The Action at Quinta do Carvalho

A British force at bay — July 1812

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL · ATTACK & DEFEND · ABOUT 12 TURNS · 12 × 6 FT TABLE

Distances are in inches, for 28 mm figures. With 15 mm figures read the same numbers as centimetres, on a table of 144 × 72 cm — choose yours with Figures at the top.

The Situation

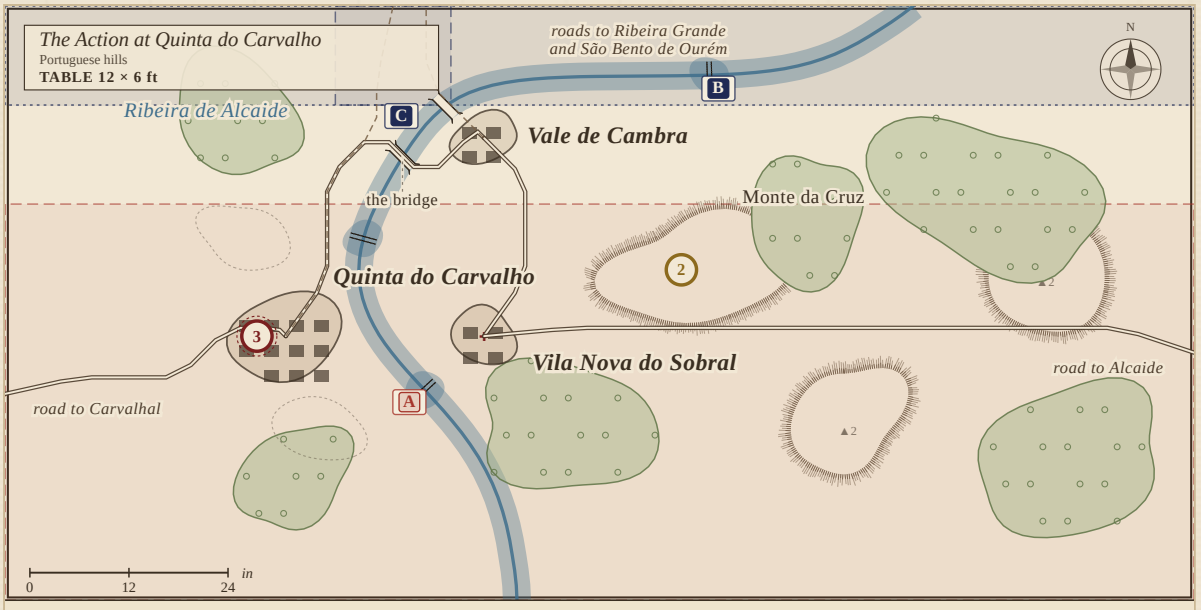
The British and Portuguese had taken Quinta do Carvalho two days before, and with it the road to Carvalhal. Marmont could not march on with that behind him, so he turned to take it back, which was what the British and Portuguese had wanted him to do. Wellington was there himself, which said how much it mattered.

Both sides claimed the affair at Quinta do Carvalho afterwards, which is usually a sign that neither got what he came for.

The village stood on the Carvalhal road, and in July 1812 a British force of twenty battalions, three regiments of cavalry and two batteries was in it. Marmont came up against it with thirty battalions, six regiments of cavalry and three batteries. A single cork-oak wood crowned the ridge and gave the only shade and the only cover.

What neither commander knew that afternoon was that the divisions they were each screening had already turned away, and that the road they spent the day over would carry nothing for a fortnight.

The field · Spain and Portugal · portuguese hills · north to the top



KEY

Hill (▲1 low, ▲2 higher) · Wood / copse · Village · River / stream · Marsh · Road · Track · Bridge · Ford · Objective (points) · Keystone objective · Deployment zone

ZONES *set out by eye — where each formation stood, not a measurement*

Allies **French**

A Allies Defending — 144in wide × 48in deep — deploy anywhere inside

B French Attacking — 144in wide × 12in deep — enter across this edge

C road corridor on the Ribeira Grande road — 14in wide × 12in deep — enter in column of march

The British and Portuguese had the ground and the French the task of taking it; what each brought to it is in the order of battle, and the turns would decide which counted for more.

