



Marlborough's Other Army: The British Army and the Campaigns of the First Peninsular War, 1702–1712 by Nicholas Dorrell.

2nd ed. Warwick, UK: Helion, 2019. Pp. 190. ISBN 978–1–911628–40–8.

Review by Caleb Karges, Concordia University Irvine (caleb.karges@cui.edu).

The Duke of Marlborough and his campaigns in Flanders and Germany dominate English-language narratives of the War of the Spanish Succession, a conflict waged in all corners of western Europe. In *Marlborough's Other Army*, prolific military historian Nicholas Dorrell focuses on the often overlooked military campaigns of the Grand Alliance in the Iberian Peninsula during the war.

The author introduces readers to the Iberian theater with a clear and concise overview of the campaigns and the forces that conducted them by synthesizing relevant nineteenth- and twentieth-century works in English and German on his subject. Despite its subtitle, the volume details not only British but also the Allied Dutch, Portuguese, pro-Habsburg Spanish, Austrian, and Palatine contingents. The reader learns the names of regiments, their organization and tactics, their deployments and strengths at given points in the various campaigns. Tables indicating uniforms of the allied forces are enhanced by accurate color illustrations; wargamers will find such details particularly useful. The obsessive attention to detail seen in the discussion of uniforms recurs in the handling of operations and tactics in the body of the book.

The high politics and strategic aspects of the war are covered in an introduction to provide context for the chapters to follow. This will be appreciated by readers with little knowledge of the events of the Iberian campaigns.¹ Nevertheless, more on politics and grand strategy would have reinforced some of Dorrell's claims. For example, he is right to note that Almanza was not the decisive battle of the Iberian war, since "[the campaign of] 1710 was arguably at least as important and possibly more so" (136). But any attempt to fully unpack the significance of this fact is forgone in favor of clarifying operational and tactical details.

The book's sixteen chapters proceed chronologically through the Allied campaigns in the Peninsula. Chapters on the British and Dutch armies bookend the 1702 campaign, while the chapter on the pro-Habsburg Spanish army follows the 1705 capture of Barcelona; chapters on the Austrians and Palatines begin with their arrival in the 1708 campaign.

As both its title and subtitle suggest, the book concentrates on land warfare. Readers interested in details of naval operations will be disappointed: the Allied and French navies are alluded to, but get little screen time. Dorrell is aware, however, that naval actions could directly influence the land war when it mattered, as, for instance, in relation to the siege and relief of Barcelona in 1706.²

The campaigning chapters furnish quick narratives of each army's operations on its respective front, highlighting major battles and sieges. Operations in Portugal and Catalonia are treated sep-

1. Those seeking a fuller discussion of the war's intertwined political and strategic contexts should consult A.D. Francis, *The First Peninsular War, 1702–1713* (London: E. Benn, 1975).

2. For more on naval matters, see John H. Owen, *The War at Sea under Queen Anne, 1702–1708* (1938; rpt. NY: Cambridge U Pr, 2010).

arately but also neatly tied together to show the reader how they influenced each other. The chapters include exhaustive lists of the pertinent army groups and garrisons, their commanders, and their constituent regiments. Dorrell often pauses to update lists of regiments and their unit strengths (when available). Throughout, he briefly identifies and comments on the reasons for successes or failures.

The author stresses the consequences of a dysfunctional and divided Allied high command, which, for example, caused the catastrophic loss of two Dutch regiments under Gen. François Nicolas Fagel near Zarcedas in Portugal in 1704.

Fagel's move was not part of some planned counter-attack but instead was a product of what was to be a major problem for the Confederates efforts—internal disagreements. Fagel had been at Estremoz as part of the forces there but had quickly fallen out with Schomberg. This rapidly escalated and so in early May, before news of the Bourbon attack had arrived, Fagel decided he could not stay in the same location as Schomberg and so left with the Dutch troops under his command. (46)

Dorrell's discussion of petty disputes and dithering in the Allied command provides readers with clear criteria to recognize that the command talent in the war lay on the Bourbon side in the persons of the Duke of Berwick and the Duc de Vendôme. The author notes in his conclusion that the quality of the Allied commanders and their Iberian campaigns heightens our appreciation for the abilities of Marlborough, Wellington, (and, I would add, Dwight Eisenhower) in handling coalition forces.

As intended, *Marlborough's Other Army* is a fine, lavishly illustrated introduction to the armies and campaigns of the war in the Iberian Peninsula, especially for readers impatient with details of the back and forth of diplomacy.³ It may serve, too, as a handy guide for wargaming the Iberian campaigns of the War of the Spanish Succession.

3. For which, see Francis (note 1 above) and Winston Churchill's magisterial *Marlborough: His Life and Times*, 4 vols. (1933–38; rpt. Chicago: U Chicago Pr, 2002).