

# Goya and the napoleonic invasion of spain



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

One the third of May 1808 it was not just a time in history but the name of a famous painter by the name of Francisco Goya. This painting was at the Medina del Rio Seco in Spain which was demonstrated on Napoleon's troops who marched into the Medina del Rio Seco to be confidently met by more than 21, 000 Spanish troops who were going to protect their city by any means necessary. There were a lot of lives that were lost during this time which was a reason why this date was such an important time in the history of Spain.

The art of war possesses some unchanging principles, whose main objective is to ensure armies against leaders mistakes about enemy strength-a mistake which more or less always occurs.

Francisco Jose de Goya y Lucientes was known as one of most famous and important Spanish artist of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. When Goya was born in 1746, the Spanish crown was under the rule of Ferdinand VI. Up in age he began to start painting in a studio beside the Francisco brothers and Ramon Bayeu y Subias which led him into marrying their sister by the name of Josefa. He made a great name for himself over the course of years which got his name more and more in the spotlight.

Getting recognized, at the middle age of forty, he was appointed so greatly the painter to the King, Charles III. Working hard on painting got him moved up even more to officially be promoted to the court painter under Charles IV.

In this painting that Goya presented to us, it shows the fear and suffering of the Spanish that took place during this dreading and awful event. Napoleon's troops showed no mercy at all towards the Spanish even when they already

lost about 3, 500 of their people already. Goya made sure the facial expressions were well painted out so that observers could see that the Napoleon's troops had no mercy at all towards the Spanish. The painting showed how some of the Spanish was laid in a pool of their own blood but that did not stop the Napoleons from wanting to kill the rest. The people who was already shot had been tossed aside and piled up making more room for the next victim. The look on one Spaniard who is in the white shirt is showed with his hands displayed in a High V showing peace, but the Napoleons show no sympathy at all towards them. What is not shown in this painting is the look on the Napoleon troops faces, but by their reaction, fear, and pain on the Spanish townspeople faces they are looking death in the eyes as the troops point their guns ready to end the rest of their lives. On the Napoleon troops side it shows the scene of darkness being brought upon the Spanish and nothing but the depressing side of doom.

The third of May, 1808 all started due to Napoleon Bonaparte's forces who had crossed the Pyrenees into the allied Spain under the pretext of trying to invade Spain and take over. The infamous French emperor decided to overtake and control the regions of Spain and its people. The King by the name of Charles IV had attempted to flee to South America but by the time he could do that he was forced by an extremely angry citizens of Spain. The King Napoleon sensed an opportunity to take over, so his great plan was to invite Charles and Ferdinand to France. During the time the leaders of Spain would be executed, so they decided to rise up against the Napoleon troops. This is what led to the famous The third of May, 1808 painting.

“ With my banner bearing the words ‘ Liberty and Emancipation from Superstition,’” he said, “ I shall be regarded as the liberator of Spain.”

Taking a stand and rising up against the troops, the Spaniards decided to retaliate and on one nightfall, there were at least 150 soldiers of the French that was found dead. This made the Napoleons furious and definitely knew they had to find some type way to get the Spaniards back. Of course that led to the French getting their revenge, and they ended up killing some of the Spaniards as well for what they did to their people. Going back and forth with each other is what started the unforgettable war that went on. The going back and forth led to the French wanting to put an end to this madness once and for all which led to the Peninsular War.

The Peninsular War (1807– 1814) was a military conflict between Napoleonic France and the allied powers of Spain, Portugal, ect for control of the Iberian Peninsula during the Napoleonic Wars. The war started when the French and Spanish armies invaded and occupied Portugal in 1807, and escalated in 1808 when France turned on Spain, it is only ally at the time. The war on the peninsula would last until the sixth Coalition had defeated Napoleon in 1814. This would be regarded as one of the first wars of national liberation, significant because of the emergence of guerrilla warfare.

The Peninsular War, would also begin to overlap with what the Spanish-speaking world calls the (Spanish War of Independence), which began on the May 2, 1808 and ended on April 17, 1814. The French occupation destroyed the Spanish administration, which fragmented into quarrelling segment of the Spanish government. In 1810, a reconstituted national government, the

C?- diz Cortes. The British and Portuguese armies would eventually take control of Portugal. With this new found position the British and Portuguese would use this as a point of location to campaigns against the French army. They would also use this as a way to provide whatever supplies they could to the Spanish, so that the Spanish armies and guerrillas could tie down a sizeable amount of Napoleon's troops.

