

# The Spanish Civil War 1936–39 (1)

## Nationalist Forces



Men-at-Arms . 495

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# The Spanish Civil War 1936–39 (1) Nationalist Forces



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# THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR 1936–39

## (1) NATIONALIST FORCES

### INTRODUCTION

**T**he Spanish Civil War was the curtain-raiser to World War II, and the major focus of international attention in Europe in the late 1930s. It was fought between the rebel Nationalist army led by Gen Francisco Franco ('right wing', and aided by Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and some foreign volunteers from conservative countries), and the army of the Spanish Republican government ('left wing', and aided by the Communist Soviet Union and many volunteers from liberal democracies).

The war involved the most modern weapons then available – particularly aircraft, both operating in direct support of ground forces and bombing enemy-held towns. Like all civil wars, it was fought

ferociously by both sides and caused immense suffering to civilians. From a Spanish population of about 24 million, at least 500,000 people died in this bitter war of attrition and in the repression that followed it. When the Nationalists secured victory they installed a dictatorship that lasted from April 1939 until November 1975 – the last such regime in Western Europe.

The Nationalist forces were varied in origin. Their spearhead was provided by the colonial army brought over from Spanish Morocco, and, apart from sympathizers within the pre-war regular army who joined the 1936 rebellion, troops raised in Spain thereafter by voluntary enlistment and conscription reflected a number of distinct class, regional, political and religious traditions. It is incorrect to characterize them, with simplistic

**General Francisco Franco y Bahamonde** (see Plate A1). A former officer of *Regulares* in Morocco, in 1920 Franco was the original second-in-command of the Spanish Foreign Legion under LtCol José Millán Astray, and during the Rif War (1921–26) his personal courage, leadership and application to duty saw him rise from major to brigadier-general. Although he was the chief of staff under the 1933 CEDA-backed government, 'Pacquito' was not the original director of the UME's military rebellion in July 1936; however, he immediately seized the opportunity presented by his successful takeover of the Morocco garrison, the most formidable command in the Spanish Army. That October he became supreme commander of the disparate Nationalist forces, and by April 1937 he had welded the political Right into a unified movement under his own control. After his victory in the Civil War he became the longest-ruling dictator in modern European history. (AdeQ Historical Archives)





Colonel José Moscardó e Ituarte became famous for his command in summer 1936 of the Nationalist defenders of the besieged Alcázar fortress in Republican-held Toledo, refusing to surrender even to save his own son from execution. Franco ordered the 'Madrid Column' led by Col Yagüe to divert from their objective to relieve the Alcázar garrison, for reasons of public opinion; when Yagüe reportedly objected he was replaced 'for health reasons' with Gen Varela. (AdeQHA)



hindsight, as conscious agents of international fascism: for the huge majority the war was an entirely local cause, and very many saw it as a Catholic crusade.

Osprey has published separate titles on a number of specific subjects relating to the Spanish Civil War (see listing on inside back cover). For reasons of space, this volume is limited to an overview of the components that made up the Nationalist forces, as a primer for those wishing to delve more deeply into the subject.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1936:**
- February–July** Popular Front victory in general election is followed by widespread civil unrest and violence.
- 17–19 July** Military coups are attempted in Morocco and all over Spain, but are defeated in Madrid, Barcelona and other cities, thus making civil war inevitable.
- 27 July** At request of Gen Franco, commanding the Army of Africa, German and Italian aircraft join airlift (**begun on 20th**) of Nationalist troops from Morocco to southern Spain.
- 6 August** First German combat aircraft and personnel arrive in Spain.
- 14 August** Nationalist troops from Africa under LtCol Yagüe capture Badajoz.
- 16 August** Republican landing in Majorca, Balearic Islands, in unsuccessful attempt to put down rebellion by garrison; Italian aircraft support Nationalist counterattacks.
- 13 September** Nationalists take San Sebastian, having secured most of northern and western Spain for the rebels.
- 24 September** Nationalists divert troops south-eastwards from march on Madrid to relieve besieged garrison of the Alcázar in Toledo (**accomplished on 27th**).
- 1 October** Gen Franco named as *Generalísimo y Jefe de Estado* – Nationalist military commander-in-chief and head of government.
- 7 October** First German armoured troops arrive in Spain.
- 30 October** Official creation of German 'Condor Legion'.
- 23 November** After hard fighting in outskirts against Republicans with Soviet armour and International Brigade support, Nationalists abandon attempt to take Madrid.
- December** Nationalist offensives north-west of Madrid, and in south from to expand territory in Andalucía. First 3,000 Italian ground troops land at Cádiz (**23rd**).
- 1937:**
- 6–27 February** Battle of the Jarama river: Nationalist offensive south-east of Madrid, with mostly Africa Army troops, ends in stalemate. In Andalucía, Nationalists and



- March** Italians take Málaga (8<sup>th</sup>). Official creation of Italian *Corpo Truppe Volontarie* (17<sup>th</sup>). Republicans repel Nationalist/Italian advance on Guadalajara, north-east of Madrid.
- April** Franco unites Nationalists, neo-fascist Falangists and monarchist Carlists into a single political *Movimiento Nacional* and army under his control.
- May** Nationalist advances on north-coast ports of Santander and Bilbao.
- 19 June** Bilbao surrenders to Nationalists.
- 6–24 July** Republican offensive at Brunete, west of Madrid; advance halted and driven back by Nationalist reinforcements withdrawn from northern front.
- 24 August** Republican offensive north-east of Madrid opens at Belchite, south of Saragossa.
- 26 August** In Asturias, Nationalists take Santander.
- 6 September** Republicans take Belchite, but advance ends in stalemate.

