, smiths, gardeners or wheelwrights (*ibid* 1992, 2-3).

The value of the unit soon became apparent. Progress on the fortifications dramatically improved, so much so that the establishment was increased by 25 men in 1774 (*ibid* 1992, 6). Secondly, the sterling work performed by the ‘The Soldier-Artificer Company’ during the Great Siege of Gibraltar (24th June 1779 – 7th February 1783) proved the immense worth of such a unit. Consequently in 1786 a second company of Soldier-Artificers was raised for service on Gibraltar (Thompson 2015, 6).

In the same year concerns were raised about the state of the defences along the south coast of England. It was suggested that the creation of companies of military artificers, modelled on the units in Gibraltar, could be an effective way of improving and maintaining these defences. So, on 10th October 1787 a Royal Warrant authorised the establishment of a Corps of Royal Military Artificers composed of six companies, each of 100 men. These companies consisted of one serjeant-major, three sergeants, four corporals, 90 privates and two drummers. The warrant also specified that each company should contain, as privates, 12 carpenters, ten masons, ten bricklayers, five smiths, five wheelwrights, four sawyers, eight miners, two painters, two coopers, two collar-makers and 30 labourers. The NCOs were to be a master mason, a master carpenter, a master smith, a master bricklayer, a master wheelwright, a foreman of miners and a foreman of labourers. The warrant also stipulated that the Royal Engineers were to command the Corps (Conolly 1992, 64).

The Royal Military Artificers were intended to provide skilled workmen at the main Ordnance depots. Thus, five of the new companies were stationed at Woolwich, Chatham, Portsmouth, Gosport and Plymouth. The sixth company was posted to the Channel Islands, where half the men were stationed on Jersey and the rest on Guernsey (Conolly 1992, 65; Thompson 2015, 6). On enlistment every man signed an agreement which stated that he was prepared to serve in any part of the world that required his services. In peace time this condition was never invoked, even when there were requests for artificers to serve on Gibraltar the vacancies had been filled by volunteers (Conolly 1992, 81). This situation changed in 1793 with Britain’s entry into the French Revolutionary Wars, as the Ordnance Department enforced the agreements signed by the artificers. Thus from 1793 onwards small groups of artificers, often taken from more than one company, were sent on active service to Flanders, the West Indies, Canada, the Netherlands and Spain (*ibid* 1992, 106). By 1811 only four sergeants and 84 men from the Royal Military Artificers had been sent to Portugal, “... who had never seen

a sap, battery or trench constructed” (quoted in Haythornthwaite 1979, 92). Unfortunately, the company commanders usually wanted to retain their best men at the depots, so the least useful men were normally sent on campaigns. Because relatively small numbers of mainly ineffectual men were sent on campaigns, their presence had little impact on military operations. Thus, the bulk of the manual work at the sieges was performed by the infantry, most of whom had received no specialist training (Haythornthwaite 1998, 115).

In 1797, the two companies of the Soldier-Artificers based at Gibraltar were incorporated into the Royal Military Artificers (Connolly 1992, 106). Two years later, the Duke of York prior to his campaign in the Netherlands, asked the Ordnance Department for men from the Royal Engineers and the Royal Military Artificers to join his army. The Duke was so annoyed with the inadequate number of officers and men provided by the Ordnance Department that he resolved to form a corps of engineers that was controlled by the army and not the Ordnance Department. Thus, in 1800 the Royal Staff Corps was formed (Conolly 1992, 125; Gleig 1845, 287; Haythornthwaite 1979, 92).

Unlike the Royal Engineers, this corps was composed of both officers and men. Initially, the officers were selected from among cavalry and infantry officers who had acquired some scientific education (Gleig 1845, 287) although several officers also transferred in from the Ordnance Department (Thompson 2015, 7). An officer training school for the Royal Staff Corps was established in Marlow. Meanwhile, the rank and file of the corps was formed partly from new recruits, who were skilled tradesmen such as carpenters, masons, bricklayers or blacksmiths. The rest of the corps was formed by drafting in soldiers from other regiments who had been tradesmen prior to enlistment (Gleig 1845, 288).

The Royal Staff Corps was stationed at Hythe in Kent and rarely served abroad. However, detachments of the corps were posted overseas when they were needed (Gleig 1845, 288; Haythornthwaite 1979, 92). It was envisioned that the Royal Staff Corps and the Royal Engineers would have different areas of responsibility. The Royal Staff Corps was intended to perform such tasks as constructing field defences, bridging rivers, demolition work, surveying and reconnaissance. But the more technical matters, such as building major fortifications and siege-warfare, fell under the remit of the Royal Engineers (Rogers 1979, 70; Thompson 2015, 7). During the Peninsular War, the practicalities of the situation meant that the demarcation between the functions of both corps became blurred (Thompson 2015, 7). A prime example of this is Maj. Henry Sturgeon RSC who constructed bridges over the Tagus, Águeda and Adour (Haythornthwaite 1998, 115). But at the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo he performed duties normally

undertaken by the Royal Engineers, most notably by guiding an attacking column to the main breach (Jones 1814, 96).

3.7. Conclusion

The development of effective artillery in the C15th profoundly affected both the design of fortifications and the conduct of sieges. Such artillery shifted the advantage in siege-warfare to the attackers, as the new technology made older fortifications obsolete. However, the development of the *trace italienne* system of defence in depth, swung the balance back in favour of the defenders. Vauban's creation of a systematic method for conducting siege-warfare meant that the advantage once again lay with the attackers.

With these developments sieges now became mainly a contest between the artillery and the engineers. The attacking engineers had to construct the parallels, saps and batteries, to enable their artillery to create breaches in the enemy's defences. Likewise, the defending engineers were responsible for trying to maintain the integrity of the fortifications that were under attack, as well as constructing of additional defences, such as retrenchments, behind those parts of the walls that had been breached. In response the defender's artillery tried to destroy the batteries being built by the attacking engineers. Thus, the quality of the men in both the engineering and the artillery corps was an important factor in siege-warfare.

During the late C18th and early C19th, the French *Corps du Génie* were the pre-eminent military engineers in Europe. They had a unified corps structure, with well-trained engineer officers in command of trained regiments of sappers, artificers and miners. French pre-eminence in theorising on how to conduct both the attack and defence at sieges is reflected in the vocabulary of fortifications and sieges, terminology which was adopted by the British engineers from French texts they possessed on the subject.

At the start of hostilities with France not one Royal Engineer had any practical experience of siege-warfare, especially against fortresses protected by the *trace italienne* system such as Badajoz. Prior to the first siege of Badajoz the only large-scale regular siege undertaken by the Royal Engineers was at Calvi in 1794 (Oman 1913, 279). Although the British Army was involved in the capture of several towns throughout the conflict, such as Valetta (1800) and Copenhagen (1807) these were captured mainly through the efforts of the Royal Navy. Valetta surrendered following a two-year blockade, and Copenhagen (Harvey 2007, 354; Longford 2012, 89) surrendered after heavy bombardments from both land and sea.

During his service in India, Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, was present at the sieges of Seringapatam (1799), Ahmednagar (1803) and Gawilghur (1803). There is however, a marked contrast between the siege operations conducted by Gen. George Harris at Seringapatam and those conducted by Wellesley at Ahmednagar and Gawilghur. The siege operations at Seringapatam followed the scientific principles laid down by Vauban, with the various stages of the operation being carried out in sequence. Before the town was captured by an assault on the breach (Longford 2012, 45; Weller 2000, 69).

By contrast at Ahmednagar, Wellesley dispensed with normal siege tactics and captured the town by escalade without any preliminary bombardment. Then one battery was constructed, which was used to breach the curtain of the Ahmednagar fortress. However, before the British troops could storm the fortress the garrison surrendered (Weller 2000, 153). The tactics Wellesley employed at Gawilghur were equally direct. First two breaches were made in the curtain of the Outer Fort without any attempt to silence the enemy guns. The breaches were then carried by a direct assault (*ibid* 2000, 222). It was then discovered that a ravine separated the Outer Fort from the Inner Fort, so some British troops made a direct assault on the heavily fortified gate of the Inner Fort, whilst another party escaladed the walls (*ibid* 2000, 224). It is possible that the rapid success of these sieges, especially Ahmednagar, may have led Wellington to underestimate the difficulties of capturing Peninsular fortresses defended by resolute Frenchmen (Longford 2012, 59).

There were however, three differences between the Indian sieges and those in Spain. First, the Indian fortresses did not possess the *trace italienne* system of defence. Second, the engineers involved were not Royal Engineers but highly trained and experienced employees of the East India Company. Finally, the Indian defenders did not put up as much resistance as the French garrisons of Badajoz, Ciudad Rodrigo and Burgos (*ibid* 2012, 59).

The lack of training and practical experience of siege-warfare is reflected in a letter written by Captain Charles Pasley RE, who stated:

“For my part, I should not have even known how to make a battery in the attack on Copenhagen, the first siege in which I was employed, but from the information I derived from a French book on the subject” (quoted in Thompson 2015, 247).

The engineering services for the British Army were provided by three distinct units, the Royal Engineers, the Royal Military Artificers and the Royal Staff Corps. However, the Army only exercised direct control over the Royal Staff Corps, which took almost no part in

the sieges. Very few members of the corps were sent to the Peninsular Army (Haythornthwaite 1979, 92) and those that were sent performed other tasks such as bridging rivers, demolition work, surveying and reconnaissance (Rogers 1979, 70).

The Ordnance Department exercised control of the Royal Engineers and the Royal Military Artificers. Although the Royal Engineers commanded the Royal Military Artificers, they were two separate corps. Thus, they lacked the benefit of a unified command structure which the French *Corps du Génie* enjoyed. Besides the lack of a unified command structure, the number of Royal Engineers and Royal Military Artificers who served on the peninsula was extremely small. Of the latter there were only four sergeants and 84 men serving with Wellington's army in 1811 most of whom, when they arrived did not know how to construct saps, trenches or batteries. Thus, bulk of the manual labour during the sieges was performed by the infantry, who were also totally ignorant of such constructions (Haythornthwaite 1979, 92).

From January 1811 to October 1812 the number of Royal Engineers on the peninsula fluctuated between 23 and 33 (Thompson 2015, 279). The Royal Engineers did not undergo the same rigorous six-year training as their French counterparts. Because of the acute shortage of trained officers, the final examination at the Royal Military Academy was abolished in 1795, after which staff at the academy simply recommended those cadets for promotion who were likely to make useful officers (Guggisberg 1900, 35). Nearly all the Royal Engineers who served during the Peninsular War received their commissions after the abolition of the final examination in 1795, when the Ordnance Department was desperately trying to produce enough officers to make up the acute shortage of trained personnel. Thus, it is easy to see that in terms of siege-warfare British engineering expertise was second-rate in its command structure, its training, its numbers and its experience, when compared to its French counterparts, a fact that would play a major adverse role in the sieges of Badajoz, Ciudad Rodrigo and Burgos.

Chapter 4

The First Sieges 1811-1812

4.1. Introduction

This is the first of three chapters, which examines the events of the sieges Jones was present at between 1811 and 1812. The events of the first two sieges of Badajoz and that of Ciudad Rodrigo have been condensed into this chapter. In April 1811 Wellington knew he had to recover Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo to control the border and defend Portugal. Likewise, he could not advance into Spain without possession of both towns, as to leave either one in French hands would mean that there was an enemy army in his rear that could cut his line of retreat. Wellington was also aware that the only way he could recover both towns was by siege-warfare.

The first section (4.2) begins with a description of Badajoz's defences, as well as recounting the French efforts to improve its fortifications after they had captured it. The following section (4.3) examines the British preparations for the first siege of Badajoz. This includes a discussion of how the allied plan was governed by Wellington's insistence that the siege should not last longer than 16 days, before looking at the evidence which shows that original plan was altered after Wellington left Badajoz.

The next section (4.4) is an account of the first siege of Badajoz (8th -13th May 1811). This is followed by a section (4.5) describing the second siege (30th May – 10th June 1811). An assessment of both sieges is made in the following section (4.6) explaining why they were unsuccessful.

The chapter continues with an examination (4.7) of Wellington's decision to attack Ciudad Rodrigo. It includes the arrangements made to transport the siege-train, ammunition and engineers' stores to Ciudad Rodrigo, as well as the efforts to overcome the lack of sappers by training volunteers to construct batteries. A description of Ciudad Rodrigo's fortification is provided in the next section (4.8). The following section (4.9) examines the successful siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. The chapter then continues (4.10) with an assessment of that siege.

The final section (4.11) draws together all the points raised from the comparisons between *Journals of the Sieges* and evidence from other sources, to assess the accuracy and value of Jones' work.

4.2. Badajoz

Badajoz is situated on the southern bank of the Guadiana river (**Figure 4**), which is between 275m and 457m wide at that point. In the north-east angle of the town there was an old Moorish castle located on a rocky outcrop, about 40m above the river (Jones 1814, 29). Outside the castle walls the ground drops away steeply to the north and east. To the north the land falls to the Guadiana, whilst to the east the terrain descends sharply to the Rivillas, a stream that runs along the eastern side of the town before joining the Guadiana north of the castle (Belmas 1837, 666; Myatt 2008, 27).

The town was originally surrounded by a mediaeval wall about 9m high and 5m thick. From the western end of the castle, the wall ran west along the banks of the Guadiana to the San Vincente bastion (Belmas 1837, 666). There the wall turned south and then east to the Rivillas, which it followed to re-join the south-east corner of the castle. The mediaeval wall was modernised in the mid C18th, except for the section between the castle and San Vincente which was so close to the river it rendered this section virtually unassailable (Grehan 1990, 26; Jones 1814, 29). Towards the western end of this section of the wall was the Las Palmas gate, one of four town gates.

From San Vincente eight bastions were constructed at regular intervals along the wall culminating in the San Pedro bastion. These were 10m high (Jones 1814, 29), except for the San Vincente and San José bastions which were 7m (Belmas 1837, 667). The curtain between the bastions was 9m high, except between the San Vincente and San José bastions where it was 2m lower (Jones 1827, 11). Beyond the San Pedro bastion, the wall climbed uphill to the San Antonio demi-bastion, which connected the town wall to the castle. The Mérida gate, a small pedestrian entrance, was in the curtain south of the San Antonio demi-bastion.

In front of the bastions and the curtain between them, was a broad ditch, with a counterscarp averaging 7m in height. On the far side of the ditch was a covered way, with a counterscarp revetted to a height of 2m, which extended from the San Vincente bastion to the San Pedro bastion. The short section of wall between the San Pedro bastion and the castle was not protected by a ditch, but just a simple *glacis*, as this was where the land rose sharply up to

the castle (Belmas 1837, 667; Fletcher 2008, 27). The curtain walls were covered by *ravelins*. Although they were unrevetted and incomplete, they still provided a considerable degree of protection (Myatt 2008, 27).

The Mérida road left Badajoz via the Trinidad gate located in the northern flank of the Trinidad bastion and crossed the Rivillas by means of a small bridge. Both the gate and the bridge were protected by the San Roque *lunette* on the other side of the Rivillas, about 370m south-east of the castle. This was located midway between the Trinidad and San Pedro bastions. Also, on the eastern bank of the Rivillas, 370m south of San Roque, was the Picuriña, a larger *lunette* located on the Cerro de San Miguel, a small hill in front of the Trinidad bastion. Both *lunettes* were connected by a covered way.

South of the Picuriña was the Calamón, a tributary of the Rivillas. This flowed in a north-easterly direction, along a steep sided valley, to join the Rivillas about 140m from the Picuriña. Over 900m due west of the Picuriña was Fort Pardaleras; a crownwork with low scarps, a narrow ditch and a badly closed rear (Belmas 1837, 667; Jones 1814, 29). Fort Pardaleras was located 275m south of the San Juan and San Roque bastions. The Pilar gate, the fourth entrance into Badajoz, was in the curtain between these bastions (Belmas 1837, 667).

There were two outworks on the northern bank of the Guadiana. The *tête-de-pont* was at the northern end of the Las Palmas Bridge, a 550m long mediaeval bridge, which crossed the Guadiana to the Las Palmas gate (Jones 1814, 30). Some 450m further east was a rocky outcrop, the 'Heights of San Christóbal'. These dominated the Moorish castle, about 450m away on the opposite bank of the river and gave excellent views into the castle and the town (**Figure 5**). An artillery battery placed here could easily blast through the castle walls so a substantial fort, San Christóbal, had been constructed on the heights to protect the castle from such fire (Belmas 1837, 667; Grehan 1990, 26).

Badajoz surrendered to the French on 11th March after a 42-day siege, by which time Fort Pardaleras was a mound of rubble, the Picuriña was severely damaged and there was a breach approximately 20m wide in the curtain between the San Juan and San Roque bastions. Soult garrisoned the town with 3,000 troops commanded by Gen. Armand Phillipon and returned to Seville. Work immediately began on repairing the breach and the damaged outworks, as well as strengthening the town's defences (Lamare 1825, 137).

The French Chief Engineer, Col. Jean Lamare, decided to dam the Rivillas to form an inundation in front of the San Pedro, Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions. On 1st April, the

foundations a coffer dam were laid out under the bridge that carried the Mérida road from Badajoz. This eventually created a lake 3m to 4m deep that stretched about 900m upstream (*ibid* 1825, 148). The French considered the western side of Badajoz, between the San Vicente and San José bastions, to be its weakest point because the bastions were 3m lower than the rest of the defences with no outworks to protect this section of the walls. Lamare had originally intended to construct a *lunette* in front of the San José bastion supported by a blockhouse on an island in the Guadiana. However, the lack of time and materials meant that Lamare could not construct these defences. He therefore decided to place a series of mines in front of this weak point (*ibid* 1825, 146). On 29th April, work began on three galleries in front of the San José bastion, from which side galleries were run off to house mines. Lamare stated that once the allies learnt about the mines, they did not dare to attack the western side of Badajoz (*ibid* 1825, 147).

4.3. Preparations for the first siege of Badajoz

On 26th March Beresford reached Elvas, 22kms from Badajoz, just 14 days after he had been ordered to recapture the town. However, Beresford could not move against Badajoz until he had crossed the Guadiana. The nearest bridges across the river were at Badajoz and Mérida, both of which were in French hands. So, it was decided to bridge the Guadiana near Juromenha, 27kms downriver from Badajoz (Leslie 1908, 373). According to Jones, the Royal Engineers collected five Spanish boats and four pontoons from Elvas for the bridge (Jones 1814, 25; 1827, 3; 1846; 4). Other sources, including Jones' private journal, state that six pontoons were used for the bridge. Jones' journal entry for 8th March reads:

“An order went to Captain Wedekind to proceed to Elvas with six pontoons and to prepare everything for throwing a bridge across the Guadiana if circumstances should render it expedient” (Jones 1810-1811, 53-54).

The number of pontoons is corroborated by Dickson who wrote in his journal on 29th March:

“This evening marched for Juromenha the 6 English pontoons, and sundry materials for the bridge” (Leslie 1908, 373).

If Jones used his journal to compile *Journals of the Sieges*, why did he make such a simple mistake about the number of pontoons used to bridge the Guadiana?

The bridge was completed on 3rd April and plans were made for the army to cross the next day. Overnight, the Guadiana rose by a metre which made the bridge unusable, because it had short trestles. The army was eventually ferried across on four rafts, the largest of which could take either 100 men or 25 horses. By the evening of 8th April, Beresford was across the Guadiana and the next day he invested Olivenza (Jones 1814, 26-27). Olivenza surrendered on 15th April, after an eight-day siege (Belmas 1837, 176; Jones 1814, 28).

On 20th April Wellington arrived at Elvas and held a conference with his senior officers about the best way to besiege Badajoz (Sarrazin 1815, 176). Wellington wanted a plan that would not require more than 16 days in open trenches, as this was how long he estimated it would take a French relief column to reach Badajoz (Jones 1814, 31). The problem with Wellington's demand was that the engineers knew from Vauban's works that the time judged necessary to breach the walls of a town such as Badajoz was 18 days, if the attack was against a section of the walls without any outworks. If an outwork, such as Fort Pardaleras, had to be captured first this would add an extra four days to the siege. Thus, if the allies were to attack the southern section of the walls, which the French had attacked and which Wellington favoured, it would require 22 days to capture Badajoz. Fletcher submitted a plan designed to capture Badajoz in 16 days (*ibid* 1814, 31-32).

The first phase was to capture San Christóbal (Belmas 1837, 667; Jones 1814, 30). Batteries would then be erected inside the fort to dominate the castle and stop defensive works being prepared against any breaches made in the castle walls. The next phase was to attack the castle, as it was estimated that the walls could be breached in three or four days. Once a breach had been made, the castle would be stormed. The plan assumed that once the castle was in allied hands the French would find it impossible to defend the town and would be forced to surrender (Jones 1814, 32-33).

Fletcher's plan called for parallels to be started against San Christóbal, the Picuriña and Fort Pardaleras. The latter two operations were to be false attacks designed to disguise the point of the intended breach to prevent the French from constructing new defences behind the threatened sections of the walls for it was believed that they did not have enough supplies or manpower to erect defences at three separate places. However, once the breach in San Christóbal was practicable, the two false attacks would be abandoned and the men employed on them would be redeployed for the attack against the castle (*ibid* 1814, 33).

After Wellington had reconnoitred Badajoz's defences he gave his approval to Fletcher's plan. Before returning to Almeida, Wellington wrote several memoranda about the upcoming siege. One document contained guidelines for Beresford to follow if Soult tried to raise the siege. It authorised Beresford to use his judgement on whether to fight or retreat and advised him that Albuera would be a suitable place to meet the French if he decided to fight (Gurwood 1838a, 490-492; Thompson 2015, 102).

Wellington's second document was a memorandum to Beresford, Fletcher and Dickson, which covered in eight separate points how the siege should be conducted (Jones 1814, 34-36). In all three editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones repeated seven of the points in Wellington's memorandum. However, he failed to mention in any of his works the eighth and final point:

“8. When the British Army will be in possession of St Christoval [*sic*], Picurina & Pardaleras Marshal Sir W. Beresford will determine upon the position at which he will attack the body of the place: **it is believed however upon the whole that one of the south faces will be the most advantageous**” (Gurwood 1838a, 494).

It is impossible to argue that Jones was unaware of Wellington's memorandum, as he had copied it into his journal (Jones 1810-1811, 110-115). The wording of point 8 shows that Wellington expected San Christóbal, the Picuriña and Fort Pardaleras to be captured and the walls to be breached on the south side, which is totally at odds with Jones's account of the two false attacks and the planned attack against the castle in *Journals of the Sieges*.

It would appear that the reason for this glaring anomaly was that the plan approved by Wellington on 23rd April was altered by Fletcher on 7th May. Jones' journal for that date stated:

“This morning Lt Col Fletcher moved to the Camp before Badajos [*sic*] and there met Marshall Beresford who approved of the plan of attack decided upon...” (*ibid* 1810-1811, 140).

Why should Jones refer to the fact that Beresford had approved of Fletcher's plan on 7th May, when he had known about it since 23rd April? The explanation seems to be that Fletcher had changed his original plan and Beresford agreed to the change. Yet this point is not mentioned in any editions of Jones work on the sieges.

In his journal for 8th May Jones wrote:

“The Commanding Engineer marked out a work against the Picurina Redoubt and to conceal from the Enemy the real point of attack it was decided to arrange on a false attack against the Pardaleras” (*ibid* 1810-1811, 141).

It would appear from the above passage that the decision to make a false attack against Fort Pardaleras was made on 8th May and not on the 21st April as implied in *Journals of the Sieges* (Jones 1814, 32-33). It could be argued that Jones had made a mistake when he mentioned that the false attack was only against Fort Pardaleras. However, in his journal Jones described ‘the false attack’ as being against Fort Pardaleras on nine separate occasions. Yet each time he mentioned any action against the Picuriña he referred to it as ‘the attack’. Perhaps the most telling entry is from 10th May when he wrote:

“The Reliefs at the false attack & at the attack against the Picurina were merely nominal, ...” (Jones 1810-1811, 151).

This clearly shows that the false attack and the Picuriña attack were two separate actions and the allies intended to capture the Picuriña. This is corroborated by Rice Jones’ journal entry for 11th May (Shore 1986, 101).

There are three significant differences between the evidence in Jones’ journal and the plan to capture Badajoz outlined in *Journals of the Sieges*. First, Jones deliberately failed to record point 8 of Wellington’s memorandum in his published version, even though he was fully aware of its contents. Next, he did not reveal that Fletcher had submitted a different plan on 7th May, as intimated in his journal. Finally, Jones stated that there were two false attacks in *Journals of the Sieges*, while on nine separate occasions he only mentioned one false attack in his journal.

An explanation as to why Jones chose to omit the first two points from *Journals of the Sieges* can be found in the preface to the 1814 edition. Jones noted that throughout the Peninsula campaign Wellington’s army was vastly superior to the French forces in numerous battles, but whenever allied troops attacked a fortified position they did not display the same level of superiority as the French defenders. He argued that as the artillery and the engineers were the most prominent units involved in siege-warfare, it was natural to assume that the allied army’s poor performance was due to the ineffectiveness of one or both of these corps. Jones however, rejected the suggestion and resolutely defended both units (Jones 1814, vi). Thus, when Jones wrote *Journals of the Sieges* to explain why the British army was so poor at siege-warfare, he was committed from the outset to finding an explanation that did not criticise either the artillery or the engineers. Therefore, Jones created a narrative that the main reason the

British army performed so badly at siege operations was because they did not have a professionally trained Corps of Sappers and Miners.

There are several instances in *Journals of the Sieges* where Jones deliberately suppressed evidence that was detrimental to either the artillery or the engineers. After the siege it became obvious that the allied plan to capture Badajoz had been seriously flawed. By omitting both point 8 of Wellington's memorandum and Fletcher's subsequent change of plan, Jones gives the impression that the engineers were following a plan approved by Wellington and his senior officers. As any suggestion that Fletcher had altered the original plan would have reflected badly on the Royal Engineers.

As Beresford was not equipped with a siege-train, most of the artillery, ammunition and engineers' stores were taken from Elvas. On 18th April, Dickson was tasked with assembling a siege-train. His examination of the guns showed that most of them were brass cannons in extremely poor condition dating from the 17th century. Despite these problems Dickson assembled sixteen 24-pounders, eight 16-pounders, two 10-inch howitzers and eight 8-inch howitzers (Leslie 1908, 384).

On 27th August, in a letter to Maj.-Gen. John MacLeod RA, Dickson wrote:

“You ask about the guns we got at Elvas for the siege of Badajoz, whether they were English. None of them were. They were brass Portuguese guns of the time of John 4th and his son Affonso, bearing dates 1646, 1652, 1653, etc.; also some Spanish guns of Philip 3rd and 4th, dates 1620, 1636, etc.” (*ibid* 1908, 448).

4.4. The first British siege of Badajoz

On 4th May Badajoz was invested on the southern bank of the Guadiana by 5,000 troops commanded by Maj.-Gen. William Stewart. Four days later the town was fully invested when Maj.-Gen. William Lumley's Brigade took up positions on the northern bank (Jones 1814, 36-37). The same evening, a working party of 800 men opened a 200m long parallel 820m from the Picuriña. At the same time, the old French trenches on the Cerro del Viento were re-opened and a battery for four guns was commenced (*ibid* 1814, 39). A third working party of 400 men broke ground about 410m from San Christóbal, to construct a battery for three 24-pounders and two 8-inch howitzers. The ground near San Christóbal consisted of 8cms of soil on top of solid rock (Oman 1911, 418). As soon as the working party started digging the French directed a heavy fire at the labourers, by morning there was only enough cover to enable ten men to work in the battery in daylight (Jones 1814, 40).

At 7.00am on 10th May, 700 French troops, 120 sappers and 50 cavalry made a sortie from San Christóbal and the *tête-de-pont* (Lamare 1825, 154). They seized control of the battery before a counterattack led by Lt. William Reid RE, drove them back. In the heat of the moment the British troops pushed on too far and came within range of San Christóbal's guns. Over 400 British troops were killed or wounded in the ensuing fight (Jones 1814, 41), whereas the French casualties were 18 dead and 110 wounded (Lamare 1825, 155). In his journal Jones noted that 1,000 French troops took part in the sortie (Jones 1810-1811, 150). However, in *Journals of the Sieges* Jones recorded that 700 French troops supported by two field-guns had made the sortie (Jones 1814, 41; 1827, 28; 1846, 24). When Jones wrote this, he must have changed the number of French troops from 1,000 to 700 because he was using a captured copy of Lamare's account of the siege. If this was the case, then why did he fail to mention the 120 sappers and the cavalry? Also, why did Jones record that the French had two field-guns, when his journal, Rice Jones' journal and Lamare's account make no mention of them?

To prevent further sorties, it was decided to erect a battery for three 12-pounders to enfilade the Las Palmas bridge on a knoll 640m from the *tête-de-pont*. By daybreak on 11th May, the breaching battery was completed and armed with three 24-pounders and two 8-inch howitzers. Jones stated in *Journals of the Sieges* that the breaching battery opened fire against San Christóbal at 4.00am on 11th May (Jones 1814, 41-42; 1827, 29; 1846, 25). However, Jones' journal entry for 11th May directly contradicts this statement:

“Soon after two o'clock Colonel Fletcher set out to mark the directions of the attack thinking to take advantage of the dawn of the morning, but before 4 o'clock such a very thick fog came on that the relative situations of no two objects could be ascertained: he waited near the spot till ½ past 6 when as the weather did not clear, he returned home to make his further arrangements” (Jones 1810-1811, 153).

Evidence from Rice Jones' journal corroborates the details about the fog as his entry for 11th May reads:

“Soon after 2.00am, set out to mark the directions of the intended attack, but was prevented from this by a thick fog at daylight;” (Shore 1986, 101).

These entries show that when the battery was supposed to have opened fire there was dense fog that made it impossible to see San Christóbal. It is inconceivable that the gunners would have opened fire at a target they could not see. Therefore, the battery must have opened fire sometime after 6.30am, when the fog had cleared.

In all three editions Jones compared the ineffectiveness of the Portuguese gunners with the French gunners. In the 1814 edition he wrote:

“The Portuguese artillery-men were young and inexperienced, and made extreme bad practice: the enemy on the contrary kept up a heavy and well-directed fire from San Christoval [*sic*], and from a battery erected on the terre-plein of the castle, and in the course of the day rendered unserviceable the three guns, and one of the howitzers” (Jones 1814, 42).

Jones’ criticism of the Portuguese gunners ignores two facts, which explain why they were so ineffectual. First, the engineers had only constructed one breaching battery. No additional batteries were built to provide counter-battery fire to suppress the French fire. Therefore, all the guns in San Christóbal which could bear on the breaching battery, as well as a battery of six guns on the *terreplein* of the castle were concentrated on just one target (Jones 1810-1811, 156). The French gunners could also take their time aiming and firing their guns as they knew they were safe from counter-battery fire. This would have made the French fire more accurate. Second, the Portuguese gunners were using 17th century brass cannons that were museum pieces. Most of the guncarriages were in poor condition and had to be handled very carefully. Thus, the Portuguese gunners were trying to breach the walls of San Christóbal with obsolete guns, whilst under an accurate bombardment from numerous French guns.

On the night of 11th May, the disabled guns were removed from the battery, and a new battery was started to the left of the old position. Meanwhile the battery to enfilade the bridge was completed and armed with three 12-pounders and a howitzer. Jones stated that by the 12th there were only 1,800 fit troops stationed near San Christóbal, which was not enough to provide both working and covering parties, so that very little work was done from that point onwards (Jones 1814, 43). However, in his journal Capt. John Squire RE, who oversaw operations against San Christóbal, stated that there were only 1,000 fit troops, who were exhausted and unable to perform more than a third of the work expected of them. Also, the engineers had no *gabions*, *fascines*, sandbags or timber. Despite this they had enough tools for 500 men, so they continued to do as much work as possible (Squire 1811, 2-3). Squire’s account is probably more accurate than Jones’, as he was responsible for the day-to-day management of the attack against San Christóbal and would certainly have known how many fit troops and what equipment he had at his disposal.

At 10.00pm on 12th May, a working party of 1,400 troops started to dig a parallel in front of the castle walls, while a further 1,600 troops acted as a covering party (Jones 1810-

1811, 163). According to Jones's published works, the troops had almost covered themselves by midnight, when they received orders to raise the siege as Soult had reached Llerena (Jones 1814, 44; 1827, 32; 1846, 27).

However, Jones' journal entry for that night noted:

"... notwithstanding the lateness of the hour at which the party commenced work, the soil proved so favourable, & the men worked so well, & meeting with no interruption being yet undiscovered by the Enemy by one o'clock the Parallel was generally 3 feet (0.9m) & 3ft 6in (1m) deep by 4 feet (1.2m) in width, and there was every prospect of our being extremely well covered before day-light at one a.m. on Monday 13th: an order was received from the Marshall to instantly withdraw all the workmen from the trenches, and to send the stores to the rear" (Jones 1810-1811, 163).

Jones is quite specific about the time and date that the order to raise the siege was received, as he mentions the time as 1.00am twice within a few lines. Corroboration that the siege was raised at 1.00am can also be found in the journals of both Squire (Squire 1811, 4) and Rice Jones (Shore 1986, 102). So why did Jones state that the siege was raised at midnight, when in fact it occurred at 1.00am?

Allied casualties during the first siege were 100 dead and 650 wounded or taken prisoner, most of which were sustained on 10th May when the sortie from San Christóbal was repulsed. The Royal Engineers suffered a high proportion of casualties as Capt. Sebastian Dickinson and Lt. David Melville were killed, and Capt. George Ross, Capt. Richard Boteler and Reid were wounded (WO 25/3223). Thus five out of 21 engineers engaged in the siege were casualties, which was a casualty rate of 23%.

4.5. The second British siege of Badajoz

On 16th May, Beresford engaged Soult at Albuera. In the ensuing battle, the combined Anglo-Portuguese and Spanish armies sustained 5,916 casualties, whereas the French forces suffered between 7,000 and 7,900 (Oman 1911, 394-395). The battle however, achieved its aim in preventing Soult from relieving Badajoz and on the 18th he retreated leaving behind several hundred wounded.

The next day Maj.-Gen. John Hamilton's Portuguese brigade reinvaded Badajoz on the left bank of the Guadiana (Myatt 2008, 36; Thompson 2015, 105). Phillipon had used the period, between raising the siege and Hamilton's reinvestment, to ensure that the allied batteries were levelled and the trenches filled in. He had also arranged for the thin layer of soil

around San Christóbal to be removed, so that there was only bare rock around the fort (Oman 1911, 421).

On 10th May, Marshal Auguste de Marmont replaced Masséna as commander of the Army of Portugal. Wellington was confident Marmont could not take the offensive for some time; as he only had 28,000 effective infantry, was short of cavalry, and only had enough fit horses to transport 36 guns (*ibid* 1911, 361-362). On 12th May, Marmont's army retreated to Salamanca, where it went into cantonments. Wellington therefore decided to take personal charge at Badajoz. On 14th May, the 3rd and 7th Divisions departed for Badajoz, followed two days later by Wellington (*ibid* 1911, 406-407).

Dickson was again tasked with collecting the artillery from Elvas. On this occasion, he found thirty 24-pounders, four 16-pounders, eight 8-inch howitzers and four 10-inch howitzers, which were sent to Badajoz (Leslie 1908, 394). In the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones incorrectly recorded the number of the guns collected by Dickson, as twenty-six 24-pounders and six 8-inch howitzers (Jones 1814, 58). However, he corrected the numbers to those provided by Dickson in subsequent editions (Jones 1827, 39; 1846, 33).

Wellington decided to follow a modified version of Fletcher's plan. There were to be no false attacks and the attacks against the castle and San Christóbal would begin on the same day. The attack against San Christóbal called for the construction of four batteries connected by a parallel. No.1 Battery was for five 24-pounders for counter-battery fire against the castle, No.2 Battery was to contain four 24-pounders and four 8-inch howitzers to breach the walls of San Christóbal, while No.3 Battery was to hold four 24-pounders for counter-battery fire against San Christóbal. The fourth battery, for four 16-pounders and two 10-inch howitzers, was to be constructed on the knoll to enfilade the bridge (Jones 1814, 56; 1827, 44; 1846, 31). Jones stated in *Journals of the Sieges* that Wellington endorsed this plan on 22nd May, but he recorded that it occurred on 28th May in his journal (Jones 1810-1811, 186).

The 7th Division under Maj.-Gen. Sir William Houston invested Badajoz on the right bank of the Guadiana on 25th May (Jones 1827, 40; 1846, 34). The attack against the castle began on 30th May when a working party of 1,600 men, protected by a covering party of 1,200 troops, started construction of a parallel. By daybreak, the troops had dug a parallel about 1,005m long 730m from the castle walls (Jones 1814, 59-60; Oman 1911, 420). The same night a working party of 1,200 men, protected by a covering party of 800 troops, started work against San Christóbal. Unfortunately, the working party was detected and came under heavy fire from

both the fort and the castle. The lack of any topsoil meant that the men had to place *gabions* along the lines of the intended trenches and fill them with earth dug up from the reverse slope of the hill (Oman 1911, 420-421). Near the site of Nos.1 and 2 Batteries the ground was so rocky it could only be removed by blasting. By daylight progress had only been made on No.4 Battery, which was well advanced (Jones 1810-1811, 190). Elsewhere no more than half a metre of earth had been raised at the sites of the other batteries (Jones 1827, 46; 1846; 39; Oman 1911, 420-421).

Although the parallel in front of the castle had not yet reached the point intended for the breaching battery, it was decided to save time by constructing a battery at the extreme right of the parallel. On the night of 31st May, 600 men began work on No.5 Battery. This was for fourteen 24-pounders, four 8-inch howitzers and two 10-inch howitzers. The same night No.4 Battery was completed and armed. However, difficulties in obtaining enough soil meant that no progress was made anywhere else north of the Guadiana (Jones 1827, 47; 1846, 40).

By 1st June, miners were blasting the rock in the interior of No.1 Battery to create an even surface for the artillery platforms. Because of the difficulties caused by working on the bare rock, Squire sent to Elvas for some woolpacks to use for the parapets. These arrived on 2nd June and 82 woolpacks, which were approximately 1.4m cubes, were used to form the parapets of the batteries (Squire 1811, 47). According to Jones the woolpacks absorbed the impact of round-shot, whilst retaining their shape (Jones 1827, 49; 1846, 41). This assessment was not shared by Squire who recorded in his journal on 3rd June:

“The wool packs in N^o 1 which are outside, burst by the concussion & the wool spreads & the wool takes fire” (Squire 1811, 50).

During the night of 2nd-3rd June, Nos.1, 2, 3 and 5 Batteries were completed and armed. No.5 Battery opened fire against the castle at 9.30am and the four batteries north of the Guadiana at 9.45am (Squire 1811, 47). When No.5 Battery opened fire against the castle there were initially problems with the accuracy of the ancient brass guns, due to windage. However, as the gunners learnt the idiosyncrasies of each gun, they made adjustments that improved their accuracy. By late afternoon, the outer wall of the castle had been demolished, but behind it there was a vertical cliff (Jones 1827, 52; 1846; 43). This consisted of clay-slate, which did not crumble however much it was subjected to cannon fire (Oman 1911, 418). During the day, two of the 24-pounders were disabled through wear and tear. The bush around the vent-hole of one gun was blown out, whilst the brass barrel of the other had begun to droop because of the

amount of heat it had been subjected to (Leslie 1908, 402). The problem with ‘muzzle droop’ was to recur frequently throughout the siege.

Initially the gunners in the batteries in front of San Christóbal also had problems with the accuracy of their guns. But over time they adapted to the peculiarities of their weapons. No.2 Battery was used to breach the walls of San Christóbal and by evening some progress had been made towards making a breach (**Figure 6**). By nightfall three guns north of the river were out of action. An 8-inch howitzer in No.2 Battery was disabled by enemy fire, a 24-pounder in No.3 Battery had developed ‘muzzle droop’ (Jones 1827, 53; 1846, 44) and the carriage of a 10-inch howitzer was broken through improper use by a Portuguese Artillery Captain (Leslie 1908, 402).

From 3rd June onwards, the guns in No.5 Battery continued trying to breach the cliff behind the castle wall, even though it was to prove to be physically impossible (**Figure 7**). At the same time work began on extending the parallel to the right, so No.6 Battery could be constructed at the end of the parallel 595m from the breach. By 5th June, No.6 Battery was completed and armed with seven 24-pounders which had been moved from No.5 Battery (Jones 1827, 54-56; 1846, 45-47).

Between the 3rd and 5th June five 24-pounders and three 8-inch howitzers south of the Guadiana were disabled. Only one 24-pounder had fallen victim to enemy fire, the rest of the 24-pounders were immobilised by ‘muzzle droop’, and the carriages of the three howitzers were damaged by their recoil. To stop the mounting losses due to ‘muzzle droop’ the gunners were ordered to wait seven or eight minutes between each shot, to let the gun-barrels cool down (Jones 1827, 54-55). The batteries north of the Guadiana continued to attack San Christóbal, and by the evening of the 5th considerable progress had been made in breaching its walls. However, since the 3rd June four more 24-pounders were disabled, three of them by ‘muzzle droop’ and the carriage of the fourth was damaged by its recoil (*ibid* 1827, 58).

During the night of 5th - 6th June, the parallel in front of the castle was extended to the right, where construction began on No.7 Battery, 475m from the breach. This was to take six iron 24-pounders, which Wellington had ordered from Lisbon on 10th April, and four other guns (*ibid* 1827, 58). North of the river No.3 Battery was dismantled and its guns were moved into Nos.1 and 2 Batteries to replace those that had been disabled. The same night Lt. William Forster RE examined the breach in San Christóbal and decided it was practicable (Jones 1814,

65). Evidence from Squire's journal suggests that the breach was not fully practicable, he wrote:

“The breach of Fort Christoval [*sic*], though certainly not good, appearing practicable at least for two men at once, the garrison weak & little prospect of its being reinforced from the town it was decided to assault the place this evening, particularly as Col. Fletcher had written to Lord Wellington stating that, the main attack was extremely annoyed by a light gun from Christoval [*sic*]” (Squire 1811, 55-56).

This shows that the breach could only be attacked by two men abreast. The usual tactic when storming a breach was to attack with as many men as possible, in the hope that weight of numbers would overwhelm the defenders. In this instance it seems inconceivable that an assault consisting of just two files of men would have been able to capture a heavily defended breach. Thus, anyone examining the breach should have recommended that the breach needed to be widened significantly before it was assaulted. We do not know why Forster declared that the breach was practicable. But it is possible that he felt pressured into making his decision, because both his commanding officer Fletcher and Wellington wanted the fort captured as quickly as possible.

Evidence from a letter written by Captain George Ross RE to Sir Hew Dalrymple suggests that other engineers, besides Squire, also thought that the breach was not practicable.

“I forbear saying anything on our ill-fated assaults upon Fort Christoval [*sic*]. I am the more disposed to be silent as I had not the honor [*sic*] to have anything to do with it. Beyond saying to whoever asked me the question, that I thought the breach practicable each time. However I was nobody & my opinion had no effect on the decision. I state this that I may not be classed with some engineers who I find, to my no small surprise, find now, that they never thought the breach practicable” (Ross 1811,2-3).

Unfortunately, Ross does not indicate how many engineers did not consider the breach to be practicable. An examination of the differences in the brickwork at breach site shows that the breach was about 6m or 7m in width (**Figure 6**). This suggests that any force attacking the breach would have only been able to attack on a narrow front of six or seven men abreast. Thus, even if the allied troops, on their second attempt to capture San Christóbal, had managed to climb up the breach it is doubtful of they would have been successful.

On 6th June, work continued on No.7 Battery, while the nine remaining 24-pounders south of the river hammered away at the cliff-face. At San Christóbal the gunners maintained a steady rate of fire at the breach, to keep it clear as it had been decided to storm

the fort at midnight. During the day, enemy fire disabled one 24-pounder and an 8-inch howitzer (Myatt 2008, 40).

At midnight, a 'forlorn hope' of 25 men from the 51st Foot commanded by Ensign Joseph Dyas was guided to the breach by Forster. They were followed by a storming party of 155 grenadiers. On reaching the breach the 'forlorn hope' discovered that the garrison had removed all the debris from its base. So, instead of there being a gentle slope of rubble that the troops could have climbed up, there was a sheer wall over 2m high. The garrison had also blocked the top of the breach with *chevaux-de-frise*, carts and other obstacles (Oman 1911, 425). Dyas realised he could not get past these obstacles and withdrew (Jones 1827, 64).

As the 'forlorn hope' retreated they met the storming party, the officers of which decided to escalate the walls using ladders they had brought with them. But the ladders proved to be too short, as the walls of the fort were over 6m high. For an hour, the attackers were stuck in the ditch being sniped at from the ramparts, as well as being subjected to a barrage of shells, hand-grenades, and stones from the defenders. At 1.00am the storming party withdrew, having incurred losses of 12 dead and 90 wounded. Among the casualties was Forster who was mortally wounded as he retreated (Jones 1827, 65; Myatt 2008,40; Squire 1811, 57-58).

On 7th June two more brass 24-pounders were lost to 'muzzle droop'. This meant that there were only seven 24-pounders and two 8-inch howitzers still serviceable north of the river (Jones 1814, 66; 1827, 67; Squire 1811, 59). No.7 Battery was armed with one 8-inch howitzer, three brass 24-pounders and six iron 24-pounders which had arrived that evening. (Jones 1827, 66). At dawn on the 8th the iron guns opened fire at the cliff-face. Although these guns were far from perfect, they were vastly superior to the brass 24-pounders. Despite many direct hits the cliff-face remained vertical, although a small amount of debris could be seen at its base. During the day two brass 24-pounders in No.6 Battery became unserviceable from 'muzzle droop' and one of the iron guns was disabled by enemy fire (*ibid* 1827, 69). This meant that there were only 14 serviceable guns on the south bank of the river, five iron 24-pounders, eight brass 24-pounders and one brass 8-inch howitzer.

At nightfall, Capt. Peter Patton RE, led a patrol to establish if the fords across the Rivillas were still usable and to check on the state of the breach. As Patton returned to his own lines, he ran into a French patrol. In the ensuing fire-fight Patton was mortally wounded but was carried back to the British lines, where he made his report (*ibid* 1827, 70).

Throughout 9th June, all the batteries south of the river continued to bombard the cliff-face to try and create a breach, but to no avail. During the day, another brass 24-pounder in No.7 Battery was disabled by ‘muzzle droop’ (*ibid* 1827, 71-72). On the north bank of the river the breach was declared to be practicable, so it was decided to make a second attempt to capture San Christóbal later that night. On this occasion, the number of men involved in the attack was increased from 180 to 400, 200 of which were to storm the fort. These were divided into two parties of 100 troops each. Each party consisted of a ‘forlorn hope’ of 25 men and a storming party of 75 men. Of the remaining 200 troops, 30 men were to take up positions on the *glacis* and snipe at the defenders; another 100 men were positioned west of the fort to stop any French troops from the *tête-de-pont* relieving San Christóbal; finally, 70 men moved down to the banks of the Guadiana to guard against any French forces crossing the river by boat (*ibid* 1827, 73-74).

It was decided that this assault would be launched at 9.00pm, three hours earlier than the previous attempt so the garrison would not have time to clear the rubble away from the breach. As sunset occurred about 7.30pm the garrison still had one and a half hours to prepare for any assault. Lamare believed that if the assault had taken place during daylight it would have stood a better chance of success (Lamare 1825, 193). The idea of a daylight assault had been discussed by the commanders of the 7th Division but was rejected because it meant the attacking columns would have to advance about 450m, uphill over open ground, whilst under sustained fire (Oman 1911, 427-428).

At 9.00pm as the attackers moved out from behind Nos.1 and 2 Batteries they were subjected to a hail of musketry and gunfire. The ‘forlorn hope’, once again led by Dyas, reached the breach, followed shortly afterwards by the first storming party. On reaching the breach, they discovered the French had cleared the rubble away in the limited time available before the assault (Jones 1827, 77-78; Oman 1911, 428-429). The attackers tried to escalate the walls using 16 ladders, which they had brought with them. For an hour, the troops made numerous attempts to capture the fort, whilst being sniped at from the ramparts as well as being subjected to a continuous bombardment of grenades, shells, fireballs and stones. By 10.00pm all the ladders had been broken so the men were ordered to retire (Jones 1827, 78).

In his journal Jones recorded the number of allied casualties as “... a loss of 140 killed & wounded” (Jones 1810-1811, 204) and in his published works as 40 killed and 100 wounded (Jones 1814, 68). Oman disagreed with the figures and put the numbers at 54 killed, 81 wounded and four missing, a total of 139 casualties (Oman 1911, 429). The figures quoted

by Oman are much more plausible than those given by Jones, who appears to have made an arbitrary decision to divide them into 40 killed and 100 wounded.

Evidence to support this suggestion can be found in the *Returns of Absences* ledger. The entry for 9th June 1811 recorded the casualties as 55 dead, 85 wounded and five missing, a total of 145 officers and men (WO 25/3223). Although the figures given by Oman and the *Returns of Absences* do not tally, they are close. The *Returns of Absences* however, covers the whole of 9th June, not just the San Christóbal attack. Thus, the discrepancies between the two sets of figures could be due to casualties that occurred elsewhere earlier in the day. This is confirmed by two pieces of evidence. Jones confirms this, when he recorded that on 9th June during the attack against the castle one gunner was killed and another wounded (Jones 1827, 71). Further corroboration can be found in the *Returns of Absences*, which recorded that Patton was severely wounded on 9th June. But it has already been noted that Patton was mortally wounded on the night of the 8th-9th June below the castle (WO 25/3223).

On 10th June, the artillery on the south bank continued firing at the castle wall. During the morning yet another 24-pounder was disabled through ‘muzzle droop’ (Jones 1827, 79; Leslie 1908, 404). On the opposite bank a truce was arranged so that the allies could collect their dead and wounded. Jones wrote in his journal:

“Monday 10th June - At ½ past ten a.m. the Batteries ceased firing on account of a flag of truce being sent into the garrison” (Jones 1810-1811, 205).

However, in *Journals of the Sieges* Jones recorded that the truce started 10.00am (Jones 1814, 68; 1827, 79; 1846, 66). Fortunately, in this instance evidence from Squire’s journal explains the differences in the times. Squire wrote:

“At 10AM a flag of truce was sent to the tete-de-pont by Gen^l Houston to ask leave to collect the dead & wounded near F^l Christoval [*sic*]” (Squire 1811, 66-67).

Thus, it appears that the truce was requested at 10.00am but started at 10.30am, as recounted in Jones’ journal.

The same day Wellington learnt that Marmont was marching south to rendezvous with Soult. Wellington estimated Marmont would reach Mérida, 60kms east of Badajoz, on 15th June. Once the two armies met their combined strength of 60,000 men would greatly outnumber Wellington’s forces. Wellington knew that he could not capture Badajoz before the French relief force arrived. So, he raised the siege but kept a blockade around the town, whilst all the siege equipment, artillery and ammunition was moved to Elvas (Gurwood 1838b, 14).

4.6. An assessment of the first two British sieges of Badajoz

Time played a key factor in both the British sieges of Badajoz. It is easy to see that the main reason Beresford's siege was unsuccessful was due to a lack of time. Wellington had estimated that the allies needed 16 days to capture the town. The siege began at 6.00pm on 8th May and Beresford was forced to raise it at 1.00am on the 13th. This meant the siege had only lasted four days and seven hours in total, which was barely a quarter of the time deemed necessary to capture the town.

The short duration of Beresford's siege meant that some of the problems encountered during the second siege only became apparent then. No attempt was made to breach the castle wall as the first parallel was only started at 10.00pm on 12th May. Thus, the allies had no knowledge that when the castle wall was demolished they would be faced with a vertical cliff, which would prove impossible to destroy. Likewise, the brevity of the siege meant that the problem of 'muzzle droop' with the ancient brass 24-pounders did not arise, as the guns were in use for such a short period of time.

In his published works Jones described the Portuguese gunners as "young and inexperienced, and made extreme bad practice" (Jones 1814, 42). There is however, an entry in Jones's journal, which proves he deliberately suppressed evidence about the poor performance of the artillery. The entry for Saturday 11th May reads:

"The Battery against the Picurina fired 160 rounds this day but without causing the slightest injury to that work, having only struck it four times" (Jones 1810-1811, 157).

An entry in Rice Jones' journal for the same day corroborates (JT) Jones' comments about the artillery (Shore 1986, 102). Yet despite this damning evidence Jones chose not to mention it in any of his published works.

Time was an important factor in the second siege. Wellington knew he had to capture Badajoz in 16 days, so he decided to follow Fletcher's plan. This is surprising as Wellington still favoured attacking the southern side of the *enceinte* (Jones 1812, 24-26). Wellington's relations with his engineers were not as harmonious as they were with other army units (Muir 2015, 432). In 1809, in a letter to Lt.-Col. John Rowley RE, Fletcher wrote:

"Sir Arthur is very civil to me, but I do not I shall ever be so much in his confidence from what I saw in Zealand I do not believe that Sir A attaches much importance in our department" (quoted in Thompson 2015, 37).

Despite his antipathy towards the engineers there is evidence that Wellington was still willing to listen to them. At 8.00am on 8th June Wellington informed Fletcher that he had decided to make a second attack against San Christóbal that night. Later that day Squire advised Fletcher to delay the attack for 24 hours when the breach would be fully practicable (Squire 1811, 60). Wellington obviously agreed to the suggestion as the second attack was postponed until the following night. So, it appears that before the start of the second siege Fletcher was able to persuade Wellington not to attack the southern side of Badajoz but to follow his plan. Thus, to save time Wellington had attacked two of the strongest points of Badajoz's defences with very inferior artillery (Oman 1911, 417).

The first siege was conducted without a proper siege-train and a limited supply of engineers' stores. Thus, the guns and necessary equipment had been taken from Elvas. On 25th May, 40 carts of engineers' stores, which had sent from Lisbon arrived at Badajoz (Jones 1810-1811, 106). Thus, at the outset of the second siege the engineers had sufficient tools and equipment with which to perform their role, whereas the artillery still had to rely on the ancient brass ordnance found inside Elvas.

The artillery was initially equipped with 46 pieces of ordnance, thirty brass 24-pounders, four brass 16-pounders, eight 8-inch howitzers and four 10-inch howitzers. On 7th June, an additional six iron 24-pounders arrived from Lisbon. During the siege, a total of 27 guns were put out of action, over 51% of the total allied ordnance. Only six guns were disabled by enemy fire. The other 21 guns, about 40% of the total allied ordnance, were damaged in a variety of ways; fifteen brass 24-pounders were disabled from 'muzzle droop'; another brass 24-pounder's carriage was damaged due to recoil; the carriages of two 10-inch howitzers were damaged from improper use; and the carriages of three 8-inch howitzer were disabled due to recoil. After the siege, there were only 14 operational brass 24-pounders, which all had greatly enlarged vent-holes through constant use making them very unreliable (Jones 1827, 82).

Despite the large number of guns put out of action during the siege, the artillery still breached the walls of San Christóbal. Jones believed that the fort would have been captured if the engineers had had a company of trained sappers. In the 1814 edition Jones blithely stated:

"With a few sappers, and the necessary fascines and gabions, the reduction of Fort Christoval [*sic*] would have been certain" (Jones 1814, 69).

The evidence suggests that Jones was disingenuous with his assessment of the situation. He argued that once ground had been broken before San Christóbal on 30th May the

sappers could have sapped up to the edge of the *glacis* by 6th June. On reaching the *glacis*, musketry from allied troops stationed on the *glacis* would have prevented the garrison from removing the debris from the base of the breach. Thus, when San Christóbal was stormed the troops could have climbed up the debris and entered the fort (Jones 1814, 69-70; 1827, 83).

There are several points about Jones's argument which are difficult to accept. It does not seem logical that the sappers would have started sapping forward immediately ground was broken, as suggested. Their first task would have been to construct the parallel and the batteries. During the siege, it took the allies from 30th May to 3rd June to construct three batteries opposite San Christóbal. Thus, the sappers could not have started the sap to the *glacis* until 3rd June.

After the French had removed all the topsoil between the two sieges the area around San Christóbal consisted of solid rock. Thus, to reach the *glacis*, the sappers would have had to build a 450m long sap across solid rock, whilst under constant fire from the garrison. The troops had learnt at the beginning of the siege that it was impossible to construct trenches using just *fascines* and *gabions*, a fact which Jones conveniently ignored. No.1 Battery was only completed because the parapets were constructed out of the woolpacks.

