

THE PORTUGUESE EXPEDITIONARY CORPS IN WORLD WAR I: FROM
INCEPTION TO COMBAT DESTRUCTION, 1914-1918

Jesse Pyles, B.A.

Thesis Prepared for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

May 2012

APPROVED:

Geoffrey Wawro, Major Professor
Robert Citino, Committee Member
Walter Roberts, Committee Member
Richard McCaslin, Chair of the Department
of History
James D. Meernik, Acting Dean of the
Toulouse Graduate School

Pyles, Jesse, The Portuguese Expeditionary Corps in World War I: From Inception to Destruction, 1914-1918. Master of Arts (History), May 2012, 130 pp., references, 86.

The Portuguese Expeditionary Force fought in the trenches of northern France from April 1917 to April 1918. On 9 April 1918 the sledgehammer blow of Operation *Georgette* fell upon the exhausted Portuguese troops. British accounts of the Portuguese Corps' participation in combat on the Western Front are terse. Many are dismissive.

In fact, Portuguese units experienced heavy combat and successfully held their ground against all attacks. Regarding *Georgette*, the standard British narrative holds that most of the Portuguese soldiers threw their weapons aside and ran. The account is incontrovertibly false. Most of the Portuguese combat troops held their ground against the German assault. This thesis details the history of the Portuguese Expeditionary Force.

Copyright 2012

by

Jesse Pyles

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The love of my life, my wife Izabella, encouraged me to pursue graduate education in history. This thesis would not have been possible without her support.

Professor Geoffrey Wawro directed my thesis. He provided helpful feedback regarding content and structure. Professor Robert Citino offered equal measures of instruction and encouragement. Dr. Walter Roberts is a facilitator.

Professor Linda S. Frey has graciously mentored me since I enrolled at the University of Montana. As a historian I am first Professor Frey's student. Her sister, Professor Marsha L. Frey, has been equally munificent. Professor Paul Gordon Lauren taught me much about diplomacy. Professor James V. Koch provided much advice. I am indebted to Professor Dennis Showalter who has offered his time unreservedly.

Dr. William Riley and David Reinberger backed my study of history. John Garland and Ryan Stevens have long encouraged me. Brigadier General James Higham, Colonel Wayne Skora, Lieutenant Colonel Ross Gubser, Major Thomas Menza, and Captain R. K. Boone helped me in many ways. Mr. Jerry Smith, thank you.

At the Arquivo Histórico Militar, João Tavares, along with Carla Silva and Antonio Granha, provided much assistance. Sabrina Rowlatt at the Imperial War Museum helped identify collections which proved essential to this project. The entire staff at the National Archives of the United Kingdom is knowledgeable and helpful.

Any errors in this thesis are mine.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2. ENTRY INTO THE EUROPEAN WAR.....	10
CHAPTER 3. HOLDING THE LINE IN FRANCE.....	37
CHAPTER 4. PORTUGAL’S WAR ESCALATES.....	64
CHAPTER 5. THE BATTLE OF THE LYS RIVER.....	89
CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION.....	117
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	123

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On the morning of 9 April 1918 operation *Georgette* pitted the powerful German Sixth Army against two corps, the XI and XV, of the British First Army. The XI Corps had two divisions in the frontline along the attack frontage selected by the Germans, the 2nd Portuguese, comprised of twelve worn down battalions, and the 55th with nine fresh battalions. The XV Corps had the 40th Division in the line with nine battle weary battalions under command. From south to north the 55th held a 4,000 yard front, the 2nd Portuguese held a front exceeding 12,000 yards, and the 40th a front of 7,500 yards.¹ All the ground held by the Portuguese and that held by the right brigade of the 40th Division lay within the exceptionally flat Lys River plain. The 55th held ground better suited to defense. The 40th Division's frontage was by Great War standards exceptionally long. The Portuguese frontage can only be classed as extreme. The German battle plan called for an attack along the entire Portuguese front, about two miles of the 40th Division's right-front, and a mile or so of the 55th Division's left front.

German planners intended *Georgette's* opening phase to be an exhibition of crushing force. They did not want a set piece battle. An extraordinarily intense bombardment severed all communications immediately. Its earth-shattering force sheered battalions from brigades, companies from battalions and platoons from

¹ J. E. Edmonds, *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1918*, Vol. II, (Nashville: The Battery Press, Inc., 1995), 162. This official history incorrectly states the Portuguese held only 10,000 yards.

companies. Once the bombardment subsided the Sixth Army launched fourteen divisions, nine of which were well-equipped attack divisions (*Angriffsdivisionen*) trained in the new German methods of tactical infantry assault (*Stosstrupptaktik*), against a ten to eleven mile frontage held by just five Allied brigades.² Three additional brigades stood in immediate reserve. In manpower, the Germans attacked with a battlefield superiority of better than nine to one. Portuguese and British defenders on the Lys plain could only fight hopeless small unit actions against successive waves of attackers. The 55th Division had an easier run of things.

Few comprehensive Allied reports on the battle exist owing to the nature of the engagement. As examples, all three Portuguese brigade commanders remained at their headquarters during the attack trying to coordinate the resistance and were taken prisoner.³ Even if they had detailed knowledge of their battalion's actions in the battle they were unable to record and pass the information up the chain of command. One battalion belonging to the 40th Division's reserve brigade lost three of its four companies less than an hour after sending them forward. Another battalion in the same brigade also lost two or more companies. These men were not heard from until they returned from German prisoner of war camps many months later. Some did not return. These battalion's war diaries accordingly offer little information regarding the combat actions fought by their companies. Historian Martin Middlebrook commented on this

² John F. Williams, *Modernity, the Media and the Military: The Creation of National Mythologies on the Western Front 1914-1918*, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 174.

³ General Tamagnini de Abreu e Silva in Isabel Pestana Marques, *Das Trincheiras com Saudade: A Vida Quotidiana dos Militares Portugueses na Primeira Guerra Mundial*. (Lisbon: A Esfera dos Livros, 2008), 376-377.

phenomenon regarding operation *Michael*. “Because of the results of the fighting on the first day, the War Diaries of the front-line British battalions are in parlous state.”⁴ The same situation applies to the war diaries of the frontline and reserve units which fought in *Georgette*.

Research for this thesis proved challenging. The Arquivo Histórico Militar at Lisbon, (AHM), holds more than 1,400 boxes on the Portuguese Expeditionary Force. Accounts of the battle number in the hundreds and span several boxes. Most are curt handwritten reports of squads, platoons and companies. Some were contributed by repatriated prisoners-of-war. The reports bear out the frenetic nature of the struggle. Several Portuguese officers later wrote comprehensive accounts of the battle based on these reports. Most are very reliable. The longest reports appeared in print during the 1920s; none were translated. No English language history of the battle has examined these sources.

The National Archives of the United Kingdom at Kew, (TNA), holds what war diaries and after action reports that exist of the British units which fought in the battle. The Imperial War Museum at London, (IWM), holds the private papers of several British officers which took part in the battle. Taken together, the records at these three archives provide sufficient information to render a very good understanding of the battle’s first hours. Before examining further difficulties with these records it is helpful to briefly turn to the least understood but most central element in the account of the battle, the Portuguese.

⁴ Martin Middlebrook, *The Kaiser’s Battle*, (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 10.

Prior to conducting research for this project I had never visited Portugal. My familiarity with Portuguese culture derives from having lived in Brazil for several years. The experience afforded unique perspectives. No two former colonial possession and imperial overlord states have more greatly diverged than Brazil and Portugal. Americans and Britons share many aspects of material culture. Argentines somewhat jokingly deride Spaniards but even a cursory glance at those two nation's cultures demonstrates far more similarities than differences. Brazilian and Portuguese cultures perhaps share no more than two commonalities, a language, and a taste for *bacalhau*, heavily salted, pungent, sun dried cod.

I knew a number of Portuguese in Brazil. They are peculiar people. A Portuguese readily stands out in a group of Brazilians, even at a distance. Their formal mannerisms betray them. Interacting with them I learned of their inclination to honesty which is probably closely related to their fondness for well-mannered modesty, even chivalry. I learned, for example, if a Portuguese agreed to meet at a certain time; he or she would be at the appointed place on time or earlier. Punctuality is a foreign concept to most Brazilians. Most of the Portuguese I knew preferred to refrain from conflict. They also hesitated to place blame, even when another party had clearly erred.

By contrast, I was aware of the British penchant for exaggeration from reading World War II military histories. British material on the German offensives of 1918 proved no different. During the course of my research I encountered far too many statements which read something to the effect of, 'British soldiers preferred to fight, and die if necessary, where they stood over retreating'. Historian Duff Cooper declared of the

British forces during the *Michael* battle, “Confusion therefore was great, but panic there was none.”⁵ Such remarks defy reason.

Portuguese and British accounts of the Battle of the Lys do not square. In many cases they are not even close. Other trends emerged as I studied the material. Portuguese accounts of the Lys battle do not appreciably differ. Portuguese reports also admit faults, probably judging themselves too harshly in many cases. British records, even multiple reports of the same unit, diverge significantly; they also admit little if any fault. A number are farfetched. For example, several reports which seek to blame the Portuguese for something or another claim clear sight at extended distances at times before dawn while an exceptionally thick fog draped the battlefield and German shells exploded in a much denser ratio than upon the *Michael* battlefield.

One more trend emerged in the British material. War diaries and after action reports of units which did not operate in proximity to the Portuguese during the battle imply they were right beside the Portuguese and blame them for their defeats. More importantly, units which performed worst during the battle place the most blame on the Portuguese. It should be added that many secondary sources base their accounts of the battle on these histories. J. E. Edmonds’ official history does as well. Accordingly, his description of events on 9 April 1918 is unreliable.⁶ This topic is addressed in greater detail in the third and fourth chapters.

I began to search for material to elucidate all these inconsistencies. It emerged

⁵ Duff Cooper, *Haig*, Vol. II, (London: Faber and Faber, 1936), 248.

⁶ Middlebrook, *The Kaiser’s Battle*, 10.

that Martin Middlebrook had addressed them in *The Kaiser's Battle*. His opening remark on the topic merits examination here:

If one reads only the regimental and battalion histories of British units the situation presented is of one position after another 'fighting to the end', with the utmost bravery and heavy loss of life. This does not fit in with the German accounts....Nor does it fit in with the reliable fatal casualty figures extracted from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission records.⁷

Middlebrook proceeds to document instances of premature surrenders and deliberate falsification of casualty figures in order to perpetuate the myth that the unit fought well.⁸

Middlebrook's guidepost proved invaluable in helping me to properly interpret the British records. I make no apology for this.

Douglas L. Wheeler's *Republican Portugal: A Political History, 1910-1926* is an outstanding work. Anyone seeking an understanding of Portugal's political turmoil and its underlying causes during this tumultuous period should first consult this book.

Wheeler also understands and accurately conveys Portuguese perspectives. I have cited him throughout this thesis on obscure and controversial matters. Nuno Severiano Teixeira occupies the preeminent position among Portuguese scholars of the period. His book, *O Poder e a Guerra, 1914-1918*, is first rate. Professor Teixeira writes authoritatively but dispassionately. Scholarship achieves no higher level than can be found in the pages of his book. Luís Manuel Alves de Fraga also deserves recognition for his contributions to the study of the Portuguese Expeditionary Force.

John F. Williams made a compelling observation regarding British Army officer's perspectives of the Portuguese. "Given carte blanche to do what they liked with the

⁷ Ibid, 332.

⁸ Ibid, 332-334.

soldiers of an ally they regarded as racially inferior, British military leaders tucked the Portuguese away where they could do the least harm.”⁹ Williams did not broach the subject of racism unfounded. It pervades private British commentary and some widely published literature of the period. A declaration made in a 1918 *The Contemporary Review* article makes this plain. “The thrilling account of the resistance of the Portuguese near the Lys on April 9th may have come as a surprise to those who have been accustomed to look upon the Portuguese as a degenerate race.”¹⁰ Racism is well attested in remarks made by British officers in their private papers and memoirs in which Portuguese dignitaries and senior officers are almost invariably described as ‘old’ or ‘little’ though they were no older or shorter than their British counterparts. The British, including many senior officers, referred to the Portuguese as Goose, Geese, Ruddy Geese, Poor Geese and Pork and Beans. A British captain described a Portuguese colonel as a “hairy-eared baboon.”¹¹ Many remarked on Portuguese attempts at communication in French or English. Lieutenant Colonel Walter Guinness wrote, “General Battista was a dear old man, who unfortunately could speak no known language.”¹² I only touch on this topic in the paper. I have made note of it here because the history of the Portuguese soldiers in France cannot be fully understood without recognition of bigotry.

Finally, the Imperial War Museum at London holds the diary of Captain Richard

⁹ Williams, *Modernity, the Media and the Military*, 170.

¹⁰ Aubrey F. E. Bell, “The new Administration in Portugal” in *The Contemporary Review*, No. 631, July 1918, 48.

¹¹ IWM, Dartford Papers, 27 March 1917.

¹² Brian Bond and Simon Robbins, (eds), *Staff Officer: The Diaries of Walter Guinness (First Lord Moyne) 1914-1918*, (London: Leo Cooper, 1987), 180.

Charles Gordon Dartford. The diary proved immensely helpful to this project in two distinct ways. First, Dartford served as a liaison officer with the British Mission to the Portuguese Expeditionary Force throughout the full year the Portuguese held the Lys sector. He spoke Portuguese and had lived in Portugal. He possessed a solid understanding of Portuguese culture. Dartford's diary entries offer insight into the day-to-day interactions of British and Portuguese soldiers. His records of engagements fought, artillery bombardments, people, and personal conflicts helped corroborate many events. Second, Dartford often recorded very raw impressions and sentiments, his own, and those of his fellow officers. Accordingly, he sometimes does not come off very well. It should be remembered that Dartford only shared the bigoted perspectives of his cast and of many Britons, he did not conceive them.

I have made every effort to avoid tarnishing this exceptionally brave officer's legacy. During the early morning hours of 9 April 1918, Captain R. C. G. Dartford left the relative safety of his billet in the rear and made for the Portuguese 4th Brigade Headquarters, to which he was attached, under the weight of *Georgette's* opening artillery bombardment. Though a majority of his fellow British Mission officers took to their heels as German gunners unleashed the second most powerful artillery strike in the history of war to that day, a fact he only indirectly points out, Dartford exceeded all measure of devotion to duty by advancing into the teeth of near certain death to stand his post. Many Portuguese which moved forward to engage the Germans under the rain of steel that morning did not survive. Somehow Dartford did. So far as can be determined Dartford received no commendation for his extraordinary valor that morning. For that

matter, neither have the Portuguese. I felt compelled to acknowledge these intrepid actions here.

CHAPTER 2

ENTRY INTO THE EUROPEAN WAR

Elements of the Portuguese Expeditionary Force, o Corpo Expedicionário Português (CEP) in the vernacular, first entered the trenches of French Flanders in April 1917.¹³ By November the CEP operated as a two division corps commanded by General Fernando Tamagnini de Abreu e Silva. The corps was attached to General Sir Henry Home's First Army. The 1st and 2nd Portuguese Divisions, comprised of more than 50,000 men, held an extended portion of the British line, "on a front of 7,000 and 9,000 yards respectively."¹⁴ From April 1917 until April 1918, the CEP held its assigned sector steadfastly, the enlisted men without relief or leave. Throughout that year Portuguese soldiers endured heavy high explosive and gas bombardments. They repelled strong raids and launched raids of their own. Portuguese troops did what duty required of them, sustaining heavy casualties and conceding remarkably few prisoners. Then, on the morning 9 April 1918, following a terrific four-hour-long bombardment, eight divisions of the German Sixth Army launched the main effort of Operation *Georgette* against the seven-mile-long Portuguese front. Only the 2nd Division held the front that day. The battle was decided in a matter of hours. By 12:15 p.m. the division had been destroyed.

¹³ Most Portuguese and many British works on the CEP state that the unit fought in Flanders. Americans typically associate Flanders with the Belgian province of the same name. Here the term refers to the older and much larger region of Flanders located generally in the Low Countries which included portions of northern France, also known as French Flanders.

¹⁴ TNA, General Sir Henry Home to GHQ, First Army No. GS 942, 21 December 1917, WO 158/190.

The widely accepted British report on the Battle of the Lys River denigrates the Portuguese troops.¹⁵ Soldiers and historians have asserted that the men of the 2nd Division fled the battlefield en masse, in disarray. A. J. P. Taylor's remark exemplifies the narrative:

On 9 April the Germans attacked in Flanders towards Hazebrouck. They had an unexpected stroke of luck. The line here was held only by one Portuguese division, tired, depressed and due for withdrawal. We need not linger over the questions why and when Portugal entered the war. At any rate the miserable troops were there. They broke on the first onslaught.¹⁶

The tale of blue clad Portuguese soldiers throwing down their arms and taking to their heels has been construed as fact. A few historians have been kinder to the Portuguese but even these affirm that most of the troops abandoned their positions once the German onslaught broke against their front. John Toland ranks among this group:

The leading waves of the [German] divisions converging on the Portuguese 2nd Division found most of the front-line trenches empty. Small groups could only put up brief if heroic resistance...It was not that the Portuguese were cowards. They saw little reason to fight. Besides they were spread too thin. The result was panic flight.¹⁷

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was probably the first historian to sympathize with the Portuguese. In 1920 he published a reasonably accurate account of the battle. It was an impressive feat given the available information. His account remains one of the most equitable to date: The main force of the German attack fell upon the Portuguese line, and it was of such strength that no blame can be attached to the inexperienced troops who

¹⁵ The battle is also known as the Battle of Armentières, the Battle of Estaires and Fourth Ypres.

¹⁶ A. J. P. Taylor, *The First World War: An Illustrated History*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1972), 223.

¹⁷ John Toland, *No Man's Land: 1918, The Last Year of the Great War*, (Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 2002) 147.

gave way before so terrific a blow, which would have been formidable to any soldiers in the world.¹⁸ Conan Doyle also noted the Portuguese “gunners stood to their work like men and groups of them continued to fire their guns after the infantry had left them exposed. These brave men were killed or captured.”¹⁹

Portuguese and British records elucidate a much different series of events regarding that momentous battle than is rendered in the standard narrative. The Portuguese 2nd Division, and by extension the CEP, along with the British First Army, suffered a stinging defeat along the Lys that April morning. The division was destroyed as an integral fighting force but not because it ran from the enemy. The evidence shows that the Portuguese infantry, artillerymen, and machinegun units largely held their positions until killed, wounded, captured, or overrun. Many support and reserve units actually moved forward to meet the German advance. Casualty lists show that most of the division’s combat units lost more than half their complement in the battle. This thesis examines the history of the CEP, from the political impetus that brought the Portuguese soldiers into the trenches of the Western Front, their training, combat experiences and ultimate destruction on the Lys.

Portugal was enmeshed in turmoil at the turn of the twentieth century. Intense political division threatened civil war. King Carlos I and heir Prince Royal Luís Filipe were assassinated in Lisbon on 1 February 1908. The second son, wounded in the arm during the attack, was proclaimed King Manuel II the next day. Manuel ruled an

¹⁸ Arthur Conan Doyle, *A History of the Great War: The British Campaign in France and Flanders: 1918, January to July*, Volume 5, (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1920), 232-233.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 234.

increasingly chaotic state for two and a half years. A political uprising backed by a burgeoning republican movement forced him into exile on 5 October 1910. The republican party, supported by “the working classes and small shopkeepers of Lisbon and Oporto,” proclaimed the Portuguese Republic the same day Manuel departed for England.²⁰ The party always held an exceedingly tenuous grasp on power. Monarchists, Catholics, socialists and anarchists intrigued against the new government as well as each other. Strikes, riots, and assassinations occurred frequently.

While political life centered on Lisbon and Oporto, the nation’s largest cities, a majority of the Portuguese people lived in rural areas. Much like the populations of many contemporary east European nations, most Portuguese were of peasant stock. Western Europe’s eighteenth and nineteenth century political and social revolutions had bypassed rural Portugal. Most of the peasantry remained detached from the outside world with a majority being illiterate.²¹ They languished on the land in obscurity as their forbearers had done for centuries.

Internationally, particularly in Western Europe, Portugal was seen as a backwater. The assassination of King Carlos had shocked the civilized world and was denounced as an act of barbarity. *The Spectator* proclaimed, “The civilized world has been filled with horror and pity by a detestable crime.” In America *The Outlook* declared, “The annals of political assassination record no more terrible crime than that by which, on Sunday last, King Carlos of Portugal and the Crown Prince, Luiz Felipe, were killed in the streets of

²⁰ J. D. Vincent-Smith, “The Portuguese Republic and Britain, 1910-14”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Oct., 1975), 707-727.

²¹ Filipe Ribeiro de Meneses, *Afonso Costa*, (London: Haus Histories, 2010), 8.

Lisbon.”²² Assassinations of political figures had occurred frequently since the late nineteenth century. Czar Alexander II of Russia, French President Sadi Carnot, Empress Elizabeth of Austria, King Umberto I of Italy and American President William McKinley rank among the most prominent victims. The particular ire leveled against the Portuguese results from several factors. First, English King Edward VII and King Carlos I shared Saxe-Coburg and Gotha blood. They also enjoyed very good relations. The blonde-hair, blue-eyed Portuguese king had visited England and “was strongly attached to the English people.”²³ Second, though it endured in name for thirty more months, the Lisbon Regicide effectively ended the Portuguese Monarchy as the Infant Manuel had insufficient clout to rule. Third, it was widely held, probably unduly, that the regicide had been carried out by radical elements within the republican movement.²⁴ Whatever the case, the republican revolution further fueled the international community’s consternation.²⁵ Winston Churchill believed the assassins and republicans inseparable. He wrote to his wife, “I must say I do not see why we should be in a hurry to recognize this provisional Republic. Their leaders still condone and glorify the murder of King Carlos.”²⁶ In another he told her, “I wrote at [great] length to [Foreign Minister] Grey about Portugal and made out a [very] strong case for non-recognition of those sanguinary

²² *The Outlook*, Vol. 88, No. 6, New York February 8, 1908.

²³ *The Spectator*, No. 4,154, February 8, 1908.

²⁴ J. D. Vincent-Smith, “The Portuguese Republic and Britain, 1910-14,” 709.

²⁵ Douglas L. Wheeler, *Republican Portugal: A Political History 1910-1926*. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 129; “The Portuguese republic had received a generally bad press abroad during the years 1911-1914.”

²⁶ R. S. Churchill, *Winston Spencer Churchill: Young Statesman 1901-1914*, Vol. II, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967), 341.

swine.”²⁷ Portugal unquestionably occupied “a low rank among civilized states”²⁸

The centuries old Anglo-Luso Alliance complicated Portugal’s international predicament. The alliance, Europe’s longest standing, dating from the 1386 Treaty of Windsor, strongly favored British interests.

The alliance had endured, even in the twentieth century, precisely because it...continued to serve [the United Kingdom's own] interests, in return for which successive British Governments have upheld their promise to guarantee, albeit reservedly, the integrity of Portugal and her empire.²⁹

The unbalanced nature of the alliance underscored its intricacies. Dennis Showalter described the characteristics of such unequal accords:

The dynamics of alliances are shaped by symmetry....Significant imbalances of strength and commitment work to transform them into a different kind of relationship. At best it will be a patronage....At worst it devolves into a clientage, where the lesser members’ only real leverage is to threaten collapse.³⁰

Portugal had a proud history. It had been a European maritime power in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Portuguese, not the Spanish, initiated the Age of Discovery.³¹ Portugal lost its prestigious position mainly to events played out between Spain, France and England—as those nations vied for supremacy in Europe and around the globe. Portugal could not compete with these much larger states and by the mid-sixteenth century had been consigned to second power status. Spain was Portugal’s traditional enemy. Spain menaced Portugal’s independence once it emerged the

²⁷ Ibid, 344.

²⁸ Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 130.

²⁹ Glyn A. Stone, “The Official British Attitude to the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance, 1910-45,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Oct., 1975), 729.

³⁰ Dennis Showalter in Richard L. DiNardo, *Germany and the Axis Powers: From Coalition to Collapse*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2005), xi.

³¹ Meneses, *Afonso Costa*, x.

dominant European Power under Charles V's reign. His son Philip II actually annexed Portugal, along with its sizable empire, in 1580. The Portuguese regained their independence in 1660; they could not recover their nation's former glory.

Portugal had regained its autonomy but the "*perigo espanhol*" remained. Though Spanish power in Europe began to wane in the second half of the seventeenth century, Spain always possessed ample strength to overpower Portugal. The Spanish did not relinquish the hope of placing the Portuguese under heel until well into the twentieth century. Portuguese rulers understood the threat. They relied upon British military support to thwart Spanish subjugation. British protection came at a high price. By the eighteenth century Portugal was beset by "difficulties and contradictions."³²

The British exploited their dependent ally to the fullest, often placing Portugal in compromising positions. One such discomfiting situation played out during the American Revolution.³³ Through their mutual association with Great Britain, American colonists considered the Portuguese to be allies.³⁴ Up to the outbreak of Revolutionary War, Portugal and the Colonies enjoyed a thriving commercial partnership.³⁵ In 1772 and 1773 alone, 151 "English and colonial-American ships on the average annually

³² Júlio Joaquim da Costa Rodrigues da Silva, *Ideário Político de uma Elite de Estado: Corpo Diplomático (1777/1793)*, (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian: Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia, 2002), 187-188.

³³ Jorge Manuel Martins Ribeiro, *Comércio e Diplomacia nas Relações Luso-Americanas*, Porto, Universidade do Porto, unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1997, 289; "The rebellion of the American colonies was prejudicial to the interests of Portugal, given that it would be impossible to count on English military aid in the conflict with Spain."