**Map showing basic outlines of Republican and Nationalist territories in summer 1936 and summer 1938. Note that spelling of some placenames is anglicized. (Map by John Richards)**



A typical portrait of a Nationalist field officer posing in summer everyday uniform of a khaki shirt and olive trousers; note the typically wide cut of the collar. On his left breast the three 8-point gold stars of colonel are displayed on a 'galeta' of red Infantry branch-of-service colour. This officer is Heli Rolando de Tella y Cantos, who began the Civil War as a major and ended it as a brigadier-general; his decorations included a Military Merit Medal awarded in 1923 for service in Morocco, and the prestigious San Fernando Cross. In September 1936 Tella led a column (*l Tabor/Regulares de Tetuán, l Bandera/Tercio*, plus a *Guardia Civil* company) to Madrid. Wounded in the winter fighting for the University City, he was promoted general in April 1938, and held commands during the Ebro and Catalonia campaigns. (AdeQHA)

21 October

December

1938:

7 January

22 February

9 March

April

July

25 July

6 August–

16 November

23 December

1939:

January

February

28 March

1 April

On Asturias front, Nationalists take last Republican stronghold of Gijón.

Republicans launch offensive against Nationalist salient at Teruel, east of Madrid (**14th**). Nationalist counter-offensive ends in stalemate in harsh winter conditions.

Republican troops capture remaining Nationalist positions in Teruel, but are themselves encircled. Nationalists retake Teruel.

In Aragón, Franco launches major offensive eastwards towards Mediterranean coast, to cut off Catalonia from Valencia and southern Republican territory.

Nationalists take Lerida (**3rd**); reach Mediterranean at Vinaroz (**15th**), and fan out over 30 miles of coastline. Nationalist drive on Valencia fails at cost of c.17,500 casualties.

Republican Army of the Ebro, with c.120,000 men in Catalonia, launches offensive southwards across Ebro river to cut Nationalist corridor and link up with Valencia. Some units advance 25 miles, but all are soon halted and forced to dig in.

In prolonged, costly fighting (41,400 Nationalist casualties, to 70,000 Republican), Franco's reinforced corps eventually force the Republicans back across the Ebro. Franco can now concentrate on the Republican capitals: Barcelona and Madrid.

Franco launches Catalonia offensive on the Rio Segre.

Nationalists capture Tarragona (**7th**), and enter undefended Barcelona (**27th**).

Republican leaders flee to France (**6th**); Nationalists reach French frontier (**9th**). Internecine Republican faction-fighting in Madrid (**23 February–13 March**). Britain and France recognize Franco's government (**27th**).

Nationalist troops enter Madrid.

Nationalist troops enter Valencia; Franco declares end of war.

## BACKGROUND TO REBELLION

The Second Spanish Republic was proclaimed on 14 April 1931. King Alfonso XIII had forced the military dictator Gen Miguel Primo de Rivera to resign after seven years in power, but when nationwide municipal elections revealed the strength of the parties of the Left in the cities the king chose to flee the country. The mass electorate's expectations for social reforms, land redistribution and regional devolution went far beyond the realistic abilities of the new Republican government, which inherited a bankrupt and politically polarized state



without functioning democratic institutions. In pursuit of many social and regional agendas, different interest groups formed a political spectrum stretching from the extreme Right to the extreme Left and a powerful Anarchist movement, and in an atmosphere of deep uncertainty these factional hatreds could spark murderous violence.

In January 1932 a number of Army officers led by Gen José Sanjurjo tried to overthrow the government of Prime Minister Manuel Azaña, but the bulk of the armed forces remained obedient. However, a new political party was formed: the Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas (Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right-wing Groups, CEDA). This presented itself as the protector of religion, family, and property rights against the radical ambitions of the Left. In 1933 the CEDA won a general election, and put a brake on popular reforms.

There were other forces further to the Right, though with conflicting ideologies. The ultra-traditionalist, Catholic, monarchist Carlists were a century-old movement that enjoyed a strong revival, particularly but not exclusively in the province of Navarre. In October 1933 José Antonio Primo de Rivera, son of the former dictator, founded the Falange Española movement; with a programme similar to that of the Italian Fascists, this party was basically anti-clerical and anti-monarchist. At the other political extreme, in October 1934 the 'Asturias Revolution' saw the murder by rabidly anti-clerical Leftists of 37 priests, monks and seminarians and the destruction of 58 churches – actions that many conservatives interpreted as the beginning of a widespread 'Red terror'.

