

The Napoleon Series

The Germans under the French Eagles: Volume II

The Baden Contingent – Chapter 6 Part I

By Commandant Sauzey

Translated by [Greg Gorsuch](#)

THE BADEN CONTINGENT IN SPAIN.¹

§ 1st. -- 1808. -- *Combat of Durango and Balmaseda.*

The contingent demanded by the Emperor from the Grand Duke of Baden in July 1808 to be sent to Spain included an infantry regiment (no. 4) with two battalions, under the command of Colonel Porbeck, as well as a battery of six pieces and two howitzers, served by an artillery company under the orders of Captain von Lassulaye and accompanied by a detachment of the train.

These troops, destined to enter the composition of the "German Division" called to serve in the Spanish peninsula, crossed the Rhine at Kehl on the 24th of August and arrived in Strasbourg the same day. The infantry numbered 46 officers and 1,687 non-commissioned officers and soldiers; the artillery and the train had 205 men, 169 horses, 6 pieces of 6, 2 howitzers of 7 and 31 ammunition carriages.

Each of the two battalions consisted of six companies organized in the French manner, that is to say a company of grenadiers, four of fusiliers and one of voltigeurs; these companies were 140 men. The troops of the Confederation of the Rhine were nourished and maintained by the Emperor from the day of their departure from the territory of the Confederation; the maintenance of the armaments, the extra pay brought by the passage from a footing of peace to a war footing, as well as the gratuities of shoes for the extraordinary marches were also at the charge of France: the sovereign princes provided only the balance to their quotas.

The Baden infantry, having arrived at Metz on 30 August, exchanged their fusils and ammunition for French fusils and cartridges; the Baden fusils remained in the stores of the town, at the disposal of the Grand Duke's government.

The battery joined the regiment on the 15th of September, at Orléans, and the contingent thus assembled reached Irun on the evening of the 31st, after having receiving at Bayonne camp utensils, provisions, and a complement of ammunition.

The German division was organized in Durango.

¹The well-documented German work of Baden Major W. Krieg von Hochfelden (*Geschichte der Badischen Truppen in Spanien*) served as a canvas for the last part of this study.

The quotations from Bernays' book (*Schicksale des Grossherzogthums Frankfurt and Seiner Truppen*) are themselves taken from the written telling of this war by Captain Rigel, who made the whole campaign in the ranks of the Baden contingent (*Der siebenjährige Kampf auf der Pyrendischen Halbinsel*).

Finally, the numbers of this contingent at different periods of operation in the peninsula were extracted from the work of Costa de Serda on "*Les Troupes sociales sous le Premier Empire*."

General Leval took command on 18 October.

Battle Order of the German Division.

1st Brigade, Colonel von Porbeck (from Baden):

Baden Regiment, no. 4.
Nassau Regiment, no. 2.
A battery of Baden.

2nd Brigade, General Chassé (from Holland):

Dutch Infantry Regiment.
Dutch 3rd Hussar Regiment.
A horse battery of Holland.

3rd Brigade, General Grandjean (French):

A battalion of the Paris Guard.
Frankfurt Battalion.
Hessen Regiment "Erbprinz" (Crown Prince)
Hessen half a battery.²

At the first review as the Baden regiment passed, General Leval declared it "the first and most handsome corps of his division": he had already politely made the same declaration concerning the battalion of Frankfurt and the Nassau Regiment.³

Leval's Division was the second of the 4th Corps under the command of Marshal Lefebvre (Leval, Sebastiani, Villatte Divisions) who, with Marshal Victor, commanding the 1st Corps, was opposed to the 40,000 men of General Blake: the latter, supported in Bilbao, held all the country between the sea and the Upper Ebro.

The French army, commanded by the Emperor, had its headquarters at Vitoria; Moncey, at Tafalla, observed the corps of Palafox established on the Sangüesa; Ney, at Logrono, was facing the 40,000 Spaniards of Castaños settled on the Ebro near Tudela; lastly, Bessières, at Miranda del Ebro, was covered by the numerous cavalry of General Lasalle.