Orders of Battle

MUSTER ROLL

British

Lieutenant-General Wellington
on table at start; and a detached British regiment of light dragoons (Line, standard size), from turn 4, by dice — see Reinforcements

LEITH'S DIVISION *MAJOR-GENERAL*

Barnes's Brigade *MAJOR-GENERAL*
4 battalions — 3 Line, 1 Rifle (1 Elite, 3 Line) · *Foot Battery* · 1 can screen

Inglis's Brigade *LIEUTENANT-COLONEL*
4 Line battalions (4 Line)

Skerrett's Brigade *COLONEL*
3 Line battalions (3 Line)

Aylmer's Brigade *MAJOR-GENERAL*
2 Highland battalions (2 Veteran)

HOUSTON'S DIVISION *MAJOR-GENERAL*

Colin Halkett's Brigade *BRIGADIER*
2 K.G.L. battalions (1 Elite, 1 Veteran)

French

Maréchal d'Empire Marmont
enters from turn 1 across ZONE B

PIERRE BOYER'S DIVISION *GÉNÉRAL DE BRIGADE*

Brayer's Brigade *GÉNÉRAL DE BRIGADE*
6 battalions — 5 Line, 1 Light (1 Veteran, 5 Line)

Marcognet's Brigade *GÉNÉRAL DE BRIGADE*
3 battalions — 2 Line, 1 Light (1 Veteran, 2 Line) · *Foot Battery*

CURTO'S DIVISION *GÉNÉRAL DE BRIGADE*

Rey's Brigade *GÉNÉRAL DE BRIGADE*
8 battalions — 7 Line, 1 Light (1 Veteran, 7 Line) · *Heavy Battery*

Fririon's Brigade *GÉNÉRAL DE BRIGADE*
8 battalions — 5 Line, 3 Light (3 Veteran, 5 Line)

BRENIER'S DIVISION *GÉNÉRAL DE DIVISION*

Desgraviers-Berthelot's Brigade *GÉNÉRAL DE BRIGADE*

Robert Long's Cavalry Brigade *MAJOR-GENERAL*

3 Light Dragoons

15 battalions · 3 cavalry · 1 battery

Portuguese

Marechal Beresford · under Lieutenant-General Wellington on table at start

JOHN HAMILTON'S DIVISION *MARECHAL DE CAMPO*

D'Urban's Brigade *BRIGADEIRO*

5 battalions — 4 Line, 1 Caçadores (1 Veteran, 4 Line) · *Heavy Battery* · 1 can screen

5 battalions · 0 cavalry · 1 battery

3 battalions — 2 Line, 1 Light (1 Veteran, 2 Line) · *Heavy Battery*

Chaudron-Rousseau's Brigade *GÉNÉRAL DE BRIGADE*

2 Line battalions (2 Line)

FOY'S DIVISION *GÉNÉRAL DE DIVISION*

Bron's Cavalry Brigade *GÉNÉRAL DE BRIGADE*

1 Chasseur à Cheval, 1 Lancer

Lallemand's Cavalry Brigade *GÉNÉRAL DE BRIGADE*

2 Chasseurs à Cheval

MAUCUNE'S DIVISION *GÉNÉRAL DE DIVISION*

Barbot's Cavalry Brigade *GÉNÉRAL DE BRIGADE*

2 Dragoons

30 battalions · 6 cavalry · 3 batteries

The Ground

MEASURED FROM THE LEFT AND BOTTOM EDGES OF THE MAP

Quinta do Carvalho *centre 34 in from the left edge, 32 in from the bottom edge*

A large village: 14 in across the table by 11 in deep, 14 in of frontage to hold or to carry.

A knot of stone and thatch astride the road. Held with resolution, Quinta do Carvalho would break the momentum of any column that tried to pass without first clearing it.

Monte da Cruz *centre 84 in from the left edge, 40 in from the bottom edge*

Whoever held Monte da Cruz looked down upon the villages below. It was the hinge of the position, and both sides knew it.

Ribeira de Alcaide *centre 66 in from the left edge, 46 in from the bottom edge*

The line of the Ribeira de Alcaide lay across the front. Fordable in places, it would still make the attacker pay for the yards he crossed under fire.

Wood *centre 35 in from the left edge, 15 in from the bottom edge*

The wood offered a covered approach for infantry willing to lose their order among the trees, and a hiding place for a reserve.

Ford *centre 85 in from the left edge, 64 in from the bottom edge*

Not an objective. A ford over the Ribeira de Alcaide: what may cross it, and how fast, is for your own rules.