In elections of February 1936 the CEDA-backed government was narrowly defeated by a Popular Front of Leftist parties, within which moderate Republicans had responsibility but little control. Left-wing and Anarchist trade unions staged widespread strikes, and in Catalonia the Marxist and Anarchist groups competed for power. Poverty-stricken rural peasants seized land from wealthy estate-owners, and many churches were burned down with impunity. The Falange was banned and its leader José Antonio Primo de Rivera was arrested (still in prison at the time of the July rebellion, he was nevertheless charged with conspiracy and insurrection, and executed on 20 November). In the ensuing atmosphere of crisis, on 13 July a leading right-wing politician, José Calvo Sotelo, was assassinated by government Assault Guards. Both Carlists and Falangists then put their hopes and resources behind a conspiracy by the Unión Militar Española (Spanish Military Union, UME), founded in 1933, to instal a military dictatorship.

On 17–18 July senior officers led mutinies in all the main Spanish garrison towns, with varying degrees of success. Many were arrested and shot, but in the north Gen Emilio Mola raised Navarre, to be followed by most of Aragón, Old Castile, Alava, León and Galicia, and in the far south Gen Queipo de Llano led garrisons in western Andalucía in revolt. General Franco, who had been sidelined by an appointment as commander in the Canary Islands, quickly flew to Spanish Morocco. At Tetuán on 19 July he overthrew the civil authorities of the protectorate, and after a number of judicious executions the great majority of the officers and troops rallied to him.



**A German war correspondent interviewing two Spanish soldiers wearing the regulation dress of 'gorrillo', 'guerrera' and 'granaderos'. From the outset, Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy were determined to support the Nationalist rising in Spain. The Catholic aspect of the struggle was irrelevant to Berlin and Rome, but they shared some ideological beliefs with the UME leadership, being united in their hostility to Communism – especially after the USSR intervened heavily in support of the Republic. For all three interventionist powers Spain provided testing-grounds for their personnel, weaponry and tactics, particularly in the contexts of air and armoured warfare. In 1939 a total of nearly 18,000 German military personnel of all three services would be awarded a new German decoration, the Spanish Cross with Swords, for active service during the Civil War. (AdeQHA)**

Brown-uniformed members of the German Condor Legion photographed fraternizing with the family of a city policeman of the *Cuerpo de Seguridad y Asalto*. The child is dressed in the uniform of the Falange party. About one-third of the urban police sided with the Nationalists in 1936. (AdeQHA)



The generals' July *coup d'état* provoked furious reprisals against the Church by extreme Leftists; by mid-September some 3,400 clerics, nuns and their followers had already been murdered by local loyalists and militias in the name of the Republic. Such atrocities by the 'Reds' greatly encouraged enlistment in the Nationalist ranks by devout Catholics, who regarded the cause as a crusade against the destruction of Catholicism in Spain. In the first three months some 60,000 volunteers flooded into Carlist and Falangist militia battalions, and volunteers additionally provided the equivalent of 25 newly raised regular Army battalions. Many of the foreign Catholic volunteers who came to Spain to fight for the Nationalists were also spurred by the anti-clerical outrages; others were simply inspired by a conservative political ideology that regarded Communism as an urgent worldwide threat.

The nominal figurehead of the rebellion, the exiled Gen Sanjurjo, had died in a plane crash on 20 July 1936, and on 1 October Gen Franco was named as Nationalist general-in-chief and head of state. He was supported by the Falange and the Carlist *Comunión Tradicionalista*, and in April 1937 he would unite the two parties to form a single movement under his own close control, known by the abbreviation 'FET y de las JONS'.

## THE NATIONAL ARMY

In 1936 the Spanish Army had two distinct components: the Peninsular Army and the Army of Africa. The Peninsular Army reportedly had some 8,500 officers and 112,000 enlisted men in service. The troops were conscripts, poorly trained and motivated, and on the outbreak of the Civil War more than 40,000 men were absent on leave (for shortage of resources to keep them embodied). The army was very weak in artillery, and had no modern armoured vehicles.



Estimates vary, but it seems that during the first week of the risings some 4,660 officers and 19,000 men of the Peninsular Army declared for the Nationalists, though large numbers of rebel officers were immediately executed or imprisoned by the Republicans. Of the other serving officers, around 2,000 actively supported the Popular Front government, with perhaps 30,000 of their troops. However, the spearhead of the rebellion was the Army of Africa – see below – which roughly doubled the numbers of troops available to the Nationalists. It is estimated that in the immediate aftermath of the rebellion the Nationalist troops on the ground were outnumbered by the Republican Army by a factor of about four to three, but by the time the Africa Army had arrived in Spain in the autumn they were of almost equal strength. The Nationalists could also rely upon perhaps another 30,000 armed police of the *Guardia Civil*, *Cuerpo de Seguridad* and *Carabineros*, and in the early weeks of the war many thousands of Falangists, Carlists and other right-wing political militiamen also joined the cause – though their integration into a coherent command structure took rather longer.