The German 1st Brigade was not engaged on the 24th of October in the first affair of Zornosa; but, after a night at the bivouac with torrential rain, the division of Leval received the mission to connect with General Merlin who was forced to evacuate Bilbao: the 1st Battalion of Baden took a position of support behind and to the right of Zornosa to prevent the Spaniards from turning to the right of General Merlin; the assembled companies of voltigeurs of the brigade fired with the front post their first rounds against the enemy. The Baden voltigeurs and a Nassau company under the command of Captain von Holzing (of the Baden voltigeurs), on 26 October, supported a serious battle ahead of Durango, where Leval was ordered to withdraw, followed by Merlin (the Spaniards showed nearly 30,000 men and a rapid concentration became necessary); these three companies were first repressed; but, supported by a new company from Baden, they finally recaptured the lost position and put the enemy to flight: the Baden had 5 killed and 10 wounded in this engagement.

Marshal Lefebvre had just arrived at Durango; the Villatte and Sebastiani Divisions succeed at the same time; the Marshal, at the head of his three divisions, immediately attacked the Spaniards.

Battle of Durango (31 October).

Leval was on the right of our line: he had under his command the French brigade of General Pacthod (27th Light

²Bernays, page 45.

³Rigel, "*Der siebenjährigen Kampf auf der Pyrendischen Halbinsel.*"

and 63rd Line) and the German brigade of Colonel Porbeck (Baden and Nassau Regiments). Sebastiani was in the center: his division being the weakest, the voltigeurs and the artillery of Baden marched with him; finally, Villatte formed the left of the little French army.

"Before the fight," -- writes a German eyewitness officer⁴ -- "the Marshal shook hands with every officer who saluted him; his face was radiant with joy and he looked more like a young man than a 60-year-old man."

The Spaniards were approached in front by two divisions and jostled from position to position; flanked on their left by Leval, they are pursued by the fire of the Baden artillery. Blake, beaten, left 1,200 killed or wounded on the ground and retired to Balmaseda, west of Bilbao. Lefebvre expressed his satisfaction to the German troops, taking for his guard on the evening of the affair a battalion of Baden and a battalion of Nassau.

Report of Marshal Lefebvre on the Battle of Durango.

"...I have a lot to praise from the French troops... as well as troops from Baden, Nassau and Holland. I request the decoration of the Legion of Honor... for the Colonel of the Baden Regiment... and four stars for the regiments of Baden, Nassau and Holland, all of which distinguished themselves."

Disposition of the Leval Division on 1 November 1808.⁵

Provisional Commander 1st and 2nd Brigades: General SCHAEFER.

			Present.	Sick.	Totals.
	2 nd (Light) Infantry Regiment of Their Serene Highnesses the Duke and Prince of Nassau,		1,537	66	1,861
1st Brigade{	4 th Regiment of His Royal Highness the Duke of Baden		1,610	118	1,850
2 nd Brigade{	4 th Regiment of His Royal Highness the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt,		1,455	150	1,678
	Battalion of His Serene Highness the Prince-Primate,		813	23	836
Commander 3 rd Brigade, General CHASSÉ.					
3 rd brigade.	Infantry of H. M. the King of Holland.	{ 1 st Bn. of the 2 nd Regt. } { 2 nd Bn. of the 4 th Regt. }	1,583	"	1,723
TOTAL OF INFANTRY			6,998	357	7,948
Artillery and train of Baden					204
Artillery and train of Hesse-Darmstadt					96
Light artillery of Holland					91
Train of Holland					76
Miners of Holland					37
TOTAL OF ARTILLERY					504

The difference between the partial figures and the total comes from men detached or en route to join.

⁴Rigel.

⁵Costa de Serda, page 16.

