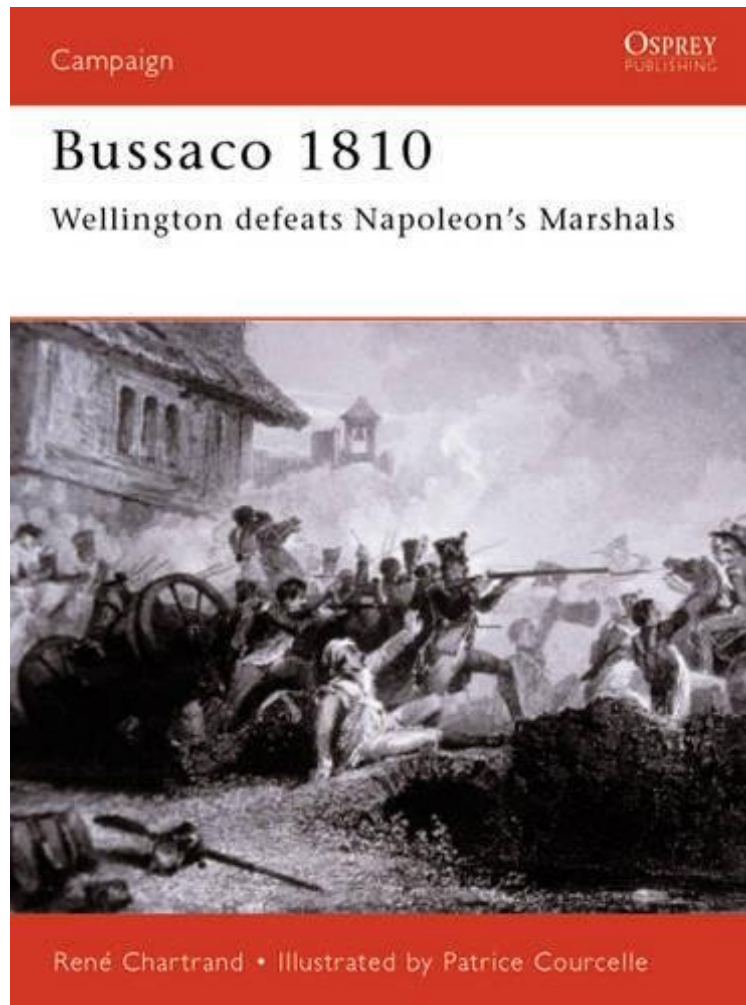


(Free download) Bussaco 1810: Wellington defeats Napoleon's Marshals (Campaign)

Bussaco 1810: Wellington defeats Napoleon's Marshals (Campaign)

René Chartrand

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René Chartrand : Bussaco 1810: Wellington defeats Napoleon's Marshals (Campaign) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bussaco 1810: Wellington defeats Napoleon's Marshals (Campaign):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Finest Defensive Position in Europe...By HMS Warspite "Bussaco 1810: Wellington Defeats Napoleon's Marshals" is another solid entry in the Osprey Campaign Series. Author Rene Chartrand opens with a summary of the Peninsular War to 1810, quick portraits of the opposing commanders, and descriptions of the opposing armies. His narrative properly begins with the appointment of veteran Marshal Massena to command the third French attempt to conquer Portugal. Chartrand devotes considerable space to the sieges of the border fortresses of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, along with an entire chapter to the nearly disastrous encounter of the British Light Division with Marshal Ney's French 6th Corps at the River Coa. In fact,

more than half the book is spent getting Messina and the French Army to the foot of the Bussaco ridge, where Wellington's Anglo-Portuguese Army awaits them on what another author termed "the finest defensive position in Europe." Bussaco itself is briskly dealt with, as the French are soundly repulsed after a frontal assault with minimal reconnaissance. After the battle, the Anglo-Portuguese Army withdraws south. The narrative ends with Messina's shocked discovery of the Lines of Torres Vedras, barring the way to Lisbon. Chartrand is remarkably even-handed in his narrative, giving due credit to the rebuilt Portuguese Army whose baptism of fire was at Bussaco, and to the French Army, which overcame a variety of obstacles on the way to Bussaco. The graphics, illustrations, and photographs are good to excellent. This reviewer would have liked a little more investigation into Messina's poor handling of the Battle at Bussaco. "Bussaco 1810" is highly recommended to students of the Peninsular War as a concise and useful account of the battle and the campaign. 11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Adequate, but Needs Better Maps