There appear to be no contemporary accounts of how the woolpacks were used to construct the batteries. Although a woolpack could absorb the impact of a 24lb round-shot, they could still split and catch fire when subjected to gunfire (Squire 1811, 50). Thus, there must have to be some means of preventing the force of a shot from moving the woolpacks out of position, as well as reducing the risk of them catching fire. So, it seems logical that the woolpacks were not just placed on the ground but were reinforced (most probably by being covered with soil) to ensure they remained in position and did not catch fire. The soil used to strengthen the batteries could only have been collected from the reverse slope of the hill and carried up to the batteries in *gabions*.

If this method was used to create a sap to the *glacis*, it is extremely doubtful if the sappers could have found enough soil to reinforce the woolpacks. When the troops constructed the parallel and the batteries, they would have removed all the soil from near the top of the reverse slope first. As work progressed, they would have been forced to move further and further downhill to find sufficient material to fill their *gabions*. Thus, if the sap had been started on 3rd June the nearest available soil might have been 100m down the reverse slope of the hill. This meant that to obtain soil a sapper might have to move 100m downhill, fill his *gabion* and

make the return journey of 100m just to reach the first parallel. As the sap moved forward, the distance from the sap-head to the soil supply would increase. By the time the sap neared the *glacis*, which was 450m in front of the parallel, a sapper would have to walk more than 900m to obtain one *gabion* of soil. Thus, it would have been impossible to construct a sap up to the *glacis* in these circumstances.

Even if the allies had captured San Christóbal, they still would not have captured Badajoz. Fletcher's plan was dependant on the capture of both San Christóbal and the castle, as once these were in allied hands the garrison would be forced to capitulate. Unfortunately, the clay-slate cliff was almost impervious to bombardment, which meant that the allies could not capture the castle.

Time was a major factor in Wellington's decision to follow a modified version of Fletcher's plan, but it was not the only reason he failed to capture Badajoz. The allied plan was flawed from the outset because of the decision to attack two of the strongest defensive positions of the town. Fletcher can be excused for his decision to attack the castle, as he was totally unaware of the presence of the cliff behind the castle wall. However, he knew about the rocky nature of the soil near to San Christóbal. Thus, when the allies discovered that the French had removed all the soil around the fort, Fletcher should have realised it would be extremely difficult to capture San Christóbal and changed his plan accordingly.

4.7. Preparations for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo

Marmont and Soult entered Badajoz on 20th June (Oman 1911, 446). In all three editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones recorded that it happened on 19th June. This might be regarded as just a simple mistake but in his journal Jones recorded that the French relieved Badajoz on Thursday 20th June (Jones 1810-1811, 209). A fact which is corroborated by the official French account of the siege:

“June the 20th, the French armies of Portugal and the Midi occupied the area around Badajoz, on both banks of the Guadiana, and the two generals in chief arrived at the town; the Duke of Ragusa (*viz* Marshal Marmont), entered first, accompanied by generals Regnier and Foy” (Lamare 1825, 206).

Once again Jones had correctly noted the facts in his journal, then recorded different details in his published works.

On 17th June Wellington took up a position 16kms west of Badajoz. His front extended 19kms from Elvas north through the Caya Valley, past Campo Maior, to the walled town of Ouguela, on the Gévora river. The position was such that it could not be outflanked (Bryant 1944, 497; Oman 1911, 449-451). On the 22nd Marmont and Soult reconnoitred Wellington's position, which neither general was willing to attack. On the 28th Soult's army began its march back to Andalusia. The Army of Portugal stayed near Badajoz until 15th July, then having re-provisioned Badajoz, moved north (Myatt 2008, 47; Oman 1911, 449-455).

Badajoz was renowned as an extremely unhealthy place during the summer months. 'Guadiana fever' a form of malaria had struck down thousands of Wellington's men. So, he moved north to Castelo Branco which had a healthier climate. This was within striking distance of both Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo. Thus, Wellington could attack either fortress once his men had recovered their strength (Grehan 1990, 42; Myatt 2008; 48).

Throughout the summer Wellington received reinforcements so he reorganised his army by dividing it into a southern and a northern force. The southern force, of 9,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry commanded by Maj.-Gen. Rowland Hill, was given the task of protecting Elvas (Oman 1911, 458-459). The northern counterpart consisted of 46,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry. Thus, for the first time Wellington's northern force was numerically superior to the Army of Portugal. Even after he had received reinforcements in the autumn of 1811, Marmont's army consisted of 40,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry (*ibid* 1911, 459-460).

Wellington decided to strike at Ciudad Rodrigo. There were several reasons for this decision. First, the Guadiana valley was so unhealthy during the summer months (*ibid* 1911, 547). On 25th July, there were 12,277 allied troops sick from a variety of illnesses including said 'fever', peaking at over 17,000 in October before falling to 12,392 by 25th December 1811 (Muir 2015, 437). Wellington did not want to further weaken his army by a summer campaign against Badajoz, so his only viable offensive alternative was to capture Ciudad Rodrigo.

Second, was the mountainous terrain to the west of the Águeda river. In this area, part of the Serra da Estrela range, there were several easily defended positions Wellington could fall back on if forced to retreat. The numerous hills and broken ground also had the extra advantage of nullifying the manoeuvrability of the French cavalry (Oman 1911, 547).

Third, Wellington realised that a move north would mean that his army would be separated from Soult's forces by over 400kms. Soult was responsible for Andalusia and had problems with a Spanish army and guerrilla groups operating in the province. Wellington

reasoned that if he besieged Ciudad Rodrigo, Soult would not come to Marmont's assistance. Thus, the only aid that Marmont could expect to receive would be from Marshal Jean-Baptiste Bessières's Army of the North, which was not as formidable as Soult's (*ibid* 1911, 548).

One of the lessons learnt during the two sieges of Badajoz was that a prerequisite for conducting a successful siege was the provision of a proper siege-train. Oman and Napier both blamed the unsuccessful second siege of Badajoz on the Government's failure to supply Wellington with a proper siege-train (Myatt 2008, 48). Evidence however, suggests that a siege-train had been sent out from England three years earlier and was still onboard ships moored in Lisbon harbour.

On 20th March 1811, Wellington wrote to Vice-Admiral George Berkeley, who organised the convoy system that kept the Peninsular Army supplied:

"I propose to disembark the ordnance storeships (with the exception of the battering train and its stores) ..." (Gurwood 1838a, 379-380).

Then on 14th May, Wellington ordered that the ships with the battering-train onboard should be immediately sent to Oporto (*ibid* 1838a, 552). Burgoyne mentioned this development when he wrote to Lord Derby on 29th May:

"Our heavy artillery hitherto always kept embarked here has been ordered round to Oporto, with three companies of artillery" (Wrottesley 1873, 133).

In the 1827 and 1846 editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones wrote:

"Lord Wellington, after raising the siege of Badajos [*sic*], retained his army on the Caya, to cover the Alemtejo provinces till the forces of Marshals Soult and Marmont should separate, and during that time, foreseeing the probability of some opportunity offering to recover Ciudad Rodrigo, gave orders for a battering train, just arrived from England, And a due proportion of engineer's stores, to be sent from Lisbon by sea to Oporto, to be moved in boats up the Douro to Lamego..." (Jones 1827, 92; 1846, 81).

Jones' assertion is clearly wrong. Wellington raised his siege of Badajoz on 11th June and took up his position on the Caya on the 17th. However, Wellington had mentioned the presence of a battering-train to Berkeley on 20th March, three months before he took up his position on the Caya. Therefore, the battering-train described by Jones could not have just arrived from England. A letter from Dickson written on 3rd September suggests that the siege-train must have arrived in Lisbon in 1809, as he wrote:

“I feared the wheels would be shook, by the necessity of the guns being mounted on their own carriages, nor is it a thing to be surprised at, when we recollect that these carriages have been three years on board ship, and the wheels must naturally require drawing together” (Leslie 1908, 453).

On 19th July Wellington issued a memorandum detailing how the siege-train and engineers’ stores at Oporto were to be transported to Ciudad Rodrigo (Gurwood 1838b, 121-122; Leslie 1908, 417; Myatt 2008, 50). First, they were to be transported by boat up the Douro to Peso de Régua from where the equipment was to be taken overland to Trancoso, which had been chosen as the artillery depot. Dickson, who was tasked with overseeing the transportation of the siege-train to Trancoso, was appalled by the ruinous state of the road to Trancoso, so he wrote to Wellington suggesting that the siege-train bypass Trancoso. On 17th August Wellington gave him permission to select both the route and location of the new artillery depot (Gurwood 1838b, 202). Dickson chose Vila da Ponte as the new depot (Oman 1911, 550).

Wellington intended to use Almeida as his base from which to attack Ciudad Rodrigo, so the siege equipment was kept at Vila da Ponte until Almeida was repaired. Repairs were completed on 12th November. Two days later Wellington instructed Dickson to move the siege-train to Almeida (Gurwood 1838b, 401). To confuse any French spies who might have seen the guns being moved, it was stated that the guns were for rearming Almeida (Bryant 1944, 515; Jones 1827, 97).

To overcome the lack of trained sappers Wellington arranged for the Royal Engineers to train 200 volunteers from the 3rd Division. The task of training the men was given to Burgoyne and Lt. Peter Wright RE (Jones 1811-1812, 23-24). On 16th August they began training the volunteers to construct saps, to make and lay *fascines* and *gabions*, and to construct batteries. This instruction continued daily until 20th September, when it was suspended before resuming in early November (Jones 1827, 96-97).

At the beginning of August Wellington blockaded Ciudad Rodrigo. On 25th September Marmont broke the blockade to re-supply the fortress (Myatt 2008, 52-53). Wellington retreated towards Fuente Guinaldo. Marmont sent out detachments to locate Wellington’s forces. On 28th September, Marmont reconnoitred the position that Wellington had taken up on the River Côa, but decided it was too strong to attack and withdrew (Weller 1962, 191-192). The campaign achieved little, as Marmont’s army consumed over two-thirds of the food intended for Ciudad Rodrigo (Grehan 1990, 44; Myatt 2008, 53). Once Marmont’s

forces withdrew the blockade was re-established by the Light Division aided by some Spanish guerrillas (Myatt 2008, 54).

In early November, a French column of 3,400 men broke through the blockade, re-supplied the garrison and returned to Salamanca. Napoléon believed, that as Ciudad Rodrigo was adequately provisioned and winter was fast approaching, Wellington would not move against the town until spring. In a letter to Marmont, he wrote:

“..... such a move is improbable. The English have suffered heavy losses lately and are having difficulty recruiting their army. This leads us to believe that they will confine themselves to the defence of Portugal” (quoted in Oman 1914, 193).

By the beginning of December, the siege-train and all the engineers' stores were in Almeida. To ensure that they could be quickly transported to Ciudad Rodrigo when the opportune moment arose, it was necessary to bridge the Águeda. This task was allocated to Sturgeon and 148 craftsmen selected from the 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Divisions. Within weeks Sturgeon had constructed a 122m long trestle bridge across the Águeda near the Marialva ford, 5kms south-east of Gallegos (Jones 1827, 98; Robertson 2008, 234).

In the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones wrote:

“On 17th December the different divisions of the army commenced making fascines and gabions, at their respective Head-quarters” (Jones 1814, 81).

Jones' journal entry for the same day contains a list of *fascines*, *gabions* and pickets, which had been requested for the forthcoming siege. The entry also stated that the request had been handed to Wellington that day. A General Order was issued the next day asking for volunteers to make pickets, *fascines*, and *gabions* for the forthcoming siege (Egerton 1812, 280). This is yet another example of Jones writing one thing in *Journals of the Sieges* after having recorded different details in his journal. In the later editions he amended the date the troops began making *fascines* and *gabions* to 19th December (Jones 1827, 100; 1846, 91).

Since the start of the war there had been no overall commander of the French forces in Spain, subsequently all the top-level decisions were made by Napoléon. Because Marshal Louis-Gabriel Suchet was besieging Valencia whilst trying to suppress several local risings, Napoléon ordered Marmont to send three divisions to aid Suchet (Sarrazin 1999, 239). On 28th December, Wellington received intelligence that 14,000 men from Marmont's army were marching to join Suchet in eastern Spain. Wellington knew that it was the right time to strike at Ciudad Rodrigo, as Marmont had less than 30,000 men at his command (Grehan 1990, 46).

4.8. Ciudad Rodrigo

Ciudad Rodrigo is located on the northern bank of the Águeda river where a Roman bridge carried the Salamanca to Lisbon road across the river (Robertson 2000, 185). The town is roughly oval in shape and covers the top of a small rocky hill, the south-eastern side of which terminates in a steep cliff which falls 30m from the ramparts to the banks of the Águeda (**Figure 9**). The original fortification was a Moorish castle located at the northern end of the bridge, later a mediaeval wall 10m high, 9m thick and about 1.6kms long was built around the town (Horward 1984, 86; Myatt 2008, 57).

In 1710, the fortifications were strengthened by the creation of a *fausse-braie*, a revetted earth bank about 6m high, around three sides of the town. No additional defences were created in front of the wall alongside the river, as they were deemed unnecessary (Horward 1984, 86; Myatt 2008, 57). The earth for the *fausse-braie* was taken from in front of the wall to create a defensive ditch, between 6m and 7m wide. Although there were *ravelins* constructed on the northern and eastern sides of the *fausse-braie*, they were not provided with a covered way (Jones 1814, 82). They were however, protected by a rocky *glacis*.

The *fausse-braie* was constructed to protect the base of the wall from artillery fire. However, the Spanish engineers had not built it high enough to protect the wall from guns placed on two hills north of the town, the Little Teson and the Great Teson (Horward 1984, 89). The Little Teson, was the same height as the ramparts and only 165m away from them at its nearest point. The Great Teson was 366m beyond the Little Teson and about 4m higher than the ramparts (**Figure 8**). A steep valley separated the town from the Little Teson (Horward 1984, 89; Myatt 2008, 57-58).

When the French captured the town in 1810, they had started their first parallel on the Great Teson. Since then the French had built a fort, the Renaud Redoubt, on the forward slope of the Great Teson. This was surrounded by a ditch about 3.6m wide and 2.5m deep, with strong palisades at the foot of the counterscarp. There was a sally-port in the palisades that closed the rear of the redoubt (Burgoyne 1811-1812, 190).

The suburb of San Francisco lay 275m north-east of the fortress. In 1810, Spanish engineers had entrenched these suburbs with earthen parapets 1.8m to 2.1m high with salients formed by four *redans*. The northern flank of the suburbs was covered by the fortified convent of San Francisco, which was 400m south-east of the Renaud Redoubt (Horward 1984, 91).

Two cannons and a howitzer were sited on its roof (Jones 1814, 83). A wooden palisade ran from the convent to the north-east wall of the town (Horward 1984, 93).

On the eastern side of the suburbs was the fortified convent of Santa Clara, which guarded the Salamanca road. The southern flank of the suburb was protected by the fortified convent of Santo Domingo, which was 250m due west of the town (Grehan 1990, 47). Another palisade had been constructed from Santo Domingo to the *demi-lune* of San Andres (Horward 1984, 93). A fourth fortified convent, Santa Cruz, was just beyond the *glacis* 100m north-west of the town. (Grehan 1990, 47). In all three editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones maintained that the convents were fortified by the French (Jones 1814, 82-83; 1827, 107-108; 1846, 96-97). However, a French Engineer, Capt. Jean Jacques Pelet who was present at the 1810 siege recorded that the convents of San Francisco, Santo Domingo and Santa Cruz were fortified by the Spanish (Horward 1973, 45-46).

On 7th January 1812, Wellington reconnoitred Ciudad Rodrigo and decided to breach the walls at the site of the French breach, which was clearly visible as the new masonry was a lighter colour than the rest of the walls. A shortage of lime meant that the mortar used to rebuild the breach was weaker than the mortar in the rest of the wall (Oman 1914, 164). The same day Wellington wrote to the Earl of Liverpool about the upcoming siege:

“...I can scarcely venture to calculate the time which this operation will take, but I should think not less than twenty four or twenty five days” (Gurwood 1838b, 536).

The plan of attack was that once the town was invested, the Renaud Redoubt would be stormed the same night. A lodgement would then be made behind it with a communication to the rear. The lodgement would be extended on the second night to form the first parallel, at the same time three batteries to take 33 guns would be begun in front of the parallel. On completion of these batteries, troops would sap forward to the Little Tesson to erect a battery to breach the *fausse-braie* and the main wall. Another party would sap up to the *glacis* and destroy the counterscarp (Jones 1814, 84). Because the allies realised that the garrison would retrench the rear of the breach, it was decided to create a second breach just before the final assault to reduce the number of casualties that would be caused by forcing these retrenchments. This breach would be near a small tower about 180m south-east of the main breach. So, a second breaching battery for seven guns was to be constructed on the second parallel (*ibid* 1814, 85).

Because of the bitterly cold weather, the lack of camping equipment and the lack of shelter near Ciudad Rodrigo, the troops went into cantonments in four villages between

13kms and 19kms from the town. Siege duties were to be carried out by the 1st, 3rd, 4th and Light Divisions in rotation. Each division was to arrive at Ciudad Rodrigo at mid-day. They would then spend the next 24 hours in the trenches (*ibid* 1814, 85). Capt. John Ewart of the 52nd Foot was billeted at El Bodón, 19kms from Ciudad Rodrigo. In his journal Ewart described how the regiment marched from their billets at daybreak to reach Ciudad Rodrigo by noon. During their march, the regiment had to wade waist through the waist-deep icy waters of the Águeda at the Cantarranas ford. Then after 24 hours on duty it took almost five hours to return to El Bodón (Glover 2010, 55-56).

4.9. The siege of Ciudad Rodrigo

At noon on 8th January, the Light Division and Brig-Gen. Denis Pack's Portuguese Brigade invested Ciudad Rodrigo (Fletcher 1812, 3; Jones 1814, 115; Shore 1986, 123). The appearance of British troops surprised the 2,000-strong garrison, but they could not believe that Wellington intended to besiege the town in the depths of winter (Grehan 1990, 48). At 3.00pm 269 carts filled with engineers' stores arrived and were unloaded at the Engineers Park, behind the Great Teson (Fletcher 1812, 3).

The same day Lt.-Col. John Colborne, of the Light Division was ordered to capture the Renaud Redoubt. At 8.00pm, Colborne led a force of 450 men, consisting of two companies from the 43rd, 52nd and 95th Foot and one each from the 1st and 3rd Caçadores to capture the redoubt (Oman 1914, 167). They were guided by Lt. Alexander Thomson RE (Fletcher 1812, 4; Urban 2004, 144). Fifty metres from the redoubt the jangling of equipment alerted the garrison who opened fire. Their artillery fired one round before concentrated musketry forced the defenders to seek cover (Oman 1914, 167; Urban 2004, 144). Three companies gained access to the redoubt using ladders, whilst a fourth entered after forcing the postern gate. In ten minutes, the allies had captured the fort, for the loss of six dead and three officers and 16 other ranks wounded. Of the garrison three men were killed, two captains and 48 uninjured men and 12 wounded men were captured, and four escaped (Oman 1914, 168).

In the later editions of *Journals of the Sieges* there are three significant differences from Oman's account. Jones wrote that Colborne's troops consisted of three companies from the 52nd Foot. He also stated the artillery fired off two or three rounds before the escalade, yet all the other sources record that only one round was fired. Jones final mistake was about the size of the garrison. He wrote that three were killed, two officers and 43 men were taken prisoner, and four escaped (Jones 1827, 116-117; 1846. 105). Surprisingly, the figures in his

published work do not correspond to those recorded in his journal, which were three dead, one officer and 49 men captured (Jones 1811-1812, 143).

After the capture of the redoubt 300 men began a lodgement behind the building, while a further 400 troops dug a communication from the lodgement to the Engineers Park. By daylight both the lodgement and the communication had been completed (Jones 1814, 88). At dusk on 9th January, 1,200 men extended the lodgement into a parallel between 530m and 550m from the town. At the same time work began on three batteries in front of the parallel, each designed to take 11 guns. In No.1 Battery, a return was made for two guns to suppress the fire from the San Francisco convent (Jones 1827, 119; 1846, 107).

At daylight on 10th January, No.1 Battery was found to have been incorrectly taped out, as the Renaud Redoubt screened the line of fire of five guns. Rather than demolish that part of the redoubt which obstructed the view it was easier to re-site the guns, as Jones recorded in his journal:

“Three Batteries to ruin the defences of the place were marked out & commenced this night. They were intended to contain 11 guns each. The Battery on the left would not immediately contain more than six guns without very considerable labour. It was therefore determined to place five of the eleven guns on the left of the right-hand battery, a little echeloned to the front & which after this was called the sixteen gun battery” (*ibid* 1811-1812, 145-146).

No mention of this error or the subsequent changes is made in the official British report dated 29th January:

“Night between the 9th and 10th

.....Three batteries to ruin the defences of the place were also commenced in front of the parallel. The left battery for 6 guns at 600 yards (550m) distance having a return for 2 guns to dislodge the enemy from the Convent of San Francisco. The centre battery for 11 guns at 500 yards (460m) distant. The right battery for 16 guns at 550 yards (500m) distant” (Fletcher 1812, 4-5).

This account is purported to have been written by Fletcher, but a closer examination shows that only the introduction and the final signature are in Fletcher’s handwriting. Two pieces of evidence show that the report was written by Jones. First, a comparison of the handwriting in the official account of the siege (**Figure 10**) with that in Jones’ journal (**Figure 11**) reveals that both documents are written in a looped cursive script. The capital letters B, D, F, N and S, have enough similarities to show they were written by the same hand. In addition to the handwriting, the text of the official report is almost identical to that in Jones’ journal.

Second, in a letter to Squire dated 7th February, Burgoyne wrote:

“Williams¹⁷ tells me saw our journal of the siege, and that he gave great offence to Jones by pointing out some inaccuracies, as it was put down there that the seven-gun battery on the left opened on the 17th, instead of the 18th” (Wrottesley 1873, 163).

Thus, Jones had falsified the report to gloss over the mistake the engineers made in marking out No.1 Battery. Even though he had recorded the correct information in his journal 19 days before he wrote the official report.

On 13th January Wellington consulted Fletcher about the feasibility of breaching the walls from the batteries on the first parallel to save time. It was agreed that once completed the batteries would be used to breach the walls and not for counter-battery fire (Fletcher 1812, 7-8). A decision was also made to construct a second parallel on the Little Teson. However, the connecting sap from the first to the second parallel would pass 140m from Santa Cruz, the guns of which would be able to enfilade the length of the trench (*ibid* 1812, 6). Thus, it was necessary to capture the convent before the sap could be started (Jones 1827, 125).

On the night of 13th January, 300 volunteers from the 1st Battalion, King’s German Legion and a company of the 5/60th Foot led by Capt. La Roche de Stackenfels stormed the building. Lt. Charles von Holle forced the palisades, which allowed the Germans to enter and capture the convent. Santa Cruz was captured with the loss of three killed, and one officer and 34 other ranks wounded (Beamish 1837, 31). The *Returns of Absences* for 14th January gives the KGL’s casualties as three dead, two officers and 39 men wounded (WO 25/3223). In the later editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones asserted that Santa Cruz was captured without loss, which is patently untrue (Jones 1827, 125; 1846, 111).

During the night of 13th-14th January the three batteries were armed with 27 guns. In the later editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones wrote:

“This night the following guns were placed in the batteries.

<i>Against the Convent of St Francisco</i>			
No.1.	-	18-pounders	2
No.2.	-	18-pounders	2
		24-pounders	7
No.3.	-	24-pounders	16”

(Jones 1827, 127; 1846, 113).

¹⁷ Captain John Williams RE.

Jones made a simple error of omission when he compiled this table. Clearly only the two 18-pounders in No.1 Battery were intended to attack the convent of San Francisco, whilst the remaining 25 guns were for use against the town walls. The table should obviously include a heading such as *Against the City Walls* before the entry for No.2 Battery. This is confirmed by an entry in Jones's journal, which reads:

“At ½ past 4.P.M. Twenty-five guns opened directed to that object and two guns on the Convent of St Francisco” (Jones 1811-1812, 150).

On 14th January, as the working parties were changing over, 500 French troops made a sortie. They upset most of the *gabions* placed in front of the parallel the previous night, recaptured Santa Cruz and tried to spike the guns in the batteries. However, elements of the 24th and 42nd Foot drove them back into Ciudad Rodrigo (Jones 1827, 127-128; Myatt 2008, 67). Most of the damage was quickly repaired, but the task of opening the embrasures of the batteries proved more difficult. Accurate French artillery fire, the lack of skilled workmen and the death of Lt. Thomas Skelton RE, who was supervising the task, meant it was 4.30pm before the guns opened fire (Jones 1827, 128; 1846, 114).

Twenty-five guns, two 18-pounders and twenty-three 24-pounders were directed at the salient point on the northern side of the town wall to create breaches in the wall and the *fausse-braie* (Fletcher 1812, 8; Jones 1814, 92). Two guns were used to bring down suppressing fire on the San Francisco convent (Fletcher 1812, 8; Jones 1814, 92). The object of this attack was to demolish the convent's exterior defences. Unfortunately, a rise in the ground between the battery and the convent prevented the guns striking low enough on the walls. So, after a few rounds fire was directed at the main building (Jones 1827, 129; 1846, 114-115).

In his letter to Squire dated 7th February, Burgoyne wrote:

“...in order to breach the convent of San Francisco, which was to be attacked at night. Those two guns, however, as before observed, could not see the wall low enough, and were of no service; the other guns also fired nearly every shot clear over the town, owing to the haste in opening the embrasures, the shot striking the sill of the embrasure, which were not properly opened till night, after which the artillery made very good practice to the end of the siege” (Wrottesley 1873, 162).

Although Jones mentions Skelton's death in 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges*, he fails to refer to the mistakes in sighting the guns or the misaligned embrasures. In subsequent editions, Jones acknowledged the problem of the guns attacking the San Francisco convent but still failed to mention the misaligned embrasures (Jones 1827, 128-129; 1846, 114-115).

The same day, it was decided to capture the San Francisco convent so that the working parties could complete the second parallel in comparative safety (Fletcher 1812, 8; Jones 1827, 129). That night three companies of the 40th Foot stormed the convent. As the first troops climbed onto the building, the French evacuated it leaving behind three guns and two wounded men. Shortly afterwards the French abandoned all their outposts in the suburbs, including Santa Cruz which they had recaptured that morning (Oman 1914, 174).

By 15th January, the bombardment from the Great Tesson had caused considerable damage to the repaired breach (**Figure 12**). As such it was decided to remove the seven guns which were having the least effect to form a new battery, No.4 Battery, to the east of the Renaud Redoubt. This would be used to create a second breach. The battery was completed during the night of the 17th-18th January and opened fire at daylight on the 18th (Jones 1814, 94). The official report stated that the battery opened fire at daylight on the 17th (Fletcher 1812, 10). Burgoyne's letter to Squire, quoted above, clearly shows that the date given in the official report is wrong and the battery opened fire on 18th January (Wrottesley 1873, 163).

On the night of 15th-16th January the artillery ran five additional 24-pounders into Nos.1 and 2 Batteries, so that at daylight, twenty-eight 24-pounders and two 18-pounders were pounding the walls (Jones 1827, 131-132). At noon, thick fog descended which forced the artillery on both sides to cease firing. The engineers used the lull to place 60 *gabions* along the second parallel (Fletcher 1812, 10). Jones journal for 16th January reads:

“At noon a thick fog came on & the artillery ceased firing – advantage was taken of the fog to place 60 gabions in prolongation of the 2nd parallel” (Jones 1811-1812, 153).

The details in his journal agree with the official report. In the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones account is consistent with his journal but for the fact he mentions 50 *gabions* were placed on the second parallel, instead of 60 as recorded in his journal and the official report (Jones 1814, 93). However, in the later editions Jones wrote:

“The batteries opened soon after daylight with twenty-eight 24-pounders and two 18-pounders against the breach, but about half past nine such a thick fog came on that they were obliged to cease firing. The engineers however took advantage of the fog to place fifty gabions in prolongation of the second parallel” (Jones 1827, 132; 1846, 118-119).

The official report, Jones's journal and the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* all record that the fog came down at noon. So, why did Jones deliberately alter the time the fog came down to 9.30am?

On the 16th the allies breached the walls, so they summoned the garrison to surrender, which the French commander General of Brigade Jean Léonard Barrié refused to do (Fortescue, 1917, 357; Glover 2010, 57). The same night work started on No.5 Battery, designed for six 24-pounders, 170m from the town at the eastern end of the second parallel (Fletcher 1812, 10; Jones 1827, 132). Construction of this battery proved difficult due to the French artillery, as *gabions* were laid to form the base of the parapets French gunfire would blow them to pieces. To complete the battery, the French gunfire had to be suppressed. But there was no counter-battery fire from the allied artillery, as every gun was being used to create the breach (Oman 1914, 175).

The solution was for 30 members of the 95th Rifles to crawl down to the *glacis*, dig themselves in and snipe at the French gunners (Jones 1827, 132-133). Lt. John Kincaid described the action:

“My turn of duty did not arrive until eight in the evening, when I was ordered to take thirty men with shovels to dig holes for ourselves, as near as possible to the walls, for the delectable amusement of firing at the embrasures for the remainder of the night. The enemy threw frequent fire-balls among us, to see where we were; but, as we always lay snug until their blaze was extinguished, they were not much the wiser, except by finding, from having some one popt [*sic*] off from their guns every instant, that they had got some neighbours whom they would have been glad to get rid of” (Kincaid 1830, 103).

The rifle fire was so accurate that the French could only man their guns by stuffing the embrasures with bales of straw, whilst the guns were loaded and aimed, after which the bales were removed and the guns fired. This slowed down the French rate of fire and reduced its accuracy (Grehan 1990, 55; Urban 2004, 148). The riflemen were supported by infantry posted along the second parallel who kept up a constant barrage of musketry (Jones 1827, 132).

Kincaid stated this occurred on 12th January, but other evidence indicates that he was mistaken. The 95th Rifles started their stints in the trenches at noon on the 8th, 12th and 16th January. However, the allies only occupied San Francisco and Santa Cruz on the night of the 14th. Thus, Kincaid and his men could not have been dug in on the *glacis* before then as their rear would have been exposed to enemy fire from both convents. Therefore, the event must have occurred on the night of the 16th, as recorded by Jones.

By nightfall on the 17th, a large portion of the wall had been demolished (Jones 1827, 133). The *fausse-braie* had also sustained considerable damage (Fletcher 1812, 10). Throughout the day all attempts to sap to the *glacis* were halted by French gunfire. During the night of 17th - 18th January, No.4 Battery was armed with seven 24-pounders. The infantry in

the second parallel maintained a heavy musketry at the base of the main breach to prevent the French from removing the rubble, as this formed a ramp which the attackers would use to storm the town (Jones 1827, 134).

On 18th January No.4 Battery opened fire at the *fausse-braie* in front of the tower, 180m from the main breach (**Figure 13**). By the afternoon, the breach in the *fausse-braie* was practicable. The gunners then turned their aim on the tower (Fletcher 1812, 11). Wellington could not have chosen a better place to breach the town walls. In his report Barrié wrote:

“... unique in the enceinte for the facilities which it offered for breaching and the difficulties for the defence. This is the spot where the walls are lowest, the parapet thinnest, and the *fausse-braie* narrowest. Moreover here had been situated the gun which best flanked the original breach” (Barrié 1812, 275).

By nightfall most of the tower had been demolished. During the night, a 5^{1/2}-inch howitzer and a 6-pounder were placed in the No.5 Battery to enfilade the base of the main breach to stop the rubble being removed (Jones 1846, 122). The official report stated:

“Night between the 17th & 18th

..... Two guns & two howitzers were placed in situations to enfilade the breach & the guard in the 2nd parallel kept up a continual fire of musketry on it, during the whole night, to prevent the enemy from clearing away the rubbish” (Fletcher 1812, 11).

I believe that the date in the official report is wrong and the events described happened the following night. Even though the locations of the guns or howitzers are given, I think they were placed in No.5 Battery on the night of 18th - 19th January. It has already been established, from Burgoyne’s letter to Squire, that the chronology of events in the official report was out by one day, as No.4 Battery had opened fire on the 18th and not the 17th (Wrottesley 1873, 163). So, if this error continued then the events for the night of 17th - 18th described in the report, tallies with Jones’s description of placing guns in No.5 Battery the next night (Jones 1846, 122).

On 19th January, the tower was destroyed leaving a practicable breach 25m wide (**Figure 14**). The main breach was also practicable and about 120m wide. Due to the constant bombardment the garrison could not remove the rubble at its base, so they built a second defensive line. A ditch 5m deep was dug at the rear of the main breach, with a retrenchment behind it. On either side of the breach trenches were dug across the ramparts, 3m wide and 3m deep, with a 24-pounder sited behind each trench (Fletcher 1991, 190). Wellington decided to storm the town at 7.00pm that evening, using troops from the 3rd Division, Light Division and

Pack's Portuguese Brigade. Wellington issued an order of his plan to storm the town, using five attacking columns, which outlined the tasks allocated to each column starting with the troops on the southern bank of the Águeda and moving around the town in a clockwise direction (Gurwood 1838b, 550).

At 6.50pm, the 2nd Caçadores and the 83rd Foot's light company commanded by Lt.-Col. Bryan O'Toole were to cross the bridge and capture the outwork in front of the castle. This contained two guns which defended the gate allowing access to the northern end of the ditch (Jones 1814, 96; Oman 1914, 178).

At the same time the 5th Foot, led by Maj. Henry Ridge, were to leave Santa Cruz, force the gate and gain access to the ditch. Then they had to climb onto the *fausse-braie* and move along it to the main breach (Jones 1814, 96). At 7.00pm, ten companies of the 94th Foot were to leave Santa Cruz and enter the ditch to the right of the main breach, mid-way between the gate and the main breach (Oman 1914, 178). After entering the ditch, they were to turn left and make for the breach (Jones 1814, 95-97).

Ten minutes earlier, 180 sappers carrying bags of hay were to leave the second parallel, under covering fire from the 83rd Foot, run to the *glacis* and throw the bags into the ditch. They would be followed by a storming party from the 45th, 74th and 88th Foot of Maj.-Gen. Henry Mackinnon's Brigade. These troops were to jump onto the hay bags, cross the ditch and attack the main breach (*ibid* 1814, 97).

At 7.00pm three companies from the 95th Foot were to leave the San Francisco convent and enter the ditch at a point mid-way between the two breaches (Oman 1914, 178). Once in the ditch they were to turn right and make their way to the main breach. At the same time Maj.-Gen. John Vandeleur's Brigade was to leave the San Francisco convent and attack the lesser breach. First, they had to capture the breach in the *fausse-braie*, after its capture five companies were to move along the *fausse-braie* to the main breach. The remaining troops would attack the lesser breach and after they had captured it, they were to move along the ramparts to the main breach (Jones 1814, 97-98).

The final part of Wellington's plan was for Pack's Portuguese Brigade to make a diversionary attack on the outwork in front of the Santiago gate, located at the south-east corner of the town (*ibid* 1814, 99). Pack was authorised to turn this diversion into a genuine attack if he met light resistance (Grehan 1990, 57-58).

O'Toole's and Ridge's attacks quickly achieved their objectives. The 5th Foot moved rapidly along the *fausse-braie* to the main breach, where they met the 94th Foot. This regiment had encountered so little resistance it had arrived at the breach before the 'forlorn hope' of the main storming party. Mackinnon's Brigade had begun their attack at 7.00pm but had been delayed reaching the breach. These troops arrived within minutes of the troops from the 5th and 94th Foot so all five regiments began to climb up the rubble to the top of the breach (Myatt 2008, 70; Oman 1914 180).

As the first attackers reached the top of the slope, they were met with a hail of grapeshot from the guns located either side of the breach, which virtually destroyed all the men at the top of the breach. However, a small group of men from the 88th Foot jumped across the trench cut in the parapet and bayoneted the gunners serving the left-hand gun. The second gun was silenced by troops who used planks found at the top of the breach to bridge the ditch. As the allied troops gained a foothold on the parapets, the French fired a large mine which killed Mackinnon and many of his men (Myatt 2008, 71; Oman 1914, 180-181).

The troops attacking the lesser breach entered the ditch but strayed too far to the left in the dark. It was only after the accompanying engineer pointed out the correct direction, that they reached the lesser breach (Grehan 1990, 60). The troops quickly climbed the breach and fought their way onto the ramparts. French resistance collapsed when they realised that British troops had captured both breaches. O'Toole's men had also forced their way into the town by hacking their way through the Colada gate (Oman 1914, 181-183).

In all three editions of *Journals of the Sieges* there is a strange anomaly about the number of troops detailed to throw the hay-bags into the ditch. Jones recorded that "180 sappers" were detailed to carry the hay-bags (Jones 1814, 97; 1827, 139; 1846, 124). Yet a few pages further on in the text Jones stated that the number of men carrying the hay-bags was 150 (Jones 1814, 100; 1827, 141; 1846, 127). There is no record of the number of troops tasked with carrying the hay bags in Jones' journal. However, Wellington's order stated that "180 sappers" were to throw the hay-bags into the ditch (Wellington 1860, 254). Jones had obviously obtained his information from this source. His manuscript was handwritten so the printers had probably confused 180 with 150. Hence the numbers changed within a few pages. The error was not picked up by whoever proofread Jones' manuscript in 1814 thus the mistake was repeated in the later editions.

Once the breaches had been captured, the garrison retreated to the cathedral square, where they briefly rallied. However, they quickly laid down their arms when the Light Division entered the square from a different direction (Fortescue 1917, 363; Oman 1914, 183). Because the town had been taken by storm, under the conventions of the time the victorious troops were entitled to plunder it. Thus 7,000 allied troops spread out across Ciudad Rodrigo in search of drink and plunder (Fortescue 1917, 364). Although the disorder was appalling it was not on the same scale as the mayhem that occurred after the capture of Badajoz. Neither the garrison nor the local population were molested by the troops (Oman 1914, 185). By dawn discipline was restored and by noon the last of the victorious troops had left the town (Fortescue 1917, 364).

4.10. An assessment of the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo

This was the most successful siege undertaken by Wellington during the war. The Anglo-Portuguese army had captured the town in 12 days, with a total loss of 178 killed and 825 wounded or missing (Gurwood 1838b, 557). Allied losses for the final assault were 105 killed and 390 wounded (Oman 1914, 182-183). Allied casualties in the trenches were 73 killed and 435 wounded. During their 35-day siege of Ciudad Rodrigo the French suffered losses of 222 killed and 1,242 wounded, all of which were sustained in the trenches, as Ciudad Rodrigo surrendered prior to a French assault (Horward 1984, 182-183). An examination of the casualty figures for the men in the trenches rather surprisingly reveals that the average daily casualty rate for both sieges was six men killed and 36 wounded. Thus, if we ignore the casualty figures for the assault, the various shortcuts taken by Wellington did not significantly increase the number of casualties incurred.

Like the two earlier sieges at Badajoz, time was a factor in this siege. As soon as Wellington received intelligence that 14,000 men from Marmont's army were moving to eastern Spain, he immediately commenced the siege. Wellington believed that he had 24 or 25 days in which to capture the town (Gurwood 1838b, 536). He therefore took every opportunity to hasten the progress of the siege. Such as his decision to capture the Renaud Redoubt by escalade, as well as breaching town walls from the first parallel (Fortescue 1917, 353; Oman 1914, 169).

A major factor for the siege being so successful can be attributed to the provision of a properly equipped siege-train. Unlike the previous sieges the gunners did not have to contend with antiquated brass guns, with all the related problems of faulty carriages, windage, blown vent-holes and 'muzzle droop'. Wellington was able to breach walls from the first

parallel because the artillery was equipped with iron guns that were both accurate and powerful enough to perform the task from that distance.

Another reason for the success of the siege was that the defences of Ciudad Rodrigo were significantly weaker than those of Badajoz. When the town defences were improved in 1710, unlike Badajoz the mediaeval wall was not replaced by a modern bastioned wall. The defensive improvements consisted of constructing a *fausse-braie* around three sides of the old wall, with an accompanying ditch (Fletcher 1812, 1; Horward 1984, 86). Although the function of the *fausse-braie* was to shield the wall from artillery, the Spanish engineers had not built it high enough to protect the wall from guns sited on either of the Tesons (Horward, 1984, 89).

Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz were both surrounded by five outworks. At Badajoz, these were strong purpose-built structures designed to protect different parts of the city. Four of the five outworks around Ciudad Rodrigo were just a series of reinforced convent buildings which were not designed as defensive structures. The only substantial purpose-built outwork at Ciudad Rodrigo was the Renaud Redoubt, which had been built by the French.

Another element which helped the Anglo-Portuguese army to capture the town so quickly was the ineffectiveness of Barrié, who did not mount an energetic defence. Barrié was made governor in October 1811 (Oman 1914, 165). His defence was lacklustre apart from one sortie on 14th January (Jones 1827, 127). After the second breach was made, he made no effort to retrench that breach. In fact, the only obstacle that was placed at the top of the lesser breach was a 24-pounder, placed lengthwise across it. On 19th January, although both breaches were practicable Barrié made no preparations to defend the town even though he knew that the allies would probably mount an assault that night (Fortescue 1917, 367).

At the time, the accepted rules of siege-warfare dictated that if a garrison resisted an assault after a practicable breach had been made then the lives of the garrison were forfeit. The logic for such a barbaric rule was to deter other fortresses from resisting in the future. Thus, once the garrison of a town learnt that during a previous siege the defenders had been slaughtered for such resistance, they would be more inclined to surrender once a practicable breach had been made. As noted above, once the garrison surrendered they were not molested by the allied troops.

On 3rd March, Capt. George Bowles of the Coldstream Guards wrote to Lord Malmesbury about Ciudad Rodrigo. In his letter, he wrote rather prophetically:

“Unluckily our men gave quarter, ergo, we shall always have to storm” (Glover 2008, 33).

Bowles realised that after the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo, Wellington would make another attempt to capture Badajoz. From his letter, it is obvious that Bowles fully expected that the Anglo-Portuguese army would be forced to capture Badajoz by assault. Little did he know the appalling number of casualties the allies would sustain during that assault.

4.11. Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have highlighted numerous errors made by Jones in *Journals of the Sieges*, these include simple typographical errors; factually incorrect statements; inexplicable changes to details recorded in Jones' private journal; and the deliberate omission of facts that were harmful to the reputations of the Royal Engineers or the Royal Artillery.

In relation to these sieges, there are four typographical errors in *Journals of the Sieges*. First, the date Wellington approved Fletcher's plan for the second siege of Badajoz. In *Journals of the Sieges* this is given as 22nd May, whilst it is recorded as the 28th in Jones' journal (Jones 1810-1811, 186). As the original manuscript was handwritten the printer probably confused the 8 for a 2. Second, a heading is missing from the table of the guns placed in the first three batteries at Ciudad Rodrigo. Third, in Jones' journal and the official report it is recorded that 60 *gabions* were laid out during the fog on 16th January. But in *Journals of the Sieges* the number is given as 50 so the printer probably confused the number 60 for 50. Finally, the number of sappers detailed to throw the hay-bags into the ditch at Ciudad Rodrigo changed from 180 to 150 within a few pages. Although Jones cannot be held accountable for the printer's mistakes, he is responsible for all the remaining errors and inaccuracies outlined in this chapter.

Because Jones' journal can be compared with other independent sources, as well as *Journals of the Sieges*, it is possible to show that on 14 occasions Jones provided factually incorrect information about these sieges. In relation to the two sieges of Badajoz, this predominantly relates to events north of the Guadiana. The sole exception is when Jones wrongly stated that Dickson collected twenty-six 24-pounders and six 8-inch howitzers for the second siege, which he corrected in the later editions (Jones 1827, 39; 1846, 33).

Jones' account of the French sortie on 10th May is incorrect. He correctly noted that 700 infantry participated in the sortie, but Jones failed to record that 120 sappers and 50 cavalymen were also involved. But his biggest mistake was the assertion that the French troops

were supported by two field-guns when there is no mention of field-guns in Lamare's official account of the siege, Rice Jones' journal or (JT) Jones' own journal.

Jones' assertion that there were 1,800 fit troops on the north bank of the Guadiana is wrong (Jones 1814, 43). Squire who oversaw operations against San Christóbal, provided a more detailed explanation about the situation. He stated that there were only 1,000 fit troops, enough tools for 500 men, and no *gabions*, *fascines*, sandbags or timber (Squire 1811, 2-3). Thus, the slow progress against San Christóbal was not just due to a shortage of manpower but also to a limited number of tools and a total lack of building materials. Facts which Jones failed to mention. Evidence from Squire's journal also contradicts Jones' claim that throughout the second siege the woolpacks used to create the batteries, absorbed the impact of round-shot whilst retaining their shape (Jones 1827, 49). Squire, who built the batteries, recorded that the concussion from round-shot could burst woolpacks and set the wool on fire (Squire 1811, 50).

At first glance Jones' claim that the San Christóbal breach was practicable on 6th June appears to be correct (Jones 1814, 65). Squire however, believed the breach was too narrow and that efforts should have been made to widen it before attempting an assault (Squire 1811, 55-56). I have already suggested that Forster, the engineer who decided that the breach was practicable, might have felt pressured into making that decision because both Fletcher and Wellington were in a hurry to capture San Christóbal. If Jones had cited Squire's opinion it would have reflected badly on the engineers, as it would have shown that they were not capable of assessing if a breach was practicable.

The casualty figures noted by Jones for the second assault on the San Christóbal are incorrect. Although he correctly recorded the total number of casualties as 140, he failed to provide accurate numbers of those troops who were killed, wounded or missing. Jones arbitrarily put the figures at 40 killed and 100 wounded, whereas the correct figures are 54 killed, 81 wounded and five missing (WO 25/3223). This means that Jones under-reported the number of deaths by 35% (40 instead of 54) and over-stated the number of wounded by 29% (100 instead of 81), whilst failing to mention any missing troops.

Besides these errors about Badajoz, Jones was also wrong about the siege-train that was used at Ciudad Rodrigo (Jones 1827, 92; 1846, 81). Evidence from Wellington, Burgoyne and Dickson show that the siege-train that was sent to Oporto had been onboard ship in Lisbon harbour for three years. Thus, Jones' assertion that it had recently arrived is wrong (Gurwood 1838a, 379-380; Leslie 1908, 453; Wrottesley 1873, 133).

Jones wrongly stated that the troops began making fascines and *gabions*, for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, on 17th December (Jones 1814, 81). Wellington's *Dispatches* reveal that the order asking for volunteers to make *fascines* and *gabions* was issued on the 18th. Jones did however correct this error in the later editions of *Journals of the Sieges* (Jones 1827, 100; 1846, 91).

It has already been noted that Jones made three significant errors when describing the capture of the Renaud Redoubt. First, he wrote that Colborne's troops consisted of three companies from the 52nd Foot, whereas it consisted of two companies from the 43rd, 52nd and 95th Foot and one each from the 1st and 3rd Caçadores (Oman 1914, 167). Second, Jones stated the artillery fired off two or three rounds before the escalade, yet all the other sources state that only one round was fired. Jones' final mistake was about the French casualties. He recorded that there were three dead, two officers and 43 men were taken prisoner, and four men escaped (Jones 1827, 116-117; 1846. 105). However, a more accurate assessment of the French casualties indicates that there were three dead, two captains and 48 uninjured men and 12 wounded men were captured, and four escaped (Oman 1914, 168).

On 14th January 1812, the troops involved in the capture of Santa Cruz suffered either 38 or 44 casualties, depending on which source is used. According to Beamish, the losses were three dead, and one officer and 34 other ranks wounded (Beamish 1837, 31). The *Return of Absences* for 14th January puts the KGL's casualties at three dead, and two officers and 39 men wounded (WO 25/3223). Yet, in the later editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones recorded that Santa Cruz was captured without loss, which is clearly untrue (Jones 1827, 125; 1846, 111).

Burgoyne's letter to Squire reveals that the two guns meant to attack the San Francisco convent were wrongly sited and could not hit the proposed target. It also shows that the embrasures in the batteries were too high. Jones failed to refer to these mistakes in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges*. However, in subsequent editions he acknowledged the problem of the guns attacking the convent but still failed to mention the misaligned embrasures (Jones 1827, 128-129; 1846, 114-115).

Besides the mistakes mentioned above there are several errors made by Jones, which are perplexing. In these cases, Jones recorded the correct details in his private journal but for some inexplicable reason changed them in *Journals of the Sieges*. Only one of these cases cannot be corroborated by evidence from another source. This is the time the fog came

down on 16th January at Ciudad Rodrigo. In his journal and the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones stated the fog came down at noon (Jones 1814, 93) but in the later editions the time was given as 9.30am (Jones 1827, 132; 1846, 118-119). This is not a typographical error, so why did Jones deliberately change the time the fog came down?

Two of these errors consist of minor changes. The first concerns the time the first siege of Badajoz was raised. In *Journals of the Sieges* Jones stated that the siege was raised at midnight (Jones 1814, 44; 1827, 32; 1846, 27). However, the journals of Rice Jones, Squire and his own journal all record that the siege was raised at 1.00am (Jones 1810-1811, 163; Shore 1986, 102; Squire 1811, 4). A similar error was made about the date the French relief columns entered Badajoz after the second siege. In *Journals of the Sieges* the date is given as the 19th June (Jones 1814, 73) but both Jones' journal and the official French account of the siege give the date as the 20th (Jones 1810-1811, 209; Lamare 1824, 206).

Jones made three errors about the first siege of Badajoz. The first error was about the number of pontoons used to bridge the Guadiana. In his journal Jones stated that six pontoons were used to construct the bridge (Jones 1810-1811, 53-54), which is corroborated by Dickson (Leslie 1908, 373). Jones however, inexplicably changed the number of pontoons from six to four in *Journals of the Sieges* (Jones 1814, 25; 1827, 3; 1846; 4).

The second point is about the number and location of false attacks made during the siege. In *Journals of the Sieges* Jones stated that there were two false attacks against Fort Pardaleras and the Picuriña (Jones 1814, 33). However, evidence from (JT) Jones' journal (Jones 1810-1811, 151) and Rice Jones' journal (Shore 1986, 101) indicate that there was only one false attack against Fort Pardaleras, and the allies intended to capture the Picuriña.

The final point is about the time the guns opened fire on the 11th May. Although Jones stated in *Journals of the Sieges* that the guns opened fire at 4.00am (Jones 1814, 41-42; 1827, 29; 1847, 25) his journal directly contradicts this statement. Evidence from (JT) Jones' journal and Rice Jones' journal show that there was dense fog when the guns were alleged to have opened fire. Thus, the guns must have opened fire later, which according to Jones was sometime after 6.30am (Jones 1810-1811, 153; Shore 1986, 101).

In the above examples, there appears to be no rational explanation why Jones changed the correct details in his journal to those in *Journals of the Sieges*. It is possible that some of these mistakes, such as the time the first siege of Badajoz was raised, were due to Jones' carelessness. Burgoyne's letter to Squire about the official account of the siege of

Ciudad Rodrigo indicates that Jones was capable of such carelessness, as the dates of some of the events are wrongly recorded as having occurred a day earlier than they actually happened (Wrottesley 1873, 163).

However, two of the changes made by Jones are difficult to explain. First, is the number of false attacks made during the first siege of Badajoz. In his journal Jones differentiated between the false attack against Fort Pardaleras and the attack against the Picuriña on **nine** separate occasions. Thus, it is hard to understand why Jones should claim that there were two false attacks in *Journals of the Sieges*. An equally puzzling change concerns the time the guns opened fire on 11th May. Jones stated in *Journals of the Sieges* that guns opened fire at 4.00am (Jones 1814, 41-42; 1827, 29; 1847, 25). Yet, in his journal Jones goes into detail about Fletcher's movements and the thick fog (Jones 1810-1811, 153). Given this, it is difficult to understand why Jones should claim in *Journals of the Sieges* that the guns opened fire at 4.00am.

Because the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* was written to explain why the British were so bad at siege-warfare, without blaming the artillery or the engineers, Jones deliberately omitted certain facts from *Journals of the Sieges*, which would have reflected badly on the Royal Engineers and the Royal Artillery. Point 8 of Wellington's memorandum about the first siege of Badajoz (Gurwood 1838a, 494) and evidence that Fletcher had changed the original plan (Jones 1810-1811, 140) were both omitted from *Journals of the Sieges*. So, it appeared that the engineers were not at fault for the plan of attack but were following a plan devised by Wellington and his senior staff.

Likewise, in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones omitted evidence about the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo that showed the engineers in a bad light. First, he failed to mention that the two guns designed to destroy the exterior defences of the San Francisco convent were badly sited and thus unable to hit the exterior walls. Jones also failed to mention that the sills of the embrasures had been made too high, so that most of the shots hit the sills and overshot the town (Wrottesley 1873, 162). In the later editions Jones acknowledged the problem of the two guns attacking the convent but still failed to mention the misaligned sills (Jones 1827, 128-129; 1846, 114-115). There is also evidence that in the official account of the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo that Jones' deliberately omitted details, which showed that the engineers had made a mistake in marking out one of the batteries on the first night of the siege (Fletcher 1812, 4-5).

Jones also omitted evidence that reflected badly on the artillery. When discussing the first siege of Badajoz, Jones failed to mention that on 11th May the artillery had fired 160 rounds at the Picuriña and had only hit it four times (Jones 1810-1811, 157). This is surprising as in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges*, he was critical of the artillery when discussing the attack against San Christóbal on the same day. Jones stated:

“The Portuguese artillery-men were young and inexperienced, and made extreme bad practice.” (Jones 1814, 42).

This appears to contradict his assertion that the artillery was amongst the best in Europe (Jones 1814, vi). But this is not the case, because when Jones made the comment in the preface to *Journals of the Sieges*, he was referring to the Royal Artillery not the Portuguese Artillery. Thus, he is critical of the Portuguese Artillery not the Royal Artillery in *Journals of the Sieges*.

Of the numerous errors, inaccuracies and omissions noted above only four of them can be attributed to typographical errors, the rest of the mistakes or deliberate omissions were made by Jones. Despite the large number of errors made in relation to these three sieges in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges*, Jones only corrected three of his mistakes in the later editions. Thus, most of the errors made in the 1814 edition were repeated in the later editions of *Journals of the Sieges*.

Chapter 5

Badajoz 1812

5.1. Introduction

After his successful siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, Wellington's next objective was to capture Badajoz and thus gain control of the Portuguese border. This chapter is a review of that siege and follows the events outlined in *Journals of the Sieges*. It begins with Wellington's preparations for the siege (5.2). This includes his arrangements to protect Ciudad Rodrigo, Dickson's efforts to assemble a new siege-train and the allied army's move south.

The next section (5.3) examines events just prior to the siege. It begins with a discussion about the number and location of the allied bridges across the Guadiana, before continuing with the Anglo-Portuguese army's investment of Badajoz. This is followed by a description of the additional defences created by the garrison since the second siege. The section ends with an examination of the allied plan to capture Badajoz.

The chapter continues with an account of the third siege of Badajoz (5.4). It covers the difficulties Wellington's army encountered during this operation, as well as the defensive measures taken by the garrison. It then discusses Wellington's decision to storm Badajoz and explains why the assault was delayed for 24 hours. This is followed by a section (5.5) which covers Wellington's plan to capture Badajoz and a description of the assault. The next section (5.6) contains an assessment of the siege.

The final section (5.7) draws together all the points raised from the comparison of the information in *Journals of the Sieges* with the evidence from other sources, to assess the value of Jones' work.

5.2. Preparation for the third British siege of Badajoz

Wellington's first concern after the capture of Ciudad Rodrigo was to protect the newly captured town while it was being repaired. Because the Army of Portugal's siege-train was discovered inside Ciudad Rodrigo, Wellington knew that Marmont could not mount a siege. However, while the walls were unrepaired the town was vulnerable to a *coup-de-main*. By 24th January, the trenches had been filled in, the batteries demolished, and the breaches

temporarily closed with *fascines* and earth (Oman 1914, 197). On 29th January, 49 Spanish masons began replacing the temporary repairs with new stone walls (Jones 1827. 151). The same day Wellington wrote to the Lord Liverpool:

“I now propose to attack Badajoz as soon as I can. I have ordered all the preparatory arrangements to be made, and I hope that everything will be in readiness to enable me to invest the place by the second week in March” (Gurwood 1838b, 579).