Lefebvre entered victorious in Bilbao where a dispatch brought by Polish lancers informed him of the arrival in Vitoria of the Emperor, who took the command of the army:

"At this news the troops were electrified and impatiently awaited the signal of the march forward. The officers were full of the same enthusiasm."⁶

The Emperor sent Lefebvre to Balmaseda, where Villatte had just been defeated.

Battle of Balmaseda (8 November).

On the morning of the 8th, the three divisions of Marshal Lefebvre attacked the enemy again: Baden and Nassau, with Frankfort and the Paris Guard, were in support. The positions occupied by the Spaniards were taken, Blake lost 3,000 killed or wounded; the village of Balmaseda, in flames, was occupied at night by our troops.

On 8 November, Leval was in Nava where he entered into communication with Victor (1st Corps); on the 9th, he marched on Burgos and went on the following day to Quintanilla-Sapenna, which he reached after a painful march during which 1,200 men remained behind. The 4th Corps arrived at Espinosa only at the end of the battle, after Victor's victory over Blake; the debris of the Spaniards were still crushed, on the 13th, by a division of Soult: 4,000 to 5,000 enemies scarcely managed to take refuge in the mountains of Asturias.

The German Division bivouacked on 11 November in Villarcajo. A reconnaissance, commanded by Major von Grolmann, of the Baden Regiment (a company of Hessian voltigeurs, two companies of grenadiers of Baden and Nassau and 50 Dutch hussars) brought back a crowd of cripples and found many soldiers slaughtered by the scattered bands of Blake's army. Also, on the 13th, Marshal Lefebvre organized an "advanced guard regiment", composed as follows:

1st Battalion, Commander PIGNE, of the 58th:
2 companies of voltigeurs of the 28th Line;
2 -- -- 32nd Line;
2 -- -- 58th Line.

2nd Battalion, Major von Grolmann, of the Baden Regiment:
2 companies of voltigeurs of the 75th Line;
2 -- -- Baden;
2 -- -- Nassau.

Arrived on the 14th at Reynosa, Lefebvre joined Soult (2nd Corps); General Leval was then detached to the corps, with a German Brigade (Baden and Nassau), to escort the convoys on Santander; four pieces of Baden artillery were attached to this brigade, but could not follow it in the wild mountains which had to be crossed; this artillery joined the 4th Corps, marching on Madrid, escorted by the Baden voltigeur companies of the "advanced guard regiment" which had just been disbanded. The other four Baden pieces were detached since the end of October in the Lagrange Division of Ney's corps.

On the 8th of December, Lefebvre arrived at El Pardo, near the gates of Madrid; Leval rejoined him the next day, after having at last united his division, which the Emperor reviewed on the 10th. Napoleon had various movements executed before him; Colonel von Porbeck having committed several errors of maneuver, the Emperor jokingly relieved them and then ordered to defile "by battalion in mass, with no charge"; he then made numerous promotions in the various contingents (as the faculty had been attributed to him by the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine) and distributed crosses of the Legion of Honor.

The 17th Bulletin of the Army of Spain reads:

"...His Majesty has passed today the review of the troops of the Confederation of the Rhine, commanded by General Leval. The regiments of Baden and Nassau have behaved well; the regiment of Hesse-Darmstadt did not support the

⁶Bernays, page 56.

reputation of the troops of this country..."

The 4th Corps received at this time a new organization:

1st Division (French), SEBASTIANI;

2nd division (German), LEVAL;

3rd Division (Polish), VALENCE;

Artillery: three French batteries, a Dutch battery, a Hessian battery and a Baden battery.

TOTAL, with cavalry: 12,000 to 13,000 men and 36 cannons.

The German Division remained confined to Madrid with the Lápice Division of the 1st Corps, to guard King Joseph; only the artillery of Baden, Holland and Hesse took part, with the divisions Sebastiani and Valencia, the light cavalry of Lasalle and the dragoons of Milhaud, with the expedition destined to clean out all the insurgents of the country to the Tagus. The artillery of Baden stood out at Almaraz.

