

Shockley's Rockets

by Faron Bell



Early 1809, somewhere near the Spanish-Portuguese Border

Shockley paused to take a sip from his water bottle. The pre-dawn air had quite a bite to it, but he had worked up a sweat marching across the broken terrain with his ad hoc force. *That Major Logan always saddles me with the leftovers from camp. Why do I always draw the absolute worst missions and are given only the camp dregs to carry them out?*

"Rodrigo?" Shockley shouted.

"Yes, Tenente?"

"How much longer until we reach the bloody fort?"

"About an hour, Sir." Rodrigo said nervously. He knew that Shockley was unhappy with their progress or, rather, lack of.

"Damn." Shockley softly cursed under his breath. *These Portuguese recruits are going to be the death of me yet. They may yet become fine troops, IF I can keep them and their Lieutenant alive long enough to train the bloody lot.* The ragtag column trudged onward. Somewhere in the blackness of a cool Peninsular evening lay an old Spanish fortress. That was the goal and destination of the early morning march.

The day before, Major Logan, had pulled Shockley and his Sergeant, Patterson, aside and described his latest mission.

"Shockley, 'ole boy, I have another mission for you and your chosen men. I need to place a garrison at the Castell de St. Pequena. The French are organizing an invasion that may commence at any time. I must have some eyes and ears near the border, for I must know what the French are up to!" Logan pointed out the small fortress on a large map spread out across a table.

Shockley thought to himself, *Just what I bloody well need, another mission!*

Guessing Shockley's thoughts, Logan continued, "I'll tell you what Lieutenant, I'll send some of our best troops to go along with you and your chosen men. Take Ensign Mallory's Platoon and....hmmm....let me see....err...uhh...oh yes, and Rodrigo's Portuguese detachment. They're fine fellows!"

Shockley rolled his eyes. *Great, I'll get to wet nurse yet another collection of misfits and raw recruits. Why in King George's name, they don't give me a proper command, I will never know. By Jove, I've earned it.*

By the time Logan was finished explaining the details of the mission, Shockley persuaded him to detach a troupe of Hussars from Belmont's Squadron so that he could have some "eyes" of his own. Logan was hesitant to do so, but he had a certain fondness for Shockley and was not totally unsympathetic to his plight.

"Oh and Shockley, err...uh...take Lieutenant Trotter's Rocket Battery with you as well. You could use some artillery, just in case!" Logan added.

"Sir, I hardly think..."

"Never mind what you think, Shockley. Take the damn rockets and be off with yourself." Logan barked. Shockley knew when he had pushed the good Major to the edge, and this was happening quite often lately. *Rockets*, he thought, *Bloody well useless! What in Heavens name do I need with rockets...* He mused to himself as Logan bid the Riflemen a good day and excused himself.

"Sergeant Patterson?" Shockley blurted.

"Yes, Sir!" Patterson snapped.

"Ready the Rifles. We're on the move again. Take the men and move up towards this old castle...err...uh...fort." He pointed to Logan's map. "You should be able to make it by midnight, with a hard march." he continued, "I doubt I can get the rest of this rabble and especially those bloody useless rockets on the move before dark. With a bit of luck, we may catch up to you by daybreak."

"Yes, Sir" Patterson eagerly replied. Shockley was a hero to the Riflemen. They had been through many a scrap with him and he had brought them back alive in every case. Well, most everyone, anyway.

"Oh, and Patterson?"

"Yes, Lieutenant?"

"Take Margarita with you and drop her off at Villabuena." She has been wanting to visit her mother and this will be a prime opportunity to make sure she arrives safely."

"I'll guard her with me life!" Patterson said sincerely.

Within a few minutes, Patterson had readied the Riflemen and set off for St. Pequena. He gave his best girl, Margarita, a kiss on the cheek and bid her farewell. Shockley watched as they disappeared over a gentle hill in the distance. *Well, at least Margarita is safe, he thought to himself, I'll not rest well until we are reunited...*

Later, as dawn broke on the following day, a French officer adjusted his eye glass.