³⁴ James Piecuch, "A War Averted: Luso-American Relations in the Revolutionary Era, 1775-1786", in *Portuguese Studies Review*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1996-97), 22.

³⁵ José Calvet de Magalhães, *História das Relações Diplomáticas entre Portugal e os Estados Unidos da América, 1776-1911*, (Lisbon: Publicações Europa-América, 1991), 17.

entered Lisbon from North America.”³⁶ Commerce at Oporto increased the trade volume.³⁷ In 1776 several European nations acting under British pressure, in their own colonial interests, or both, curtailed trade with the Colonies. As Britain’s most reliant ally, Portugal closed its ports to all American vessels on 5 July 1776, incidentally the day after the Colonies declared their independence.³⁸ The royal edict, written and enacted by Minister Marquis de Pombal, stated that American ships were not to be “granted assistance of any kind.” Docked vessels were given eight days to leave after being searched for “powder or weapons.”³⁹ The edict’s upshot dealt a substantial blow to Portugal’s economy. Because the alliance was “based for the Portuguese on necessity,” however, Pombal had no real choice but to comply.⁴⁰ He settled on economic backlash over the prospect of the British government withdrawing its protective shield.

Britain benefited tremendously by serving as the guarantor of Portugal’s independence. Portugal occupies a strategic position along the westernmost extent of the European continent. It possesses an extensive coastline along vital European shipping routes between the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. For centuries Portuguese ports functioned as a cornerstone of European trade. These ports also afforded the British

³⁶ H. E. S. Fisher, *The Portugal Trade, A Study of Anglo-Portuguese Commerce 1700-1770*, (London: Methuen, 1971), 90.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 129.

³⁸ Samuel Flagg Bemis, *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 115.

³⁹ José Ferreira Borges de Castro, Julio Firmino Judice Biker, *Suplemento à Collecção dos Tratados, Convenções Contratos e Actos Publicos Celebrados entre a Corôa de Portugal e as Mais Potencias Desde 1640*, Vol. XI, Part 1, (Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1873), 366-367.

⁴⁰ Jonathan R. Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 19.

Navy strategic control of the eastern Atlantic in times of war. Portugal's colonial ports further suited British interests. The Admiralty issued a memorandum in December 1912 acknowledging the immense advantage of Portugal's ports:

We should make it a cardinal point of our subsequent policy to see that no maritime power, such as France or Germany, replaces us, and thus obtains the right to use the Cape Verde Islands, the Azores or Portuguese Guinea, either as a sovereign power or as an ally of Portugal. We should prevent at all costs the transfer of these particular possessions to any strong naval power.⁴¹

The alliance came under great strain since 1910 because the republic "was not in any way universally popular in Great Britain."⁴² For one, Portugal's political instability concerned the British. Some feared that Portugal's new government would begin to assert its own interests, particularly abroad. Others disapproved of the republic in principle in preference for the monarchy. Winston Churchill fell into all three categories. He ranked among the republic's staunchest enemies. He disfavored continuing the alliance and campaigned fervently against recognizing the new government. He wrote to Grey in June 1911, "the time has not yet come for recognition....we should...await...without risk the further developments in Portuguese internal affairs....We should not take sides against the Portuguese Monarchy."⁴³ A month later he advised Grey that Britain should not "take any line in regard to Portugal which ranges us as supporters of the Republic."⁴⁴

⁴¹ Glyn A. Stone, "The Official British Attitude to the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance, 1910-45," 730.

⁴² John Vincent-Smith, *As Relações Políticas Luso-Britânicas, 1910-1916*, (Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 1975), 43.

⁴³ R. S. Churchill, *Winston Spencer Churchill: Young Statesman 1901-1914*, Companion Volume II, Churchill to Grey, 11 June 1911, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969), 1092.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 1102.

For the Portuguese too, the alliance had become acerbic. In the decades leading up to the war the British acted more like bullies than protectors. In 1886 Britain seemingly accepted Portugal's claim to expanded territory in south central Africa between Mozambique and Angola, though it did not ratify the treaty. The British decided in 1890 that the agreement was not in their best interest. Instead of negotiating with the Portuguese, the British government threatened to sever diplomatic ties with Portugal if it did not acquiesce immediately. Ever fearful of losing its independence Portugal readily complied. The 'Ultimatum' humiliated the Portuguese and caused the monarchy a considerable loss of domestic prestige.⁴⁵ The British again encroached upon Portugal's African colonies in 1898 and 1912-1913. These events caused many Portuguese to ponder the value of the alliance. With friends like Britain, many Portuguese reasoned, who needed enemies?

The intricate history of Portugal's participation in the Great War cannot be easily understood without knowledge of the Portuguese disposition. Douglas L. Wheeler observed, "Some writers claim that the Portuguese are a people of paradox, that they have a penchant for self-effacement which is disarmingly combined with self-aggrandizement."⁴⁶ Both traits are integral to Portuguese culture. The Portuguese are exceedingly formal in manner, polite, but not necessarily genial.⁴⁷ Staunch traditionalism and reserved stoicism define this unique Latinate people. They favor the grandiosity of

⁴⁵ Charles E. Nowell, "Portugal and the Partition of Africa," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Mar., 1947), 15.

⁴⁶ Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 3.

⁴⁷ TNA, General N. W. Barnardiston to General R. D. Whigham, 11 December 1916, WO 158/709; "The Portuguese are pleasant but not very easy to deal with."

centuries past. The Portuguese have a long history of overextending their limited resources seeking, perhaps, to recapture a measure of their nation's past glory, or more modestly, the legitimacy of recognition.

Consensus opinion holds that the Portuguese government wanted to enter the European war to gain colonial territory at the eventual peace conference. The evidence shows this was not the case. The young republic had three reasons to enter the war. Portuguese leaders feared for their national survival and also wanted to retain their African colonies. Most importantly, they sought to legitimize the republic internationally and consolidate it domestically.

Even in the twentieth century Portugal's international predicament had not changed. Portugal possessed a large colonial empire but remained exceedingly weak on the European continent. Several European Powers coveted Portugal's colonies.⁴⁸ The Spanish still coveted Portugal proper. Without British protection Spain could seize Portugal almost at will. Spain counted 115,000 men in its peacetime army and could expand to 500,000 in war. Portugal possessed a peacetime army of 11,600 and could probably field little more than 100,000 in all out war.⁴⁹ Winston Churchill had not only campaigned to discontinue the Portuguese alliance, he wanted enter into an alliance with Spain. He knew full well that "deeply rooted in the hearts of the Spaniards is the desire to absorb Portugal."⁵⁰ This state of affairs caused Portugal to feel "surrounded by

⁴⁸ Meneses, *Afonso Costa*, 10.

⁴⁹ Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 115.

⁵⁰ R. S. Churchill, *Winston Spencer Churchill: Young Statesman 1901-1914*, Companion Volume II, Churchill to Grey, 25 July 1911, 1091.

international hostility.”⁵¹

The Portuguese feared the loss of their African colonies not to Germany but to Britain. They were concerned that the British, in the event of an unfavorable outcome to the war, would use Mozambique and Angola as bargaining chips in negotiations with Germany.⁵² Since the late nineteenth century Portugal’s experiences with the British involving matters of African colonial territory had inculcated the fear of such an eventuality. The Portuguese believed the best way to protect their colonies was to join the European war at Britain’s side.

These two reasons combined were not strong enough to propel Portugal into a war where it stood to lose more than it stood to gain. The third reason therefore, international recognition, must be considered the real reason republican leaders sought access into the European war. It was an extremely high-risk proposition. The evidence bears out that Portuguese Prime Minister Afonso Costa did not comprehend the risks.⁵³

Historians who have written on Portugal’s participation in the Great War agree on less than might be expected. On two subjects, however, near unanimity of opinion exists. One of these is the principal reason the republic sought to enter the European war. Afonso Costa and other republican leaders wanted to change Portugal’s backwater “image in Europe from...the legendary “nightmare republic,” to the equally legendary

⁵¹ Filipe Ribeiro de Meneses, *Portugal 1914 – 1926: From the First World War to Military Dictatorship*, (Bristol: HiPLAM, 2004), 1.

⁵² Nuno Severiano Teixeira, *O Poder e a Guerra, 1914-1918: Objectivos Nacionais e Estratégias Políticas na Entrada de Portugal na Grande Guerra*, (Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1996), 373-374; Meneses, *Portugal 1914 – 1926*, 22.

⁵³ Meneses, *Afonso Costa*, 50.

idealistic, civilized, and progressive Portuguese republic.”⁵⁴ They also hoped such recognition would stabilize the teetering republic domestically. João Chagas, a prominent interventionist, pushed zealously for Portugal’s entry into the war. Chagas was not a warmonger. He was an intellectual who wrote copiously and in the most flowery language. Chagas acknowledged the republic’s feeble grasp on power:

The Republic hangs by a thread. What should consolidate it forever, our participation in the war, should it end in disaster, is the very thing that can throw it and the nation into an abyss of shame.⁵⁵

Furthermore, the republic expressed no desire to gain from its participation. This they hoped would demonstrate their sincerity and further endear Portugal to the civilized world:

For Portugal, belligerence was to be a feat of glory never to be forgotten by the rest of the world: a sacrifice endured for an alliance six centuries old, with no desire for conquest or material rewards.⁵⁶

In other words, the Portuguese republic sought a position of prestige fighting alongside the Allies against the forces of monarchical tyranny. It should be noted that Portuguese leaders conveniently excluded Czarist Russia from the ranks of absolutist governments because that nation was allied to Britain. To obtain the honorable position necessary to satisfy its aim, Portugal required an invitation. That invitation could only come from Portugal’s ancient ally, England, invoking the defensive arrangements stipulated in the Treaty of Windsor, by calling upon Portugal to come to its aid in the

⁵⁴ Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 128-129; Meneses, *Portugal 1914-1926*, ix, 5-6, 30; Teixeira, *O Poder e a Guerra*, “Por que foi Portugal para a Guerra?” 373-382; Teixeira’s discussion of the topic is the most comprehensive.

⁵⁵ João Chagas, *Diario*, Vol. I, 29 December, 1914, (Lisbon: Parceria A. M. Pereira), 382.

⁵⁶ Filipe Ribeiro de Meneses, “Sacred Union or Radical Republic? The Dilemmas of Wartime Propaganda in Portugal, 1916-1917,” *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1999, 81.

titanic struggle for freedom on the Western Front. Bernardino Machado, erstwhile President of the republic, asserted his vision of Portugal's obligation to civilization in a pamphlet intended for Portuguese soldiers bound for service in France:

It is our mission to struggle always in the vanguard of civilization, that same civilization which we were the first to take to the whole world through seas never before sailed.⁵⁷

Machado's declaration exemplifies 'self-aggrandizement'. Examples of 'self-effacement' become evident as this thesis unfolds.

Republican leaders seriously overreached.⁵⁸ Their notion lacked adequate rational foundation in several crucial matters. As a monarchy or a republic the British government considered Portugal little more than a vassal, and a backward one at that. Most British leaders were at best ambivalent to the new republic.⁵⁹ Some feared the Spanish monarchy would invade Portugal to put down the threat of revolution in Spain. Such an eventuality would seriously upset the European balance of power and also threaten the British Navy's unrestricted access to Portugal's ports. Additionally, the republican party's hold on power was far too weak to bring about national unity through intervention in the European war. Even in May 1917, with Portuguese troops in the trenches, Costa feared his party would "be forced to...immediately resign."⁶⁰ Furthermore, Republican leaders were idealists, completely "unaware of what it took to

⁵⁷ Ibid, 81.

⁵⁸ The reasons the Portuguese sought entrance into the war is not central to this thesis. In English, Wheeler and Meneses, discuss the topic in detail. In Portuguese, see Teixeira and Fraga.

⁵⁹ J. D. Vincent-Smith, "The Portuguese Republic and Britain, 1910-14," 709.

⁶⁰ Afonso Costa to War Minister Norton de Matos, in Meneses, *Afonso Costa*, 62.

keep a country at war.”⁶¹ They desired international recognition for fighting alongside the Allies but lacked the basic components required to place a single division in France.⁶² Finally, they sought entry into a game of kings among the European Powers in which they would be mere pawns. Afonso Costa’s government staked Portugal’s future on variables well beyond its sphere of influence.

British diplomats understood the Portuguese. And British formality strongly appealed to the Portuguese’ affinity for chivalry. British diplomats catered to this penchant for pomposity. They frequently used it to their advantage. Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey gave brief synopses of complex diplomatic exchanges with the Portuguese regarding the prospect of Portugal’s entry into the war. “Portugal was our oldest Ally. My impression is that from the beginning she was ready, if we asked, to enter the war on that footing.”⁶³ The alliance was a treaty of mutual defense. Because Britain had declared war to protect its threatened interests, the provisions of the treaty allowed Britain to invoke the alliance and call upon Portugal to come to its defense. This is exactly the scenario Portugal’s government desired. The British government knew this but had no intention of allowing it “unless our military and naval authorities considered that action on her part could be of material assistance to us.”⁶⁴ The British did not want Portugal to enter the war, especially not on the Western Front.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Ibid, 60.

⁶² This topic is discussed in further detail in chapter two.

⁶³ Sir Edward Grey, *Twenty-Five Years: 1892-1916*, Vol. II, (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co, 1925), 233.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 233.

⁶⁵ Teixeira, *O Poder e a Guerra*, 372.

Grey gave the Portuguese an excuse they could not argue with. He wrote of “the risks of war” and concerns that the needs of a belligerent Portugal “would be an additional liability and burden on the British Fleet.”⁶⁶ Taken at face value Grey’s position was justified. Portugal was “underdeveloped, reliant on massive imports, militarily weak...with its colonial possessions coveted by stronger nations.”⁶⁷ The British knew the dilapidated Portuguese Navy could not defend its home waters, much less engage in offensive operations. The position Britain took toward Portugal can be more easily understood when examined from outside the constructs of the ‘ancient alliance’. Britain was bound by treaty to defend Portugal. Portugal could not effectively defend its homeland, much less participate in a foreign war without massive support from Britain. Britain feared it would not be able to effectively prosecute the war if called upon to come to Portugal’s defense. Ergo, Britain declined to invoke the alliance. Britain’s position seems sensible. However, it only partially accounted for why the British did not want Portugal to become a belligerent.

Portugal’s weakness did not prevent the British from benefiting in every way possible from their dependent ally. A non-belligerent, non-neutral Portugal best suited British interests. Once again, London placed Lisbon in a precarious position by formally requesting that Portugal not declare neutrality.⁶⁸ The request came in the war’s opening days. The verbiage demonstrates that the British were not simply requesting a favor from an ally; they were directing what they considered to be a vassal state.

⁶⁶ Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, 233.

⁶⁷ Meneses, *Portugal 1914-1926*, xi.

⁶⁸ Meneses, *Portugal 1914 – 1926*, 5, 25, 75.

In case of attack by Germany on any Portuguese possession His Majesty's Government will consider themselves bound by the stipulations of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance... For the present His Majesty's Government would be satisfied if the Portuguese refrained from proclaiming neutrality.⁶⁹

The message came through clearly in Lisbon, Britain would continue to guarantee Portugal's independence so long as Portugal acceded to Britain's requests. The Portuguese readily complied. Portugal's government also recognized that non-neutrality increased the likelihood that Britain would eventually invite Portugal to enter the European war.

Britain benefitted in two distinct ways from Portugal's undeclared neutrality. Both involved saving face. First, the strategic advantage Portuguese ports afforded the British Navy has been examined. The laws of neutrality prohibit any one party from exclusively engaging in trade with or providing assistance to only one belligerent. Because the Admiralty intended to make full use of Portugal's homeland and colonial ports in its war efforts, if Portugal declared its neutrality, by law the German Navy would also have access to the ports. This, the British would not countenance. Furthermore, Britain knew that Germany would more or less recognize and abide by such a state of affairs, so long as it did not become overtly blatant. In other words, Germany would know that Portugal was not neutral but would act as if it was, particularly in Europe, so long as some measure of balance existed or some benefit could be had. The Germans in fact did treat Portugal's homeland ports as if Portugal had declared neutrality. Dozens of German merchant vessels sought safe harbor in Portuguese ports when the war broke out.

⁶⁹ Portugal, *Negócios Externos: Documentos Apresentados ao Congresso da República em 1920 pelo Ministro dos Negócios Estrangeiros, Portugal no Conflito Europeu*, Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1920), Sir E. Grey to Mr. Carnegie, 4 August 1914, Document 8, 6-7.

Portugal's colonial possessions were treated somewhat differently.

Second, Britain wanted to keep its options open. Portugal possessed ores and minerals crucial to the manufacture of munitions. In August 1916, "complicated negotiations [had] been in progress for many months between the British and Portuguese governments in regard to the export of certain materials (notably wolfram and pyrites)."⁷⁰ The British knew other eventualities might arise in which Portugal's resources could prove crucial to the war effort. They had no intention of allowing the Central Powers equal use of Portugal's resources, as much as much they could restrict access to them without blatantly violating international law. Non-neutrality on the part of Portugal would allow access to whatever items Portugal might be called upon to provide while at least maintaining a façade of adhering to international law.

Prior to the costly battles of 1916 Portugal stood little chance of securing an Allied invitation to enter the European war on the basis of a manpower shortage. Some evidence suggests that the French began to consider the option as the massive battle of attrition that was Verdun unfolded. However, desperate Allied need which only Portugal could supply remained the only likely scenario in which Britain would invite Portugal to join the European war.⁷¹ Britain had prepared for such an eventuality by requesting that Portugal refrain from declaring neutrality even though it sincerely hoped that no such need would arise. As events turned out, both France and Britain requested Portuguese assistance in unforeseen matters. The French necessity came first and very early on.

⁷⁰ TNA, Walter T. Layton to The Director of Military Operations, WO 106/546.

⁷¹ Meneses, *Portugal 1914-1926*, 30.

Combat attrition provided the initial impetus for Portugal's entry into the European War. The French had borne the brunt of the fighting in the war's first months. By the middle of September 1914 the burden had severely strained the French armies and French resources. The army experienced a particularly acute shortage of artillery. Portugal had purchased from France a number of good quality 75mm guns prior to the war. The French informed the British of the need and pointed out that the Portuguese had these guns. On 24 September 1914, the British Foreign Office requested their requisition of the Portuguese Government. Grey noted:

The Portuguese had some excellent guns, and Kitchener told us that it was essential to get these guns for use on the French Front. It became my business to get the guns.⁷²

The Portuguese government saw an opportunity to enter the European war by sending the guns along with their crews and supporting infantry units to France. They made their case to the British Foreign Office.⁷³ The Portuguese had reason to be optimistic. Grey made note of the quandary. "To supply guns to a belligerent [was] an unneutral act. If Portugal departed from neutrality she wished to do it with the full status of an Ally at our request. We made the request."⁷⁴ Grey's feigned naïveté regarding Portugal's non-neutral status attests to the intricate nature of the charade the British played with the Portuguese, the Central Powers, and above all, themselves. Grey knew that the Portuguese had not declared their neutrality, nor were they adhering to the laws of neutrality. He, in fact, had requested that Portugal not declare its neutrality. Be that as it

⁷² Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, 233.

⁷³ *Negócios Externos*, Doc. 66, 40.

⁷⁴ Grey, *Twenty-Five Years*, 233.

may, the British had no choice but to invoke the alliance because of the desperate need for the guns. Grey sent the official request on 10 October 1914. It provided the Portuguese government with exactly what it hoped for:

The loyal and unhesitating manner in which your government have acceded to this request, encourages me to invoke the ancient alliance between Portugal and this country, and formally to invite the Portuguese Government...to range themselves actively on the side of Great Britain and her allies. The position of the allied armies in the Western theatre of war would be very materially strengthened, if the Portuguese Government could at this moment dispatch a force, especially artillery to be followed by other arms, to cooperate with our forces in the present campaign.⁷⁵

The Portuguese Army's unpreparedness for combat in Europe prevented the republic from taking advantage of Britain's invitation. Portugal supplied the artillery pieces to the French without their crews. The Germans, well aware of other Portuguese violations of neutral law, kept their blind eye turned in Portugal's direction. Portugal prepared, in fits and starts, to enter the war from that point onward. Seventeen months would pass before Portugal became an official belligerent, thirty months before Portuguese troops entered the line.

Portugal's incapacity to mobilize in a timely manner provided the British with an excuse for revoking the October invitation. Grey rescinded it in July 1915 noting, "I have long ceased to regard the memorandum of the 10th October, which was not acted upon at the time, as applicable."⁷⁶ Portugal's leaders made another push to gain entrance into the European war. Out of desperation they sought Britain's approval to declare war

⁷⁵ *Negócios Externos*, From Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Teixeira Gomes, 10 October, 1914, Doc. 84, 48.

⁷⁶ Great Britain, Foreign Office, Bourne, Watt, British Documents on Foreign Affairs, Vol. II, Doc. 27, Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Carnegie, Foreign Office, 15 July 1915, 23.

on Germany outright. The British replied that “it would be wiser to leave the initiative to Germany.”⁷⁷

Britain’s subsequent request for assistance brought Portugal into the European war. In late 1915, British diplomats began to make subtle inquiry with the Portuguese regarding the seventy-some-odd German merchant vessels docked in Portugal’s homeland ports. The ships had been there for some time, some since the beginning of the war, benefitting from the sanctuary of Portugal’s pretend neutrality. Britain desperately needed the ships to replace its mounting losses but still did not want Portugal to enter the European war. Portugal’s economic situation was dismal.⁷⁸ The British hoped to cajole the Portuguese into confiscating the ships, ostensibly for their own use, without having to invite them to join the European war. Once the ships were in Portugal’s possession the British government could ‘borrow’ or ‘lease’ the ships. If events unfolded as the British hoped, they would avoid direct implication in a flagrant violation of the laws of neutrality. That embarrassment would be saddled upon the Portuguese. Nuno Severiano Teixeira explained Britain’s quandary:

For Great Britain, the necessity of the ships became a priority objective. They sought to obtain them at the lowest possible cost. Edward Grey made every diplomatic effort to achieve that result. However, since December 1915 the British war office was of the opinion that, to solicit the requisition of the ships of Portugal it would be necessary to guarantee support to Portugal and appeal to the alliance.⁷⁹

To ‘appeal to the alliance’ was tantamount to inviting Portugal into the war. In early

⁷⁷ Ibid, Doc. 12, Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Carnegie, Foreign Office, 7 July 1915, 10.

⁷⁸ Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 126-127.

⁷⁹ Teixeira, *O Poder e a Guerra*, 366.

February the Foreign Office informally, yet strongly, suggested that the Portuguese requisition the vessels for their own use. The ploy did not work. The underhandedness only caused consternation in Lisbon.⁸⁰ The Portuguese countered that the British should formally ask for the ships' requisition by invoking the alliance. As had been the case with the French Army's shortage of artillery, the British had no other choice. Citing "serious difficulties for commerce having resulted from existing shortage of tonnage," the British Government formally requested that Portugal seize the German ships:

His Majesty's Minister is directed on behalf of His Majesty's Government to urge the Government of the Republic in the name of the alliance to requisition all the enemy's ships lying in Portuguese ports which shall be used for Portuguese shipping trade as well as between Lisbon and such other ports as may be determined upon by the two Governments in agreement.⁸¹

It is worth noting that even in officially requesting the ships' requisition, which effectively made the British the instigating party to a brazen violation of international law, the Foreign Office still attempted to shield itself as much as possible by the vague and naively worded second portion of the communiqué. The Portuguese government did not care. They enthusiastically complied with Britain's request on 24 February 1916 knowing full well that they now had access into the European war.

From a diplomatic perspective both parties handled the matter clumsily. The outright theft of costly German assets infuriated the German government, as well as the ships' proprietors. Germany declared war on Portugal on 9 March 1916. The declaration stated:

⁸⁰ Meneses, *Afonso Costa*, 48.

⁸¹ *Negócios Externos*, Doc. 330, 17 February, 1916, 233.

The Portuguese Government has made known that it considers itself a vassal of England, and subordinates all national considerations to English interests and wishes.⁸²

Portuguese documents noted that the German declaration contained “terms that could be judged insulting.”⁸³ The Portuguese had little grounds to complain. An extensive historical record bears out that Portugal invariably supported Britain in international affairs, often to the detriment of its own national interests.⁸⁴ Two other matters relating to Germany’s declaration of war further embarrassed the Portuguese.

The first resulted from the extant state of undeclared war between Germany and Portugal in Africa. Portugal had been engaged in hostilities against Germany in southern Africa since 1914. The Portuguese could not claim the engagements were minor clashes as “nearly as many troops were sent to fight in Africa as were later sent to France.”⁸⁵ Germany had been content to continue that de facto state of war undeclared. They had demonstrated their willingness by not reacting to Portugal supplying the French with guns as well as British naval vessels’ unfettered access Portugal’s ports. Portugal had forced Germany to declare war and the international community knew it.⁸⁶

The second embarrassment resulted from the manner in which the Portuguese seized the ships. If the Portuguese had needed the ships, as the British implied, they could have inquired of the German government, which had retained its ambassador in

⁸² Ibid, Doc. 354, 9 March, 1916, (from the Portuguese translation), 254.

⁸³ Luís Augusto Ferreira Martins, *A Cooperação Anglo-Portuguesa na Grande Guerra de 1914-1918*, (Lisbon: Serviços de Informação e Imprensa da Embaixada Britânica, 1942), 13.

⁸⁴ Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 130.

⁸⁵ Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 127.

⁸⁶ Meneses, Afonso Costa, 49.

Lisbon until war was declared, regarding their purchase or lease.⁸⁷ The Portuguese made no such attempt. Portugal also could not have used nearly as many ships as it seized. Though the British had tried to disguise the fact, it became immediately clear that Portugal had seized the ships for Britain's use. These matters attest to the extraordinary intricacies surrounding the Anglo-Luso Alliance during the Great War.