But the stay in Madrid presented new dangers to the garrison: a quantity of isolated soldiers -- 30 to 40 a day, say some German authors,⁷ -- perished assassinated under the knife or under the bullets of the inhabitants.

At the end of the year 1808, German troops had won the right of citizenship among the French troops. They had executed the most painful marches, delivered successful engagements, and always observed the most rigorous discipline. Their strength was greatly diminished; reinforcements were still being prepared in the depots of Germany.

Small provisional depots had been established for the various contingents in operations on the peninsula, on the northern slope of the Pyrenees; while the troops of Baden were in the neighborhood of Bayonne, in Bassussary.

**§ 2. -- 1809. -- Combat of Meza-de-Ibor and Valdecañas;
Battles of Medellin, Talavera, Almonacid and Ocaña.**

An order of the Emperor, dated 9 January 1809, sent the Leval Division from Madrid to Talavera de la Reyna, to occupy the right bank of the Tagus, jointly with the Polish Division of General Valence. The Baden had at this moment 904 men present in the regiment of infantry and 557 soldiers with the hospitals; the batteries of Baden and Hesse together had 116 present and the trains 100. The regiments of Baden and Nassau were then provisionally under the command of the Prince of Isembourg; the Leval Division was reinforced by a battalion of the Westphalian Regiment, a battalion of the Prussian Regiment, and a battalion of the Irish Regiment, from the foreign corps in the service of France.⁸

The Spanish General Cuesta had collected from the debris of the army of Estremadura many reinforcements brought from the south of the peninsula, and his heads of columns already bordered the Tagus: the 4th Corps, from 12,000 to 13,000 men and 36 pieces of canon, had the task of preventing the enemy from crossing the river and threatening the capital.

The Germans left Madrid on the 13th of January and arrived on the 17th at Talavera, after having left a company of Baden at Cebolla; the letters written at that time by Leval's soldiers reflect their joy at being sent to the south of Spain and finding "large and rich villages, still inhabited, hidden in fig-trees and lemon trees; meat and wine in abundance -- and an almost benevolent welcome ..."

The regiment of Baden remained at Talavera itself, with the Dutch; two Baden pieces went to the bridge of Arzobispo with the 2nd Battalion of Nassau; two other pieces were at the bridge of Almaraz with the 1st Battalion of the same regiment; this last post was attacked on the 26th by the Spaniards, and on the evening of this engagement

⁷Hochfelden, page 17.

⁸Bernays, page 66.

the two pieces of Baden had almost completely exhausted their ammunition; the retreat of the detachment placed at the bridge of Almaraz having taken place the following day, at night, the Leval Division was concentrated entirely on the morning of the 29th at Cazalda, leaving only one company of Baden as the guard of the bridge and of Talavera Hospital. It was at this moment that General Schaefer von Bernstein came to take command of the 1st German Brigade, replacing the Prince of Isembourg, who was given at his request a brigade of dragoons in Milhaud's division.

The Spaniards no longer making offensive demonstrations, the division was put in cantonments: Baden went to Calderuela.

But soon the recovery of the bridge of Almaraz was decided and King Joseph charged Victor to attack Cuesta on the middle Tagus. The German Division passed on 6 February into the composition of the 1st Corps, where it took the name of the 4th. Victor then had under his orders Villatte (1st Division), Ruffin (2nd Division), Lápice (3rd Division, detached), Leval (4th Division), the Latour-Maubourg Dragoon Division and the Lasalle Light Cavalry Division.

On the 10th of February, the two German brigades rallied at Naval Moral the Baden artillery and two regiments of General Lasalle; the whole column then went to Almaraz, preceded by an advance guard composed of the six companies of voltigeurs of the German battalions and commanded by Major Baden Grolmann. This vanguard found the bridge and the height which dominated it solidly occupied and fortified by the enemy; the attack was postponed until 15 February; but on that day, the Spaniards blew up the bridge in front of the assault columns: an arch was destroyed over 80 paces wide and the attacking troops were forced to give up the operation, which was a failure. Satisfied with the result obtained, the Spaniards withdraw to the south.