"Je n'y crois pas!" Lieutenant Goodenot barks out as he surveys the old Fort in the dim pre-dawn light. "That Shockley, he has beated me to the old Spanish fort! Once again he is threatening to spoil my plans. Guischard, ready your Grenadiers! We have a fortress to storm!" he hesitated for a moment, "Mon Dieu, but what is this? A girl in the fortress? She almost looks like...err...uh...yes...yes... I can't believe it...Margarita is with the fortress garrison!" A smile flickered across his lips, "If only I can beat Shockley to the prize!"

British Briefing

Shockley arrives at Castell de St. Pequeña in the early morning hours. His men are tired but encouraged due to his charismatic urgings. Much to Shockley's dismay, however, he begins to pick out the telltale signs of an enemy force nearby. The French have arrived in the pre-dawn hours and seem to be assembling for an assault on the fort. He makes out his riflemen atop the fortress walls. Good! At least his Riflemen are in place. Now, if he can only motivate these Portuguese recruits to put up a good fight. And better yet, if he can get Trotter's Rocket Battery set up on that hill off to the left....

The main British objective is to hold the fort at all cost (1VP). Lieutenant Trotter is also interested in proving the worth of his rockets. If he can cause a casualty to the French Artillery Battery before losing one of his own men to canon fire, he will have proved his worth (1VP). Young Ensign Mallory has not had confession in quite sometime. If he can move to the Church, come into base contact with the door (simulating entry) and achieve a "Task=12," then he will feel much better about his spiritual state (1 VP). Causing more damage to the French forces than received is also desirable (1 VP).

Characters and Forces:

Overall British Force is considered "Good."

Lieutenant Shockley: Status III; Charismatic; Handsome; Strapping Fellow; Accomplished Swordsman; Shockley may influence any groups on his side for he is the overall commander and inspirational to all he commands. He leads a group of twelve Riflemen; Elite with Baker Rifles.

Lieutenant Trotter: Status I; Average Stamp; Leads a Heavy Rocket Battery (single Rocket model) with five Crew. He may only influence his own men.

Tenente Rodrigo: Status I; Average Stamp; Rodrigo leads two groups, each of twelve Portuguese Line Infantry; Regular with muskets. He may only influence the Portuguese Infantry under his command.

Ensign Mallory: Status II; Average Stamp; Mallory leads two groups, each of twelve British Center Company Line Troops; Good with muskets.

Lieutenant Belmont: Status II; Average Stamp; Accomplished Horseman; Belmont leads a group of six Hussars; Elite with Carbines.

French Briefing

Goodenot has been ordered to take the Spanish Fort. Soult considers the area to be valuable for staging his troops for the upcoming invasion of Portugal. To accomplish this, Goodenot has a hastily formed force of Line troops supported by a platoon of Voltigeurs, a group of Mounted Dragoons and also Guischart's Grenadiers.

Guischart is a Pioneer Sergeant-Chef and packs demolition charges to blow the main fortress gate. If he can come into base contact with the gate and achieve a Task roll of 12, the explosives will be assumed to be planted and will destroy the main gate on the next Tiffin card (1VP). The Grenadiers are equipped with six scaling ladders. For every two Grenadiers that are killed or lost, remove one scaling ladder.

The main French Objective is to take the fort (1VP). If Goodenot can manage to come in to base contact with Margarita (she is considered engaged to Shockley) and seduce her, then he will consider this a personal victory (1VP). Sergeant Delafloate has a personal oath to fulfill. He has sworn to plant a rose on the grave of a mysterious Spanish young lady buried within the cemetery. To achieve this, he must achieve a Task roll of 12 which will denote him placing the rose and kneeling for prayer (1VP). Causing more damage to the British forces than received is also desirable (1 VP).

Characters and Forces:

Overall French Force is considered "Good."