Ford *centre 43 in from the left edge, 44 in from the bottom edge*

Not an objective. A ford over the Ribeira de Alcaide: what may cross it, and how fast, is for your own rules.

Ford *centre 51 in from the left edge, 25 in from the bottom edge*

Not an objective. A ford over the Ribeira de Alcaide: what may cross it, and how fast, is for your own rules.

the bridge *centre 48 in from the left edge, 54 in from the bottom edge*
Not an objective. A bridge over the Ribeira de Alcaide.

Bridge *centre 53 in from the left edge, 60 in from the bottom edge*
Not an objective. A bridge over the Ribeira de Alcaide.

If you cannot set the battlefield out exactly, do not worry. A fair representation of the ground matters more than the exact place and size of every feature. The frontages above are a guide. Vary them to suit your own rules: a large village, for example, may need two battalions to hold it, or may be several sectors.

Command

WHO GIVES THE ORDERS, AND HOW MANY

> Each commander is rated on five levels, best to worst — **Decisive · Capable · Workmanlike · Laboured · Adrift** — and the scale on his card shows where he sits. The rating says how much of his command he can get fresh orders to in an hour's fighting. Whatever he does not reach carries on with its last orders, and the more formations he has under him, the less of it he reaches. If your rules grade generals, Workmanlike is the middle of that scale.

☐ ALLIES — DEFENDING

Lieutenant-General Wellington BRITISH & PORTUGUESE

Decisive

3 DIVISIONS (7 BRIGADES) · 6 FOOT, 1 HORSE

He landed at Mondego Bay in August 1808, beat Junot at Vimeiro inside the month and was superseded that same day. Back in 1809 he crossed the Douro under Soult's nose in wine barges; in the winter he had the Lines of Torres Vedras dug in secret and let Masséna starve in front of them. He fought from behind crests, kept his men lying down until the French were close, and rode to wherever it was going wrong.

DECISIVE | CAPABLE | WORKMANLIKE | LABOURED | ADRIFT

A **Decisive** general — what helps him and what hinders him cancel out.

Anything he can see, he can turn. A new intention reaches every formation under him inside the hour, and the far flank is not meaningfully later than the near one.

> *IN HIS FAVOUR* — *a small command — only 3 divisions, few enough that his orders reach all of them.*
>
> *AGAINST HIM* — *a coalition command — his orders pass through a staff that is not his own.*

- Major-General **Leith** — 4 brigades
- Major-General **Houston** — 2 brigades
- Marechal de Campo **John Hamilton** — 1 brigade

■ FRENCH — ATTACKING

Maréchal d'Empire Marmont FRENCH

Workmanlike

5 DIVISIONS (9 BRIGADES) · 6 FOOT, 3 HORSE

Duke of Ragusa, a gunner who had been with Bonaparte since Toulon. He took over Masséna's wreck in May 1811, re-horsed and re-clothed it, and relieved Ciudad Rodrigo that September. For a fortnight in July 1812 he out-marched Wellington on the Douro and the Guarena. The shell that broke his arm and ribs came as his divisions were already too far apart to help each other, and nobody could have pulled them together in time.

DECISIVE | CAPABLE | **WORKMANLIKE** | LABOURED | ADRIFT

A **Workmanlike** general, with nothing in this action to change it.

About half his command can be turned to a new purpose within the hour.

- Général de brigade **Pierre Boyer** — 2 brigades
- Général de brigade **Curto** — 2 brigades
- Général de division **Brenier** — 2 brigades
- Général de division **Foy** — 2 brigades
- Général de division **Maucune** — 1 brigade

The rating is the app's own and is not taken from any rule set: it says how much of his command a man can turn to a new purpose within the hour, and what the rest do meanwhile. Set your own dials from that.

Objectives

5 POINTS · WEIGHTED

5 objective points in all, counted at nightfall. Quinta do Carvalho is worth the most, and a decisive result needs the other with it.

3 **Quinta do Carvalho** KEY OBJECTIVE
Held at nightfall by whichever side has the last formed unit on the position, or within 6 inches of it.

2 **Monte da Cruz**
Held at nightfall by whichever side has the last formed unit on the position, or within 6 inches of it. *Monte da Cruz is decided on its main crest alone; the lesser slopes are tactical ground only and do not score.*

5 **Total on the table**
Contested — and scored by neither — if both sides have a formed unit within that radius.