During the 1936 summer campaigns it was estimated that the rebels had about 100,000 men in northern Spain and 60,000 in the south. On 26 August 1936 the Nationalists introduced conscription, and as a result their total strength had increased to some 270,000 by March 1937 (by which date they also had the support of some 50,000 Italian ‘Blackshirt’ militiamen and regular troops). By the end of the war in April 1939 more than one million Spaniards were serving in the Nationalist forces: 840,000 infantry in 61 divisions, 15,300 cavalry, 19,000 artillery, and 119,000 in supporting units. The army had suffered about 70,000 killed and 300,000 wounded.

### Formation and unit organization

The pre-war Peninsular army’s divisional organization was regional, for local garrison duty rather than operations. In addition to separate *comandancias* in the Canary and Balearic islands, there were eight military regions headquartered at Corunna, Saragossa, Burgos, Valladolid, Seville, Valencia, Barcelona and Madrid, each with one infantry division, plus a cavalry division also based in Madrid. Peacetime ‘organic’ divisions had only two infantry regiments each of two battalions. Regular infantry units were numbered by battalion (often Roman numerals in Spanish sources) within regiment (a placename and an Arabic numeral). Rather as in the British Army, the regimental identity was traditional and administrative, and battalions of a single regiment seldom served together in the same tactical formation.

The Nationalist tactical formations were at first assembled on an *ad hoc* basis. For example, in the confusion of 1936 the ‘División Soria’, numbered 73, had three brigades totalling more than 20 infantry units or part-units. Of these, 12 were regular line battalions; but there were three *tercios* (regiments) of Carlist *requetés* militia, four *banderas* (battalions) and a *centuria* (company) of Falangist militia, two companies of what were simply termed ‘*milicias armadas*’, and one ‘*batallón mixta*’. The division also listed nearly 20 artillery batteries, two cavalry squadrons and nine engineer companies.

By contrast, at the Jarama in February 1937 Gen Luis Orgaz’s largely Moroccan force was termed the ‘Reinforced Division of Madrid’; his infantry comprised three battalions in reserve, and five numbered



A Spanish private soldier of the Peninsular Army wearing the standard olive-brown wool uniform and brown leather belt equipment used by both sides during the Civil War. The cap piping and tassel are Infantry red; the branch device is displayed both as brass collar badges and on his belt plate. (AdeQHA)



**General Eliseo Álvarez-Arenas served in various Civil War campaigns, including as commander during the defence of Vitoria in 1936, and was later appointed Captain-General of Saragossa. Here he wears the olive-brown 'guerrera' tunic of service dress; note the closed collar with long points bearing gilt Infantry branch badges, the Medal for Wounds, and a Falange membership badge on his breast pocket. (AdeQHA)**

brigades each of two regiments, the latter numbered in sequence from 1st to 10th. Each had two or three battalions of mixed origin: e.g. 5th Regt had I Bandera/ Tercio (Foreign Legion), something called Bn 'A' de Ceuta, and I Tabor/ Tiradores de Ifni. 9th Regiment comprised V Bandera/Tercio and a Bandera de Falange de Valladolid; while the 10th had II Tabor/ Regulares de Ceuta and the line unit 2nd Bn/ Regimiento de Toledo No.26. Of the 29 battalions, six were Spanish line, three of militia, and the rest were Moroccan or Legion.

After the confusion of the first nine months, from April 1937 the Nationalist-held territories of the pre-war organic divisions supported new army corps: e.g., the old 5th–8th Divs became respectively the Cuerpos de Ejército de Aragón, Navarra, Castilla and Galicia. Other corps would be created, and at different dates during the war regionally-titled corps might command varying numbers of divisions. A numbered division usually had 12 infantry battalions in three brigades, an artillery *grupo* with varying numbers of batteries, and divisional units including an anti-tank battery and a cavalry reconnaissance squadron.

Obviously, very many additional battalions were raised for the line infantry regiments. Already in 1936–37 we find high-numbered battalions listed for some regiments (several 8th or 9th Bns, and for Regt de San Quintin No.25 a 20th Battalion). From mid 1937 a change of system assigned to regiments further new battalions numbered in a single sequence throughout the infantry. Purely as a representative example of the complexity of unit identity and assignments: the Regt de Tenerife No.38 had 1, 2, 3 & 4 Bns, then Bns 281 (assigned to 85a División), 282 (40a Div), 284 (?) and 285 (74a Div). The intermediate-numbered Bns 283 and 286 were in fact II & IV Banderas of the Tiradores de Ifni from the Moroccan Sahara, both assigned to 54a División. The next line regiment, Regt de Canarias No.39, had 1 & 2 Bns, shipped to mainland Spain in September 1936 and May 1937 respectively; then four more units, all shipped in August 1937: Bns 287 (to 54a Div), 288 (52a Div), 290 (73a Div) and 291 (74a Div), while the intermediate Bn 289 was V Bandera /Tiradores de Ifni (in 54a División).