Lieutenant Goodenot: Status III; Charismatic; Handsome; Strapping Fellow; Accomplished Swordsman; Goodenot leads two groups, each of twelve French Line Fusiliers; Good with Muskets. He also commands a 6 pounder gun, though it is placed a fair distance from his position.

Sgt.-Chef Guischart: Status II; Strapping Fellow; Pioneer with special demolition ability (see above); Guischart leads twelve Grenadiers; Elite, Aggressive with muskets and six scaling ladders.

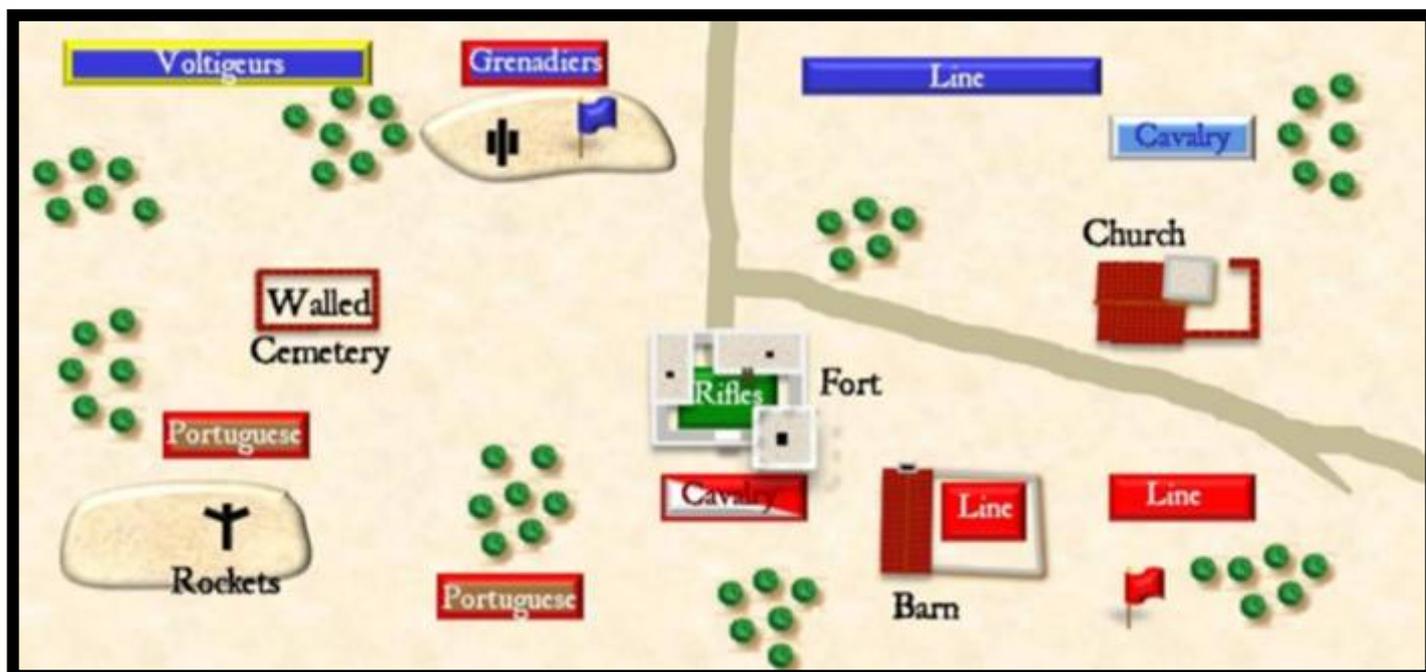
Lieutenant Bontecou: Status II; Average Stamp; Accomplished Horseman; Bontecou leads six Mounted Dragoons; Good with carbines.

Sergeant Delafloate: Status I; Average Stamp; Delafloate commands two groups, each of twelve Voltigeurs; Good with muskets.