Leaving the artillery of Baden and a company of sappers to repair this crossing, Victor returned the Germans to Arzobispo and made with the divisions of Leval, Villatte, Ruffin and Lasalle a painful reconnaissance of the positions occupied by the enemy on the left bank of the Tagus: he found them so strong that he gave up attacking them and returned to the right bank; the Germans return to Talavera after having looted and burned the small town of Arenas, in retaliation for the massacre that the inhabitants had made on 25 February of a detachment composed of 25 Westphalian Light Horse.

The Baden returned from this expedition in a great state of fatigue: many men, whose shoes were completely worn out, had their feet wrapped in sheepskins...

At the beginning of March Marshal Victor's corps occupied the following locations:

Divisions Villatte and Ruffin, in Peralda and Naval Moral;
German Division Leval, at Talavera de la Reyna;
Lápice Division (detached in Salamanca);
Latour-Maubourg Division (dragoons), in Toledo;
Lasalle Division (light cavalry), in Talavera, Oropesa and La Cazalda.

The Leval Division underwent a new regimentation:⁹

1st Brigade, General VON SCHAEFER (from Nassau):
Battalion of assembled voltigeurs, 8 companies.
2nd Nassau Regiment.

2nd Brigade, General MERLE:
Baden Regiment.

3rd Brigade, General VON SCHAEFER (of Hesse):
One battalion from Hesse (the other was detached to Segovia).
Frankfurt Battalion.

⁹ Bernays, page 78.

4th Brigade, General CHASSÉ (of Holland):
Regiment of Holland.

Victor reviewed the German division on the 14th of March at Talavera, in honor of the capture of Zaragoza, and resumed the offensive the next day; this movement coincided with the march of Soult on Portugal. The divisions of Leval, Villatte, Ruffin and Lasalle performed a concentric march on Meza-de-Ibor, where the Spanish General Cuesta, fortified on three successive positions, gathered 10,000 infantry, 1,000 cavalry and a good artillery.

Battle of Meza-de-Ibor (17 March).

Nassau, Hesse and Frankfurt attacked the enemy with Baden and Holland in support; Baden passed soon to the center of the first line: obliged to form a square in front of the threats of the Spanish cavalry, the regiment marched to the enemy in the most beautiful order and forced it to let go.

Reformed on a second position, the Spaniards were still hunted; but at this moment of the fight, the Baden had to form in column to cross a defile suffering serious losses. The German Division made the final assault: Baden attacked the enemy right, Nassau fought head-on; Hesse, Holland and Frankfurt fell on the left of the Spaniards: they were beaten and gave up their seven guns, as well as many dead and wounded.

The losses of the German Division were considerable:¹⁰

	Officers.	NCOs.	Soldiers.	Totals.
Nassau	10	34	271	315
Baden	2	5	43	50
Dutch	4	14	47	63
Battalion of Hesse	"	4	23	27
Battalion of Frankfurt	1	1	17	19
Battalion of Voltigeurs	"	2	20	22
	--	--	--	--
	17	60	421	498

The Nassau Regiment, alone, had more than 300 men out of action...

Fight of Valdecañas (18 March).

"Yesterday you saw Nassau," said General Leval to Marshal Victor, "today I will show you Baden!" Indeed, the day was glorious for the regiment of Colonel Porbeck; in charge of attacking the center of the Spanish position at Valdecañas, this officer deployed two companies of the 1st Battalion and rushed to attack at the head of the rest of his troop formed in column. The enemy line was forced. The regiment of Baden established itself on the conquered position while its men, under the orders of the adjutant of the regiment von Krieg, continued their march in the direction of the bridge of Almaraz and taking the enemy in the rear, the attacking with the bayonet and driving them out of the position it occupied: communication by Almaraz was restored and the Spanish army retreated.