Through the devastating years of fighting in Spain was a complete heavy burden on France's Grande Armee. While the French were victorious in battle, their communications and supplies were severely tested and their units were frequently isolated, harassed or overwhelmed by partisans fighting an intense guerrilla war of raids and different types of ambushes. The Spanish armies were repeatedly beaten and driven to the peripheries, but they would regroup and relentlessly hound the French. This drain on French resources led Napoleon, who had unwittingly provoked a total war, to call the conflict the " Spanish Ulcer". The cumulative crises and disruptions of invasion, revolution, and restoration led to the independence of most of Spain's American colonies and the independence of Brazil from Portugal.

Joseph would be appointed King of Spain by his brother, Napoleon, Emperor of France, five years before the Battle of Vitoria. Joseph's appointment to the throne did not go over well with the people of the Spain. The appointment and arrival of Joseph, is what started the Spanish revolt against the Napoleon and set the Peninsular War into action. It is said that the main reason of the Spanish revolt was, " a reaction against new institutions and ideas. This was movement to show loyalty to the old order hereditary to crown of the Catholic kings. Which Napoleon was not, as an excommunicated enemy of <https://assignbuster.com/goya-and-the-napoleonic-invasion-of-spain/>

the Pope? Napoleon had given control of Spain to a Frenchman; who had the Catholic Church persecuted as began a republican, who had desecrated churches, murdered priests, and enforced a “loi des cultes” (a new law of religion) and promoted a centralized government.

Joseph had temporarily withdrawn much of the French Army to northern Spain, because he had grown comfortable with his current station as the King of Naples. Knowing that he was not in good standing with the Spanish people, Joseph proposed his abdication from the Spanish throne. Hopeful that Napoleon would sanction his return to the Naples. Napoleon dismissed Joseph’s reservations, and the Emperor proceeded to send in heavy French reinforcements, to assist Joseph in maintaining his position as King of Spain.

Despite the easy recapture of Madrid, and the minimal control that Joseph’s government over many cities and provinces, Joseph’s reign over Spain was always questionable at best. Because it was constantly under resistance from the pro-Bourbon guerrillas. Joseph and his supporters would never established complete control over the country. The king had virtually no influence over the course of the ongoing Peninsular War: Joseph’s nominal command of French forces in Spain was mostly a sham, because the French commanders under King Joseph’s command would insist on checking with Napoleon before carrying out Joseph’s instructions. Joseph’s lack of control among his army leaders would play a large role in the outcome of the Battle of Vitoria.

Joseph would come to battle the British army under the command of Arthur Wellington. Wellington came from a noble background, but he would work

his way through the ranks just like Napoleon. Wellington was not accepted as British general and if he had die at the Battle of Talavera in 1809, when arch enemy Napoleon was at the height of his military career, which is then little would be known of the man, who would start the downfall of the Napoleonic Empire of France. His near death experience at Talavera, his ability as a commander would not be known until 1812 and his victory over in Spain in 1813. In 1812, when Napoleon set out with a massive army on what proved to be a disastrous campaign to conquer Russia, a combined allied army under Wellesley pushed into Spain defeating the French at Salamanca and taking Madrid.

The British Army under the command of Arthur Wellington, Duke of Wellington, would guard Portugal and campaigned against the French in Spain alongside the reformed Portuguese army. The Portuguese army was under the command of General William Carr Beresford, who had been appointed commander-in-chief of the Portuguese forces by the exiled Portuguese royal family, and fought as part of a combined Anglo-Portuguese army under Wellesley. This combined army would come up against the French Army lead by Joseph Bonaparte and Marshal Jean “ Baptiste Jordan. Although the British and the Spain had been rival throughout the colonial times, they would put aside their hatred for each other and join forces defeating Napoleon and the French Empire that he had obtained thus far.

Although the Anglo-Spanish alliance could afford them the best chance at winning this battle against Napoleon there was not much trust amongst Wellington and the Spanish generals at all. The Spanish were engaging in what was the beginning of Guerilla warfare, Wellington found it hard to lead

<https://assignbuster.com/goya-and-the-napoleonic-invasion-of-spain/>

the troops at times. The Spanish were often described as vicious bandits, who would disguise themselves and attack their enemy without a second thought. Whereas the Spanish say the British Army as a group of drunken hooligans who were out for their own ambitions. These differences Wellington would find it difficult at times to assist the Spanish in this quest to defeat Napoleon.