Wellington had intended to send the siege-train overland to Badajoz. But the oxen used to draw the carts were too weak to pull the guns that distance. So, most of the guns were returned to Oporto and just 16 howitzers were sent overland. Dickson was again tasked with assembling a siege-train and transporting it to Elvas. On 28th January, he set off for Setúbal, 50kms south-west of Lisbon, where sixteen 24-pounders had arrived from Oporto, it was these pieces that Dickson used to form the basis of his new siege-train (Fortescue 1917, 374). The Royal Navy agreed to lend him twenty 18-pounders, which had been removed from a Russian fleet that had been trapped in Lisbon harbour since 1808 (Harvey 2007, 618). On examining the guns Dickson discovered that English round-shot was nearly 1.3cms too small for them. Despite his protests Dickson was forced to accept them. He then spent days sifting through the ordnance depots in Lisbon to find enough shot to fit the 18-pounders (Fortescue 1917, 375; Oman 1914, 224). The guns and ammunition were then ferried up the Sado to Alcácer do Sol and overland from there to Elvas. By 8th March, a 52-gun siege-train was assembled at Elvas ready for use (Oman 1914, 224).

Wellington anticipated that the French would assume his next objective would be Badajoz. Thus, he hoped to steal a few days march by slipping away from Ciudad Rodrigo undetected (Fortescue 1917, 217). On 16th February, the first of his divisions moved south (*ibid* 1917, 379). Over the next week, five divisions slipped away one after the other and made their way to Elvas. By 26th February, only the 5th Division remained near Ciudad Rodrigo (*ibid* 1917, 382). On 5th March Wellington set out for Elvas (Oman 1914, 219).

On 12th March, Wellington had nearly 60,000 troops concentrated around Elvas, which was enough to invest Badajoz and provide a covering force (*ibid* 1914, 218-219). Besides the troops concentrated near Elvas, the fortress contained the 52-gun siege-train, the engineer's stores, 22 pontoons and a large quantity of *fascines* and *gabions* (*ibid* 1914, 226). Wellington was therefore ready for a third attempt to capture Badajoz once his engineers had bridged the Guadiana.

5.3. The investment of Badajoz

There is confusion among Fortescue, Jones, Napier and Oman about the number of bridges constructed, their locations and the date that they were built. In the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones wrote:

“On the 16th the preparations for the siege being completed, a pontoon bridge was thrown across Guadiana, about four miles (6.4kms) below the town and the 3rd and 4th divisions crossed the river, and invested Badajos [*sic*], without any opposition being offered by the enemy” (Jones 1814, 108).

Yet Jones’ journal reveals that he knew that the construction of two bridges had begun on 14th March:

“22 pontoons set out to form a bridge across the Guadiana & two large Spanish boats to form a flying bridge” (Jones 1812, 35).

This is another example where Jones recorded one version of an event in his journal but published something different in *Journals of the Sieges*. In subsequent editions he recorded that construction of a “fixed bridge” and a “flying bridge” had begun on 14th March (Jones 1827, 161; 1846, 148). Unfortunately, there is no mention of the location of either bridge in the revised text.

Oman states that on 14th March, the engineers constructed a pontoon bridge across the Guadiana 6.4kms west of Badajoz but made no mention of a flying bridge (Oman 1914, 228). Fortescue acknowledged the construction of two bridges but gave the date of construction as 15th March:

“Accordingly on the 15th a pontoon-bridge and a flying-bridge were after some delay thrown over the Guadiana, the former at a narrow point in the river about ten miles (16kms) below Badajoz, the latter about a mile and a half (2.4kms) above it” (Fortescue 1917, 382-383).

In a footnote Fortescue wrote:

“Napier mentions only the pontoon-bridge and says that it was four miles (6.4kms) from Badajoz; I prefer the evidence of Burgoyne” (*ibid* 1917, 383).

However, Fortescue had not read Napier’s account correctly, it reads:

“On the 15th pontoons were laid over the Guadiana four miles (6.4kms) from **Elvas**, at a place where the current was dull, and two large Spanish boats were arranged as flying bridges” (Napier 1851, 100).

This shows that Napier was aware of the construction of two bridges. However, he describes the location of the pontoon bridge in relation to its distance from Elvas not Badajoz. The Guadiana is 6.4kms south of Elvas and this point is about 16kms south-west of Badajoz (**Figure 15**). Thus, Fortescue and Napier were both referring to the same location.

Burgoyne provides the best description of the locations and constructions of the bridges:

“A bridge of small English pontoons is established across the Guadiana, about 10 miles (16kms) below Badajoz, in the narrowest part that could be found {about 120 yards} (109m), there not being sufficient pontoons to form a longer bridge; they are placed 4ft. 6in (1.4m) asunder, and reckoned equal to pass nine-pounders. About a mile and a half (2.4kms) higher up the river, a flying bridge is commenced, composed of three large boats, to pass the battering train” (Burgoyne 1812a, 1).

The confusion about the site of the pontoon bridge arose because both Fortescue and Oman misinterpreted Jones’ description of its location. At first glance it appears that Jones recorded the bridge as being 6.4kms (4 miles) from Badajoz. But careful reading of *Journals of the Sieges* reveals that he was describing its location from Elvas. Jones described the bridge as being “about four miles (6.4kms) below the town and the 3rd and 4th divisions crossed the river and invested Badajos [*sic*]” (Jones 1814, 108). The wording implies that “the town” and “Badajos” [*sic*] are different places. Thus, the bridge must have been built 6.4kms south of Elvas, at the location given by Burgoyne, Fortescue and Napier.

On 16th March, a covering force of 19,000 troops from the 1st, 6th and 7th Divisions commanded by Lt.-Gen. Thomas Graham crossed the Guadiana and marched south to push any French forces beyond the Sierra Morena. Thus, if Soult moved to relieve Badajoz, he would first have to fight his way through the mountain passes of the Morena (Fortescue 1917, 383; Oman 1914, 228-229). The same day, Beresford crossed the river with a force of 12,000 troops from the 3rd, 4th, Light Divisions and a squadron of Portuguese cavalry to invest Badajoz on the southern bank of the Guadiana (Oman 1914, 228). In the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones stated Badajoz was invested by the 3rd and 4th Divisions (Jones 1814, 108-109), it was only in the later editions that he acknowledged that the Light Division and the Portuguese cavalry were part of the investing force (Jones 1827, 161; 1846, 148). Later the same day, a second covering force of 14,000 troops under Hill’s command moved along the northern bank of the Guadiana to Mérida, the site of the only bridge across the upper Guadiana, where Hill took up a defensive position (Oman 1914, 229).

On 17th March, the engineers reconnoitred Badajoz's defences, which revealed that the French had strengthened their defences since the last siege (**Figure 16**). North of the Guadiana, the San Christóbal breach had been repaired, its *glacis* had been raised and the ditch deepened. In addition, a redoubt called the Lunette Verle had been built on the site of the breaching batteries. This was surrounded by a 4.4m deep ditch, which had been blasted through the solid rock (Lamare 1824, 4). An almost completed covered way ran between the *tête-de-pont* and San Christóbal (Fortescue 1917, 384; Jones 1814, 109; Oman 1914, 234). The town's defences south of the river had also been strengthened. The breach in the castle wall had been rebuilt in the shape of a tower (Fortescue 1917, 384-385). French engineers had blasted away parts of the castle mound facing the Rivillas to create an almost precipitous escarpment below the castle walls (Oman 1914, 234).

The Rivillas dam begun the previous April had created an impassable inundation along the eastern walls of Badajoz. This was about 180m wide, between 3m and 4m deep and extended upstream for about 900m to its confluence with the Calamón (Myatt 2008, 80). The inundation provided additional protection to the San Pedro, Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions, and throughout the siege it created problems for the allies. A *cunette*, 2m wide and 2m deep, had been dug across the ditch in front of the Trinidad bastion (Jones 1814, 109; Oman 1914, 234).

Fort Pardaleras was now connected to the main defences by a well-protected trench between two high earthen banks. The French had begun constructing three *ravelins* between the San Vincente and the Santiago bastions, only one of which had been completed while the others were just mounds of beaten earth. Another *cunette*, 2m wide and 2m deep, had been dug along the ditch between the San Vincente and the Santiago bastions (Jones 1814, 109).

It is implied in *Journals of the Sieges* that the decision to breach the Trinidad bastion was made after the engineers had reconnoitred Badajoz's defences on 17th March:

“... and the only feasible project that presented itself was to take advantage of a defect in the fortifications, and from a distance batter down the bastion of Trinidad, which from the counterguard in its front not having been finished was liable thereto, and to trust to the valor [*sic*] of the troops to overcome the intermediate difficulties, which in a properly conducted siege are always removed by art and labour” (Jones 1814, 110; 1827, 163; 1846, 152-153).

However, Jones' journal shows that the decision to attack the Trinidad bastion was made at Ciudad Rodrigo on 15th February, a month before Badajoz was invested:

“Lord Wellington this day held a meeting on the subject of the best attack of Badajos [*sic*]. There were present General Castano, Gen Girard the Spanish Brigadier General of Engineers and Lt. Colonel Fletcher. The Spanish and his Lordship were for making the same attack as the French. Lt Col F proposed attacking the bastion of the Trinidad from the ground in front of the Picurina Redoubt, but not being able to state his reasons, (*illegible*) ...the British Engineers not having establishment of either Sappers & Miners and being thought unequal to the task of contending with the mines of those fronts. No one of the Council would accede to his opinion, but Lord Wellington being reminded of our deficiencies agreed to this project saying ‘He regretted extremely our deficiencies as it obliged him to undertake an attack he did not approve but that knowing our success he believed it to be the only attack in our power to get this’.” (*ibid* 1812, 24-26).

Jones does not mention this meeting in any editions of *Journals of the Sieges*. He does however refer to the discussion in the ‘Notes’ of the later editions. In Note.15 he recorded Fletcher’s objections to attacking Badajoz’s southern defences:

“ The Duke of Wellington was very desirous of directing the attack against one of the south fronts; but Sir R. Fletcher, on calculating the details, found it would require at least 30 pieces of ordnance, including mortars, beyond the number that could be made available for the operation, five or six times the number of gabions, and twenty times the quantity of timber and other materials, for which carriage was likely to be procured; and further, an additional number of well-instructed miners as well as sappers” (Jones 1827, 429; 1846, 376-377).

Wellington’s relations with his engineers were not as harmonious as with other army units (Muir 2015, 432; Roberts 2002, 26). So, it is surprising that he agreed to follow Fletcher’s proposal, rather than to attack the southern side of Badajoz. Fletcher’s plan was based on the fact there was an incomplete counterguard in front of the right face of the Trinidad bastion, so its base could be seen from the Cerro de San Miguel. This meant that it was possible to breach the bastion from the Picuriña (Jones 1827, 163-164; 1846 153). It was proposed to capture the Picuriña and then build batteries at its rear to breach the Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions (**Figure 17**). It was assumed the French would re-entrench these breaches, so once the breaches were practicable a third breach would be made in the curtain between the two bastions (Jones 1814, 111; 1827, 164; 1846, 153).

However, the most incomprehensible decision made during the Ciudad Rodrigo meeting was choosing where to attack Badajoz before a detailed reconnaissance of its defences had been made. There are several reasons why this decision was ridiculous. First, Fletcher’s plan was based on his knowledge of the defences that existed in June 1811. Since then the French had spent eight months strengthening Badajoz’s defences. Second, even if the counterguard was still incomplete when the plan was finalised on 15th February the French still

had a month in which they could have completed it. Third, by arriving at Badajoz with a preconceived plan the engineers ignored all other options in favour of their pre-selected point of attack. Thus, they failed to notice one of the weakest points of Badajoz's defences the curtain between the San Pedro bastion and the San Antonio demi-bastion.

5.4. The third siege of Badajoz

At dusk on 17th March, a working party of 1,800 men, protected by a covering party of 2,000 troops, began work on the first parallel and its approaches. During the night, the troops worked on a 550m long parallel and a 1,220m long approach (Jones 1814, 113-114; 1827, 171; 1846, 158-159). In all three editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones stated:

“At day-light the approaches and parallel were generally 3 feet (0.9m) deep and 3 feet and 6 inches (1m) wide, and the relief was employed to improve them” (Jones 1814, 114; 1827, 173; 1846, 159).

However, Jones' journal shows that real progress had only been made on the 550m parallel, whilst large sections of the communication had not been opened (Jones 1812, 43).

On 18th March one working party improved the parallel, whilst another worked on the communication, which was completed by nightfall (*ibid* 1812, 45). That night 1,800 troops were employed on four separate tasks. Six hundred men perfected the communication, 400 troops completed the existing parallel, and another 400 men extended the parallel 411m to the right. Finally, 400 troops started the construction of two batteries. No.1 Battery, for three 18-pounders and three 5¹/₂-inch howitzers, to enfilade the communication between Badajoz and the Picuriña, as well as break the palisades at its rear. No.2 Battery, to hold four 24-pounders, for use against the Picuriña (Jones 1814, 114; 1827, 172, 1846, 160).

There are two facts in Jones' journal, which contradict the *Journals of the Sieges*. The first is another instance where Jones recorded one detail in the journal but later altered it in *Journals of the Sieges*. In the former, Jones wrote that the parallel was extended 550 yards (503m) to the right (Jones 1812, 46), yet in all three editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones stated that the parallel was lengthened by 450 yards (411m; Jones 1814, 114; 1827, 172; 1846, 160). The second point shows that Jones deliberately omitted evidence that demonstrated the deficiencies of the Royal Engineers. In his journal, Jones referred to No.1 Battery as 'Battery m', and his entry for the 18th reads:

“But Battery m was found to be so far sited down the slope of the hill that it could not see the spot and was therefore abandoned in the morning” (Jones 1812, 46).

At 1.00pm on 19th March, the trenches were attacked by a French sortie of 1,000 infantry, 40 cavalry and detachment of 100 sappers, who overran the parallel and the batteries. The allied troops were forced back about 900m up the Cerro de San Miguel, before they rallied and drove the French back into Badajoz. During the fighting, the French sappers filled in a short length of the trenches, before retreating with 545 British entrenching tools (Belmas 1837a, 323; Burgoyne 1812a, 7; Lamare 1824, 14-15).

In all three editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones stated there were 1,500 infantry in the sortie and the French carried off 200 entrenching tools (Jones 1814, 115; 1827, 173-174; 1846, 161-162). The French figure of 1,000 infantry in the sortie is probably correct, as it is taken from Lamare’s official account of the siege. Likewise, the figure of 545 entrenching tools must also be correct as Phillipon had promised his men a dollar for every British tool taken from the works and he would have known how much he paid for the captured tools (Lamare 1824, 14-15; Oman 1914, 238).

During the sortie, nearly 150 British officers and men were killed or wounded. Among the latter was Fletcher, who remained in nominal charge of the siege as Wellington consulted him and Jones every day (Jones 1814, 115; 1827, 173-174; 1846, 161-162). His subordinates, Squire and Burgoyne, took over effective control of the siege (Fortescue 1917, 386; Oman 1914, 238). In his journal, Jones gave the number of killed and wounded as 130 (Jones 1812, 49). So, once again Jones recorded one figure in his journal but quoted a different figure in *Journals of the Sieges*. Belmas put the French losses from the sortie as 20 killed and 160 wounded (Belmas 1837a, 324; Lamare 1824, 15).

Over the next five days it rained incessantly, which greatly hampered the progress of the siege. Despite the weather, the parallel was extended to the inundation. The parallel was also extended north towards the Guadiana. At one point the parallel crossed the Mérida road, which caused two problems. First, the road surface was too hard to dig through, so initially trenches were dug to the edges on either side of the road, which left an 18m gap in the parallel. Second, the ground north of the road was 1.5m lower than on the southern side, thus most of the rainwater flowing down the Mérida road ran off the road into the northern part of the parallel causing flooding (Jones 1814, 116; 1827, 176-177; 1846, 163-164). Once the garrison noticed the gap, they maintained a constant barrage of grapeshot and musketry at the workmen

trying to close it. By noon on 20th March, the gap was closed by building a parapet of 3,000 sandbags across the road (Jones 1812, 53).

In the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones recorded that during the night of 20th March, work commenced on three batteries north of the Picuriña. No.4 Battery for six 24-pounders was begun east of San Roque, for use against the right face of the Trinidad bastion. Construction began on No.5 Battery, for four 18-pounders, to enfilade the right flank of the San Pedro bastion. The third battery, No.6, was designed for five 24-pounder howitzers, which were to attack San Roque (Jones 1814, 117). In the later editions Jones stated that No.4 Battery was built to take six 24-pounders and a 5¹/₂ inch howitzer and No.6 Battery was constructed to house three 24-pounder howitzers (Jones 1827, 178; 1846, 165).

Jones' journal entry for 20th March recorded that work commenced on four batteries. He did not number them, but from the text it is obvious that the last three batteries mentioned were Nos.4, 5 and 6. It also possible to identify the first battery mentioned:

“.....for the work of the night. To mark out and commence at dusk the following Batteries.

A Battery for six pieces of Ordnance to enfilade the left face of the Picurina redoubt and the covered communication leading from the ravelin St Roque to that work” (Jones 1812, 54).

This new battery is the No.1 Battery in *Journals of the Sieges*. It has already been noted that No.1 Battery was abandoned on 19th March, as it was sited in the wrong place. So, on the night of the 20th work began on a new one to replace it. Jones deliberately omitted these two details in *Journals of the Sieges*, so it appears from the text that the No.1 Battery which opened fire on 25th March was the same battery that was begun on the night of the 18th, which is patently untrue (Jones 1827, 185; 1846, 172). Thus, Jones cleverly concealed an error made by the engineers.

Jones' journal for 21st March, shows that the engineers made a series of errors in marking out the locations of Nos.4, 5 and 6 Batteries. He noted:

“The enfilading Batteries on the flat, had not been correctly marked out. That intended for the prolongation of the flank being placed about 250 yards (228m) too much to the right & that intended for the prolongation of the right face of the Bastion Trinidad about 20 yards (18m) too much to the right & that for the right face of the ravelin of St Roque being altogether in a hollow & good for nothing” (Jones 1812, 56-57).

Although all three batteries were incorrectly located, the engineers decided the battery designed to attack the Trinidad bastion could be used against its San Pedro counterpart.

Thus, work continued on this battery. Also, two new batteries were to be constructed to replace the batteries that were sited incorrectly (*ibid* 1812, 56-57). In *Journals of the Sieges* the only indication that there was anything wrong with the siting of the batteries is a comment about No.6 Battery:

“The exact enfilade of the right face of the lunette St. Roque falling on a hollow, which would render the fire from battery No.6 uncertain, a direct battery (No.3) against the lunette, was picketed out” (Jones 1814, 119; 1827, 180; 1846; 167-168).

Thus, Jones played down the problem with No.6 Battery. In *Journals of the Sieges* he recorded that the fire from No.6 Battery would be “**uncertain**” whereas in his journal he called the battery “**good for nothing**”. On 21st March Jones recorded more of the engineers’ errors:

“At dusk this evening no steps whatever had been taken to mark the proper directions for the new enfilading Batteries. The battery for the right flank of the Bastion of St Pedro was therefore picketed out when it was too dark to be certain of the direction & the **Battery B on the right being exactly in the same state as in the morning without any marks having been taken on the site F, it was decided to go on with it in its original situation it being too dark to mark it out fresh altho’ there is little probability of it answering any good purpose.** But to make certain of keeping down the fire of the ravelin a direct Battery was picketed out for four 18 pdrs” (Jones 1812, 61-62).

The Battery B mentioned in Jones’ journal is called No.6 Battery in *Journals of the Sieges*. It has already been noted that the engineers were aware that this battery would be ineffectual from the outset and had decided to construct a new battery to replace it. Jones’ journal reveals that the engineers had not bothered to mark out the site of this new battery. Thus, from 21st to 25th March working parties continued constructing the original battery in extremely wet conditions despite the fact it was “**good for nothing**” (*ibid* 1812, 56).

During the same period, another working party constructed No.3 Battery, which was to hold four 18-pounders for use against San Roque (Jones 1814, 119; 1827, 180; 1846, 168). Details in Burgoyne’s journal confirm that the engineers knew that No.6 Battery would be ineffective:

“This night a new battery is commenced for 3 guns direct against the right face of the ravelin of St Roque, as the enfilading battery cannot be made to see it from the rise & fall of the ground” (Burgoyne 1812a, 10).

As No.3 Battery was intended to perform the same function as No.6 Battery, why did the engineers persist in completing No.6 Battery when they knew it was going to be

ineffective? Jones' journal for the 22nd also reveals that the new battery picketed out in the dark on the 21st was also in the wrong place. On this occasion the battery was "found to be 50 feet (15m) too much to the right" (Jones 1812, 63). Unfortunately, there is no evidence in either Jones' journal or *Journals of the Sieges* to indicate if this was abandoned and a new battery constructed in its place.

On 21st March, the garrison became worried when they saw that the allies were constructing three batteries against that section of the *enceinte* between the San Pedro bastion and the San Antonio demi-bastion. Lamare believed that this was one of the weakest points of Badajoz's defences, as he wrote:

"The construction of batteries opposite to the front 8 (San Pedro) and 9 (San Antonio) appeared to show that they had observed the faults of the Fortress. This is in fact one of its weakest points, having but a bad scarp of masonry, the foot of which may be seen from the country at a distance of 800 yards (731m), and but having but a simple curtain, without a parapet, ditch or counterscarp, behind which it was impossible to construct an intrenchment [*sic*]. The choice of this front as the point of attack occasioned us much uneasiness; but the enemy did not see the advantages which he might have derived from it: he directed all his efforts, as will be seen, against one of the points which ought to have presented the greatest resistance to him, and which would beyond a doubt would have stopped him much longer, had the Garrison been stronger, and the Magazine been provided with 1,000 shells and 50,000 lbs (22,680kgs) of powder, more than we actually had" (Lamare 1824, 16).

From the start of the siege the allies had only occupied the southern bank of the Guadiana. On 20th March, French officers were observed examining the parallel from the other side of the river. This led the engineers to believe the French might enfilade the parallel from across the river. To prevent this a new parallel was constructed, which ran off the existing parallel in a north-easterly direction (Jones 1814, 118; 1827, 179; 1846, 165). The next day the garrison enfiladed the parallel with two field guns from the north bank of the Guadiana. Fortunately, the alteration made to the parallel prevented serious casualties. In response riflemen were posted along the southern bank of the river to snipe at the French guns, which were quickly removed because of mounting casualties amongst the gunners (Jones 1814, 118; 1827, 179; 1846, 167).

At daylight on 22nd March, the garrison opened fire on the parallel from a battery of three field guns they had constructed overnight on the northern bank of the Guadiana. In response Wellington ordered Lt.-Gen. James Leith to occupy that side of the river (Jones 1814, 119; 1827, 181; 1846, 168). At 4.00pm the same day torrential rain set in, which flooded the

trenches. The level of the Guadiana rose which swept away the pontoon bridge. Although the flying bridge remained intact, the current was so strong it could only be operated with great difficulty. The loss of the pontoon bridge caused serious concern, as only a limited amount of food and ammunition could be brought from Elvas via the flying bridge (Jones 1814, 119-120; 1827, 181-182; 1846, 168-169). Wellington briefly considered raising the siege due to the gravity of the situation (Jones 1812, 65). Fortunately, the weather improved the next day, the river subsided and the pontoon bridge was restored (Fletcher 2008, 46).

Over the next two days constant showers turned the ground into a waterlogged mass of mud, which made it difficult to form batteries and trenches. The soil had the consistency of liquid slurry, which caused the sides of trenches to collapse. The swampy nature of the ground prevented artillery pieces from being moved into position. In the parallel north of the Mérida road the bottom of the trench was covered with layers of *fascines* and sandbags to raise its floor above the standing floodwater. To add to the difficulties the troops working in this section of the works were subjected to plunging fire from the cannons on the castle walls (Jones 1814, 120-121; 1827, 182-184; 1846, 169-171).

On 24th March, Leith occupied the northern bank of the Guadiana, which ended the harassing fire from the French battery. Leith's arrival coincided with a change in the weather, which enabled the working parties to complete the batteries before dark. By the morning of the 25th all the batteries were ready to open fire (Jones 1814 121; 1827, 184; 1846, 171). In all three editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones stated that all six batteries opened fire at 11.00am. In his journal however, he recorded that the batteries opened at two different times:

“The Artillery having orders to open the Batteries whenever they had up a sufficiently supply of ammunition to ensure a continuation of their fire. At 10 a.m. the two Batteries against the Picurina opened & at 11 a.m. all the other Batteries opened” (Jones 1812, 75-76).

Once again, we have one version of an event in Jones' journal yet altered in *Journals of the Sieges*.

Throughout the day, the British batteries silenced the guns in the Picuriña and San Roque (Jones 1814, 121; 1827, 186; 1846, 172-173). Although the guns in the Picuriña had been silenced, its defences were intact but for a break in the ramparts near the salient angle, which the garrison had repaired using woolpacks and *fascines* (Belmas 1837a, 329; Lamare 1824, 17). To make up for the time lost due to the weather Wellington decided to storm the

lunette that night. The planning of the assault was helped by intelligence received from a deserter who provided details of the Picuriña's defences (Lamare 1824, 17).

The Picuriña had salient faces 61m in length and flanks 21m long.¹⁸ Four splinter-proof casemates were constructed in the ditch to guard the faces of the *lunette*, but there were no defences along its flanks. The counterscarp of the ditch was 3m high. It was 9m from the bottom of the ditch to the top of the parapet, but only the lower 4m of the wall was perpendicular. At the top of the perpendicular section a *fraise* had been installed along the outside walls. Above the *fraise*, the walls sloped inwards. The rear of the Picuriña was protected by three rows of palisades, which were intact despite the allied bombardment (Jones 1827, 186-187; 1846, 173). Three *fougasses*, improvised mines, had been placed under the angles of the *glacis*. Loaded shells and barrels of combustibles, were positioned on the ramparts ready to be thrown at any attackers. Finally, 200 loaded muskets were placed along the parapet, thus every member of the garrison had an extra musket primed and ready for his use (Lamare 1824, 14).

Five hundred troops from the 3rd and Light Divisions, commanded by Maj.-Gen. Kempt, were tasked with capturing the Picuriña. Kempt divided his forces into two attacking columns of 200 men and a reserve of 100 troops. Maj. John Rudd of the 77th Foot commanded the left-hand column, which was to move around the southern flank of the Picuriña and attack its *gorge*. Meanwhile, the right-hand column, under Maj. Matthew Shawe of the 74th Foot, was to skirt the northern flank and attack the *gorge* with 100 men. The rest of this column was to take up position close to the communication between Badajoz and the Picuriña to prevent reinforcements reaching the *lunette* (Jones 1814, 122; 1827, 188; 1846, 174).

Each of the attacking columns was preceded by six carpenters with cutting tools, six miners with crowbars and 12 sappers carrying ladders. The left-hand column was led by Lt. Frank Stanway RE, while Lt. George Gipps RE guided the right-hand column. The reserve, commanded by Capt. Henry Powys of the 83rd Foot, was stationed inside No.2 Battery (Jones 1814, 122; 1827, 188; 1846, 174).

At 10.00pm, two guns in No.2 Battery signalled the start of the assault (Jones 1812, 79). Rudd's column reached the rear of the Picuriña undetected, but once they began to attack the palisades they were subjected to a deadly hail of fire from the defenders. After suffering heavy losses, the column retired to regroup. Shawe's party was also unable to break through the palisades, so they tried to escalate the left flank of the *lunette* (Jones 1814, 123; 1827, 188-

¹⁸ There is conflicting evidence about the dimensions of the Picuriña. This will be examined in Chapter 7.5.

189; 1846, 174-175). Unfortunately, the ladders were too short to reach the top of the parapet. As the men milled around in the ditch trying to find a way into the Picuriña they sustained heavy casualties from enemy musketry. Shawe was wounded during this phase of the attack, so command passed to Capt. James Oates of the 88th Foot (Fortescue 1917, 389; Fletcher 2008, 50; Oman 1914, 240).

Oates realised that the ladders were long enough to span the ditch, so the troops used three ladders to form a bridge across the ditch. Once this makeshift bridge was in place, Oates led 50 troops across the ladders, through one of the embrasures and into the Picuriña. Once Oates' men had entered the Picuriña, Kempt ordered Powys to attack the salient angle of the *lunette*. Powys and his men fought their way into the Picuriña via the damaged rampart. In the bitter hand-to-hand fighting that followed the British troops overpowered the garrison. Three-quarters of an hour after the start of the assault the Picuriña was in allied hands (Fortescue 1917, 389; Fletcher 2008, 51; Oman 1914, 240).

Col. Gaspard-Thierry, commander of the Picuriña, and 80 of his men were taken prisoner (Belmas 1837a, 331; Jones 1827, 190; 1846, 176). One officer and 30 men from the 200-strong garrison reached the safety of the town. The rest were either killed in the hand-to-hand fighting or drowned in the inundation as they tried to escape (Belmas 1837a, 331; Lamare 1824, 18). Although the Picuriña was now in British hands, it had been achieved at a high cost as 64% of the attackers were casualties. Four officers and 50 other ranks were killed, while a further 15 officers and 250 men had been wounded out of a total force of 500 men (Fortescue 1917, 390; Jones 1814, 124; 1827, 190; 1846, 176; Oman 1914; 240).

The French artillery bombarded the Picuriña throughout the night to prevent a lodgement being made inside it (Lamare 1824, 19). Despite this bombardment working parties began work on three different tasks. One party constructed a lodgement across the *terreplein*, whilst another built a communication to the lodgement. This ran from the first parallel into the ditch, where it was carried into the Picuriña by a ramp on the exterior slope of the *lunette*. A third working party opened a second parallel, from the Picuriña to the inundation (Jones 1814, 124; 1827, 191; 1846, 177).

Throughout 26th March, the French guns maintained such a heavy bombardment on the Picuriña, that they destroyed the lodgement. Despite this setback, by the evening another lodgement had been constructed around the exterior of the *lunette* (Jones 1814, 125; 1827, 192; 1846, 177). During the day, the French artillery had used 5,440kgs of gunpowder. Since the

start of the siege the garrison had expended 31,750kgs of gunpowder, over half of their original supply. Thus, the artillery were ordered to slacken their rate of fire (Lamare 1824, 19).

At nightfall, working parties were assigned three separate tasks. One group began constructing No.7 Battery, for twelve 24-pounders, at the end of the second parallel near the inundation, which was to be used to breach the right face of the Trinidad bastion. Another unit started building No.9 Battery, for eight 18-pounders to the east of the Picuriña, with which to breach the left flank of the Santa Maria bastion. The remaining troops erected No.10 Battery (Jones 1814, 125; 1827, 193; 1846, 178). In his journal and the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones stated this battery was to house four 24-pounder iron howitzers to enfilade the area in front of the Trinidad bastion to prevent the garrison from working in the ditch (Jones 1812, 90; 1814, 125). In yet another example of Jones changing the details in his journal to something else in *Journals of the Sieges* in subsequent editions Jones recorded that the battery was for three 24-pounder iron howitzers (Jones 1827, 193; 1846).

Lamare thought that the plunging fire from the castle guns had caused so much damage to the British batteries, it had forced them to abandon their attempt to breach the curtain between the San Pedro bastion and the San Antonio demi-bastion (Lamare 1824, 19). When the allies began constructing Nos.7, 9 and 10 Batteries, Lamare expressed surprise at the British decision to attack the Santa Maria and the Trinidad bastions as he thought they were the strongest part of Badajoz's fortifications (Lamare 1824, 20). Once construction began on Nos.7, 9 and 10 Batteries the garrison began to strengthen the defences in front of the Santa Maria and Trinidad bastions by raising the height of the uncompleted *ravelin* and the unfinished counterguard in front of the Trinidad bastion. Once completed, the counterguard was lined with French troops who maintained a constant musketry on the allied working parties (Jones 1827, 194; 1846, 179).

On the night of 27th March, a working party began constructing a second parallel north from the Picuriña. The parallel was dug to the edge of the Mérida road without much difficulty, but the troops could not carry the trench across the road. This was due to its surface being such a light colour that when the troops tried to work on it, they were illuminated by the bright moonlight, which made them easy targets for French snipers (Jones 1814, 126; 1827, 195; 1846, 179).

The engineers had marked out the proposed layout of the parallel north of the road with white cord. When the French noticed this, they decided to change its direction so that the

British would dig their new parallel in an alignment with batteries inside the castle. At nightfall on the 28th a French miner, Corporal Stoll, crept out of San Roque removed one of the stakes holding the tape in position and replaced it further to the right, before returning to San Roque undetected (Belmas 1837a, 336; Myatt 2008, 90). Fortunately, Capt. Charles Ellicombe RE noticed the change in direction, which he rectified (Myatt 2008, 90).

On 28th March, plunging fire from the castle caused numerous casualties among the gunners in No.6 Battery and dismounted two of the 24-pounder iron howitzers. So, it was decided to dismantle the battery and transfer its guns to other batteries (Jones 1814, 127; 1827, 196; 1846, 181). The engineers also decided to construct an additional battery west of the Picuriña to help breach the Santa Maria bastion. Thus, after dark on the 28th work began on No.8 Battery, for six 18-pounders (Jones 1827, 197; 1846, 182). In the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones recorded that No.8 Battery was for use against the face of 'La Trinidad' (Jones 1814, 127). However, he rectified this mistake in the later editions (Jones 1827, 197; 1846, 182). The same night, allied troops carried the second parallel across the Mérida road by means of a flying sap, constructed out of *gabions*, before extending the second parallel another 18m north. Meanwhile another working party constructed a dugout in front of the breaching batteries, to house riflemen who were to snipe at the French troops firing at the working parties (Jones 1814, 127; 1827, 197, 1846, 182).

On 29th March, Wellington ordered the construction of No.11 Battery, for six 18-pounders, which was to be used to capture San Roque so that the allies could demolish the Rivillas dam. This would provide two major benefits. Without the inundation breaching batteries could be constructed closer to the walls. Second, when the troops stormed the breaches, they could make a direct assault from the Cerro de San Miguel, without having to negotiate their way around the inundation (Jones 1814, 126; 1827, 195; 1846, 179). At nightfall, work began on No.11 Battery, which was built on the *glacis* of the communication between the Picuriña and San Roque. Under the cover of darkness another working party dug a trench across the Mérida Road, thus joining the two sections of the second parallel. During the night, the artillery armed No.9 and No.10 Batteries (Jones 1827, 198-199; 1846, 183).

At daybreak on 30th March, No.9 Battery opened fire at the Santa Maria bastion. Shortly afterwards a French shell hit its magazine, which contained over 300 18-pounder cartridges. The resulting explosion killed four gunners and wounded several more. The guns continued firing by using shells taken from No.3 Battery until a fresh supply arrived from the artillery depot (Jones 1827, 199; 1846, 183-184). This was the only occasion during all the

sieges of the Peninsular War that a magazine in a battery was destroyed by enemy fire. Magazines were made of sloping beams laid at angle of 45° and covered with tarpaulins. The tarpaulins were then covered with several rows of *fascines* and sandbags. Unfortunately, this magazine was constructed on solid rock, which sloped towards its entrance. One shell landed near the magazine, instead of sinking into the ground, it rolled down the slope into the magazine where it exploded (Lamare 1824, 42-43). Jones makes no mention of this explosion in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* as it would have reflected badly on the Royal Engineers. Although the incident is recorded in the later editions there is no mention of magazine's design flaw (Jones 1827, 199; 1846, 183-184).

On the night of 30th March, the artillery armed No.7 and No.8 Batteries. The same night, the guns in No.10 kept up a steady bombardment at the ditch in front of the Santa Maria and Trinidad bastions, to stop the French from strengthening their defences. Despite this barrage, by dawn the counterguard had been raised by 1.3m, so that it was now 4m high and covered the lower third of the bastion (Jones 1814, 129; 1827, 201-202; 1846, 185-186). Once the exact point of the allied attack became evident the French engineers created new defences. First, retrenchments were constructed behind the threatened bastions. Then a second line of defence was established behind the retrenchments, by making loopholes in the houses and garden walls at the rear of the bastions and digging trenches across the adjoining streets (Lamare 1824, 22).

On 31st March, the breaching batteries opened fire, No.8 and No.9 Batteries at the Santa Maria bastion, and No.7 Battery against the Trinidad bastion. In the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones stated that both No.7 and No.8 Batteries opened fire against the Trinidad bastion, which is obviously incorrect (Jones 1814, 129). Jones corrected this error in the later editions (Jones 1827, 201; 1846, 185).

By 1st April, the parapets of both bastions had been destroyed, so the French repaired them with sandbags, woolpacks and bales of cotton. Due to dwindling supplies of gunpowder, Phillipon ordered the artillery to ration their powder to 2,948kgs a day. Lamare estimated that with rationing there was only enough gunpowder left to defend Badajoz until 9th April (Lamare 1824, 24).

On the night of 2nd April, No.11 Battery was armed with six 18-pounders. The same night an attempt was made to blow up the dam. Since 27th March, the allies had been unable to capture San Roque. It was therefore decided to destroy the dam without capturing the *lunette*.

Jones and Belmas agree on the key details but provide differing accounts as to why the attempt failed. The most detailed version of the incident is covered in Jones's journal:

“His Lordship determined to try by a bold enterprise to apply a petard to the masonry & blow it in. With that intent five barrels of powder were emptied into two cases, twenty sandbags filled with earth to place on top of them as soon as the cases shall be placed against the wall” (Jones 1812, 113).

The task of destroying the dam was entrusted to Stanway. Jones recorded what followed:

“As soon as it was thoroughly dark Lt. Stanway Rl Engineers marched out of the right of the parallel with four men carrying each of the boxes of powder and twenty men carrying the sandbags. He was followed by an escort of thirty men. Lt. Stanway marched directly forward to the bed of the River Rivillas under the Castle; He then turned to his left and having marched about 100 yards, according to orders he halted his covering party & preceded on with the powder. He was challenged twice by the Sentries on the bridge, and once fired upon but remaining quiet a minute or two under cover of the noise of the water running over the sluice, he reached the proper spot and deposited the boxes of powder against the wall **but did not think it of any consequence to put the sand bags over them.** He then applied the lighted slow match and retired. The explosion not taking place as he expected, he returned to the boxes and found that the water had extinguished the slow match. He then applied another piece to the saucisson, and in due time the powder exploded. On the explosion more then [*sic*] fifty men opened their fire on the spot” (*ibid* 1812, 114-116).

Although the charges exploded, they did not destroy the dam. This was due to Stanway's failure to cover them with the sandbags. Jones gives no indication as to the weight of the sandbags. However, Belmas stated that they each weighed 41kgs (Belmas 1837a, 342). If Belmas' figure is accurate then the combined weight of the sandbags amounted to 820kgs and such a weight correctly positioned around the charges would have directed the resulting explosion against the base of the dam. Instead, the lack of sandbags meant that the explosion was blown away from the dam.

Belmas stated the demolition party had placed four barrels of gunpowder at the base of the dam and were about to cover them with sandbags when a sentry raised the alarm. Once the alarm was sounded Stanway had just enough time to light the fuse and retire (*ibid* 1837a, 342). At first sight, this seems plausible. But this overlooks Jones' journal entry, of Stanway lighting the fuse and when there was no explosion, returning, replacing the fuse and relighting it undetected. This suggests that Stanway would have had enough time to place the charges and sandbags in position before he lit the fuse the first time.

In the three editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones made no reference to Stanway's failure to cover the charges in the body of the text. However, he offered the following explanation in the 'Notes':

"Lieutenant Stanway, however, put the cases as near to the batardeau as the overflowing of the water and the slope of the supporting earth would admit, but did not bring the men forward with bags to cover the cases, from the certainty of discovery which would have rendered the attempt abortive, as the enemy's sentries had already twice challenged, and once fired upon the men with powder" (Jones 1814, 302-303; 1827, 439; 1846, 382).

This explanation was an attempt by Jones to conceal Stanway's error. The troops had obviously been able to place two large cases of gunpowder at the base of the dam unnoticed. So, it is feasible that they could have also placed the sandbags around the cases undetected. But Stanway made no attempt to even bring them up to the dam.

Throughout 3rd April, 40 British guns pounded the Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions. The French could not provide any counter-battery fire, because they were rationing their gunpowder. By nightfall breaches were visible in both bastions. The enfilading fire from No.10 Battery prevented the French from removing the debris in front of the breaches (Belmas 1837a, 343). British observers noticed that the French were constructing a large battery below the castle, which directly overlooked the breaches (Jones 1814, 131; 1827, 206; 1846, 189). This new battery posed a serious threat to the troops who would assault the breaches, so to negate this threat it was decided to construct another battery, No.12 Battery, at the northern end of the first parallel. It was designed to take fourteen 24-pounder iron howitzers, which would be used to fire spherical case and grapeshot at the French battery during the assault (Jones 1814, 131-132; 1827, 206; 1846, 190).

By noon on 5th April the breaches were practicable. In the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones recorded:

"Lord Wellington at noon reconnoitred the breaches from the most advanced parts of the approaches, and decided that they were in a state to be assaulted, and which the near approach of Soult made him desirous should have [the] place this evening, the covering army being about to fall back on Talavera: but in the afternoon it was arranged to defer the assault till the following day, and in the intermediate time to endeavour to make a breach in the curtain" (Jones 1814, 133).

In the later editions Jones explained that the decision to delay the assault by 24 hours was due to Fletcher's intervention, who had entered the trenches for the first time since he was wounded:

“At two P.M. the commanding engineer was desired to obtain the best view he possibly could of the obstacles created by the garrison behind the breaches; and after a most attentive examination from various points, having reported that the principal breach appeared to be prepared for an obstinate and protracted resistance, it was determined to carry the original plan into effect, and turn all the guns of the batteries on the old wall of the curtain between the two breaches, so as in one day’s firing to obtain an opening into the place which should turn the retrenchment of the bastions, and which opening being assaulted as soon as made could have no interior defence.

At four P.M. the orders for the assault this evening were countermanded, an directions given for a continued fire of grapeshot to be kept on the breaches throughout the night” (Jones 1827, 210; 1846, 193).

In his journal for 5th April Jones wrote:

“By noon this day the two breaches were reported practicable & it was intended to give the assault in the evening and every preparation was completed for that purpose.

About 4 p.m. Lord Wellington & Marshall Sir Wm Beresford made a short reconnaissance of the breaches, & having convinced themselves that the Enemy had well re-trenched them. His Lordship determined to carry his first instruction into effect & try by turning all the guns on the curtain between the two breaches, to effect a breach in it in one day and as the time would not admit of its being retrenched, an opening would be ensured to turn the re-trenchments of the other two breaches” (Jones 1812, 122-123).

Thus, Wellington had decided at noon to assault Badajoz that night, but about 4.00pm the same day he cancelled the attack. Although there is no reference in Jones’ journal to Fletcher’s examination of the breaches, this is undoubtedly what happened. After his inspection, Fletcher must have reported to Wellington on the strength of the defences, which led to Wellington and Beresford examining them. This provides clear evidence that Wellington was still willing to follow Fletcher’s advice, despite his antipathy towards the Royal Engineers. Although Wellington might have had an aversion to the Royal Engineers and the Royal Artillery, he knew that these were the only troops with the necessary training and skills to conduct siege warfare. Therefore, he relied on the expert advice they gave him.

Jones’ omission of the part Fletcher played in Wellington’s decision to delay the attack by 24 hours in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* was another attempt to present the Royal Engineers in a good light. When Jones wrote his original draft the horrendous human cost of the army’s assault on the breaches was still fresh in the public memory (Gurwood 1838c, 45, Oman 1914, 255-256). Thus, if Jones had revealed that Fletcher was responsible for the delay, which had given the French extra time to prepare their defences, it would have reflected badly on the Royal Engineers. By 1827 the pain caused by the huge losses was not so raw and Fletcher had been dead 14 years. He been killed at San Sebastián on 13th August 1813. Thus,

Jones knew he could safely recount why the assault was delayed by 24-hours in the 1827 edition of *Journals of the Sieges*.

On the night of 5th April No.12 Battery was armed with fourteen 24-pounder iron howitzers. Working parties altered the embrasures in the breaching batteries so as many guns as possible could bear on the curtain between the breaches (Jones 1827, 210-211; 1846, 193-194). At daylight on 6th April eight 24-pounders and six 18-pounders opened fire on the curtain and within two hours there was significant damage to the wall. Although Badajoz's defences had been improved in the 1750s by the construction of well-built bastions, they were still linked by the original poorly constructed town wall (Jones 1812, 126). By 4.00pm a practicable breach had been formed. Shortly afterwards, Wellington examined the breaches and decided to assault the town that night (Jones 1814, 133-134; 1827, 211; 1846, 195).

5.5. The British assault on Badajoz

On 6th April, Wellington issued an order for the attack (**Figure 18**). It contained 27 separate points detailing the actions to be taken by each unit involved in the assault (Gurwood 1838c, 32-36). Despite the attention to detail there were several differences between Wellington's original order and the final attack. Crucially two of the points omitted from the order would have a significant impact on the upcoming assault, but for hugely different reasons.

Although the order was issued on the 6th it is obvious from the text that it was written sometime before 4.00pm on 5th April. Although the order refers to breaches in the Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions there is no mention of the breach in the curtain. This, and other points noted below, reveal that the order must have been written prior to the cancellation of the attack on 5th April. Wellington's decision not to update his order on 6th April was one of the factors which led to the heavy casualties at the breaches.

Wellington's original plan only envisaged four attacks on the castle, the two breaches and San Roque, with a demonstration against Fort Pardaleras (*ibid* 1838c, 32-36). The plan was expanded to include an attack against the San Vincente bastion. Likewise, the number of demonstrations rose from one to three, two of which were to take place on the northern bank of the Guadiana. These actions were all supposed to begin at 7.30pm but delays in assembling the troops meant that the start time was put back to 10.00pm (*ibid* 1838c, 32).

Lt.-Gen. Thomas Picton was convinced he could capture the castle by escalade, so he persuaded Wellington to include it in his plan of attack (Knowles *et al* 2011, 168). Picton's

3rd Division was to cross the Rivillas by an old mill-dam, climb up the *glacis* to the castle and escalade its walls (**Figure 19**). Once the castle was captured the division was to make its way along the ramparts to the Trinidad bastion (Gurwood 1838c, 32-33).

Moving clockwise around Badajoz the next point of attack was San Roque. The capture of the *lunette* was assigned to 400 men of the 4th Division. One party of 200 men were to advance to the covered way near to its salient angle and maintain a heavy fire on the faces of the *lunette*. Meanwhile another 200 troops were to move to the right of San Roque and attack the *gorge* of the *lunette* (*ibid* 1838c, 35).

The next point of attack was area of the Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions. Although there were three breaches in this section of the *enceinte* Wellington's order only contained instructions about the breaches in the bastions. The 4th Division were to capture the Trinidad breach, whilst the Light Division had the responsibility of seizing the Santa Maria breach (**Figure 20**). Both divisions were to attack from the Cerro del Viento with the Light Division to the left of the 4th Division. Each division was to be led by an advance party of 500 troops, equipped with 12 ladders. The storming party would be accompanied by men carrying sacks of hay, wool and other light materials, which were to be thrown into the ditch so the troops could jump down onto them (*ibid* 1838c, 33). Once in the ditch, the Light Division were to turn left and attack the Santa Maria breach. After its capture, they were to move along the ramparts towards the San Vincente bastion. Their next task was to open the Pilar gate. Meanwhile, the 4th Division was to move to the right and assault the Trinidad breach. Once that had been captured the 4th Division were to move towards the castle, whilst some troops opened the Trinidad gate (*ibid* 1838c, 34-35).

Points 16 and 18 instructed the 4th and the Light Divisions to move along the ramparts to link up with each other. This was physically impossible, since Wellington had written the order, a third breach had been created in the curtain between the two bastions. Thus, the 4th Division could not link up with the Light Division or vice versa. However, the major flaw in Wellington's order was that after the creation of the third breach, he failed to allocate the task of assaulting it to any unit from the 4th or Light Divisions. This is the more surprising given the fact that Wellington micro-managed every detail of an operation (*ibid* 1838c, 32-36).

Wellington's original plan did not include an attack on the San Vincente bastion. However, that changed with intelligence provided by a deserter, a Sgt.-Major of Engineers. He offered to point out the weakest points of the town's defences in exchange for an English

commission. Wellington was totally against the idea, but authorised Jones to offer him a bribe of £200 to £300. The Sgt.-Major accepted the cash but refused to accompany the escalating party, so he was sent to England with other prisoners. The intelligence however, proved to be reliable so an attack on San Vincente was included in the plan (Jones 1842, 55-56).

The attack on the San Vincente bastion, which was undertaken by the 5th Division, is not included in Wellington's order. However, one of the additional notes to the order made by Wellington after the event refers to the attack:

“A plan has been settled with Lieut. General Leith for an attempt to be made to escalate the bastion of San Vincente, or the curtain between that bastion and the bridge, if circumstances should permit” (Gurwood 1838c, 36).

In the original plan, all the attacks and the demonstration were restricted to the southern bank of the Guadiana. Yet, when Badajoz was attacked there were two false attacks north of the river, against the *tête-de-pont* and San Christóbal. The only documentary evidence of these false attacks is in the same note about the San Vincente bastion mentioned above (*ibid* 1838c, 36).

By the evening of 6th April, the plan to capture Badajoz was finalised, with all the attacks and demonstrations scheduled to begin at 10.00pm. Despite the timings given in the order, a mistake by the 60th Foot meant that the castle assault began at 9.30pm. Burgoyne, who conducted the 3rd Division to their point of attack described, the incident in his journal:

“At 9 ½ pm the advance of the 3rd Division, under Lieut.-Colonel Williams, 60th Regiment, was quietly introduced across the mill-dam under the castle, which is about 300 yards below the ravelin of St. Roque, and lie down under the banks on the opposite side; the ladders were being brought over, to be formed six or eight abreast, ready to be taken up the hill, when a French sentinel in the covert-way [*sic*] fired, as was common at nights. The advance not being aware they were so near the enemy, and thinking themselves discovered, commenced firing, and the garrison immediately took alarm. The attack on the castle was therefore commenced directly” (Wrottesley 1873, 175).

French sources state that the initial assault was made against the curtain between the San Pedro and the San Antonio bastions, and not against the castle (Belmas 1837a, 350; Lamare 1824, 29). In a letter home George Hennell, a volunteer attached to the 94th Foot, provided a description of the site of the first attack:

“When we got up this rock we came to some palisades within about 20 yards (18m) of the walls. The palisades were broken down. Behind them was a ditch 3ft (0.9m) deep. Just

behind that a flat piece about 6 yards (5.5m) broad. Then a hill 8ft (2.4m) higher than the ditch & then walls 26ft (7.9m) high with six or seven ladders against it” (Glover 1979, 14).

The palisades were broken down by troops under Capt. James MacCarthy, an Assistant Engineer attached to the 3rd Division. Picton was shot in the leg whilst crossing the Rivillas, so command passed to Kempt. Despite, the destructive fire from the parapets the allied troops raised five ladders against the walls. Although MacCarthy was an eyewitness, it is not clear from his narrative where the ladders were placed against the walls (Knowles *et al* 2011, 172-173). Thanks to Hennell’s description it is possible to determine where the initial attack was made. My survey of Badajoz revealed that the only point on the eastern side of the town which corresponds with Hennell’s description of a level area 6m wide, which starts 18m from the walls is between the San Pedro and San Antonio bastions. North of San Antonio there are no level areas of the necessary width within 18m of the walls. Thus, the French accounts about the location of the first attack must be correct.

The attackers were subjected to a hail of missiles and musketry from the parapets, as well as volleys of grapeshot from guns on the adjoining bastions. Kempt’s men could not scale the walls and eventually retreated after their ladders were broken (Fortescue 1917, 398). As Kempt’s brigade re-grouped they were joined by the rest of the 3rd Division, including Picton who had hobbled up the hill (Oman 1914, 251-252).

The second assault was made by about 4,000 men, along a 185m section of the wall north of San Antonio. Again, the attackers were subjected to a torrent of missiles and musketry as they tried to scale the walls. Unlike the first assault troops scrambled onto the ramparts. The first two men to enter the castle were killed. However, the third person onto the ramparts, Ridge of the 5th Foot, maintained a precarious foothold until he was joined by approximately 20 men. He then led a charge which scattered the defenders. Soon hundreds of troops began streaming over the walls into the castle (*ibid* 1914, 251-252). Once the allies entered the castle, they cleared the grounds of hostile troops. Many defenders took refuge in the keep which they defended floor by floor until eventually they were all killed. Phillipon had intended to use the castle as a refuge for the garrison if the town was captured, so all the gates had been bricked up except for a small postern gate, through which a few of the defenders managed to escape (*ibid* 1914, 252).

Sometime before 11.00pm, Phillipon received a report that British troops were inside the castle. So, he ordered four companies of the 88th Regiment to retake the building. He also instructed two companies of the 9th Light Infantry, who were stationed on the San Vincente

bastion, to assist them. Unfortunately, a mistake was made delivering the order, as the 9th Light Infantry moved to the breaches (Lamare 1824, 31-32). When the French troops reached the postern gate, one of them demanded entrance in English. The trick did not fool the British troops, who opened the gate and dispersed them with a volley of musketry. Picton knew that he could not advance along the ramparts to the Trinidad bastion as ordered. So, he decided to secure the castle and await daylight. By midnight, the castle was firmly in allied hands. Picton then despatched a messenger to inform Wellington of his success (Fortescue 1917, 401; Oman 1914, 252-253).

Further south, the attack against San Roque had also started early. About 9.40pm the troops on the covered way opened a heavy musketry at the *lunette*. The garrison were so occupied dealing with this attack that the storming party of 200 men, commanded by Maj. James Wilson of the 48th Foot, reached the rear of the work and scaled the walls almost unopposed. In the ensuing fight the British troops gained control of San Roque. Once the *lunette* was secured the troops set about destroying the dam (Fortescue 1917, 396).

Because the time of the assault was changed from 7.30pm to 10.00pm the garrison had two and a half hours to bolster their defences at the breaches. The British artillery ceased firing at sunset, so the French troops worked unhindered. Sixty 14-inch shells were buried 3.5m apart in a circular formation at the bottom of the ditch near the counterscarp. The shells, which were only 10cms below the surface, were connected to the ramparts by *saucissons* (Lamare 1824, 30). Next, the garrison scattered obstacles across the ditch, including several damaged boats, barrels of combustibles, overturned carts, tar-covered rope entanglements and piles of broken *gabions* and *fascines*. The slopes of the breaches were covered with obstacles. Finally, *chevaux-de-frise* were fixed across the tops of the breaches (Oman 1914, 246).

On 6th April, Phillipon had just over 4,000 fit men. Nevertheless, he detailed over a quarter of his troops to defend the breaches, 700 picked men were placed behind the breaches with a reserve of 500 men. Each man was provided with three loaded muskets. An assortment of shells, powder barrels, grenades, and rocks were placed along the parapets ready to be thrown at any attackers (Fortescue 1917, 394; Oman 246). Just after 10.00pm the 4th and Light Divisions, each led by an advance party of 500 volunteers, moved along the banks of the Rivillas to the *glacis*, where the 4th Division turned right, and the Light Division veered to the left. The advance party of the 4th Division reached the flooded part of the ditch. It is estimated that at least 50 men, instead of waiting for the troops carrying the ladders, simply leapt into the water not realising how deep it was and were drowned. The troops quickly realised that the

ditch was impassable at this point and moved to the left, where the Light Division was descending into the ditch (Oman 1914, 248). Soon most of the advance parties from both divisions were crowded together at the bottom of the ditch, while the rest of the troops were clustered along the *glacis* waiting to descend the ladders. At this point the French engineers fired the 60 buried shells. The resultant explosion killed or injured nearly all the men from the two advance parties. Of the Light Division only two officers were unhurt. More importantly every one of the Royal Engineers who were guiding the troops to the breaches were either killed or wounded. The loss of these troops, who knew the locations of the breaches, was to have serious repercussions for the coming assault (Fortescue 1917, 398; Oman 1914, 248).

Phillipon had hoped that the shock of the explosion would dishearten the British troops. However, it had the opposite effect on the men's morale, as they eagerly climbed or jumped down into the ditch. One consequence of the explosion was that many of the obstacles in the ditch caught fire and as these continued to burn brightly it helped the defenders, by illuminating the ditch. Thus, French sharpshooters could pick off individuals as they descended the ladders (Fortescue 1917, 398).