The next two orders of the day were the most beautiful testimony of the satisfaction of the French generals for the German troops who delivered the glorious battles of the 17 and 18 March.

Order of the Day.

At headquarters, in Trujillo. 21 March 1809.

"The Marshal Duke of Bellune, commander-in-chief of this corps, hastens to testify to the German Division under the command of Major-General Leval, all his satisfaction at the distinguished conduct which the from 17th to 18th his brave troops who; although very inferior in number to the enemy, pursued with the sword in the kidneys from

¹⁰ Rigel II, page 173.

mountain to mountain by impassable paths, flushed it from all its positions and entrenchments, removed seven pieces of cannon and made a great number of prisoners."

"His Excellency will make it a duty to inform His Majesty the Emperor and King that the troops of the Confederation of the Rhine are as glorious as those of the Grand Army."

The Chief of Staff, SEMELLÉ.

Order of the Day.

"The general commanding the German division is hastening to inform his troops of the present order of the day."

"He does not think he can better render to their bravery his particular homage than by assuring them that their conduct was so audacious and distinguished on the 17th and 18th of March, that he will count these two days as one of the most agreeable and honorable of all his military life."

General of Division, LEVAL.

Having all his divisions in hand, Marshal Victor then went against the Spanish army which was waiting for him on the strong position of San Benito.

Battle of Medellin (28 March).

After crossing the Guadiana and through the small town of Medellin, the French were in the presence of all the forces of Cuesta: 36,000 infantrymen, 7,000 horsemen and 30 pieces of cannon. In addition to numerous regiments of militia, the Spanish general included in the ranks of his army regular infantry corps among which must be mentioned the brave Gardia Valona (Walloon Guards), the former Swiss regiment of Troxler, the regiment of Toledo, etc. His cavalry was almost exclusively composed of veteran troops.

It was against these imposing forces that Victor threw his 17,000 men at 1 o'clock in the afternoon.

The Villatte Division, in front of Medellin, constituted the reserve; Ruffin formed the left, and the Latour-Maubourg dragoons with the light cavalry of Lasalle, the center and the right of our disposition: this cavalry was ranged in two lines. The battalion of voltigeurs of the German division and the regiment of Nassau, in two squares, held the right of the dragoons; the 1st Battalion of Baden, placed between the dragoons and the light cavalry, and the 2nd Battalion on the far right of the cavalry of Lasalle, were also formed into squares. A six-piece mounted battery covered the right flank of Latour-Maubourg, another six-piece battery on the left flank of Lasalle; the four pieces of Baden protected the front of the 1st Battalion of Baden; finally, four pieces of the Villatte Division supported the extreme right of our line.

The Spaniards made the mistake of leaving their strong positions on the plateau of San Benito, and descending into the plain in thin and spread out lines, in the idea of outflanking the two wings of the French army; their lines were easily pierced on the right by the German squares; the enemy, once broken, then charged by the cavalry, was soon in complete disorder; all fleeing by throwing away fusils, sacks, hats, and coats.

On the French left, the Ruffin Division at first lost ground; but the Villatte Division, hitherto in reserve, suddenly burst upon the line of battle in close formation and advanced, bayonets in front, without answering the fire of the enemy whose too thin lines were quickly stove in, while charged at the same time by the Latour-Maubourg dragoons and attacked by the German Division already victorious at the right wing... The Spanish cavalry, without trying to save its infantry, disappeared galloping out of the battlefield, pursued by the cavalry of Lasalle.

The enemy lost 10,000 killed, more than 6,000 prisoners, 22 cannons, several flags and all its parks. "For Ferdinand VII, victory or death!" Was the war cry of the Spaniards in this bloody day: every soldier wore this motto inscribed on a red and yellow armband, as well as on his hairstyle... Cuesta had announced to his troops that the French would all find their tomb on the battlefield he had chosen, and he had forbidden to make any quarter!... Still the soldiers of Victor, in their anger, bayoneted a large number of unfortunate Spaniards who, in the rout, shouted in

vain: "Viva Napoleon!" About a hundred prisoners, known for having previously taken an oath of allegiance to King Joseph, were put to death the next day.