The Battle of Vitoria took place on June 21, 1813 with the British, Portuguese and Spanish armies coming together under the leadership of Duke Wellington. Wellington would not meet Napoleon in battle, but he would in fact face Napoleon's brother Joseph Bonaparte and Marshal Jean-Baptiste near Vitoria in Spain. The reason why Napoleon was not at the battle of Spain was because, he decided to withdraw a majority of his forces so he could rebuild and prepare for his invasion of Russia.

The battlefield for the battle would be located on the Zadorra River, which runs east to west. Vitoria is located on the east of the Zadorra River, with five roads that lead into Vitoria. The armies could enter from the North from Bilbao, from the Northeast from Salinas and Bayonne, East from Salvatierra, South from Logrono, and West from Burgos on the South side of the Zadorra River. Gazan and his division would be guarding the narrow western end of the Zadorra valley which placed them south of the river. D'Elron would also be stationed on the south side of the river and his failure to destroy three bridges along the river's bend. This would leave one the weakest French division to guard them from the British army.



The day leading up to the Battle of Vitoria, Jourdan would fall ill and the French would not have the leadership it would need to face Wellington in battle. The troops would leave a convoy of artillery in the streets of Vitoria, because they would not have enough animals to the wagons or the cannons that they had gained control of in a siege attack. The now out of control French army would meet Duke Wellington, who was moving his troops in the north side of the Zadorra. The French would come into battle with 60, 000 troops, which would put them up against a strong British army of 82, 000 troops. The French Army had 49, 000 infantry, 11, 000 cavalry and 151 guns going into this battle. While the British had more men and few guns with 96 guns they would give the French all they had.

On June 21, Wellington would launch is final attack on Joseph and the French Army near Vitoria. He would lead a group of soldiers on the attack with around 57, 000 British troops, 16, 000 Portuguese and 8, 000 Spanish toward Vitoria. They would come in on the French with four columns. Wellington would outflank Jourdan's company on the Northern side near the Esla River. This would leave them stuck between the Douro and the Tagus. This would cause the French army to retreat into Burgos, causing Wellington to march hard to cut them off from returning to France. Wellington would be in command of the central forces and their strategic action in cutting Joseph and his army off the main road leading them back into France, while Thomas Graham would lead the bulk of the army to the right flank of the Zadorra River. Things were not going so well elsewhere for Wellington. General Graham's attack on the French right flank at the crossing of the Zadorra River north of Vitoria, which had run into determined opposition at the village

of Gamara Mayor. Wellington was becoming concerned, by noon his center columns under Picton and Dalhousie had not yet arrived. When they finally arrived Picton impatient for orders led his division to take the bridge of Mendoza. The French had by the afternoon been driven from the heights and were being squeezed into the area around Vitoria as the allies drove at them from the center and left flanks. The French were now under threat from both flanks and the center with an artillery duel between 75 allied guns and 76 French guns being the biggest artillery battle of the war and the largest amount of artillery Wellington would have command of until Waterloo. Wellington was preparing for the final stroke. Outflanked and under pressure the French finally broke. Only the failure by the allies to take the Mayor prevented the French being cut off completely and destroyed.

This major accomplishment by Wellington and his army had the French scrambling and question what to do. The French generals did not trust the leadership of Joseph and they would not make decision with first getting word from Napoleon. This would give Wellington the upper hand and after a hard fight Thomas would break through the centerline of the French army and soon cause a breakdown of the French Army. The major set that the French was meeting with when Gazan and D'Erlon not cooperating at the Zuazo ridge cause the morale of the soldiers to collapse and caused them to flee the battleground. The artillery men would leave behind their guns as they fled the fields on their horses. This rushing of the men leaving the battlefield would cause congestion on the roads with large number of wagons and carriages trying to head back to France. The efforts of Reille's divisions' was definitely holding off the Graham and his troops that was

allowed for more than ten thousand men to escape via the Salvatierra Road to head home to France.

Without Goya, we would have not gotten a well painted picture of such a historic time. Goya showed true meaning of what he painted and for that we all got a sense of what it could have been like during this time because of all the heartfelt faces and the little details that was displayed in the painting. This is why they have named Goya as one of the greatest painters of the eighteenth and nineteenth century.