Diplomatic bungling aside, Portugal's government had secured all it hoped for. Some British diplomats misunderstood the republic's objective:

Active participation in the war was Portugal's only salvation, for otherwise she was merely a dependent on England's bounty, whereas now as a belligerent she has her place and right among the powerful group of allied nations.⁸⁸

Portugal sought international recognition, not compensation. It was, and remains, a difficult concept to fully grasp. Joseph Gies remarked that the Portuguese Corps had been "recruited by Britain through political and economic leverage."⁸⁹ The explanation makes sense to anyone examining Britain's heavy-handed dealings with Portugal regarding the ships.

Douglas Wheeler wrote, "The decision to enter the European theater of war against Germany in March 1916 was one of the most controversial and bitterly contested decisions in modern Portuguese history."⁹⁰ The decision "lit an uncontrolled firestorm"

⁸⁷ Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 127.

⁸⁸ Bourne, Watt, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, Vol. III, Doc. 73, Sir L. Carnegie to Mr. Balfour, Lisbon, 9 July 1917, 138.

⁸⁹ Joseph Gies, *Crisis 1918: The Leading Actors, Strategies and Events in the German Gamble for Total Victory on the Western Front*, (New York: Norton, 1974), 116.

⁹⁰ Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 127-128.

of public opinion.⁹¹ This is the second subject regarding Portugal's participation in the war on which scholars unanimously agree; that Portuguese public opinion overwhelmingly opposed engaging in the European war.⁹² The argument is credible, but not irrefutable. Lisbon was the center of liberal political thought in Portugal. There, the republican government's drive to enter the war met with more dissent than support. The same position probably held sway in Oporto. This does not necessarily imply that the war itself was unpopular, though it does indicate the ruling party's unpopularity. Nor does it mean that opposition to the government's objective was anything like united. The fractured state of Portuguese politics has already been examined. Political parties opposed to the republic, passionately opposed the ideologies of other parties as well. Proponents of political ideologies opposed to the republic, toyed with the idea of entering the war for reasons other than the republic advanced. Some monarchists, for example, espoused the idea of declaring war on Britain and France and fighting on the German side of the line.

The rest of the country held to its traditional conservatism. Conservatives did not by default support or oppose the war. Taking the entire Portuguese population into consideration, it becomes more difficult to assert that a majority actually opposed the war. A majority in Lisbon and Oporto may have been against the war for one reason or

⁹¹ Marques, *Das Trincheiras*, 21.

⁹² Teixeira, *O Poder e a Guerra*, 372. "Against the will of the better part of the country, the democratic Government and the radical interventionist faction obtained their strategic objective: finally, belligerence."; Filipe Ribeiro de Meneses, "The Abandoned Army: The Portuguese Expeditionary Corps in France, 1917-1918," *Portuguese Studies Review*, Vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1996), 59; "Portugal's intervention in the conflict, a political option, was decided upon without due consideration for the country's stability and willingness to wage war on Germany on the Western Front."

another. That rather narrow sampling of the Portuguese citizenry does accurately represent public opinion throughout Portugal.

The viewpoint of the peasant population, those that would bear the brunt of the fighting in France, cannot be overlooked in any attempt to determine the war's popularity. The peasantry was largely ignorant of Lisbon's politics and Europe's for that matter.⁹³ Many knew of the war but "did not know who was fighting, against whom and why."⁹⁴ It can be surmised that few Portuguese peasants delighted in being conscripted into the army, leaving their homes, no matter how humble, to risk life and limb in any war. Be that as it may, Portuguese peasants, along with the rest of that caste throughout Europe, were accustomed to being marched off to war for their king or government. The theme of illiterate uncivilized peasants serving in the CEP appears throughout the literature on Portugal's participation in the European war. Accordingly, the peasantry's historical obligation for soldiering has been touched on here.

Chagas was elated to learn that Germany had declared war on Portugal. He exclaimed in his diary "Hallelujah!"⁹⁵ Many in Portugal did not share Chagas' enthusiasm. Captain André Brun, an infantry officer who led his troops with distinction in France, described the controversy as the "indecisive passage of our nationality through the Great War."⁹⁶ By December 1918, two Portuguese governments were violently overthrown. Costa's, of course, was the first to fall. Another collapsed while the peace

⁹³ Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 131-132.

⁹⁴ Marques, *Das Trincheiras*, 21.

⁹⁵ João Chagas, *Diario*, Vol. II, 9 March 1916, 217.

⁹⁶ André Brun, *A Malta das Trincheiras: Migalhas da Grande Guerra, 1917-1918*, (Porto: Livraria Civilização Editora, 1983), 28.

negotiations were underway. The upheaval undermined Portugal's positions in those proceedings. The republic's great venture proved very near ruinous.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 133.

CHAPTER 3

HOLDING THE LINE IN FRANCE

The Portuguese army began to mobilize for combat in France in September 1914. The effort suffered from a lack of impetus. The army lacked sufficient men to send one division to France while maintaining a force in Portugal to ward off Spanish aggression and defending its colonial territories.⁹⁸ Furthermore, it lacked the weapons to outfit an infantry division with standardized equipment.⁹⁹ Portuguese arsenals, for example, stocked four types of rifles and carbines, all of Austrian and German manufacture no less.¹⁰⁰ The War Ministry had culled units from the standing army to form the cadre of the *Instruction Division*, later renumbered the 1st Division, designated for combat on the Western Front. The units assembled for training near the rural town of Tancos located to the northeast of Lisbon. Portuguese officers oriented the training program to modern warfare as they best understood it.

The German declaration of war, along with a sizable British loan, pushed the preparations into overdrive.¹⁰¹ The division was tasked with demonstrating its martial value to British and French officials, mostly in the form of drills and parade. It perhaps serves as an indication of the lack of confidence the British and French had in the

⁹⁸ Portugal managed to mobilize 200,000 men between 1914 and 1918, of which 99,000 were deployed to France and Africa. Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 131.

⁹⁹ Meneses, *Afonso Costa*, 42.

¹⁰⁰ Luís Alves Fraga, *Do Intervencionismo ao Sidonismo: Os Dois Segmentos da Política de Guerra na 1.ª República: 1916-1918*, (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2010), 149.

¹⁰¹ Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 127.

Portuguese army that they required the Portuguese troops demonstrate the most elementary military tasks. Be that as it may, the event took place on 22 July 1916. The attending dignitaries were sufficiently impressed with what they saw. The last official hurdle had been cleared; only one further obstacle would need to be surmounted.

Without a doubt the Portuguese government overstretched its meager resources to send a significant fighting force to Europe.¹⁰² However, “political considerations made the CEP the showcase of Portugal’s military participation in the First World War.”¹⁰³ Therefore, the government spared little expense, from near empty coffers, in order to make the best impression it could. Preparing a single division for combat may seem a modest accomplishment for many nations. For the Portuguese it represented a monumental exertion. They thought the achievement so remarkable it was dubbed ‘the Miracle at Tancos.’

General Fernando Tamagnini de Abreu e Silva commanded the 1st Division. Aged sixty-one years when the CEP arrived in France; he looked ten years older. Many elderly generals served in the war however. Sir John French and Paul von Hindenburg were older than the Portuguese commander. General Tamagnini stood and walked with the aid of a cane. Pictures show him invariably hunched over indicating that he was at pains to stand. Nothing suggests the general possessed dynamism or verve, at least not at that stage of his life. Haig wrote of him, “the old General...seems generally

¹⁰² General Gomes da Costa, *O Corpo de Exército Português na Grande Guerra: A Batalha do Lys, 9 de Abril de 1918*, (Porto: Edição da Renascença Portuguesa, 1920), 17.

¹⁰³ Meneses, *Portugal 1914-1926*, 50.

appreciated.”¹⁰⁴ He was just five years Tamagnini’s junior. The British rapidly determined that he was affable and somewhat malleable.

Once war was declared British and Portuguese officials formed a Military Convention which entered into protracted negotiations regarding a myriad of logistical matters relating to Portugal’s entry onto the Western Front. French representatives were initially involved in the discussions. Some French and British delegates suggested the Portuguese serve with the French Army. Some of the reasons advanced for such an arrangement were that more Portuguese officers spoke French than English, which was true, and that the two nations’ shared Latinate ancestry would help them get on well. The French were also reeling under the strain of Verdun and badly needed men. The idea never garnered much support and was dropped rather quickly.

The Anglo-Portuguese Alliance all but mandated that the Portuguese would fight alongside the British. The discussions soon became an entirely Anglo-Luso affair. Portuguese War Minister General Norton de Matos emerged a prominent figure in the discussions. The general possessed an iron will and a respectable ability to negotiate. He often got his way but almost never settled for less than an amenable compromise.

The size of the CEP was originally set at one enormous division comprised of eighteen infantry battalions along with supporting units. The Portuguese Army’s weaponry varied significantly in provenance and quality. Citing a need for uniformity in matters of supply, the British insisted on providing the Portuguese with their standard

¹⁰⁴ Douglas Haig diary entry, May 20, 1917, in Don Farr, *The Silent General: Horne of the First Army: A Biography of Haig’s Trusted Great War Comrade-in-Arms*, (Helion & Company Ltd, 2006), 168.

issue weapons.¹⁰⁵ Compared with the level of detail discussed in many other matters the clause which discusses equipping the Portuguese, paragraph nine of the military convention, does not specify the weapons to be provided. Other sources provide sufficient detail however. Infantry men received the reliable Lee-Enfield rifle. The Portuguese requested 25,000 rifles to start. Maxims were the only machinegun originally allocated to the Portuguese. The eighteen infantry battalions were allotted a total of 144. An additional 32 Maxims were consigned to machinegun companies and other miscellaneous units. Lewis guns were issued sometime after to Portuguese entered the line. The Portuguese requested twelve batteries of Schneider 75mm field guns, 4 guns per battery. For heavy guns, twenty-four field howitzers of an unspecified caliber were requested.¹⁰⁶

Ammunition figures were also established. Rifle ammunition was set at 150 rounds “on the man,” 56 “in regimental reserve,” and 100 “with the divisional ammunition column.”¹⁰⁷ Maxim machinegun crews carried 11,000 rounds “with the gun,” an additional 10,000 rounds per gun were held by the “divisional ammunition column.”¹⁰⁸ Guns were allotted 258 rounds “with the battery” and 220 “with the divisional ammunition column.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ TNA, War Cabinet, G. T. 65, CAB 24/6.

¹⁰⁶ TNA, Table of material, ammunition, etc., required for the Portuguese Expeditionary Force, 15 September 1916, WO 106/546.

¹⁰⁷ TNA, Regulation for the organization of the supply services etc. in the Field, WO 158/709.

¹⁰⁸ TNA, Regulation for the organization of the supply services etc. in the Field, WO 158/709.

¹⁰⁹ TNA, Regulation for the organization of the supply services etc. in the Field, WO 158/709.

Tea and the standard British alcohol ration did not suit the Portuguese palate. The commission agreed to substitute the items with coffee and wine. Rations were established at “20 grammes of coffee and half a litre of wine.” An inkling of the massive supply effort required to sustain the Portuguese force in France can be seen in the quantity of the quarterly ration of just these two staples. “The total supply for 3 months of these two articles is 72 tons coffee and 3,600 pipes containing each 500 litres of wine, or about 1,800 tons.”¹¹⁰

The commission addressed numerous other logistics matters. The Portuguese assumed responsibility for transporting their sick and wounded from the ‘firing line’ with the help of “English motor ambulances, if available” to Portuguese aid stations. The British government took responsibility for treating the ‘sick and wounded’ from that point until such time as a man recovered or was shipped home. The Portuguese agreed to “provide some doctors and men for nursing, to co-operate with the English personnel in the treatment of sick and wounded.” The British requested that members of the Portuguese Red Cross “co-operate in the treatment of the sick and wounded and their removal to Portugal.”¹¹¹

Portuguese replacements were to be “maintained at a depot at a base or at such other point on the lines of communication....This depot will be under the command of a Portuguese Officer, who will send his demands for supplies and for transport requirements for sending the drafts to the front.” The British took the responsibility to

¹¹⁰ TNA, English translation of a memorandum by General Norton de Matos, WO 158/709.

¹¹¹ TNA, Regulation for the organization of the supply services etc. in the Field, WO 158/709.

provide interpreters. It was agreed that Portuguese soldiers were subject to discipline “as laid down by the Portuguese Military Law.”¹¹² The Portuguese Government agreed to repay the British Government for “all expenses occurred...in such a manner as may be arranged later between the two Governments.”¹¹³

The two governments also agreed to the formation of a Military Mission to Portugal. The mission proved a pivotal, possibly even a stabilizing factor, in the tenuous alliance. Major General N. W. Barnardiston headed the mission. He arrived in Lisbon on 30 August 1916. Of the senior British Army officers directly involved in dealings with the Portuguese, Barnardiston is the most enigmatic. In part he seems no less bigoted than many of his peers as evidenced by an excerpt of a letter he wrote to General R. D.

Whigham:

In dealing with the Portuguese one has to remember their vanity and extreme sensitiveness with regard to anything affecting their sovereignty, if one may use the expression with regard to a Republic. This accounts for their jealousy in matters affecting in the least degree their control over their own men. We think it absurd, perhaps, that so small a country should stand to such an extent on its dignity, but it is so, just as a small man is nearly always very touchy.”¹¹⁴

Barnardiston revealed in the letter that he espoused the British officer corps’ prejudices regarding the Portuguese. This being said, an extensive collection of archival documents demonstrate that Barnardiston worked well with Norton de Matos and other Portuguese. Many letters and telegrams he sent to London imply that he agreed with the Portuguese on some matters or at very least thought their requests reasonable. The general played an

¹¹² TNA, Regulation for the organization of the supply services etc. in the Field, WO 158/709.

¹¹³ TNA, Amendment to Paragraph 8 of “Memorandum of Arrangements &c.”, WO 158/709.

¹¹⁴ TNA, Letter to General R. D. Whigham, (probably written by Barnardiston), 11 December 1916, WO 158/709.

influential role in the Anglo-Luso alliance during the war. He often served as a facilitator for the Portuguese. He possessed sufficient clout with the War and Foreign Offices that his recommendations were usually acted upon without lengthy deliberations. The Portuguese probably got in him as sensible a senior British officer as they could have hoped for.

Transporting the Portuguese to France proved the last great impediment to the Portuguese governments' endeavor to join the fight in Europe. Train transport was not an option because the rail lines crossed through Spain. Spain had declared its neutrality and had acrimonious relations with Portugal. Maritime transport was the only available option. The shipment of Portuguese troops met with a myriad of difficulties.¹¹⁵ Some of the barriers may have been intentionally erected by British officials in an effort to keep the Portuguese out of France. Certainly, at least initially, the British had not prioritized the transport of the Portuguese troops. Neither had they provided adequate escorts to defend the freighters carrying Portugal's valuable human cargo. General de Matos threw his weight behind the matter and secured a workable solution. The 1st Brigade shipped for France on 30 January 1917. The brigade arrived at the port of Brest on the morning of 2 February. The brigade entrained for Flanders two days later.¹¹⁶ The other brigades followed in the coming months. Difficulties aside, by 4 June 1917 "about 37,000 men" had been transported to France.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ TNA, War Cabinet, 54, February 5, 1917.

¹¹⁶ Costa, *Lys*, 19.

¹¹⁷ AHM, Cx. 1178.

Once the Portuguese began to arrive in France, General Tamagnini de Abreu assumed command of the CEP. General Gomes da Costa, the 1st Brigade commander, took command of the 1st Division. The fifty-four year old white haired general cut an impressive martial figure. He visited the front lines frequently which garnered him the respect of his men. He enjoyed the favor of the British who appreciated his charm, charisma and military bearing. To them, da Costa epitomized a gallant officer and gentlemen. He was the only senior Portuguese officer of whom the British recorded no negative comments prior to the Lys battle. The general was uncompromising and tough on his troops. Dartford observed “he evidently has no truck with slackers.”¹¹⁸ General da Costa was also a pragmatist. His reports and writings exhibit a disposition to painful honesty.

Portuguese troops received training oriented to trench and other modern warfare techniques from British soldiers before entering the line. Some Portuguese received specialized training. At least one British officer praised the Portuguese soldiers’ aptitude and willingness to learn. Major H. Hesketh-Prichard wrote a seven page chapter on training the Portuguese in sniping. He repeatedly noted their interest, aptitude, and especially their skill at patrolling.¹¹⁹ The major did not make a single disparaging remark toward the Portuguese. Other British soldiers either did not take the responsibility of training very seriously or allowed their prejudices to influence how they treated the Portuguese. Walter Guinness remarked “our men showed great aptitude in getting the

¹¹⁸ IWM, Dartford Papers, 1 August 1917.

¹¹⁹ Major H. Hesketh-Prichard, *Sniping in France: 1914 – 1918*, (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1920), 184-190.

Portuguese to dig and do their work in the trenches.”¹²⁰ The comment may have been completely harmless. It should be remembered however that most of the Portuguese were peasant farmers. They had plenty of experience with manual labor. The comment may connote that the British troops passed on their undesirable responsibilities to the Portuguese. Guinness made other remarks regarding his interactions with the Portuguese which indicate this may be the case.

Palpable tension surrounded British-Portuguese relations once the CEP units arrived in France. British diplomats knew how to deal with the Portuguese; British officers were not as adept. Many senior British officers did not want the Portuguese troops at the front. They thought the Portuguese made poor soldiers. A Chief of the Imperial General Staff memo described the Portuguese “of very doubtful value, and certainly will not be of much use for some time to come.”¹²¹ In fairness, British officers were familiar with the undeclared Portuguese-German war in southern Africa. They knew that Portuguese forces had performed poorly in combat against the Germans. Some British officials wanted the Portuguese to serve as laborers. “After entering the war, Portugal declined simply to provide labor battalions for the Allies and insisted on sending an expeditionary force of 54,000 men to France.”¹²² In this context, ‘labor’ is a sanitized word to describe grueling and often perilous tasks, often in a combat zone, under conditions which closely resemble slavery.

¹²⁰ Bond, Robbins, *Staff Officer*, 177.

¹²¹ TNA, G. T. 49, CAB 24/6.

¹²² Spencer C. Tucker (ed), *European Powers in the First World War: An Encyclopedia*, (Garland Publishing, New York, 1999), 569.

General Hastings Anderson, Henry Horne's 1st Army chief of staff, wrote a eulogy of Horne's World War I career upon his death. His remark regarding the difficulties of working with the Portuguese has been often cited. "The methods and training of our Allies differed materially from those of the British Army, and their national pride made their assimilation in the British front a matter of anxious thought and difficulty."¹²³ Frank Herbert Simmonds wrote something similar albeit far less tactful. "The presence of a foreign contingent in the British army naturally constituted a further element of weakness."¹²⁴ Both statements speak to the complex nature of alliance warfare which is trying in even optimum situations. "Alliance warfare is always difficult, always frustrating, always dependent on interlocking networks of compromise and conciliation at personal, professional, and political levels."¹²⁵ Without a doubt, a major impediment to reasonably smooth workings between the two countries was the 'ancient alliance' itself. The British considered themselves the senior partner in the alliance. Barnardiston's above remark gives testament to this perspective. Many Britons "felt that the Portuguese should know their place and assume a poor-relation status."¹²⁶ The Portuguese had no intention of obliging.

The War Office told Haig, "The method of employing the Portuguese

¹²³ General Sir Hastings Anderson, "Lord Horne as an Army Commander," *The Journal of the Royal Artillery*, Vol. LVI. No. 4. (1930), 410.

¹²⁴ Frank Herbert Simmonds, *History of the World War*, (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1920), 85.

¹²⁵ Dennis Showalter in Richard L. DiNardo, *Germany and the Axis Powers: From Coalition to Collapse*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2005), xi.

¹²⁶ Charles E. Nowell, "Portugal and the Partition of Africa," 12.

Expeditionary Force is a matter for your decision.”¹²⁷ The made it clear however that the Portuguese were to be at the front. Haig relegated the Portuguese to a purely defensive role. He replied to the War Office, “in view of the necessity of economizing horses, the Force should be organized and equipped on a defensive basis, and be allotted sufficient transport to meet the requirements of trench warfare only, at any rate for the present.”¹²⁸

Elements of the 1st Portuguese Division, attached to the British 49th Division, entered a relatively quiet sector along the Lys River on 4 April 1917. On 11 May the 34th Battalion became the first autonomous Portuguese unit to enter the line.¹²⁹ Two months later, with all three infantry brigades under command and in the line, General da Costa’s division took responsibility for a section of the line under the British XI Corps commanded by General Richard Haking. Haking had earned the unenviable sobriquet ‘Butcher’ from the men that served under his command in previous battles. Neither did Haking enjoy favor in the British army other than with Haig. The War Office and Chief of the Imperial General Staff Robertson strongly disfavored him.¹³⁰ General Henry Horne, his army commander, remarked that he could “write a very specious report” and was “a vindictive bully.”¹³¹

The Portuguese adapted the British defensive scheme when they went into the

¹²⁷ TNA, B. B. Cubitt to Douglas Haig, 0148/380 (S.D.2.), 18 July 1917, WO 106-547.

¹²⁸ TNA, Douglas Haig to the War Office, London, O.B. 1864/O., 9 July 1917, WO 106-547.

¹²⁹ IWM, Dartford Papers, 13 May 1917.

¹³⁰ Simon Robbins, *British Generalship during the Great War: The Military Career of Sir Henry Horne (1861-1929)*, (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 126-127.

¹³¹ Simon Robbins (ed). *The First World War Letters of General Lord Horne*, (Stroud: The History Press for the Army Records Society, 2009), 28-29.

line. The Lys “was an appreciable obstacle: navigable and up to 15 meters wide.”¹³² The river flows almost due east for several miles in the region of the frontline. “For topographical reasons it [had] been regarded as a safe sector. The experience of three years was against possibility of attack on any large scale before the month May.”¹³³ The Portuguese sector lay just south of the river. The line ran generally north and south intersecting the Lys at right angles. The line in the Lys sector consisted of an outpost line and the main line known as the “B” Line. The ‘Village Line’ and ‘Corps Line’ were located behind the “B” line. Both the “B” Line and the Village Line were regarded as defensible. A gap ranging between 300 to 800 meters separated each line. The CEP’s principal task was to hold the “B” Line.

Once the Portuguese entered the line the only British soldiers they routinely interacted with, other than on the flanks, belonged to the British Mission to the Portuguese Expeditionary Force. The Mission had been agreed upon by both parties in the 1916 negotiations. Lieutenant Colonel Charles Arthur Ker headed the Mission. Captain Richard C. G. Dartford served with the Mission for the entire year the Portuguese held the Lys sector. He wrote regarding his fellow junior officers of the Mission, “all seem to have a poor opinion of Ker, that [he is] out on the make [and] all for giving himself a good time.”¹³⁴ Remarkably little is known of Ker considering the prominent liaison unit he commanded. In the summer of 1917 Haig appealed to the War Office on

¹³² David Stevenson, *With Our Backs to the Wall: Victory and Defeat in 1918*, (London: Allen Lane, 2011), 70.

¹³³ TNA, First Army No. G.S. 1167, 15 June 1918, WO 158/75.

¹³⁴ IWM, Dartford Papers, 10 November 1917.

Ker's behalf that he be promoted to brigadier general. The wording Haig chose reveals much regarding his views of the Portuguese:

This officer has a very difficult position to fill and his responsibilities are considerable. Under the guise of advice he has to exercise, through the officers of the Mission, which is necessarily somewhat large, a very real control throughout the Portuguese Expeditionary Force.¹³⁵

Haig also offered as justification for Ker's promotion that "the Portuguese pay great deference to rank."¹³⁶ On this matter Haig was correct. Ker received the promotion a few months later.¹³⁷

Relations between the Portuguese and the British Mission officers ranged from rare friendships to tolerant respect to outright indignation. British patronizing frequently incited the difficulties. On 10 May 1917, Dartford "went up to front line posts...at evening stand to [and] showed the geese the job of an officer on rounds, examining sentries etc. These Yorkshire men (& officers) are much denser than ours and the goose is worse still."¹³⁸ At that time Portuguese units in the line were attached to the 49th Division from Yorkshire. Dartford apparently did not care for them but still compared them favorably to the Portuguese. It should be noted that the Portuguese officers Dartford interacted with that day likely disapproved of his patronizing manner. It can be assumed they knew their jobs and took pride in the status as officers. They only needed to be oriented to trench warfare's finer points.

¹³⁵ TNA, Douglas Haig to The Secretary, War Office, London, S.W., O.B./1864/B.M. September 1917, WO 158/112.

¹³⁶ TNA, Douglas Haig to The Secretary, War Office, London, S.W., O.B./1864/B.M. September 1917, WO 158/112.

¹³⁷ TNA, British Mission War Diary, 7 January 1918, WO 95/5488.

¹³⁸ IWM, Dartford Papers, 10 May 1917.

Dartford was an intriguing figure. He spoke Portuguese. Prior to the war he lived in Portugal. He appears to have been well acquainted with Portuguese culture. His service in the British Army seems to have turned the culture he knew so well into an irritant however. He complained bitterly of Portuguese formality. “They are the limit in the mess dugout being as ceremonious as if at a party. ‘Com Licença’ (excuse me) gets on my nerves, & ‘Ate logo’ (goodbye) every time you part – as if either minded in the least.”¹³⁹ His ornery conduct appears to have subsided somewhat once he transferred to the 4th Brigade.