By R. A. Forczyk

Bussaco 1810 is the second installment in René Chartrand's trilogy on the Portuguese phase of the Peninsula War. Like the previous volume, *Vimeiro 1808*, the author provides a solid summary of a crucial early phase in that particular theater of the Napoleonic Wars. This volume covers the period April-October 1810, with Marshal Massena's invasion of Portugal. As standard in the Osprey Campaign series, the volume begins with a section on the origins of the campaign and a campaign chronology, followed by well-written sections on opposing plans, opposing commanders and opposing armies. While adequate, these sections are succinct and assume that the reader has access to other sources, particularly concerning the French and British armies in the Peninsula. One concern in these sections is the relative pro forma treatment of Marshall André Massena, which is inadequate given the crucial role that his leadership played in the campaign. The stock descriptions of Massena as a barely-literate looter appear in virtually every source, but they are used as substitutes for real insight into the man who was one of Napoleon's best marshals. Massena's brilliant battlefield performance at Aspern and Wagram the year before Bussaco are not even mentioned by Chartrand, but they are certainly relevant. The campaign itself is covered in six phases: the Battle of the River Coa against the British covering force, the siege of Almeida, the march to Bussaco and preliminary deployments, the Battle of Bussaco and the aftermath. Three battle scenes depict the action at the River Coa Bridge, the explosion of Almeida's main powder magazine and the repulse of Ney's 6th Corps by Craufurd's Light Division at Bussaco. An excellent order of battle for both sides is included, which has units identified down to regimental level and with manpower strengths. The information on Allied artillery is good, but much less is provided on the French artillery. While the text of this account is excellent, as is usual for Chartrand, the battle itself is difficult to analyze for two reasons. First, Massena's peculiar behavior in the days leading up to Bussaco is not well-addressed; the comments that he was pre-occupied with a mistress might explain a brief lapse, but not a string of bad decisions that were atypical of this otherwise excellent commander. Was Massena sick (for example, modern historians now suspect that heart problems undermined General Robert E. Lee's performance at Gettysburg in 1863), or suffering from post-Wagram battle fatigue? Unlike Wellington, Massena had been in the thick of two major battles in 1809. The other problem that makes analysis difficult is the lack of adequate maps. This volume has one 3-D map of the River Coa engagement, two 3-D maps of the main French attacks at Bussaco but only one small 2-D map that covers the movements toward Bussaco. It is thus difficult to adequately evaluate Massena's approach to Bussaco or Wellington's response to the French invasion. A vital question - could Massena have done anything differently at Bussaco - cannot be answered from this perspective. While Chartrand suggests that Ney's preference for a hasty assault the day before might have produced better results, this is unlikely. As in the volume on *Vimeiro*, Chartrand has not attempted much analysis to explain the French failure. There is little doubt that Massena fumbled the Battle of Bussaco due to violation of the principles of security, surprise and maneuver. French pre-battle reconnaissance was abysmal. Wellington used the terrain effectively and was able to mass sufficient combat power to defeat the French column attacks. Yet Bussaco was not a true reflection of French contemporary tactics, since French cavalry was unengaged and their superiority in artillery was not exploited. Nor were Wellington's famous "reverse slope" tactics utilized to any great extent. If the French had attempted a methodical artillery preparation - particularly against the inexperienced Portuguese units - could Wellington have held? A little analysis of what went wrong for the French army at Bussaco would have been useful. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Ok, but lacking on actual battle

By Phil Historian

First off: The copy of this I received had the same illustrations twice and the same two maps on the battle of River Coa. This book does not cover the battle as well as it should, with more space being devoted to the French invasion, and the battles of the River Coa and Almeida. Overall this was a good Osprey volume but lacking the coverage on the battle required to make it a five star read. also, the maps and illustrations were not first class.

This Osprey title details the gruelling Bussaco campaign of the Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815), as French attempts to subdue Portugal reached their climax. By 1810, Napoleon reigned supreme over most of continental Europe. But the Iberian Peninsula remained unsubdued, particularly Portugal, which continued to resist. Napoleon ordered Marshal Masséna to crush this resistance with the Army of Portugal. Greatly strengthened, Masséna's army would drive the Portuguese and British into the sea. Facing the French were 60,000 British and Portuguese troops. No-one knew how the Portuguese would perform in battle, but on 27 September 1810, they received their baptism of fire.

From the Publisher Highly visual guides to history's greatest conflicts, detailing the command strategies, tactics, and experiences of the opposing forces throughout each campaign, and concluding with a guide to the battlefields today.

About the Author René Chartrand was born in Montreal and educated in Canada, the United States and the Bahamas. A senior curator with Canada's National Historic Sites for nearly three decades, he is now a freelance writer and historical consultant. He has written numerous articles and books including almost 20 Osprey titles and the first two volumes of Canadian Military Heritage. He lives in Hull, Quebec, with his wife and two sons.