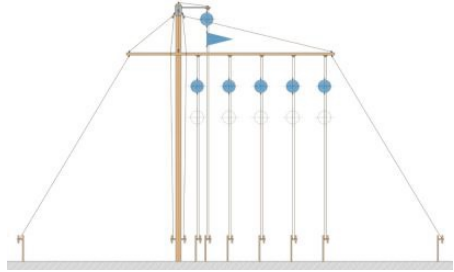
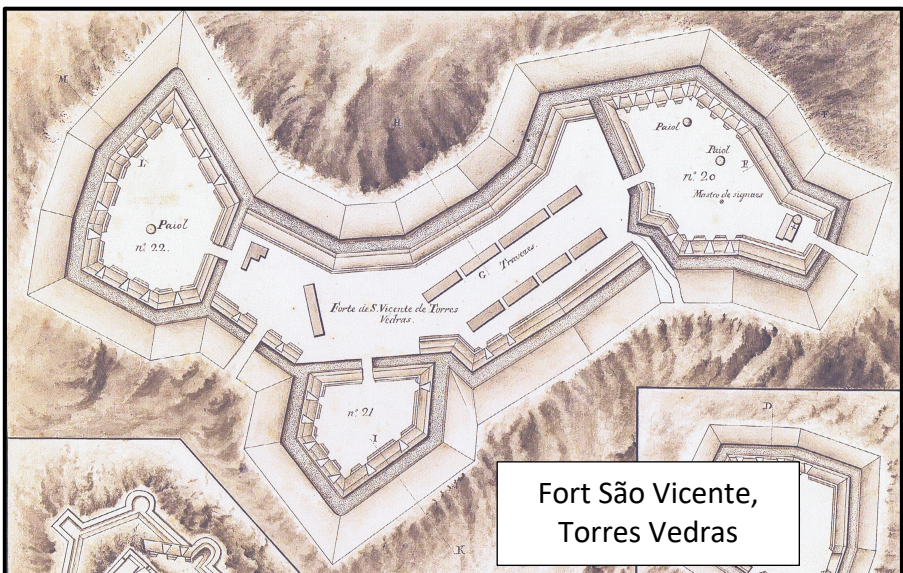


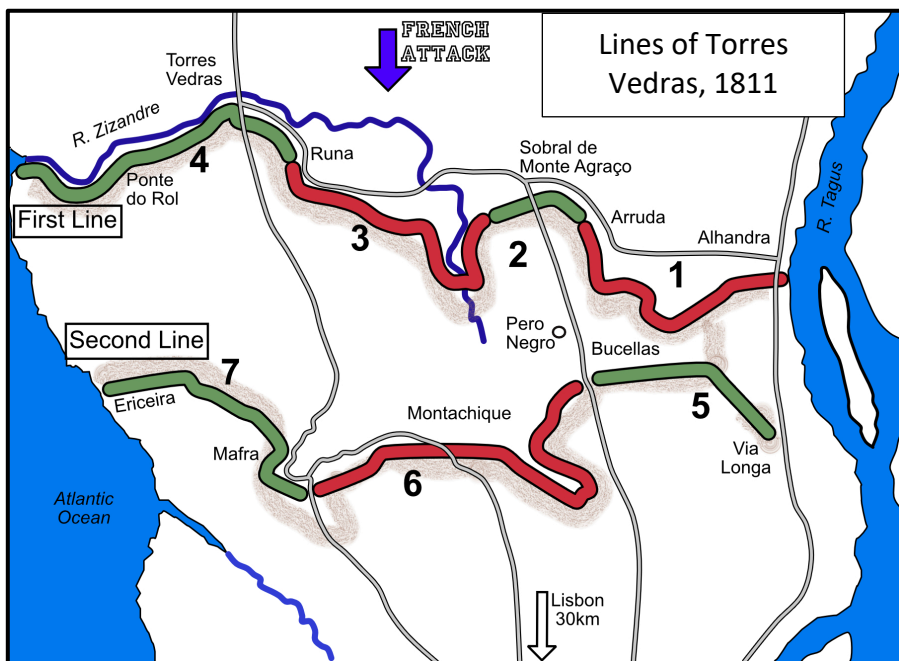
The Friends of the Lines of Torres Vedras



A brief history of the Lines

The Lines of Torres Vedras were built to defend the Portuguese Capital City, Lisbon, during the Peninsular War, 1807-1814. The allied army under the future Duke of Wellington needed a secure base where he could stand if the French concentrated their larger forces against him. There was nowhere else in Portugal where Wellington believed he could do this. The Duke ordered their construction in October 1809 and they were ready to use in October 1810 when the Allied army entered the Lines, followed by the invading French army under Marshal Masséna. The French realised the Lines were too strong, but, remained in front of them until March 1811, when starvation left them with no alternative other than retreat. The French never threatened the Lines again.





The lines of Torres Vedras are not a continuous set of fortifications, but a number of separate forts with interlocking fields of fire, supported by other natural and man-made obstacles such as hills, scarps, abbatis, rivers and dams. There were three primary lines north of the Tagus. The first line was originally intended to consist of a number of strong points to delay the French advance, the main fortifications being at Torres Vedras and Sobral. This was later converted into a full defensive line stretching from the Atlantic to the Tagus. The second line was initially planned to be the main defensive line but was never attacked as the French were stopped by the first line. The third line was built to protect the embarkation point at St Julian. Later, a fourth line was constructed to the south of the Tagus to stop any French attempt to disturb the maritime traffic on the Tagus.

Although the French never returned after March 1811, work continued on maintaining and enhancing the defences. By 1812 over 150 forts were in existence which required over 700 guns and 35,000 troops when fully occupied. Whilst many of the defences were earthworks, the larger ones were stone faced and formidable. Over 100 forts still exist.

The Friends of the Lines of Torres Vedras

The *Friends of the Lines of Torres Vedras* were formed following a Parliamentary visit to Portugal in July 2009 and a reception at the Palace of Westminster in January 2010. The group is open to anyone with an interest in the Lines of Torres Vedras.

The aims of the Friends of the Lines of Torres Vedras are:

1. *To support Portuguese institutions and local authorities in maintaining, enhancing and explaining the physical infrastructure of the Lines.*
2. *To encourage British interest in the Lines of Torres Vedras and awareness of the contemporary developments.*
3. *To raise funds in support of these objectives.*
4. *To collaborate with Portuguese and British-based organisations, civil and military, in achieving these objectives.*

Over the last few years, there has been substantial work done by the Portuguese municipalities to preserve the Lines, but there is still much work to do. The 'Friends' maintain links between interested parties in Portugal and the United Kingdom.



By becoming a member, you will be contributing to these aims. You will receive an update, at least annually, on the progress of the project and the work of the Friends. We would welcome offers to join the committee and help with this work. Membership is only £20 annually and can be paid by Standing Order.

The Friends intend to hold at least two events each year. These include conferences, visits and dinners. On alternate years we will try to organise a trip to The Lines.

A comprehensive website is maintained which has information on every fort on the lines, including photographs for those that still exist. Other relevant information is also available as well as up-to-date news items.

For more details, or to join, please contact us through our website or Facebook page.

Website : www.f-ltv.co.uk

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/groups/293029624070745/>

Or search for us: Friends of the Lines of Torres Vedras.