Hygiene proved a source of considerable conflict. Robert Graves commented on the sanitation standards of the Portuguese troops. The aspersion ranks among the most frequently cited in British literature on the Portuguese that served in France:

We once discussed which were the cleanest troops in the trenches, taken by nationalities. We agreed on a descending-order like this: English and German Protestants; Northern Irish, Welsh and Canadians; Irish and German Catholics; Scots...Mohammedan Indians; Algerians; Portuguese; Belgians; French. We put the Belgians and French there for spite; they could not have been dirtier than the Algerians and the Portuguese.¹⁴⁰

Graves’ remark evokes an observation made by Alistair Horne regarding French sanitation practices in the war. “French carelessness about hygiene in the trenches never failed to shock visiting Britons; though, perhaps immunised by the rusticity of their normal peacetime sanitary arrangements, it rarely appeared to disturb the French.”¹⁴¹

Dartford recorded a complaint made by a Portuguese officer which makes clear that

¹³⁹ IWM, Dartford Papers, 9 June 1917.

¹⁴⁰ Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1998), 182.

¹⁴¹ Alistair Horne, *The Price of Glory: Verdun 1916*, (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 61.

hygiene caused tensions. “Fernandez Costa said he was very fed up with the [English] because at Quernes (France) he heard that officers refused to sleep in beds where the [Portuguese] had been!”¹⁴² A number of British reports make note of the Portuguese troops’ low sanitation standards as to imply that they made poor soldiers. Sanitation practices correlate poorly with a soldier’s personal courage on the battlefield.

For their part, the Portuguese usually held their hands close when interacting with the British. An exchange between Haig and Norton de Matos upon their initial introduction exemplifies this trend. Haig made a diary entry after the meeting:

He seemed quite an energetic and keen little man. The Portuguese Divn, though the first units began to arrive soon after the new year have now only *one battalion* in the line! The delay is due in great measure to the Chief Staff Officer of the Force (Major Baptista) who has made difficulties and would not take advantage of the knowledge of the British officers whom I sent to the Divn to be instructors. I told the minister of this, and suggested that Baptista should go back to Portugal. He promised to go into the matter.¹⁴³

Haig did not know that Baptista enjoyed the complete confidence of de Matos. The minister credited Baptista’s organizational skills with the accomplishment at Tancos. Matos had retained Baptista in his prominent position when the CEP went to France.¹⁴⁴ He had no intention of removing Baptista though he gave Haig the idea he would look into it. The encounter must have been interesting.

An analysis of the five most influential Portuguese officers involved with the CEP reveals much regarding its organizational structure. General Norton de Matos

¹⁴² IWM, Dartford Papers, 20 March 1917.

¹⁴³ Douglas Haig Diary, May 20, 1917, in Don Farr, *The Silent General: Horne of the First Army: A Biography of Haig's Trusted Great War Comrade-in-Arms*, (Helion & Company Ltd, 2006), 167-168.

¹⁴⁴ Fraga, *Do Intervencionismo ao Sidonismo*, 283, 293.

incontestably exercised the greatest influence over the CEP. The man he assigned to command it, General Tamagnini, as the Portuguese often refer to him, comes off as little more than a figurehead. Tamagnini effectively functioned as a caretaker of the CEP while de Matos commanded it from Lisbon. Gomes da Costa was the most qualified senior officer. He demonstrated the greatest combination of leadership, drive, and, particularly level-headedness, which is probably why de Matos assigned him to divisional instead of corps command. General Simas Machado, 2nd Division commander, failed to make an impression other than of a grumpy, irascible old man. Colonel Baptista served as de Matos' eyes and ears in France. Though a mere major when he stepped into the role at Tancos, he exercised a tremendous amount of power over the CEP. General de Matos, much like Pershing did with American forces, sought to ensure that the small Portuguese force retained its autonomy and visibility. He tasked Baptista with that responsibility in his absence. This explains why the British detested him. They wanted to be rid of him or see him 'promoted' out of the position. Ker wrote, "Some of the authorities here think that Baptista must go. Why they don't give him command of an infantry brigade beats me."¹⁴⁵ Baptista retained his post as long de Matos retained his.

The Portuguese government was not satisfied with just one division in France. Neither was General de Matos. To them a single division subordinated to the British Army did not "guarantee...sufficient visibility and initiative."¹⁴⁶ They strongly believed that in order to garner recognition among the Allies and the international community the

¹⁴⁵ TNA, Ker to Barnardiston, WO 106/551.

¹⁴⁶ Meneses, *Portugal 1914-1926*, 57.

CEP needed to form an independent corps and hold a clearly defined sector of the Allied line. They pushed for adding a second division. They got their way in July.¹⁴⁷ Six additional infantry battalions would be sent to France. Six of the 1st Division's eighteen battalions would be transferred to the 2nd Division. Preparing the new units took time. The War Office broke the news to Haig. "His Majesty's Government felt that, for various reasons, it was necessary to accept the additional troops required to expand the Portuguese Expeditionary Force in a Corps of two Divisions."¹⁴⁸ Haig opposed any expansion of the CEP into an army corps. He wrote a bitter letter to the War Office:

I recommended that no additional troops beyond the requirements necessary for the maintenance of one Division should be despatched from Portugal. Nothing has since occurred to cause me to change this opinion.¹⁴⁹

A few Portuguese historians refer to British criticisms of the CEP's quality and combat value. De Meneses in particular has discussed at length and accepted as valid the dissatisfaction of British officers. He offers only biased innuendo as evidence however. Jamie Cortesão, accurately described as a "liberal intellectual,"¹⁵⁰ claimed Portugal "did not have an Army capable of waging modern war."¹⁵¹ Portuguese authors, including de Meneses, have taken the medical officer's comments as the words of a skilled military commander. His comment did no justice to his compatriots that fought in France. Cortesão's assertion is also contradicted by the evidence of the Portuguese in combat.

¹⁴⁷ TNA, 19 July 1917, WO 158/709.

¹⁴⁸ TNA, B. B. Cubitt to Douglas Haig, 0148/380 (S.D.2.), 18 July 1917, WO 106-547.

¹⁴⁹ TNA, Douglas Haig to the War Office, London, O.B. 1864/O., 9 July 1917, WO 106-547.

¹⁵⁰ Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 177.

¹⁵¹ Cited in Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 180.

The month of May was fairly quiet. In June the Germans resolved to test the Portuguese soldiers' mettle. Records show the Portuguese saw frequent combat and generally fought well.¹⁵² They got better with experience. The Germans executed large raids against the Portuguese front throughout the spring and summer. The raids of 12 and 13 June against Ferme de Bois and Neuve Chapelle and 14 September at Neuve Chapelle and Mauquissart, the left center and right center respectively, were particularly strong.

The raid of 14 August was the largest action fought by Portuguese troops in 1917 and the first to meet with initial success. At least a company of stormtroops led the attack. A heavy artillery preparation at 0530 hours, which included the use of gas shells, preceded the action. A force in battalion strength attacked in two columns. One of the columns went in against the vaunted 15th Battalion of which more will be seen. That proved to be a mistake. The attackers were "promptly repelled under the weight of a violent fire."¹⁵³ The second column penetrated past the 35th Battalion's frontline and took a number of prisoners. The battalion, aided by the 23rd Battalion, counterattacked and pushed the Germans back. The Portuguese took five prisoners. They counted a German captain and lieutenant among the dead.

During the action Lieutenant Hernâni Cidade, accompanied by three of his men, assailed a German squad escorting Portuguese prisoners across no-man's-land. The erstwhile prisoners joined the fight. Along with Cidade's small detachment, they

¹⁵² Costa, *Lys*, 23-31.

¹⁵³ AHM, Cx. 144, No. 161.

overcame the larger German force and returned to their own line.¹⁵⁴ For good measure the intrepid lieutenant returned to no man's land, under fire, to retrieve a wounded German.¹⁵⁵ Described as "simple and spontaneous," Cidade was awarded the Cruz de Guerra for his actions.¹⁵⁶ This intrepid officer fell into German captivity on 9 April. Repatriated after the war, he became a distinguished professor of history and literary critic.¹⁵⁷

Captain André Brun's company, 23rd Battalion, engaged the Germans in that raid. After stopping by his command post to gain an understanding of the attack's scope, Brun made his way toward the fighting, his "pistol in hand, finger on the trigger." He explained what took place as he neared the fight. "I came across groups of indecisive soldiers, from my battalion and the neighboring one taking cover. They confirmed that the *boche* was all around. I ordered the quick organization of a resistance group." Satisfied that his orders were followed, Brun again moved forward. Rounding a corner in the trench, a blonde mustached German suddenly appeared in front of him. "I raised my pistol at him...lacking little – a third of a second" before dispatching him, "when several Portuguese soldiers [also appeared and]...helped me understand everything. [The German] was a prisoner of war."¹⁵⁸ He was a father of three and belonged to a stormtroop unit that had moved from Alsace to the front three days earlier.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ Luís Augusto Ferreira Martins, *Portugal na Grande Guerra*, Vol. I, (Lisbon: Ática, 1934-1935), 266.

¹⁵⁵ Figuras da Cultura Portuguesa, <http://cvc.instituto-camoes.pt/figuras/hcidade.html>.

¹⁵⁶ Jaime Cortesão, *Memórias da Grande Guerra*, (Porto: Renascença Portuguesa, 1919), 102.

¹⁵⁷ Figuras da Cultura Portuguesa, <http://cvc.instituto-camoes.pt/figuras/hcidade.html>.

¹⁵⁸ Brun, *A Malta das Trincheiras*, 84-85.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 87.

The Portuguese also launched raids. In a letter to his wife, General Horne expressed satisfaction with a Portuguese raid on June 22, 1917 that “tackled a German patrol of 7 men. Killed three & took four prisoners – not bad!”¹⁶⁰ The 2nd Battalion executed the first solely Portuguese raid during the night of 26 July. The raid came up against stout resistance which thwarted an attempt to secure prisoners. Casualties were one missing and other “light wounds.” The raid had been “preceded by a reconnaissance carried out by another patrol one hour earlier which waited for the raiding force in a [shell] crater.” Gomes da Costa concluded “the raid failed due to the inexperience of our troops in this type of service.”¹⁶¹ He was probably too critical. Many German raids failed in front of the Portuguese line too. The raids increased in size and audacity as the Portuguese soldiers gained experience. In September the Portuguese began a series of successful raids which carried into November.

In September, Haig made a push to marginalize the CEP. Citing the upcoming winter conditions which the Portuguese were unaccustomed to, he insisted that one Portuguese division, under British command, remain on the front while the rest of the CEP serve as a reserve for relieving Portuguese front line troops and other duties which GHQ might see fit.¹⁶² The British suggestion struck the Portuguese as disingenuous. Norton de Matos would not hear of it. He read between the lines and understood Haig’s play. Again he emerged triumphant.

¹⁶⁰ Robbins, *The First World War Letters of General Lord Horne*, 228.

¹⁶¹ AHM, Cx. 144, No. 160.

¹⁶² Meneses, *Portugal 1914-1926*, 58-59.

The 1st Division passed to the operational command of the Portuguese Corps on 5 November 1917. The 2nd Division had fully entered the line by 26 November. General Simas Machado commanded the division. British officers did not think much of him. Ker recorded, “the Army Commander thinks that Simas Machado is much too old and seedy for his job.”¹⁶³ Portuguese records mention Machado infrequently.

A note on the CEP’s organizational structure is in order. Portuguese divisions were comprised of twelve infantry battalions divided into three brigades.¹⁶⁴ This was not unusual. However, a large number of auxiliary units were attached to each division which resulted in a divisional complement of more than 25,000 men. By comparison, British divisions fielded around 15,000 men and a corps was comprised of three divisions. The two large division corps structure, holding an extended line, selected by the Portuguese proved suboptimal. Three regular strength divisions on the British model, holding a shorter line, would have been a more practical configuration. Such a structure would have allowed the Portuguese an operational reserve as well as a badly needed relief rotation. Some compromises were reached. British units served as the Portuguese reserve when they were available.¹⁶⁵ While the two allies cooperated in a limited fashion in this matter an actual resolution proved elusive. Flaws in the structure became evident as the months wore on.

As the calendar turned to November the Germans showed no sign of ceasing hostilities. During a raid executed in the early hours 10 November 1917 Alferes José

¹⁶³ TNA, Ker to Barnardiston, WO 106/551.

¹⁶⁴ TNA, War Cabinet, G. T. 65, CAB 24/6.

¹⁶⁵ Costa, *Lys*, 24; On 16 June the British 148th Brigade was designated the 1st Division reserve.

Neves Eugénio of the 29th Battalion, 3rd Brigade, distinguished himself “directing his men...with energy and decisiveness.” Incidentally, this same officer had not yet established listening posts in the front line which enabled the enemy to reach the “B” line undetected. General da Costa reprimanded the oversight but also praised his combat leadership in the same order of the day.¹⁶⁶ The general demonstrated his exacting standards toward another junior officer. He determined Alferes Pimenta “the most responsible for the attack’s success....was taken prisoner by the Germans without fighting, and owed an explanation for his actions when he returned to Portugal.”¹⁶⁷

The Germans raided the same battalion again on 22 November and failed completely. Dartford noted “the 29th [battalion] on the left seem to have caught it worst & according to a relatorio de combate a heavy raid was beaten off.”¹⁶⁸ Two German prisoners were taken; one Portuguese officer and seven soldiers were wounded. Several Portuguese officers including the commander of the company which repulsed the attack were noted for their “leadership and calmness under fire.”¹⁶⁹

A military coup led by Sidónio Pais, a reserve army major and former ambassador to Berlin, overthrew Costa’s government during the first week of December 1917. Pais was not particularly favored in British government and army circles. Barrie Pitt wrote of the coup, “unfortunately, since the dispatch of the two Portuguese Divisions, the Government which sent them had fallen and been replaced by one whose attitude to the

¹⁶⁶ Luís M. Alves de Fraga, *Guerra & Marginalidade: O Comportamento das Tropas Portuguesas em França, 1917-1918*, (Lisbon, Prefácio, 2003), 25.

¹⁶⁷ AHM, Cx. 144, No. 162.

¹⁶⁸ IWM, Dartford Papers, 22 November 1917.

¹⁶⁹ AHM, Cx. 144, No. 163.

war was negative.”¹⁷⁰ Whispers of Pais’ admiration of the Germans circulated freely. The December revolution was not universally despised by the British however. Even with Portuguese troops in France the republic had retained its negative standing in the minds of many Britons. A *The Contemporary Review* article asserted, “Surely never was Great Britain delivered from a more dubious friendship than by the Portuguese Revolution of December, 1917.”¹⁷¹

The change in government almost immediately strained the CEP’s combat effectiveness. The already meager flow of reinforcements from Portugal was cutoff completely. Lloyd George later ruminated on the coup’s affect on the troops’ morale. “The Portuguese contingent had suffered recently from the effects of political changes in their own country. The Ministry that had brought Portugal into the War had been overthrown. Their successors were not overzealous in its prosecution. The result was that the little Portuguese Army in France had been let down during the past few months.”¹⁷² The Prime Minister was repeating, probably unaware for he despised Haig and Horne, an aspersion cast by these and other senior British officers in France as a justification to alter the existing arrangements regarding the employment of the Portuguese. In actuality, the absence of replacements caused far greater distress among the Portuguese soldiers than another change in government. Still, the Portuguese troops had plenty of fight in them.

¹⁷⁰ Barrie Pitt, *1918: The Last Act*, 115.

¹⁷¹ Aubrey F. E. Bell, “The New Administration in Portugal” in *The Contemporary Review*, No. 631, July 1918, 51.

¹⁷² David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George: 1918*, Vol. VI, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1927), 28.

Ink from many British pens has been spilled regarding the quality of the Portuguese officers that served with the CEP. It has been suggested that some officers were not sufficiently trustworthy to serve in the battle zone because their political persuasions might incline them to treachery. When Portugal became a belligerent the “officer corps was still largely monarchist.”¹⁷³ We have seen that some monarchists in Portugal favored supporting Germany. British documents and private records reveal abundant innuendo regarding the unreliability of the Portuguese officer corps. It should be noted that not a single claim of even the suspicion of treason was ever brought forward.

Other disparaging remarks were made about Portuguese officers. The Portuguese “officers seemed generally rather ignorant and inefficient. Relations between officers and men were poor and morale low.”¹⁷⁴ Such implications are contradicted by numerous examples of outstanding combat leadership by Portuguese officers. Lieutenant Augusto Casimiro experienced no shortage of volunteers for a raid he carried out. “Without permission, stubbornly, some who had wanted to go, had followed behind me.”¹⁷⁵ Casimiro’s men wanted to go into combat with him for a reason. Alexander Watson offered insight into the combat dynamic between enlisted men and junior officers. “Junior officers possessed immense influence over the combat performance and resilience of First World War armies....Trust was...crucial for effective command, and in

¹⁷³ Meneses, “Sacred Union or Radical Republic,” 81.

¹⁷⁴ J. P. Harris, *Douglas Haig and the First World War*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 468; Simmonds, *History of the World War*, 84-85; “The material was good, but the leading notoriously bad.”

¹⁷⁵ Augusto Casimiro, *Nas Trincheiras da Flandres*, (Porto: Renascença Portuguesa, 1918), 215, 218.

long periods of low-intensity, stressful trench warfare, was most successfully created by officers who behaved paternalistically.”¹⁷⁶

Casimiro recorded the events of an undated raid. While under a heavy barrage, which he described as “a rain of steel,” Casimiro noticed four German soldiers at the crest of his trench. He and his orderly “ran to them” and “took them prisoner.” They turned out to be Prussians. One of them had a “shattered shoulder.” Casimiro fell wounded in the right leg shortly thereafter. He ordered that “his Prussian comrade” be carried to the aid post on the only available stretcher before him.¹⁷⁷ Casimiro wrote that while convalescing from his wound, “My major and my captain came to see me. They told me that the battalion continued to give a good account of itself.”¹⁷⁸ Watson also commented on influence junior officers had over their men in combat. “On the battlefield...officers’ power derived primarily from their ability to provide the sense of order, empowerment and safety sought so desperately by soldiers in the midst of chaos and danger.”¹⁷⁹ Portuguese troops fought well because their officers fought well. There can be no doubt that some bad Portuguese officers shipped to France. Taken as a whole however, the CEP’s officers proved to be stalwart combat leaders.

Finally, a note regarding the pro forma British compliments of the Portuguese must be made here. General Richard Haking, under whose XI Corps the Portuguese served until November, commended the 1st Division for “the way in which they had held

¹⁷⁶ Alexander Watson, *Enduring the Great War: Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914-1918*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 114.

¹⁷⁷ Casimiro, *Nas Trincheiras da Flandres*, 194-196.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 196.

¹⁷⁹ Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 110.

the sector, especially under the barrage of 12-13 June.”¹⁸⁰ General Douglas Haig recognized the CEP’s contribution to the Allied war effort in his year-end salutary address:

During the present year the Portuguese Expeditionary Force has taken its place in the line, and for many months has held a sector of the British front. Though they have not been engaged in major offensive operations, yet in a number of raids and minor engagements the officers and men of the Portuguese Expeditionary Force have shown themselves gallant and efficient soldiers.¹⁸¹

David Lloyd George paid the Portuguese tribute as well. “Some time before [Georgette] I saw a battalion of Portuguese soldiers marching to the front...They appeared to me to be of excellent quality – stocky, well-built, and of smart and soldierly appearance.”¹⁸²

Lloyd George’s comment appears more sincere than the others. The Portuguese, it has been seen, possess a fondness for the grandiose. A box in the archives at Lisbon holds a folder with a title which translates to ‘Praises of the CEP’. The folder contains the English original and translated copies of numerous British compliments including the one by Haig above. The folder serves as an indication of the all too human yearning for recognition.

At the turn of December the tumult in the trenches which had endured almost continuously from June to November suddenly abated. Neither side initiated significant infantry action along the Lys front throughout December. It must have been a welcome reprieve. Many officers took Christmas leave. A number did not return for various

¹⁸⁰ Costa, *Lys*, 25.

¹⁸¹ J. H. Boraston (ed.), *Sir Douglas Haig’s Despatches (December 1915 – April 1919)*, (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1919), 147.

¹⁸² Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George*, 28.

reasons. Some simply because they did not want to and knew that Pais' regime would allow them to remain without penalty. The enlisted men had no choice but to remain and spend Christmas in the trenches. The men of the CEP had many battles yet to fight. In those battles they would come into their own.

CHAPTER 4

PORTUGAL'S WAR ESCALATES

The Lys sector remained fairly quiet throughout January. On the 1st a Portuguese company “reported an attempted raid by 100 of the enemy which was repulsed.”¹⁸³ Curiously, several important Portuguese sources which typically provide detailed accounts of every significant action do not mention the event. The Portuguese center along Neuve Chapelle was taken under fire on the 4th. The Germans sent out “small patrols” on the 8th and 9th. Both were easily turned back.¹⁸⁴ Portuguese units also drove off a patrol on the 15th and a small raid on the 18th which netted two prisoners.¹⁸⁵

German infantry activity increased slightly in February. Elements of the 172nd Infantry Regiment executed “a small raid against the right of the Neuve Chapelle sector” on the 6th. The Germans lost 3 dead, the Portuguese, 1 wounded, 1 missing.”¹⁸⁶ Several other light actions took place during the middle of the month. Artillery bombardments, however, rose sharply. The frontline came under appreciable fire every day between the 10th and 13th.¹⁸⁷ From the 21st on, the shelling “increased significantly, signaling the arrival of new equipment, heavy and light, occupying new positions from where [German gunners] sought to range their fire against headquarters, command posts, battery

¹⁸³ TNA, British Mission War Diary, 1 January 1918, WO 95/5488.

¹⁸⁴ TNA, British Mission War Diary, 8-9 January 1918, WO 95/5488.

¹⁸⁵ Costa, *Lys*, 29.

¹⁸⁶ TNA, British Mission War Diary, 6 February 1918, WO 95/5488.

¹⁸⁷ TNA, British Mission War Diary, 10-13 February 1918, WO 95/5488.

emplacements and road junctions.”¹⁸⁸ The marked escalation in artillery activity coincides with pivotal events set in motion on the German side of the line in late 1917.

Throughout January and February Ludendorff and senior field commanders engaged in a series of meetings and communiqués regarding offensive operations for 1918. Opinions existed in abundance and the deliberations often became heated. The opening conference occurred at Mons on 11 November 1917, attended only by Ludendorff and other General Staff officers. Aside from Ludendorff, Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria the army group commander on both the Picardy and Flanders fronts, along with his chief of staff Hermann von Kuhl, played a prominent role in the discussions. Rupprecht preferred to make the main push in Flanders “towards the railway junctions at Hazebrouck and Bailleul.”¹⁸⁹ This operational scenario received the codename *George*. Following a significant scale down in scope, it was rechristened *Georgette*.

Ludendorff did not disfavor Rupprecht’s plan in principle. However, he wanted to strike at the British as soon as possible, in February if it could be done, but no later than March. A Flanders offensive could not be undertaken before April due to the marshy ground. Ludendorff preferred to attack along the Somme in Picardy, striking at the junction of the British and French armies. That operation was dubbed *Michael*. Ludendorff reportedly settled on *Michael* as early as 21 January but for the most part kept the decision confidential. The exchange therefore continued well into February.

¹⁸⁸ General Tamagnini in Marques, *Das Trancheiras*, 373.

¹⁸⁹ David Stevenson, *With Our Backs to the Wall*, 39.

The Crown Prince's preference to launch the main thrust in Flanders is significant because his army group was designated to carry out either attack. In other words, he stood to receive the laurels for a successful operation on the Somme or in Flanders. The Lys sector offered several prominent prospects for success. First, "the British position in Flanders had no depth at all. North of the Somme, the British front lines averaged only about ninety kilometers from the coast."¹⁹⁰ Second, the terrain on both sides of the Lys River was very flat and an extended period of "dry weather, which had reduced the Oise and the Somme, had also abolished the customary Flanders mud."¹⁹¹ Third, Hazebrouck, "the railroad centre of the north as vital as Amiens in the south" lay approximately 15 miles to the northwest behind the Portuguese front.¹⁹² Hazebrouck was also a major British supply depot. The fall of Hazebrouck would seriously cripple the British Army in northern France and Belgium. As the exchange evolved, Rupprecht's plan gained sufficient recognition to place it among the most prominent alternative operations depending on how *Michael* unfolded. The official decision to launch *Michael* as the main thrust was made on 7 March. Orders were issued three days later. Offensive "preparations were made at all points discussed," including Flanders.¹⁹³

Infantry action erupted violently along the Portuguese front during the first three weeks of March. At 0500 hours on the 2nd, Brandenburg assault troops in battalion strength attacked the Portuguese center near Neuve Chapelle. "Masked by smoke" as

¹⁹⁰ David T. Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives: A Case Study in the Operational Level of War* (New York: Routledge, 2006) 85.

¹⁹¹ Simmonds, *History of the World War*, 84.

¹⁹² Ibid, 85.

¹⁹³ Cyril Falls, *The Great War*, (New York: Capricorn Books, 1959), 331.

they advanced against the 5th Brigade's 4th Battalion, the assault troops "penetrated as far as [the] "B" line wire." Portuguese artillery took the attackers under fire. The 4th Battalion, aided by the 12th and 17th Battalions counterattacked compelling the raiders to withdraw. The Portuguese lost 6 killed, 68 wounded, 3 officers, 1 sergeant and 65 other ranks missing, likely taken prisoner. German prisoners estimated their losses at approximately 200 killed. The Portuguese artillery inflicted a good deal of those casualties.¹⁹⁴ The Portuguese would not be taken by surprise again.