Battalions might be transferred from one division to another, and even from one regiment to another. For example, in 52a Div we find that in December 1937 Bn 136 was posted from Regt de Burgos No.31 to San Marcial No.22, and in October 1938 Bn 288 went from Regt de Tenerife No.38 to Canarias No.39. This 52a Div seems to have undergone several simultaneous cross-postings in March 1938, perhaps as a result of casualties: Bn 133 from Regt de San Quintin No.25 to San Marcial No.22; Bn 135 from Regt de Zamora No.29 to Bailen No.24; and Bn 141 from Regt de Granada No.6 to América No.23.

Peninsular, African and militia units continued to be gathered within the same field divisions. Again, simply as a representative example, we might note Gen de Brig Fernando Barron's famous 13a División 'Mano Negra' (see Plate D3a) of the Moroccan Army Corps. The original *Columna Barron* was formed on 16 September 1936 at Talavera de la Reina during the march on Madrid, with I Bandera/Tercio and I Tabor/ Regulares de Tetuán, later joined by I Tabor/Regs de Melilla. When it was raised to divisional status in April 1937, in the Army of the Centre reserve, it had I & V Banderas/Tercio, 1 Bn/Regt de Mérida No.35, 3 Bn/Regt de La Victoria No.28, and the Tabores de Ifni and Ifni-Sahara.

By the battle of the Ebro in July 1938 the division's infantry comprised: 1 Bn/Regt de Mérida No.35; 73 Bn/Regt de Toledo No.26; 3 Bn/Regt de La Victoria No.28; Tabor de Ifni-Sahara; I, V & VI Tabores/Regulares de Melilla; IV & VI Banderas/Foreign Legion; IV Bandera Falange de Castilla, Bn de Tiradores de Ifni, and 262 Bn/Cazadores de Ceuta (Moroccan light infantry).

Officially, infantry battalions (on both sides) had four rifle companies and a machine-gun company, but in practice many lacked either one of the rifle companies or the MG company, having only four companies in total. A rifle company had three platoons (*secciones*) each of three squads (*pelotones*). It was common practice to attach a platoon with two to four guns from the MG company to each rifle company, and some first-line units such as Foreign Legion battalions eventually had up to 16 machine guns. Alternatively, machine guns could also be gathered in 'batteries', often including the weapons from reserve units. (The pre-war army had had four dedicated MG battalions, organic to the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 7th Divisions.)

Cavalry regiments had (officially) four sabre squadrons and a mounted MG squadron. Where available, they might also have a support squadron with mortars, anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns. A cavalry *escuadrón* was the equivalent of an infantry *compañía* in firepower, though not in numbers; each sabre troop approximated a rifle platoon, each having three squads and a light machine gun. As with the infantry, squadrons from regiments were dispersed among different tactical formations.

### Order of battle

The Nationalist order of battle between spring 1937 and spring 1939 consisted largely of the following numbered divisions: 1-5, 11-23, 26, 31-34, 40, 50-58, 60-63, 71-75, 81-85, 102, 105, 107-108, 112, 122, 150-152 and 154 Divisiones del Ejército Nacional; plus 1 & 2 Divisiones de Caballería (mounted cavalry), and 1, 3, 4 & 5 Divisiones de Navarra (Carlists).



An officer displaying on his tunic collar the wreathed starburst device of the Quartermaster Corps or *Intendencia*. The brown uniform buttons might be of either leather or carved wood. As in all armies, the privately-tailored uniforms of officers varied considerably in minor details such as the cut of the collar and the pocket flaps. (AdeQHA)



Nationalist troops in regulation pre-war uniforms and M1926 steel helmets. In this case the use of riding boots (foreground) and knee-length leather leggings over ankle boots identifies them as soldiers from a mounted unit, though they carry infantry rifles and belt equipment. (AdeQHA)





**A crowd of soldiers from V Army Corps, Army of the Centre, wearing a variety of campaign dress. The headgear includes both the Adrian helmet and the Germanic-looking M1926. The pre-war helmet factory at Trubia which made the M1926 was only captured by the Nationalists late in 1937. They had two potential sources for Adrian helmets: French-supplied two-piece 1926 models captured from the Republicans, and Italian four-piece 1915 and two-piece 1926 models brought to Spain by the CTV. (AdeQHA)**

have three to five divisions at any one time; some were subsequently upgraded to the status of armies. In addition to army corps, there were also temporary formations termed 'groups of divisions'.

### NATIONALIST MILITIAS

Large numbers of volunteer militias were formed, and about 150 units, with a cumulative manpower of more than 260,000, are identified by Bueno (see 'Further Reading', ...*Guerra Civil Española*). Most were styled as battalions (*banderas*), some as regiments (*tercios*). However, some of the former are listed with higher manpower than some of the latter, presumably because they existed for longer and the rolls record total enlistments throughout the war. The lowest number of men listed for a bandera is 250, the highest 6,200. Most units were infantry, but a few are identified in other roles; e.g., Seville provided 1a and 2a Escuadrónes de Caballería, and there was a Tercio de Radio-Teléfonos de Campaña.