There was confusion among both divisions as they re-grouped after the explosion. Because the 4th Division had moved left to avoid the inundation, they had become intermingled with men from the Light Division. The loss of the Royal Engineers meant that the troops could not be guided to their allocated breaches. Some men mistook an unfinished *ravelin* as the central breach and climbed it only to find themselves stranded in full view of the enemy, who swiftly swept them off it with a combination of musketry and grapeshot (Fortescue 1917, 399; Oman 1914 249). Many troops from both divisions made their way along the ditch, past the burning obstacles, to the larger Trinidad breach. But only part of the Light Division made for the Santa Maria breach. Very few, if any, troops attacked the central breach, which was lower than the other breaches and not re-trenched (Jones 1814, 148; Oman 1914, 249). Jones wrote:

“The party which was allotted to storm the breach in the curtain was not in the first instance led to it, in consequence of the engineer officer appointed to conduct it having been disabled on the *glacis*; It is therefore probable that the breach in the curtain was never attempted; at least, not a single body nor wounded man was to be seen lying upon it at day-break in the morning, whilst the foot and ascent of the other breaches were choaked [*sic*] with them” (Jones 1827, 235; 1846, 215-216).

The allied troops made a series of desperate attempts to capture the two breaches, all of which were repulsed. Again and again the men climbed up the steep rubble slopes covered in obstacles, whilst subjected to a hail of musketry, volleys of grapeshot and a barrage of

missiles. Very few reached the tops of the breaches. The next morning observers noted that there were no corpses at the top of the Santa Maria breach and only three at the top of the Trinidad breach. Yet the lower slopes of both breaches were carpeted with dead bodies, lying on top of each other (Oman 1914, 250).

Throughout the attack, Wellington was stationed on the Cerro del Viento. About midnight a report arrived, which stated that no progress was possible, as nearly all the officers had fallen along with huge numbers of men. Shocked by this report Wellington recalled the troops, so he could regroup and attack again at dawn (Jones 1814, 142; 1827, 224; 1846, 209). At midnight, the battered and bloodied survivors struggled back to their starting points, leaving their dead, dying and seriously wounded in front of the breaches (Fortescue 1917, 399-400; Oman 1914, 250).

The 5th Division's assault on the San Vicente bastion started nearly an hour later than planned, because the officer bringing the scaling ladders had lost his way in the dark. Thus a few minutes after 11.00pm the lead elements of Maj.-Gen. George Walker's brigade, reached the *glacis* of the San Vicente bastion where they were detected by the garrison. The troops were soon subjected to fire from both the San Vicente and San José bastions. Despite this the attackers torn down the palisades and entered the ditch (Oman 1914, 253). Walker's men made several attacks against the bastion, which the garrison repulsed. Some officers realised that whilst the defenders were busy dealing with these frontal attacks, they could outflank the French position. Several troops moved around the bastion to where it joined the mediaeval wall alongside the Guadiana. At this point the wall was very lightly defended. Three or four ladders were raised against the walls and soon a steady stream of men was pouring over the walls into the town (*ibid* 1914, 253).

Just before 1.00am on 7th April, Phillipon received news that the enemy had entered the town via the San Vicente bastion. Knowing that this incursion and the loss of the castle meant it was only a matter of time before Badajoz would be in allied hands, he set off to assess the situation. Walker's troops advanced so quickly, that they got between Phillipon the breaches. Cut off from his men Phillipon slipped across the Palmas bridge and sought refuge in San Christóbal. When the forces at the breaches realised that allied troops were behind them their resistance crumbled. Lamare stated:

“The brave men defending the breaches had never stirred until now; but, receiving no orders, they dispersed. Seeing that the enemy was in the place, they ceased to make further resistance, broke their arms and surrendered. Some detachments retired to the Pardaleras

and into various houses of the Town, where they continued to defend themselves until break of day” (Lamare 1824, 34).

Just after 1.00am, Wellington was informed the 5th Division was in Badajoz and moving towards the breaches. About 2.00am, Wellington ordered the 4th and Light Divisions to take the breaches. It was 2.30am, when the 4th and Light Divisions entered Badajoz and completed its capture (Grattan 1989, 205). Within an hour the victorious troops began a brutal sack of the town.

During the 10-hour sack of Ciudad Rodrigo, there had been much drunkenness, many houses were ransacked, a vast amount of property stolen and a few incidences of arson. Despite these excesses very few of the inhabitants were maltreated by the allied troops. The sack of Badajoz was considerably worse, fuelled with alcohol the troops rampaged through the city for over 48 hours. Looting was widespread, women were raped and several inhabitants were murdered by the victorious troops (Oman 1914, 257). Almost all the troops defending the castle were killed during its capture, but that was in the heat of battle. There is no evidence that any French defenders were executed after their surrender (*ibid* 1914, 258). However, the Spanish members of the garrison were handed over to the Spanish authorities who executed them for treason (Lamare 1824, 35).

Order was finally restored on 9th April after a series of measure were implemented by Wellington: hourly roll calls for each unit; a ban on British or Portuguese troops entering Badajoz without a pass; guards posted at the Palmas gate and the breaches; the erection of gallows inside Badajoz; and frequent patrols by the Provost Marshal and his assistants inside the town (Wellington 1860, 312-313).

5.6. Assessment of the siege of Badajoz

The capture of Badajoz was marred by the large number of casualties sustained during the siege. In the *Returns of Absences* casualties for the third siege of Badajoz were recorded at intervals between 23rd March and 8th April. The first entries provide a day-by-day record of the casualties incurred from 18th March until 5th April, whilst the final entry on 8th April catalogues the casualties suffered on 6th April. This entry is in two parts, the first section details the casualties incurred prior to the assault on Badajoz, whilst the second section is devoted to the casualties sustained during the storming of the city (WO 25/3223).

Between 18th March and the afternoon of 6th April the allies sustained a total of 1,191 casualties: 239 dead, 941 wounded and 11 missing. Included in these figures are six dead and 21 wounded on 6th April prior to the assault. Total casualties for the assault on Badajoz are recorded as 3,722, (803 dead, 2,867 wounded and 52 missing) (WO 25/3223). Thus, the total casualty figures for the siege were recorded as 4,913, which is 18.2% of the 27,000 allied troops engaged in siege duties. Is there any one reason to explain why the casualty figures were so high or were they due to several factors?

Although Wellington conducted the siege with a makeshift siege-train this had little adverse impact on the conduct of the siege. This was due to the sterling work by Dickson to scrape together 52 reliable iron guns and enough ammunition to create an artillery train. Like previous sieges time became a factor, which affected the conduct of the siege. Wellington was confident that he could capture Badajoz provided Marmont and Soult did not combine forces to relieve it. He believed he had sufficient forces to deal with either French army individually, whilst leaving a blockading force around the town (Grehan 1990, 71). Wellington was unaware that Napoléon had ordered Marmont to move on Ciudad Rodrigo if Badajoz was attacked to draw Wellington away from Badajoz. Thus, Wellington conducted the siege as if a juncture between Soult and Marmont was a possibility and sought to save time whenever possible. Such time saving measures usually resulted in heavier casualties than normal. One example was the capture of the Picuriña. Although its guns were silenced the *lunette's* defences were virtually intact when Kempt's force attacked it. In the ensuing fight the British sustained a total of 319 casualties out of 500 combatants (Fortescue 1917, 390; Jones 1814, 124; 1827, 190; 1846, 176; Oman 1914; 240).

The most disastrous example of an attempt to save time was the decision to attack the breaches without first forming lodgements on the *glacis* or blowing in the counterscarp to provide easy access to the ditch. Lamare was scathing about the attack:

“In short, what Officer is there, possessing the smallest experience of Siege operations, who would not admit that to assault breaches in the body of the place without blowing in the counterscarp and forming lodgements on the *glacis*, is the most hazardous and inconsiderate enterprize [*sic*] which a besieger could attempt? The assailants of the breaches were, as they ought to have been, annihilated” (Lamare 1824, 30).

Failure to take these measures were major reasons why the allied casualties at the breaches were so high. If the engineers had blown in the counterscarp, the rubble would have formed a ramp which the attackers could have used to gain easy access to the ditch. Likewise,

if Wellington's troops had made a secure lodgement on the *glacis* prior to the assault, they could have prevented the French from placing the mines and various obstacles in the ditch (*ibid* 1824, 30). The cumulative effect of failing to carry out these two measures resulted in nearly 1,000 casualties. If the proper siege tactics had been applied the two attacking divisions could have advanced side by side down the rubble ramp into the ditch. Once in the ditch the engineers could have led each unit straight to the breaches they were supposed to attack, including the breach in the curtain.

Rather surprisingly, Jones acknowledged that the counterscarp should have been destroyed prior to the assault:

“It has been stated in a note, that nothing but the absolute impossibility of doing anything more scientific, could justify the attack adopted: if the enemy stand firm, it is near impossible to carry a breach without marching to it regularly formed: the descent into the ditch, whether by ladders, or by jumping down, must break all order in the troops; and therefore it never should be attempted against a place with a reveted [sic] counterscarp (Jones 1814, 146; 1827, 231; 1846, 212).

In the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones defended the plan of attack:

“This plan for attacking Badajos [sic] was so extremely hors de règle and hazardous, it should be known, though adopted through necessity from inability to undertake any other, it never was for a moment approved by any one employed in drawing it up, or in the execution of it. Lord Wellington particularly always entertained great doubts of its success; but it was necessary to reduce Badajos [sic], and no other chance offered” (Jones 1814, 298).

Jones maintained that an attack on the Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions was the only viable option available. The castle's defences were deemed to be too strong. The area in front of the western walls were mined and could not be attacked without trained sappers and miners. However, the counterguard in front of the Trinidad bastion was so low that the engineers believed the bastion could be breached from the Picuriña. Thus, the allied attack was directed against this point (Jones 1814, 110; 1827, 163; 1846, 149).

However, as noted above, evidence from Lamare suggests that Jones' assertion that this was only possible point of attack is disingenuous. Lamare recorded that one of the weakest points in the town's defences was the badly constructed curtain between the San Pedro bastion and the San Antonio demi-bastion. This section of the wall did not have a parapet, a defensive ditch, or a counterscarp and it was impossible to construct a retrenchment behind it. The base of the wall was also visible from 730m (Lamare 1824, 16). Finally, this stretch of the wall was

not protected by the inundation. Thus, if a breach had been made in the curtain the attacking forces could have made a direct assault, without having to negotiate any obstacles.

Unfortunately, the decision about where to attack Badajoz was taken without any prior reconnaissance a month before the siege. Thus, from the outset of the siege nobody took the opportunity to carefully survey Badajoz's defences to see if there was another weak point that the allies could attack. Jones was fully aware that the site of the allied attack had been preselected a month earlier. Despite this he continued to maintain that the plan of attack was the only one possible, as to acknowledge the failure to conduct a proper reconnaissance would have reflected badly on the engineers (Jones 1814, 298).

Although Jones provided reasons why the attack was directed at the Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions, he failed to explain why no attempt was made to blow in the counterscarp (Jones 1814, 110-111; 1827, 163-164; 146, 153-154). It can be seen from the above that Jones was fully aware of the dire consequences of failing to destroy the counterscarp, yet this necessary step was not factored into Wellington's plan of attack. The breaching batteries opened fire on 31st March, but no attempt was made to sap forward and blow in the counterscarp before the assault on 6th April. So, why did the allies fail to use this seven-day period to destroy the counterscarp?

It could be argued that if the allies had taken a few extra days to sap forward and blow in the counterscarp then there might have been no need to storm the town. Since August 1811, Hill had stopped two supply columns from entering Badajoz, so at the start of the siege the garrison was short of gunpowder. By 1st April, despite rationing there was only enough gunpowder to last until 9th April (Lamare 1824, 24). Thus, by 10th April the town would have been defenceless and Phillipon would have been forced to surrender.

The evidence shows that the Royal Engineers made a series of errors throughout the siege, which contributed to the high number of casualties. The most obvious mistake was the decision to attack the Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions rather than the curtain between the San Pedro bastion and San Antonio demi-bastion. Another error was the failure to sap up to the ditch and destroy the counterscarp, which has been discussed above. Besides these mistakes there were errors in siting the allied batteries. During the siege, allied troops constructed a total of 12 batteries but Jones' personal journal reveals that five of these batteries were laid out incorrectly, so that three of them had to be re-sited. Even then, one of the replacement batteries was found to be out of position by 15m (Jones 1812, 63).

The engineers also made a mistake in the construction of the magazine in No.9 Battery. Throughout the war this was the only magazine in a siege battery that was blown up by enemy fire. This was due to its incorrect design. In this instance, the magazine was constructed on solid rock which sloped towards the entrance. One shell landed near the magazine, rolled down the slope into the magazine where it exploded (Lamare 1824, 42-43). Thus, if the engineers had constructed the magazine so that the ground sloped away from the entrance the explosion would not have occurred. The unsuccessful attempt to destroy the dam on 2nd April was due to an error made by Stanway. His party placed their explosive charges against the dam but failed to cover them with the sandbags brought along especially for that purpose. Thus, when the explosion occurred the blast wave was blown away from the dam and not directed at the base as intended (Jones 1812, 114-116).

Phillipon's spirited defence of the town was another factor which contributed to the high casualty rates. Throughout the siege Phillipon used a variety of different measures to maintain the morale of the garrison. This in turn meant that the French kept the initiative throughout the siege, whilst the allies were continually forced to react to the different measures employed by the French. During the siege, the garrison made three sorties against the allied trenches (Belmas 1837a, 323; Lamare 1824, 14-15). They also enfiladed the British parallel from the northern bank of the river. Once the French realised the allied attack was directed at the Santa Maria and Trinidad bastions, they created a defence in depth at this point. The defence began in the ditch by burying 60 shells to function as mines and placing obstacles in the ditch (Lamare 1824, 30). Next the slopes of the breaches were covered with obstructions and *chevaux-de-frise* were fixed across the tops of the breaches (Oman 1914, 246). Retrenchments were constructed behind the Santa Maria and the Trinidad breaches. Behind these retrenchments a second defensive position was created (Lamare 1824, 22). Finally, the French constructed a large battery below the castle, overlooking the breach site (Jones 1814, 131; 1827, 206; 1846, 189). Phillipon's efforts to prevent the allied troops from capturing the breaches proved successful. Unfortunately for him the town was captured by other means.

On 7th April, Wellington sent a letter to Lord Liverpool in which he explained why his losses had occurred:

"I assure your lordship that it is quite impossible to carry fortified places by *vive force* without incurring grave loss and being exposed to the chance of failure, unless the army should be provided with a sufficient trained corps of sappers and miners... The consequences of being so unprovided with the people necessary to approach a regularly fortified place are, first, that our engineers, though well-educated and brave, have never

turned their minds to the mode of conducting a regular siege, as it useless to think of that which, in our service, it is impossible to perform. They think that they have done their duty when they have constructed a battery. with a secure communication to it, which can breach the place. Secondly, these breaches have to be carried by *vive force* at an infinite sacrifice of officers and soldiers These great losses could be avoided, and, in my opinion, time gained in every siege, if we had properly trained people to carry it on. I declare that I have never seen breaches more practicable in themselves than the three in the walls of Badajoz, and the fortress must have surrendered with these breaches open, if I had been able to ‘approach’ the place. But when I made the third breach on the evening of the 6th, I could do no more. I was then obliged either to storm or to give the business up; and when I ordered the assault I was certain that I should lose our best officers and men. It is a cruel situation for any person to be placed in, and I earnestly request your lordship to have a corps of sappers and miners formed without loss of time” (Oman 1914, 255-256).

Wellington was critical of the engineers conduct of the siege especially their failure to sap up to the edge of the *glacis*. He stated that this was due to the lack of a trained Corps of Sappers and Miners. Jones’ *Autobiography* shows that Wellington blamed Fletcher for the losses at the breaches, as his intervention led to a 24-hour delay in the attack, during which the garrison strengthened their defences:

“Sir Richard Fletcher possessed, in an unusual degree, the knowledge and accomplishments of a finished soldier, uniting much general science to long and varied military experience. He was moreover hardy, active, and brave to excess; but these valuable qualities were alloyed and almost paralysed, by what in military language is called a deficiency of moral courage, or, in other words, being too sensitive to the awful responsibilities of risking human life, and being too diffident and distrustful of his own judgment to plan or direct any unusually bold or hazardous enterprise. He had the military weakness of being far too honest and conscientious to support or advise any mediated undertaking of his chief, which military judgment did not fully approve. His diffidence or his honesty on this occasion, which led to a day’s delay in the assault, drew on him the displeasure of Lord Wellington, who, in consequence, when he moved with the army against the enemy in the north, left Sir Richard to restore the defences of the place, and accident alone restored him to his proper post at head-quarters” (Jones 1842, 53).

Fletcher’s attitude towards Wellington was not sycophantic as he challenged him about siege tactics when necessary. Thus, Fletcher possessed both honesty and moral courage, which he displayed when he suggested the creation of the third breach. It could be argued that the creation of the breach made no difference to the attack. Most of the defensive arrangements, the *cunette*, the retrenchments, the secondary defensive position and the battery overlooking the breaches, were made prior to 5th April. The creation of the third breach forced Phillipon to denude other parts of his defences to man the area behind the breach. Thus, the secondary attacks on the castle and the San Vincente bastion faced far fewer defenders, which contributed to their success.

When the Anglo-Portuguese army left Badajoz on 13th April, Fletcher was left behind to supervise the repairs. This was an unusual arrangement as the chief engineer usually travelled with Wellington (Thompson 2015, 140). Jones implied that Fletcher was being punished for his suggestion to create the third breach (Jones 1842, 53). Thompson has suggested that there were two reasons Fletcher was left at Badajoz: that Wellington wanted to ensure that Badajoz was repaired as quickly as possible and that Fletcher was not fit enough to travel, as he had only left his tent for the first time on 4th April, so riding was probably impossible (Thompson 2015, 141). The first point is undoubtedly true, but Jones' journal suggests that Fletcher could have been fit enough to travel when the army left Badajoz. On 22nd March, Jones wrote:

“Lt.-Col. Fletcher went on horseback to the left of the Parallel, but was obliged to return, the exertion having done much to his wound” (Jones 1812, 64).

If Fletcher could ride three days after he was wounded, it suggests that his wound was not that severe and was beginning to heal. His exertions however, re-opened the wound. Twenty-four days after Fletcher was wounded the allied army left Badajoz, so he must have been well on his way to recovery by then. Jones recorded that Fletcher was riding on 11th May (*ibid* 1812, 157). The same day Wellington was at Fuente Guinaldo, 222kms north of Badajoz, where he stayed until 12th June (Gurwood 1838c, 234). Thus, Wellington could easily have summoned Fletcher to join him prior to the start of the Salamanca campaign. The fact he did not suggests that Jones assertion that Fletcher was left at Badajoz as a punishment is correct.

5.7. Conclusion

Wellington's capture of Badajoz was a significant turning point in the war. The Anglo-Portuguese army had finally gained control of the frontier which permanently removed any threat of a French invasion of Portugal. This meant that Wellington could now go on the offensive and take his army into Spain, safe in the knowledge that his line of retreat was secure. In reviewing the accounts of the planning, preparation and execution of the siege I have found numerous instances where the account of this siege in *Journals of the Sieges* differs from the evidence gleaned from other sources. Like the previous chapter these mistakes fall into four main categories: simple typographical errors, factually incorrect statements, instances where details recorded in Jones' private journal have been changed for no apparent reason and the deliberate omission of facts that were harmful to the reputation of the Royal Engineers.

There are two typographical errors in *Journals of the Sieges* about this siege. First, in his journal Jones stated that the parallel was extended 550 yards to the right (Jones 1812, 46), but in *Journals of the Sieges* the distance is given as 450 yards (Jones 1814, 114; 1827, 172; 1846, 160). Second, Jones recorded in his journal that the number of British casualties from the French sortie on 19th March was 130 (Jones 1812, 49). However, in *Journals of the Sieges* the number is given as 150 (Jones 1814, 115; 1827, 173-174; 1846, 161-162). These errors probably occurred because the printers had difficulty in reading some of the numbers in the original handwritten manuscript.

On five occasions Jones provided factually incorrect information about the siege. First, it is implied in *Journals of the Sieges* that the decision to breach the Trinidad bastion was made after the engineers had reconnoitred Badajoz's defences (Jones 1814, 110; 1827, 163; 1846, 152-153). However, Jones' journal shows that the decision to attack the Trinidad bastion was made at Ciudad Rodrigo on 15th February, a month before Badajoz was invested (Jones 1812, 24-26). Second, in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones stated Badajoz was invested by the 3rd and 4th Divisions (*ibid* 1814, 108-109). Jones failed to mention that the Light Division and the Portuguese cavalry were part of the investing force. This omission was however, rectified in the later editions (Jones 1827, 161; 1846, 148). Third, in all three editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones maintained that by daylight on 18th March the first parallel and the communication trench were generally 3 feet (0.9m) deep and 3 feet 6 inches (1m) wide (Jones 1814, 114; 1827, 173; 1846, 159). Jones' journal however, shows that real progress had only been made on the 550m parallel, as over one third of the communication trench had not been opened (Jones 1812, 43). Fourth, Jones made two mistakes about the French sortie on 19th March. In all three editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones stated that the sortie had consisted of 1,500 infantry and about 40 cavalry. He also reported that when the French retreated, they took with them about 200 entrenching tools (Jones 1814, 115; 1827, 173-174; 1846, 161-162). However, the official French report stated that the sortie was composed of 1,000 infantry, 40 cavalry and 100 sappers. It also maintained that the troops had captured 545 British entrenching tools (Belmas 1837a, 323; Burgoyne 1812a, 7; Lamare 1824, 14-15). Finally, in the 1814 edition Jones stated that No.8 Battery was constructed to breach the face of the Trinidad bastion (Jones 1814, 127). A few pages later Jones stated that on 31st March, both No.7 and No.8 Batteries opened fire against the right face of the Trinidad bastion (*ibid* 1814, 129). This is incorrect as No.8 Battery was designed to breach the left flank of the Santa Maria bastion. However, this error was corrected in the later editions (Jones 1827, 201; 1846, 185).

Besides the mistakes mentioned above there are several instances where Jones recorded the correct details in his private journal but for unexplained reasons changed them in *Journals of the Sieges*. In his journal Jones was aware that two bridges, a pontoon bridge and a flying bridge, were built across the Guadiana (Jones 1812, 35). Yet only the construction of the pontoon bridge is recorded in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* (*ibid* 1814, 108). In the later editions Jones recorded the construction of both a 'fixed bridge' and a 'flying bridge' (Jones 1827, 161; 1846, 148).

In the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones stated that No.4 Battery was built for six 24-pounders and No.6 Battery was constructed for five 24-pounder iron howitzers. Jones' journal notes that No.4 Battery was constructed for seven guns. Unfortunately, the entry does not record the calibre of the guns in this battery. Jones did however, record that No.6 Battery was built for five 24-pounder iron howitzers (Jones 1812, 54-55). In the later editions Jones stated that No.4 Battery was built to take six 24-pounders and a 5^{1/2} inch howitzer and No.6 Battery was constructed to house three 24-pounder howitzers (1827, 178; 1846, 165). It appears that Jones had failed to mention the 5^{1/2} inch howitzer in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges*. So, he corrected that error in the later editions. However, there appears to be no reason why Jones should alter the number of guns in No.6 Battery from five to three. It is not a typographical error as the number of guns in the text changes from 'five' to 'three'.

In the three editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones stated that the batteries all opened fire at 11.00am on 25th March. However, in his journal Jones recorded that the batteries opened fire at two different times. The two batteries attacking the Picuriña opened fire at 10.00am, whilst the other four batteries opened fire at 11.00am (Jones 1812, 75-76). Thus, once again Jones noted one version of an event in his journal yet altered the details in *Journals of the Sieges*.

In his journal and the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones stated No.10 Battery was built to house four 24-pounder iron howitzers (Jones 1812, 90; 1814, 125). However, in subsequent editions Jones recorded that the battery was for three 24-pounder iron howitzers (Jones 1827, 193; 1846). This is yet another example where Jones changed the details in his journal to something else in *Journals of the Sieges*.

Because the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* was written to explain why the British performed so poorly in siege-warfare, without criticising the Royal Engineers or the Royal Artillery, Jones deliberately omitted details from *Journals of the Sieges*, which reflected

badly on either corps. During the third siege of Badajoz the engineers made more mistakes than at the three previous sieges. However, this is not apparent in *Journals of the Sieges* because Jones failed to mention most of these mistakes.

On 18th March Jones recorded in his journal that Battery m, which is referred to as No.1 Battery in *Journals of the Sieges*, was abandoned because it was in the wrong place (Jones 1812, 46). Jones omitted this fact in *Journals of the Sieges*. Two days later Jones recorded in his journal that work had commenced on four batteries, one of which was built to replace Battery m (*ibid* 1812, 54). However, in *Journals of the Sieges* Jones mentioned that work began on three batteries, No.4, No.5 and No.6, but failed to mention the construction of the replacement for Battery m. By deliberately omitting these two details in *Journals of the Sieges*, it appears that the No.1 Battery which opened fire on 25th March was the same battery that was begun on the night of the 18th, which obviously it is not (Jones 1827, 185; 1846, 172).

In his journal Jones recorded that four more batteries were in the wrong positions. These included the three batteries started on the night of 20th March. No.4 Battery which was intended to attack the San Pedro bastion was abandoned and a new one started the next night (Jones 1812, 56-57). However, the next morning this new battery was discovered to be out of position (*ibid* 1812, 63). In all three editions of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones failed to mention that these batteries were in the wrong places. He also failed to record that the battery built to replace No.4 Battery was also in the wrong position.

The fourth battery was No.6 Battery. On the morning of 21st March, the engineers discovered that this battery was in a hollow and its guns were unable to bear on the San Roque *lunette* (Burgoyne 1812a, 10; Jones 1812, 56). So, it was decided to abandon this battery and construct a new one on a nearby knoll. Unfortunately, none of the engineers bothered to mark out the position of the new battery. Thus, at nightfall work continued on No.6 Battery because it was too dark to mark out the site for a new battery (Jones 1812, 61-62). On the night of 21st March work began on No.3 Battery, which was also to be used against San Roque (Jones 1814, 119; 1827, 180; 1846, 167- 168). Thus, from 21st to 25th March working parties continued to construct the original battery in extremely wet conditions despite the fact it was **'good for nothing'**, whilst at the same time another working party was constructing No.3 Battery to perform the same function as No.6 Battery (Jones 1812, 56). So, for obvious reasons Jones neglected to mention this in *Journals of the Sieges*.

Jones concealed the fact that the explosion of the magazine in No.9 Battery was due to its poor design (Jones 1827, 199; 1846, 183-184). The magazine was built on solid rock with its entrance at the bottom of a slope, rather than at the top. One shell landed near the magazine and rolled down the slope into the magazine where it exploded (Lamare 1824, 42-43). This incident is not mentioned in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges*. Although the event is recorded in the later editions Jones failed to mention the magazine's design flaw, as it would have reflected badly on the engineers (Jones 1827, 199; 1846, 183-184).

There is a detailed account about the attempt to blow up the Rivillas dam in Jones' journal, in which he was critical of Stanway's failure to cover the explosives with sandbags (Jones 1812, 116). Despite this Jones provides scant details about the incident in *Journals of the Sieges*, again as it reflected badly on the engineers.

Jones refused to acknowledge that the engineer's plan of attack was wrong. In *Journals of the Sieges* he maintained that the attack on the Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions was the only viable option (Jones 1814, 110; 1827, 163; 1846, 149). This assertion appears disingenuous as Lamare recorded that one of the weakest points in the town's defences was the badly constructed curtain between the San Pedro bastion and the San Antonio demi-bastion (Lamare 1824, 16). He also stated that the two bastions attacked were the strongest part of the fortifications, as more than 80 guns could be brought bear on the site from adjoining bastions, the castle, San Roque and Fort Pardaleras. He also maintained that if the garrison had had enough gunpowder the allies would not have captured Badajoz (Lamare 1824, 20).

Jones made numerous errors in his account of the third of siege of Badajoz only two of which can be attributed to typographical errors. Despite the number of errors made in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* in relation to this siege, Jones only corrected three mistakes in the later editions. Thus, most of the errors made in the 1814 edition were repeated in subsequent editions. Jones also omitted details which showed the Royal Engineers in a bad light on nine separate occasions. The cumulative effect of all these errors and omissions is that Jones' description of the third siege of Badajoz bears little resemblance to the actual siege. Thus, anyone researching the third siege of Badajoz should use as many different sources as possible rather than rely on *Journals of the Sieges*.

Chapter 6

Burgos

6.1. Introduction

Wellington's unsuccessful siege of Burgos is the subject of this chapter. The first section (6.2) recounts Wellington's movements from the capture of Badajoz until the liberation of Madrid. It explores his decision to move against Marmont. Before outlining the capture of Salamanca, the Battle of Salamanca, Wellington's pursuit of the Army of Portugal and the liberation of Madrid.

The chapter continues (6.3) with an assessment of the situation facing Wellington in Madrid and examines why he moved towards Burgos. This is followed by a discussion of Wellington's intentions when he left Madrid. It also examines why the Anglo-Portuguese army did not have a proper siege-train and why the most experienced divisions were left behind in Madrid.

The next section (6.4) contains a description of Burgos' fortifications, which includes details of the strength of the garrison in terms of manpower, artillery and supplies.

A review of the siege is recounted over the next three sections. The first section (6.5) covers the capture of the San Miguel hornwork, the second section (6.6) explores the capture of the first defensive line and the final section (6.7) outlines the allies abortive attempts to capture the second defensive line as well as the raising of the siege.

An assessment of the siege is covered in the next section (6.8) which includes a discussion about the necessity of the siege and the reasons for its failure.

The final section (6.9) begins with an examination of the errors in Jones' account of the siege. Because, Jones was wounded on 4th October he was not present at the latter stages of the siege, thus the rest of this section is devoted to discovering what source or sources Jones used to write about the siege in 1814 edition of the *Journals of the Sieges*.

6.2. Wellington goes on the offensive

When Wellington devised his strategy for the defence of Portugal in 1810, he had intended to strike south to deal with Soult after he had secured the frontier (Stanhope 1889,

90). By 1812 his assessment of the situation had changed. In Andalusia, Soult was fully occupied with the siege of Cádiz, as well as campaigns against several guerrilla groups in the region. Thus, after his capture of Badajoz, Wellington decided to move against Marmont as he believed that Soult would not come to Marmont's aid (Myatt 2008, 116). On 17th June Wellington reached Salamanca, where Marmont had left a garrison of 800 troops in three fortified convents on the south-western outskirts of the city. After a ten day siege the Anglo-Portuguese army captured these buildings. Then almost a month later, on 22nd July, Wellington inflicted a crushing defeat on Marmont's army at the Battle of Salamanca. Gen. Bertrand Clausel, who had assumed command after Marmont was wounded, led the remnants of the Army of Portugal as it retreated towards Burgos pursued by Wellington (Fortescue 1917, 552; Oman 1922, 2).

On 5th August, having driven Clausel beyond the Duero, Wellington abandoned his pursuit but left Lt-Gen. Henry Clinton's 6th Division at Cuéllar to monitor Clausel's movements (Oman 1922, 2). After receiving intelligence that King Joseph and the Army of the Centre had left Madrid for Valencia, Wellington moved east to liberate the city (Gurwood 1838c, 348). On 12th August Wellington entered Madrid where he stayed until 1st September while he planned his next move.

6.3. Wellington decides to move north

Besides Soult's forces in Andalusia, there were four other French armies in Spain whose movements Wellington had to consider before deciding his next move. Suchet's 20,000 strong Army of Aragon was stationed at Valencia. However, once Joseph joined him, there would be a force of 35,000 men to the east, threatening Wellington's position in Madrid (Oman 1922, 2). There were also two French armies north of Madrid. Furthest north was the 30,000 strong Army of the North commanded by Gen. Marie-François Auguste de Caffarelli du Falsa. One of his responsibilities was to protect the line of communication between France and Spain, as the route was subject to frequent raids by guerrillas and Royal Navy personnel commanded by Commodore Sir Home Popham, Wellington believed that Caffarelli was too preoccupied with these problems to pose any threat (Fortescue 1917, 554).

After a brief respite near Burgos, during which he reorganised his army, Clausel moved south causing Clinton to retreat to Arévalo. On 17th August Clausel recaptured Valladolid (Fortescue 1917, 562; Oman 1922, 3). It soon became apparent that if Clausel was left unopposed he would recapture all the ground he had lost during his retreat. There was even

a possibility that he could cut Wellington's lines of communication with Portugal. Thus, it was imperative that he be dealt with immediately and the only way to do so was to detach a sizeable force from Madrid to push him further north (Oman 1922, 3).

On reaching Valencia, Joseph joined forces with Suchet. Joseph then ordered Soult to abandon Andalusia and join him at Valencia. By 27th August, Soult was en route to Valencia with 50,000 men (Fortescue 1917, 571). Wellington knew that once Soult reached Valencia, Joseph would have an army of 85,000 men with which to march on Madrid. However, Wellington realised that it would take Soult several weeks to link up with Joseph's forces. Thus, Wellington decided to deal with Clausel first before returning to Madrid to face the threat posed by Joseph's army (Gurwood 1838c, 387; Oman 1922, 3).

Towards the end of August, Wellington sent the 1st, 5th, and 7th Divisions as well as Bradford's and Pack's Portuguese Brigades, Bock's heavy dragoons and Ponsonby's light cavalry to Arévalo to rendezvous with Clinton's 6th Division (Fortescue 1917, 563). The rest of the allied army was left behind to protect Madrid. On 1st September, Wellington left Madrid to take command of his forces at Arévalo (Fortescue 1917, 563; Gurwood 1838c, 403).

Wellington left Arévalo on 4th September and moved towards Valladolid. Clausel slowly retreated before the advancing Anglo-Portuguese army, without making any attempt to oppose its progress. On 7th September, Wellington's forces entered Valladolid, where they halted until the 10th (Oman 1922, 14-15). Over the next week Clausel retreated towards Burgos, slowly followed by Wellington. On 16th September, Wellington joined forces with Castaños's 11,000 strong Army of Galicia. By the 18th Clausel had passed through Burgos and taken up positions near Briviesca and Pancorbo. The French had however, left a garrison of 2,010 men inside Burgos Castle commanded by General of Brigade Jean-Louis Dubreton (Divall 2012, 38; Fortescue 1917, 564; Oman 1922, 17).

Jones claimed in his *Autobiography* that Wellington intended to capture Burgos when he left Madrid, as he wrote:

“Lord Wellington then told Colonel Jones that he should not send him back to the eastern coast, but if he did, it should be in a very different situation: ‘At present,’ he added, ‘I want you. You must come with me to the north; as, after driving the French back, I intend to reduce the castle of Burgos. You will command the siege’” (Jones 1842, 66).

After the capture of Badajoz, Jones had been promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel and had resigned from Wellington's staff. In June, he was sent to Catalonia as part of an expedition

to capture Tarragona. This mission was abandoned because of the lack of support from the local Spanish forces, so the expedition sailed to Alicante (*ibid* 1842, 60-61). In August, Jones was sent to Madrid with a dispatch for Wellington, who ordered Jones to accompany him north (*ibid* 1842, 65-66). Despite Jones' claim that he was given command of the siege, Burgoyne was the chief engineer in charge of the siege.

Other facts also contradict Jones' assertion that Wellington had decided to capture Burgos before he left Madrid. First, there is nothing in any of Wellington's correspondence before his departure from Madrid to indicate that he planned to besiege Burgos. In two letters written on 30th August, to Gen. Thomas Maitland and Lord Bathurst, Wellington stated he intended to push the French back from the Duero and establish contact with the Spanish Army of Galicia (Gurwood 1838c, 387).

Second, Wellington left Madrid without a properly equipped siege-train. After the capture of Badajoz, he had access to two siege-trains. The siege equipment used at Badajoz was stored in Elvas (Leslie 1908, 624), whilst Marmont's captured siege-train was still inside Ciudad Rodrigo (Oman 1922, 25). Thus, when Wellington advanced into Spain, he took a conscious decision to leave behind his siege-train. It became apparent after the difficulty in capturing the Salamanca forts that the Anglo-Portuguese army was not equipped to conduct a siege (Fortescue 1917, 461). Wellington however, made no attempt to rectify the situation when he set off from Madrid, even though the city's arsenal contained enough heavy guns, ammunition and powder to form a siege-train. The only heavy artillery Wellington took with him were three iron 18-pounder guns and five 24-pounder howitzers that had been used during the siege of the Salamanca forts. The 18-pounders were good siege-guns but the howitzers were useless for siege-work as they were both inaccurate and lacked the necessary power to breach solid walls from a distance (Oman 1922, 25).

The situation was exacerbated by the fact that the artillery possessed a limited amount of ammunition and powder. Dickson recorded that there was a total of 1,406 rounds available for the 18-pounders, 1,306 round-shot and 100 spherical case, which meant that there was a maximum of 468 rounds available for each gun. There was a total of 1,344 assorted rounds available for the 24-pounders, consisting of 900 round-shot, 208 common shot and 236 spherical case, which could provide a maximum of 268 rounds for each howitzer. Likewise, the artillery only had 15 barrels of powder (Leslie 1908, 744). Jones maintained that there were 300 rounds available for each gun, which is clearly untrue. However, he did acknowledge that the artillery only had 15 barrels of powder (Jones 1814, 186).

Similarly, the Royal Engineers did not possess the quantity of tools and equipment necessary for conducting a siege. They had only 600 picks and shovels, 200 billhooks and 100 felling axes. They did not have any carpenters', masons' or miners' tools and had very few supplies and no timber or sandbags (Burgoyne 1812e, 1). Besides the lack of tools and equipment, the engineers also lacked trained personnel, with a complement of only five Royal Engineers and eight Royal Military Artificers. These men were supplemented by ten assistant engineers and 81 assorted tradesmen drawn from the ranks of the various regiments (Esdaile & Freeman 2015, 69; Myatt 2008, 126; Oman 1922, 26).

Third, Wellington left behind his three most experienced divisions the 3rd, 4th and Light Divisions in Madrid. It would appear that Wellington was allowing these troops to rest after the hardships they had suffered during the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, as well as the Battle of Salamanca. As Wellington intended to return to Madrid to face Joseph's forces after he had dealt with Clausel, it made sense to have his most experienced troops fully rested and ready to meet Joseph's army on his return. Thus, Wellington's actions in leaving the 3rd, 4th and Light Divisions behind are consistent with the aim of the campaign outlined to Maitland on 30th August (Divall 2012, 20; Gurwood 1838c, 387).

Although Wellington might have had no intention of besieging Burgos when he left Madrid by 7th September he had decided to besiege the town, as he wrote to Gen. George Murray:

"I hear that the siege of Cadiz is raised; and there is a storm brewing up from the south, for which I am preparing by the detachments of the army of Portugal away from the Duero; and I propose, if I have time, to take Burgos from them" (Gurwood 1838c, 398).

6.4. Burgos

Burgos is located on the banks of the River Arlanzón approximately 245kms north of Madrid, at the junction of two major roads. The first road ran north from Madrid, passed through Burgos to the port of Santander. The other route started at the Portuguese border and travelled north-east through Ciudad Rodrigo, Salamanca, Valladolid, Burgos and Vitoria to San Sebastián (Belmas 1837, 466-467). Just north-west of Burgos Cathedral is a steep-sided chalk hill, the Cerro del Castillo, which is approximately 600m long and about 300m at its widest point (**Figure 21**). The summit lies approximately 75m above the town. It consists of an oval plateau, which has a central axis that runs for about 220m in a north-west to the south-east direction. (Fortescue 1917, 572; Myatt 2008, 125; Oman 1922, 21).

In 1808 Napoléon had passed through Burgos and had ordered the hill to be converted into a fortified base capable of dominating the surrounding area (Belmas 1837, 467; Oman 1922, 21). Two buildings occupied the hilltop and the French had used them as the basis for their fortifications. The first structure was the remains of an old castle keep located on the south-eastern side of the summit. Although the castle had been destroyed by fire in 1736 the empty shell of the keep had survived. Approximately 40m north-west of the keep stood the second building, the church of Santa Maria la Blanca, which was so badly built that it was of little defensive value (Fortescue 1917, 572; Myatt 2008, 125; Oman 1922, 21).

The French had constructed three distinct defensive lines around the Cerro del Castillo. On the western side of the hill, where the ground descended less steeply to the town, the first or outer line had been constructed around a third of the circumference of the hill. This was based on part of the old outer walls of the mediaeval castle, the remains of which were about 9m high. These had been modernised with the addition of *tambours*, palisades and a *fraised* shot-proof parapet. In front of this section of the defences was a 10m wide ditch with a masonry counterscarp (Divall 2012, 38; Oman 1922, 22). The first line did not carry on around the whole extent of the Cerro del Castillo. Towards the southern and eastern sides of the hill the ground was so steep that it was both unnecessary and impossible to build any additional fortifications (Oman 1922, 2).

The second line, which was also partly based on the old castle walls, enclosed both Santa Maria la Blanca and the keep. Like the first line, the wall had been strengthened with the addition of *tambours*, palisades and a *fraised* shot-proof parapet. At the point where the first and second lines met, a strong palisaded and *fraised* earthwork about 6m high had been constructed at the western side of the hill behind the outer line. Thus, it created a second defensive position across the width of the hill, which mirrored that of the first line (Divall 2012, 38; Oman 1922, 22).

The inner or third line consisted of a well-built palisaded earthwork about 6m high, which ran from the south-eastern rampart around both Santa Maria la Blanca and the keep. In front of this earthwork was a 10m wide ditch. Besides strengthening the walls of the keep, the French had also modified the building. A powder magazine had been constructed on the lower floor, whilst the roof had been reinforced so that it was able to house a battery of eight guns. This was called the Napoléon Battery and was armed with two 16-pounder and six 12-pounder cannons (Belmas 1837, 470; Oman 1922, 22).

Immediately to the north-east of the castle was a second hill, the Cerro de San Miguel, which was about the same height as the castle. The two hills were separated by a ravine but the summit of the second prominence was only about 250m from the Cerro del Castillo. Thus, if attackers could position artillery on the Cerro de San Miguel, they could easily bombard both the keep and Santa Maria la Blanca. To protect the Cerro del Castillo from such an attack, a hornwork had been partially constructed near to the summit of the Cerro de San Miguel (Belmas 1837, 467). This was a three-sided structure, with demi-bastions that projected forward from the two front corners of the earthwork. This gave the hornwork a ground plan which roughly resembled a capital M.

According to Belmas, the project had been stopped on Napoléon's orders (*ibid* 1837, 467). Jones (1814, 186) stated that the height of the hornwork was 25 feet (7.6m) but a field survey conducted in 2009 revealed that it was 13.7m (Esdaile & Freeman 2015, 88). The flanks were not so strong as there were no ditches in front of these parts of the defences (Belmas 1837, 467). A strong palisade, between 3.5m and 4.5m in height had been constructed at the rear of the hornwork a few days before the arrival of Wellington's forces (Oman 1922, 23). But there were no palisades along the flanks and front of the earthwork (Jones 1814, 187).

Besides the main works, there were four outlying defensive structures. One was the fortified church of San Roman, which was situated about 20m south-east of the second line of the Cerro del Castillo. The remaining structures were located on the Cerro de San Miguel. These were three *flèches*, which were about 55m from the hornwork and located at strategic points along the edge of the plateau that lay in front of the work. Picquets from the garrison were stationed in the *flèches* to observe any movements in the valley below and warn the garrison of danger (Myatt 2008, 126; Oman 1922, 23).

Dubreton's garrison was composed of 2,010 troops from the Army of the North. It consisted of 1,600 infantry drawn from the 34th and 130th Regiments', a company of artillery, a company of pioneers and a detachment of engineers. The bulk of the troops were stationed on the Cerro del Castillo. However, a battalion from the 34th Regiment were posted inside San Roman. The San Miguel hornwork was held by the 130th Regiment, with their grenadier company holding the *flèches* (Belmas 1837, 469).

The French artillery was equipped with nine heavy guns, 11 field guns and six mortars or howitzers. Eight heavy guns had been placed in the Napoléon Battery, whilst the hornwork had been armed with seven field-guns. The remaining artillery pieces were sited at

strategic points along the upper lines of the Cerro del Castillo (Belmas 1837, 468; Oman 1922, 23). As well as being adequately provided with artillery, the garrison also had an abundant supply of ammunition, gunpowder and food. The one potential weakness was the garrison's access to water. Its supply was limited to just two sources: a well inside the castle and a spring in one of the *ravelins*. Thus, as soon as Burgos was invested Dubreton introduced water rationing (Burgoyne 1812c, 103).

6.5. The attack on the San Miguel hornwork

On 19th September, Wellington reached Burgos and immediately invested the castle. The 6th Division took up positions in the suburbs south of the Arlanzón. The rest of the investing force, the 1st Division and Pack's Portuguese Brigade, crossed the river and moved north around the town to complete the investment. Throughout the siege, despite the large amount of damage caused by the French guns and the danger of moving around Burgos the town continued to function as a market town (Esdaile & Freeman 2015, 127). Elements of the 1st Division ascended the Cerro de San Miguel and drove the French picquets out of the *fleches*. Meanwhile, the 5th and 7th Divisions together with Bradford's Portuguese Brigade, passed through Burgos and advanced to Monasterio de Rodilla about 14.5kms north-east of Burgos. There they took up positions astride the main road to France, to cover the siege (Divall 2012, 39; Fortescue 1917, 573; Oman 1922, 17).

Once Wellington had reconnoitred the castle, he decided to attack the western side of the Cerro del Castillo. This was selected for several reasons. First, Santa Maria la Blanca partly sheltered the position to be attacked from the guns in the Napoléon Battery. Second, the hill fell away so steeply that not even light guns could be depressed enough to bear on the chosen position. Finally, the lines on that side of the hill were judged to be faulty and weak (Fortescue 1917, 573; Jones 1814, 187; 1827, 296-297; Oman 1922, 27).

Wellington realised that because he possessed a limited amount of heavy ordnance it would not be possible to capture the castle by using the same tactics that had been used at Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz. In his official report of the siege, Burgoyne described the proposed plan to capture Burgos:

“None of these lines nor the hornwork were esteemed capable of resisting a *coup-de-main*, & not having artillery or stores equal to attacking it regularly, it was in consequence proposed to attempt each line successively by assault, after the one taken precedingly was

well secured to us by a good lodgement & communications, drawing all the little aid we could from our small force of artillery” (Burgoyne 1812e, 2).

Thus, it was proposed to capture each line by a direct assault without breaching them first. Jones however, stated that after the capture of the hornwork the allies had planned to tunnel under the outer wall and use mines to create breaches (Jones 1814, 188). This statement directly contradicts Burgoyne’s official account of the siege.

Before the outer line could be attacked it was necessary to capture the hornwork, as its guns commanded the intended point of the first assault (Divall 2012, 41). Thus, it was decided to capture the hornwork that night. Wellington’s plan was for a firing party of 150 men from the 42nd Foot to move up to the front of the work, stop at the edge of the ditch and fire at the garrison. Then, while the defenders were distracted by the fire, two storming parties each consisting of 100 men from Packs’ Portuguese Brigade were to attack the salient angles of the two demi-bastions. The Portuguese troops were to be preceded by ‘forlorn hopes’ from the 42nd Foot. At the same time as the attack on the demi-bastions, 140 men from the Light Companies of the 24th, 42nd and 79th Foot commanded by Maj. Edward Cocks were to move around to the rear of the hornwork to prevent the arrival of reinforcements and if possible to break into the earthwork (Jones 1814,189-190; 1827, 300; 1846, 277-278).

At 8.00pm on 19th September the firing party from the 42nd Foot began their attack. Unfortunately, it was a bright moonlit night and as soon as the firing party crested the hill the garrison opened fire on them. About 110m from the hornwork the firing party returned fire and continued firing as they advanced to the edge of the ditch, where they engaged in a firefight with the garrison for about a quarter of an hour. Meanwhile, Pack’s Portuguese troops and the ‘forlorn hopes’ had begun their attacks. The ‘forlorn hope’ of the left-hand column, led by Lt. Thomas Pitts RE, entered the ditch and raised their ladders, which were found to be too short. Although, the ‘forlorn hope’ climbed the ladders and struggled to gain access to the earthwork they were repulsed by the defenders. The Portuguese troops refused to enter the ditch and retreated. A similar scenario was repeated at the attack on the right-hand demi-bastion (Jones 1814, 190; 1827, 301; 1846, 278-279).

During this frontal attack, Cocks led his men along the right flank of the hornwork to its rear, where they were observed by the castle garrison who immediately began firing at them. Despite the shellfire and musketry from the castle the troops managed to gain access to the rear of the hornwork; partly by climbing over the palisades and partly by destroying them with axes. Cocks then divided his men into two sections. One party was detailed to remain by

the postern gate to prevent the garrison from escaping, while Cocks led a larger unit to the right demi-bastion to attack the French from the rear. As soon as the French realised that they were being attacked from the rear, they broke and rushed to reach the safety of the castle. The small party of men guarding the postern gate were brushed aside by the large mass of French troops fleeing to safety (Jones 1814, 191; 1827, 301-302).

Although the capture of the hornwork was a success Wellington paid a high price for its capture. According to the *Returns of Absences*, the Anglo-Portuguese army suffered a total of 421 casualties, of these six officers and 65 men had been killed, 15 officers and 319 men wounded, and 16 men were reported as missing. The Portuguese suffered a total of 132 casualties out of the 200 troops involved in the assault, with 24 dead, 93 wounded and 15 missing. Thus, they had sustained a casualty rate of 66%, whereas the casualty rate among the British units was 83% (WO 25/3223). As the total number of men involved in the assault was approximately 535, this meant that the overall casualty rate was a staggering 78%. French casualties amounted to six officers and 137 men killed or wounded, with a further 60 taken prisoner (Jones 1827, 302).

In *Journals of the Sieges* Jones implied that the failure to capture the demi-bastions was because the Portuguese troops had refused to enter the ditch (Jones 1814, 190). However, Lt. William Reid RE, who examined the hornwork the next morning cited a different reason for the failure of this attack. On measuring the hornwork, he discovered it was 45 feet (13.7m) high and not 25 feet as recorded by Jones. Thus, the ladders used by the 'forlorn hope' were much too short to reach the top of the hornwork. Reid recounted that at the left demi-bastion the attacking troops had tried to reach the top of the hornwork by placing one ladder above another and pinning them in place with their bayonets. He stated that in some places there were three ladders fixed to the slope in this fashion (Reid 1837, 11).

6.6. Attacks against the outer line

Once the garrison learnt that the hornwork had been captured the Napoléon Battery began a devastating fire on the work, which continued throughout the night. Thus, most of the allied troops were withdrawn from the hornwork, but for 300 men who constructed a short parallel across the *terreplein* of the work and a communication to enable reliefs to safely enter the work (Burgoyne 1812e, 2; Oman 1922, 28). Throughout 20th September heavy fire from the Napoléon Battery meant that only 150 men could enter the hornwork to improve the lodgement.

At nightfall 600 men began work on No.1 Battery, which was located on the southwestern side of the Cerro de San Miguel, a little way from the rear of the hornwork. This site had been chosen because it was sheltered from the guns of the Napoléon Battery by the side of the hill (Burgoyne 1812e, 2). On the night of 22nd September, the battery was armed with two 18-pounders and three 24-pounder howitzers. The same night work commenced on No.2 Battery in the gorge of the hornwork, which was designed to bring down the keep, after the third line had been carried and the enemy's artillery had been silenced (*ibid* 1812e, 3).

Construction of these batteries and all subsequent batteries, trenches and mine galleries were only made possible because the engineers had found a large store of French tools inside Burgos town. Burgoyne estimated that the allied troops used 2,000 picks and shovels during the siege, as the Anglo-Portuguese army had arrived with only 600 pick and shovels, the engineers must have found at least 1,400 tools inside the town. Beside the tools, the engineers also obtained large numbers of sacks that they used as sandbags and enough timber to make gun platforms for the various batteries (Burgoyne 1812f, 1).

Encouraged by the success of the attack on the hornwork, Wellington decided to capture the outer line by escalade without any preliminary bombardment. The point chosen for the attack was on the north-western side of the outer wall, which was about 7m high. This was selected because of a sunken road which ran west along the ravine between the Cerro del Castillo and the Cerro de San Miguel to the suburb of San Pedro. This road, which ran parallel to the outer wall, was about 55m from the castle ditch. About 100m east of the suburb the road forked. The main road continued into San Pedro, whilst a side road branched off and curved around the western side of the castle. Because of the sunken nature of the road the attackers could form up here, safe in the knowledge that they could not be seen by the garrison (Oman 1922, 29).

Wellington's plan called for the attack to be made by 400 volunteers from different units of the 1st Division. After the troops had assembled in the sunken road, 200 men were to line the southern bank of the lane and provide covering fire for the 200 strong storming party. Then at 11.00pm, the storming party was to begin their attack. This unit was to be led by 30 men carrying five ladders, followed by 12 troops with axes, and then by an officer and 20 men. Once the ladders had been raised against the wall the officer and his men were to mount the ladders, to be followed immediately by another 50 men. Then the remainder of the storming party were to join the escalade (Gurwood 1838c, 448).

The 1st Division's attack was to be supported by an attack on the south side of *enceinte* by a detachment of Caçadores from the 6th Division. Prior to the attack the Caçadores were to take up positions in some ruined houses opposite the outer line. At 10.50pm, 130 men, 12 of whom were armed with axes, were to leave the houses and attack the palisade in front of them. Once they had cut down the palisade, they were to link up with the storming party from the 1st Division. Meanwhile, the rest of the Caçadores were to remain in the houses and provide covering fire. Once the allied troops had captured the outer line, the 200 troops left in the sunken road were to move forward, tear down a section of the castle wall to create a breach and dig a communication between the *terreplein* and the ditch (*ibid* 1838c, 448).

That night Wellington decided to put the start-time back an hour. Thus, the Portuguese troops began their attack at 11.50pm. But they were immediately detected by the garrison and subjected to heavy fire. The Caçadores faltered, broke and returned to their starting point without reaching the outer line (Oman 1922, 29). Meanwhile, the main attack had also run into difficulties. According to Jones the ladder parties and the 'forlorn hope' had managed to reach the ditch and plant their ladders against the outer wall before the garrison realised they were under attack. But the party detailed to provide covering fire failed to take up its position in the sunken road and advanced with the storming party. The garrison poured a heavy musketry onto the men in the ditch (Jones 1814, 193). They also rolled live shells down onto the attackers. The officer commanding the storming party, Maj. Andrew Lawrie, was killed early in the attack, but because of the mixed nature of the attacking force nobody knew who should assume command. Despite this, several attempts were made to mount the ladders, but they were all beaten back by the garrison, who shot or bayoneted the few men who managed to reach the tops of the ladders. Eventually, Wellington ordered the troops to retreat (Oman 1922, 29).

The *Returns of Absences* show that the Anglo-Portuguese army incurred a total of 158 casualties. At the main attack site three officers and 26 men had been killed, and three officers and 97 men were wounded. Among the Portuguese troops one officer had been killed, and one officer and 27 men had been wounded. The *Returns of Absences* also show that the 400 troops involved in the main attack were drawn from at least eight different units (WO 25/3223). Belmas recorded that the total French losses for the whole of 22nd September had been one officer and eight men killed, and one officer and 12 men wounded (Belmas 1837, 532).

In a letter to Lord Liverpool on the 23rd November Wellington placed the blame for the failure of the assault on Major Lawrie:

“In fact the troops ought to have carried the exterior line by escalade on the first trial on the 22nd of September, and if they had we had means sufficient to take the place. They did not take the line because _____, the field officer who commanded, did that which is too common in our army. He paid no attention to his orders, notwithstanding the pains I took in writing them, and in reading and explaining them to him twice over. He made none of the dispositions ordered; and instead of regulating the attack as he ought, he rushed on as if he had been the leader of the forlorn hope, and fell, together with many of those who went with him. He had my instructions in his pocket; and as the French got possession of his body, and were acquainted with the plan, the attack could never be repeated. When he fell, nobody having received orders what to do, nobody could give any to the troops. I was in the trenches however and ordered them to withdraw” (Gurwood 1838c, 573-574).

Reid’s account shows that Lawrie’s disregard of Wellington’s orders played a significant part in the failure of this assault. Lawrie assembled his troops not in the sunken road as instructed but at a point about 219m behind the road, which was over 274m from the outer wall. The men then advanced in columns of four, with the ladder party at the front, followed by the storming party and finally the covering party. When the troops were about 183m from the wall the garrison spotted them opened fire. Thus, when the ladder party descended into the sunken road, the rear units broke formation and ran to reach the safety of the sunken road. In the confusion the covering party failed to up take their allocated position in the sunken road and advanced with the storming party (Reid 1837, 15).