On 7 March the 15th Battalion, 3rd Brigade, completely thwarted an attacking force estimated at 200-250 men in three columns. The engagement cost the Portuguese just 2 killed and 15 wounded.¹⁹⁵ At 6 a.m. on the 12th "after [an] intense artillery preparation", German troops raided the left center of the line in "3 assault waves." "The Germans were completely repulsed with heavy losses." The Portuguese took seven prisoners, two of which were wounded. They killed a "large number" in no-man's-land and two others which reached the front trench. Portuguese losses were 56 wounded, 13 killed, 3 gassed, 6 missing. Dartford "went up to the front line" shortly after the battle. He noted "the whole trench was heavily crumpled" by the bombardment.¹⁹⁶

The Germans launched three company size raids and two strong patrols on the 14th. All the attacks were directed against Ferme de Bois and Neuve Chapelle sectors, the right center of the line. The three raids were supported by heavy barrages. The right side

¹⁹⁴ AHM, Cx. 144, No. 178; TNA, British Mission War Diary, 2 March 1918, WO 95/5488.

¹⁹⁵ AHM, Cx. 144, No. 165.

¹⁹⁶ AHM, Cx. 144, No. 179; TNA, British Mission War Diary, 12 March 1918, WO 95/5488; IWM, Dartford Papers, 12 March 1918.

of the Neuve Chapelle sector alone took “52 hits by heavy projectiles.” The Portuguese troops repulsed all five attacks. The attackers did not reach passed the wire defenses.¹⁹⁷ All the German activity made an impression on the officers of the British Mission. An entry in the mission’s war diary states, “Indications point to a desire on the part of the enemy to impress us with his intention to attack on the whole front shortly.”¹⁹⁸

The Portuguese did not take the hostile activity passively. They conducted a strong raid on the 9th. General Gomes da Costa ordered the raid “with the goal of keeping up the morale of the 1st Division’s soldiers.” Three platoons of the 21st Battalion, 1st Brigade, attacked in as many columns, along with sappers accompanying the flanking columns. While the Portuguese artillery took the German front line under fire, the attackers cut the wire the bombardment had not cut. “The entire raiding force penetrated the enemy front line under heavy rifle and machinegun fire....The center platoon spotted approximately 30 Germans against which they advanced resolutely.” The defenders abandoned their position under the force of the attack. The Portuguese hotly pursued them, inflicting “great losses.” The platoon split into three squads to examine the dugouts. They found Germans in two and dispatched them after a brief resistance.

The left column took by force a machinegun position with which the enemy had attempted to pin it down after a “violent action.” The platoon commander, Alferes Alipio, and Lieutenant Gonzaga were ‘gravely wounded’ during the assault. “The right column commanded by Alferes Henrique Augusto fell upon a heavily defended bunker

¹⁹⁷ AHM, Cx. 144, No. 167; TNA, British Mission War Diary, 14 March 1918, WO 95/5488.

¹⁹⁸ TNA, British Mission War Diary, 14 March 1918, WO 95/5488.

suffering 11 wounded. The German soldiers were all killed except one taken prisoner.” The sappers “destroyed two concrete dugouts.” Five prisoners were taken, a large number of the enemy were killed. Total Portuguese losses amounted to 3 officers, 2 sergeants, 1 corporal and 14 men wounded. Capitan Anontio Ribeiro de Carvalho acted as “the operation’s true soul, attending to all matters, proceeding intelligently, conducting himself with serenity and valor.”¹⁹⁹ Dartford declared himself impressed:

This was a great day for the goose as he did a successful raid. Extraordinary thing that [it is] impossible to get the details of what happened. The guns kept it up for over an hour & I believe the infantry stayed in for about 40 mins. The brought back 5 prisoners & a M.G. and only had 1 killed & 3 wounded. The 21st batt. 1st Bde. did it just S. of Neuve Chapelle.²⁰⁰

The Portuguese launched another raid ten days later. During the wee hours of the 19th, two platoons of the 3rd Brigade’s 14th Battalion set out to destroy strong points and shelters. The platoons advanced in columns, again with sappers in tow. The right column “located a steel reinforced concrete dugout with a roof approximately twelve inches thick. The men destroyed it with two twenty pound explosive charges.” The left platoon also found a large concrete bunker and blew it up.²⁰¹ The raiders encountered light resistance and “captured 3 prisoners of the 269th R.I.R., and a machine gun.”²⁰²

The combat and shelling that month proved costly. In February the CEP lost 35 killed and 89 wounded in action. In March, casualties jumped to 235 and 633 respectively. The losses become more striking when gas casualties are included. In

¹⁹⁹ AHM, Cx. 144, No. 166.

²⁰⁰ IWM, Dartford Papers, 9 March 1918.

²⁰¹ AHM, Cx. 144, No. 170.

²⁰² TNA, British Mission War Diary, 19 March 1918, WO 95/5488, PRO; IWM, Dartford Papers, 19 March 1918.

February the number was 44; in March it reached a staggering 741.²⁰³ The troops' performance in the March battles serves as a solid gauge of their resolve to fight. Each of the March raids had been as heavy as any action the Portuguese had seen in 1917. The men were tired; they had been continuously on the front an extraordinarily long period of time but they were not beaten.

An important indicator regarding the Portuguese troops' resolve to fight can be seen in the number of prisoners surrendered up to operation *Georgette*. A British report on the number of Portuguese troops serving in the CEP lists 15 confirmed prisoners and 91 missing at the close of 1917.²⁰⁴ Through 8 April 1918 the highest calculated prisoner total stands at 358.²⁰⁵ For the full year that the Portuguese soldiers spent on the front lines the number is strikingly low, negligible even. The Portuguese soldiers were disinclined to surrender.

Major Ferreira do Amaral, a career officer with previous combat experience, commanded the 15th Battalion in France. He took pride in the achievements of the men of his battalion. The 15th "successfully repulsed all attacks" along its front, never surrendering ground to the enemy. He made special mention of the fact that until 9 April 1918 the battalion had not surrendered a single prisoner. He proudly declared, "for the Germans to take prisoners of the unit they had to do battle."²⁰⁶ The men of the 15th

²⁰³ Fraga, *Guerra e Marginalidade*, 115.

²⁰⁴ TNA, Major-General N. W. Barnardiston to C.I.G.S., War Office, Whitehall, No. 806, 16 February 1918, WO 106-547.

²⁰⁵ Captain David Magno in Nuno Severiano Teixeira, "A Fome e a Saudade: Os Prisioneiros Portugueses na Grande Guerra," *Penélope - Fazer e Desfazer a História*, No. 8, Lisbon, 1992, 102.

²⁰⁶ Ferreira do Amaral, *A Mentira da Flandres E... O Médo!*, (Lisbon, J. Rodrigues, 1922), 397.

Battalion thought so highly of their commander they presented him with a personalized and elaborately decorated saber which they commissioned with their own funds. The saber occupies a prominent display at the Military Museum in Lisbon.

The raid of 19 March marked the last significant infantry action by either side for the remainder of the month. The sharp drop in combat action in the latter half of the month corresponds directly with the launch of *Michael* on the 21st. The sledgehammer blow fell against the Third and Fifth British Armies, south of the Lys sector. While a detailed account of that tremendous offensive falls outside the scope of this paper, key events with direct corollaries to *Georgette* require examination here.

Michael and *Georgette* share numerous inextricable links. *Georgette* in fact cannot be fully understood without the context of *Michael's* scope, objectives, and impact. The Germans considered the two operations the first and third phases of a colossal battle known as the *Kaiserschlacht* or Kaiser's Battle. Operation *Mars*, essentially an unimaginative and costly diversion which failed almost immediately, was the second. Operation *Blücher*, executed against the French on the Aisne in May, was the other major German offensive of 1918. The protracted battle marked a major turning point on the Western Front. Ultimately, the battle bled the German Army of its last resources, especially in manpower. It also brought the British Army perilously close to defeat. British accounts of the battle, which depict a comprehensive drubbing of the Third Army and a veritable rout of the Fifth Army, are rare. John Terraine gave one such an account. *Michael*, he wrote:

which burst upon the British front on March 21st—is one of the great dramas of the War. The stunning violence of the German bombardment...the huge weight of

the infantry attack...the fog, which lent eerie mystery to the enemy's movements, and nullified much of the British defensive system' the total annihilation of forward units; the breakdown of communications; the new German tactics of infiltration by 'Storm Troops'; all these elements, added to the thousand-and-one harrowing details of defeat in the field and sudden retreat."²⁰⁷

At 0445 hours on 21 March, Bruchmüller's artillery unleashed the most intense bombardment in the history warfare to that day. It went on for five hours. German guns fired 3.2 million rounds along a 50 mile front the first day alone.²⁰⁸ The bombardment proved devastating the defenders. Artilleryman Lt. Pat Campbell "could not see what was happening in front of him because of a thick morning fog and the general chaos of the day....British soldiers retreated past him in increasingly large numbers, but still he had no clear idea of the overall picture."²⁰⁹ Joseph Gies described the experience of many British troops that morning. "The gray shock troops clambered out of their own trenches and plunged forward. No-Man's-Land was curtained with fog; the survivors in the British front line were overwhelmed almost before they glimpsed their adversaries materializing out of the mist."²¹⁰

Lieutenant Colonel Walter Guinness took part in the defense with the 66th Division at *Michael*. He wrote candid assessments of several British units' performances during the battle. The 51st Division broke "letting the Boche in behind them."²¹¹

²⁰⁷ John Terraine, *Ordeal of Victory*, (Philadelphia & New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1963), 414.

²⁰⁸ Stevenson, *With Our Backs to the Wall*, 53.

²⁰⁹ Michael S. Neiberg, *Fighting the Great War: A Global History*, (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 2005), 306-307.

²¹⁰ Joseph Gies, *Crisis 1918: The Leading Actors, Strategies and Events in the German Gamble for Total Victory on the Western Front*, (New York: Norton, 1974), 82.

²¹¹ Bond, Robbins, *Staff Officer*, 191, 192, 194.

Guinness described a series of events on 25 March in which panic must have prevailed.

From an excellent vantage point he could see British troops in retreat:

Obviously many of the units which were falling back in turn were simply doing so because their neighbors had set the example and because under the circumstances they had no means of protecting their flanks....Meanwhile the 41st Division was streaming back on our right and soon after one of our own Battalions (the 3rd Worcesters) also crossed the railway....Traill, who was in command, told me he had come back owing to anxiety as to his right flank and further that the Boche seemed to be round our left rear.²¹²

On the same day Guinness “found Colonel Finch, [41st Division], very reluctant to leave a good line on which he was dug in...and to advance to the next ridge with the risk of being caught in the open between.”²¹³ Guinness also described a chaotic scene around

Bucquoy on 26 March:

The jumble of traffic on the road and the general confusion just west of Bucquoy village was indescribable. I met Lord Hampden who commanded a Brigade of the 62nd Division on the western outskirts of Bucquoy, arguing with the gunners whether the people we saw coming over the Ridge a short distance to the south were our own or the enemy. The gunners had lost their heads and were shelling them but through my very strong binoculars I could see quite clearly that the men in question were British and Hampden got the artillery stopped.²¹⁴

Guinness did not hesitate to call the so called withdrawal of the 5th Army a ‘route’.²¹⁵

J. P. Harris offered an explanation for the defeat dealt to the Fifth Army:

On 21 March 1918 British troops on the southern wing of Fifth Army, facing the German Eighteenth Army, were outnumbered eight to one....There is really no need to seek explanations for initial German Success on the Fifth Army front in terms of weaknesses in British morale or tactical understanding...It is doubtful whether any troops in the world could have stood their ground for long under that weight of fire and against that weight of numbers on an imperfectly fortified front,

²¹² Ibid, 194.

²¹³ Ibid, 193.

²¹⁴ Ibid, 196.

²¹⁵ Ibid, 197.

supported by an inadequate infrastructure....The Germans were assisted in making their initial break-in by exceptionally foggy conditions.²¹⁶

As information about the attack became available Haig exuded boastful elation. On the 22nd he noted, “All reports show that our men are in great spirits. All speak of the wonderful targets they had to fire at yesterday. Enemy came on in great masses.”²¹⁷ One of Haig’s most admiring biographers felt compelled to convey a more realistic representation of the battle. Haig’s “description might serve for some of the happier portions of the Third Army defence, but it was by no means an accurate reflection of the day’s fighting as a whole.”²¹⁸ Haig’s sanguinity rapidly proved baseless; the cold reality of the unfolding debacle struck him on the 23rd. He became disquieted. He “was surprised to learn that [Gough’s] troops are now behind the Somme and the river Tortille....I cannot make out why the Fifth Army has gone so far back without making some kind of a stand.”²¹⁹ Haig was not the only British officer confounded by the situation. General Henry Wilson also grappled with the news of the unrelenting retreat.

I don’t understand why we are giving ground so quickly, nor how the Boches got through our battle zone apparently so easily. Our casualties yesterday are estimated at 30,000 by G.H.Q., and I am afraid will have been heavy again to-day....I am afraid we must have lost a good many guns to-day, as we have given up so much ground.²²⁰

Dartford too expressed his unease. “Disturbing news from the [South]. We have retired

²¹⁶ Harris, *Douglas Haig and the First World War*, 447-448.

²¹⁷ Gary Sheffield, John Bourne (eds.), *Douglas Haig: War Diaries and Letters 1914 – 1918*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005), 390.

²¹⁸ Terraine, *Ordeal*, 417.

²¹⁹ Sheffield, Bourne, *Douglas Haig*, 391.

²²⁰ Henry Wilson, 22 March diary entry in, C. E. Caldwell, *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: His Life and Diaries*, (New York: C. Scribner’s sons, 1927), 73-74.

to the line of the Somme and Tortille and the Boche has a footing on the left bank of Somme at Ham....Sir D. Haig has sent a special order of the day saying that this is the crisis in the war & that the Boche intends the destruction of the British Army.”²²¹

General Horne feared “people at home will be much put about by the news of the German success.”²²² His concern was justified. The ramifications of the stinging defeat dealt to British arms by *Michael* cannot be easily overstated. The irresistible power of the offensive, “the initial strength of which was unprecedented on the Western Front,”²²³ along with British losses “sounded the alarm in Whitehall.”²²⁴ Upon learning of the offensive David Lloyd George wrote:

We are all here full of anxiety about this terrible battle—undoubtedly the greatest the world has ever seen....Have had 3 or 4 days of the most worrying time of my life.²²⁵

Lloyd George’s words convey the anguish of a British citizen as much as they do the trepidation of a wartime prime minister.

As the *Michael* offensive unfolded Haig and his GHQ intelligence staff tried to divine Ludendorff’s next move. They erred. “In late March, GHQ considered there were no German reserves facing the Lys (the CEP’s sector) area, and the First Army commander (General Horne, commanding from the La Bassée canal north to the Ypres

²²¹ IWM, Dartford Papers, 24 March 1918.

²²² IWM, Horne Papers, 24 March 1918.

²²³ Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 173.

²²⁴ Stevenson, *With Our Backs to the Wall*, 260.

²²⁵ Kenneth O. Morgan (ed), *Lloyd George: Family Letters 1885—1936*, (Cardiff and London: University of Wales Press/Oxford University Press, 1973), 186.

canal), thought that only a holding attack might be made.”²²⁶ At that time GHQ was partially correct. Substantial German reserves did not move into the Lys sector until April. However, guns were there, heavy guns. They had been arriving in large numbers since the middle of February; they kept coming. The Portuguese knew of the guns. They warned the British but were rebuffed. This being said, the intelligence error resulted from the fact that Haig and GHQ were convinced the main an attack come against Vimy Ridge.²²⁷ They believed an attack against that sector would prove more strategically advantageous than the Lys plain.²²⁸ They clung unwaveringly to this view.

Historians have credited one British general for foreseeing presaging *Georgette*. None of them deserve credit for they were all wrong. Haig generally receives the most credit.²²⁹ On 6 April Haig entered in his diary, “Enemy intentions seem still to be the capture of the Vimy position, by turning it in the south of Arras as well as in the north (south of the La Bassée Canal). At the same time a surprise attack by 3 or 4 divisions against the Portuguese front is also to be expected.”²³⁰ Haig’s remark regarding a

²²⁶ Timothy Travers, *How the War Was Won: Command and Technology in the British Army on the Western Front, 1917-1918*, (New York: Routledge, 2001), 92.

²²⁷ Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*, 183.

²²⁸ General Tamagnini in Marques, *Das Trancheiras*, 375.

²²⁹ Terraine, *Ordeal*, 430-431. “It requires some stature to ignore a serious present danger and give attention to one that has not yet materialized. At this stage only Haig was capable of doing this.” Terraine’s comment regarding Haig’s supposed prediction and preparation for *Georgette*. Duff Cooper, *Haig*, (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1935), “It was on the north, not on the south, of the La Bassée canal that the attack was delivered, and the weight of it fell upon the Portuguese troops as Haig had foreseen.” The assertion is highly misleading. Haig had noted the possibility of an attack on the Portuguese but expected the main attack to come against Vimy Ridge.

²³⁰ Sheffield, Bourne, *Douglas Haig*, 398.

holding attack against the Portuguese is frequently misconstrued to mean he understood his opponent's intentions.²³¹ He did not.

General Henry Wilson expected an attack even further south than Haig. "The Boches will mount a great attack against Haig between Albert and La Bassée", he wrote.²³² Wilson considered the greatest threat to the British Army lay in being rolled up from the south. He enunciated his concerns to General Foch. "In my opinion, the proper course for the enemy to pursue is as follows: place Amiens town and Amiens railway and junctions under his guns so as to deny all serious traffic, then mass an attack of 40 to 50 divisions against the British between Albert and the La Bassée Canal."²³³ Wilson's remarks have been misunderstood by some authors who have taken them to mean that he foretold the *Georgette* attack. This is not the case. The attack he expected would have rolled up a considerable portion of the British Army from south to north. *Georgette* would have, had the Germans chosen to pursue that course of action, rolled up a large portion the British Army from north to south.

Horne had no original thought. He essentially echoed Haig. As late as 8 April he believed the impending attack "may extend southwards from the La Bassée Canal...with perhaps a small attack north of the Canal."²³⁴ Not one of the generals, or GHQ intelligence was correct. They were not even close. "The British were taken by surprise;

²³¹ Cooper, *Haig*, 268, 270.

²³² Henry Wilson, 7 April diary entry in, Caldwell, *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson*, 88.

²³³ Henry Wilson in Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*, 182-183.

²³⁴ Robbins, *The First World War Letters of General Lord Horne*, 250.

Haig's intelligence specialists... guessed wrongly that the attack would come at Vimy Ridge."²³⁵

Though no significant infantry actions took place along the Lys sector while *Michael* ran its course, German artillery began to rain down shells on the Portuguese in previously unseen volume. The Germans also employed an increasing number of heavy guns. The bombardments weighed heavily on everyone. Jamie Cortesão wrote, "War's heart began to beat with more violence...not even one hour of quiet to be had since the beginning of March."²³⁶ Dartford noted on the Ides of March, "I am simply hating these days – A worse shelling than ever today – the house next door down."²³⁷ Three days later Dartford and his companions experienced a harrowing near miss by a large caliber shell:

We all had a narrow escape today when [the Germans] put some very heavy shells this end of Laventie. Long & I were just escaping from the mission when one landed in the cemetery 40 yards from us...No one was damaged but the hole made is colossal – probably a 21 c.m. shell. Taylor has just found out it is an 11 inch armour-piercing shell apparently used for road destruction.²³⁸

The British Mission war diary records very few quiet days in March. Dartford noted that the decision was made to evacuate all civilians from the battle zone. "Civilians are being evacuated at 2,000 a week from all this area...The French authorities have refused to sanction it in the past. It is marvelous the way the people cling to their homes."²³⁹

Others knew a major attack on the Lys loomed, just not GHQ.

²³⁵ G. J. Meyer, *A World Undone: The Story of the Great War 1914 to 1918*, (New York: Delacorte Press, 2006), 651.

²³⁶ Cortesão, *Memórias da Grande Guerra*, 157.

²³⁷ IWM, Dartford Papers, 15 March 1918.

²³⁸ IWM, Dartford Papers, 18 March 1918.

²³⁹ IWM, Dartford Papers, 13 March 1918.

Other pivotal events transpired in March. General da Costa assumed command of the 2nd Division on the 21st. The transfer was a preliminary move in anticipation of the relief of the 1st Division. No one that mattered wanted to see da Costa depart the front when his division was relieved. *Michael* began the same day which required the Portuguese to continue in the line. British divisions had been stretched to the breaking point by *Michael*.²⁴⁰ “The Portuguese Corps had in fact been due for relief before the onset of the St. Quentin battle, but events since then had clearly necessitated their retention in the line; they were by now very tired, and somewhat disgruntled. They had cause to be.”²⁴¹

On 25 March an event took place that has gone undisclosed in every extant history on the Lys battle. Haking decided at a conference with the 55th Division to sacrifice the Portuguese in case of a strong attack:

It was decided that it was not a possible operation to hold the “B” line as our main line of defence and that we would have to hold the VILLAGE Line...the majority of our concrete emplacements were in the Village line and could not come into action until the “B” line had been lost. The wire in front of the “B” line was at present weak in places...Having decided to hold the VILLAGE Line...the Corps Commander pointed out that the question on joining with the Portuguese Corps had now to be considered...He was...going to tell the Portuguese Commanders that they must hold and fight in their front system of defence, and that their main line of resistance would be the “B” Line. The last time he was along this line, in November last, it was in good order, continuous, well-wired and with good communication trenches, and in many parts the approaches well concealed by trees and hedges.²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Pitt, *1918: The Last Act*, 111, 113-114; Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*, 166; G. J. Meyer, *A World Undone*, 651.

²⁴¹ Barrie Pitt, *1918: The Last Act*, 115.

²⁴² TNA, XI Corps, S.S. 6/2, Appendix 31, 25 March 1918, WO 95/883.

In other words, the rest of the XI Corps planned to hold a line roughly 1,000 meters behind the line the Portuguese were told to hold. The corps planned to hold that line because they considered it more defensible than the “B” line closer to the front. Haking had no qualm relegating the Portuguese to hold the weaker line. Furthermore, Haking was not going to tell the Portuguese that the rest of his corps was going to hold a line well behind them. Haking’s decision at very best represents the friction inherent in alliance warfare. It probably lies in more sinister realms.

Three days after this meeting action developed elsewhere along the First Army’s front. Ludendorff launched the *Mars* attack, part of which went in against the 1st Army’s southern flank. This was the area Haig and GHQ expected the attack. The Germans attacked well-prepared British positions on high ground. The British repelled the attack in short order. Horne took a page from Haig’s book; he exulted excessively in defeating the attack.²⁴³ Horne’s letters to his wife show that the success instilled in him the belief that his army could hold against further attacks.²⁴⁴

The prompt repulse of *Mars* proved misleading for several reasons. Joseph Gies described the two-pronged *Mars* offensive as “a pair of minor distracting attacks.”²⁴⁵ He was right. The Germans employed only 1250 guns firing in divergent directions.²⁴⁶ The artillery preparation was traditional, not the highly calculated system of methodical destruction conceived by Bruchmüller. Finally, “the attacks were executed shoulder to

²⁴³ Robbins, *The First World War Letters of General Lord Horne*, 245-247.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 248-249.

²⁴⁵ Joseph Gies, *Crisis 1918*, 114.

²⁴⁶ Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*, 155.

shoulder, with no hint of the infiltration tactics that had been so successful in the early stages of *Michael*.²⁴⁷

The Germans launched no raids on the Lys sector during the first eight days of April. The British Mission's war diary records "some small enemy patrols" on the 3rd.²⁴⁸ Ominously a Portuguese raid executed during the night of 2 April "went beyond the support line, but did not encounter any of the enemy."²⁴⁹ German artillery opened up on the raiders as they returned to the line. Another example of Portuguese self-effacement can be seen in da Costa's assessment of why the raid failed to secure prisoners. "Above all, orders and counter-orders of the day regarding its execution, which always translate into indecision and little confidence in those tasked with its execution."²⁵⁰ Dartford reasoned a German attack loomed. "Everything points to our getting an attack here soon. Roads being mended, abnormal movement, prisoners say guns & [ammunition] are being brought up, & yesterday & today aeroplanes flying low & spitting M.Gs at the trenches."²⁵¹

By the beginning of April 1918 the Portuguese had been continually on the frontline for a very long time. The 1st Division had been in the trenches for nine months; some of its battalions had been in the line for a full year. The 2nd Division had been in the line for five months, some of its units had spent eight months in the line. Alexander

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 155.

²⁴⁸ TNA, British Mission War Diary, 3 April 1918, WO 95/5488.

²⁴⁹ TNA, British Mission War Diary, 19 March 1918, WO 95/5488.

²⁵⁰ AHM, Cx. 144, No. 178.

²⁵¹ IWM, Dartford Papers, 6 April 1918.

Watson's comment regarding the onset of combat fatigue describes the Portuguese experience:

Undoubtedly, a key factor undermining men's willingness to continue was fatigue. The physical demands of active service, the long periods away from home and the mental strain of taking constant risks and coping with the death of friends resulted in the increase of 'war-weariness'. The letters of men facing continuous strain at the front unsurprisingly demonstrate a gradually intensifying wish for relief.²⁵²

General da Costa observed, "Our divisions did not see even a glimpse of hope on the horizon of being relieved."²⁵³

British commentary has made much ado of Portuguese mutinies. Some authors seemingly imply the Portuguese revolted constantly. In fact only two organized acts of insubordination took place from the time the Portuguese arrived in theater. The more serious of the two occurred among the men of the 7th Battalion on the night of 4 April 1918, five days before *Georgette* began. The 7th Battalion was among the most blooded Portuguese units; they "knew how to fight...possessed a great capacity to engage the enemy...allowing very few men to be taken prisoner."²⁵⁴ By April, the men had spent more than seven months in the line. They refused to return to the frontline trenches after a rotation in the second line and temporarily declined to be disarmed. The men fired some shots into the air but did not fire on anyone.²⁵⁵ They backed down a few hours

²⁵² Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 56-57.

²⁵³ Costa, *Lys*, 40.

²⁵⁴ Fraga, *Guerra & Marginalidade*, 35.