**Ejército del Sur (Army of the South)** Organized: 1 August 1936. Commander: Gen de Div Gonzalo Queipo de Llano Sierra. Battle honours included: Cierre de la Bolsa de la Serena, Peñarroya. Components at various dates:

II Cuerpo de Ejército (21–25, 60 Divs); III Cuerpo de Ejército (23, 24, 26 Divs). Reserve: 102 Div (October 1937); 112 Div (September 1937); 122 Div (24 May 1938); 60 Div (May 1938); plus 2 Div de Caballería (31 October 1938).

Bueno (see 'Further Reading', ...*Guerra Civil Española*) gives for 1939: Cuerpo de Ejército de Extramadura (21, 24, 60 Divs); C de E de Granada (32–34 Divs); C de E de Córdoba (22, 23, 31 Divs); C de E Marroquí (i.e. Moroccan – 12, 13, 105 Divs); C de E de Andalucía (40, 102, 112, 122 Divs); plus 2 Div de Caballería.

**Ejército del Norte (Army of the North)** Organized: 10 August 1936. Commanders: Gen de Brig Emilio Mola Vidal (killed 3 June 1937); Gen de Brig Fidel Dávila Arondo (from 4 June 1937). Battle honours included: Belchite, Brunete, Teruel, Alfambra, Aragón, Ebro, Levante, Cataluña. Components at various dates:

Cuerpo de Ejército Marroquí (1, 4, 5, 13, 15, 40, 50, 74, 82, 105, 108, 150 Divs); C de E de Aragón (40, 51, 53–55 Divs); C de E de Navarra (3, 61–63 Divs); C de E de Urgel (61–63, 150 Divs); C de E del Maestrazgo (1, 74, 82, 84 Divs); plus the Italian Corpo Truppe Volontarie of four divisions at its peak but progressively reduced (see below, 'Foreign Volunteers').

Bueno does not list an orbat for 1939, by which time this army's corps had all been transferred to the Armies of the South, Centre or 'Levant'.

**Ejército del Centro (Army of the Centre)** Organized: 3 June 1937. Commander: Gen de Div Andrés Saliet Zumeta. Battle honours included: Brunete. Components at various dates:

I Cuerpo de Ejército (71, 72, 74 Divs); Independent Brigade of la Ciudad Universitaria (11, 12, 14 Divs – 25 August 1937); Independent Sector of Talavera (11, 12, 14, 107 Divs – 5 November 1937; 16, 17, 18 Divs – 14 April 1938); V Cuerpo de Ejército; VII Cuerpo de Ejército (71–75 Divs; Brigada de Vanguardia, Brigada de Reserva).

Bueno lists for 1939: Cuerpo de Ejército de Madrid (16, 18, 20 Divs); C de E del Maestrazgo (1, 82, 84 Divs); C de E de Navarra (4, 5, 63 Divs, plus Italian CTV Div 'Littorio'); Italo-Spanish Divs 'Green Flames', 'Blue Flames', 'Black Flames'; C de E de Toledo (11, 14, 71, 74 Divs); Agrupación de Divs Somosierra (72 Div); Agrupación de Divs del Tajo (17, 19, 107 Divs); plus 1 Div de Caballería.

**Ejército de Levante ('the Levant' = Mediterranean coastal region)** Organized: 26 November 1938. Commander: Gen de Div Luis Orgaz Yoldi. Battle honours included: Teruel, Alfambra, Aragón, Levante. Components at various dates:

Cuerpo de Ejército de Castilla (5, 52, 54, 61, 81, 82, 85 Divs); C de E de Galicia (13, 41, 55, 82–84, 108, 150 Divs); Detachment of Communication.

Bueno lists for 1939: Cuerpo de Ejército de Galicia (55, 58, 83, 108 Divs); C de E de Castilla (3, 15, 31, 57, 81, 85, 152 Divs); C de E de Aragón (51, 53, 54 Divs); C de E de Urgel (61, 62, 150 Divs); Agrupación de Divs Albarracín (52, 56 Divs); and Agrupación de Divs Guadalajara (71, 75 Divs).

Most of the units listed by Bueno have simple regional or city designations (e.g. 1a–4a Banderas de León, 1a–5a Banderas de Cádiz, etc), and some were from the Spanish islands (e.g. 1a Bandera de Tenerife, 2a Bandera de Canarias, 1a & 3a Banderas de Las Palmas). Some have religious titles (e.g. Tercio Notra Señora del Camino, Tercio Cristo Rey, Tercio de San Miguel, etc), while others are specifically identified with the Falange or Carlist parties (e.g. 2a Centuria de Falange de Alava; 8a Compañía de Requetés de Alava).