Report of Marshal Victor to the Emperor.

"...General Leval led into fire the German division in a very distinguished manner. The Captain von Lassolaye, commanding the Baden artillery, has fulfilled his duties with honor. Officers and troops of Baden, Nassau and Frankfurt showed the greatest bravery... Baron von Porbeck, commander of the Baden Regiment, also supported his reputation throughout this war..."

The day after the battle, the army continued its movement; but the German Division remained at Medellin, where it stayed for a month; it was they who were in charge of burying the dead, a task which lasted more than eight days, during which they had to dispute with the eagles, who had flocked in innumerable bands, to the corpses scattered over the plain.

An Anglo-Portuguese corps advanced towards the Tagus, in the direction of Alcántara, Marshal Victor marched to meet it, having left at Merida a battalion of the regiment of Holland and eight detachments of 25 men and an officer taken from the Leval Division; the Baden regiment provided 3 officers and 75 soldiers. The place, besieged by the Spanish General Zayas, defended itself with such energy that the enemy did not dare to assault, although the breach was practicable; the approach of the French army soon obliged the Spaniards to raise the siege and to retire.

Employed in the middle of the month of May in the guarding of the communications of the army, the German Division returned to Almaraz and the regiment of Baden was sent to Oropesa, where it arrived on 4 June: it was there that it received a reinforcement of 600 men brought by Major Louis Brückner.



1809. — LE GÉNÉRAL SÉBASTIANI
Commandant le 4^e corps de l'armée d'Espagne (1).
(D'après une lithographie de l'époque.)

1809. -- GENERAL SEBASTIANI

Commander the 4th Corps of the Army of Spain.¹¹

¹¹Sebastiani de la Porta (Count Horace), born at Porta (near Daslia), in 1773, died in 1851. Battalion commander at Arcole, colonel at Verona. Ambassador to Constantinople after the 18th Brumaire, directed the defense of this city

(From a lithograph of the time.)

General Sebastiani, successor of Lefebvre in the 4th Corps, had won the brilliant victory of Ciudad-Real; but Soult, forced to evacuate Portugal, brought back the English in his wake, and Austria entered the war against France; many troops consequently had to be sent back from Spain to the Danube; the generals stayed in the Peninsula concentrated their diminished strengths; Victor recrossed onto the right bank of the Tagus and took up a position near Talavera de la Reyna, where the German Division also retired after having levied heavy war contributions in the Tiétar Valley (24 June); reviewed 30 June in Almagro by King Joseph, it was then directed to Toledo (25 July); she arrived there after some marches which the torrid heat of the season made very painful. Effectives on 25 July, present:

Nassau	947	men.
Bade	4,386	--
Frankfurt	304	--
Hesse	398	--
Holland	1,032	--

Sir Arthur Wellesley, after having made the junction of the English army with the Spanish army of Cuesta, advanced at the end of July toward Talavera, with the intention of upsetting the isolated corps of Victor and then rallying, towards Toledo, another Spanish army commanded by Venegas.

To counter this danger, Joseph recalled to Toledo Victor with the 1st Corps and Sebastiani with the 4th; this concentration was accomplished on 25 July; he went himself to this city with the reserve corps, while Soult at the head of the 2nd, 5th and 6th Corps (30,000 men) went from Salamanca to Plasencia, threatening by this movement the British line of retreat on Portugal.

After making these arrangements, Joseph marched on the strong enemy near Talavera.

Placed on the Napoleon Series: October 2018

against the English. 1809, commanding the 4th Corps of the Spanish Army (Ciudad-Real, Almonacid). 1812, Smolensk, Moskowa. 1813, Leipzig, Hanau. 1814, commanding the Cavalry of the Guard. 1830, Minister of Foreign Affairs.