²⁵⁵ Fraga, *Guerra & Marginalidade*, 33.

later. The event prompted the relief of the 1st Division two days later.²⁵⁶ It should be noted that the British Mission war diary claims two British officers narrowly escaped wounds by hand grenades thrown by Portuguese soldiers at their own officers.²⁵⁷ No Portuguese record regarding the alleged event could be found.

The grind of war had taken its toll on the CEP; its strength declined significantly. By April the 2nd Division stood 399 officers and 7,059 men below authorization.²⁵⁸ Shortages were particularly acute among the infantry units. Authorized strength for the infantry brigades stood at 168 officers and 4,492 men or a divisional total of 504 officers and 13,476 men. The 4th Brigade mustered 103 officers and 3,167 men, the 5th Brigade 104 officers and 2,949 men, the 6th Brigade 87 officers and 2,912 men. In all the three forward brigades counted just 294 officers and 9,028 men.²⁵⁹ The twelve infantry battalions counted an average rifle strength of just 400.²⁶⁰ The 6th Brigade's four battalions were near or below half their authorized strength. The 1st Battalion counted a meager 13 officers and 153 men fit for duty.²⁶¹ In effect, the division lacked the equivalent of a full infantry brigade.

During the last two days of March the 40th Division began to enter the line on the Portuguese left in relief of the 57th Division. Several battalions in the division did not

²⁵⁶ Costa, *Lys*, 31, 7th Battalion of the 2nd Brigade refused to enter the front lines on 4 April, just five days before the German attack. This brought about the relief of the 1st Division on 6 April.

²⁵⁷ TNA, British Mission War Diary, 5 March 1918, WO 95/5488.

²⁵⁸ Costa, *Lys*, 37, 45.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 34; The number is significant and will be returned to below.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 35.

²⁶¹ *Ibid*, 47.

arrive until after the 4th. By late March the 55th Division had held the Portuguese right for about six weeks. All the British divisions in the First Army except for the 55th were battle weary.²⁶² Generals Horne and Haking planned to relieve the Portuguese with two of these divisions, the 50th and 51st, severely weakened by the *Michael* battle and laden with replacements. In some cases the replacements had not fully completed their training being rushed to the front because of *Michael*.²⁶³

On 6 April the 1st Division was withdrawn from the line after a year at the front.²⁶⁴ The 2nd Division temporarily took over the entire sector previously held by both divisions.²⁶⁵ At the same time the division again came under the tactical command of Haking's XI Corps. The 4th Brigade held the left, the 6th Brigade the center, the 5th Brigade the right. The 3rd Brigade was in reserve. General da Costa wrote "it was a division entirely in forward posts."²⁶⁶ Along the Lys sector the "front was held with extreme weakness, each division being strung out over some 7,500 yards, a good half mile more than that allotted to units of the 5th army on March 21st."²⁶⁷ The 2nd Division held a front of more than 12,000 yards.²⁶⁸

On the evening of the 8th, German gunners took the sector under fire for several hours. The bombardment ended after midnight. Three weeks earlier Haking had made

²⁶² Basil Liddell Hart, *The Real War: 1914-1918*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1930), 405.

²⁶³ IWM, Bagley Papers, Catalogue Number, Documents, 12344.

²⁶⁴ Costa, *Lys*, 36; The 3rd Brigade remained acting as the 2nd Division reserve. Haking had the brigade posted too far back from the front to serve as an effective reserve in the case of a swift attack.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 55.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 35-36.

²⁶⁷ C. R. M. F. Cruttwell, *A History of the Great War*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969), 516.

²⁶⁸ TNA, General Gomes da Costa, WO 158/75.

note of the greatest potential threat to the XI Corps sector. “The most dangerous form of offensive against which we have to prepare is a surprise attack preceded by a short bombardment.”²⁶⁹ This exact scenario befell his and the neighboring corps.

Precisely at 0415 hours on 9 April German artillery began an intense shelling with high explosive and gas along a ten to eleven mile front. Jaime Cortesão, asleep at a makeshift hospital, awoke to “the stupendous thunder of a 31 or 38 [cm] shell exploding nearby”²⁷⁰ All of the Portuguese line came under the bombardment. In the north, the 40th Division’s right flank held by the 119th Brigade and the 120th Brigade in reserves also came under heavy fire. To the fire struck the extreme left flank of the 55th Division’s junction with the Portuguese 5th Brigade. All telephone communications in the Portuguese sector were severed immediately. The initial bombardment lasted four long hours, “well into the morning....almost without any rest at all.”²⁷¹

A dense fog hung over the battlefield all morning. Edmonds’ history states “visibility at first not exceeding 40 yards.”²⁷² This is misleading however as it was also pitch black when the shelling began and for more than two hours thereafter. The bombardment was immediately succeeded by a creeping barrage. German skirmishers almost certainly went forward as soon as the bombardment ended at 0815 hours, not earlier. Reasonably reliable British and Portuguese reports note infantry contact by 0820-0830 hours. The main attack was launched at 0845 hours. Twelve divisions of General

²⁶⁹ TNA, XI Corps, S.S. 6/2, Appendix 31, 25 March 1918, WO 95/883.

²⁷⁰ Cortesão, *Memórias da Grande Guerra*, 202.

²⁷¹ TNA, 119th Infantry Brigade War Diary, 9 April 1918, WO 95/2605.

²⁷² Edmonds, *Military Operations*, 164.

von Quast's Sixth Army made the main assault. Eight went in against the Portuguese front. Four more crashed into the 40th Division's right front. By 0850 hours German troops had penetrated the 2nd and 40th Division's frontline in multiple locations and were making for the "B" line. Dartford described the confusion:

Runners from battalions came nearly dead with fatigue....Heavy fog on and everybody seemed isolated from others. About 9 a.m....we...all made for the Aid Post cellar. Gas was not hanging about then...I persuaded the others (Portuguese officers) to go to the mission cellar. There three civilians were saying prayers in a corner and odd wounded were being treated in another and the rest of us wondering what to do.²⁷³

Dartford was an exceptionally brave British officer but he was at a complete loss for what to do next. The Portuguese stood no chance of halting the attack. All they could do was try to slow its progress. Most did what they could. More on this topic follows in the following chapter.

Haig, Horne, and Haking stated the Germans targeted the Portuguese, that they 'anticipated' the relief of the Portuguese and launched the offensive with relatively small forces. The generals asserted that because the Portuguese 'bolted' the Germans decided to exploit the success by funneling more forces into the operation, presumably away from the Arras-Vimy Ridge sector where they expected the main attack. Ludendorff remarked later that the Germans wanted to execute *Georgette* against the Portuguese front. It is important to remember that the British generals made their remarks well before Ludendorff did. The British generals' assertion is not borne out by the facts. Armies do not concentrate 1,700 guns of which more than 800 were classified as heavy or super heavy and assemble more than twenty-five divisions for a spoiling attack.

²⁷³ IWM, Dartford Papers, 9 April 1918.

The *Georgette* offensive did not deliberately target the Portuguese; it targeted the sector they occupied. “The Germans had no clear programme for these offensives and were constantly changing their minds about what they wanted to do next. They made the critical decisions about their attack on the Lys only a week or so before the operation began.”²⁷⁴ That the Germans had the ability to assemble so large a force so quickly, at a far faster pace than the British Army could have hoped to match, does not mean that they targeted the Portuguese. The weight of *Georgette* fell upon the CEP’s sector because the Rupprecht considered that the flat ground the Portuguese and the 40th Division occupied, the only flat ground in the region, offered the best chances for a successful breakthrough attack. Frank Herbet Simmons pointed out that the city of Armentières lay just north of the Portuguese sector where “the British front was mainly on high ground.” Furthermore, south of La Bassée the British line...rested upon admirable natural obstacles.”²⁷⁵ The exact strip of land held by the 2nd and 40th Divisions had not far behind it the prized railhead city of Hazebrouck, Rupprecht’s first major objective. The Lys plain was normally considered too wet for major operations until May, if at all. However, the region had been unseasonably dry for some time.²⁷⁶ Once the Germans committed to *Georgette* they made little effort to disguise their buildup. By the first days of April the British knew of the German buildup which explains why Haig noted he expected an attack of three to four divisions against the Portuguese front. John F. Williams affirmed,

²⁷⁴ Harris, *Douglas Haig*, 467; Liddell Hart, *The Real War: 1914-1918*, 404.

²⁷⁵ Simmons, *History of the World War*, 85.

²⁷⁶ Eric Ludendorff, *Ludendorff's Own Story, August 1914-November 1918*, (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1919), 238.

“the evidence of German preparations for an offensive between Armentières and La Bassée were interpreted as a diversionary ‘stunt’, designed to distract attention from the real offensives....Fortification against a probable German bluff was considered a waste, even if troops could be found. And at this stage of the war there simply not enough to go round.”²⁷⁷

Horne is an exceedingly difficult man to understand. He made an incomprehensible remark in a letter to his wife on the 10th while the Sixth Army’s attack ran at full bore and his First Army, to put it sanitized military parlance, retreated. That same morning the Fourth German Army launched a second assault against Horne’s army front, north of what had been the 2nd and 40th Division front and drove the defending 34th Division before it. “The attack yesterday was very heavy between La Bassee Canal and Armentieres but we got it stopped, except in one place where Boche managed to get through and across the River Lys. I hope to put that right this evening.”²⁷⁸ Perhaps the general refused to believe in the possibility of defeat. Perhaps he chose to slip into a state of denial. Whatever the case, reality told differently.

Winston Churchill commented on *Georgette’s* magnitude. “From the general not less than from the British point of view, April 12 is probably, after the Marne, the climax of the war.”²⁷⁹ By the battle’s fourth day, the 12th, the German attack had reached a crescendo which threatened to unhinge the British Army on the continent. Still, it is a remarkable statement given the *Michael* battle.

²⁷⁷ Williams, *Modernity, the Media and the Military*, 175.

²⁷⁸ IWM, Horne Papers, Letter to Lady Horne, 10 April 1918.

²⁷⁹ Winston Churchill, *The World Crisis*, Vol. II, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1927), 155.

CHAPTER 5

THE BATTLE OF THE LYS RIVER

Almost as soon as stalemate developed on the Western Front the belligerent armies searched for methods of breaking it. The futility of frontal assaults by waves of massed attackers against machinegun positions and entrenched riflemen had become painfully apparent. German units, often on their own initiative, experimented and improvised with various weapons and tactics.²⁸⁰ With time, it became apparent that attacks by well armed squads could quietly cross no-man's-land without presenting easy targets.²⁸¹ Once inside the defenses these units could *roll up* trenches or attack strong points from the rear. Hand grenades and flamethrowers proved potent offensive weapons in such attacks.²⁸² Young, motivated pioneers and infantrymen began to trade in their rifles for shoulder bags full of hand grenades, portable flamethrowers and carbines. Light machineguns which could be easily carried rapidly established their effectiveness.²⁸³ Trench mortars and light field guns were added for fire support.²⁸⁴ The units were dubbed *Stosstruppen* or assault troops. They often rehearsed their tactics on ground which resembled that designated for actual attacks. Sometimes even replica trenches were dug. *Stosstrupp* companies were eventually formed into combined arms assault

²⁸⁰ Bruce I. Gudmundsson, *Stormtroop Tactics: Innovation in the German Army, 1914-1918*, (New York: Praeger, 1918), xv.

²⁸¹ Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*, 68.

²⁸² Gudmundsson, *Stormtroop Tactics*, 34-35, 44-45.

²⁸³ *Ibid*, 99.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 29, 47-48.

battalions.²⁸⁵ Allied forces experienced the formidable attacks of these mid-sized units in 1917 but were slow to grasp their significance.

By the late summer of 1917 the German Army possessed sufficient units trained in *Stosstrupptaktik* to employ them in substantial numbers in large battles.²⁸⁶ The *Stosstruppen* shredded every Allied army they were employed against. The Russian 12th Army first felt the sting of the new tactics in September at Riga. Italian armies experienced the shock in late October at Caporetto.²⁸⁷ These two successes impressed Ludendorff. He ordered the creation of entire *Angriffsdivisionen* or attack divisions which were employed for the first time in 1918.²⁸⁸ The British 5th and 3rd Armies buckled under the sledgehammer blow at *Michael*. The French had their turn in May 1918 when *Blücher* fell upon the French 6th Army on the Aisne.²⁸⁹ At *Georgette*, assault divisions attacked the 2nd Division and 40th Divisions, not the 55th Division. The Portuguese acquitted themselves no worse than the British on their left flank, possibly better in some cases, as will be seen.

The history of the Lys River battle is based primarily on British innuendo and slander. Before turning to an analysis of the battle let us further examine British assertions regarding the Portuguese. Douglas Wheeler wrote that “the reputation of the Portuguese army on the Flanders front was later based on rumor, half-truth, and pseudo-racist slurs; among some of the Allied forces, the story of the battle of Lys, 9 April 1918,

²⁸⁵ Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*, 69.

²⁸⁶ Gudmundsson, *Stormtroop Tactics*, 114; Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*, 69.

²⁸⁷ Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*, 69.

²⁸⁸ Gudmundsson, *Stormtroop Tactics*, 151.

²⁸⁹ Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*, 218-219.

became a myth, threaded with ethnic jokes about the Portuguese.”²⁹⁰ His observation squarely hit the mark. S. L. A. Marshall’s terse paragraph on the 2nd Division’s performance in the battle attests to the substance of Wheeler’s observation:

About 9:00 AM on April 9, coming on through fog, nine full-strength German divisions attacked. They drove straight for a sector manned by four Portuguese brigades serving with the British. It was no contest. The fog wafted away, and the Portuguese saw what was coming in time; these merry men—the most congenial lodgers on the Western Front—threw down their arms and fled.²⁹¹

Marshall’s synopsis ridicules the Portuguese in at least two ways. First, as has been seen, his caricature of the Portuguese troops in no way reflects the Portuguese disposition. More importantly, his remark takes on an exceedingly inequitable tone when compared with his exculpatory account of the British 5th Army’s rout at *Michael*. In Marshall’s view, British soldiers caught in *Michael*’s tide did all they could against overwhelming odds.²⁹² The Portuguese faced a similar but far more sharply concentrated attack just three weeks later. They perhaps acquitted themselves no better than the 5th Army troops, but definitely no worse. Still, Marshall chose to ridicule them, to make them a laughing stock. C. R. M. F. Cruttwell dealt the Portuguese an even crueler blow. Echoing biased sentiments dating from the Peninsular War he declared, the Portuguese “troops were undoubtedly the worst of any nation in the West, and had always been regarded as practically worthless.”²⁹³

Most primary sources are no kinder to the Portuguese. Winston Churchill, no

²⁹⁰ Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 178.

²⁹¹ S. L. A. Marshall, *World War I*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 363.

²⁹² *Ibid*, 349-357.

²⁹³ Cruttwell, *A History of the Great War*, 516.

friend of Portugal, sniped at the 2nd Division. “No less than seven German divisions fell upon the four Portuguese brigades, and immediately swept them out of existence as a military force. The 40th Division, its flank opened by the Portuguese disaster, was also speedily overwhelmed.” He added that “the vehemence of the German advance, the streams of retreating Portuguese and the general confusion” prevented British reserves from putting up an effective defense.²⁹⁴

Brigadier-General F. P. Crozier wrote one of the most inflammatory remarks regarding the Portuguese troops. “The failure of our allies, the Portuguese, on April 9th, 1918, came near to losing much ground for us, and because of that I ordered the shooting, by machine-gun and rifle fire of many Portuguese, in order to stem the tide.”²⁹⁵ Of the book in which Crozier made the remark the *Times* obituary announcement of death wrote that it was “best forgotten. Most of it was written in the worst of taste.”²⁹⁶ Arnold D. Harvey later investigated Crozier’s claim in detail. He concluded it to be unsubstantiated and clearly false.²⁹⁷ Indeed, none of the contentions examined here hold more than partial truths; many are manifestly false.

The standard British narrative of the CEP’s performance during the battle takes on added importance because a majority of modern Portuguese scholars that write on the subject generally accept it, some almost in its entirety. De Meneses for example

²⁹⁴ Churchill, *The World Crisis*, 791-792.

²⁹⁵ F. P. Crozier, *The Men I Killed*, (London: Michael Joseph, 1937), 49.

²⁹⁶ Arnold D. Harvey, *A Muse of Fire: Literature, Art and War*, (London: The Hambledon Press, 1998), 155.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 152-160.

inexplicably identified Crozier and Graves, discussed above, as ‘impartial witnesses.’²⁹⁸

Portuguese historians that challenge the account usually do so very discreetly. Others have written apologist articles, even entire books, on the ‘abandoned’ Portuguese troops.²⁹⁹ Even histories written by soldiers who served with the CEP in the years following the war’s conclusion also only modestly point out glaring discrepancies in the standard narrative. Wheeler also commented on this puzzling trend, elucidating several underlying reasons for it:

Whatever the views of foreign historians, soldiers, politicians, and diplomats, the most significant factor for Portuguese politics was the Portuguese opinion of themselves. Portuguese literature on the Flanders campaign often features discussions of what happened at Lys and how the honor of the army was stained by the perfidy of the politicians at home, the cowardice of some officers, and the cutting sarcasm of the less sensitive of her Allies’ representatives, both official and unofficial.³⁰⁰

Finally, most Portuguese historians understate the battle’s historical significance.

John F. Williams offered a comparative analysis of the *Georgette*’s scale; it warrants contemplation here:

In terms of manpower, *Georgette* would suck in about as many troops in total as had been engaged in all the so-called battles of 1915-1916 together....In terms of scale and sheer violence, the opening day of *Georgette* dwarfed all previous engagements between Armentières and La Bassée....Nine German storm-troop divisions were pitted against one-and-a-third Portuguese divisions whose troops had been reduced by German guns....These particular storm troops were the pick of the German army; their morale was high; most were trained in the latest assault tactics; and members of the assault squads bristled with the latest in high-tech weaponry.³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ Filipe Ribeiro de Meneses, “‘All of Us are Looking Forward to Leaving’: The Censored Correspondence of the Portuguese Expeditionary Corps in France, 1917–18”, *European History Quarterly* Vol. 30 No. 3, (2000), 335.

²⁹⁹ De Menseses’ and Marques’ writings best exemplify this trend.

³⁰⁰ Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 179.

³⁰¹ Williams, *Modernity, the Media and the Military*, 174.

Portuguese scholars seldom associate the Lys battle with the *Georgette* offensive. Those that mention *Georgette* treat it much like a routine battle of the Great War. All these regrettable trends detract from the devastating situation the 2nd Division faced that fateful April morning.

John Buchan offered a succinct evaluation of the battle's first day. "The events of that mad day were so tangled that it is hard to present them in a clear narrative."³⁰² British war diaries and after action reports attest to the veracity of Buchan's remark. We have seen how the unreliability of British war diaries and after action reports, as elucidated by Martin Middlebrook, significantly contributes to the confusion. Alexander Watson also offered insight into the sometimes near impenetrable chaos. "Disorderly retreats, panics and routs also contributed to the defeat. Battalion diaries are often reluctant to admit that such incidents took place among their own men but do record other units fleeing in the face of the enemy."³⁰³ Examples of this tendency follow below.

A four hour bombardment signaled the beginning of the Lys battle. It is to that awesome event that we now turn our attention. The intensity and type of the opening bombardment is a crucial but infrequently discussed topic by many historians who have written on the battle. The official British history even downplayed the bombardment's power. It suggested that the main, but fairly weak, bombardment occurred on the 8th. After reading a draft of Edmonds' history, Brigadier-General J.E.S. Brind, assigned to XI Corps HQ at the time of the battle, corrected the oversight. He replied to Edmonds that

³⁰² John Buchan, *A History of the Great War*, Volume IV, (Boston, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922), 222.

³⁰³ Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 175.

he did not “remember the one on the 8th”, but the bombardment on the 9th “woke [him] up at once.”³⁰⁴ Furthermore, several histories of the battle suggest that the shelling subsided significantly between 0600 and 0800 hours.³⁰⁵ Portuguese accounts acknowledge that the divisional headquarters at Lestrem experienced a let up during those hours but that the front line was shelled heavily throughout. David T. Zabecki has shown that *Georgette*’s bombardment program offered no respite along the frontline.³⁰⁶

Initial German successes at *Michael* and *Georgette* underscore the primacy of Oberst Bruchmüller’s bombardment regimen. He developed and supervised both programs. This type of artillery strike shredded wire and strong points, crumpled trench systems and devastated defenders. David Stevenson’s description of the affects of the *Michael* bombardment readily applies to the one unleashed at *Georgette*:

The defenders, cold and without breakfast, often made sick – or worse – by inhaling gas, saw their comrades blown to pieces or buried alive. Even if most survived...many were benumbed by the pounding, absorbed with their own predicament, and scarcely able to think or act.³⁰⁷

The *Georgette* bombardment, “for sheer concentrated intensity...was the second heaviest so far in the war.”³⁰⁸ Zabecki conducted a comparative analysis of the *Michael* and *Georgette* bombardments. He observed that the “artillery order of battle for *Georgette* shows the weighting of the main attack far more clearly than it did for

³⁰⁴ TNA, Major-General J. E. S. Brind to J. E. Edmonds, 3 January 1932, p. 2, CAB 45/122.

³⁰⁵ Don Farr, *The Silent General*, 183.

³⁰⁶ Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*, 187; Zabecki provided a detailed program for the bombardment. It offers awe-inspiring insight into the terrific ordeal the Portuguese endured.

³⁰⁷ Stevenson, *With Our Backs to the Wall*, (London: Allen Lane, 2011), 54.

³⁰⁸ Williams, *Modernity, the Media and the Military*, 182.

Michael.”³⁰⁹ He partially based his conclusion on the numbers of German and British guns that could be brought into action during the battle, or “tube superiority ratio.”³¹⁰

Another matter worth consideration is the ratio of battlefield area to rounds fired on the first day of each assault. The *Georgette* attack frontage was narrow, just 10 to 11 miles. The frontage at *Michael* was 50 to 60 miles. At *Georgette*, the German Sixth Army brought 1,686 guns to bear against the Portuguese which “fired a total of 1.4 million rounds that first day.”³¹¹ As noted above, on the first day of *Michael*, German guns fired 3.2 million rounds. In short, shells fell upon *Georgette*’s battlefield frontage in a much denser ratio than on *Michael*’s.

The type and destructive capabilities of the guns also bears greatly upon the outcome of the first day. Nearly half of the Sixth Army’s guns belonged to the heavy and super heavy type categories.³¹² John F. Williams also provided perspective regarding the artillery employed by the Germans. “On 8-9 April 1918 the Germans used 195 field guns and no less than 230 heavy (and super-heavy) *batteries*, mostly late models capable of firing a weight of shells that could exceed, in days – or perhaps even hours – everything fired from all the guns previously used in the sector in four years of war.”³¹³ Given the force and duration of the artillery preparation it is unlikely that even the best trained freshest troops could have held against it.

³⁰⁹ Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*, 184.

³¹⁰ *Ibid*, 184.

³¹¹ *Ibid*, 186.

³¹² *Ibid*, 185.

³¹³ Williams, *Modernity, the Media and the Military*, 174.

Bruchmüller's artillery scheme had two parts; a creeping barrage followed the opening bombardment. The barrage had two purposes. "The object...is partly to force the garrison to keep sufficiently under cover before our infantry penetrates the line and partly to give our infantry *enough time to close up right under the barrage*, and to give it *time to breathe*."³¹⁴ "Reflecting the lessons of 21 March" the barrage moved forward more slowly to provide better cover for the advancing infantry.³¹⁵

Portuguese and British defenders also experienced the full power of assault tactics. The British made note of the new tactics employed at *Michael*. "Dealing from the flank and rear with strong points which are not attacked frontally has been conspicuous in the German operations since the 21st of March, 1918."³¹⁶ Assault tactics also involved sending skirmishers to disrupt defenses and locate weak points before the main attack. Bruchmüller's "new artillery procedures were the more important and innovative."³¹⁷ However, when his bombardment and assault tactics were paired in an attack they repeatedly proved inexorable, a defender's worst nightmare.

Before turning to the Portuguese experience during the battle it behooves us to examine events on the British held flanks. Don Farr wrote "the main thrust of [the] attack fell squarely on the Portuguese, although both 55th and 40th Divisions on either side, were rapidly and heavily engaged."³¹⁸ The 55th Division generally receives credit

³¹⁴ TNA, Translation of a German Document, Notes on the Creeping Barrage, Ia/47795., WO 95/883.

³¹⁵ Stevenson, *With Our Backs to the Wall*, 71.

³¹⁶ TNA, Notes on Recent Fighting—No. 7., German Attack Near Givenchy, April 9th, 1918, 24 April 1918, WO 95/883.

³¹⁷ Stevenson, *With Our Backs to the Wall*, 37.

³¹⁸ Farr, *Silent General*, 183.

for having stood valiantly against a powerful attack. General Horne reported to his wife that “Givenchy has been most gallantly held all day by General Jeudwine’s division.”³¹⁹ General Haking claimed “the successful defence of the 55th Division on the right flank of the Portuguese is known all the world over.”³²⁰ These statements are broadly true, but very misleading. The 55th Division guarded the northern flank of the La Bassée canal, an important water barrier which Rupprecht and Ludendorff would have liked to have secured but was not a primary objective. The 55th was well-rested and occupied strong positions anchored on favorable ground. The principal reason the division largely held that day is buried deep in the archives, invariably glossed over by most historians. John F. Williams pointed it out. “Between Givenchy and Festubert, the 55th Division was fortunate in opposing two undistinguished *Stellungsdivisionen*.”³²¹ These were static divisions used primarily in defensive roles. Comprised of middle-aged family men who, “had neither the stamina nor the right frame of mind to throw themselves enthusiastically into battle”, they were considered ill-suited to offensive operations.³²² The fact that these divisions were employed in the attack against the 55th Division indicates the low priority German planners assigned to securing the La Bassée Canal. The two divisions, the 4th Ersatz and 43rd Reserve, tried to outflank the 55th. “The enemy seems to have based his plan on avoiding the strong locality of Givenchy itself, penetrating our line on either

³¹⁹ Robbins, *The First World War Letters of General Lord Horne*, 250.