Burgoyne attributed the failure of the assault to the fact the Portuguese troops had not made a wholehearted attack on the outer line (Burgoyne 1812c, 214). Undoubtedly, this did not assist the main attack, but there were other factors which contributed to the failure of the attack. The escalade was targeted against an intact defensive wall which had not been subjected to an artillery bombardment. Unlike other sieges the attacking force of 400 men was extremely small and they were only equipped with five ladders (Oman 1922, 30). The troops were drawn from eight different units. Thus, the men did not know each other so they could not operate with the same degree of cohesion and confidence that a unit drawn from the same battalion would have possessed (Fortescue 1917, 577). There was also a language problem as at least a quarter of the men involved in the attack were from the German speaking KGL and most of the British troops did not speak German. Yet these troops, who had only received their orders an hour before, were expected to attack an intact defensive position defended by a strong garrison, whose morale had not been shaken by an artillery bombardment, in small groups that

were easily outnumbered by the defenders (Oman 1922, 30). It is small wonder that the attack failed.

As the French had found a copy of Wellington's plan on Lawrie's body, the allies had to find another way of capturing the outer line. It was decided to use mines to create breaches in the outer wall. During the night of 23rd September, the sunken road was converted into a parallel by cutting a step along its southern bank. The next morning marksmen were stationed along the parallel to try and keep down the heavy fire from the castle, by picking off as many gunners as possible. Although the marksmen had some success in dampening the enemy fire, the troops working in the trenches were plagued by French marksmen stationed in a *tambour* flanking the mine site (Burgoyne 1812d, 3).

On 25th September work began on a mine gallery 1m wide, 1.2m high and 18m long. Fortunately, the ground was so solid that the gallery could be built without having to shore up the roof with pit props (Jones 1814, 194-195; 1827, 311-312). The same day No.2 Battery was completed and No.1 Battery opened fire. Although No.1 Battery had originally held two 18-pounders these had been replaced with two 24-pounder howitzers the previous day. The howitzers were so ineffectual that firing ceased after 141 rounds had been fired, when it became evident that the trivial amount of the damage caused was not worth the powder and shot expended (Leslie 1908, 746; Oman 1922, 31). Because of the dwindling supply of gunpowder Wellington wrote to Popham requesting forty 90-pound barrels of powder (Gurwood 1838c, 450). In the evening work began on a sap down to a ledge on the south-west face of the Cerro de San Miguel, where a dugout was to be built to house marksmen who were to try and suppress the enemy fire (Jones 1814, 195; 1827, 313; 1846, 289; Myatt 2008, 152-153).

On 26th September, the original parallel was extended 70m in a south-westerly direction to a position about 7m from the castle walls, from where it was decided to begin a second mine gallery. Work also continued on the Cerro de San Miguel dugout and by morning there was sufficient cover to allow a few men to occupy the trench. The troops occupying the dugout were told to concentrate their fire on the *tambour* flanking the site of the first mine (Jones 1814, 195; 1827, 315-316; 1846, 290-291).

At daybreak work started on the second mine gallery. The lack of experience in military mining and a shortage of proper miner's tools meant that progress on the gallery was slow. Throughout the day the garrison kept up a constant barrage of stones, hand grenades and

musketry at the troops in the sap leading to the first gallery. At the same time, the artillery in the castle brought down a devastating fire on the Cerro de San Miguel dugout, which destroyed the parapet and forced the marksmen to abandon the trench (Jones 1827, 318; 1846, 292-293).

On the night of 27th September, work began on a communication from No.1 Battery to the trenches near the San Pedro suburb. Over the next two days work continued on the dugout and the two mine galleries. The French artillery fire was so destructive that it was impossible to work in the communication during daylight hours. About noon on 29th September, the miners reported that they had reached the foundations of the castle wall, because large slabs of masonry were blocking the end of the gallery. The miners were ordered to excavate a mine chamber 1.5m long. By 10.00pm, the chamber had been constructed, filled with twelve 90-pound barrels of gunpowder and the 4.5m of the gallery had been tightly packed with sandbags (Jones 1814, 196-197; 1827, 319-320; 1846, 294-295).

Wellington decided to explode the mine and attack the resulting breach at midnight the same day. His plan was for all but 100 troops from the covering party to retire to the San Pedro suburb. The remaining troops were designated to be the storming party, who were to be supported by 300 men from different units of the 6th Division. Immediately after the detonation of the mine a 'forlorn hope' of an officer and 20 men were to attack the breach. Once the 'forlorn hope' had captured the breach, they were to be reinforced first by 50 men from the covering party and then by the rest of the support troops. The plan then called for the troops who had retired to the San Pedro suburb to enter the castle and dig a lodgement behind the breach and a communication to the parallel (Gurwood 1838c, 461).

The mine was fired at midnight, but the explosion only brought down the front facing of the wall and did not affect the earthen rampart behind it, which remained vertical. There were, however, places where the broken facing joined the intact part of the wall and where it was possible for troops to scramble up the exposed rampart with some difficulty. Immediately after the explosion the 'forlorn hope' began their attack. A sergeant and four men reached the damaged section of the wall and scrambled up into the castle. But after a short fight they were repulsed by the French. Meanwhile, the officer in charge of the 'forlorn hope' led the rest of his men too far to the right and reached a section of the wall that was still intact. He assumed that the mine had failed to cause a breach and ran back to the storming party to inform them that the defences were still intact. Because of his report the supporting troops returned to the parallel (Jones 1827, 322; 1846, 296-297; Napier 1836, 270; Oman 1922, 32). Shortly afterwards, the sergeant and three of the men who had entered the castle returned and reported

that there was a breach. By then Dubreton had reinforced the outer line, so no further attempts were made to capture the breach. Because of the shortage of ammunition, the artillery was unable to fire on the site during the night to prevent the garrison from retrenching the breach. By daybreak, the garrison had placed many obstacles on the breach site and erected an earthen parapet at its rear (Jones 1827, 328; 1846, 297).

The failure of this attack was due to two factors. First, the miners had not dug a long enough gallery, so that the mine chamber was not under the castle wall (Jones 1827, 321; 1846, 296). Second, unlike the other sieges the ‘forlorn hope’ had not been led to the breach by a Royal Engineer. Of the five Royal Engineers present at the siege one had a broken arm, one was sick, and one had been killed. In addition, two of the assistant engineers had been severely wounded.¹⁹ It was decided not to risk any of the remaining engineers as they had to perform daily duty in the trenches. Thus, after the explosion the officer in charge of the ‘forlorn hope’ and 15 of his men had moved too far to the right and missed the breach, which gave Dubreton enough time to reinforce the breach (Jones 1827, 322; 1846, 297; Leslie 1908, 749).

On 30th September, the siege entered its twelfth day. During the previous seven days the troops working in both the parallel and the mine saps had been subjected to accurate musket fire from French sharpshooters in the *tambour* flanking the breach site. Due to the mounting casualties it was imperative that this fire should be neutralised. Thus, on the morning of the 30th a 24-pounder howitzer in No.1 Battery was replaced with a captured 6-pounder field-gun. At 10.00am the battery opened fire on the *tambour* and within three hours its palisades had been destroyed (Jones 1827, 324; 1846, 298; Leslie 1908, 749).

The artillery had used ninety 24-pounders round-shot, forty 6-pounder round-shot and six 5^{1/2} inch common shells to destroy the *tambour* (Leslie 1908, 749). This further depleted the limited supply of ammunition the allied army possessed. The shortage of ammunition had been a problem since the beginning of the siege, so on 25th September a reward was promised for every shell that the troops brought to the artillery depot. Ensign John Mills of the Coldstream Guards wrote in his journal:

“The Engineers give a shilling a piece for all the large French shot that are brought and sixpence for the smaller. The men go out to look for them and stand watching the places

¹⁹ Lt. Pitts, RE, broke his arm on 19th September, Lt. Reid, RE, was taken ill on the 23rd, Capt. Williams, RE, was killed on the 25th, assistant engineer Lt. Stewart was wounded on the 22nd and assistant engineer Capt. Kenny was mortally wounded on the 26th, dying on 30th September.

where they hit, running the chance of being hit for the chance of getting a shilling or two (Fletcher 1995, 231).

By 30th September, a total of 1,499 rounds of different calibres had been collected. This included three hundred and thirty 4-pounder cannon balls which were of no use to the artillery. But to encourage the troops to continue searching for rounds it was decided to pay for every shell collected regardless of its calibre (Leslie 1908, 749).

Wellington ordered the construction a new battery for three guns, No.3 Battery. This was to be used to breach the outer wall and was to be constructed about 60m from the castle wall. This site was chosen because it could not be seen from any of the upper batteries in the castle. As there were no batteries mounted on the lower castle defences, it was decided that the parapet only needed to be musket proof, which would save both time and materials during its construction (Burgoyne 1812e, 5; Jones 1814, 198; 1827, 325; 1846, 299).

At dusk on 30th September, 500 men began work on No.3 Battery. While these troops worked undisturbed throughout the night, a further 200 men manhandled the three 18-pounders downhill to the new battery. At 9.00am the next day, the battery was finished and armed with the 18-pounders (Jones 1814, 198; 1827, 325-326; 1846, 299-300). But before the engineers could open the embrasures, the garrison brought a howitzer and a 6-pounder down from the upper batteries to the outer wall of the castle. The garrison made a hole through the outer wall, from which they fired rounds from the 6-pounder directly at the battery. This fire coupled with intense musketry directed at the battery forced Wellington to order its evacuation. The French guns continued to pound No.3 Battery, so that in a few hours its parapets had been destroyed (Belmas 1837, 483-484; Jones 1827, 326-327; 1846, 300-301). One of the guns had a trunnion smashed off, its gun-carriage damaged and had received a few dents from where it had been hit by several shots. Another cannon had been hit by 11 shots, which had caused a split in its muzzle and ruined its carriage. The third gun and its carriage had survived the bombardment unscathed. At nightfall, the three guns were removed from the battery (Burgoyne 1812e, 6; Jones 1827, 328; 1846, 301-302).

It was decided to construct a new battery to the left of No.3 Battery. During the afternoon of 1st October, woolpacks were collected in Burgos town for use in the construction of No.4. Battery. At nightfall 150 men began work on the battery and overnight they built a battery, using woolpacks and *gabions* stuffed with wool. At daylight on the 2nd, five guns in the castle opened a concentrated fire on the new battery. It soon became obvious from the destructive plunging fire from the castle, that even if the battery could be completed, the

artillerymen would be unable to service the guns. So, Wellington ordered all work to cease on the battery (Jones 1827, 328-329; 1846, 302).

On the evening of 2nd October, the gallery made to house the second mine was found to be 22m long, so it was estimated that mine would be ready the next day. Wellington ordered the 18-pounders from No.3 Battery to be taken back to No.1 Battery, so that they could be used to enlarge the breach made by the mine. Once this had been achieved, the guns were to be used to destroy the rampart that the garrison had built behind the breach. Thus, when the second mine was exploded the allied troops would be able to make a two-pronged attack on the outer wall (Jones 1827, 329; 1846, 302).

Although it had been raining almost constantly since the evening of 23rd September, the weather worsened on 2nd October. The exceptionally heavy rain meant that little was achieved during the night. A working party of 200 men struggled to manhandle the 18-pounders back into No.1 Battery. By daybreak, the guns had only been dragged as far as the top of the hill, where they were abandoned until nightfall. Meanwhile, progress underground had been equally slow. Ventilation had become a major problem after the gallery had reached 13.7m in length. Thus, the gallery was cleared of workmen for periods of half an hour to allow fresh air into the gallery. In his official report Burgoyne explained the reason why no attempt was made to find a way to ventilate the gallery, as he wrote:

“In the morning the gallery was only 74 feet (22.5m), owing to meeting with large stones & idleness in the miners:- both at this & the first galleries, from this being small, very considerable difficulty was experienced after about 45 feet (13.7m) to keep the candles burning; at times we were forced to make the people leave the gallery for half an hour to let air in:- but we were fearful of losing time by adopting even the most simple machinery to ventilate them” (Burgoyne 1812e, 6).

Because of this lack of progress Wellington was forced to postpone the attack on the outer wall (Jones 1827, 330; 1846, 302-303). The next day, it was only possible to continue work on the gallery, which was 24m long by nightfall. After dark two officers crept out and measured the distance between the wall and the start of the gallery, the measurements obtained were 22.5m and 22.8m. So, it was decided to lengthen the gallery by another 1.2m to ensure that the mine would be in the correct position to breach the wall. The same night the artillery finally moved two 18-pounders into No.1 Battery, which was also armed with three 24-pounder howitzers (Jones 1827, 331-332; 1846, 304).

About 9.00am on 4th October, No.1 Battery opened fire at the wall near the breach. Because the gunners did not know if the 18-pounder with the split muzzle could take a full charge of 2.7kgs of powder, they initially used a charge of 0.9kgs. But this was increased when it became apparent that the gun was still capable of firing a full charge. By 4.00pm, the guns had created a practicable breach about 18m wide (Leslie 1908, 752). The artillery had however, used a total of 660 rounds to create the breach. This meant that, including the rounds collected by the troops, there were only 798 assorted rounds for the 24-pounder howitzers, 1,314 round-shot and 100 special case for the 18-pounders, and 86 rounds for the 6-pounders (Jones 1827, 332; 1846, 304). At 10.00am the same day, work began on a 1.3m long mine chamber, which on completion was loaded with 490kgs of gunpowder. Unlike the previous mine a space of 30cms was left between the powder and the chamber wall. Then 3.6m of the gallery was backfilled with sandbags to ensure that the blast would be directed against the castle wall (Jones 1827, 333; 1846, 305).

Because most of the ‘forlorn hope’ had failed to locate the breach in the darkness during the last attack, Wellington decided to make the third assault on the outer line in daylight. Unlike the two previous attacks, the storming party for this assault were all drawn from the 2nd Battalion of the 24th Foot. The support troops had however, been chosen from several different regiments. At 5.00pm on 4th October, the second mine was exploded, which created a breach 30.5m wide in the castle wall. Immediately after the explosion, two ‘forlorn hopes’ each composed of an officer and 20 men, attacked the breaches. Both these units were closely followed by a detachment of 50 troops. The storming party captured both breaches and forced the French troops to retreat behind their second line. Then, the engineers and working parties entered the castle and began making a secure lodgement on the *terreplein* (Jones 1814, 200-201; 1827, 334-335; 1846, 306-307).

It is difficult to determine accurate casualty figures for this assault, because of how the figures were compiled. Throughout the siege the muster was taken daily at 12.00 noon. Thus, the casualties that were incurred during the assault on the afternoon of 4th October were recorded as having occurred on 5th October. Both Fortescue and Jones stated that 37 men were killed during the assault (Fortescue 1917, 579; Jones 1827, 335; 1846, 306). However, a closer examination of the *Returns of Absences* shows that both writers included two Portuguese privates who had been killed prior to noon on the 4th (WO 25/3223). Jones also recorded that seven officers had been wounded in the attack (Jones 1827, 335; 1846, 306). But in the *Returns of Absences* the names of nine wounded officers are recorded as well as the severity of their

wounds. Among the wounded were Jones and assistant engineer Lt. Parke Neville who were both described as being ‘severely’ wounded. This meant that out of the 15 Royal Engineers and assistant engineers employed at the start of the siege only eight were still operational. The *Returns of Absences* also show that the casualties included six members of the Royal Artillery, one of whom had been killed. These men had not taken part in the attack, so they must have been killed or wounded elsewhere. Thus, the most accurate figure for the casualties sustained during the assault are 34 men killed, nine officers and 170 men wounded, and four missing (WO 25/3223). But even these figures might not be completely accurate, as it is possible that some of them could have been wounded in the trenches either before or after the attack.

By dawn on 5th October, the allied troops were securely entrenched between the third and second lines. This had been achieved after 16 days of siege-work in almost constant rain and had involved three separate assaults on the outer line. Wellington’s next objective was to capture the second line. This appeared to be less formidable than the outer line, as it lacked a ditch and a masonry facing (Oman 1922, 36).

6.7. Wellington attempts to capture the second line

Over the night of 4th -5th October, the artillery once again reorganised the guns in the Cerro de San Miguel batteries so that by morning there were four 24-pounder howitzers in No.1 Battery, and two 18-pounders and one 24-pounder howitzer in No.2 Battery (Leslie 1908, 753). Wellington ordered that the fire from the howitzers in No.1 Battery be directed at those parts of the second line that could be seen from the Cerro de San Miguel to break the palisades along the earthwork. During the morning, the fire from No.1 Battery had some success as it damaged some palisades and kept in check the enemy fire directed at the troops in the trenches. However, the lack of ammunition meant that the fire could not be sustained throughout the day. By the time the howitzers ceased firing, they had expended seventy-nine 24-pounder round-shot, twenty-one 24-pounder spherical case, and nine 24-pounder common shells (*ibid* 1908, 756). The gunpowder shortage was however, resolved the same day, when the forty 90-pound barrels of powder which Wellington had requested finally arrived (Oman 1992, 39).

Throughout the day, working parties continued to improve the lodgements made behind the breaches. At 5.00pm, 300 French *voltigeurs* made a sortie from the second line and captured the first breach. They managed to hold it long enough to overturn many of the *gabions*, fill in large sections of the parallel and seize about 200 tools (Jones 1827, 337; 1846, 309). During this sortie, the allied troops suffered 142 casualties, of which 19 men were killed, 12

officers and 101 men were wounded, with ten men reported as missing (WO 25/3223). Among the wounded was another assistant engineer Lt. Thomas Twigg, which meant that the only available engineering personnel were Burgoyne and six assistant engineers (Burgoyne 1812e, 8). The French lost 17 killed and 21 wounded (Oman 1922, 37).

Overnight working parties repaired the damaged trench and began to dig two saps towards the second line with the intention of constructing a parallel on its *glacis*. At 11.00am on 6th October, the batteries opened fire. The howitzers in No.1 Battery continued to fire at the palisades of the second line, but very few of the palisades were broken. At the same time the guns in No.2 Battery fired at the junction of the outer and second line with the intention of creating another breach. No.2 Battery had only been firing for a short time when it was discovered that the embrasures were too high, which meant that the guns could not be depressed enough to hit the intersection of the two lines. Thus, the guns ceased firing until the embrasures could be altered after nightfall (Leslie 1908, 757).

Because of the ineffectiveness of the howitzers in No.1 Battery, overnight two of them were removed from the battery and replaced with two captured field-guns for which there was an ample supply of round-shot (*ibid* 1908, 757). Despite their smaller calibre these guns proved to be much more effective, as the next day they caused noticeable damage to the palisades on the second line (Oman 1922, 37). Meanwhile, the guns in No.2 Battery kept up a steady and accurate fire against the junction of the two lines. So much so, that by 5.00pm on 7th October, between 12m and 15m of the parapet had been destroyed. Throughout the day, the heavy guns in the Napoléon Battery kept up a concentrated fire on No.2 Battery, which knocked one of the 18-pounders off its carriage and broke off one of its trunnions. Thus, by nightfall the Anglo-Portuguese army possessed only one effective piece of heavy ordnance in full working order (Leslie 1908, 757; Oman 1922, 37). During the night, the artillerymen jury-rigged block carriages to hold the two 18-pounders that had lost their trunnions. Each carriage had a cradle arrangement attached to the side without the trunnion, which was used to hold up the gun. Tests showed that these guns, which the artillery christened ‘the two lame guns’, were still capable of being fired with a reduced charge (Oman 1922, 37).

By nightfall on 7th October, the British saps were within 30m of the second line. At 3.00am, 400 French troops, consisting of three companies of grenadiers, two sections of *voltigeurs* and a detachment of sappers, made another sortie from the second line. The French achieved total surprise and forced the allied troops out of the *terreplein*, but for two officers and 36 men who were taken prisoner. The French sappers levelled the trench, before the allied

troops rallied and drove the French back to their second line. The retreating French sappers once again carried off large numbers of valuable tools (Belmas 1837, 490-491). According to the *Returns of Absences* this sortie caused a total of 184 allied casualties, five officers and 67 men killed, four officers and 100 wounded and eight men reported as missing (WO 25/3223). Another assistant engineer Lt. Henry Dumaresque was wounded in the sortie (Burgoyne 1812e, 9). The French casualties were 11 killed and 22 wounded (Belmas 1837, 491).

Over the next few days, the Cerro de San Miguel batteries continued to fire at the junction of the outer and second lines of the castle. This section of wall was so badly built that even shots from 'the two lame guns' brought down sections of the masonry. In response, the guns in the Napoléon Battery would hammer away at No.2 Battery until it was so severely damaged that it had to be abandoned, after which the French engineers would rebuild the outer line with sandbags. On 9th October, the allied artillery ceased firing on the new breach as the infantry had used so much ammunition trying to suppress the French fire, that they did not possess enough musket balls to be able to mount an assault. So, it was decided to try other tactics, while the infantry waited for the arrival of more ammunition (Oman 1922, 42).

Because it was known that the garrison's food supplies were stored in Santa Maria la Blanca, it was decided to try and set the building alight by firing red-hot shot onto its roof. From 9th to 11th October, the artillery fired at Santa Maria la Blanca, but with little effect (Leslie 1908, 758-759). Burgoyne's journal suggests that the church did not catch fire because the artillerymen did not heat the round-shots until they were red-hot (Burgoyne 1812c, 101). On 11th October all attempts to set the building on fire ceased (Leslie 1908, 739)

On 9th October, it was decided to capture San Roman by means of a mine. So, work started on a gallery from a house which was thought to be 23m south of San Roman. On the night of 11th October, the distance between the house where the gallery started and the terrace in front of San Roman was measured and was found to be over 48m (Burgoyne 1812e, 10-11). On the 10th Burgoyne interrogated a French deserter who provided him with information about the defensive arrangements prepared by the garrison. He told Burgoyne that San Roman was mined, so that the church could be blown up if it was captured (Burgoyne 1812c, 103). Despite this intelligence, work continued on the mine (Burgoyne 1812e, 11).

Because of the incessant rain, over the next few days no progress was made by the men working on the *terreplein*. The bad weather meant that the guns in the battery were unable to open fire until midday on 15th October (*ibid* 1812e, 11-12). As soon as No.2 Battery opened

fire, it was subjected to concentrated fire from both the Napoléon Battery and a battery of four guns and two mortars located on the second line. The fire was so intense that within three-quarters of an hour the battery's *merlons* had been destroyed and its guns silenced (Leslie 1908, 761). The same day, 300 rounds of 18-pounder ammunition arrived from Ciudad Rodrigo as well as a supply of musket balls (Leslie 1908, 762; Jones 1827, 349). Because of the limited amount of heavy ordnance available, it was decided to try and breach the second line using a mine. So, work began on a mine gallery from the left-hand sap on the *terreplein* (Burgoyne 1812c, 105).

Overnight torrential rain caused some of the walls in both batteries to collapse. Thus, throughout the whole of 16th October all offensive artillery operations ceased as the workmen strove to repair the damaged batteries (Leslie 1908, 762-763). On the same day, the allied troops tried to construct a *cavalier-de-tranchée* at the end of the left-hand sap, so that marksmen could be posted on it to overlook the second line and suppress the enemy fire. But the workmen were unable to construct a *cavalier-de-tranchée* (Burgoyne 1812e, 12). At nightfall, the French began building a *cavalier-de-tranchée*, which they could position troops on to dominate the sap and force the allied troops to cease working in the trench.

By 4.00am on the 17th the San Roman gallery was found to be 57.6m long. The miners reported that they could hear the French working under San Roman. Reid, who had recovered from his illness, checked the gallery but could not detect any evidence of French troops.²⁰ Thus, the gallery was pushed forward a few more metres before the mine chamber was excavated and filled with 408 kgs of powder. Once the mine was completed Wellington authorised Burgoyne to use his discretion to explode the mine if it was discovered by the French as this would at least create a breach in the walls of San Roman (Burgoyne 1812d, 1).

At daylight on 17th October, French troops began to fire into the allied sap from the *cavalier-de-tranchée* they had constructed overnight. Throughout the day, nine men were killed by fire from the *cavalier-de-tranchée*. Although heavy rain prevented any work being carried out in the trenches work continued on the gallery designed to breach on the second line. By mid-afternoon, the miners had by-passed some masonry they had encountered the previous day and had placed a small mine consisting of two barrels of powder under the second line. At 7.00pm the same day, the mine was blown. Because the gallery had not been made long enough, the resulting explosion created a crater just in front of the second line but failed to damage any

²⁰ Although Reid was now fit, assistant engineer Lt. Rae had been wounded on 16th October.

of the palisades. Despite the lack of damage the French retreated. Allied troops quickly seized control of that part of the work and began constructing a lodgement. However, half an hour later the French returned in force, but rather than risk more casualties by fighting the allied troops withdrew (*ibid* 1812d, 2).

On 18th October, Wellington decided to try and capture the second line, with three co-ordinated attacks. The plan was that at 4.30pm the mine under San Roman would be fired to signal the start of the attacks. Immediately after the explosion a force of Portuguese and Spanish troops were to rush forward and seize the ruins. Then, if it was possible, this unit was to move forward and capture the second line (Gurwood 1838c, 502).

The second attack was to be made by 200 men from the Guard's Brigade of the 1st Division, the majority of who were to make their attack from the trenches on the *terreplein*. Meanwhile, a 'forlorn hope' of one officer and 20 men were to make their attack from the head of the left-hand sap leading to the second line. The 'forlorn hope' was to attack that section of the second line where the palisades had been broken down and drive the French troops away from that position. As soon as they had achieved this they were to be supported by the rest of the attackers (*ibid* 1838c, 502-503).

The third attack was to be made by 200 men of the KGL commanded by Maj. Adolf Wilhelm von Wurmb. This unit was to form up in the sunken road and attack the breach created at the intersection of the outer and second lines. The initial assault on this breach was to be made by a 'forlorn hope' of one officer and 20 men. Once they reached the top of the breach, they were to be followed by another detachment of 50 men. A further 100 troops were to remain in the sunken road until the first two groups had entered the breach. These troops were only supposed to leave the sunken road if the first two units needed support (*ibid* 1838c, 503).

At 4.30pm, the San Roman mine was exploded and immediately afterwards all three attacks began. The explosion made a large breach in the terrace in front of the church and damaged part of the west end of the building. After the explosion, the French garrison retreated to their second line as the Portuguese and Spanish troops entered the damaged church. Because of musketry and artillery fire from the second line the allied troops could not advance any further. They took refuge in San Roman, at which point the French detonated their mine, bringing down the belltower and most of the roof crushing some of the allied troops inside the building (Belmas 1837, 501; Oman 1922, 47). According to Belmas, there were more than 300 casualties caused by the explosion. The *Returns of Absences* shows that on 18th October only

19 Portuguese troops were killed or wounded (WO 25/323). There are no figures for the Spanish casualties, but it seems improbable that it would be anywhere near 300. Despite the casualties the allied troops made a secure lodgement inside the ruined church and began constructing a secure communication to the houses in Burgos (Burgoyne 1812e, 14).

The second attack by the Guards Brigade captured that part of the second line where the palisades were broken down and advanced onto the *terreplein* behind the breach. Unfortunately, they were unable to drive the defenders from that position. For about ten minutes the Guards were engaged in a fierce firefight with the French. Scores of French troops emerged from the inner line and drove the small number of Guardsmen out of the second line (*ibid* 1812e, 14).

The attack by the KGL also began successfully, as the breach was carried with little loss. A few troops were even able to cross the *terreplein* and the inner ditch, to clamber up the inner line before being shot or bayoneted by the defenders. The French troops also rolled live shells down the earthwork at the troops in the ditch (Belmas 1837, 500). On entering the breach none of the Germans turned to their left to attack the palisade entrenchment near the breach, which provided access to the second line. Instead, they moved to their right and linked up with the attacking Guards. The small number of allied troops used in these two attacks were easily repulsed by the garrison (Burgoyne 1812e, 14).

On the same day as the assault on the second line, there was heavy skirmishing between advanced elements of the allied divisions stationed at Monasterio de Rodilla and units of the Army of Portugal, under its new commander, Gen. Joseph Souham. Over the next few days Wellington sent the Guards Brigade and the KGL to reinforce the covering force. On 20th October, he received intelligence that the Army of Portugal had been reinforced with troops from the Army of the North. Wellington prepared to lift the siege. Throughout the 21st units of the allied army quietly slipped away from Burgos and retired towards Valladolid. At 5.00am on 22nd October, the rear-guard of Wellington's army crossed the Arlanzón and began its retreat. A few hours later, units of the Army of Portugal entered Burgos and relieved the garrison after a 35-day siege (Oman 1922, 49).

During the siege, the Anglo-Portuguese army had suffered a total of 2,049 casualties. These consisted of 24 officers and 485 men killed, 66 officers and 1,445 men wounded, and two officers and 42 men reported as missing. The garrison had suffered a total of 623 casualties, of which 304 were killed or died of their wounds (Oman 1922, 49). Of the

15 Royal Engineers and assistant engineers involved in the siege, one had been killed outright, another had been mortally wounded and seven had been wounded. Thus, this small unit had suffered 60% casualties (WO 25/3223). The engineers were also without the services of Reid for two weeks through illness. Although the loss of so many trained and semi-trained officers who could supervise the construction of batteries, parallels, galleries and mines undoubtedly played a part in Wellington's inability to capture Burgos, there were several other factors which contributed to this failure.

6.8. Assessment of the siege

When Wellington left Madrid on 1st September, his aim was to drive the Army of Portugal away from the Duero and link up with the Army of Galicia, before returning to Madrid to deal with the threat posed by Joseph. On 16th September, Wellington achieved the aim of his campaign when he met Castaños's forces near to Celada del Camino, which is about 20kms south-west of Burgos and about 70kms north of the Duero (Oman 1922, 14). Even though Wellington was not equipped to conduct a siege he still advanced another 20kms to conduct a siege that had no strategic value.

All the sieges conducted by Wellington prior to Burgos, were carried out to achieve strategic aims. It had been necessary to capture Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, to defend the Portuguese frontier from further French invasions and to ensure that Wellington's lines of communication were secure when he advanced into Spain. The Salamanca forts were captured to ensure that he could advance further into Spain with his lines of communication safe from attack. As Wellington intended to return to Madrid to deal with Joseph's army there was no need to capture Burgos to protect his lines of communication, as he would be marching south after its capture.

It could be argued that it was necessary to capture Burgos and garrison it with allied troops to block the Army of Portugal's advance on Madrid. The presence of an allied fortress in the French rear would have threatened their lines of communication. This argument however, is not very convincing as the castle was not that strongly fortified and could easily have been captured by an army equipped with a proper siege-train. Thus, if Wellington's siege had been successful, then when the Army of Portugal advanced, they would have quickly recaptured the castle and taken the garrison prisoner. This would have totally negated any advantage that Wellington would have achieved from capturing Burgos.

Years later, Wellington declared that because he had captured more than one Indian fortress by escalade, he was sure that he could capture Burgos, but that he had been foiled by the skill and determination of Dubreton (Fortescue 1917, 584). The aggressive French defence was an important factor in Wellington's failure at Burgos, as they attacked the allied troops at every opportunity. They successfully destroyed No.3 Battery with two guns they had manhandled down to the outer line. Then they made two sorties from the second line, which caused numerous allied casualties, interrupted the construction of the trenches and resulted in the loss of valuable tools (Burgoyne 1812d, 2).

There is however, evidence to suggest that Wellington was using Dubreton's skilful defence of Burgos as an excuse for his failure to capture the castle. On 21st September, at the start of the siege Wellington wrote to Lord Bathurst in which he confessed that he might not have sufficient resources to be able to take the castle (Gurwood 1838c, 442). Yet, almost two months later in a letter written to Lord Liverpool on 23rd November, he attributed the failure not on the lack of available resources but rather on the inexperienced troops involved in the siege:

“The fault of which I was guilty in the expedition to Burgos was, not that I undertook the siege with inadequate means, but that I took there the most inexperienced troops instead of the best troops. I left at Madrid the 3rd, 4th, and Light divisions, who had been with myself always before; and I brought with me that were good the 1st division, and they were inexperienced” (*ibid* 1838c, 573).

Wellington's claim that the siege was a failure because he did not have his most experienced troops with him rather than the lack of artillery, ammunition and materials is disingenuous. The presence of inexperienced troops was undoubtedly a factor in Wellington's failure to capture Burgos, it certainly is not as important as he maintained in his letter. The main reason the siege was a failure was because of the inadequate number of heavy guns and the limited supplies of ammunition and gunpowder which Wellington had brought with him from Madrid. The lack of heavy guns and ammunition impinged on the conduct of the siege in a variety of ways.

Once the guns in No.1 Battery opened fire on 25th September, it quickly became apparent that the only effective guns were the 18-pounders. As there were only enough 18-pounders to form one battery the allied troops were forced to move these guns from battery to battery throughout the siege. These frequent moves, besides being bad for morale, meant that there were days when the guns could not be fired as they were in transit between batteries,

which slowed down the progress of the siege. Thus, the task of suppressing the enemy fire fell to the infantry, who were positioned in trenches to fire at the enemy gunners and marksmen. This was ineffective as the defenders were safely hidden behind earthworks and strong palisades. It was only on 30th September, 12 days into the siege that the artillery used a captured field-gun to silence the French marksmen in the *tambour* flanking the site of the first mine.

A similar situation arose on 17th October when French marksmen stationed on the recently constructed *cavalier-de-tranchée* killed nine allied soldiers that day. The lack of ammunition meant that the artillery was not used to dislodge the troops on the *cavalier-de-tranchée*, whilst infantry musket fire was unable to dislodge them (Burgoyne 1812d, 2). Because the infantry were used to suppress the French fire since the start of the siege, when a breach was created at the juncture of the outer and second lines Wellington could not order an immediate assault as most of the infantry's ammunition had been used keeping down the French fire. Thus, the attack had to be delayed until a supply of musket balls arrived from Ciudad Rodrigo (Oman 1922, 42).

Besides being unable to use the artillery to suppress the enemy fire, the lack of ammunition meant that the artillery could not fire at the French troops when they retrenched the breach caused by the first mine. Thus, they were able to safely construct a strong palisaded earthwork behind the breach overnight unhindered by the allied artillery. The lack of ammunition also meant that the allied artillery could not provide enough sustained fire to break the palisades of the second line, when the allied troops were sapping towards it.

Because of the lack of ammunition, the artillery was only used to create one breach, between the juncture of the outer and second lines of the castle. All the other attempts to create breaches in the various defensive lines were made by mines. During the siege four separate mines were exploded. Of these, only the second mine, detonated on 4th October, was totally successful. Each of the other three mines, against the outer line, the second line and San Roman were only partially successful. In these cases, the mines galleries had not been made long enough. Thus, the explosions occurred in front of the intended targets and not directly underneath them.

Responsibility for the failure of the mines must rest with the engineers who were supervising the work. But this must be viewed in context. At the start of the siege there were only five Royal Engineers attached to the allied army, because the British Government had ordered Wellington to send most of his experienced engineers on the Catalonia expedition

(Jones 1842, 60). During the siege, the Royal Engineers were supplemented by ten assistant engineers, some of whom had some engineering training at previous sieges and some of whom were totally inexperienced. By the time work commenced on the first mine, three Royal Engineers and one of the assistant engineers had been incapacitated, which left only two fully qualified engineers. This was the first siege in the Peninsular War that mines were used by the Anglo-Portuguese army, so the construction of mine galleries was totally new to the remaining assistant engineers. Thus, they were unable to determine the precise locations of where to construct the mine chambers.

The lack of heavy guns was acknowledged as a major problem from the start of the siege. So, the obvious solution was to bring up more guns. Unfortunately, the nearest supplies of heavy ordnance were at Madrid, 250kms to the south, or at Santander 181kms to the north. On 20th September, Sir Howard Douglas had suggested to Wellington that he should ask the Royal Navy at Santander for some naval guns. Wellington dismissed this suggestion out of hand, declaring that the siege would be over before the guns could arrive (Oman 1922, 39-40). Wellington changed his mind on 3rd October and sent a request to Popham for some naval guns. These were dispatched on 9th October, and by the 18th they had reached Reynosa, some 80kms from Burgos. By then Wellington was preparing to raise the siege so they were sent back to Santander. Thus, if Wellington had requested the naval guns on the 20th September, as suggested by Douglas, they would have arrived in time to have been used during the siege and might have been instrumental in ensuring a successful outcome to the siege (*ibid* 1922, 40).

The tactics used by Wellington during the various assaults on the defensive lines also contributed to failure of the siege. In two of the three assaults on the outer line, the attacking force was drawn from different units. Thus, the men were unable to operate with the same degree of cohesion and confidence that a unit drawn from the same battalion would have possessed (Fortescue 1917, 577). Likewise, in three of the four assaults, the number of allied troops involved was far too small to capture their objectives. This was a result of Wellington's insistence on using small groups of men to perform the assaults and only committing further resources when the first group had achieved its objective. The reinforcements were also too small and could not hold any captured objectives. Wellington had obviously taken to heart the slaughter that had occurred at Badajoz and was evidently trying to minimise the casualties among his men. However, on this occasion it is likely massed assaults by thousands of men, as opposed to assaults by just 400 troops, might well have succeeded.

The responsibility for the failure to capture the castle of Burgos must ultimately rest with Wellington. When he left Madrid on 1st September, his aim was to drive Clausel away from his lines of communication before returning to Madrid to face the approaching threat of Joseph's army. Having driven Clausel's army about 200kms north of Madrid by 16th September, he could have returned to Madrid to face Joseph without having to besiege Burgos. Instead, Wellington became embroiled in an unnecessary siege after which he was forced to retreat to Salamanca and surrender most of the gains he had obtained in 1812.

6.9. Conclusion

In the previous two chapters, because Jones's private journal could be compared with *Journals of the Sieges*, it was possible to identify Jones' mistakes and place them in one of four categories. Unfortunately, I was unable to locate the volume of Jones' journal which included the siege of Burgos, so a direct comparison cannot be made between Jones' journal and *Journals of the Sieges*. Despite this, evidence from a variety of sources shows that Jones made five factually incorrect statements prior to being wounded on 4th October.

First, Jones stated Wellington had decided to besiege Burgos before he left Madrid (Jones 1842, 66). However, there is nothing in Wellington's correspondence which indicates that he was contemplating besieging Burgos at this time. His stated aim was to push the French back from the Duero and establish contact with the Spanish Army of Galicia (Gurwood 1838c, 387). Also, when Wellington left Madrid he was not equipped to conduct a siege, as he only took with him three iron 18-pounder guns and five 24-pounder howitzers (Oman 1922, 25). Furthermore, the artillery possessed a limited amount of ammunition and gunpowder (Leslie 1908, 744). Likewise, the engineers did not have enough personnel, tools or supplies to conduct a siege (Burgoyne 1812e, 1). Finally, Wellington left his three most experienced divisions the 3rd, 4th and Light Divisions in Madrid (Divall 2012, 20; Gurwood 1838c, 387).

Second, Jones stated that there were 300 rounds available for each gun (Jones 1814, 186). Dickson's account of the siege shows that this is clearly untrue. According to Dickson there were 468 rounds available for each 18-pounder and 268 rounds for each howitzer (Leslie 1908, 744).

Third, Jones maintained that the height of the San Miguel hornwork was 25 feet (7.6m) (Jones 1814, 186). However, Reid stated that he had measured the hornwork on 20th

September and had discovered that it was 45 feet (13.7m) high. A field survey conducted in 2010 confirmed that Reid's figure of 13.7m was correct (Esdaile & Freeman 2015, 88).

Fourth, Jones stated after the capture of the hornwork the allies had planned to use mines to breach the outer wall (Jones 1814, 188). However, this statement directly contradicts Burgoyne's official account of the siege, as he recorded that the plan was to capture each line in succession by a series of escalades (Burgoyne 1812e, 2). The decision to use mines was only taken after the French obtained a copy of Wellington's plan from Lawrie's body. This meant the French were aware of Wellington's tactics to capture the outer line, thus an alternative plan had to be formulated (Gurwood 1838c, 573-574). Hence the decision to use mines.

Fifth, in his account of the first attack against the outer wall Jones stated that the ladder parties and the 'forlorn hope' had managed to reach the ditch before they were detected by the garrison (Jones 1814, 193). However, Reid stated that the attacking troops were about 183m from the outer wall when the garrison opened fire on them (Reid 1837, 15). Thus, the ladder parties could not have reached the ditch undetected.

After Jones was wounded on 4th October, he was delirious for ten days before being evacuated to Lisbon (Esdaile & Freeman 2015, 8; Vetch 1892, 143). Thus, he took no part in the latter stages of the siege, also because of his delirium he was not able to take notes about the conduct of the siege. Despite this, Jones wrote an account of the siege of Burgos in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges*. The question that must be asked is what source or sources did Jones use for his account of the latter phases of the siege of Burgos? Fortunately, during my research into the *Journals of the Sieges* I was able to discover the answer to this question.

In the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones used two sources for his account of the siege from 5th October to 22nd October, Burgoyne's official account of the siege and Wellington's order for the attack on 18th October (Gurwood 1838c, 502-504). Jones' primary source was Burgoyne's official report, which he plagiarised by copying the last nine pages of the report (Burgoyne 1812e, 7-15). If the two texts are compared *Journals of the Sieges* (**Figure 22**) is identical to Burgoyne's report (**Figure 23**) but for a few small omissions made by Jones, namely when the assistant engineers Lt. Neville, Lt. Twigg, Lt. Dumaresque and Lt. Rae were wounded. The only additional information Jones provided was to insert a copy of Wellington's order for the attack on 18th October at the relevant point in Burgoyne's text (Gurwood 1838c, 502-504; Jones 1814, 209-213).

At the start of my study I had decided not to examine the siege of the Salamanca forts and the two sieges of San Sebastián because Jones was not present at these sieges. But as I was investigating the accuracy and value of Jones' work I checked Burgoyne's official report of the Salamanca forts to see if Jones had used it in *Journals of the Sieges*. A comparison between Burgoyne's official report (Burgoyne 1812b, 1-8) and *Journals of the Sieges* (Jones 1814, 158-170) showed that Jones had plagiarised Burgoyne's report. But for a few instances where Jones condensed short sections, Jones' account of the siege of the Salamanca forts in the 1814 edition *Journals of the Sieges* is taken word for word from Burgoyne's official account. Unfortunately, I was unable to find any official reports for the two sieges of San Sebastián, so it was not possible to determine the source of Jones' information about these sieges.

Chapter 7

Surveys of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz

7.1. Introduction

In the three preceding chapters numerous literary sources were used to examine the five major British sieges of 1811 and 1812. Apart from *Returns of Absences* (WO 25/3223) all the literary sources are subjective to some degree, being personal observations or recollections. One source that is often overlooked by historians are the physical remains of the siege sites. Archaeological surveys of these sites can be used as an objective way to assess the reliability of written sources.

The first archaeological survey of a British siege site of the Peninsular War was conducted at Burgos between 2008 and 2010. This revealed that details in *Journals of the Sieges* about the San Miguel hornwork were incorrect, as it was found to be 6.1m higher than the figure given by Jones (Esdaile & Freeman 2015, 154). It was also discovered that the dimensions on the map in *Journals of the Sieges* were much smaller than those provided by the survey data as the hornwork was supposed to be 79.2m wide, whereas its actual width is 260.43m.

At the beginning of my research I could find no evidence that anyone had ever surveyed Ciudad Rodrigo or Badajoz for archaeological purposes. I therefore decided to conduct field surveys of both towns. The surveys were conducted for two reasons. First, the data could be used to check the reliability of the written accounts. Second, as both towns had been taken by the French before Wellington captured them in 1812, it is possible to compare the locations of the breach sites made by the French and the allies. Thus, the survey data could then be used to determine if the besieging engineers had chosen the most appropriate places to attack the *enceinte*.

Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz have been surveyed before to create town maps. Several maps of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz made during the Peninsular War are housed in the National Archives at Kew. The first section of this chapter (7.2) describes which of the maps I used and explains the significance of each of them, their quality, when they were made, and who made them.

The next section (7.3) discusses the methodology used for the surveys. It begins with an explanation about the decision to use a handheld GPS unit. This is followed by a brief explanation about how a GPS unit works, before concluding with a description of the main drawbacks and other problems encountered during these surveys. The following section (7.4) is an account of the survey of Ciudad Rodrigo. It begins with a description of the main fortifications which still exist around the town and continues with an explanation of how I was able to locate the remains of the five outworks which once surrounded the town.

The survey of Badajoz is described in the next section (7.5). It adheres to the same format as the survey of Ciudad Rodrigo and begins with a description of the existing sections of the main *enceinte* and explains why and when certain sections of the fortifications were demolished. This is followed by a discussion of the locations of the outworks around Badajoz and how I was able to locate them.

The chapter concludes with an appraisal of the survey data (7.6). First, to assess the reliability of the written accounts. Second, to compare the relative merits of the different breach sites to evaluate the choice of each site, which can then be used to assess the competence of the different engineers involved in the sieges.

7.2. Existing maps of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz

During my research I found three maps of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz in the National Archives. The first map is of Ciudad Rodrigo published on 4th June 1812 (WO 78/5905), which has been copied from two maps drawn by Capt. Alex(ander) Tod RSC (WO 78/5904; WO 78/5906). Our knowledge of Tod is limited to the brief details given in L.S. Challis's *Peninsula Roll Call*, a card index of officers who served in the Peninsular War.²¹ By April 1808 Tod was a Captain in the Royal Staff Corps. He served in the Peninsular army between April 1809 and April 1814. During the conflict he participated in the Battle of Talavera, the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo and the capture of Badajoz (Challis 2009).

Tod's map (**Figure 9**) includes details of both the French and allied siege-lines, with the French trenches being coloured light brown and the allied lines yellow. The map also contains the locations of the British earthworks constructed after the 1812 siege. However, the position of the British communication trench does not correspond with evidence from aerial

²¹ He is referred to as Alexander Todd in Challis' *Peninsula Roll Call*.

photographs.²² According to Jones the work to fill in the trenches, dismantle the batteries and build the new outworks was completed on 4th March (Jones 1827, 154-155; 1846, 142-143). Tod therefore drew his map sometime after that date. If so then the accuracy of the British and French siege-lines recorded by Tod must be treated with caution, as the lack of visible remains meant that Tod was only able to plot their approximate locations. Finally, there is no indication as to where Tod obtained his information about the French trenches but the most feasible explanation is that he copied the details from a captured French map.

A Spanish map of the 1811 French siege of Badajoz is also kept in the National Archives (WO 78/5889). The map shows the locations of the French trenches and batteries, and in addition the key to the map contains detailed information about the number and calibre of the guns inside each of the batteries. Unfortunately, there is nothing to indicate when it was drawn or by whom. We know however, from a pencil note at the foot of page that the map was ‘Procured at Cadiz by Frederick Leicester, Captain Royal Staff Corps’ (**Figure 24**). Leicester was a graduate from the Military College, Marlow, and was made a Captain in December 1803. He served on the Iberian Peninsula from April – December 1810 and April – December 1812, where he was present at the siege of Cadiz and the capture of Badajoz (Challis 2009).

The National Archives does not possess any maps of the first two British sieges of Badajoz. There are however, two maps which show the 1812 siege. Because the first map (WO 78/5908) had a notation at the foot of the page which read ‘Bad map inaccurate’ I opted to use the second map (WO 78/1017/7/16). This is a larger and more detailed map of 1812 siege (**Figure 16**). The draughtsman noted that a Royal Engineer had pointed out corrections to his depiction of the British trench system as the map was commenced after the trenches and batteries had been levelled. Thus, once again the location of the siege-lines must be treated with caution. The wording on the map implies that the map was not made by a Royal Engineer, but more probably by a member of the RSC.

7.3. Methodology and problems with the surveys

Because I had to survey Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz by myself the only viable method for conducting the surveys was to use a handheld map-making GPS unit. In August 2015 I used an Ashtech Mobilemapper 10 for my initial surveys. For my follow up surveys in July 2017 I used a Garmin GPSMap 62st. Both units create maps by collecting data transmitted

²² See section 7.4 below for further details.

from the United States' Global Positioning System. The United States' Department of Defense began the GPS project in 1973 for use by its military. In the 1980s the U.S. government made the system accessible to anyone with a GPS receiver. The current system consists of 31 satellites which orbit the earth twice in a 24-hour period at an altitude of approximately 20,100kms. Each satellite continuously transmits geolocation and time information that can be collected by any GPS receiver. In order to operate a GPS unit must receive data from at least four satellites. This data is then converted into a three-dimensional reference point of latitude, longitude and vertical height, which is recorded by the unit (Conolly & Lake 2006, 63). Thus, to plot the position, outline and structure of a feature, such as an earthwork, a series of readings are taken at salient points on the feature to build up a composite picture of the structure.

In the 1990s the U.S. government deliberately degraded the accuracy of GPS readings for civilian users with a programme called 'Selective Availability' and which meant that the GPS data received was accurate to within 5m. However, in May 2000 President Clinton discontinued 'Selective Availability' which greatly improved the accuracy of GPS readings. The current generation of GPS receivers are accurate to within 30cms (GPS.Gov 2019). Despite the removal of 'Selective Availability' maps or plans made by using a handheld GPS unit are not as accurate as those created by using a total station. Atmospheric interference to the signals from satellites lying at low angles in the sky and slight time differences means the GPS receiver has often to estimate the position where the four satellite signals intersect. However, correction mechanisms built into the GPS receiver and the use of additional data from the satellites can minimise these errors (Conolly & Lake 2006, 63-64). The two handheld GPS receivers used during my surveys were accurate to between 0.5m and 5m after correction.

One drawback to using a handheld GPS receiver is that to function the unit must be able to receive data from at least four satellites. Unfortunately, satellite signals are relatively weak and are unable to pass through solid objects such as buildings. Thus, during my surveys of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz there were several instances when it was impossible to obtain any readings because the GPS unit could not connect with four satellites because of obstructions such as buttresses.

Another problem I encountered whilst conducting the surveys was difficulty in getting access to certain areas. In some instances this was only temporary. During my 2015 survey of Badajoz I could not map the area behind the castle because of ongoing building work, but in 2017 I was able to survey the area. Unfortunately, there are some parts of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz that could not be surveyed due to their inaccessibility. These ranged from sections

of the curtain of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz which are too precipitous to parts of Badajoz's fortifications where houses and other structures blocked access to them, and the interiors of the Santa Clara convent, Ciudad Rodrigo and the San Roque *lunette* at Badajoz.

7.4. Ciudad Rodrigo

The main enceinte at Ciudad Rodrigo has barely changed since the 1812 siege. Its town walls, *fausse-braie*, *ravelins* and ditch are still intact. The site of the lesser breach was rebuilt in the form of a gateway, which now serves as the main entrance into the mediaeval town. Although the main breach and the *fausse-braie* were repaired, they were not rebuilt to their previous height so they were easy to locate (**Figure 12**). The absence of the gate allowing access to the western end of the ditch is the only other noticeable change to the 1812 defences.

Outside the town walls the situation is completely different. Tod's map (**Figure 9**) shows that during the siege there was a small suburb north-east of the main *enceinte*. The distance from the mediaeval wall to the suburb varied from between 300m and 400m. However, since the siege the suburbs have expanded so that they now surround the old town. Houses have been constructed between the original suburb and the town wall, so that the buildings are now only about 100m from the mediaeval wall. A gridiron pattern of streets containing three and four storey apartment blocks has been built on the Little Teson. The Great Teson is still undeveloped but for a railway line which was constructed along the valley between the two Tesons in the late C19th. These developments have destroyed almost all traces of the outer defences that once surrounded the town: the earthen parapets around the suburb, the two wooden palisades which ran from the suburb to the main *enceinte*, the four fortified convents and the Renaud Redoubt.²³

Although there are no traces of the earthen parapets or the wooden palisades it was still possible to determine the locations of the four fortified convents and the Renaud Redoubt. In the C19th, the Santa Cruz convent was demolished and a bullring was constructed on its site.²⁴ Even if there are no visible remnants of the convent it was possible to obtain its approximate location by mapping the bullring.

There are some remains of the San Francisco convent. These consist of the ruined two storey high sacristy of the convent church, which occupied the south-east corner of the

²³ See Chapter 4.8 for a description of the town's defences.

²⁴ The information about the bullring was provided by the Ciudad Rodrigo Tourist Board.

convent complex (**Figure 25**). The eastern and southern walls of the ruin once formed part of the external walls of the church. On Tod's map the convent complex is recorded as being about 100m east to west and 80m north to south, which means that the convent once had a floor area of approximately 8,000m² (WO 78/5904; WO 78/5905; WO 78/5906). The remaining southern wall is approximately 20m long and the eastern wall is about 10m. Thus, the sacristy has a floor area of 200m², which is only about 2.5% of the area of the original convent. The rest of the convent is lost beneath the houses, shops and roads which have been constructed since the siege. Although it was relatively easy to map most of the San Francisco ruins, it proved impossible to properly map the southern wall of the church. There were four buttresses along the wall but the GPS unit was unable to receive signals when positioned on the western side of their inner angles.

The Santa Clara convent survived the siege intact and is home to a community of Carmelite nuns. Unfortunately, the Carmelite Order are a contemplative enclosed religious order who shun contact with the outside world. Thus, it was not possible to survey the interior of the convent. It was only possible to survey three of its exterior walls, as the presence of a school and a row of shops meant that it was physically impossible to reach the eastern outer wall of the convent.

The location of the fourth convent, Santo Domingo, was harder to find because most of the convent buildings have been destroyed since the siege. Despite this there were enough clues to indicate that the remains of a doorway flanked by two short sections of wall in the Calle Cuartel Viejo was all that remained of the convent (**Figure 26**). First, the ruins were only 10m from the Plaza Santo Domingo. Second, 'calle cuartel viejo' is 'old barracks street' in English. The convent was fortified and housed a garrison throughout the Peninsular War so it makes sense that the street was given this nomenclature, as the convent functioned as a barracks from 1810 to 1814.²⁵ Third, the doorway resembles that of a church doorway with flanking columns on either side of a 2m wide opening orientated in an east-west direction the usual orientation for churches of that period. Thus, the ruined doorway marked the western entrance to the convent church, a fact verified by Tod's map (WO 78/5904; WO 78/5905; WO 78/5906).

Locating the position of the Renaud Redoubt posed some problems. Prior to my first visit to Ciudad Rodrigo I had examined Google Earth. The satellite photograph showed

²⁵ This information was supplied by the Ciudad Rodrigo Tourist Board.

the existence of two earthworks on the Great Teson. This appeared to correspond to Jones' statement that after the siege the engineers had strengthened the Renaud Redoubt (Jones 1827, 150; 1846, 138) and constructed a new redoubt at the northern edge of the Great Teson (Jones 1827, 152; 1846, 141). I assumed that these were the two earthworks shown in the aerial photograph (**Figure 28**).

However, when surveying the southernmost earthwork it became apparent that this **was** not the Renaud Redoubt. The earthwork was located 200m north of the southern edge of the Great Teson. Jones stated that the first parallel was located behind the Renaud Redoubt and three batteries had been constructed in front of the parallel (Jones 1814, 88; 1827, 119; 1846, 107). Thus, the batteries would have been located to the sides and roughly level with the redoubt. However, it is impossible to see either the town walls or the San Francisco convent from this position (**Figure 27**). Therefore, the Renaud Redoubt had to be nearer to Ciudad Rodrigo.

A closer study of the Google Earth photograph revealed the presence of a large inverted 'V' shaped cropmark on the forward slope of the Great Teson, which extended almost to the railway line (**Figure 28**). The shape, size and location of this cropmark suggests that this was the site the Renaud Redoubt. Another cropmark ran from just above the apex of the inverted 'V' to the earthwork on the northern edge of the Great Teson. This marked the British communication trench from the first parallel to the engineer's park (Jones 1814, 88). There was also a cropmark running for about 150m along the eastern side of the Great Teson. The 1812 map shows that this corresponds to the eastern end of the French first parallel constructed during the 1810 siege (WO 78/5904; WO 78/5905; WO 78/5906). Several indistinct cropmarks are visible just north of the Renaud Redoubt. It is not possible to determine what these marks represent as both the French, and the British constructed a series of parallels and batteries in this area. Finally, a faint cropmark is visible 150m west of the British communication trench, which runs roughly parallel to the British communication trench for about 350m. On Tod's map this is shown to be the position of both the French and British communication trenches. However, the cropmarks in the photograph show that the communication trenches were about 150m apart. Thus, Tod must have made a mistake when drawing his map. Because Jones mentioned that the British communication trench was started behind the Renaud Redoubt then the cropmark along the western side of the Great Teson must be evidence of the French communication trench (Jones 1814, 88).

