

**HAMILTON'S CAMPAIGN
WITH MOORE AND
WELLINGTON DURING
THE PENINSULAR WAR**

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Hamilton's Campaign with Moore and Wellington During the Peninsular War by Anthony Hamilton

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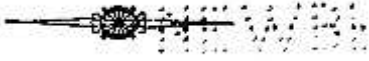
ANTHONY HAMILTON

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HAMILTON'S CAMPAIGN

WITH MOORE AND WELLINGTON.

At the request of a large circle of acquaintances and friends, as well as from my own choice, I offer to my numerous readers (as I hope they may be) a brief and unvarnished account of my humble life and adventures.

I was born on the 1st of January, 1779, in the town and parish of Raphoe, County of Donegal, in the North of Ireland.

My parents were much respected and were descendants of some of the first and best families that early settled in that part of the Island.

On my father's side I was a protestant, and on the part of my mother a catholic; suffice to say, the whole family went with mother to the mass, which left me a Roman Catholic.

My father had a good freehold property and was well to live; he died when I was quite young, which deprived me of the means of an early edu-

cation. I was bound out to a trade, but soon ran away and went to Strabane in the county of Tyrone, where I enlisted in the 43d Light Infantry, with Lieut. Pollock, who was afterwards wounded in the siege of Badajos.

We sailed from Warren's Point, recruits and all, to Liverpool and went by the way of London, to Kent.

We next sailed with an expedition from Hive Barracks in Kent, to Copenhagen, in order to punish Denmark for going into an alliance with France. We bombarded Copenhagen—the fleet by water and the army by land. In this affair, I was in the Light Brigade. We built sand-bank batteries, drove in the advance piquet guards of the Danish army, and captured the Danish fleet. The consequence was, Denmark paid a heavy ransom to England to withdraw their armament.

We returned to England, and lay for a short time in Barracks at Malden, in Essex.

Soon after the opening of the first campaign of the British army destined for the Peninsula, we sailed for Portugal and landed at Mondego Bay. Previous to the landing of our division, Sir Arthur Wellesley, now the Duke of Wellington, left Cork, Ireland, July 12th, 1808, with an army of 12,000 men, and landed at Mondego Bay, on the 1st of August. I was not present in this first engagement, but will give the details as received from the most authentic and reliable sources.

BATTLE OF ROLICA.

On the 9th of August, the advanced guard of the army moved onward from the Mondego, by the way of Leiria, and on the 14th entered Alcobaca, from which the enemy had retired on the preceding night, and on the following day moved forward towards Caldas. At Brilos, a village in the neighborhood the first blood was shed. The post was attacked by some companies of riflemen of the 60th and 95th regiments, who carried it with trifling resistance on the part of the enemy, whom they incautiously pursued for several miles. The detachment however was in turn attacked by a superior force which endeavoured to cut off their retreat ; and it was only by the prompt assistance of General Spencer that this object was defeated. The loss of the British was 26 killed.

On the same day the army reached Caldas, and the advance, under Brigadier Gen. Fane, moved on to Obidos, and drove the enemy's piquets from the town. Gen. Delaborde, in the meantime, had retired to a position in front of Rolica. The heights on which this village is situated form the boundary of a valley commencing at Caldas and about three leagues in extent.

Nearly in the centre stand the town and old Moorish fort of Obidos ; and every favourable post on the high ground, on either side of the valley

was occupied by detachments of the French army. The main body was posted on a plain, which overlooked the valley as far as Obidos.

On the morning of the 17th August, Sir Arthur Wellesley advanced to the attack. Columns were sent out on either flank; and on the approach of these, Delaborde, without offering resistance, fell back to the heights of Rolica, where he again placed his army in position.

The ground thus occupied was strong; and having been closely reconnoitered by Sir Arthur Wellesley, he made immediate preparation for attack. His army with this view was formed into three columns.

The right, consisting of twelve hundred Portuguese infantry, and fifty Portuguese cavalry, was intended to turn the left flank of the position, and penetrate into the mountains in the rear. The left consisting of Major General Ferguson's and Brigadier General Bowes' brigades of infantry, three companies of riflemen, and about forty cavalry, British and Portuguese, was destined under command of General Ferguson, to ascend the hills at Obidos, in order to turn the posts which the enemy still held on the left of the valley, as well as the right of his position at Rolica. The centre column, commanded by Sir Arthur in person, and consisting of Major General Hill's, Brigadier General Nightingale's, Crawford's and Fane's brigades, with four thousand Portuguese light in-

fantry, and the main body of the British and Portuguese cavalry, was ordered to assemble in the plain, and attack the front of the position.

Such was the order of the attack. It was morning and a calm and quiet beauty seemed to linger on the scene of the impending conflict. The heights of Rolica, though steep and difficult of access possessed few of the sterner and more imposing features of mountain scenery. The heat and droughts of summer had deprived them of much of that brightness of verdure which is common in a colder and more variable climate. Here and there the face of the heights was indented by deep ravines, worn by the winter torrents, the precipitous banks of which were occasionally covered with wood; and below, extended groves of the cork tree and olive; while Obidos, with its ancient walls and fortress, and stupendous aqueduct, rose in the middle distance. To the east the prospect was terminated by the lofty summit of the Monte Junto, and on the west by the Atlantic.

As the centre column commenced its advance towards the steep acclivity in front, the enemy gave no demonstration of hostility; and all was still and peaceful, as when the goat-herd tended his flock on the hilly pastures, and the peasant went forth to his labours, carolling his matin song in the sunrise. Such was the scene about to be consecrated in the eyes of posterity by the first