³²⁰ TNA, Haking, XI Corps, S. S. 16/8, WO 158/75.

³²¹ Williams, *Modernity, the Media and the Military*, 187.

³²² Gudmundsson, *Stormtroop Tactics*, 151.

flank, and turning inwards so as to take Givenchy from the right rear.”³²³ Both divisions took a severe mauling in the attack but still gave the 55th all it could handle that day. It is worth noting that the 55th Division’s reports state remarkably little regarding the Portuguese. The division won its battle that day albeit against a weak opponent. It did not need to lay blame on the Portuguese.

If British accounts of the 55th Division’s exploits are routinely verbose; those on the 40th Division are noticeably terse.³²⁴ Simply put, the 40th Division performed poorly during the battle. Arthur Conan Doyle reported, “by 1 o’clock the bulk of the Fortieth Division was across the Lys.”³²⁵ Cyril Falls also acknowledged the division’s rout. He did so delicately however, declining to identify the division by name. “Farther north they rolled back another British division, exhausted and shaken in March.”³²⁶

Lieutenant-Colonel Walter Guinness, a staff officer serving with the 66th Division, gave an account of his interactions with several elements of the 40th Division on the second and third days of the battle. They attest to a division in disarray, with exceedingly poor situational awareness. On 10 April “at 8 a.m. Carter, the GSO of the 40th Division (who were on our right), came to see us....He assured us...that the troops we believed to be Boche were part of the 40th Division....At 10.25 a.m....it became evident that Carter had been wrong and that the enemy were firmly established behind

³²³ TNA, XI Corps, Notes on Recent Fighting—No. 7., German Attack Near Givenchy, April 9th, 1918, 24 April 1918, WO 95/883.

³²⁴ Arthur Conan Doyle’s account is indicative of this phenomenon. The 55th’s actions on April 9th span six pages, while the 40th’s barely three.

³²⁵ Arthur Conan Doyle, *A History of the Great War*, 241.

³²⁶ Cyril Falls, *The Great War*, 338.

our line.” Guinness noted on one occasion the 40th Division withdrew in a different direction than its neighboring units leaving them with exposed flanks. On the following day, “the left of the 40th Division had...given way and this left our newly gained ground as a very dangerous salient.” Guinness later described the ‘giving way’ as “the disappearance of the 40th Division” which left his brigade isolated.³²⁷ It should be noted that Guinness’ unit also interacted extensively with the 34th Division during the battle. He recorded to criticisms regarding that division.

Details recorded by the battalions and brigades of the 40th Division most directly involved in the battle provide insight into crucial and highly controversial events. Before proceeding a note must be made about the heavy fog. It draped the entire battlefield and lingered until well after 10:00 a.m. Most firsthand accounts of the battle discuss the fog’s density. General Horne himself made note of it. “There was a terribly thick fog this morning and no one could see what was going on.”³²⁸ Most affirm that visibility did not exceed a few yards; a few claim that visibility did not exceed 50 yards. Any account of the battle therefore, such as those cited below, which claim untrammelled sight at extended distances in heavy fog during the early morning hours, perhaps scarcely after dawn, must be judged suspect.

The 14th Battalion, Highland Light Infantry Regiment, belonged to the 120th Brigade which comprised the divisional reserve that day. The battalion received orders to move forward at 9:00 a.m., a mere fifteen minutes after the German infantry attacked.

³²⁷ Bond, Robbins, *Staff Officer*, 202, 204-205.

³²⁸ IWM, Horne Papers, Letter to Lady Horne, 9 April 1918.

The timing could not have been worse; the battalion moved directly into the teeth of the German assault. A 10:06 am entry in the battalion's war diary reads, "Note: - From this time onwards nothing further has been heard of the three [companies] who went forward to occupy the front line."³²⁹ In other words, little more than an hour after receiving orders to move up, the battalion lost, probably mostly as prisoners, the majority of its combat effectives.

The 120th Brigade's report on the battle acknowledges that once its battalions were ordered forward "the movements of the forward companies of the 10/11th and 14th H.L.I became very obscure."³³⁰ The report confirms that "by 10.40 a.m....no information had been received from the forward companies."³³¹ It also acknowledges that by mid afternoon the Brigade's rifle strength had dwindled to 200 from 1,500 that morning.³³²

British after action reports are rife with dubious assertions regarding alleged Portuguese collapses. These allegations have as their painfully obvious objective the excuse of British units which performed poorly. Little analysis is required to conclude that most of these allegations are false. In an attempt to rationalize why two of its battalions lost so many men in the first hour of the battle, the 120th Brigade's report reads:

The greatest difficulty was experienced in distinguishing in the mist between the Portuguese withdrawing and the enemy advancing, and after parties of Portuguese had, on two or three occasions, been mistaken for the enemy, men began to withhold fire, and there appears little doubt that the enemy in several cases

³²⁹ TNA, War Diary, 14th Battalion Highland Light Infantry, 9 April 1918, WO 95/2612.

³³⁰ TNA, 120th Infantry Brigade, Report on Operations from 9:4:18 to 12:4:18, p. 1, WO 95/2610.

³³¹ TNA, 120th Infantry Brigade, Report on Operations from 9:4:18 to 12:4:18, p. 2, WO 95/2610.

³³² TNA, 120th Infantry Brigade, Report on Operations from 9:4:18 to 12:4:18, p. 2, WO 95/2610.

dribbled small parties with machine guns round the right flank of the companies by mingling them with the Portuguese as they withdrew.³³³

First, as has been noted, the battalions did not hear from these companies once they moved forward. It seems probable therefore that the assertion is nothing more than the conjecture of officers who were not present. Second, the remark is timed after 8:30 a.m. That the companies did not move forward until 9:00 a.m. suggests the alleged German infiltration owing to the Portuguese retreat did not occur until after 9:30 a.m. By that time the 2nd and 40th Division's line had been pierced in several places; the battle was by that time a melee. Third, the creeping barrage would have been in full swing at precisely this time adding to the poor visibility, confusion, and din of battle. Fourth, the Portuguese 4th Brigade on the left held out until after the first assault waves went in. Furthermore, the brigade sustained a casualty rate of sixty percent during the battle, the highest casualty percentage of the 2nd Division's three infantry brigades.³³⁴ The 4th Brigade fought.

The 119th Brigade's 18th Battalion Welsh Regiment's reports rank among the most contradictory and cryptic. The 18th Battalion held the 40 Division's right front immediately on the Portuguese left. The battalion's after action report claims "at 5:55 am a message was received from O[fficer] C[ommanding] right flank [company] that the enemy were coming over on the Portuguese front in large numbers."³³⁵ Then, "at 6:00 am the enemy broke through between our left post and the first post of the battalion on

³³³ TNA, 120th Infantry Brigade, Report on Operations from 9:4:18 to 12:4:18, p. 2, WO 95/2610.

³³⁴ Meneses, *Portugal 1914-1926*, 62.

³³⁵ TNA, 18th Battalion Welsh Regiment, Narrative of Events 9th April to 14th April 1918, Appendix A (hand written), WO 95/2607.

our left in large numbers. Spread along the front line towards our right and advanced on our support line.”³³⁶ In other words, the battalion reports claims the Portuguese broke on the battalion’s right and its sister battalion broke on its left.

Incidentally, the Imperial War Museum in London holds in its archive an obscure ten page report on the first hours of the Lys battle written by 2nd Lieutenant A. D. S. Johnson. Johnson claimed to have been in temporary command of D company of an unspecified battalion holding the main line, not the front line, on the left flank of the Portuguese. Johnson alleges in the hand-written report that the Portuguese on his right retreated, leaving his flank open, as a justification for ordering the company to withdraw.³³⁷ The 18th Battalion reports do not mention names. However, similarities in the two reports are striking.

The 13th Battalion, East Surrey Regiment, held the 18th Battalions left. The 13th Battalion’s war diary makes no mention of its own right flank being pierced. It does claim however, “the battalion immediately “stood to” but the enemy broke through the Portuguese on our right flank and the battalion was surrounded.”³³⁸ The 18th Battalion held the 13th Battalion’s right flank, not the Portuguese.

Both battalions belonged to the 119th Brigade, commanded by the aforementioned Brigadier-General Crozier. The brigade report gives a different account of events for both battalions, especially the 18th. “About 8:30...the enemy taking advantage of the fog

³³⁶ TNA, 18th Battalion Welsh Regiment, Narrative of Events 9th April to 14th April 1918, Appendix A (hand written), WO 95/2607.

³³⁷ IWM, Private papers of 2nd Lieutenant A. D. S. Johnson Papers, Catalogue Number, Documents, 11081.

³³⁸ TNA, War Diary, 13th Battalion East Surrey Regiment, WO 95/2606.

attacked on the left of our right battalion – 18th Welsh – after a hard struggle a part of the enemy managed to get a footing in Post ‘C’, in about the centre of the right battalion front. This was about 8:50 am....The battalion on the left – 13th East Surrey – reported their line intact and no infantry actions...up to 9:20 am.”³³⁹

The truth regarding events on the 119th Brigade’s right flank remain shrouded in mystery. Given the available information however, a plausible scenario can be constructed. A company of the 18th Battalion, severely weakened during the March fighting laden with replacements and inexperienced officers, panicked under the bombardment. The company retreated through the communication trenches, leaving its sister company in the frontline line unsupported. Owing to the embarrassment Watson described above, the withdrawal went unrecorded in the 119th Brigade’s report.

Some events regarding the brigade’s actions are far clearer. After 8:30, the main German infantry attack, or perhaps a skirmishing unit, came in against the brigade front held by the 18th Battalion just north of the junction with the Portuguese. The attackers forced an opening and mostly turned southward to outflank the Portuguese. The 18th Battalion laid blame on the Portuguese and on its sister battalion, the 13th East Surrey. As the attack developed, threatening the 13th Battalion from the flank and rear, that unit simply blamed the Portuguese. The 18th Battalion’s allegation that the Portuguese holding the 2nd Division’s extreme left abandoned their posts in the face of the enemy before 6 a.m. will be addressed in turn.

Allegations later surfaced in Lisbon that the right flank of 40th Division had given

³³⁹ TNA, War Diary, 119th Brigade, 9 April 1918, WO 95/2605.

way early on in exposing the Portuguese left flank. The official British history does state “as soon as the bombardment began, the 119th Bde (40th Divn), standing to the left of the Portuguese had formed a defensive flank.”³⁴⁰ This information is incorrect. The 18th Battalion made no such movement. The 120th Brigade attempted to form something of defensive flank after 9:00 a.m. but was rolled up in the main attack. The Portuguese government requested an inquiry of the British. No investigation was undertaken. British diplomats instead forwarded a report prepared by General Horne which placed all the blame for the defeat on the Portuguese.³⁴¹ Haig also placed the blame on the Portuguese in his diary. “Apparently this attack had no great strength behind it, and if the Portuguese had not bolted, the result of the fighting would have been a severe check for the enemy.”³⁴² Both Horne’s report and Haig’s comment are unconscionable given the events of the battle.

General Gomes da Costa laid out the tasks Haking assigned the 2nd Division in his report on the battle. “The Division was responsible for the defence of the two first lines, and Corps was responsible for the defence of the Village and Corps Line, but as Corps had no reserves available, the defence of the Village Line fell to the Division, which was obviously more than it could cope with... These three lines have a total length throughout of about 40 [kilometers].”³⁴³ We have seen that the division held a front of 12 kilometers, or about 7 miles. By comparison, the extraordinarily thinly spread 5th Army

³⁴⁰ Edmonds, *Military Operations*, 172.

³⁴¹ TNA, War Cabinet, G. T. 4580, CAB 24/51.

³⁴² TNA, Douglas Haig War Diary, 11 April 1918, WO 256/29.

³⁴³ TNA, Gomes da Costa, WO 158/75.

held an average divisional front of 3.23 miles when *Michael* began.³⁴⁴

“The weight of the enemy’s assault was thrown on the Portuguese Division and the right of the XV Corps.”³⁴⁵ General da Costa expounded upon the reason the Germans chose to attack the 2nd Division. “The chief weight of the attack fell...on my division, without a doubt for the same reasons that led the Germans on the 21st of March to attack the British and French Armies at their point of junction, the idea being that the chief weakness of a line will always lie at the junction of two different armies.”³⁴⁶ At *Georgette* the Germans had two junctions to choose from. They attacked the northern one for several important reasons. First, it was a corps junction comprised of troops of different nationalities. Second, unlike the junction with the 55th Division, the 40th Division junction lay on flat ground. Most importantly, Hazebrouck, *Georgette*’s first major objective, lay to the northwest of the battlefield. The north junction therefore represented the proverbial shortest distance between two points.

General Horne wrote an intriguing letter to his wife on the opening day of the Lys battle. “The Germans attacked the front held by the Portuguese this morning...We have had a very trying day....The Portuguese of course went back.”³⁴⁷ And several British histories claim Portuguese soldiers fled the field long before the German infantry moved forward at 8:45:

Many of the Portuguese of the 3 weak brigades manning the front lines had not waited for the infantry assault; they had begun heading to the rear during the

³⁴⁴ Zabecki, *The German 1918 Offensives*, 111.

³⁴⁵ TNA, XV Corps to Second Army No. 608/13, 16 May 1918, WO 95/922.

³⁴⁶ TNA, General Gomes da Costa, Portuguese Corps, 2nd Division, Battle of the Lys, WO 158/75.

³⁴⁷ Robbins, *The First World War Letters of General Lord Horne*, 250.

German bombardment, some as early as 07h30. By 10h00 the vast majority of the Portuguese had passed through the front line of the Battle Zone...on their way to the rear and out of the battle.”³⁴⁸

These same histories claim that movement between 6:00 and 8:00 a.m., while dangerous, was possible. They offer as proof examples of officers moving between the 2nd Division’s and 40th Division’s headquarters, well behind the front line. Such examples do not accurately reflect conditions along the front lines, from brigade headquarters forward. Many Portuguese and British battalion reports attest to the near impossibility of movement without extreme risk during the bombardment, especially across open ground. Dartford experienced the bombardment’s power first hand as he moved forward from his rearward billet to 4th Brigade HQ:

Woke at 4.10 a.m. Very heavy shelling. Phoned to brigade – every communication cut already. Dressed hurriedly...and set out for brigade. The Rue de la Gare was dangerous then for shells were falling on it. Smelt gas and put my respirator on, dodging into doors as shells fell. Slipped into a ditch. Reached [brigade] dug-out. Next three hours we could do nothing, but nearly got asphyxiated by lack of oxygen owing to having to keep gas blankets down....Heavy fog on and everybody seemed isolated from others.³⁴⁹

Captain Dartford’s bravery surpasses all reproach. The annals of modern warfare repeatedly demonstrate men’s natural tendency to take cover under heavy bombardments, not to run. Considering the *Georgette* bombardment was the second strongest of the war, indeed in the history of war up to that point, it seems unreasonable to suggest that large numbers of Portuguese left the relative cover of their dugouts while shells fell around them in a greater concentration than had fallen during the *Michael* bombardment.

The hundreds of reports in the archives at Lisbon have afforded the Portuguese a

³⁴⁸ Farr, *Silent General*, 183.

³⁴⁹ IWM, Dartford Papers, 9 April 1918.

good understanding of the day's events. This being said, a few brief contextual comparisons are in order here. The greatest proportion of shells fell upon the Portuguese front causing extensive damage to the trench systems. The Portuguese troops took the brunt of the German infantry attack. Eight German divisions went in against three brigades and supporting units. Furthermore, the extreme length of the Portuguese frontage allowed the Germans considerable freedom of movement. This accounts for the fact that all three Portuguese brigade commanders became prisoners. Under these conditions Portuguese units could only offer resistance against the Germans they could see with the men in the immediate vicinity. The reports bear out that most units experienced similar situations to the ones described below.

Most of the Portuguese soldiers survived the bombardment. In punctual German fashion the creeping barrage commenced as soon as the bombardment ended. It took a heavy toll. The 3rd platoon, 2nd company, 20th Battalion on the Portuguese left held its ground firing at the Germans they could see or hear moving toward them. Around 9 a.m. the creeping barrage cut the platoon to ribbons. It lost 26 of its 38 men. The 1st company, 29th Battalion, also on the left but in support, advanced toward the front when the bombardment subsided, was caught in the barrage and lost many men, including its commander. In the center, the 2nd Company, 5th Battalion, in reserve, moved forward with around 30 men. During the bombardment a dugout holding a platoon and a half of the company's complement took a direct hit by a large shell, presumably killing all occupants.³⁵⁰

³⁵⁰ AHM, Cx. 144, No. 180, Godinho.

The 40th Division's report of the battle addressed the aforementioned 18th Battalion's claim that the Portuguese fled before 6 a.m. "About 6 a.m. a Portuguese officer belonging to the left company in the line reported to our right battalion that his company had not been attacked."³⁵¹ The XV Corps' war diary to which the 40th belonged also acknowledges the link up but puts the time a half hour later.³⁵² It will be recalled that only the 18th Battalion's company holding the main line pulled back early, not the company holding the frontline. Furthermore, Portuguese records insist that the 119th Brigade gave way at 8:50 a.m. while the Portuguese 20th Battalion held. This is precisely the time brigade's war diary acknowledges that its own 18th Battalion was overrun.³⁵³

The *Stosstruppen* benefitted from the fog that morning. Alferes Mamede of the 3rd Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Brigade "found himself enveloped by numerous enemy forces which surging from the rear covered by the fog...invaded the line capturing him along with the rest of the garrison." Shortly after Mamede's capture, German soldiers took his company commander prisoner in the "B" Line, again advancing from the rear through the fog.³⁵⁴ Several Portuguese reports note that units engaging the Germans moving toward them from the front were captured by other units advancing along the trench remnants on their flanks or from behind. British units were also overtaken from the rear. The 20th Battalion Middlesex Regiment's war diary noted, "Bn. HQ surrounded and posts attacked from rear. Commanding officer with part of HQ personnel

³⁵¹ TNA, 40th Division, Report on the Battle of Armentières from 4.15 a.m. to 12 Noon, 9th April, 1918, So Far As It Affected the 40th Division Right and Reserve Brigades, WO 95/922.

³⁵² TNA, XV Corps, War Diary, WO 95/922.

³⁵³ AHM, Cx. 144, No. 112.

³⁵⁴ AHM, Cx. 142, Report of the 3rd Company, 1st Battalion.

escaped.”³⁵⁵ The battalion belonged to the 121st Brigade which held the 40th Division’s left front and did not experience the weight of the bombardment or the main attack.

It will be recalled that the British contention is that a majority of the Portuguese threw down their weapons, ‘took off their boots’ and ran, not that they surrendered. As J. P. Harris put it, “about two-thirds of the Portuguese troops ran away.”³⁵⁶ Brigadier-General Brind also took issue with a clause in Edmonds’ draft history that read “practically the whole of the Portuguese troops had vanished.” He argued that the assertion “requires a little qualifying.” He effectively explained his reasoning:

The German account which you quote definitely says on p. 8 that “about midday the 22nd Reserve Regt. “took Neuve Chapelle by assault and mopped it up” – that is about three hours after the attack commenced, so here at least they (6th P. Bde) must have fought pretty stoutly, particularly if they knew of progress being made on their flanks.

Again “the 1st Reserve Regt. reached Croix Barbee “at 12.30” Croix Barbee is not on your maps, but I do not think that that was very rapid progress.

Anyway “the 2nd Reserve Regiment. was held up for a “long time south of Richebourg St. Vaast”, and as this was two miles north of our 55th Division, I think you must give some of the credit to the Portuguese 5th Brigade, unless indeed you have definite evidence that the credit is due elsewhere. Didn’t the Portuguese lose 6000 prisoners that day?”³⁵⁷

Furthermore, no British observer recalls seeing large numbers of Portuguese soldiers taking to flight. Lionel Robbins, an erstwhile gunner who later became a celebrated economist, saw only “forlorn little groups of Portuguese retreating discreetly.”³⁵⁸ J. K. Dick-Cunyngham, commander of the 152nd Brigade, 51st Division, the unit that moved

³⁵⁵ TNA, War Diary, 20th Battalion Middlesex Regiment, 9 April 1918, WO 95-2615.

³⁵⁶ Harris, *Douglas Haig*, 468.

³⁵⁷ TNA, Major-General J. E. S. Brind to J. E. Edmonds, 3 January 1932, p. 3, CAB 45/122.

³⁵⁸ Susan Howson, *Lionel Robbins*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 45.

forward to bolster the Portuguese front, later stated, “on no occasion did I see any parties of Portuguese troops retiring.”³⁵⁹ Dartford and his Portuguese officer companions saw only some “stragglers” heading towards the rear.³⁶⁰ Even the blustery commander of the 1st King Edwards Horse 11th Cyclist Battalion who claimed the Portuguese had “removed their boots to run faster” arrived on the battlefield after the Germans had launched their main infantry attack. He therefore could only have seen the remnants of infantry brigades “streaming back” after the line had been overrun.³⁶¹

Major Vitorino Godinho’s report frequently mentions small groups of men retreating rearward, or wandering. While most groups under the control of officers remained fairly cohesive, Godinho does explain that some men under the direct supervision of officers slipped away when other leaderless men passed them.³⁶² Numerous cases of British units fleeing the battlefield exist as well. “They were harassed from three sides. It was now or never....several hundred....ran, heads down fearing to look behind, praying to reach nearby farm ruins in time.”³⁶³ A. E. Bagley, serving in the 149th Brigade, 50th Division, recorded another large scale flight during the battle. “The strain of facing the machinegun fire had almost upset all mental balance....instead of it being a retire, it developed into a race of who could put the most distance between the Germans and ourselves in the least amount of time. A lot of chaps were taking their

³⁵⁹ TNA, Brigadier J. K. Dick-Cunyngham to J. E. Edmonds, 8 July, 1931, p. 2, CAB 45/122.

³⁶⁰ IWM, Dartford Papers, 9 April 1918, Catalogue Number, Documents, 17483.

³⁶¹ TNA, Headquarters, XI Corps, No. K. E. H. 365/18, WO 95/883.

³⁶² AHM, Cx. 144, No. 180.

³⁶³ Toland, *No Man's Land*, 150.

equipment off and throwing it away thus enabling them to run faster.”³⁶⁴ Guinness also mentions that members of his own brigade came “back in small parties...and we managed to collect a few.”³⁶⁵

British officers knew of such ‘retirements’. The commander of the 5th Division, Major General Reginald Byng Stephens acknowledged the crisis in an order to his men, exhorting them that “every post and every line is to be held to the last.” “Every day it becomes more clear that the reverses sustained by the British Army since March 21st have been in great measure due to the voluntary retirement of Units and to the want of knowledge amongst officers and men of what was required of them.”³⁶⁶

It has been asserted that the Portuguese withdrew so quickly that they neglected to destroy crucial Lys River crossings. “Although the likelihood of a Portuguese collapse had been anticipated the speed and extent of the disintegration had not. Nor had the Portuguese failure to demolish bridges and other vital points in their rapid retreat.”³⁶⁷ In fact, the 151st Brigade was responsible...for manning in an emergency....the crossings of the Rivers Lawe and Lys”³⁶⁸ We have seen as well that the Portuguese Division was responsible for defending the first three lines at most, not the Lys.

General da Costa’s report exhibits his penchant for painful honesty. He completed the report about a month after the battle. Accordingly, the data presented at

³⁶⁴ IWM, Bagley Papers.

³⁶⁵ Bond, Robbins, *Staff Officer*, 202.

³⁶⁶ TNA, Fifth Division, S. 51/30, 18 April 1918, WO 95/883.

³⁶⁷ Farr, *Silent General: Horne the First Army*, 183.

³⁶⁸ TNA, 51st Division, “Report on the Operations on the R. Lys Between 9th – 12th April,” 1918, WO 95/883.

times suffers from the obscurity of events. However, the general makes no attempt to cover up for units that fought poorly nor for those that did not measure up to his exacting standards. He criticizes, for example, the battalions of the 3rd Brigade in reserve for failing to aggressively move ‘toward the sound of the guns’. Histories and lengthy reports written by other Portuguese officers who enjoyed the benefit of having hundreds of reports at their disposal, including those of repatriated prisoners of war, point to conditions which severely hampered the 3rd Brigade. Not the least of which was the veritable curtain of artillery fire which effectively sealed off the frontline battle area for several hours. Haking also situated the brigade too far behind the front to form an effective reserve. Da Costa did make note of this. These histories further demonstrate that two companies of 14th Battalion and all of the dauntless 15th Battalion found a way forward, engaged the Germans, and sustained heavy casualties.³⁶⁹

Horne read and contradicted the substance of da Costa’s report. He directed Haking to do the same. Haking sharply critiqued it. It will be recalled that Horne wrote of Haking’s ability to write ‘specious’ reports:

I should like to point out that the paper is written by a gallant Commander who has to report a serious reverse to his Government, and who for the sake of his own troops is naturally anxious to place facts in the best possible light. Parts of the report are based on statements made by Battalion, Battery and Company Commanders and other officers who, owing to the conditions of the moment and no doubt in some cases to their desire to cover up their own shortcomings, cannot be accepted as reliable.³⁷⁰

Compared with a majority of British reports on the battle da Costa’s report is forthright.

³⁶⁹ Vasco de Carvalho, *A 2.ª Divisão Portuguesa na Batalha do Lys: 9 de Abril de 1918*, (Lisbon: Lusitânia, 1924), 386.

³⁷⁰ TNA, Haking, XI Corps, S. S. 16/8, WO 158/75.