Perhaps most interesting of all, in that they indicate the process of amalgamation of militias into the regular army in 1937, are units listed as, e.g., 1a Bandera de Burgos de la 73a Div; 2a Bandera de Burgos de la 74a Div; 3a Bandera de Burgos de la 3a Div de Navarra, etc. In all, Burgos militia units numbered 1bis, 5, 6 and 7 are all listed in the 62a División, a formation of the Cuerpo de Ejército de Urgel. Presumably the same process of absorption was army-wide.

### The Falange

In 1936 the Falangist militia was organized in a hierarchy of *tercios*, *banderas*, *centurias*, *falanges*, *escuadros*, *elementos* and *escuadristas*, each made up of three of the next smaller elements, and each with its *jefe* and *subjefe* identified by insignia of different numbers of white and red yokes or arrows. For the first nine months of the war this militia maintained a separate identity and command structure, even to the extent of directly requesting (and receiving) German instructors for its training academy.



Equipping the rapidly expanding Nationalist Army was a challenge, since the main pre-war infantry stores were in Republican-held Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, and the arms factories were in the northern Basque provinces. These troops are armed with German World War I-vintage Gewehr 98 rifles, of which the Wehrmacht had surplus stocks after adopting the shorter Kar 98k in 1935. (AdeQHA)



A Falangist unit photographed during the 1939 victory parade, wearing their characteristic blue shirts with khaki or olive Army trousers. These militiamen are from the northern or central provinces; in Navarre, Castile and Extremadura the Falangists preferred this black Basque-style beret (note the officers' rank stars) to the usual blue sidecap as illustrated in Plate E2. (AdeQHA)



**A battle-hardened Carlist infantryman, with a religious medal pinned to his uniform shirt; compare with Plate E3. Note the beret worn under his M1926 helmet; this seems to be red, but if he serves with the regular *Brigadas Navarras* it might be olive-brown. In 1926–30 the olive beret was the standard Army headgear before it was replaced with the sidecap; many were taken out of store and issued to Nationalist troops during the war, including the Navarrese brigades. This man has a typical rolled *capote-manta*, and apparently a water bottle hanging in front of his groin. Note the front-to-back depth of the cartridge boxes on his belt. The straight bolt handle sticking out from the right side of his slung rifle identifies it as the Spanish-made M1893 Mauser, since the shortened M1916 version had a down-turned handle. (AdeQHA)**

Franco put a sharp stop to this following his unification of the Nationalist movement in April 1937, and thereafter the Falangist units were absorbed into National Army formations (always as a small minority). The primary feature of their dress had been a blue sidecap trimmed either in white or red, and a blue military-cut shirt bearing on the left breast the red party badge of a splay of five arrows united by a horizontal yoke, and these continued to be widely worn with Nationalist Army uniform (see Plate E2). After the union with the Carlists in April 1937 the new political *Movimiento Nacional* was given a uniform combining the Falangist blue shirt and red yoke-and-arrows badge with the Carlists' traditional red beret.

### **The Carlists**

Carlism was a bellicose traditionalist political movement centred in but not limited to Navarre, which had long sought to establish on the Spanish throne a separate line of the Borbón royal family descended from the Infante Carlos (1788–1855). This avowedly anti-democratic movement gained many adherents after the establishment of the Second Republic; following the October 1934 Leftist rising in Asturias the Carlist militia, known as *requetés*, started to prepare seriously for civil war, and

despite a lack of weapons they were organized and trained efficiently with the help of sympathetic Army officers.

The Carlists had significant ideological differences with many of the leaders of the UME, and the July 1936 rebellion saw them siding with the Nationalist rebels uneasily and only at the last moment. It was only on 15 July that their leader, Manuel Fal Condé, agreed to place his 8,400 militiamen under local Army commanders, and, unlike the Falangists, the Navarrese units would continue to enjoy a degree of separate status which often made their integration into the National Army's plans difficult.

The unification with the Falange in spring 1937 into a single Nationalist party caused bitter rifts within the Carlist movement; its traditional leaders were exiled for the rest of the war, but more cooperative figures stepped forward, and the troops from the Carlist heartland of Navarre remained loyal. They proved a valuable resource; the Navarre Army Corps, of four divisions, would reach a peak strength of some 42,000 troops, though it was worn down to about 23,000 by the end of the war. They had a reputation for toughness, high motivation and comparatively good training, and were instrumental in several Nationalist victories, notably during the northern campaign on the Biscay coast in 1937. Most continued to wear their traditional red berets with Nationalist uniform.

## **COLONIAL TROOPS**

### **THE ARMY OF AFRICA**

Spain's colonial possessions in Africa comprised the protectorate of Spanish Morocco, the Spanish Sahara (Rio del Oro) with the small





coastal enclaves of Ifni and Cabo Juby, and Spanish (today, Equatorial) Guinea in West Africa. Of these, Spanish Morocco was the most important and the closest to mainland Spain, but also had been the most difficult to control. In summer 1921 the Berber tribes of the northern Rif highlands had wiped out 13,000 Spanish troops in three weeks; this disaster later led to the dictatorship of Gen Miguel Primo de Rivera, and Abd el-Krim's bid for Rifian independence was only crushed in 1926 by very substantial French and Spanish forces supported by aircraft, heavy artillery and armour.