Victory

WHO WINS, AND HOW WELL

Read from the top: the first line that is true at nightfall is the result.

■ **French Decisive**	Hold both objectives, Quinta do Carvalho and Monte da Cruz, at nightfall, with no attacking formation broken.
□ **Allied Decisive**	Hold both objectives, Quinta do Carvalho and Monte da Cruz, at nightfall, with no defending formation broken.
■ **French Marginal**	Hold Quinta do Carvalho at nightfall.
□ **Allied Marginal**	Hold Quinta do Carvalho at nightfall.
Draw	Anything else — for example, Quinta do Carvalho contested at nightfall, held by neither side.

Reinforcements

SCHEDULED & UNCERTAIN

UNCERTAIN From turn 4, roll a die at the start of each even-numbered turn: on a 5 or 6 a detached British regiment of light dragoons (Line, standard size) enters that turn across the bottom edge of the map as printed, behind ZONE A, anywhere along it.

Deployment & Opening Moves

The Allies deploy first, anywhere within ZONE A — the shaded bottom band, the full 144in width of the table and 48in deep — which takes in the objective line. The French begin with nothing on the table. They come on across ZONE B — the top edge of the map as printed, a strip the full 144in width of the table and 12in deep. The road corridor — ZONE C on the Ribeira Grande road — is 14in wide and 12in deep, the same depth as the entry strip either side of it. Entering by a corridor means entering in column of march, and buys the road — see the special rule, which also says what it costs. A unit entering anywhere else along ZONE B comes on across country in any formation it likes. Nothing at all enters off the two flank edges.

Special Rules

How the result is read. Nightfall is the end of turn 12. Go down the victory table from the top: the first line that is true at nightfall is the result, and nothing below it is looked at. A place is HELD by the side with the last formed unit on it or within 6 inches of it, and CONTESTED — held by nobody — if both sides have one there. A unit is FORMED if your own rules would let it charge. A FORMATION is a brigade; it is BROKEN when your own rules say it is, or, if they have no such state, when half or more of its units have been destroyed or have routed.

Skirmishers — who can screen, and what your rules do with them. Light battalions are marked in the muster. The Allies field 2 light battalions; the French field 7 light battalions. Where a brigade has no light battalion it may still screen if your rules allow line troops to, or if your rules use a brigade skirmish screen, for example.

The road corridors — and what the road costs. A unit entering by the corridor comes on in column of march, on the road. What a column gains on a road, and what it risks if it is caught in one, is for your own rules.

Uncertain arrivals. An arrival marked uncertain is diced for as its line says, and neither side may plan the opening moves on its timing.

Umpire's Notes

THE DESIGNER'S INTENT

> *The British and Portuguese cannot be strong everywhere and must choose which point to sell dearly; the French have the strength to win but not the turns to be careful. Watch the moment the attacker discovers which point was sold — usually two turns too late to switch.*

Sources

WHAT THE FIGURES REST ON

Britain. British structure and ratios from Oman’s dated morning states (25 July 1809, 27 September 1810, 15 July 1812) and his organisational chapter in Wellington’s Army; the 1813 cavalry from Nafziger’s Vitoria order of battle.

- **Troop quality**, for the table: Guards Elite, every other battalion Line. By 1812 the 2nd battalions ran small.
- **Commanders**, for the table: a named general carries his own grade; any other is rated Workmanlike.

Portugal. Portuguese brigade pattern and strengths from Oman’s Bussaco (27 September 1810), Albuera (16 May 1811) and Salamanca (15 July 1812) returns; regimental and battalion figures from Foster, Notes on the Portuguese Infantry (napoleon-series); the cavalry designation from the Portuguese unit list.

- **Troop quality**, for the table: every battalion is rated Line; the caçadores are the light arm.
- **Commanders**, for the table: a named general carries his own grade; any other is rated Workmanlike.

France. French ratios from the Paris-archive returns printed by Oman: Talavera (15 July 1809), Masséna’s muster-roll (15 September 1810), the Army of the South (1 March 1812, 29 May 1813), the Army of Portugal (15 July 1812, with its 78 guns) and Soult’s reorganisation of July 1813.

- **Troop quality**, for the table: every battalion is rated Line.

- **Commanders**, for the table: a named general carries his own grade; any other is rated Workmanlike.

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The rest was for the dice, and the men who threw them.

Made by a wargamer, for wargamers. A guide to the game, not a work of reference.