Major Godinho demonstrated an outstanding example of the Portuguese inclination to self-effacement. His semiofficial and often-cited report on the battle notes the “low energy and moral strength” of some Portuguese officers which, “having embraced an officer’s career in a time of peace and not suspecting that they would have to take part in a campaign of this nature, did not sufficiently possess the tempered character to serve as leaders for their men.” Godinho’s censure of his own professional cast undoubtedly holds a measure of truth. It should be noted however that he ranked this point seventh on a list of reasons for the defeat. “A protracted period of service at the front” and “an extreme reduction of combat effectives” which were not made good headed the list.³⁷¹

Dartford met with General Ker and other officers of the British mission on 21 April. They discussed the already circulating rumor that the “Boche came through the British right battalion.” Ker speculated the CEP’s new chief of staff Cortez may have been on the German’s payroll. The topics discussed in that meeting bear out that the British keenly sought to blame the Portuguese for the defeat.³⁷²

Dartford privately pondered the battle’s events. He tried to make sense of 4th Brigade casualty returns showing a number far too high to draw any conclusion other than the Portuguese had fought, not run. He could not get passed the 25 officers and 410 men of the 3rd Battalion listed as casualties. “It’s difficult to explain how the 3rd who was

³⁷¹ AHM, Cx. 144, No. 180.

³⁷² IWM, Dartford Papers, 21 April 1918.

in reserve got so many casualties as I don't [think] they ever got up far."³⁷³ He also mulled over reports regarding the scale of German's effort:

27 enemy divisions were concentrated in Lille on the 9th – all come from the south in 48 hours. The attack was probably meant to be a minor one at first, but on account of the success it met with the fog & the C.E.P. retreat, they developed it the following day. A German officer described the geese as running away like scalded cats! As for ammunition, there were shells to the number of 16,000 per gun in readiness & over 5 million rounds of S.A.A. in forward areas, Portuguese front on the morning of the 9th.³⁷⁴

Like Haig, his prejudices barred him from drawing rational conclusions. The first and last sentences in the above paragraph directly contradict Dartford's minimizing of the attack's scope in the second and third sentences. Twenty-seven divisions and 16,000 shells available per gun cannot be judged as indicators of a 'minor' attack.

General Tamagnini de Abreu's official dispatch regarding the battle read:

At 0415 on the 9th [German Forces] began a violent artillery bombardment against the Portuguese front....Four enemy divisions launched at 0730 a violent attack against our forces, which they were able to hold against until 1030. Our troops fought with valor but were forced to retreat, in good order, because of the prolonged and constant bombardment and the numerical superiority of the enemy infantry.³⁷⁵

The general embellished a little. Neither the Portuguese nor British retreat can be described as having occurred 'in good order'. On the 2nd Division's flanks, Portuguese and British soldiers retreated together.³⁷⁶ Casualty returns for the division show that the infantry brigades, artillery groups and machinegun companies took the lion's share of the

³⁷³ IWM, Dartford Papers, 21 April 1918.

³⁷⁴ IWM, Dartford Papers, 17 April 1918.

³⁷⁵ General Tamagnini de Abreu e Silva, Official Dispatch, in João Chagas, *Diario*, Vol. III, 83.

³⁷⁶ Costa, *Lys*, 139-149; Portuguese artillery batteries reported some retreating troops belonging to the frontline infantry battalions. British troops were reported as retreating alongside Portuguese troops, 144, 146, 148-149.

casualties. Clearly, the vast majority of the 2nd Division personnel which escaped the onslaught were rear echelon troops. Watson pointed out that British “rear-line labour personnel” also retreated in large numbers during *Michael*.³⁷⁷ Jaime Cortesão described the composition and mood of the refugee column. “On the road we swelled the long cortege of those who were withdrawing: shreds of regiments, civilian families...Chinese workers, and, in morose groups, Portuguese, English and Australian soldiers, all in a silent, pressing torrent, devoured by common drama.”³⁷⁸

Emphatic, if unexpected, support for the Portuguese came from Lloyd George. “A good deal of unfair derision has been cast on the Portuguese troops for the feebleness of their defence...they could not, in the circumstances in which they were placed, have put up a successful resistance against so formidable an attack.”³⁷⁹ Joseph Gies summarized the CEP’s battle fairly well. “The Portuguese soldiers had given a good account of themselves up to now...only one division was holding a section which two had formerly held, and it gave way.”³⁸⁰ “The Portuguese fought until enveloped and overrun by vastly superior numbers’ would have been more accurate.

³⁷⁷ Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, 177-178.

³⁷⁸ Jaime Cortesão, cited in Wheeler, *Republican Portugal*, 178.

³⁷⁹ David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George*, 27-28.

³⁸⁰ Gies, *Crisis 1918*, 116.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The CEP suffered an undeniable defeat on the Lys. However, *Georgette* also soundly defeated the British First Army, on the first day and for nearly three weeks thereafter. Beginning on 10 April the British Second Army became involved in the struggle and was also thrashed. An objective view of the evidence reveals that the British made the Portuguese the scapegoat for the embarrassing defeat. Several prominent historians have drawn similar conclusions. Michael S. Neiberg pointed out “British efforts in 1918 to blame the outmanned Portuguese provide only a partial explanation for the setback. The Germans also infiltrated the British line near Ypres, capturing most of the ground to the south and north of the town, including the strategically important Kemmel Hill and the symbolically important Messines Ridge.”³⁸¹ Joseph Gies noted the “British overblamed the Portuguese for a five-and-a-half-mile German advance through the Flemish morass.”³⁸² David Stevenson, a harsh critic the Portuguese, acknowledged the “follow-up attack on 10 April succeeded against not Portuguese but British forces.”³⁸³

Michael and *Georgette* had mocked British defenses and perhaps the British Army. The German successes bewildered British Army leaders and also severely shook the British government and public. With flagging morale, in the army and at home, and with ruptured egos incapable of comprehending how the Germans had managed to

³⁸¹ Neiberg, *Fighting the Great War*, 318-319.

³⁸² Gies, *Crisis 1918*, 116.

³⁸³ Stevenson, *With Our Backs to the Wall*, 72.

surprise and roll up their armies in so staggering a manner—twice in a row—Haig, Horne, Haking, and others sought to mitigate their discomfiture and rationalize their shame. They did not need to look for long; the Portuguese stood nearby. At *Michael* the British had only themselves to blame; at *Georgette* they could blame the Portuguese. They did.

British errors most directly contributed to the debacle. Horne's and Haking's haphazard relief of the Portuguese 1st Division allowed the Germans the added advantage of a very thinly held line. The manner in which the CEP's relief was carried demonstrates the First Army's acute lack of preparedness for the impending attack.

Lloyd George pulled no punches in assessing the blunder:

An incomprehensible piece of carelessness on the part of our Army Command was directly responsible for what happened. General Horne, the Commander of the Second Army, being warned that the next general attack would come in that sector decided to withdraw the Portuguese Corps from the line and substitute two British divisions. Foolishly, he only withdrew one Portuguese division (the second) without substituting a British division and then left the forward position, which had been held by a corps of two divisions, with a brigade of the other division in reserve. . . . What followed was inevitable with any troops.^{384, 385}

Liddell Hart weighed in on the matter as well. "It is a reasonable criticism that there was an error of judgment in leaving this division even for a few days with a front more than double that of the 55th on its flank."³⁸⁶ Actually its frontage was three times that of the 55th Division. Cruttwell judged the lapse more harshly. "The staff blunder which made

³⁸⁴ Lloyd George incorrectly identified the wrong division as having been withdrawn. In fact, it was the 1st division, the 2nd was scheduled to be relieved on the 9th. Also, Horne commanded the First not the Second Army.

³⁸⁵ David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George*, 28-29.

³⁸⁶ Liddell Hart, *The Real War*, 407.

one of [the Portuguese divisions] responsible for holding six important miles in an avowedly threatened area is one of the most grotesque of the war.”³⁸⁷ The Portuguese actually held seven miles. This being said, the Germans attacked the 2nd, 40th and 55th Divisions with a “numerical superiority [of] almost ten to one.”³⁸⁸ Had the 1st Division been in the line the outcome could not have been appreciably different for the Portuguese, except for a larger casualty list.

Flawed intelligence equally contributed to the defeat. As J. P. Harris pointed out, “An attack of some sort in this sector was not a surprise, but the scale of it was.”³⁸⁹ A War Cabinet document dated 10 April 1918 acknowledged the surprise. “The Director of Military Operations stated that the attack made by the Germans on the previous days had, in the light of further information, turned out to be more important than had been at first thought.”³⁹⁰ Suffice it to say, the attack on the Lys came as a near complete surprise to the British High Command. It should not have but it did all the same. Michael S. Neiberg made note of the British embarrassment. “Haig and his staff had been caught by surprise once again....They had underestimated the danger to the Lys sector in part because they had presumed that the Lys valley would not dry out until May, as had been the case in previous years.”³⁹¹

The powerful bombardment, the number of prisoners taken and the fact that the Portuguese did not hold the field at day’s end have made exact casualty figures all but

³⁸⁷ Cruttwell, *A History of the Great War*, 516.

³⁸⁸ William, *Modernity, the Media and the Military*, 182.

³⁸⁹ Harris, *Douglas Haig*, 467.

³⁹⁰ War Cabinet, 388, April 10, 1918.

³⁹¹ Neiberg, *Fighting the Great War*, 306-307.

impossible to ascertain.³⁹² Portuguese estimates of men killed in action range between 400 and 700. The Germans took between 6,800 and 7,700 prisoners.³⁹³ The numbers in wounded are problematic. Basic deductions however, point to between 2,000 and 2,500.³⁹⁴ Many of these would have been captured as most of the non-walking wounded in the frontlines would not have been evacuated owing to the narrow window, just thirty minutes, between the end of the bombardment and the main assault. The 2nd Division's total losses in the battle stand between 8,500 and 9,500. The 4th, 5th and 6th Infantry Brigades sustained more than 5,700.³⁹⁵ Of the 9,028 effectives in those three brigades there can be little doubt that the 2nd Division met its destruction in combat. That Portuguese soldiers surrendered once enveloped cannot be judged dishonorable.

David Lloyd George summarized the thoughts which must have occupied the minds of many Portuguese. "It is rather hard on a small nation, which has a long and honored record for valour and intrepidity on the sea and land...that they should have to bear the stain of reproach for a defeat which was entirely attributable to the crass stupidity of a General from another race."³⁹⁶ General Tamagnini took a pragmatic perspective of the defeat. "An attack similar to the one made against the Portuguese Division, on 9 April, with the same intensity in artillery preparation and impetus, was suffered by the 22nd French Division at Chemin des Dames and the V British Army at

³⁹² Middlebrook, *The Kaiser's Battle*, 311-322; Middlebrook discusses the difficulties in calculating British casualties on the first day of *Michael*.

³⁹³ Fraga, *Guerra e Marginalidade*, 121; Teixeira, "A Fome e a Saudade" 103.

³⁹⁴ Carvalho, *A 2.ª Divisão Portuguesa*, 410.

³⁹⁵ Gomes da Costa, WO 95/5488, PRO.

³⁹⁶ David Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George: 1918*, Vol. VI, 29.

Amiens, and no one dared to call the troops of these units cowards for having ceded ground.”³⁹⁷ Regrettably, British Army leaders held their Portuguese ally to a much higher standard than they held themselves. The Portuguese soldiers did not deserve the ignominy heaped upon them by the British in an effort to cover their own discomfiture. General da Costa paid tribute to the Portuguese troops. “The 2nd Division could not win, but it fought on the whole with gallantry and left nearly half its strength on the field of battle. It should not be thought ill of.”³⁹⁸

Upon learning of the battle Chagas wrote, “Bad news. The Portuguese were strongly attacked between Armentières and La Bassée.”³⁹⁹ The Battle of the Lys marked the independent existence of the CEP in France. From that point until the end of the war the Portuguese were held in reserve as labor troops. This is precisely what Haig had wanted of them. The official Portuguese history states, “From the Battle of Lys Portuguese forces as a large cohesive unit were left with only a diminished role.”⁴⁰⁰ The choice of words bears significance. The republican government which sent the CEP to France had hoped for more.

Portugal gained almost nothing from its participation in the European war. Ironically, former republican Prime Minister Afonso Costa led the Portuguese delegation at the peace conferences without holding an official position in the new government.⁴⁰¹

The republic’s primary reason for entering the war, to earn recognition and good will,

³⁹⁷ General Tamagnini in Marques, *Das Trincheiras*, 389.

³⁹⁸ TNA, General Gomes da Costa, WO 158/75.

³⁹⁹ Chagas, *Diario*, Vol. III, 10 April 1918, 45.

⁴⁰⁰ *Historia do Exercito Portugues*, 125.

⁴⁰¹ Meneses, *Afonso Costa*, 94.

proved completely elusive. Portugal's internal instability barred the international community from looking favorably upon the new republic.⁴⁰² Afonso Costa's intransigence provoked further dismay among the British and French.⁴⁰³ He emphatically asserted Portugal would accept as a minimum 2.5 percent of the total German war reparations. Officially, he requested 8 percent.⁴⁰⁴ Portugal was awarded 0.75 percent of the total German indemnity but received very little of that.⁴⁰⁵ Portugal retained a small number of the German ships confiscated in February 1916 and other German assets already liquidated in Portugal. These were hollow victories at best. Portugal's participation in the war was disastrous.

⁴⁰² Ibid, 111, 130-131, 135.

⁴⁰³ Ibid, 130-131.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, 134.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, 135-136.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archives

Arquivo Histórico Militar, Lisbon:

1st Division, 35th Section, Boxes (Cx.) 142, 143, 144, 145, 1178, 1272, 1401.

National Archives of the United Kingdom, Kew:

Cabinet Office: 23/6, 24/6, 24/51, 45/122.

Ministry of Munitions: 4/3081.

War Office: 32/5100, 95/60, 95/883, 95/922, 95/2605, 95/2606, 95/2607, 95/2610, 95/2612, 95/2614, 95/2615, 95/5488, 106/551, 106/552, 106/553, 106/505, 106/544, 106/546, 106/547, 153/301, 158/75, 158/112, 158/118, 158/188, 158/189, 158/190, 158/709, 158/710, 158/870, 256/29, 374/41643.

Imperial War Museum, London:

Private Papers of Captain R. C. G. Dartford, 17483.

Private Papers of 2nd Lieutenant A. D. S. Johnson, 11081.

Private Papers of A. E. Bagley, 12344.

Private Papers of General Lord Horne of Stirkoke GCB KCMG, 12468.

Primary Sources

Published Documents

Great Britain. Foreign Office. *British documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office, Confidential Print. Part II, From the First to the Second World War*. Volumes II & III. Kenneth Bourne and D. Cameron Watt (eds.). Frederick, MD: University Publications of American, 1989.

Portugal. Leis, Decretos, etc. *Negócios Externos: Documentos Apresentados ao Congresso da República em 1920 pelo Ministro dos Negócios Estrangeiros: Portugal no Conflito Europeu: 1ª parte: Negociações até à Declaração de Guerra*. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1920.

Official Histories

- Edmonds, J. E. *Military Operations: France and Belgium, 1918*. Vol. II. Nashville: The Battery Press, Inc., 1995.
- Martins, Luis Augusto Ferreira. *Portugal na Grande Guerra*. Vols. I & II. Lisbon: Ática, 1934-1935.
- Portugal. *Historia do Exercito Portugues, 1910-1945*. Vol. III. Lisbon: Estado-Maior do Exército, 1993.

Books

- Amaral, Ferreira do. *A Mentira da Flandres e...o Mêdo!*. Lisbon: J. Rodrigues, 1922.
- Bond, Brian and Simon Robbins, eds. *Staff Officer: The Diaries of Walter Guinness (First Lord Moyne) 1914-1918*. London: Leo Cooper, 1987.
- Boraston, J. H. (ed.) *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches (December 1915 – April 1919)*. London and Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1919.
- Brun, André. *A Malta das Trincheiras: Migalhas da Grande Guerra 1917-1918*. Porto: Civilização, 1983.
- Casimiro, Augusto. *Nas Trincheiras da Flandres*. Porto: Renascença Portuguesa, 1918.
- Chagas, João. *Diário*. Vol. I-IV. Lisbon: Parceria A. M. Pereira, 1930.
- Churchill, Winston S. *The World Crisis*. New York: Scribner, 1931.
- Churchill, R. S. *Winston Spencer Churchill: Young Statesman 1901-1914*. Vol. II. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967.
- *Winston Spencer Churchill: Young Statesman 1901-1914*. Companion Volume II. Churchill to Grey, 11 June 1911. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1969.
- Cortesão, Jaime. *Memórias da Grande Guerra (1916-1919)*. Porto: Renascença Portuguesa, 1919.
- Costa, General Gomes da. *O Corpo de Exército Português na Grande Guerra: A Batalha do Lys, 9 de Abril de 1918*. Porto: Edição da Renascença Portuguesa, 1920.

- Crozier, F. P. *The Men I Killed*. London: Michael Joseph, 1937.
- Graves, Robert. *Goodbye to All That*. New York: Anchor Books, 1998.
- Grey, Edward Sir. *Twenty-Five Years: 1892-1916*. Vol. II. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co, 1925.
- Hesketh-Prichard, V. H. *Sniping in France: 1914 – 1918*, London: Hutchinson & Co., 1920.
- Lloyd George, David. *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George, 1918*. Vol. VI. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1927.
- Ludendorff, Eric. *Ludendorff's Own Story, August 1914-November 1918*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1919.
- Robbins, Simon. ed. *The First World War Letters of General Lord Horne*. Stroud: The History Press for the Army Records Society, 2009.
- Sheffield, Gary and John Bourne. eds. *Douglas Haig: War Diaries and Letters 1914 – 1918*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005), 390.

Periodicals

- The Outlook*, Vol. 88, No. 6, New York February 8, 1908.
- The Spectator*, No. 4,154, February 8, 1908.

Secondary Sources

- Bemis, Samuel Flagg. *The Diplomacy of the American Revolution*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975.
- Buchan, John. *A History of the Great War, Volume IV*. Boston, New York, Chicago, and San Francisco: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922.
- Caldwell, C. E. *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: His Life and Diaries*. New York: C. Scribner's sons, 1927.

- Carvalho, Vasco de. *A 2.^a Divisão Portuguesa na Batalha do Lys: 9 de Abril de 1918*. Lisbon: Lusitânia, 1924.
- Castro, José Ferreira Borges de, Julio Firmino Judice Biker. *Supplemento á Collecção dos Tratados, Convenções Contratos e Actos Publicos Celebrados entre a Corôa de Portugal e as Mais Potencias Desde 1640*. Vol. XI, Part 1. Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1873.
- Cooper, Duff. *Haig*. London: Faber and Faber, 1936.
- Cruttwell, C. R. M. F. *A History of the Great War*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969.
- DiNardo, Richard L. *Germany and the Axis Powers: From Coalition to Collapse*. Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2005.
- Doyle, Arthur Conan. *A History of the Great War: The British Campaign in France and Flanders: 1918, January to July*. Volume 5. New York: George H. Doran Company, 1920.
- Dull, Jonathan R. *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985.
- Falls, Cyril. *The Great War*. New York: Capricorn Books, 1959.
- Farr, Don. *The Silent General: Horne of the First Army: A Biography of Haig's Trusted Great War Comrade-in-Arms*. Solihull: Helion & Company Ltd., 2006.
- Fisher, H. E. S. *The Portugal Trade, A Study of Anglo-Portuguese Commerce 1700-1770*. London: Methuen, 1971.
- Fraga, Luís M. Alves de. *Do Intervencionismo ao Sidonismo, Os Dois Segmentos da Política de Guerra na 1.a República: 1916-1918*. Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade de Coimbra, 2010.
- *Guerra & Marginalidade: O Comportamento das Trops Portuguesas em França, 1917-1918*. Lisbon: Prefácio, 2003.
- Gies, Joseph. *Crisis 1918: The Leading Actors, Strategies and Events in the German Gamble for Total Victory on the Western Front*. New York: Norton, 1974.
- Gudmundsson, Bruce I. *Stormtroop Tactics: Innovation in the German Army, 1914-1918*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1918.

- Harris, J. P. *Douglas Haig and the First World War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Harvey, Arnold D. *A Muse of Fire: Literature, Art and War*. London: The Hambledon Press, 1998.
- Horne, Alistair. *The Price of Glory: Verdun 1916*. London: Penguin Books, 1993.
- Howson, Susan. *Lionel Robbins*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Liddell Hart, Basil. *The Real War, 1914-1918*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1930.
- Magalhães, José Calvet de. *História das Relações Diplomáticas entre Portugal e os Estados Unidos da América, 1776-1911*. Lisbon: Publicações Europa-América, 1991.
- Marques, Isabel Pestana. *Das Trincheiras com Saudade. A Vida Quotidiana dos Militares Portugueses na Primeira Guerra Mundial*. Lisbon: A Esfera dos Livros, 2008.
- Marshall, S. L. A. *World War I*. Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 2001.
- Martins, Luis Augusto Ferreira. *A Cooperação Anglo-Portuguesa na Grande Guerra de 1914-1918*. Lisbon: Serviços de Informação e Imprensa da Embaixada Britânica, 1942.
- Meneses, Filipe Ribeiro de. *Portugal 1914-1926: From the First World War to Military Dictatorship*. Bristol: HiPLAM, 2004.
- *Afonso Costa*, London: Haus Histories, 2010.
- Meyer, G. J. *A World Undone: The Story of the Great War 1914 to 1918*. New York: Delacorte Press, 2006.
- Middlebrook, Martin. *The Kaiser's Battle*. London: Penguin Books, 2000.
- Morgan, Kenneth O (ed). *Lloyd George: Family Letters 1885—1936*. Cardiff and London: University of Wales Press/Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Neiberg, Michael S. *Fighting the Great War: A Global History*. Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Pitt, Barrie. *1918: The Last Act*. London: Cassell, 1962.

- Robbins, Simon. *British Generalship during the Great War: The Military Career of Sir Henry Horne (1861-1929)*. Surrey: Ashgate, 2010.
- Silva, Júlio Joaquim da Costa Rodrigues da. *Ideário Político de uma Elite de Estado: Corpo Diplomático (1777-1793)*. Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian: Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia, 2002.
- Simmonds, Frank Herbert. *History of the World War*. Volume 5. New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1920.
- Stevenson, David. *With Our Backs to the Wall: Victory and Defeat in 1918*. London: Allen Lane, 2011.
- Taylor, A. J. P. *The First World War: An Illustrated History*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1972.
- Teixeira, Nuno Severiano. *O Poder e a Guerra, 1914-1918: Objectivos Nacionais e Estratégias Políticas na Entrada de Portugal na Grande Guerra*. Lisbon: Editorial Estampa, 1996.
- Terraine, John. *Ordeal of Victory*. Philadelphia & New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1963.
- Toland, John. *No Man's Land: 1918, The Last Year of the Great War*. Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 2002.
- Travers, Timothy. *How the War Was Won: Command and Technology in the British Army on the Western Front, 1917-1918*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Tucker, Spencer C. ed. *European Powers in the First World War: An Encyclopedia*. Garland Publishing, New York, 1999.
- Vincent-Smith, J. D. *As Relações Políticas Luso-Britânicas, 1910-1916*. Lisbon: Livros Horizonte, 1975.
- Watson, Alexander. *Enduring the Great War: Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914-1918*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Wheeler, Douglas L. *Republican Portugal: A Political History 1910-1926*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978.

Williams, John F. *Modernity, the Media and the Military: The Creation of National Mythologies on the Western Front 1914-1918*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Zabecki, David T. *The German 1918 Offensives: A Case Study in the Operational Level of War*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Articles

Anderson, General Sir Hastings. "Lord Horne as an Army Commander." *The Journal of the Royal Artillery*. Vol. LVI. No. 4. (1930).

Bell, Aubrey F. E. "The new Administration in Portugal" in *The Contemporary Review*, No. 631, July 1918. 48-53.

Meneses, Filipe Ribeiro de. "'All of Us are Looking Forward to Leaving': The Censored Correspondence of the Portuguese Expeditionary Corps in France, 1917-18." *European History Quarterly*. Vol. 30 No. 3 (2000) 333-355.

- "The Abandoned Army: The Portuguese Expeditionary Corps in France, 1917-1918." *Portuguese Studies Review*. Vol. 5, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 1996). 59-72.
- "Sacred Union or Radical Republic? The Dilemmas of Wartime Propaganda in Portugal, 1916-1917." *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*. Vol. 5, No. 1. 1999. 77-92.

Nowell, Charles E. "Portugal and the Partition of Africa." *The Journal of Modern History*. Vol. 19, No. 1 (Mar., 1947). 1-17.

Piecuch, James. "A War Averted: Luso-American Relations in the Revolutionary Era, 1775-1786." *Portuguese Studies Review*. Vol. 5, Issue 2. (1996-97). 22-36.

Stone, Glyn A. "The Official British Attitude to the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance, 1910-45." *Journal of Contemporary History*. Vol. 10, No. 4 (Oct., 1975). 729-746.

Teixeira, Nuno Severiano. "A Fome e a Saudade: Os Prisioneiros Portugueses na Grande Guerra." *Penélope - Fazer e Desfazer a História*, No. 8, Lisbon, 1992. 91-114.

Vincent-Smith, J. D. "The Portuguese Republic and Britain, 1910-14." *Journal of Contemporary History*. Vol. 10, No. 4 (Oct., 1975). 707-727.

Unpublished Dissertations

Ribeiro, Jorge Manuel Martins. *Comércio e Diplomacia nas Relações Luso-Americanas*.
Porto, Universidade do Porto. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, 1997.

Websites

Figuras da Cultura Portuguesa, <http://cvc.instituto-camoes.pt/figuras/hcidade.html>.