Tod's map shows that after the siege the British constructed three additional earthworks to protect Ciudad Rodrigo. These were the two redoubts still visible on the Great Teson and a redoubt on the Little Teson. Jones recorded the construction of the northern redoubt on the Great Teson (Jones 1827, 152; 1846, 141) and the redoubt on the Little Teson (Jones 1827, 151; 1846, 139). However, he failed to mention the second redoubt on the Great Teson. The only evidence that this redoubt was constructed by the British is from Tod's map (WO 78/5904; WO 78/5905; WO 78/5906). By combining the data from the two GPS surveys, Tod's map and the Google Earth photograph it was possible to create a map of Ciudad Rodrigo's 1812 defences (**Figure 29**).

7.5. Badajoz

Although some of the Badajoz fortifications have been destroyed since 1812, the castle and large sections of the main *enceinte* still survive. Most of the mediaeval wall, between the castle and the San Vincente bastion, is still intact but for three demolished sections. The first gap is 150m long and begins 200m west of the castle. Then there are two 8m wide gaps, one on either side of the Las Palmas gate, which were created in 1906 to provide motor vehicle access into Badajoz.²⁶

Five sections of the fortifications between the San José and Trinidad bastions have also been demolished. Between 1965 and 1968 the curtain between the San José and Santiago bastions was demolished when the area was redeveloped. In the same period the curtain between the Santiago and San Juan bastions, the San Juan bastion and the curtain between the San Juan bastion and the Pilar gate were all demolished to make way for the Avenida de Europa. The three remaining gaps in the fortifications were made to improve vehicular access to the town. First, a road enters the town through a gap in the curtain adjacent to the eastern flank of the San Roque bastion. A second road passes through the centre of the curtain between the Santa Maria and Trinidad bastions. Finally, the Merida road enters Badajoz through a gap created in 1931 by the demolition of the left face of the Trinidad bastion.²⁷

Unlike the main *enceinte*, there are no traces of the *ravelins* in front of the walls and only a short section of the ditch in front of the San Vincente and San José bastions still

²⁶ This information was provided by the staff of the Badajoz Tourist Board.

²⁷ The information about the dates the various sections of the fortifications were demolished was provided by the Badajoz Tourist Board.

exists. The ditch has largely been built over but for the area from the San Pedro to the Santa Maria bastions and a small area in front of the Pilar gate, which have been laid out as gardens.

The San Roque *lunette* is still intact, although all traces of the *glacis* and the covered way to the Picuriña have been obliterated by modern development. San Roque is closed to the public, so it was only possible to survey its exterior and the ditch surrounding the work. Since 1812 Fort Pardaleras and most of the Picuriña have been destroyed. Despite this it was still possible to plot the locations of these outworks.

The remains of the Picuriña can be found in a small park on the Cerro de San Miguel. This consists of a 44m section of the southern flank and face of the outer wall of the *lunette* (**Figure 30**). The flank wall runs in an easterly direction from the adjoining football ground for about 29m, where it meets the southern face of the *lunette*. From this point the wall extends another 15m in a north-easterly direction. The survey data refutes some measurements of the Picuriña provided by Jones. He stated that the Picuriña's flanks were 21m in length, yet the surviving portion of the flank is 29m. Thus, it is at least 8m longer than the figure given by Jones. There is a plan of the Picuriña in the National Archives that was drawn in October 1811 by a French engineer Captain Lefaire, who used a pre-metric French unit of measurement the *pieds du roi* for the drawing (**Figure 32**). A *pieds du roi* was equivalent to 12.86 inches (Métrologje Française 2005). Thus, it was possible to calculate the measurements of the Picuriña, the southern flank was 32.7m, the southern face was 26.1m, the northern face was 32.7m and the northern flank was 36m. Although only a fragment of the Picuriña still survives it is obvious from examining the 1812 map (**Figure 16**) and Google Maps that the park and the adjoining football ground occupy the site of the former *lunette* (**Figure 31**).

Because of the major expansion of Badajoz in the centuries since the siege, the only way to locate Fort Pardaleras was to use Google Maps. All traces of the fort have been destroyed by new developments. Fortunately, there is a 1914 aerial photograph of Fort Pardaleras (**Figure 33**). A comparison between the aerial photograph and Google Maps reveals that the outline of the fort is reflected in the street pattern on Google Maps (**Figure 34**). Thus, I was able to plot the location of Fort Pardaleras.

On the northern bank of the Guadiana the suburb of San Engracia has been built on the hill which formerly housed the Verle *lunette*, the British parallel and batteries, eradicating all evidence of these features. Likewise, there is no visible evidence of the covered way which ran from the *tête-de-pont* to San Christóbal. San Christóbal and the *tête-de-pont* have hardly

changed since 1812. The only major change was the demolition of the gateway between the *tête-de-pont* and the northern end of the Las Palmas bridge in 1868.²⁸

In 1914 a series of aerial photographs were taken of Badajoz from an airship (Pardo 2007). A photograph of the eastern side of Badajoz shows not only the ditch and the *ravelins*, but also Fort Pardaleras, the Picuriña and San Roque (**Figure 17**). One view of the northern bank of the Guadiana shows the Verle *lunette*, San Christóbal and part of the covered way leading to the *tête-de-pont*. Thus, I was able to produce a map of Badajoz's defences by combining the survey data, the 1812 map, information from Google Earth and the 1914 aerial photographs (**Figure 35**).

7.6. Conclusion

The primary aim of my surveys was to assess the reliability of the written accounts against the survey data. Unfortunately, the demolition of some elements of the fortifications at both sites meant that I could not carry out complete surveys. At Ciudad Rodrigo I surveyed the main *enceinte* and Santa Clara convent but was only able to map the approximate positions of the remaining outworks. At Badajoz however, I was unable to fully map the main *enceinte* as some defensive elements had been demolished. I did survey three of the five outworks surrounding the town, but I could only plot the approximate locations of the Picuriña and Fort Pardaleras.

Despite these shortcomings the surveys provided some useful information. Data from Ciudad Rodrigo showed that the southernmost earthwork on the Great Tesson was constructed by the allies in 1812, a fact which Jones failed to mention in *Journals of the Sieges* (Jones 1827, 152; 1846, 141). This is corroborated by the information on Tod's 1812 map (WO 78/5904; WO 78/5905; WO 78/5906). In the case of Badajoz, it was possible to determine that the 3rd Division's initial attempt to escalate the *enceinte* was made at the curtain between the San Pedro and San Antonio bastions and not against the castle. Thus, the French accounts of the location of the attack are correct (Belmas 1837a, 350; Lamare 1824, 29).²⁹

The second purpose of the surveys was to compare the sites of the breaches made by both the French and the allies, to determine if the engineers had chosen the best place to breach the *enceinte*. At Ciudad Rodrigo it was easy to see that at both the 1810 and 1812 sieges

²⁸ This information was obtained from the Badajoz Tourist Board.

²⁹ See Chapter 5.5 for a discussion about the location of the first assault against the castle.

the engineers had selected the best location to breach the walls. It is obvious from my survey that the Great Teson dominates the town's defences, making it the logical place from which to launch any attack. This in turn dictated that any breach would be made at the northernmost point of the *enceinte*, which was where both the French and the allies breached the walls.

At Badajoz, the most obvious place to attack the town would be somewhere along its western wall between the San Vincente and Santiago bastions. First, this section of the wall was not protected by an outwork. Second, at the Santiago bastion the wall curves round in a south-easterly direction so that all the guns on the San Jose bastion and only half the guns on the San Vincente and Santiago bastions would be able to fire on any attackers.

In 1811 the French engineers wanted to attack the western wall. However, a lack of manpower meant Soult could only send six regiments of cavalry to invest the northern bank of the Guadiana. His cavalry screen was not considered strong enough to prevent the Spanish north of the river from bombarding the French parallels. Thus, the French decided to breach the curtain further south between the San Jose and San Roque bastion which meant that Fort Pardaleras would have to be captured first (Belmas 1837, 668; Oman 1911, 40). Despite this drawback there were two advantages to this choice of breach site. First, after the capture of Pardaleras the attackers would be subjected to fire from four bastions. Fortunately, the arrangement of the bastions meant that only half the guns on them would be able to bear on the French parallels. Second, the ground at the rear of the breach site was much lower than the ramparts so the defenders would find it almost impossible to construct retrenchments behind the breach (Oman 1911, 59). Although the French had not been able to attack the weakest point of Badajoz's defences it appears that their second choice of breach site was a suitable replacement.

The British plans for the 1811 sieges of Badajoz were governed by Wellington's insistence that the siege should not last longer than 16 days.³⁰ However, the engineers knew that according to Vauban's writings, the minimum time necessary to capture a town like Badajoz was 18 days if an outwork did not have to be captured first (Jones 1814, 31). The obvious place to breach the *enceinte* was the western wall. Unfortunately, the French had placed a series of mines in front of this section of the defences and the British did not have the necessary skilled personnel to deal with them (Lamare 1824, 147). Thus, Fletcher devised a plan which he believed was the only viable option for capturing Badajoz in 16 days. This

³⁰ See Chapter 4.3 for the allied plan to attack Badajoz.

necessitated the capture of San Christóbal and the castle. But as Chapter 4 shows this was a mistake as these were two of the strongest parts of Badajoz's defences.

In 1812 the allied army attacked the Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions with most of the parallels and batteries being constructed on the Cerro de San Miguel, a small hill located at the south-east angle of the town. This meant that the allies' position was exposed to gun fire from bastions on both the southern and eastern walls, as well as from Fort Pardaleras, the San Roque *lunette* and the castle. According to Lamare the French were able to bring 80 guns to bear on the allied position and it was only the shortage of gunpowder that prevented them from successfully defending Badajoz (Lamare 1824, 20). The huge number of casualties sustained by the allies gives some credence to Lamare's remark.

As explained previously, the decision of where to attack Badajoz was taken at a meeting in Ciudad Rodrigo on 15th February, a full month before the town was invested (Jones 1812, 24-26).³¹ Because the engineers had a preconceived idea about their point of attack no effort was made in reconnoitring Badajoz for a more favourable place to breach its walls. One of its weakest points was the curtain between the San Pedro bastion and the San Antonio demi-bastion. This section of the *enceinte* was not protected by the inundation, it did not have a parapet, a defensive ditch, or a counterscarp and it was impossible to construct a retrenchment behind it. The base of the wall was also visible from 730m (Lamare 1824, 16). My survey of Badajoz revealed that Lamare's statements about this section of the *enceinte* are correct. I was able to walk unhindered from the Rivillas to the base of the wall. Likewise, even though there was some modern development near to San Roque it was still possible to see the whole of the curtain including its base from about 500 metres.

Although the French and the allied engineers both selected the best location to breach Ciudad Rodrigo's walls, the situation at Badajoz was different. Both sets of engineers recognised that Badajoz's western wall was the best place to breach the *enceinte*. However, for different reasons neither set of engineers were willing to attack that position. Thus, they had to select alternative points of attack. It appears that the one selected by the French proved to be a suitable alternative. The two breach sites selected by the allies were not so good. In 1811 the allies attacked Fort San Christóbal and the castle two of Badajoz's strongest defensive positions, as a result both sieges ended in failure. Then in 1812 the allies made another mistake when they attacked the Trinidad bastion. In 1811 Fletcher had been forced by circumstances to

³¹ For further details see Chapter 5.3.

attack San Christóbal and the castle. But in 1812 it was Fletcher who persuaded Wellington to attack the Trinidad bastion (Jones 1812, 24-26). Once this decision was made no attempt was taken to reconnoitre Badajoz to see if there was a better place to attack the town. The British failure to select appropriate breach sites at Badajoz only serves to underline the fact that the French engineers were better trained, better organised, better equipped and more experienced in siege warfare than their British counterparts.

Chapter 8

Wellington and his Staff Officers

8.1. Introduction

In the previous four chapters I have used both literary sources and survey data to explore the British sieges. One element however, I have not yet touched upon is the extent of Wellington's involvement in the conduct of them. In this chapter I will show that although Wellington possessed a group of staff officers assigned to assist him with the management of the army, he chose (in the main) to ignore them and instead exerted his complete personal control over every aspect of the army's operations, including the sieges. The chapter will also assess what decisions Wellington personally made about the conduct of the sieges, on what occasions he followed the advice from other officers, and how his personal decisions impacted on the conduct and success of the sieges.

The chapter begins with a section (8.2) about Wellington's career up to the Battle of Talavera to show how his background, education and military experience influenced his autocratic style of command. It also explains why Wellington abandoned the aggressive tactics he had used in India in favour of the defensive strategy he adopted after Talavera.

The next section (8.3) examines the British military structure at the beginning of the C19th. It begins by exploring the organisation, administration and command of the infantry and cavalry regiments, as well as the technical branches of the army. This is followed by an account of the formation of the Royal Military College, and the remit of the college. The section concludes with an examination of how staff officers were appointed to armies on active service.

The following section (8.4) explores the composition, duties and relationships between Wellington and his staff officers. It begins with a discussion about the composition of Wellington's staff, which shows that he tended to choose his staff for their breeding and social position rather than for their intellectual qualities. It will also examine which officers offered Wellington advice and discuss which suggestions he followed. The section concludes with an examination of how Wellington treated his subordinates.

The final section (8.5) will draw on the various points raised in the chapter to assess the impact of Wellington's personal decisions had on the conduct and outcomes of the sieges.

8.2. Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington (1769-1852)

Arthur Wellesley was born in Dublin, the fourth child of Garrett Wellesley, Earl of Mornington and Anne Hill, the eldest daughter of Viscount Duncannon. He was first educated at Brown's preparatory school in Chelsea and from there was sent to Eton (Lloyd 1899, 190). Eton gave Wellesley an unshakable belief in himself and his capabilities that lasted throughout his life (Roberts 2002, 5-6). In 1781 his father died, and because of his family's financial difficulties he was withdrawn from Eton in 1784 and taken to Brussels by his mother. There she realised that he was only fit for the military, and so in 1786 he was sent to the Military Academy at Angers (Lloyd 1899, 190).

In March 1787 Wellesley's brother, Lord Mornington, bought him an ensign's commission in the 73rd Foot. Wellesley spent the first six years of his army career avoiding military service. He never joined his regiment, which at that time was in India. Instead, thanks to his brother's influence he was appointed aide-de-camp to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Buckingham, in November 1787. On Christmas Day the same year he was promoted to lieutenant in the 76th Foot, which had been raised for service in India. On 23rd January 1788, again to avoid service in India, he transferred to the 41st Foot, then garrisoned in Ireland (David 2012, 305). In June 1789 he transferred into the 12th Light Dragoons, which was also stationed in Ireland. Two years later, in June 1791, he became a captain in the 58th Foot, before transferring to the 18th Light Dragoons in October 1792 (*ibid* 2012, 319).

By 1793 Wellesley was just another upper-class British officer, who was well-connected but ignorant of his duties and absent from his unit. This however, all changed with the outbreak of war with France in February 1793. He persuaded his brother, Lord Mornington, to buy him two successive commissions in the 33rd Foot. Thus, by September 1793 Wellesley was the lieutenant-colonel in that regiment, aged 24, despite having no military experience (*ibid* 2012, 319). In June 1794, the 33rd Foot were sent to Flanders to reinforce the Duke of York's army (Longford 2012, 30). The campaign was a failure because the British army was composed of poorly trained officers and men, who had inadequate supplies of muskets, uniforms, food, and medical equipment (David 2012, 322).

In March 1795 Wellesley returned home, having learnt valuable lessons about how not to run a campaign (Longford 2012, 31). Having witnessed all the faults displayed during the campaign he decided that the only way to run a successful military campaign was to do everything himself. Thus, he developed an autocratic leadership style in which he refused to

delegate responsibility to his subordinates, and at the same time insisted that everybody strictly followed his orders (Stanhope 1889, 182).

Despite his involvement in the Flanders campaign, Wellesley still had much to learn about warfare. His posting to India in April 1796 was to provide him with much needed experience of combat, army administration and siege-warfare (Lloyd 1899, 174). During the Fourth Anglo–Mysore War (1798–1799) he took part in the siege of Seringapatam. He also participated in the Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803–1805) in which he won victories over the Marathas at Assaye and Argaum, he also captured the fortresses of Ahmednagar and Gawilghur (Longford 2012, 59).³²

In March 1805 Wellesley sailed for England, with experience of campaigning and army administration, that would stand him in good stead during the Peninsular campaign. In addition to his command duties, he had overseen the logistics that had kept his army supplied whilst on campaign and had also acted as a civil administrator and a diplomat (Lloyd 1899, 174). In 1807 he participated in the campaign to seize the Danish fleet, which culminated in the capture of Copenhagen.³³ On his return to England he was promoted to lieutenant-general on 25th April 1808 (*ibid* 1899, 175).

In July 1808 the British Government dispatched Wellesley, with an army of 9,500 men, to Portugal to defend the country from the French invaders (Longford 2012, 91; Robertson 2008, 39). Within days of landing Wellesley had defeated the French at Roliça, and then at Vimeiro (Roberts 2002, 35). These victories resulted in the Convention of Sintra and the French withdrawal from Portugal.³⁴ In November, Wellesley was summoned to give evidence to the Government inquiry into the Convention of Sintra (Bryant 1944, 284-285; Harvey 2007, 618-619). The inquiry exonerated Wellesley because it was adjudged that he had only signed the document under protest and at Dalrymple's insistence (Roberts 2002,37).

In April 1809 Wellesley returned to Portugal with an army of 23,000 men. On his arrival he also assumed command of the 16,000 British troops already there (Robertson 2008, 97). Thus, at the start of a five-year campaign, in which he would succeed in driving the French out of the Iberian Peninsula, Wellesley only had 39,000 British troops to oppose the over 250,000 French troops stationed across the peninsula (Bryant 1944, 343; Harvey 2007, 696; Richards 2002, 64). On 12th May, he routed the French army at Oporto, and ejected them from

³² See Chapter 3.7 for details about these sieges.

³³ See Chapter 3.7 for details about this siege.

³⁴ See Chapter 1.2 for details

Portugal (Bryant 1944, 346; Esdaile 2003, 194). At the end of July, after advancing into Spain, he defeated another French army at Talavera. This was a very narrow victory, where Wellesley sustained 5,365 casualties, over a quarter of his army (Roberts 2002, 54). He was however, forced to return to Portugal when he realised that he would not get much assistance from his Spanish allies. Following his victory at Talavera, Wellesley was elevated to the peerage on 26th August 1809 as Viscount Wellington of Talavera and of Wellington (Richards 2002, 78).

In India Wellington had learnt that aggression and risk were the keys to winning battles. At both Assaye and Argaum he had come across the enemy at the end of a long march, and after a rapid reconnaissance, had decided to make an immediate attack rather than wait until the next day (David 2012, 360). Wellington displayed this aggression in his early battles in Portugal, when in August 1808 he rapidly defeated the French at Roliça and Vimeiro (Roberts 2002, 35). Likewise, his victory at Oporto was due to his aggressive tactics and his willingness to risk his army in crossing the Douro (Bryant 1944, 346). The large number of casualties sustained at Talavera however forced Wellington to alter his tactics. He realised that the French could lose a whole army corps without any serious repercussions, but if he lost 500 men unnecessarily he would have to answer to parliament (Roberts 2002, 44). Thus, to avoid taking heavy casualties he decided to husband his resources by fighting a more cautious campaign (David 2012, 406).

8.3. British Military Administration

At the end of the C18th Britain lacked a cohesive military administration, with different branches of the armed forces being controlled by separate bodies. Prior to 1855 the infantry and cavalry were controlled by the Secretary of State for War (later the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies) from Horse Guards, in Whitehall (Ward 2017, 10). The technical branches of the military, the Royal Artillery, the Royal Engineers, and the Royal Military Artificers, were controlled by the Master General of the civilian Board of Ordnance (*ibid* 2017, 8).

Because the concept of a chief of staff was not adopted by the British army until the mid C19th the army's administration at Horse Guards was divided between the Adjutant-General and the Quartermaster-General. The Adjutant-General's department was responsible for issuing orders, making duty rosters, maintaining discipline and punishing offenders, whilst the Quartermaster-General's controlled the movement and quartering of the troops (*ibid* 2017, 11-12). The chain of command of British armies in the field mirrored that at Horse Guards,

with the commanding general being assisted by an Adjutant-General, a Quartermaster-General, and their respective staffs (Holmes 2001, 331).

After the ill-fated Flanders campaign (1792-1795) Colonel Charles Craufurd, who had noticed the shortcomings of the British staff officers whilst serving on the Duke of York's staff, wrote to Lt.-Col. John Le Marchant, a cavalry officer who enjoyed the patronage of the Duke of York, the commander-in-chief of the British army:

“As we stand at present, when an army goes upon service, we are so destitute of officers qualified to form the Quarter-Master-General's department, and an efficient corps of Aids-de-camp [*sic*], and our officers in general have so little knowledge of the most essential parts of their profession, that we are required to recourse to foreigners for assistance or our operations are constantly liable to failure in their execution” (Le Marchant 1841, 83).

In 1799 Le Marchant submitted a plan to establish a training school for army officers. This resulted in the Royal Military College being opened in 1801. The school was divided into two departments, with the Junior Department sited at Marlow and the Senior at High Wycombe. The Royal Military College had two functions; first, was the formal training of serving officers in the functions of the efficient staff-officer, and the second was for the schooling of youngsters before they obtained an officer's commission (Ward 2017, 24-25).

Potential officers were not required to attend the college. Thus, the vast majority of infantry and cavalry officers continued to purchase their commissions, and then learn about their duties through practical experience (Holmes 2001, 165).³⁵ To encourage enrolments in the college a small number of free commissions were offered to successful students. Despite this incentive during its early years the total number of students per year never exceeded 34. By the outbreak of the Peninsular War graduates from the Royal Military College were beginning to be selected as staff officers (Ward 2017, 25).

When a British army was sent on active service Horse Guards appointed the Adjutant-General, the Quartermaster-General, their respective assistants and deputy assistants with little or no input from the army commander. Likewise, the Master General appointed the members of the Royal Artillery, the Royal Engineers, and the Royal Military Artificers without any consultation with the commanding officer. If Horse Guards lacked confidence in a commander or thought he was too inexperienced they would appoint a senior officer as his second-in-command, who could advise about tactics or assume command if he made a mistake.

³⁵ By contrast officers in the Royal Artillery and the Royal Engineers did not purchase their commissions and were also required to attend the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. See Chapter 3.6. for further details.

Although a commanding officer had little say in the appointment of many of his senior staff, he still had complete freedom to select his military secretary, his aide-de-camps and the rest of his staff (Holmes 2001, 332-333).

8.4. Wellington and his Staff Officers

Although Castlereagh had managed to secure Wellington's appointment as commander-in-chief of the Peninsular Army, Horse Guards harboured doubts about his leadership qualities. Therefore, they furnished Wellington with a second-in-command. The first person to hold the post was Maj.-Gen. Sir Brent Spencer, for whom Wellington had scant regard, and thus paid little attention to him during his two years in the post (*ibid* 2001, 333). In his first meeting with Spencer, Wellington expressed his views about Spencer's appointment as his second-in-command:

"... When I went to Portugal they [Horse Guards] gave me Sir Brent Spencer as *second in command*, but I came to an immediate explanation with him; I told him I did not know what the words "*Second in command*" meant, any more than third, fourth or fifth in command; that I alone commanded the army, that the other general officers commanded their divisions; that if anything happened to me, the senior survivor would take command; that in contemplation of such a possibility I would treat them, but him in particular, as next in succession, with the most entire confidence, and would leave none of my views or intentions unexplained; but that I would have no *second in command* in the sense of his having anything like a joint command or superintending control; and that, finally and above all, I would not only take but insist upon the whole and undivided responsibility of all that should happen while the army was under my command" (Jennings 1885, 343-344).

After Spencer had returned to England in December 1811, Lt-Gen. Sir Thomas Graham was appointed as his replacement. Despite having more regard for Graham and his abilities, Wellington continued with his autocratic style of leadership and rarely took Graham into his confidence (Holmes 2001, 333).

Wellington had a similar relationship with his Adjutant-General Lt.-Col. Charles Stewart the son of Robert Stewart MP for Down and his second wife Frances, the daughter of Charles Pratt, 1st Earl Camden. His half-brother from his father's first marriage was Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh. In 1791 he entered the British army as an ensign and by 1808 he had risen to the rank of lieutenant-colonel. In April 1809 he was appointed as Wellington's Adjutant-General, a post he held until April 1813. During his early years in the role he made several suggestions to Wellington, which were all rebuffed. Irritated by these snubs he wrote to Castlereagh complaining about the insignificance of his position (Oman 1913, 157).

Wellington expected his subordinates to carry out his orders without question, and he was not above admonishing them if they failed to follow them. It was quite usual for the Adjutant-General to include intelligence gathering as part of his official duties by interrogating prisoners. However, during the Peninsular War Wellington took personal control of intelligence gathering. Stewart believed that the questioning of prisoners belonged exclusively to him as Adjutant-General. In 1826 Wellington explained that one incident over prisoners had led to a confrontation with Stewart:

“Charles Stewart (third Marquis of Londonderry) was a sad *brouillon*³⁶ and mischief-maker. I was obliged to get rid of him. He used to harass the cavalry to death by constant patrols and reconnaissance’s ... but this was not the real cause of my rupture with him. It was produced by the foolish pretension he set up as Adjutant-General of the army, that the examination of prisoners belonged exclusively to him. It happened that one day some prisoners were taken, and my aide-de-camp, happening to be on the spot, examined them immediately, and, to save time, brought me the result. But in consequence of this, Stewart refused to execute the rest of his duty as to these prisoners, and declined to take any charge or care of them whatsoever; ... This was too much; so I sent for him into my room. We had a long wrangle, for I like to convince people rather than stand on mere authority. But I found him full of the pretensions of this Department of his, although he and it and all of them were under my orders and at my disposal ... At last I was obliged to say that, if he did not at once confess his error, and promise to obey my orders frankly and cordially, I would dismiss him instanter, and send him to England in arrest. After a great deal of persuasion, he burst out crying, and begged my pardon, and hoped I would excuse his intemperance” (Jennings 1885, 346).

In April 1813 Maj.-Gen. Edward Pakenham, Wellington’s brother-in-law, was appointed as Stewart’s replacement, a position he held until the end of the war, during which time there was no friction between them (Oman 1913, 157).

Wellington’s Quartermaster-General, Lt.-Col. George Murray, was born in Perth, Scotland, the second son of Sir William Murray, 5th Baronet of Ochertyre and Lady Augusta Mackenzie, youngest daughter of George, 3rd Earl of Cromarty. In 1789, after graduating from the University of Edinburgh, Murray obtained a commission in the 71st Foot, and by 1799 was a lieutenant-colonel in the Quartermaster-General's Department. In 1808 he was appointed Quartermaster-General to the Peninsular Army, where he served under Moore during the Coruña campaign. After his evacuation from Spain he returned to the peninsula in 1809 as Wellington’s Quartermaster-General (Vetch 1894, 363).

³⁶ Muddled-headed

During the Coruña campaign Moore had kept Murray informed of his intentions. Initially Wellington failed to take Murray into his confidence, but unlike Stewart he did not resent Wellington's autocratic style of command (Ward 2017, 44). Murray was far more competent than Stewart, so Wellington favoured him over Stewart (Holmes 2001, 332). Over time Murray and Wellington developed a close working relationship that it is hard to discern how much Murray contributed to the army's operations (Ward 2017, 42). In the spring of 1812 Lt.-Col. Colin Campbell who had served under Wellington in India, Denmark, and Portugal (1803 until 1808), was appointed Assistant Quartermaster at Wellington's request. His ability to work harmoniously with Murray was a major factor in the development of the working relationship between Wellington and Murray (Stephens 1886b, 350-351). By 1813 Wellington had developed enough regard for Murray's abilities that he confided in him during the latter years of the war (Ward 2017, 45).

Wellington considered himself to be a gentleman due to his social rank as a son of a peer and his Eton schooling (Roberts 2002, 24). He believed that military academies and staff colleges were detrimental to the army, because they lowered the tone of the army, and impaired the cohesion of the officer corps. Wellington argued that the only good officers were gentlemen who were fitted for command by their breeding and public-school education, who purchased their commissions, and who learnt their military duties by service and practical experience (Spiers 1980, 13-14). Thus, he did not employ graduates of the Royal Military College on his personal staff. Instead, he preferred to choose his staff officers from young men with ability and a title rather than with ability and no title (Holmes 2001, 336; Longford 2012, 147).

Wellington's personal staff consisted of a military secretary and at least six ADCs (Ward 2017, 38). The military secretary dealt with the vast amount of Wellington's confidential correspondence, orders and reports that were generated during the war (Holmes 2001, 333). Wellington's first military secretary, Lt.-Col. James Bathurst, suffered a mental breakdown from the pressure of dealing with so much correspondence, and returned to England in December 1810. In January 1811 Wellington appointed Capt. Lord Fitzroy Somerset, one of his ADCs, as his military secretary. Somerset was the youngest son of the 5th Duke of Beaufort. He had purchased his commission as a cornet in 4th Light Dragoons in 1804. In 1808 he was promoted to a captaincy in the 43rd Foot, aged 19. Shortly afterwards he went to Portugal with Wellington (Lloyd 1898, 237).

Aide-de-camps performed a myriad of duties. Besides carrying messages and delivering verbal orders for Wellington, they also interrogated prisoners, and helped to arrange

everything aspect of life at headquarters, such as accommodation, cooking, horses, and laundry (Holmes 2001, 333). They were supervised by a senior ADC, Capt. Alexander Gordon. Like most of Wellington's personal staff, Gordon was a member of the nobility, being the son of George Gordon, Lord Haddo. In 1803, he was commissioned as an ensign in the 3rd Foot Guards.³⁷ He then served as an ADC to his uncle, Lt.-Gen. Sir David Baird. After Baird lost an arm at Coruña, he recommended Gordon to Wellington, who appointed him as his senior ADC in 1809, aged 23 (Chichester 1890, 166; Longford 2012, 114).

The rest of Wellington's ADCs were all public-school educated members of the nobility, who were all in their late teens or early twenties in 1809. Lt. Charles Gordon Lennox, Lord March, was the eldest son of the 4th Duke of Richmond. In July 1810 he was appointed as one of Wellington's ADCs and assistant military secretary, aged 19 (Sanders 1893, 48). Capt. Ulysses Bagenal Burgh was the son of one of Wellington's personal friends, Thomas Burgh. In April 1809 Burgh was a 21-year-old captain in the 92nd Foot, when Wellington selected him as an ADC (Stephens 1886, 327). Wellington's oldest ADC was the Harrow and Cambridge University educated Capt. John Fane, the son of the 10th Earl of Westmorland. In 1809 Fane, known as Lord Burghersh, was a 25-year-old captain in the 63rd Foot when Wellington selected him (Boase 1889, 176-177). Wellington treated his ADCs in his usual autocratic manner, where he failed to consult them about his intentions but expected them to follow his orders without question. This was made easier by the fact that they were all at least 15 years his junior and the highest rank any of them had attained by 1809 was captain.

Wellington was the first British general to organise his army into properly constituted divisions. The divisions consisted of either infantry or cavalry formations, which had their own artillery, and they were normally commanded by a major-general or a lieutenant-general. Divisional commanders were also assisted by their own personal staff (Holmes 2001, 337). Despite having a certain amount of autonomy divisional commanders were subjected to the same degree of control as the rest of Wellington's subordinates, as he failed to take them into his confidence. Two early C20th Peninsular War historians, Sir Charles Oman and Sir John Fortescue, studied Wellington's relationships with his divisional commanders, but came to different conclusions (Longford 2012, 148).

According to Oman, Wellington only deigned to provide explanations to three of his divisional commanders, Brig.-Gen. Robert Craufurd of the Light Division, Maj.-Gen Sir

³⁷ Now the Scots Guards.

Rowland Hill of the 2nd Division and Marshal William Carr Beresford of the Portuguese Army.

Oman stated:

“Robert Craufurd, though only a brigadier, and junior of his rank ... he was one of the very few officers then in the Peninsula in whose ability his Commander-in-Chief had perfect confidence. Nothing is more striking than to compare the tone and character of the letters which Wellington wrote to him with those which he dispatched to most of his other general officers. Only with Craufurd, Hill, and Beresford, did he ever condescend to enter into explanations and state reasons. The rest receive orders without comment, which they are directed to carry out, and are given no opportunity to discuss. The difference was noted and resented by the others: when on March 8th Craufurd was formally given charge of the whole outpost line of the army, and his seniors Picton³⁸ and Cole³⁹ were told to conform their movements to his, without waiting for orders from headquarters, some friction was engendered. Picton and Craufurd in especial, were for the rest of the campaign in a state of latent hostility ...” (Oman 1908, 232-233).

Fortescue believed that Wellington’s relationships with his generals was governed by their social standing. Wellington’s views on an officer’s breeding and public-school education certainly gives credence to this opinion. His correspondence with his old friends Beresford, Cotton⁴⁰ and Hill was more cordial than with his other generals (Fortescue 1912, 420).

Wellington never wrote to Picton or Craufurd with the same warmth as he did to Cole, Cotton, or Hill. Picton was a rough, coarse, foul-mouthed man who apparently treated Wellington with familiarity, which was probably the reason why he distanced himself from him (*ibid* 1912, 421). Despite this Wellington was still prepared to listen to his suggestions. During the 1812 siege of Badajoz, Picton was convinced that his division could capture the castle by escalade, that he persuaded Wellington to include it in his plan of attack (Knowles *et al* 2011, 168). The 3rd Division’s subsequent capture of the castle played a major role in the successful outcome of the siege.⁴¹

It is harder to understand why Wellington kept Craufurd at arms-length. Wellington valued him as a commander, had full confidence in his ability, always humoured him and treated him with exceptional consideration. Craufurd however, had a fiery temper and when he lost it, he would forget that he was a gentleman and would disobey orders. Thus, it is likely

³⁸ Maj.-Gen. Sir Thomas Picton, commander of the 3rd Division.

³⁹ Maj.-Gen. Sir Lowry Cole, commander of the 4th Division.

⁴⁰ Lt.-Gen. Stapleton Cotton, cavalry commander.

⁴¹ For further details, see Chapter 5.5.

that Wellington was wary of getting too close to such a volatile personality (Fortescue 1912, 421). Despite this Wellington trusted him. In a letter to Craufurd he wrote:

"Nothing can be of greater advantage to me than to have the benefit of your opinions on *any* subject" (quoted in Oman 1908, 233).

This was not just an empty platitude as Wellington consulted Craufurd about his initial plan to capture Ciudad Rodrigo by escalade. In October 1811 Spanish guerrillas blockading the town captured the governor General Antoine Renaud, who was initially held at Wellington's headquarters. There Wellington interviewed him while plying him liberally with claret. Renaud revealed that the garrison consisted of about 2,000 mostly inferior Italian and German troops, 300 well-trained artillerymen, and that their new governor, General Jean Léonard Barrié⁴² "was a miserable fellow who was unfit for command." Based on this information and his experiences of besieging Indian hillforts Wellington considered capturing the town by escalade.⁴³ He consulted Craufurd and Fletcher about the idea. However, they dissuaded Wellington from following this course of action (Burgoyne 1812, 4).

As already noted, Wellington believed that breeding and a public-school education were the two main requirements for being a good officer and not a good education at a military academy (Spiers 1980, 13-14). Thus, he did not have a high regard for the Royal Artillery or the Royal Engineers. In his dispatches he regularly failed to give either unit the credit that they deserved (Roberts 2002, 26).

Fletcher was the son of an Ipswich vicar who had been educated at the Royal Military Academy.⁴⁴ Thus, he did not fit the snobbish criteria of noble birth and a public-school education, which Wellington considered to be the prerequisites for a good officer (Vetch 1889, 319). Fletcher was also prepared to challenge Wellington's siege tactics if he thought that they were wrong. In his *Autobiography* Jones wrote of Fletcher:

"He had also the military weakness of being far too honest and conscientious to support or advise any meditated undertaking of his chief, which his military judgement did not fully app(r)ove [*sic*] (Jones 1842, 58).

Hence, Wellington's relations with Fletcher were not as cordial as those with two of his subordinates John Fox Burgoyne and Jones. Burgoyne was another Eton educated officer

⁴² See Chapter 4.10.

⁴³ See Wellington's conversation with Lord Ellesmere quoted in section 8.5.

⁴⁴ See Chapter 2.2 for further details of Fletcher's army career.

who had been raised by the 12th Earl of Derby (Stephens, 1886a, 342).⁴⁵ Thus, he fulfilled the criteria that Wellington believed made a good officer. Wellington's cordial relationship with Jones is harder to explain, as he did not come from a noble family and had not been educated at a public-school (Vetch 1892, 141).⁴⁶ According to Jones they first met in October 1810 inside the Lines of Torres Vedras. Wellington asked Jones to show him the new defences at the right of the first line. Unfortunately, Jones got lost en route, as a result Wellington became annoyed and was forced to make a large detour (Jones 1842, 40-41). Despite this inauspicious start a cordial relationship developed between the two men. Jones stated after the publication of *Journals of the Sieges*:

“... he (Wellington) had the magnanimity to speak in its commendation, and to honour the author with his friendship and confidence through life” (Jones 1842, 79).

Despite Wellington's antipathy towards the Royal Engineers, during the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz he followed Fletcher's advice on more than one occasion. The part played by Fletcher in Wellington's decision to abandon his plan to capture Ciudad Rodrigo by escalade has already been noted (Burgoyne 1812, 4). There were however, at least two other instances during the third siege of Badajoz where Wellington followed Fletcher's advice. First, was the decision taken on 15th February 1812 to attack the Trinidad bastion. Wellington had initially wanted to attack the town's southern defences, but Fletcher argued that the allies did not have enough ordnance or stores to carry out such an operation (Jones 1827, 429; 1846, 376-377). Thus, Wellington reluctantly agreed to target the Trinidad bastion (Jones 1812, 24-26).⁴⁷ Second, on 5th April Fletcher persuaded Wellington to postpone the attack against Badajoz until after a breach had been made in the curtain between the Santa Maria and the Trinidad bastions.⁴⁸

The allies suffered a total of 4,913 casualties during the siege of Badajoz, of which a staggering 3,722 were incurred on the final assault (WO 25/3223). There are a number of factors which were responsible for the high number of casualties, several of which can be attributed to decisions made by Wellington.⁴⁹ However, as Lt.-Col. George Thomas Napier of the 52nd Foot, who had served on the peninsula since 1808, observed:

⁴⁵ See Chapter 2.4 for further details of Burgoyne's army career.

⁴⁶ See Chapter 2.2 for further details of Jones' career.

⁴⁷ For further details about this decision see Chapter 5.3.

⁴⁸ See Chapter 5.4 for the details about the decision to postpone the assault.

⁴⁹ For further details see section 8.5 below.

“... but he [Wellington] has always kept to that system of never acknowledging he was wrong or mistaken” (Napier 2012, 126).

After the capture of Badajoz Wellington wrote to Lord Liverpool claiming that he had been unable to conduct a regular siege because he did not have a trained Corps of Sappers and Miners (Oman 1914, 255-256). In his *Autobiography* Jones stated that Wellington blamed Fletcher for the losses at the breaches, as his intervention led to a 24-hour delay in the attack, during which the garrison strengthened their defences (Jones 1842, 53). Thus, when Wellington moved into Spain, he left Fletcher behind at Badajoz, and Burgoyne became the de facto chief engineer of the Peninsular Army.

Another component of Wellington’s army was The Royal Staff Corps, which was controlled by the Quartermaster-General’s Department and not the Ordnance Department. The corps was formed in 1800 to provide engineers for the army (Rogers 1979, 70).⁵⁰ From 1809 to 1814 on the peninsula the corps was commanded by Major (later Lt.-Col) Henry Sturgeon. Sturgeon was born about 1781 and admitted to the Royal Military Academy as a cadet in May 1795. On 1st January 1796 he was commissioned as second lieutenant in the Royal Artillery. He was promoted to lieutenant in 1797. In 1803 he transferred to the RSC with the rank of captain. He was posted to the peninsula in 1809 with the rank of major, where he served until his death in 1814 (Lloyd 1898b, 131). During his time on the peninsula Sturgeon enjoyed a good working relationship with Wellington. George Napier wrote:

“Colonel Sturgeon – I may safely say one of the cleverest and most clear-headed, experienced officers in the British Army, and a man in whom Lord Wellington had the highest confidence and whose opinion (if he ever took any man’s in preference to his own, which I doubt) he is said to have often asked and sometimes followed” (Napier 2012, 125).

Although Wellington might occasionally take heed of advice from a subordinate, he still insisted that all his officers obey his orders to the letter. Those who failed to do so were dealt with harshly (Roberts 2002, 25). Besides the Stewart incident (noted above) Wellington once publicly reprimanded his chief medical officer Dr James McGrigor in front of the artist Francisco Goya. After Salamanca, McGrigor had discovered that many of the wounded had been left without any food or medical care. So, to relieve the men’s suffering, he had ordered the commissary to send food and medical supplies to them. Thus, altering the supply route

⁵⁰ For details about the formation, structure and duties of the Royal Staff Corps see Chapter 3.6.

established by Wellington. Upon, hearing of his actions Wellington soundly berated him in front of Goya (Longford 2012, 192).

8.5. Conclusion

In 1811 most of Wellington's engineers should have possessed a theoretical knowledge of Vauban's methodical system for capturing fortresses.⁵¹ However, due to a lack of practical experience of siege-warfare, Wellington's interference and several other reasons, the Royal Engineers failed to follow the systematic series of steps laid down by Vauban during any of the 1811 and 1812 sieges. Wellington's only input for the first siege of Badajoz was to demand that the siege should last just 16 days. I have shown that after he had approved Fletcher's plan on 23rd April, Fletcher had persuaded Beresford to alter it on 7th May.⁵² Thus, any mistakes made during the siege cannot be attributed to Wellington.

Wellington used a modified version of Fletcher's plan for the second siege of Badajoz. The removal of the topsoil around San Christóbal meant that the engineers had to construct parallels and batteries on solid rock (Jones 1814, 56; 1827, 44; 1846, 31). The rocky nature of the ground also meant that it was impossible to sap up to the *glacis* and blow in the counterscarp as stipulated by Vauban.⁵³ The two abortive attempts to capture San Christóbal planned by Wellington resulted in over 240 casualties, many of which could have been avoided if the *glacis* had been destroyed.⁵⁴ Although Wellington bears some responsibility for the number of casualties incurred during these attacks, the impossibility of sapping up to the *glacis* must also be taken into consideration.

It is difficult to assess all the personal decisions Wellington made about the conduct of the siege. However, the use of certain tactics suggest that they were implemented on his orders. During the attack against Badajoz castle all the batteries were used to breach the walls and not provide counter-battery fire (Jones 1827, 66). This is very reminiscent of Wellington's tactics during the sieges of Ahmednagar and Gawilghur, which suggests that he was responsible for deciding how to use the batteries.⁵⁵ Wellington was however, forced to raise the

⁵¹ See Chapter 3.3 for details of Vauban's system of attacking fortresses.

⁵² See Chapter 4.3 for the details about the change of plan.

⁵³ See Chapter 4.5 for further details of the attack against San Christóbal.

⁵⁴ See Chapter 4.5 for a complete breakdown of the casualty figures for these attacks.

⁵⁵ See Chapter 3.7 for further details of these sieges.

siege because of an approaching French relief column (Gurwood 1838c, 14). Thus, the decisions made by him during this siege had little impact on its outcome.

Wellington's decisions at Ciudad Rodrigo however, had a significant impact on the siege as well as repercussions at later sieges. The first decision that can be attributed to him was to capture the Renaud Redoubt by escalade, thus saving at least five days of conventional siege-warfare. Fortunately, Wellington's gamble paid off and the redoubt was captured with only 25 allied casualties (Oman 1914, 168). After the redoubt's capture, Fletcher's plan was to construct the first parallel and three batteries on the Great Teson, before sapping forward to construct a second parallel and breaching batteries on the Little Teson (Jones 1814, 84). On 13th January Wellington consulted Fletcher about breaching the walls from the batteries on the first parallel. It was agreed that once completed the batteries would be used to breach the walls and not for counter-battery fire (Fletcher 1812, 7-8). Once again this proved to be a good decision as the artillery on the Great Teson quickly created a major breach in the town walls.

Because all the allied guns were used to create the breach many of the French guns, which should have been silenced by counter-battery fire, were concentrated on the head of the sap being dug towards the *glacis*. The French fire was so effective that it was impossible sap forward so the attempt was abandoned (*ibid* 1812, 10). Thus, when the allied troops stormed the town, they had to jump down from the *glacis* onto bags of hay that had thrown into the ditch before attacking the breaches (Jones 1814, 97). Fortunately, this tactic worked, and Ciudad Rodrigo was captured in 12 days, with a total loss of 178 killed and 825 wounded or missing (Gurwood 1838c, 557).

This was the most successful siege undertaken by Wellington during the war, and his decisions had dramatically shortened the length of the operation. The improvised plan of throwing bags of hay into the ditch proved to be an effective way of overcoming the failure to destroy the counterscarp. The relatively easy success of this siege reinforced Wellington's belief that the siege tactics he had used at Ahmednagar and Gawilghur could be applied in Spain. He failed however, to grasp the two significant differences between his Indian sieges and those in Spain. First, the Indian fortresses did not possess the *trace italienne* system of defence. Second, the Indian defenders did not put up as much resistance as the French garrisons of Badajoz, Ciudad Rodrigo and Burgos (Longford 2012, 59). Thus, when he tried to use the same tactics at the third siege of Badajoz it resulted in an appalling number of allied casualties.

It is probable that at the third siege of Badajoz the decision not to build batteries for counter-battery fire against the guns on the main *enceinte* was made by Wellington.⁵⁶ Despite having a week to sap up to the *glacis* and destroy the counterscarp, the engineers made no attempt to carry out this action. Although Jones acknowledged that the counterscarp should have been destroyed prior to the assault, he failed to explain why it was not destroyed (Jones 1814, 146; 1827, 231; 1846, 212). The explanation for the failure appears to be that the decision was made by Wellington, but Jones did not want to state this for fear of repercussions. After the siege Wellington wrote to Lord Liverpool that the failure to sap up to the *glacis* was due to the lack of a trained Corps of Sappers and Miners (Oman 1914, 255-256).

The debacle in front of the breaches at Badajoz was caused by several factors. First, the failure to destroy the French guns on the main *enceinte* meant that throughout the assault the attackers were subjected to heavy fire from every gun that could bear on the breach site. Second, failure to crown the *glacis* meant that the French were able to bury 60 shells in the ditch to function as mines (Lamare 1824, 30). When the mines were detonated the resultant explosion killed or injured nearly 1,000 men from the two advance parties (Fortescue 1917, 398; Oman 1914, 248). Third, Wellington insistence on micro-managing everything meant that his written orders often contained a lengthy and complex series of instructions. His order for the attack on Badajoz contained 27 separate points detailing the actions to be taken by each unit involved in the assault (Gurwood 1838c, 32-36). This order had been written before the curtain between the Santa Maria and the Trinidad bastions had been breached. Wellington did not however revise his order. Thus, he failed to allocate a unit to attack the breach in the curtain, which was not as heavily defended as the other two breaches (Jones 1814, 148; Oman 1914, 249). Thus, very few (if any) troops attacked the weakest breach, which could probably have been captured.

Although the siege was ultimately a success the large number of allied casualties meant that it was a pyrrhic victory. Responsibility for the enormous number of casualties at the breaches must rest with Wellington's decisions not to silence the French guns by counter-battery, failure to crown the *glacis* and destroy the counterscarp, and his failure to revise his attack order on 6th April.

I have already shown that the siege of Burgos was unnecessary.⁵⁷ Wellington's initial aim after leaving Madrid was to drive the Army of Portugal away from the Duero and

⁵⁶ Batteries for counter-battery were only constructed against the Picuriña and San Roque *lunettes*.

⁵⁷ See Chapter 6.8 for further details.

link up with the Army of Galicia, before returning to deal with the threat posed by Joseph. On 16th September, Wellington achieved his aim when he met the Army of Galicia near Celada del Camino (Oman 1922, 14). Even though Wellington was not equipped to conduct a siege, he still advanced another 20kms to conduct a siege that had no strategic value.

Two of Wellington's decisions at Burgos had a major impact on the conduct of the siege. First, it was obvious at the start of the siege that the allies required more heavy guns and ammunition with which to capture the fortress. On 20th September Douglas had suggested to Wellington that he should request some naval guns from Popham. But Wellington refused to request any extra ordnance. Eventually he sent a request to Popham for some naval guns 14 days after Douglas' initial suggestion. The lack of heavy guns and ammunition impinged on the conduct of the siege in a variety of ways and was the major reason for Wellington's failure to capture Burgos.⁵⁸

Second, the tactics used by Wellington during the various assaults on the defensive lines also contributed to failure of the siege. In two of the three assaults on the outer line, the attacking force was drawn from different units. Thus, the men were unable to operate with the same degree of cohesion and confidence that a unit drawn from the same battalion would have possessed (Fortescue 1917, 577). Likewise, the number of allied troops involved in most of these attacks were too small to be able to capture and hold their objectives. Also, Wellington issued detailed plans of attack that relied on a series of actions to be taken one after the other. The weakness with such plans is that if just one action failed then the whole plan could unravel.

Because of Wellington's autocratic style of command most of the decisions made at the sieges were made by him. His decisions at the first two sieges of Badajoz had little effect on their outcomes. The success of the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo was partly due to some of the decisions taken by Wellington. Unfortunately, the relatively easy capture of Ciudad Rodrigo meant that Wellington thought that the use of the same tactics would have the same effect at Badajoz. Instead, the final assault resulted in 3,722 casualties, the vast majority of which occurred at the breaches, which was a terrible price to pay for the capture of the town (WO 25/3223). Finally, Wellington alone must be held responsible for the failure to capture Burgos. In the first instance he should not have embarked on the siege, but during the siege he made a series of decisions which had a negative effect on the allies ability to capture Burgos.

⁵⁸ See Chapter 6.8 for a full discussion about the lack of heavy artillery and ammunition.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

9.1. Introduction

I explained at the start of this thesis that I had originally intended to examine why the British army was so bad at siege-warfare during the Peninsular War. However, while conducting my initial research I discovered that since the publication of *Journals of the Sieges* in 1814 every British writer on the subject has unquestioningly deferred to Jones' account of the sieges. I found this total acceptance of Jones version of events hard to understand, so I decided to critique *Journals of the Sieges* with the aim of answering three questions.

1. Why is there such an uncritical regard for *Journals of the Sieges* among British writers?
2. Is Jones' reputation as a reliable historian of the sieges justified?
3. Are Jones's conclusions about why the British army was so bad at siege-warfare valid?

This chapter draws together all the points raised in this thesis to answer these questions.

The first section (9.2.) explores why *Journals of the Sieges* has acquired such uncritical regard among British historians. First, it examines the reasons behind the initial success of *Journals of the Sieges*. It then explores how the lack of alternative authoritative sources meant that other writers were forced to use Jones' work when writing about the sieges, thus further enhancing the book's reputation. Then it discusses how the editors of other Royal Engineers diaries and correspondence choose to use Jones' account of the sieges instead of the descriptions given in the diaries. The section concludes with an explanation of why the initial opening of the Royal Engineers archives was short-lived and describes what impact this had on the works of Fortescue and Oman.

The following section (9.3.) examines all the mistakes and errors made in *Journals of the Sieges* to assess Jones' reliability as an historian. This is followed by an evaluation of the impact the various errors have made on our understanding of the individual sieges. Before concluding with an assessment of Jones' reliability as an authority on the sieges.

The next section (9.4.) opens with a discussion about Jones' conclusions about why the British army performed so poorly at siege-warfare, to see if there is any merit in his assertions. I close the section with my reasons for the British army's poor performance at siege operations.

The chapter concludes with a section (9.5.) which first suggests several areas of study that would increase our knowledge and understanding of the sieges. Before closing with a short summary of the thesis.

9.2. Why is there such an uncritical regard for *Journals of the Sieges* among British writers?

During the late C18th Britain experienced major social changes such as a sharp rise in population growth, economic expansion, agricultural reform, and industrial development. The period also saw the publication of numerous newspapers to cater for the dramatic increase in adult literacy. In 1800, 14 daily newspapers, one Sunday newspaper and 250 periodicals were published in London. It is estimated that the same year daily newspaper readership in the provinces was about 400,000 people (Porter 1983, 251). Throughout the Peninsular War newspapers had kept the public informed about the progress of the war. It was against this background that Jones published *Journals of the Sieges* in 1814. Even though books were expensive the public were still willing buy them (*ibid* 1983, 252). Thus, the first edition sold out in a few months (Jones 1827, iii).

The uncritical regard of *Journals of the Sieges* as a reliable account of the sieges began shortly after its publication. This was due to several factors. First, because *Journals of the Sieges* was the first book published about the sieges, there was no yardstick that could be used to gage its contents against. Instead, it became the benchmark against which all other accounts would be judged. Second, because it was written by a Royal Engineer who had taken part in many of the sieges a lot of credence was given to its contents. Jones' personal experiences and his access to a wealth of written sources enabled him to furnish detailed insights into the conduct of the sieges that other authors could not provide. This further strengthened the regard in which *Journals of the Sieges* was held. Third, despite being published without his consent, Wellington publicly praised *Journals of the Sieges* (Jones 1842, 79). Prior to his opposition to the 1832 Reform Bill, Wellington was universally lauded as a national hero, and was considered an expert on military matters (Spiers 1980, 73). Thus, his

endorsement of *Journals of the Sieges* served to add considerable weight to the book's validity, which further boosted its reputation.

In the years after Waterloo interest in the recent conflict led to the publication of a series of Peninsular War histories, the success of which varied widely. In 1817 Jones published a two-volume history *Account of the War in Spain, Portugal and the South of France from 1808 -1814 inclusive*. This was not as well received as *Journals of the Sieges* which continued to have a good reputation (Vetch 1892, 144). Between 1823 and 1832, the Poet Laureate, Robert Southey (1774-1843) published three volumes of *The History of the Peninsular War* (Garnett 1898, 288). In 1828 Charles Vane, third Marquis of Londonderry (1778–1854) published two volumes of *A Narrative of the Peninsular War from 1808 to 1813* (Lloyd 1898a, 280). However, the publication of the first volume of Sir William Napier's *History of the War in the Peninsula and the south of France*, in 1828, completely eclipsed the histories of Jones, Southey and Vane.

Napier (1785-1860) was born in Celbridge, Ireland in 1785. He was commissioned as an ensign in the Royal Irish Artillery in 1800, he transferred to the 62nd Foot as a lieutenant in 1801, before transferring to the Royal Horse Guards. In 1804 Napier was made a captain in the 43rd Foot. He served in Denmark in 1807, and in 1808 he was sent to Portugal, where he took part in the Battle of Vimeiro. He then participated in Moore's Coruña campaign, where he formed part of the rear-guard during the retreat to Coruña. After his evacuation from Coruña he returned to Portugal in 1809. In 1810 he fought at Bussaco, and the following year he took part in the battles at Sabugal and Fuentes de Oñoro. In 1811 he was promoted to brevet major and made brigade-major of the Portuguese brigade of the Light Division. At the end of 1811 illness forced Napier to return home for a few months. In 1812 Napier re-joined the Peninsular Army, which he served in until the end of the conflict. He was involved in the capture of Badajoz and the battles at Salamanca, Vittoria, Nivelle, Nive and Toulouse (Vetch 1894a, 82-84).

Thus, he had a wealth of personal knowledge about the conflict which he was able to use in his six volume *History of the War in the Peninsula...* published between 1828 and 1840. By the time the final volume was published Napier's reputation as a historian was firmly established in England, France and Germany. *History of the War in the Peninsula* would continue to be the pre-eminent text on the Peninsular War until the C20th (Vetch 1894a, 84). A sentiment echoed by Oman who wrote that Napier's "... splendid work has held the field for 60 years" (Oman 1902, iii).