Umpire's Notes

The Game Map is set up and forces deployed prior to the scenario start. If the Umpire is to play, then he/she should play the French side. The Game is designed for a 4 hour "session" and should be played accordingly. Blinds may or may not be used as per the desire of the group or Umpire.

The British player should not be told of Margarita's presence, but he will probably notice her model within the course of the game. If asked, the Umpire may reveal that Margarita elected to accompany Patterson (forced him, actually) so that she could join Shockley at the Fortress after discovering that her dear Mother had fled Villabuena. Shockley should adjust his plans accordingly to protect her.



Victory Conditions:

Whichever side obtains the most Victory Points by game's end will win the game. The game ends after four hours of play.

British Objectives:

- British are awarded 1VP if the French have more groups routed and/or swept from the field at games end.
- The British are awarded 1 VP for "Control" of the fort.
- If Shockley ends the game in base contact with Margarita, the British score 1 VP.
- If Trotter's Rocket Battery can cause a casualty to the French Artillery Battery before loosing one of his own men to canon fire, the British score 1 VP.
- If the British capture the French Colors they are awarded 1 VP.
- If Young Ensign Mallory manages a "Confession," then the British are awarded 1 VP.

French Objectives:

- French are awarded 1 VP if the British have more groups routed and/or swept from the field at games end.
- If Goodenot achieves a net "12" result in a "Affaire de Coeur, the French "score" 1 VP.
- The French are awarded 1 VP for "Control" of the fort.
- If Sergent Delaflote plants his Rose within the cemetery walls by game's end, the French are awarded 1 VP.

- If the French capture the British Colors they are awarded 1 VP.
- If Guischart blows the main gates of the Spanish Fort they are awarded 1 VP.

Sharp Practice Deck: Add all the named Big Men detailed above, the Sharp Practice Card, Tiffin Card, 2 x Grasp the Nettle I, 1 x Grasp the Nettle II, 1 x Grasp the Nettle III cards for each side. Rodrigo may use the British "Nettle" cards.

Bonus Deck: Add Three Thin Red Line Cards, One Tally Ho! Card, One Fighting Cocks Card, Three Pas de Charge and Three Hop To It cards to the Bonus Game Deck. The French may randomly draw three bonus cards from the deck at game start. The British hold no bonus cards at the start of the scenario.

Special Rules:

- **British Colors:** Any British Big Man within 12" of their side's Colors may use an extra initiative for being inspired.
- **Cover:** Due to the poor condition of the walls, etc., all cover except the Fortress (walls, woods, etc.) is considered soft/light (-50% to firers dice). All walls are low. The Fortress is considered hard/heavy cover (-75% to firers dice).
- **Terrain Penalties:** All terrain is mild (forest, slopes, etc.) and costs -1 pip to each movement die.
- **Obstacles:** Walls, etc. cost 1d to cross.
- See Ladder rules for scaling the Fortress walls. The Grenadiers are equipped with 6 scaling ladders. For every two Grenadiers that are killed or lost, remove 1 scaling ladder.
- "Control" of the fort is defined as no enemy troops located within the fortress walls at game's end.
- **Guischart:** is a Pioneer Sergeant-Chef and packs demolition charges to blow the main fortress gate. If he can come into base contact w/ the gate and achieve a "Task=12," the explosives will assumed to be planted and will destroy the main gate on the next Tiffin card.
- **Young Ensign Mallory** has not had confession in quite some time. If he can move to the Church, come into base contact with the door (simulating entry) and achieve a Task roll of 12, then he will feel much better about his spiritual state (1 VP).
- **Margarita:** If Goodenot can achieve a net "12" result in a "Affaire de Coeur," then he wins a VP. He must come into base contact with Margarita before he may make an attempt. She is placed within the fort before game start and may not move, once placed, until Shockley comes into base contact, whereupon she may move with Shockley. The British score 1 VP at games end if Shockley ends up with her in base contact.

If you have enjoyed this scenario, why not visit Faron's blog to read more of Shockley's exploits.

<http://basilhare.wordpress.com/>

Sharp
Practice