When writing about the sieges Napier did not have access to the Royal Engineers archives. These were kept in the Royal Engineers Museum at Chatham and were only opened to the public in July 1913.⁵⁹ Thus, he was forced to rely on *Journals of the Sieges* and Reid's paper *On Assaults*. The latter however, only dealt with assaults at the Salamanca forts and Burgos. Napier therefore made extensive use of the 1827 edition of *Journals of the Sieges*, so much so that the accounts of the sieges in *History of the War in the Peninsula* closely mirror Jones' version of events. Since no one had published an alternative account to *Journals of the Sieges* by 1836 Napier could not critically assess Jones' account of the sieges.⁶⁰ Napier's use of *Journals of the Sieges* further cemented its reputation as the definitive account of the Peninsular War sieges.

In 1873 George Wrottesley published *Life and Correspondence of Field Marshal John Burgoyne* a selection of Burgoyne's letters and journals.⁶¹ This was the first publication with information about the sieges from a Royal Engineer, other than Jones or Reid. Burgoyne had kept a personal journal throughout the Peninsular War. This is an important source of information about the sieges, and as such it could have borne comparison to Jones' account of the sieges. However, by 1873 the status of *Journals of the Sieges* as the definitive account the sieges was so firmly established that Wrottesley opted to use the account of the sieges in Napier's history rather than the information from Burgoyne's journal.⁶² Thus, failing to provide an alternative view of the sieges, which future historians such as Oman and Fortescue could have used in their works.

A similar situation occurred in 1913 when Henry Shore published *An Engineer Officer under Wellington in the Peninsula*, extracts from the letters and personal journal of Lt. Rice Jones, which covered the first two sieges of Badajoz and that of Ciudad Rodrigo. Shore deliberately omitted the pages of (Rice) Jones journal concerned with the sieges, stating that (J.T.) Jones had already given full details of the siege-works (Shore 1986, 106). Once again historians were deprived of an opportunity to critically assess (J.T.) Jones's work with that from a comparable source.

At the beginning of the 20th Century two influential military historians published different works about the Peninsular War. The first was Sir John William Fortescue (1859-

⁵⁹ This information was supplied by the curatorial staff at the Royal Engineers Museum.

⁶⁰ The year volume 5 of *History of the War in the Peninsula and the south of France* (which included the siege of Burgos) was published.

⁶¹ For more information about this publication see Chapter 2.4.

⁶² Which Napier had taken from Jones' *Journal of the Sieges*.

1933) who between 1899 and 1930 published a 13 volume *A History of the British Army*. The volume about the Peninsular War was published in 1917. Although the public were allowed to view the Royal Engineers archives in 1913, this access was suspended for the duration of the First World War.⁶³ It would appear that Fortescue did not use the small window of opportunity from July 1913 to August 1914 to examine the engineers' records, and thus he was forced to rely on *Journals of the Sieges* for his information about the sieges. The second historian was Sir Charles William Chadwick Oman (1860-1946) who published his seven volume *A History of the Peninsular War* between 1902 and 1930. Oman was not able to use any Royal Engineers archive sources for the first four volumes of his history, as these were all published prior to 1913. The fifth volume of Oman's history, which covers the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo up to the capture of Madrid, was published in 1914. Unfortunately, we do not know in which month the book was published. But considering the short time frame available to use the archives it seems unlikely that Oman could have accessed the relevant siege information and incorporated it into volume 5 of his work by 1914. Thus, because of the unusual wartime circumstances both authors used *Journals of the Sieges* for the details of the sieges, which further enhanced the book's status.

Due to a series of random events by the end of the First World War *Journals of the Sieges* was viewed with uncritical regard. This started with its original publication, as it was the first book about the sieges by someone who had taken part in them. It had also been praised by Wellington, who at the time was regarded as an expert on military matters. The reputation of the book grew when other writers such as Napier were forced to rely on it because there was no other available source about the sieges, other than Reid's paper *On Assaults*. The publication of the diaries and letters of Burgoyne and Rice Jones further helped to cement the reputation of *Journals of the Sieges*, as in both instances the respective editors deferred to Jones' version of events rather than provide the information supplied in the relevant diaries. Thus, by 1913 there was no other source about the sieges available to researchers, other than those published by Jones and Reid. Although the Royal Engineers archives were opened to the public in 1913, the onset of the First World War meant that they were closed after just one year. The closure of the archives meant that Fortescue and Oman were forced to rely on *Journals of the Sieges* for their information about the sieges, which further enhanced its status.

⁶³ The information was obtained from the curatorial staff of the Royal Engineers Museum.

It is easy to understand how *Journals of the Sieges* had earned such a good reputation by the beginning of the 20th century, but it is much harder to comprehend why modern British historians have not been more critical of the book. There is a wealth of diaries, personal letters and official documents from officers and other ranks who served in the Peninsular War sieges which have been available for study for over a century. Yet many British writers still prefer to rely solely on *Journals of the Sieges*.

9.3. Is Jones' reputation as a reliable historian of the sieges justified?

Throughout this thesis I have compared Jones' account in *Journals of the Sieges* with several different sources to assess the reliability of Jones' work. In the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* 87 pages are devoted to the three sieges of Badajoz and that of Ciudad Rodrigo, and a further 17 pages cover the siege of Burgos up to the day when Jones was wounded. In these 104 pages there are at least 53 errors and omissions, which is approximately one mistake for every two pages. They include six typographical errors, where the numbers in the text differ from those given in Jones' personal journal. It is almost certain that the printer's had difficulty in reading Jones' original handwritten manuscript and inadvertently transcribed the wrong numbers. Thus, Jones cannot be held accountable for the printer's mistakes, Jones is however responsible for the remaining 47 errors and inaccuracies outlined in this thesis.

When writing about any event every historian should accurately record the known facts. Even if an historian has a specific agenda he wants to convey to his audience he still has a duty to furnish the correct details, before giving his interpretation of them. Yet in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones provided factually incorrect information on 33 occasions. Some of these mistakes are of a minor nature such as: the time the first siege of Badajoz was raised; the date the French entered Badajoz after the second siege; the date the British began making *gabions* and *fascines* before the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo; or the amount of ammunition the artillery had at the start of the siege of Burgos. Such errors do not significantly alter our view about the conduct of the sieges. They do however, suggest that Jones' was prone to making careless mistakes and that his works should be read with caution.

There are other more serious errors in *Journals of the Sieges* which have distorted our knowledge about the correct series of events that occurred during the sieges. A comparison of *Journals of the Sieges* with other sources illustrates how Jones' account differs from the correct series of the events, which in turn alters our perception about the conduct of the sieges. A good example is Jones' claim that the decision to breach the Trinidad bastion, during the

third siege of Badajoz, was made after the engineers had reconnoitred the town's fortifications on 17th March 1812. He also claimed that this was the only feasible place to breach the town's defences (Jones 1814, 110; 1827, 163; 1846, 152-153). Jones' journal shows that the decision to attack the Trinidad bastion was made at Ciudad Rodrigo on 15th February, a full month before Badajoz was invested (Jones 1812, 24-26).⁶⁴ It is incomprehensible why the decision of where to breach Badajoz's defences was taken before a detailed reconnaissance of its fortifications had been made. By arriving at Badajoz with a preconceived plan the engineers were committed to attacking the Santa Maria and Trinidad bastions, one of the strongest parts of the town's fortifications (Lamare 1824, 20). Thus, they only conducted a cursory inspection of Badajoz's defences and so failed to notice the weakness of the curtain between the San Pedro bastion and the San Antonio demi-bastion, which the French knew was one weakest parts of Badajoz's defences (Lamare 1824, 16). If the allies had not made the decision to attack the Trinidad bastion on 15th February, then it is possible that after a thorough reconnaissance of the town's fortifications they would have elected to attack the curtain between the San Pedro bastion and the San Antonio demi-bastion. If that had occurred, it would have altered the whole character of the siege.

What is unusual about 11 of the errors mentioned above is that Jones recorded the correct details in his personal journal but then altered the facts in *Journals of the Sieges*. None of these alterations can be attributed to typographical errors and they must therefore have been deliberately changed by Jones. However, there appears to be no rational explanation to why Jones changed the details of certain events in *Journals of the Sieges*.

Despite the numerous factually incorrect statements made in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges*, Jones only corrected seven of them in the 1827 edition. Thus, 26 of the mistakes were repeated in the later editions. Jones however, made another error in the later editions. In both his journal and the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* he stated that during the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo that fog had come down at noon on 16th January (Jones 1811-1812, 153; 1814, 93) but in the later editions the time was changed to 9.30am (Jones 1827, 132; 1846, 118-119). This is certainly not a typographical error, so why did Jones deliberately change the time the fog came down?

In the preface to the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges*, Jones stated his aim was to explain why the British army performed so poorly at siege-warfare. However, from the

⁶⁴ See Chapter 5.3 for a fuller discussion about the decision to breach the Trinidad bastion.

outset he totally rejected any suggestion that the fault lay with either the Royal Engineers or the Royal Artillery, the two units most involved in siege-warfare (Jones 1814, vi).⁶⁵ Thus, besides the 33 mistakes noted above, on 14 occasions he deliberately suppressed facts that were detrimental to either corps. Only one of these instances concerned the Royal Artillery. In his journal Jones noted that on 11th May 1811 during the first siege of Badajoz the artillery had fired 160 rounds at the Picuriña but had only hit it four times (Jones 1810-1811, 157). Yet, no record of this display of poor marksmanship is mentioned in any of the editions of *Journals of the Sieges*. Of the 13 instances involving the Royal Engineers, two occurred during the first siege of Badajoz, two at Ciudad Rodrigo and nine during the third siege of Badajoz.

The impact these errors and omissions have had on our understanding about the conduct of the sieges varies from siege to siege. I have already shown that Jones plagiarised much of his account of the siege of Burgos from Burgoyne's official report. However, in that section of his account prior to being wounded he made five factually incorrect statements. Four of these errors are such that when compared to the real events they alter our understanding of the siege. A good example is the assertion that the San Miguel hornwork was 7.6m in height (Jones 1814, 186). During the attack on the hornwork the 'forlorn hope' of the left-column entered, raised and mounted their ladders to try and capture the demi-bastion. As the 'forlorn hope' struggled gain access to the hornwork they were repulsed by the defenders. The Portuguese storming parties following behind refused to enter the ditch and retreated. A similar scenario was repeated at the attack on the right-hand demi-bastion (Jones 1814, 190; 1827, 301; 1846, 278-279). In *Journals of the Sieges* it is implied that the refusal of the Portuguese troops to enter the ditch was the reason this attack failed (Jones 1814, 190). Reid examined the hornwork the next morning and cited the real reason for the failure of the attack. He discovered the hornwork was 13.7m (45ft) high and not 7.6m (25ft). Thus, the ladders used for the attack were much too short to reach the top of the hornwork. Reid noted that the attacking troops had tried to reach the top of the hornwork by placing one ladder above another and pinning them in place with their bayonets. And in some places. there were three ladders fixed to the slope in this fashion (Reid 1837, 11). Thus, Reid's evidence alters our view of the failure of the attack described by Jones.

Despite making several mistakes about the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo Jones' provides a relatively accurate description of the siege. Likewise, his description of the first

⁶⁵ See Chapter 4.3 for a fuller discussion about Jones' views on this topic.

siege of Badajoz does not deviate significantly from the known events of that siege, but for a few errors about incidents that occurred on the north bank of the Guadiana. There is however, one major point which alters our view of that siege, who devised the plan to capture Badajoz? In *Journals of the Sieges* it is implied that the plan was devised by Wellington and his senior staff (Jones 1814, 33). After the first two sieges of Badajoz it became obvious that the allied plan to capture the town was seriously flawed. By omitting both point 8 of Wellington's memorandum ((Gurwood 1838a, 494) and Fletcher's subsequent change of plan (Jones 1810-1811, 140), Jones gives the impression that the engineers were following a plan approved by Wellington and his senior officers, which substantially alters our perception as to who was responsible for creating such a flawed plan.

In his description of the second siege of Badajoz all but one of Jones' errors concern events that occurred on the northern bank of the Guadiana. Although he was not present north of the river Jones was adamant that the siege would have been successful if a trained Corps of Sappers and Miners had been attached to the engineers. He stated:

“With a few sappers, and the necessary fascines and gabions, the reduction of Fort Christoval [sic] would have been certain” (Jones 1814, 69).

Unfortunately, evidence shows that he was disingenuous with his assessment of the situation.⁶⁶ When Jones wrote *Journals of the Sieges* to explain why the British army was so poor at siege-warfare, he was committed from the outset to finding an explanation that did not criticise either the artillery or the engineers (*ibid* 1814, vi). Thus, the obvious answer was that the British army was not equipped with a professionally trained Corps of Sappers and Miners. Hence, it suited Jones' personal interests to blame the failure to capture San Christóbal on the lack of a Corps of Sappers of Miners rather than other factors, such as trying to capture San Christóbal before the breach was practicable (Squire 1811, 55-56).

During the third siege of Badajoz the engineers made more mistakes than at the three previous sieges. However, this is not apparent from *Journals of the Sieges* as Jones concealed all these mistakes. First, the date the decision was taken of where to attack the fortress is incorrect. Second, Jones refused to acknowledge that the engineer's plan of attack was wrong. In *Journals of the Sieges* he maintained that the attack on the Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions was the only viable option (Jones 1814, 110; 1827, 163; 1846, 149) which has been shown to be untrue (Lamare 1824, 16). Third, there were numerous errors made in the

⁶⁶ See Chapter 4.6 for a full discussion about Jones' claims about the capture of San Christóbal.

locations of the various batteries which were constructed to capture Badajoz. Fourth, there is no mention of either the explosion of No.9 Battery's magazine or the faulty design of its magazine. Fifth, Jones failed to provide a proper explanation about the failure to destroy the Rivillas dam, even though there was a detailed account of it in his personal journal. Sixth, Jones acknowledged that the counterscarp should have been destroyed prior to the final assault. Yet he failed to explain why the engineers made no attempt to even try and sap up to the *glacis* and destroy the counterscarp in the seven days they had available (Jones 1814, 146; 1827, 231; 1846, 212).

The points raised above show that Jones' reputation as a reliable historian of the sieges needs to be reassessed. Anyone studying the first two sieges of Badajoz and that of Ciudad Rodrigo should be circumspect when using *Journals of the Sieges* especially in relation to who devised the plan of attack and any of the events that occurred on the northern bank of the Guadiana. However, Jones' account of the third siege of Badajoz contains so many errors and deliberate omissions that it does not accurately reflect the conduct of the siege. Because of the contents of the chapter on the third siege of Badajoz Jones' reputation as a reliable historian of the Peninsular War sieges is not justified, as he deliberately distorted the facts to save the reputation of the Royal Engineers.

9.4. Are Jones's conclusions about why the British army was so bad at siege-warfare valid?

In the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* Jones gave his reasons why the British army performed so badly at siege-warfare:

“..... their [*of the sieges*] frequent failure, and the loss attending them, almost warrants the supposition of a superiority in the art of defence in the enemy, or the want of skill in the assailants. The object of this discourse is to endeavour to refer those circumstances to their real sources which are considered to be-

1st, The want of an efficient Engineers' or siege department, which gave rise to an imperfect mode of attack.

2nd, The inadequate means employed in men, artillery, and materials.

3rd, The want of knowledge of the duties of a siege, in the officers and men of the line, arising from little previous practice, and the disuse of all instruction of such a nature” (Jones 1814, 248).

1. Although Jones' first reason was “the want of an efficient Engineers' department” he was not referring to the Royal Engineers officers, but to the lack of a trained

Corps of Sappers and Miners. Jones explained that the aim in Vauban's methodical system of siege operations was to dig saps up to the *glacis* to build breaching batteries on the *glacis* and destroy the counterscarp. Thus, the troops could safely march along the sap to attack the breach (Jones 1814, 249-250). Jones stated that the infantry were used to construct the parallels and batteries. However, the hazardous task of sapping up to the *glacis* needed to be carried out by specially trained sappers, who would be accompanied by miners. The miners listened out for enemy miners trying sabotage the sap, and if they heard anything they would dig down to neutralise the threat (*ibid* 1814, 252). Jones stated that the lack of a Corps of Sappers and Miners meant that the infantry were used to sap up the *glacis*, but they lacked the necessary skills to perform this task. Thus, when the troops attacked the breaches: the attackers could not move safely along the sap to the *glacis* but had to cross open ground under enemy fire; and as the counterscarp had not been destroyed they had to descend into the ditch as best they could, which broke up the attacking formations (*ibid* 1814, 253).

Jones' claim that the British army's poor performance at siege-warfare was due to a lack of a Corps of Sappers and Miners at first appears to have some validity, but this is not borne out by the facts. Of the five sieges examined in this thesis the only attempt to sap up to the *glacis* was made at Ciudad Rodrigo (Fletcher 1812, 10). At the first siege of Badajoz the lack of time meant that no attempt was made to sap towards San Christóbal. Even though Jones thought otherwise, the lack of topsoil around San Christóbal at the second siege of Badajoz meant that it was impossible to construct a sap to the *glacis*.⁶⁷ During the third siege of Badajoz no attempt was made to sap up to the *glacis*, even though there was a seven-day period between the breaching batteries opening fire and the final assault (Jones 1814, 146; 1827, 231; 1846, 212). The initial plan at Burgos was to capture the castle by escalade so there was no need to sap up to the *glacis*. After the failure of the Lawrie's attack it was decided to capture the various lines using mines (Burgoyne 1812e, 3). Although four mine chambers were excavated during the siege only one mine was successful. The failure of the mines was not due to the lack of miners but to the incorrect measurement of the mine galleries by their supervising officers. Thus, Jones' claim that the lack of a Corps of Sappers and Miners was one of the main reasons why the army was performed so poorly at siege-warfare does not ring true.

2. The second reason Jones gave was the lack of manpower, artillery and supplies. His comments about the lack of manpower were limited to the three sieges at Badajoz. Jones

⁶⁷ See Chapter 4.6. for a full explanation about Jones' claim.

was correct when he claimed that there were not enough men employed at the sieges in 1811, however his assertion about the third siege was wrong. Jones stated that the size of the garrison (4,600 men) meant that 27,000 men were needed to execute the siege,⁶⁸ yet he maintained that the besiegers only numbered about 16,000 men (Jones 1814, 256). Other sources, such as the Muster Rolls, show that the siege was conducted by 27,000 men (Paget 2005, 149). Thus, the lack of manpower was not a valid reason that the allied army underperformed at the third siege of Badajoz.

Jones made three points about the artillery. First, that the enemy artillery was not silenced by counterbattery fire at any of the sieges. He maintained that the failure to take this measure made it impossible to sap up to the *glacis*, the validity of this statement is borne out by the attempt made at Ciudad Rodrigo. However, it can be seen from the evidence noted above this observation was only relevant to the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo.

Second, Jones stated that on some occasions the ordnance provided “were not suited to the service required of them, and they were of little use”. This is a valid point as it refers to the siege-trains assembled for the first and second sieges of Badajoz. At both sieges Dickson assembled a siege-train from the antiquated brass canons from the ordnance in the armoury at Elvas. The lack of a properly equipped siege-train made no impact on the first siege, as the rapid advance of a French relief column caused the siege to be abandoned in less than five days.

The lack of a properly equipped siege-train did however cause problems throughout the second siege. At the start of the siege, the artillery had 46 pieces of antiquated brass ordnance together with an assortment mixed calibre ammunition. This meant that most of the guns suffered with problems of windage, which affected both the accuracy and the muzzle velocity of the guns. The siege-train was later supplemented with a further six iron 24-pounders. During the siege, over 51% of the total ordnance (27 guns) were put out of action. Only six guns were disabled by enemy fire. The rest were damaged through wear and tear, with 15 brass 24-pounders being disabled by ‘muzzle droop’ (Jones 1827, 54-55; 1846, 46). Despite these shortcomings, within three days the artillery created a breach in the walls of San Christóbal (Squire 1811, 55-56). Over the next four days the breach was widened, and two unsuccessful attempts were made to capture the fort. Even if the allies had captured San Christóbal, they still would not have captured Badajoz. Fletcher’s plan was dependant on the

⁶⁸ This was in accordance with the ratio of attackers to defenders as stipulated by Vauban

capture of both San Christóbal and the castle. The first day of the attack against the castle the outer wall was demolished revealing a vertical cliff of clay-slate. Even though the artillery pounded the cliff for the next eight days, they were unable to make any impression on the cliff-face (Oman 1911, 418). The failure of the siege was not due to the problems with the ordnance, but due to the lack of time. On the 11th day of the siege, intelligence was received that Soult and Marmont were both advancing towards Badajoz. Wellington was aware that he only had 25 serviceable guns left. He also knew that the relief columns would reach Badajoz before he could receive any additional ordnance, so he raised the siege (Jones 1814, 68).

Third, the artillery did not use mortars at any of the sieges (Jones 1814, 256-257). Mortars are designed to launch shells in high-arc trajectories over obstacles onto unseen targets, which made them ideal for counterbattery fire. Because of what Wellington had witnessed at the siege of Copenhagen he was opposed to their use. Many of the shells intended to silence the enemy guns missed their targets and hit houses just behind the fortifications killing innocent civilians (Thompson 2015, 121). Wellington knew that the use of mortars at Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo would have killed Spanish civilians, who were allies of the British, hence it made sense not to use mortars at those sieges.

Jones also claimed that on occasions the engineers could not employ all the infantry assigned to work in the trenches because of a lack of entrenching tools (Jones 1814, 259). This problem occurred at the first siege of Badajoz and at Burgos.⁶⁹ At Badajoz the problem was compounded by a lack of materials with which to construct the trenches and batteries. However, the problem only occurred once on the northern bank of the Guadiana, which had no effect on the outcome of the siege as it was raised the next day (Squire 1811 2-3). Although the engineers began the siege of Burgos with an inadequate supply of tools and supplies, the problem was solved when enough tools and *material* were found inside Burgos town (Burgoyne 1812f, 1). Thus, any suggestion that the lack engineers' tools and supplies was a reason why the British army was so poor at siege-warfare does not bear scrutiny.

3. The third reason Jones gave was that the infantry, who acted as workmen during the sieges, did not have any knowledge of siege-warfare. This meant that the engineers had to teach the men how to construct parallels and batteries, which slowed down the progress of the siege (Jones 1814, 259-260). Most of the engineers were also ignorant about siege-warfare at

⁶⁹ As noted above in Chapter 9.4.

the start of the conflict and had to learn what to do through trial and error, something which Jones fails to mention (Thompson 2015, 247).

Jones also criticised the lack of urgency in the infantry's work. He stated that once the troops had dug trenches deep enough to cover themselves from enemy fire their work rate slowed down (Jones 1814, 260). Jones's criticism fails to take into consideration the conditions the infantry worked in at some of the sieges. At Ciudad Rodrigo the troops were billeted in villages between 13kms and 19kms from the town, but each unit still had to parade for duty in the trenches at mid-day (Jones 1814, 85). This meant that the troops had to get up at daybreak, then march for four or five hours to reach Ciudad Rodrigo by noon. They would then spend 24 hours working in the trenches, in freezing temperatures, before having to march back to their billets. Some unlucky units such as 52nd Light Infantry had to wade waist-deep through the icy waters of the Agueda on the way to and from Ciudad Rodrigo (Glover 2010, 55-56). Given these conditions it is not surprising the troops were less than enthusiastic about working in the trenches.

During the first eight days of the third siege of Badajoz the infantry had to work in torrential rain. Trenches filled with floodwater, the ground became a waterlogged mass of mud, which made it difficult to form batteries and trenches, the sides of trenches collapsed, and the swampy ground prevented artillery pieces from being moved into position (Jones 1814, 120-121; 1827, 182-184; 1846, 169-171). On at least five occasions the infantry worked all night to construct a battery only to be told the next morning that it was in the wrong place and they must build a new battery in a different location. Such incidents must have affected the men's morale. Thus, it is easy to understand why the troops did not like siege-warfare.

The issues raised by Jones undoubtedly had some impact on the conduct of the sieges, but they were not the main reasons for the British army's poor performance at siege-warfare. I believe that Jones singled out these three issues to deflect attention away from the two main causes for the army's poor performance, which Jones was embarrassed about revealing. I also think that Foy had highlighted both these causes in his 1827 *History of the war*. In which he was critical of both the inefficiency of the Royal Engineers and the siege tactics employed by Wellington (Foy 1827, 208-210)

Despite Jones' claims to the contrary, the Royal Engineers were one of the main reasons for the British army's poor performance at siege-warfare. Normally engineers were responsible for the management of a siege, as they decided which part of the *enceinte* to attack,

constructed the parallels and created the batteries that the artillery used to breach the walls. Thus, a successful outcome to a siege was reliant on the ability of the engineers to perform these duties efficiently. Unfortunately, the Royal Engineers were unable to perform their duties at the sieges effectively because they lacked the necessary training and experience of siege-warfare. The Royal Engineers' curriculum at the Royal Military Academy did not include any lessons or practical training on siege-warfare (Guggisberg 1900, 29).

Besides the lack of training in siege-warfare the final examination a cadet had to pass before being commissioned into the Royal Artillery or the Royal Engineers was abolished in 1795. The urgent demand for artillery officers during the French Revolutionary Wars meant that the Royal Military Academy staff were ordered to "... recommend for promotion such of the cadets of the upper and second Academies as may appear likely to prove useful at this moment as officers" (Guggisberg 1900, 35). Despite the Master-General of the Ordnance wanting to re-introduce the final examination in 1802, it was not re-introduced until 1811. As it was pointed out, the pressure to provide officers for the ongoing war meant that many cadets had spent so little time at the academy, that they were totally ignorant of all but the elementary parts of the curriculum. Thus, if they were to take part in an examination it would reflect badly on the teaching at the Royal Military Academy (*ibid* 1900, 36). Of the 33 Royal Engineers who participated in the five sieges mentioned in this thesis only Fletcher had passed a graduation examination in 1788 (Vetch 1889, 319).

Thus, the only way the engineers could learn how to conduct a siege was through practical hands-on experience, whilst using Vauban's *A Manual of Siegecraft and Fortification* as a guide. The problem with such an approach was it required the engineers to participate in several sieges to achieve some level of proficiency in siege operations. Unfortunately, the Royal Engineers suffered an extremely high casualty rate of 87.9% during the sieges, as out of 33 engineers, 12 were killed and 17 wounded.⁷⁰ The high casualty rate resulted in a constant turnover of engineers, which meant that there were very few engineers who had participated in enough sieges to become proficient at siege-warfare.

The lack of training and practical experience in siege-warfare meant that the engineers made mistakes at the different sieges. However, more mistakes were made at the third siege of Badajoz than at any other sieges. The combination of two bad decisions were responsible for a large proportion of the allied casualties. First, the decision to attack the

⁷⁰ See Appendix 6 for full breakdown of the Royal Engineers casualty figures at the different sieges.

Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions was wrong, as this was one of the strongest parts of the *enceinte* (Lamare 1824, 20). Second, failure to sap up to the *glacis* and destroy the counterscarp meant that approximately 1,000 troops were killed or wounded when the French detonated the shells buried in the ditch, which could have been avoided if the *glacis* had been crowned.

The second reason the British army performed so poorly at siege-warfare was because of Wellington's autocratic style of leadership (Holmes 2001, 333). Wellington considered himself a gentleman because of his social rank and his schooling (Roberts 2002, 24). Wellington's privileged background and public-school education provided him with a great deal of self-belief. Having witnessed the abysmal failure of the Duke of York's Flanders campaign (1793-1795) Wellington decided that the only way to run a successful military campaign was to do everything himself. Thus, he developed an autocratic leadership style in which he refused to delegate responsibility to his subordinates, but at the same time insisted that everybody strictly followed his orders (Stanhope 1889, 182). This gave rise to Wellington micro-managing everything, which meant that his written orders often contained a lengthy and complex set of instructions that had to be followed to the letter. His order for the attack on Badajoz contained 27 separate points detailing the actions to be taken by each unit involved in the assault (Gurwood 1838c, 32-36). The plan for Lawrie's attack on the outer line at Burgos consisted of eight points which went into minute detail about how the two small attacking forces should carry out the assault.⁷¹ The weakness of such plans, which relied on a series of actions to be taken one after the other, was that if just one action failed then the whole plan could unravel, which had happened at Burgos (Oman 1922, 30).

During his service in India, Wellington, was present at three sieges Seringapatam (1799), Ahmednagar (1803) and Gawilghur (1803). The siege operations at Seringapatam were conducted by Gen. George Harris, and followed the scientific principles laid down by Vauban, with the various stages of the operation being carried out in sequence (Longford 45; Weller 2000, 69). Normal siege tactics were dispensed with at Ahmednagar and Gawilghur, both of which were conducted by Wellington. At Ahmednagar, the town was captured by escalade without any preliminary bombardment. One battery was then constructed to breach the curtain of the fortress, the garrison however surrendered before the building was stormed (Weller 2000, 153). The tactics Wellesley employed at Gawilghur were equally direct. Two breaches were made in the curtain of the Outer Fort without any attempt to silence the enemy guns. Then the

⁷¹ For fuller details about this plan see Chapter 6.6.

breaches were carried by a direct assault (*ibid* 2000, 222). The Inner Fort was captured by a combination of a direct assault on its gate and an escalade of the walls (*ibid* 2000, 224). The rapid success of these sieges may have led Wellington to underestimate the difficulties of capturing Peninsular fortresses defended by resolute Frenchmen (Longford 2012, 59).

In 1811, Wellington's engineers initially tried to follow Vauban's system during the first two sieges of Badajoz. The lack of time however meant that both sieges were raised before the system could be fully implemented. Wellington's only input for the first siege was to demand that the siege should last 16 days (Jones 1814, 31). For the second siege Wellington used a modified version of Fletcher's plan (Jones 1814, 56; 1827, 44; 1846, 31). It is difficult to assess what personal decisions Wellington made about the conduct of this siege. However, the tactic of using all the batteries to breach the castle wall and not provide counter-battery fire is reminiscent of Wellington's strategy at Gawilghur, which suggests that he was responsible for deciding on the use of the batteries at Badajoz.

Wellington made three key decisions at Ciudad Rodrigo, which had a significant impact on the successful outcome of the siege. First, to capture the outworks (in this case the Renaud Redoubt) by means of an escalade. Second, to breach the walls from the first parallel. Third, to attack the breaches without first destroying the counterscarp. The success of these measures reinforced Wellington's belief that the tactics he had used at Ahmednagar and Gawilghur could be applied in Spain. Thus, they formed the template which the allied army used at all subsequent sieges.

Buoyed by his success at Ciudad Rodrigo, Wellington tried the same tactics at the third siege of Badajoz. The first major action was to capture the Picuriña by escalade. In this case the *lunette's* guns had been silenced prior to the assault, but its defences were intact but for a break in the ramparts near the salient angle, which had been repaired using woolpacks and *fascines* (Belmas 1837a, 329; Lamare 1824, 17). Unlike the capture of the Renaud Redoubt this was not an easy victory. Instead, the Picuriña was captured only after a bitter hand-to-hand struggle. The victory was achieved at a high cost as 64% of the attackers were casualties, four officers and 50 other ranks were killed, while a further 15 officers and 250 men had been wounded out of a total force of 500 men (Fortescue 1917, 390; Jones 1814, 124; 1827, 190; 1846, 176; Oman 1914; 240).

Because Fletcher was wounded within the first 48 hours of the siege, Jones oversaw the conduct of the siege (Jones 1814, 115; 1827, 173-174; 1846, 161-162). Whereas Fletcher

was prepared to challenge Wellington on matters of tactics, Jones was much more sycophantic and was more likely to acquiesce to Wellington's demands. Thus, it is probable that the decision not to build batteries for counter-battery fire against the guns on the main *enceinte* was made by Wellington.⁷² Despite having a week to sap up to the *glacis* and destroy the counterscarp, no attempt was made to carry out this action. Jones acknowledged that the counterscarp should have been destroyed prior to the assault, but he failed to explain why it was not destroyed (Jones 1814, 146; 1827, 231; 1846, 212). The explanation appears to be that after the success of the attack at Ciudad Rodrigo Wellington believed that the same tactic would work at Badajoz. Thus, no attempt was made to sap up to the *glacis*. After the siege Wellington wrote to Lord Liverpool that the failure to sap up to the *glacis* was due to the lack of a trained Corps of Sappers and Miners (Oman 1914, 255-256). Although there was undoubtedly a need for a Corps of Sappers and Miners, I believe that the letter was also a means of deflecting any criticism about the casualty figures away from himself.

The debacle in front of the breaches at Badajoz was caused by several factors. First, the failure to destroy the guns on the main *enceinte* meant that during the assault the attackers were subjected to heavy fire from every gun that could bear on the breach site. Second, failure to crown the *glacis* meant that the French were able to bury 60 shells in the ditch to function as mines (Lamare 1824, 30). These mines were detonated once the advance parties from the 4th and Light Divisions were crowded together at the bottom of the ditch, killing or wounding nearly 1,000 men. Third, all the Royal Engineers who were guiding the troops to the breaches were either killed or wounded, which meant that the remaining troops became disorientated and in the confusion they only attacked two of the three breaches. No attempt was made to assault the breach in the curtain between the Trinidad and Santa Maria bastions, which was much harder to defend and an attack against it might have succeeded (Fortescue 1917, 398; Oman 1914, 248). Responsibility for the enormous number of casualties at the breaches must rest with Wellington's tactics of not silencing the French guns by counter-battery fire, and failure to crown the *glacis* and destroy the counterscarp.

The siege of Burgos was unnecessary as Wellington's initial aim on leaving Madrid was to drive the Army of Portugal away from the Duero and link up with the Army of Galicia, before returning to deal with the threat posed by king Joseph. Having achieved his aim Wellington advanced another 20kms to conduct a siege that had no strategic value (Oman 1922,

⁷² Batteries for counter-battery were only constructed against the Picuriña and San Roque *lunettes*.

14). Wellington thought the castle resembled an Indian hillfort and he made a fundamental error in believing that it would be easy to capture (Stafford 1903, 146). Thus, he conducted a siege without a proper siege-train, ammunition, tools, and trained engineers.

On the first night a force of 535 men captured the San Miguel hornwork by escalade. However, the allied army paid a high price for its capture, as according to the *Returns of Absences*, the Anglo-Portuguese army suffered a total of 421 casualties, which meant that the attacking force suffered 78% casualties (WO 25/3223).⁷³ The tactic of capturing an outwork by escalade had been used at Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz and Burgos. Although it had proved successful at all three sieges, the huge numbers of casualties at Badajoz and Burgos meant that these were pyrrhic victories.

The lack of heavy guns meant that the allies could not breach Burgos' first defensive line by gunfire. Thus, the engineers used mines, even though they had no previous experience of explosive mines. Their lack of experience is evident, as three of the four mines detonated during the siege were largely ineffectual.

The tactics used by Wellington during the various assaults on the defensive lines also contributed to failure of the siege. In two of the three assaults on the outer line, the attacking force was drawn from different units. Thus, the men were unable to operate with the same degree of cohesion and confidence that a unit drawn from the same battalion would have possessed (Fortescue 1917, 577). Likewise, in three of the four assaults, the number of allied troops involved was too small to capture and hold their objectives. This was a direct result of Wellington's insistence on using small groups of men to perform these assaults and of only committing further resources when the first group had achieved its objective. Wellington had obviously taken to heart the slaughter that had occurred at Badajoz and was evidently trying to minimise the casualties among his men. However, on this occasion it is likely that massed assaults by thousands of men, as opposed to attacks by just 400 troops, might have succeeded.

Because of Wellington's autocratic style of command most of the decisions made at the sieges were made by him. His decisions at the first two sieges of Badajoz had little effect on their outcomes. The success of the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo was due to some of Wellington's decisions. Unfortunately, the relatively easy capture of Ciudad Rodrigo meant that Wellington thought that the same tactics, of capturing an outwork by escalade, no counter-battery fire and not crowning the *glacis*, would work at other sieges. Instead, the final assault at Badajoz

⁷³ See Chapter 6.5 for a complete breakdown of the casualty figures.

resulted in 3,722 casualties, which was a horrendous price to pay for the capture of the town (WO 25/3223). Finally, Wellington alone must be held responsible for the failure to capture Burgos. In the first instance he should not have embarked on the siege, but during the siege he made a series of decisions which had a negative effect on the allies ability to capture Burgos.

The evidence above shows that the explanation of why the British army performed so poorly at siege-warfare was not due to any of the points raised by Jones, but the two reasons he refused to consider. First, the Royal Engineers lacked any training or practical experience of siege-warfare at the start of the conflict. Unfortunately, the extremely high casualty rate among the engineers meant that very few engineers participated in enough sieges to gain the practical experience necessary to become proficient in siege-warfare. Second, Wellington's autocratic style of leadership meant that although he might occasionally listen to advice from his subordinates, he ultimately made all the important decisions himself. His views on siege tactics were formed by his experiences in India and he tried to apply these lessons to the sieges in Spain. Because his decisions at Ciudad Rodrigo had resulted in a successful siege it reinforced his belief in these tactics, which he tried to replicate at subsequent sieges with disastrous results.

9.5. Conclusion

Although I have answered the three questions that I posed in Chapter One, there are still other aspects of the sieges, which merit further study. As my research was based on a critique of *Journals of the Sieges* its main focus was on Jones' view of the sieges. It is however, freely acknowledged that several witnesses to the same incident can have different perceptions about what they saw.⁷⁴ Because most British scholars of the Peninsular War sieges rely almost exclusively on *Journals of the Sieges* the resultant literature only provides Jones' perspective of the sieges. Such a reliance on one source is inherently dangerous for the researcher is trusting the accuracy of that source. This accuracy does not always exist, as I have demonstrated with Jones' account of the third siege of Badajoz. Thus, it is necessary to examine as many records as possible to try and create a more balanced picture of an event. I believe that there are several lines of research into the Peninsular War sieges, which will further enhance our knowledge and thus provide fuller picture of the sieges.

⁷⁴ A prime example are the witnesses at the inquest of Jean Charles de Menezes who all gave conflicting accounts of the incident (Telegraph 2008).

1. An examination of the sieges from the perspective of another Royal Engineer.

It would be fascinating to see how other Royal Engineers views of the sieges differed from that of Jones. The most obvious candidate for such a study would be John Fox Burgoyne, who was a contemporary of Jones, he served at every siege on the peninsula from the second siege of Badajoz to the capture of San Sebastian. The Royal Engineers Museum at Chatham has a wealth of Burgoyne's papers which include a series of journals covering his involvement in the Peninsular War; his official accounts of the sieges of the Salamanca Forts and Burgos; a collection of letters between Burgoyne and other members of the Royal Engineers; and a set of notebooks that contain information on array of topics. I have used some of Burgoyne's papers in this thesis to assess Jones' version of events but the number of Burgoyne's documents at Chatham deserves to be used to present his point of view.

2. The experience of the sieges from the perspective of Wellington's foreign troops.

Because a significant proportion of Wellington's army consisted of troops from the KGL, the Portuguese Caçadores and the Portuguese Artillery it would be interesting to see how they viewed the way the sieges were conducted. Despite their contribution to the success of the sieges they are often overlooked by historians. I have endeavoured to use as many primary sources I could obtain to reflect as accurately as possible how the sieges were conducted. However, I was unable to find any primary sources for the KGL, only a general history of the legion. There are however, some personal accounts from British officers who served in the Caçadores or the Portuguese Artillery, most notably Alexander Dickson.

3. An exploration of the sieges from the viewpoint of those being besieged.

In four of the five sieges discussed above the besieged consisted of the French garrison who actively tried to defend the town, as well as the native Spanish population who had been subjugated by the French invaders. An exploration of the interaction between both populations and how each community dealt with the rigours of the sieges would be of interest.

4. An examination of how the population of Britain viewed the progress of the sieges.

The Peninsular War occurred at a period when adult literacy was growing in Britain. At the same time there was no official censorship of the press. Thus, throughout the conflict the British public were kept updated about the progress of the war. It would be

interesting to use the papers published at the time, as well as the London Gazette and the Parliamentary Register to explore how the British public viewed the conduct of the sieges.

At the start of this thesis, I set to critically assess *Journals of the Sieges* to answer three questions. I believe I have been successful in answering these questions.

First, I have explained how *Journals of the Sieges* came to be viewed with uncritical regard by the end of the First World War. From its first publication in 1814 until 1873 *Journals of the Sieges* was the only British source about the sieges available to historians. Apart from Reid's paper *On Assaults* published in 1837, which only contained two incidents from the sieges of the Salamanca Forts and Burgos. Thus, every author of the sieges had to rely on the information in the *Journals of the Sieges*. Even when the journals of other Royal Engineers were published in 1873 and 1913 the editors elected to use Jones' version of events rather than the information provided in the diaries. In July 1913, the Royal Engineers archives were opened to the public, but a year later at the onset of the First World War they were closed for the duration of the conflict. This meant that Fortescue and Oman were both forced to use *Journals of the Sieges* when writing about the Peninsular War sieges. Thus, by 1918 because *Journals of the Sieges* had been used by such well-respected military historians as Fortescue, Napier and Oman for their work it was viewed with uncritical regard. Fortescue, Napier and Oman had been forced to rely on *Journals of the Sieges*, because they had no alternative. But since the Royal Engineers archives re-opened after the First World War many documents about the Peninsular War have been available for study. Unfortunately, many British historians still have an uncritical regard for *Journals of the Sieges* and make no attempt to use other sources, such as Burgoyne's journal.

Second, I have shown that in the 1814 edition of *Journals of the Sieges* contains 53 errors, six of these are typographical errors which were probably made by the printers, the remaining 47 errors were all made by Jones. Many of these are of a minor nature, such as the wrong time or date. There are however, 13 occasions when he deliberately suppressed evidence that was detrimental to the reputation of the Royal Engineers, the majority of which relate to the third siege of Badajoz. Thus, Jones' description of the third siege of Badajoz differs significantly from the actual events, which were gleaned from other sources. Because Jones had suppressed so much evidence about the third siege of Badajoz that was harmful to the reputation of the Royal Engineers, he should not be regarded as a reliable historian of the sieges.

Third, I have demonstrated that the three reasons Jones gave about why the British performed so poorly at siege-warfare are not valid. I have also shown that the two major reasons for the poor performance of the British army at siege warfare were the Royal Engineers lack of training and practical experience of siege-warfare, and Wellington's autocratic style of leadership.

Even though *Journals of the Sieges* contains numerous errors, especially the chapter on the third siege of Badajoz, which should be treated with extreme caution, it is still an important account of the Peninsular War sieges. This is because it was published during the war, by a Royal Engineer who had served in five sieges and who had access to wide variety of papers on the subject. Given that many British historians have such an uncritical regard for *Journals of the Sieges*, you could be forgiven for thinking that the book is sacrosanct. It is not. It is just another history book that has some good and some bad chapters. Thus, it should be used in conjunction with some of the more reliable sources mentioned above.

Illustrations

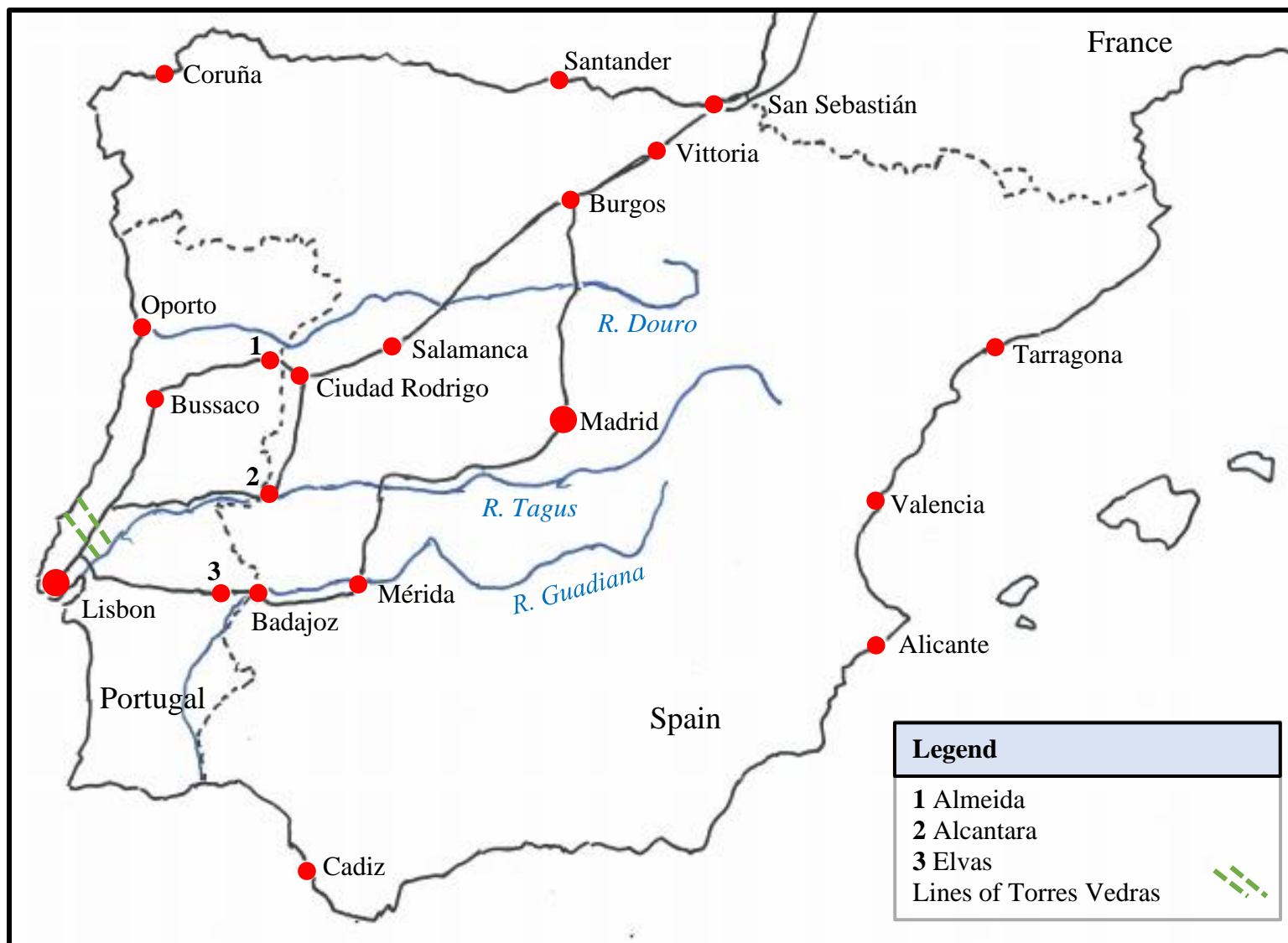


Figure 1. Map of the Iberian Peninsula showing the locations mentioned in the text.

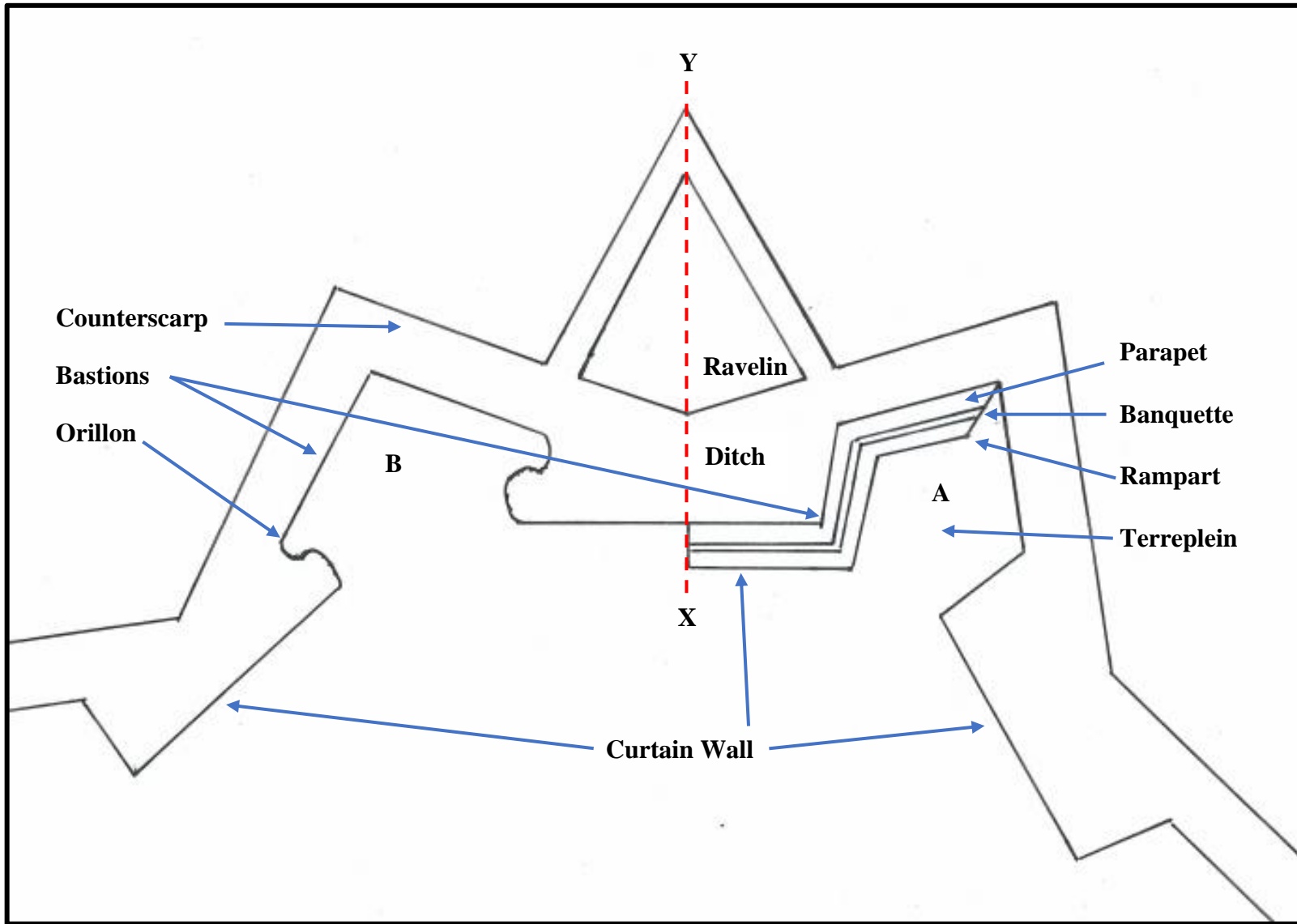


Figure 2. 'Trace italienne' system of fortifications (after Muller 1968, 32).

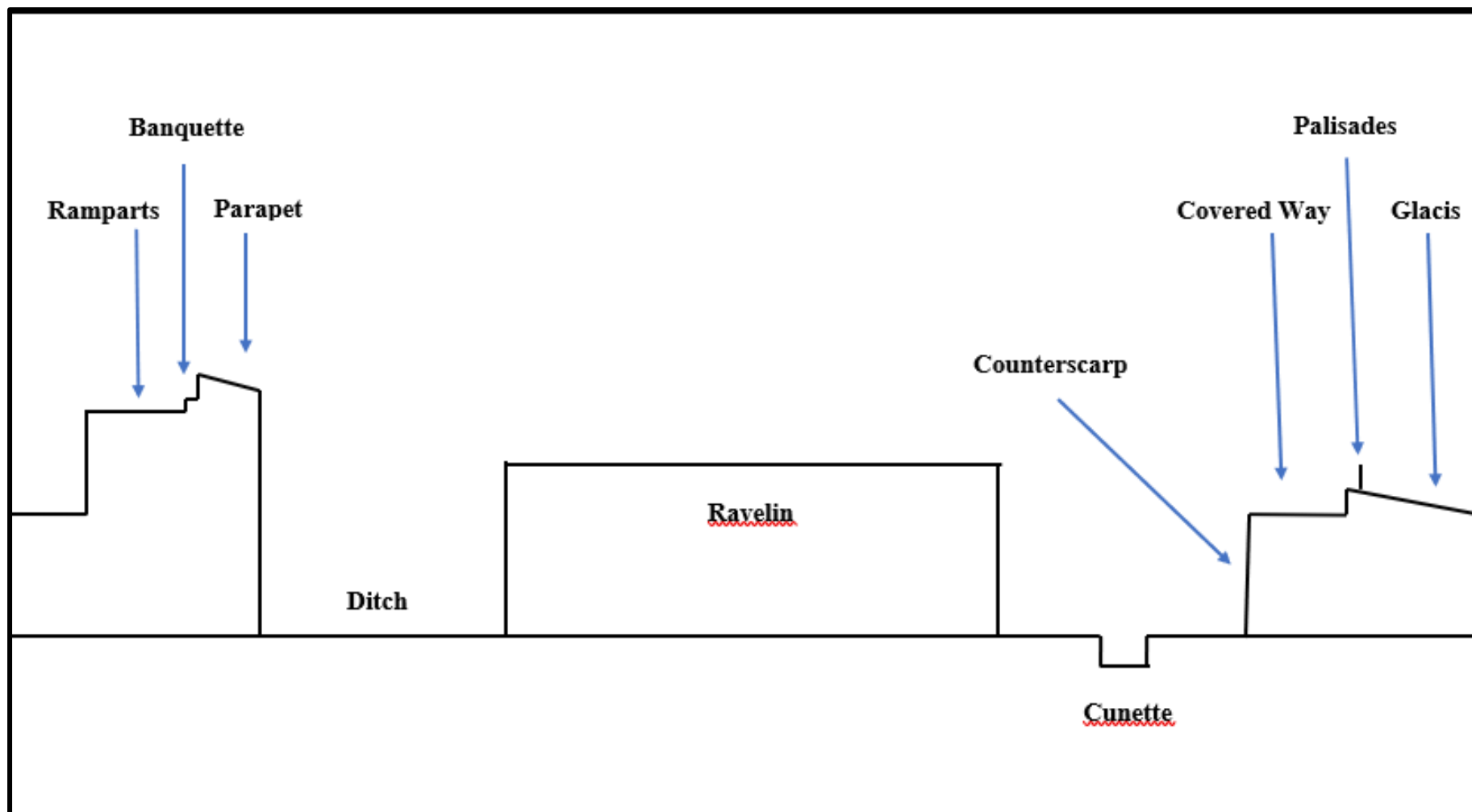


Figure 3. Cross section X-Y of a 'trace italienne' system of fortifications.



Legend	
1 Badajoz Castle	8 San Pedro Bastion
2 Las Palmas Gate	9 San Antonio Demi-Bastion
3 San Vicente Bastion	10 San Roque <i>lunette</i>
4 San José Bastion	11 Fort Parderlas
5 Pilar Gate	12 San Christóbal Fort
6 Santa Maria Bastion	13 <i>Tete-de-pont</i>
7 Trinidad Bastion	14 Original site of the British batteries and later the Verle <i>lunette</i>

Figure 4. 1914 aerial photograph of Badajoz, showing the main features of the fortifications. (Photograph courtesy of Raphael Pardo).



Figure 5. View of Badajoz from San Christóbal showing how vulnerable it is to gunfire from this location. (Photograph taken by the author July 2017).



Figure 6. Location of the San Christóbal breach made during the second siege. (Photograph taken by the author July 2017).



Figure 7. The castle wall attacked during the second siege of Badajoz. (Photograph taken by the author August 2015).



Figure 8. Ciudad Rodrigo from the Great Teson. Despite the housing on the Lesser Teson the locations of the breaches are still visible. (Photograph taken by the author July 2017).

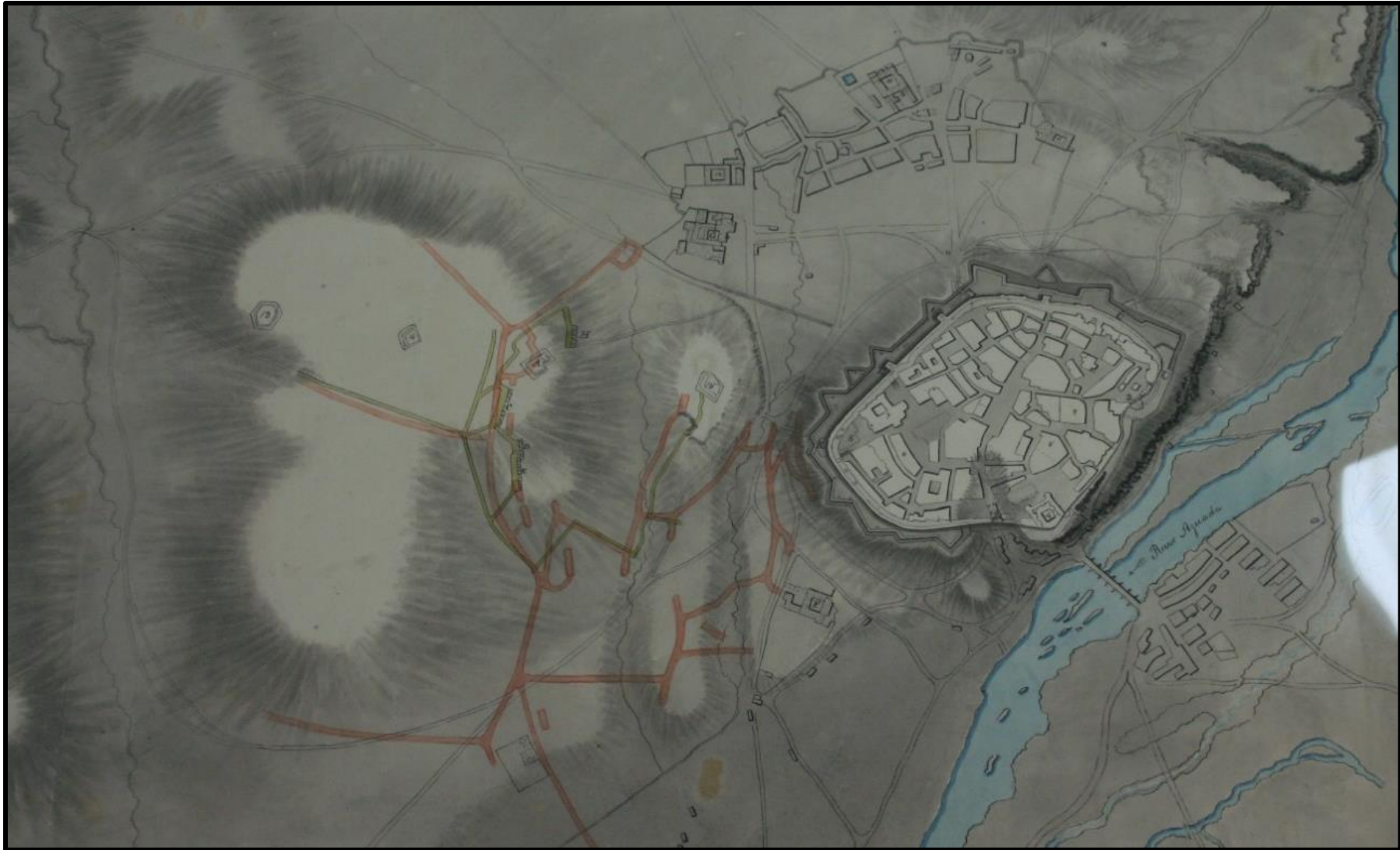


Figure 9. Map of Ciudad Rodrigo showing both the French and the allied siege works. (National Archives WO 78/5905)

Francisco. — The night last
 night for 12 guns at 500 yards dis-
 tance. The night battery for 18
 guns at 500 yards distance.
 The style of business last this
 evening was of its usual nature
 with Officers on the battery for
 high, who were killed by a
 grape shot on directing the
 above service. —

Day of the 10th. —
 One thousand men were em-
 ployed on the batteries, parallel
 & approaches. —

Night between 11th & 11th. —
 Twelve hundred men were em-
 ployed for work, 500 of them were
 employed to form the commu-
 nications from the parallel
 to the batteries, to form a trench
 of support & communication
 between the center & left bat-
 teries & to excavate for the
 magazines. —
 The remaining 700 men were
 employed on the batteries, pa-
 rallel & approaches. —

Day of the 11th. —
 1000 men were employed on
 the batteries, parallel, approaches
 & communications and
 magazines. —

Night between 11th & 12th. —
 The working party consisted
 of 1200 men & were employed
 as on the previous night.
 The enemy advanced one of
 the howitzers from the top of
 the convent of St. Francisco
 into the garden in the west
 entrenchment line of the left
 battery & parallel, & much
 interrupted the progress of the
 work by its fire.
 From the commencement of the
 attack

1201/4
 The work during the night
 the party was withdrawn.
 Between 10 & 11 A.M. the
 enemy made a sally, drove
 the guard from the convent
 of St. Cruz & succeeded in
 overrunning the greater part
 of the left battery work in

Figure 10. A page from Fletcher's Official Report of the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. (National Archives WO 28/1203).

The remaining 700 were employed on
 the batteries, parallel & approaches. —

Day of the 11th Jan^y. 1000 men were
 employed on the Batteries, Parallel,
 Approaches, communications & Magazines.

Night Between the 11th & 12th Jan^y. The
 working party consisted of 1200 men
 and were employed as on the previous
 night. — The enemy advanced one
 of the howitzers from the top of the
 Convent of St. Francisco into the garden
 in the west entrenchment line of the left
 Battery & Parallel and much interrupted
 the progress of the work by its fire.

Day of 12th Jan^y. 1200 working men
 were employed on the batteries, parallel
 communications & approaches. — The
 Carpenters began to lay the platforms &c

Figure 11. A page from Jones' personal journal about the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo, (Royal Engineers Museum Ref. 5501 59/2)



Figure 12. Site of the 'Great Breach' at Ciudad Rodrigo. (Photograph taken by the author August 2015).

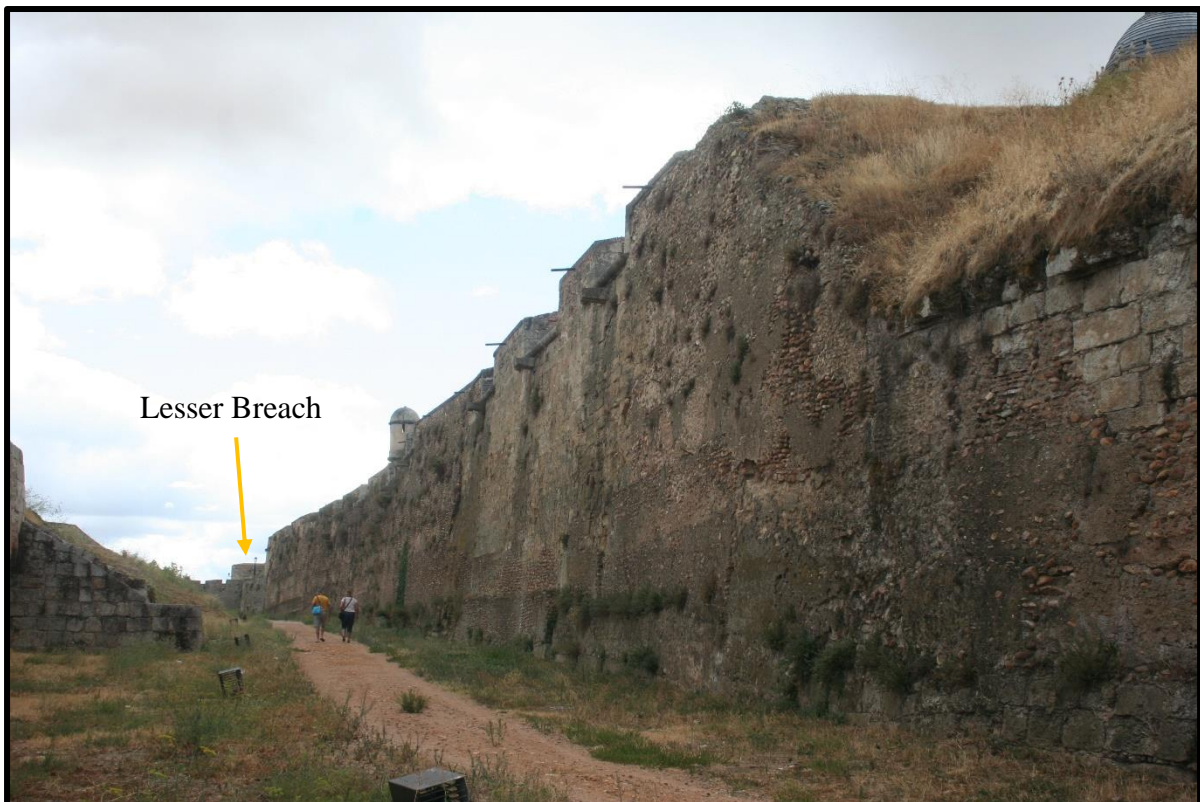


Figure 13. Ciudad Rodrigo looking from the 'Great Breach' towards the 'Lesser Breach'. (Photograph taken by the author August 2015)



Figure 14. Site of the 'Lesser Breach' rebuilt as a new gateway into the old town of Ciudad Rodrigo. (Photograph taken by the author August 2015).

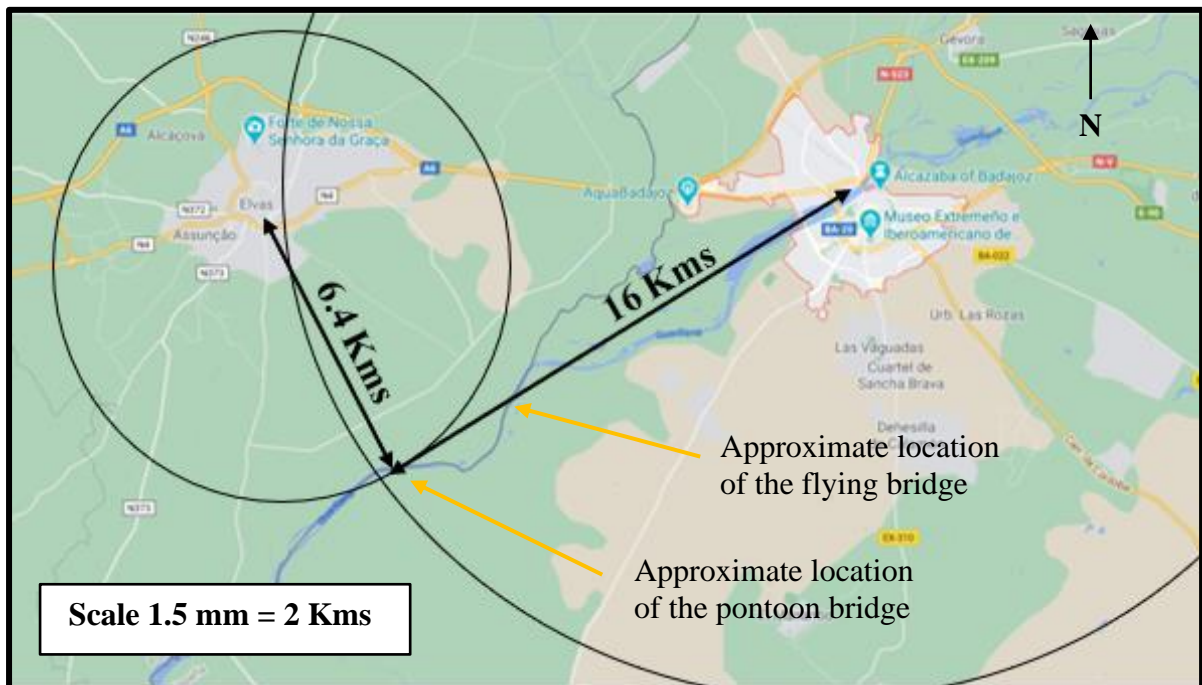


Figure 15. Map showing the approximate location of the pontoon and flying bridges built across the Guadiana before the third siege of Badajoz. (Image from Google Maps accessed in August 2020).

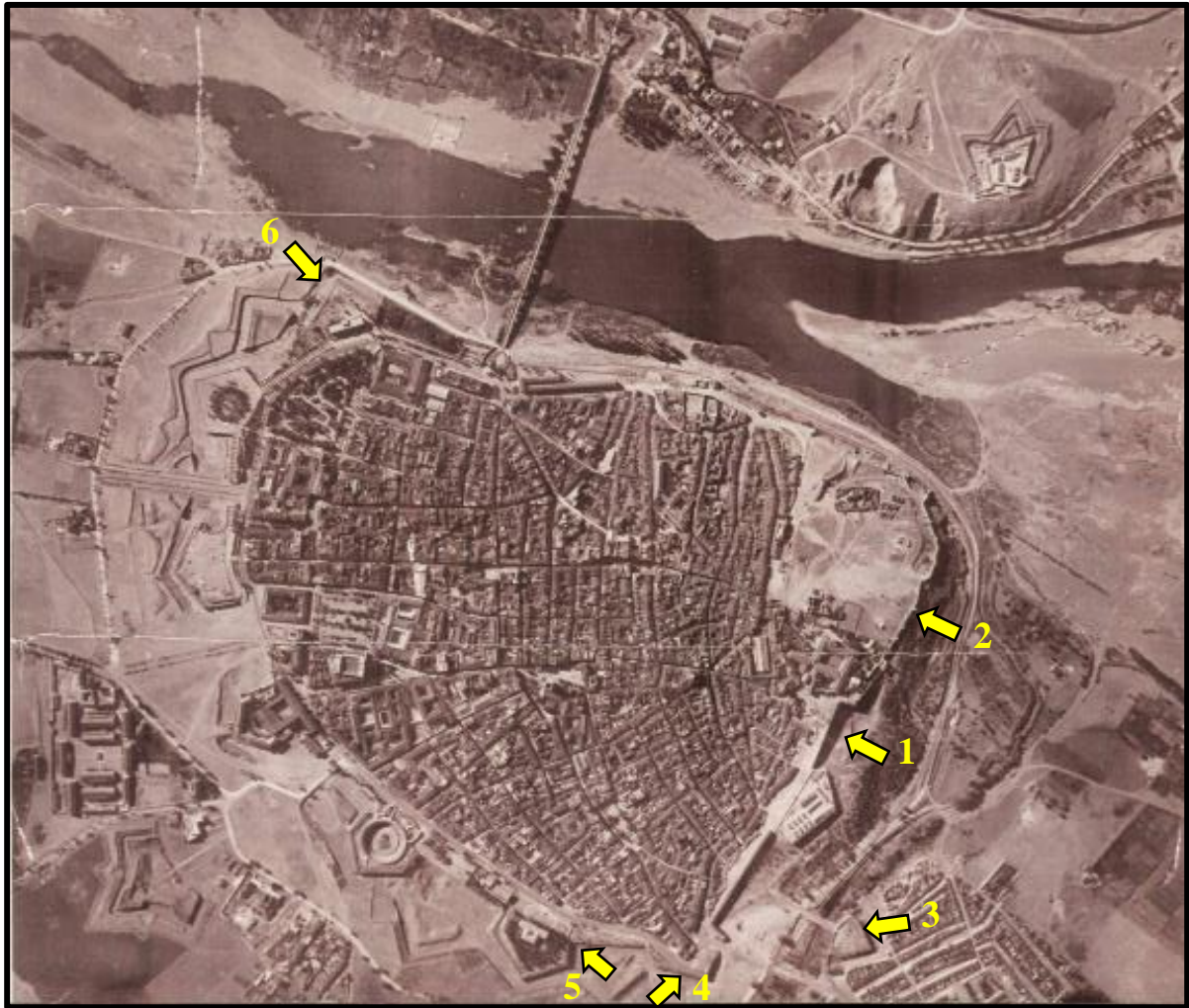


Figure 16. Map showing the third siege of Badajoz. (National Archives WO 78/1017/7/16).



Legend	
1 Fort Pardaleras	7 The Trinidad Bastion
2 Pilar Gate	8 San Pedro Bastion
3 Santa Maria Bastion	9 Site of the dam across the Rivillas
4 Site of breach in the Santa Maria Bastion	10 The San Roque <i>lunette</i>
5 Site of breach in the curtain between Santa Maria and Trinidad	11 The Picuriña
6 Site of breach in the Trinidad Bastion	12 Section of the Picuriña that is still standing

Figure 17. 1914 aerial photograph of the south-eastern section of Badajoz's fortifications. (Photograph courtesy of Raphael Pardo).



Legend	
1 Site of first attack against the castle	4 Attack against the Trinidad Bastion
2 Site of second attack against the castle	5 Attack against the Santa Maria Bastion
3 Attack against the San Roque <i>lunette</i>	6 Attack against the San Vincente Bastion

Figure 18. 1914 aerial photograph of Badajoz. The arrows indicate the British attacks on 6th April 1812. (Photograph courtesy of Raphael Pardo).



Figure 19. The castle walls which were successfully escalated by the 3rd Division on 6th April 1812. (Photograph taken by the author July 2017).



Figure 20. Left flank of the Santa Maria bastion. The breach was located between the two lamp posts shown in the picture. (Photograph was taken by the author August 2015).

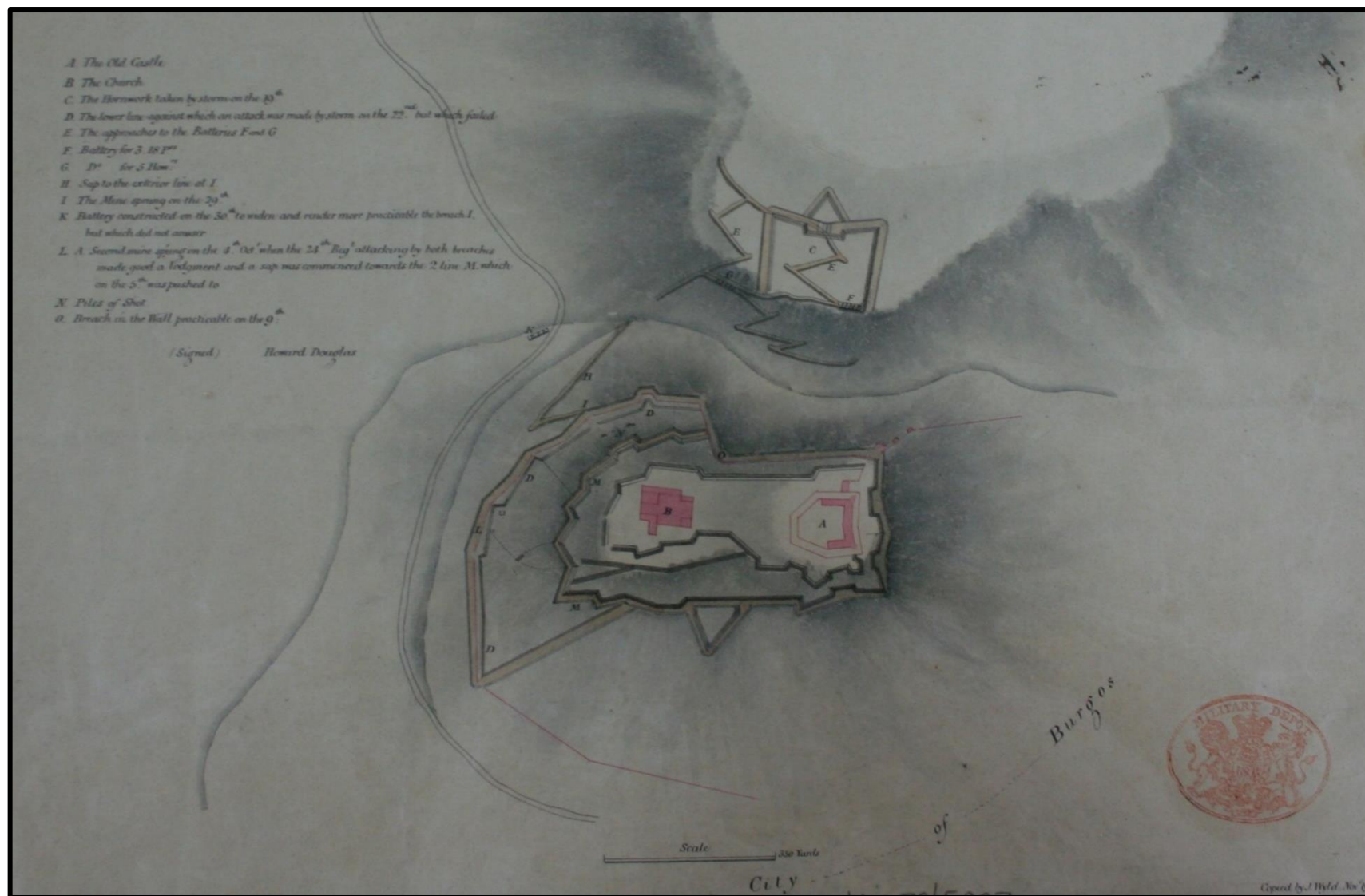


Figure 21. Map of the siege of Burgos. (National Archives WO 78/5907).

(206)

11th October.

Continued to fire hot shot from the 18-pounders with no effect.

The distance of the terrace in front of the church of St. Roman, from the house where the gallery was commenced, was found by measurement this night to be upwards of 50 yards, which was much more than expected, but the soil working extremely easy, it was continued.

12th October.

The weather very bad, with violent rains.

The gallery towards St. Roman measured in the morning 27, and in the evening 34 yards.

13th October.

The earth escarp of the second line under La Blanca was so much injured by the little firing that had been on it, that if the supply of ammunition would have admitted of a further expenditure, a perfect and extensive practicable breach would readily have been made in it: much of the palisading in the ditch had also been cut away, and though that had been effected several days, the garrison had done nothing to repair the mischief.

The enemy had by this time, notwithstanding every endeavour to prevent him, cleared away by degrees in the night about 8 feet of the top of the breach (F.) and had formed a small trench at the

stone palisades from the 2nd to the 3rd above, a short distance to our left of the breach to cut it off on that side & a piece of the ramp to fire on the parapet. —
Our 24th that was nearly expended, the 18th shot fired by the enemy was collected & made to serve for our 18 pounders. — small quantities of powder we had received from the garrison
11th October 1812

Continued with hot shot from the 18th shot that the distance to the terrace in front of the church of St. Roman from the house where the gallery was commenced, was found by measurement at night to be upwards of 50 yards, which was much more than we imagined, but the soil working extremely easy, it was continued
12th October 1812

The weather continued very bad, with violent rains. —
The gallery towards St. Roman was 34 yards
13th October 1812

The earth escarp of the second line under La Blanca was so much injured by the little firing that had been on it, that if we had had more gun & ammunition a perfect & extensive practicable breach would easily have been made in it. — much of the palisading in the ditch had also been cut. — Though the garrison had been effected several days, the enemy had done nothing to repair the mischief.
The enemy had by this time, notwithstanding our endeavours to prevent him, cleared away by degrees in the night about 8 feet at the top of the breach & had a small trench at the back of the rubbish which enabled them to work under cover.
At night the four embrasures of No 3 battery were attempted to fire on the castle, but the guns were not got in. —
14th October 1812

At night, the guns were got in to No 3, viz, one good 18 pounder, the two damaged 18th & one carronade.

Figure 22. A page from 'Journals of the Sieges' covering 11th to 13th October 1812. (Copied from Jones 1814,206),

Figure 23. A page of Burgoyne's official report on Burgos covering 11th to 13th October 1812. (Royal Engineers Museum Ref 4601-72 1812.16).



PLANO DE LA PLAZA DE BADAJOZ Y TERRENOS DE SUS CONTORNOS,
 con los ataques que hicieron los enemigos desde el 30 de enero de 1811, en que los empezaron, hasta el 10 de marzo, que capituló después de perfeccionada la brecha.

Explicacion.

1. Baluarte de S. Vicente.
2. idem de S. José.
3. idem de Santiago
4. idem de S. Juan.
5. idem de Sta. Maria
6. idem de S. Roque.
7. idem de Trinidad.
8. idem de S. Pedro.
9. Castillo.
10. Puerta de las Palmas.
11. idem de Mérida.
12. idem de la Trinidad.
13. idem del Pilar
14. Fuerte de Pardaleras.
15. idem de la Picurina.
16. Rebellin de S. Roque.
17. Fortificación de la cabeza del puente.
18. Fuerte de S. Cristoval.

19. Puente sobre el Guadiana.
20. Vestigios de las antiguas líneas de Wercik.
21. Torre de Sta. Engracia.
22. Molinos.
23. Alturas de S. Miguel.
24. idem del Almendro.
25. Cerros de Lebratos.
26. Cerro del Viento.
27. Camino á Talaverilla.
28. Camino á Olivençilla.
29. Camino á Valverde.
30. Camino á la Alouera.
31. Camino á Elvas.
32. Camino á Campomayor.
33. Camino á Albarquerque.
34. Arroyo Recillas.
35. Rio Guadiana.

Obras de los enemigos.

- A. Bateria en el cerro de S. Miguel de 4 cañones y un obus.
- B. idem en el del Almendro de 3 cañones y 1 obus.
- C. Baterias para desmontar los juegos de la cortina del Pilar y baluartes de Sta. Maria y S. José.
- D. Bateria del molino de 3 morteros y 2 obuses.
- E. Bat. de brecha de 7 piezas de a 24.
- F. Retrincheramientos en el cerro del Viento.
- G. Ramales de trinchera para aproximarse al fuerte de Pardaleras.
- H. Línea de circuncalacion.
- I. Reductos al extremo de esta línea apoyados al río.

*Revised at Cadix
 by - [Signature]
 Major [Signature]*

Figure 24. Spanish map showing the 1811 French siege of Badajoz. (National Archives WO 78/5889).



Figure 25. The remains of the San Francisco convent. (Photograph taken by the author August 2015).

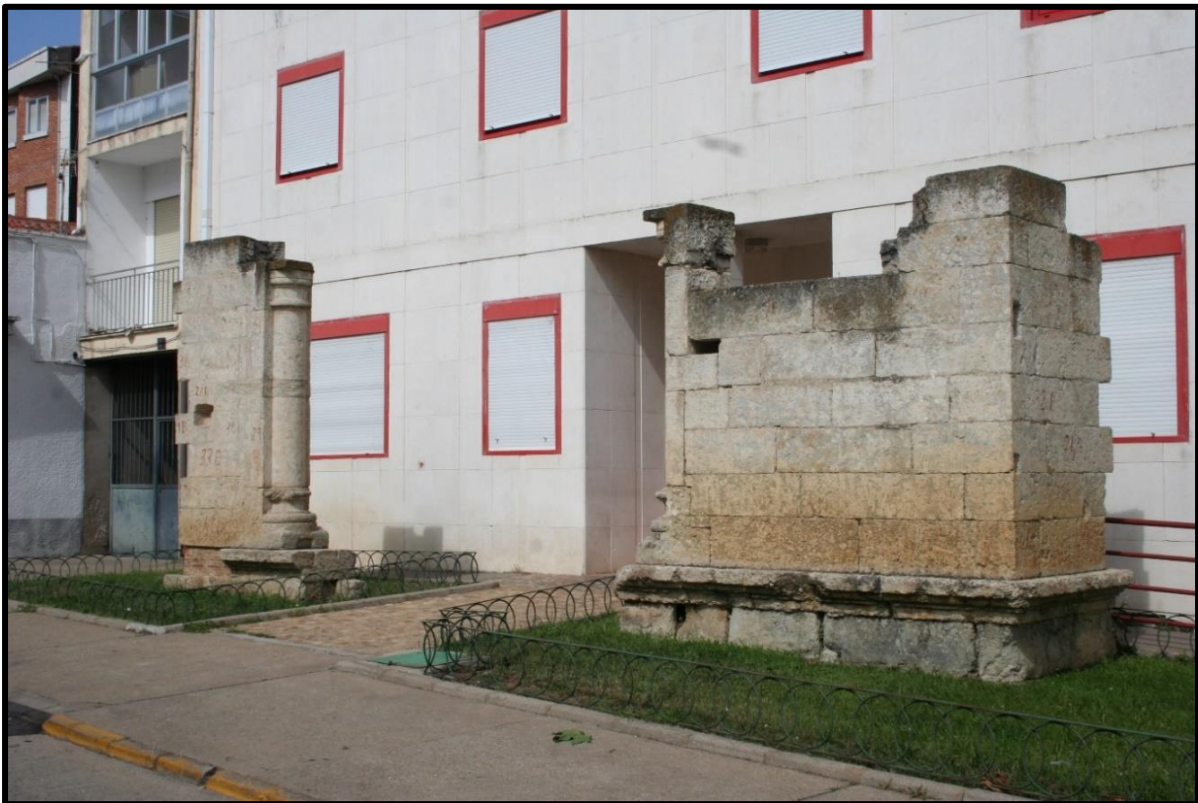


Figure 26. The remains of the doorway of the San Domingo convent. (Photograph taken by the author July 2017).



Figure 27. View of Ciudad Rodrigo from the southern earthwork on the Great Teson. (Photograph taken by the author July 2017).



Legend	
1 The location of the Renaud Redoubt	3 The French first parallel of 1810
2 The British communication trench	4 The French Communication trench of 1810

Figure 28. View of the cropmarks from the siege-works on the Great Teson (Image taken from Google Maps accessed July 2017).

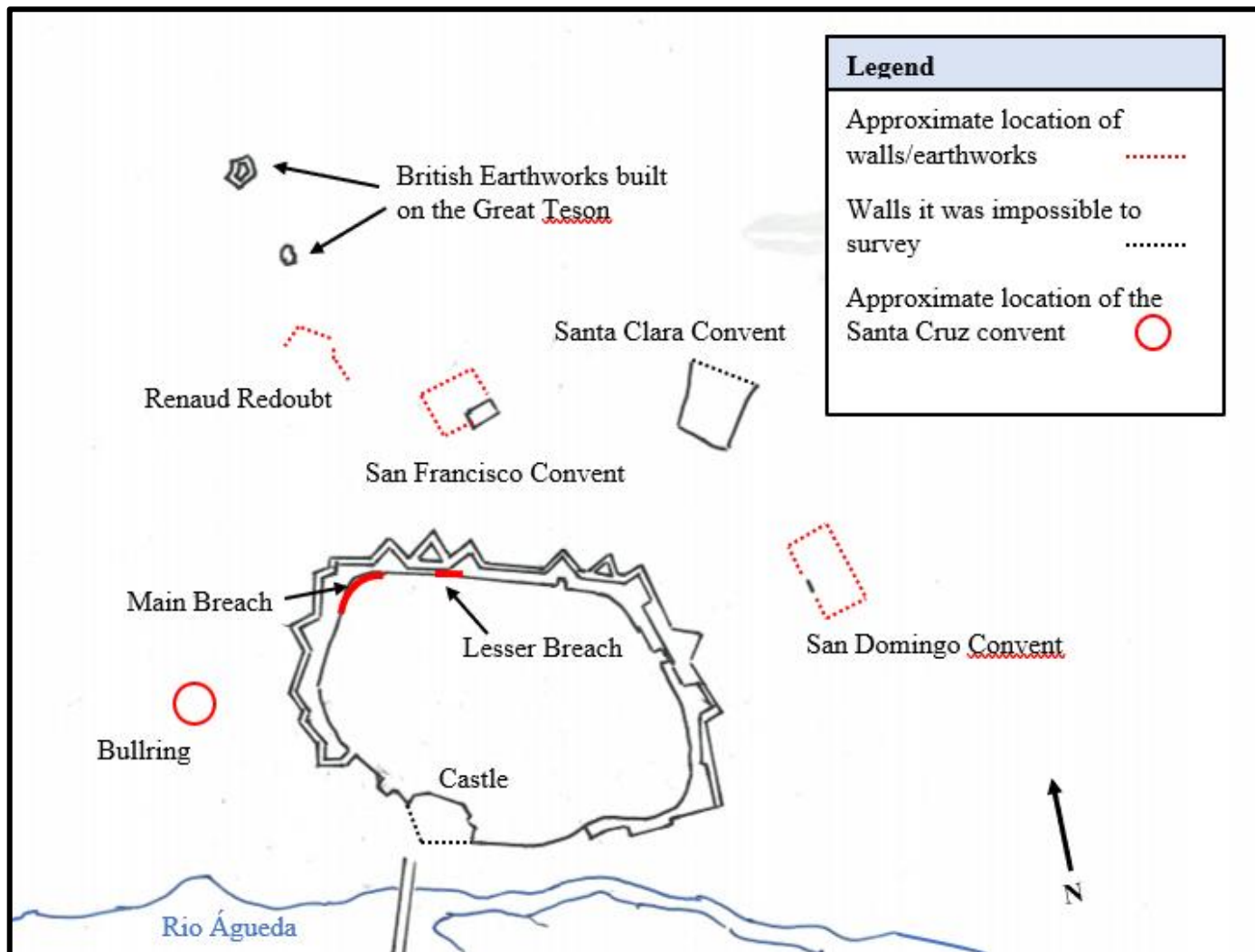


Figure 29. Map of Ciudad Rodrigo showing the locations of the fortifications that existed in 1812



Figure 30. View of the Picuriña showing the remains of the right face of the lunette. (Photograph taken by the author July 2017).



Figure 31. Aerial view of the remains of the Picuriña with the approximate location of the lunette superimposed on the image. (Image obtained from Google Maps accessed in August 2020).

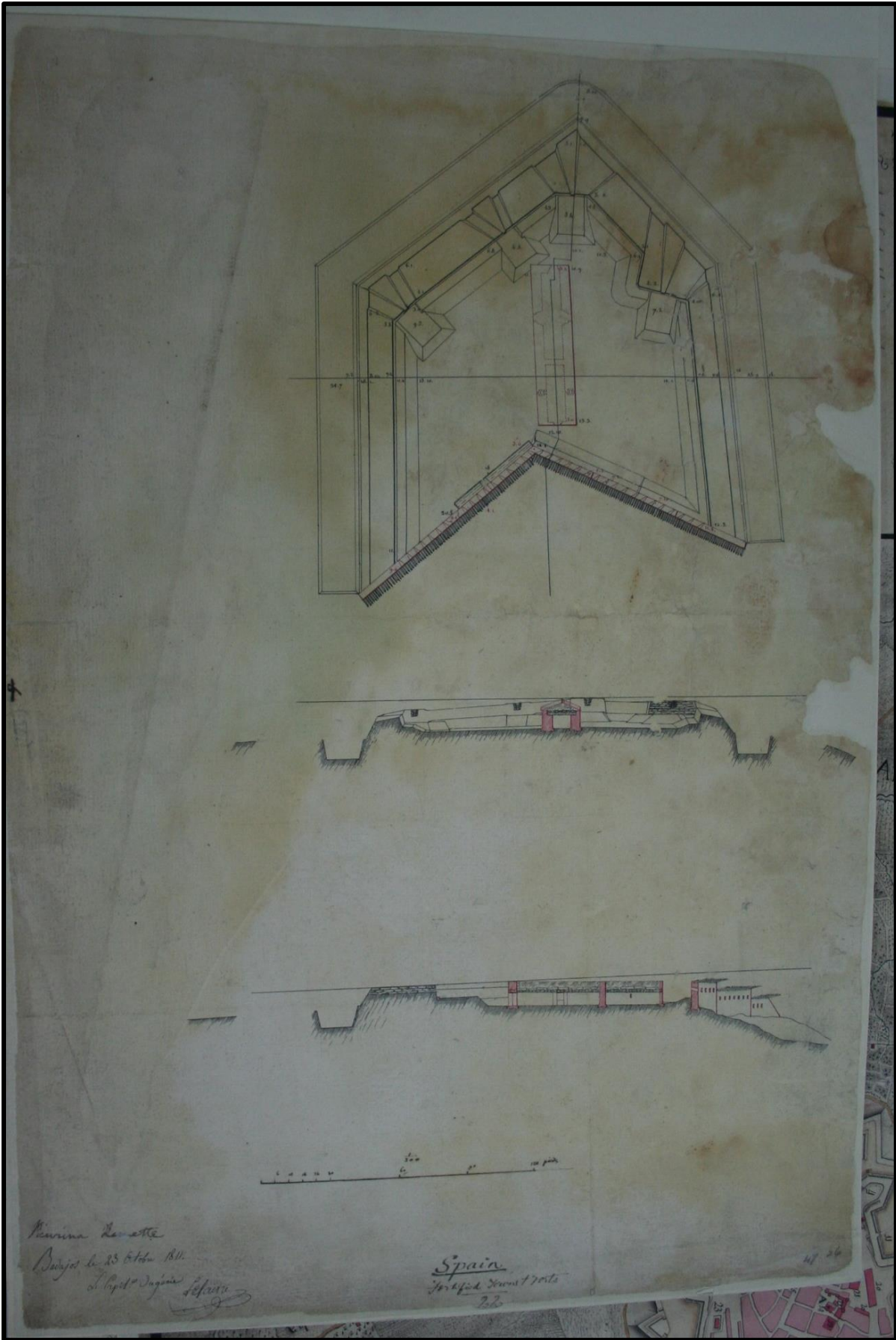


Figure 32. French plan of the Picuriña drawn October 1811. (National Archives WO 78/1017/6/46).

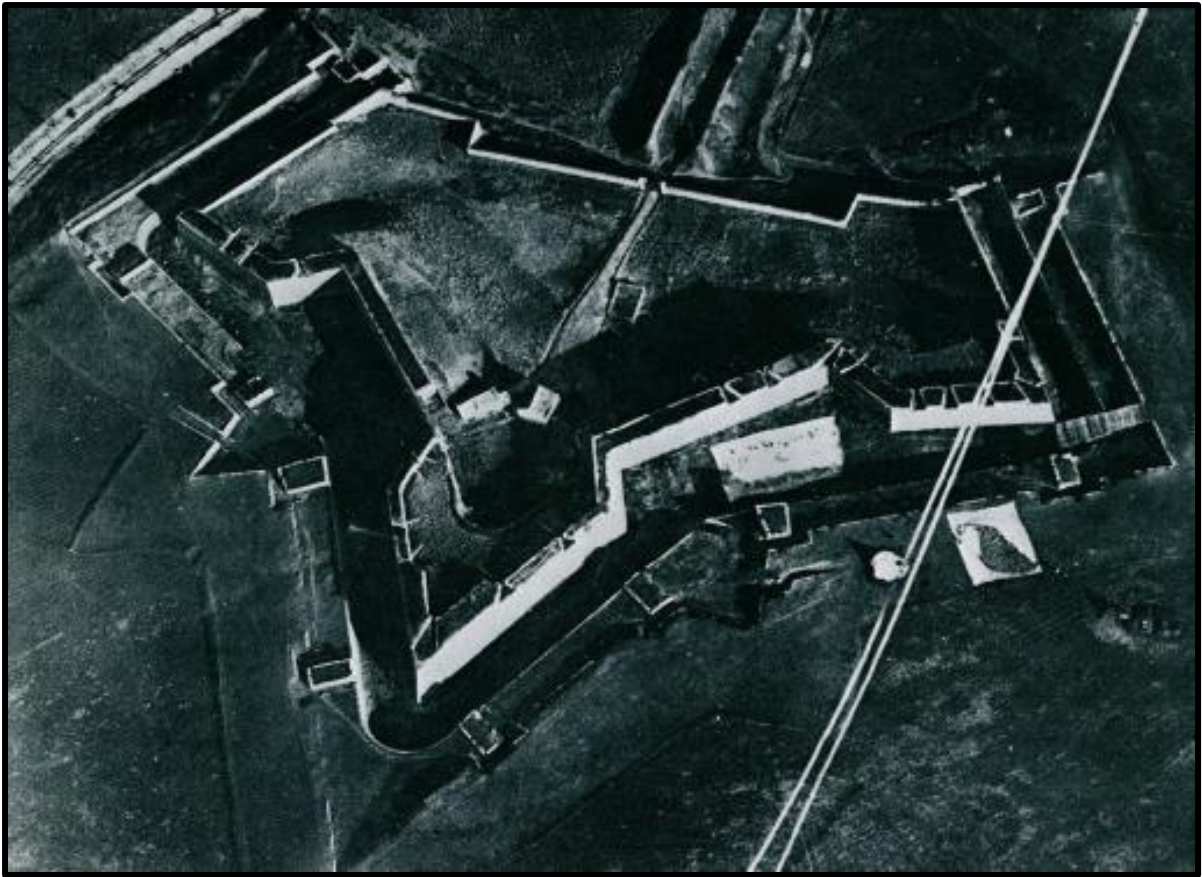


Figure 33. 1914 aerial photograph of Fort Pardaleras. (Photograph courtesy of Raphael Pardo).

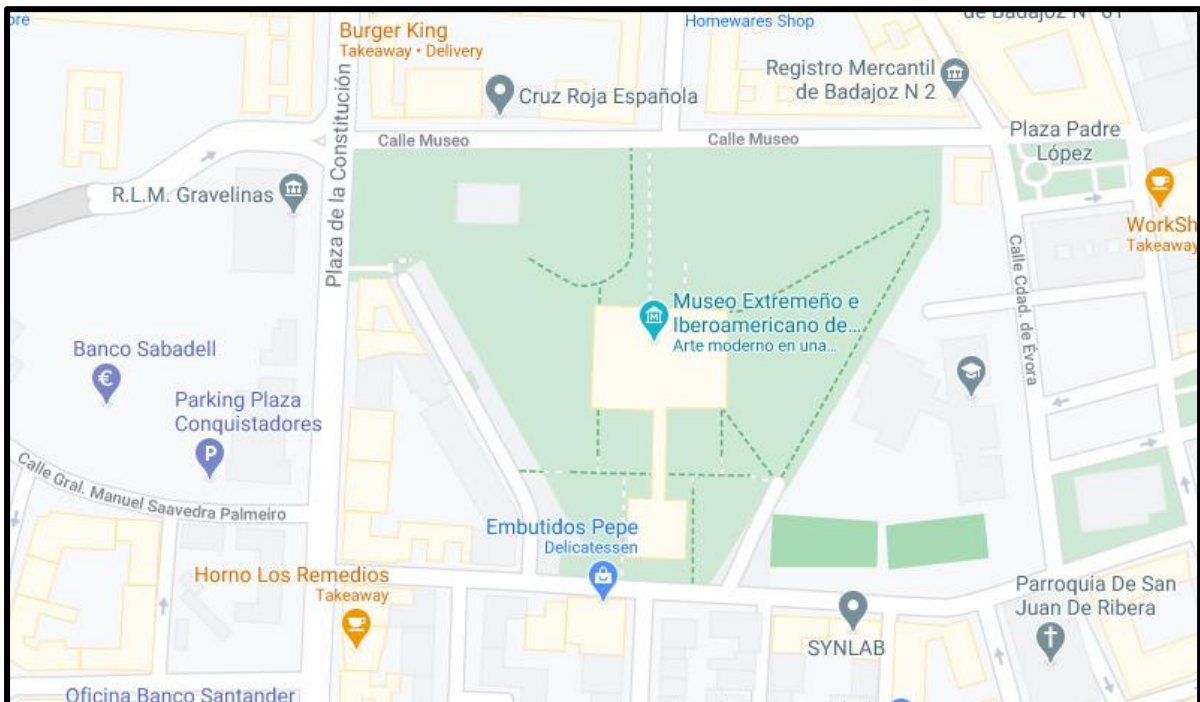


Figure 34. View of the street pattern of Badajoz showing the approximate location of Fort Pardaleras. (Image from Google Maps accessed August 2020).

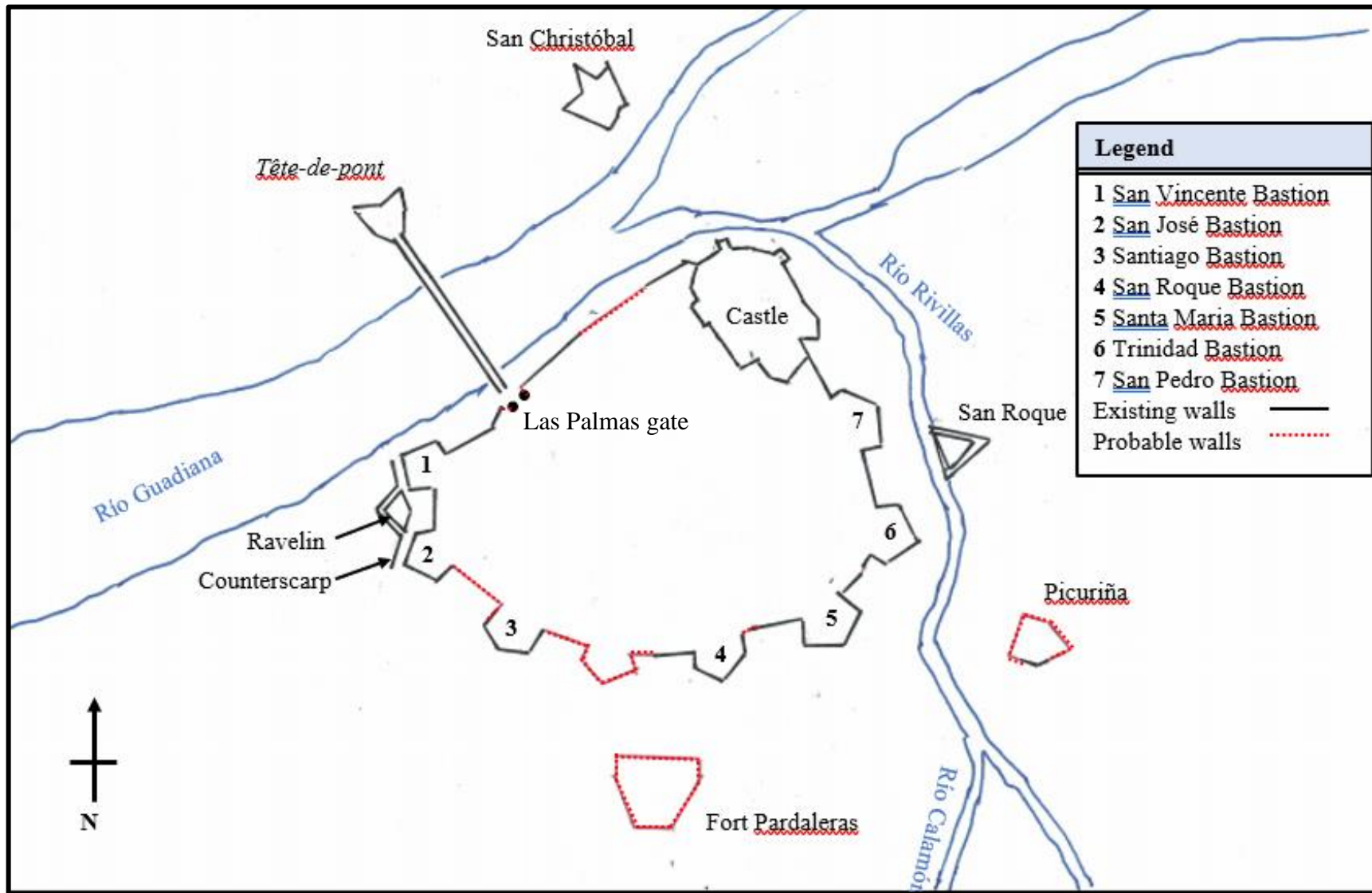


Figure 35. Map of Badajoz showing all the fortifications that still exist.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Allied casualty returns for the first siege of Badajoz⁷⁵

Date: 8th May to 15th May 1811	Killed					Wounded					Missing					Total				
	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total
British loss on 8th May									11	11									11	11
Portuguese loss on 8th May				1	1	1			18	19						1			19	20
Total loss						1			29	30						1			30	31
British loss on 10th May	1	2		29	32	19	9	3	347	378						20	11	3	376	410
Portuguese loss on 10th May						3		1	34	38				12	12	3		1	46	50
Total loss	1	2		29	32	22	9	4	381	416				12	12	23	11	4	422	460
8th May to 15th May																				
British loss	2	1		21	24	8	8	1	92	109						10	9	1	113	133
Portuguese loss	2	2		40	44	2	4	1	88	95	1			22	23	5	6	1	150	162
Total loss	4	3		61	68	10	12	2	180	204	1			22	23	15	15	2	263	295
Total British loss	3	3		50	56	27	17	4	450	498						30	20	4	500	554
Total Portuguese loss	2	2		41	45	6	4	2	140	152	1			34	35	9	6	2	215	232
Grand Total	5	5		91	101	33	21	6	590	650	1			34	35	39	26	6	715	786

⁷⁵ The figures for the casualty returns were taken from *Returns of Absences* (WO 25/3223)

Appendix 2

Allied casualty returns for the second siege of Badajoz

Date: 30th May to 11th June 1811	Killed					Wounded					Missing					Total				
	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total
30th May to 5th June																				
British loss	2			13	15	1	3		48	52				2	2	3	3		63	69
Portuguese loss	1			20	21	5	1	1	63	70				2	2	6	1	1	85	93
Total loss	3			33	36	6	4	1	111	122				4	4	9	4	1	148	162
6th June to 11th June																				
British loss	3	1		48	52	11	9		127	147	2			6	8	16	10		181	207
Portuguese loss	3	2		25	30	5	4		76	85	1				1	9	6		101	116
Total loss	6	3		73	82	16	13		203	232	3			6	9	25	16		282	323
Total British loss	5	1		61	67	12	12		175	199	2			8	10	19	13		244	276
Total Portuguese loss	4	2		45	51	10	5	1	139	155	1			2	3	15	7	1	184	207
Grand Total	9	3		106	118	22	17	1	314	354	3			10	13	34	20	1	428	483

Appendix 3

Allied casualty returns for the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo

Date: 8th to 19th January 1812	Killed					Wounded					Missing					Total				
	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total
British loss on 8th January		1		4	5	3			12	15						3	1		16	20
Portuguese loss on 8th January				3	3				6	6									9	9
Total loss		1		7	8	3			18	21						3	1		25	29
9th to 14th January																				
British loss	1	2		21	24	5	6		179	190						6	8		200	214
Portuguese loss				5	5	1			35	36						1			40	41
Total loss	1	2		26	29	6	6		214	226						7	8		240	255
15th to 19th January																				
British loss		1		25	26	10	3		143	156						10	4		168	182
Portuguese		1		14	15	2			77	79			2	2		2	1		93	96
Total loss		2		39	41	12	3		220	235			2	2		12	5		261	278
Night of 19th January																				
British loss	8	7	1	88	104	50	25	5	260	340			5	5		58	32	6	348	444
Portuguese loss				4	4	2	1		14	17						2	1		18	21
Total loss for final assault	8	7	1	92	108	52	26	5	274	357			5	5		60	33	6	366	465

Date: 8th to 19th January 1812	Killed					Wounded					Missing					Total				
	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total
8th to 19th January																				
Total British loss	9	11	1	138	159	68	34	5	594	701				7	7	77	45	6	739	867
Total Portuguese loss		1		26	27	5	1		132	138						5	2		158	165
Grand Total	9	12	1	164	186	73	35	5	726	839				7	7	82	47	6	897	1032

Appendix 4

Allied casualty returns for the third siege of Badajoz

Date: 18th March to 7th April 1812	Killed					Wounded					Missing					Total				
	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total
18th to 26th March																				
British loss	7	5		95	107	28	15	2	447	492				11	11	35	20	2	553	610
Portuguese loss	2		1	19	22	6	5		83	94						8	5	1	102	116
Total loss	9	5	1	114	129	34	20	2	530	586				11	11	43	25	3	655	726
27th March to 2nd April																				
British loss	3			60	63	10	10		146	166						13	10		206	229
Portuguese loss	1			27	28	1	1		123	125						2	1		150	153
Total loss	4			87	91	11	11		269	291						15	11		356	382
3rd to 7th April																				
British loss	51	40		560	651	213	153	12	1971	2439		1		21	22	264	194	12	2552	3022
Portuguese loss	9	6	1	149	165	48	32	3	478	561				30	30	57	38	4	657	756
Total loss	60	46	1	709	816	261	185	15	2449	2910		1		51	52	321	232	16	3209	3778
18th Mar to 7th April																				
Total British loss	61	45		715	820	251	178	14	2564	3007		1		32	33	311	224	14	3311	3860
Total Portuguese loss	12	6	2	195	215	55	38	3	684	780				30	30	67	44	3	909	1125
Grand Total	72	51	2	910	1035	306	216	17	3248	3787		1		62	63	378	268	17	4220	4985

Appendix 5

Allied casualty returns for the siege of Burgos

Date: 19th September to 21st October 1812	Killed					Wounded					Missing					Total				
	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total
British loss on 19th September	3	3		41	47	10	16	1	214	241				1	1	13	19	1	256	289
Portuguese loss on 19th Sept	3	2		19	24	5	5		83	93				15	15	8	7		117	132
Total loss for attack on San Miguel	6	5		60	71	15	21	1	297	334				16	16	21	26	1	373	421
21st to 26th September																				
British loss	5	2		47	54	11	10		217	238						16	12		264	292
Portuguese loss	2			3	5	1	3		47	51						3	3		50	56
Total loss	7	2		50	57	12	13		264	289						19	15		314	348
27th September to 3rd October																				
British loss		2		17	19		1	1	69	71							3	1	86	90
Portuguese loss		1		19	20	2			52	54						2	1		71	74
Total loss		3		36	39	2	1	1	121	125						2	4	1	157	164
British loss on 4th October		2		31	33	9	8	2	148	167				3	3	9	10	2	182	203
Portuguese loss 4th October				4	4		1	1	30	32				1	1		1	1	35	37
Total loss for attack on outer line		2		35	37	9	9	3	178	199				4	4	9	11	3	217	240

Date: 19th September to 21st October 1812	Killed					Wounded					Missing					Total				
	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total	Officers	Sergeants	Drummers	Rank & File	Total
6th to 10th October																				
British loss	5	4		82	91	13	7	3	200	223				7	7	18	11	3	289	321
Portuguese loss	2			34	36	4	1		65	70				11	11	6	1		110	117
Total loss	7	4		116	127	17	8	3	265	293				18	18	24	12	3	399	438
11th to 17th October																				
British loss		1		23	24	3	3		39	45						3	4		62	69
Portuguese loss				4	4	1			27	28						1			31	32
Total loss		1		27	28	4	3		66	73						4	4		93	101
18th to 21st October																				
British loss	4	3		81	88	9	2		119	130						13	5		200	218
Portuguese loss				8	8	1	2		41	44						1	2		49	52
Total loss	4	3		89	96	10	4		160	174						14	7		249	270
Total British loss	17	17		322	356	55	47	4	1006	1112				11	11	72	64	4	1339	1479
Total Portuguese loss	7	3		91	101	14	12	1	345	372				27	27	21	15	1	463	500
Total loss	24	20		413	457	69	59	5	1351	1484				38	38	93	79	5	1802	1979

Appendix 6

Details of the Royal Engineers who served in the sieges

Name		Rank	1st Siege of Badajoz	2nd Siege of Badajoz	Siege of Ciudad Rodrigo	3rd Siege of Badajoz	Siege of Burgos
Boteler	Richard	Capt.	Wounded				
Burgoyne	John Fox	Capt.		Present	Present	Present	Present
By	John	Capt.	Present	Present			
De Salaberry	Edward A.	Lieut.			Present	KIA	
Dickenson	Sebastian	Capt.	KIA				
Ellicombe	George	Capt.			Present	Present	
Elliott	Theodore H.	Lieut.			Present	Wounded	
Emmett	Anthony	Lieut.	Present	Present		Wounded	
Fletcher	Richard	Lt.Col.	Present	Present	Present	Wounded	
Forster	William	Lieut.	Present	KIA			
Gipps	George	Lieut.				Wounded	
Holloway	William C. E.	Capt.				Wounded	
Hulme	John Lyon	Lieut.		Present			
Hunt	Richard	Lieut.	Present	KIA			
Jones	John Thomas	Capt.	Present	Present	Present	Present	Wounded
Jones	Rice	Lieut.	Present	Present	Present		
Lascelles	Thomas	Lieut.			Present	KIA	
Macleod	George F.	Capt.	Present	Present	Present	Wounded	
Marshall	Anthony	Lieut.			Wounded		

Name		Rank	1st Siege of Badajoz	2nd Siege of Badajoz	Siege of Ciudad Rodrigo	3rd Siege of Badajoz	Siege of Burgos
McCulloch	William	Capt.			Wounded		
Meinecke ⁷⁶	Georg Friederich	Capt.	Present	Present			
Melhuish	Samuel Camplin	Lieut.				Wounded	
Melville	David	Lieut.	KIA				
Mulcaster	Edmund R.	Capt.	Present	Present	Wounded	KIA	
Nicholas	William	Capt.				DOW	
Pattton	Peter	Capt.	Present	DOW			
Pitts	Thomas James H.	Lieut.					Injured (Broken arm)
Reid	William	Lieut.	Wounded	Present	Wounded		Ill with fever
Ross	George Charles	Capt.	Wounded	Present	KIA		
Skelton	Thomas	Lieut.			KIA		
Squire	John	Capt.	Present	Present		Present	
Stanway	Frank	Lieut.	Present	Present		Present	
Thomson	Alexander	Lieut.	Present	Present	Wounded		
Wedekind	Carl	Capt.	Present	Present		Present	
Williams	John Archer	Capt.			Present	Wounded	KIA
Wright	Peter	Lieut.	Present	Present	Present	Wounded	

⁷⁶ Captains Meinecke and Wedekind were in the KGL engineers.

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