In 1936 the Army of Africa was composed of seven Spanish mainland infantry battalions, six cavalry squadrons and six field artillery batteries; six *banderas* (battalions) of the Foreign Legion (*Tercio de Extranjeros*, 'Regiment of Foreigners', popularly known simply as the *Tercio*); and ten *tabores* (small or half-battalions) of the Spanish-officered *Fuerzas Regulares Indígenas* ('Native Regular Forces', known simply as the *Regulares*). This army's total strength is given by different sources as either 34,000 or 24,000, the latter perhaps excluding the Peninsular Army units rotated through the protectorate.

The legionaries and Regulares were all long-service volunteers, and in the Rif War these units had seen heavy and prolonged fighting in difficult terrain – expertise that was still available among their field officers and senior NCOs. In October 1934, at the suggestion of Gen Franco, units of both the Tercio and the Regulares had been shipped to Spain by the new conservative government of the Republic to put down the workers' revolt in Asturias, a task they had performed ruthlessly. In 1936 the Moroccan garrison troops provided the best-trained, most professional and effective fighting force in the Spanish Army.

### Spanish Foreign Legion

The three-battalion *Tercio de Extranjeros* was authorized on 4 September 1920 and raised at Ceuta. It was loosely modelled on the much larger French Foreign Legion: as a regiment of volunteers for harsh colonial campaigns, to provide a backbone for an army of poorly trained and unmotivated conscripts. In the event, the Tercio's battalions were filled

Officers of the Army of Africa, which provided the backbone of the early Nationalist effort in southern Spain. In the centre is the much-wounded Gen de Brig Millán Astray, no longer in an active command in 1936 but influential as the lifetime Honorary Colonel of the *Tercio*. At right, wearing tinted spectacles, is TenCol Juan Yagüe Blanco, who led the 'Madrid Column' in summer 1936, and earned among Republicans the nickname of 'the Butcher of Badajoz' for atrocities committed after his capture of that town. Yagüe's outspoken manner sometimes got him into trouble, but in July 1937 he became commanding general of the Moroccan Army Corps, which would be heavily engaged for the rest of the war. Four types of officer's headgear can be seen in this group: (from extreme left edge to right) the flat-crowned *gorra de plato* service dress cap; the smaller, soft-crowned 'teresiana' worn for walking-out and sometimes for parade; the red *tarbush* worn by many officers of Moroccan troops; and the 'gorrillo' sidecap worn in barracks and in the field. (AdeQHA)



While shaving was far from a priority for troops in the field, his extravagant beard identifies this legionary of the *Tercio* as a *gastador* or combat pioneer (see Plate E1). He wears the light green shirt and olive-green cap and trousers of his corps, with the triple red bars of a *cabo* (corporal) on the left breast. The Legion's badge of crossed arquebus, crossbow and halberd is visible on his red-trimmed cap. (AdeQHA)

Moroccan troops marching through a Spanish village. In 1936, brigaded with legionaries and some Spanish infantry in small 'columns' of roughly regimental size, the Berber *Regulares* – recruited from a warrior people whose fieldcraft was legendary – fought effectively in the open countryside during the advance from Seville to Madrid in August–November. Although they did not fare so well when faced with the unfamiliar challenge of urban street-fighting, under the leadership of Gen Juan Yagüe the '*Moros*' would remain a spearhead of the Nationalist armies throughout the war. (AdeQHA)

primarily by Spanish nationals lured by double the normal Army pay rate; foreigners were not easy to recruit, and most who did enlist came from Cuba. With roughly 90 per cent Spanish manpower, the corps grew from three to eight battalions during the Rif War (1921–26).

Reduced under the Republic, during the Civil War the *Tercio* expanded from six to 18 *banderas*, plus a two-*bandera* tank group. Although the first six battalions had been grouped in two regiments termed 'Legions', they and the newly raised units were all numbered in a single sequence (I–XVIII *Banderas*), as were their component companies (e.g., the II *Bandera* comprised the 5th, 6th and 7th Rifle Companies and the 8th Machine-Gun Company). In May 1937 the *Tercio* was officially redesignated as the *Legión de Extranjeros*, with its six senior units still administratively grouped in what were now termed the 1st and 2nd *Tercios*.

While always in a minority, several thousand foreign volunteers did enlist during the war, most being dispersed between the various battalions. However, in February 1938 the 67th 'Joan of Arc' Co of XVII *Bandera* was composed of Frenchmen, mostly members of the far-right Croix de Feu movement; and XV *Bandera* was first raised as a short-lived Irish battalion (see below, 'Foreign Volunteers').

### ***Regulares de Marruecos***

The first battalion of *Regulares* was raised in 1911, when the Spanish Army was expanding into the long-ignored hinterland of northern Morocco from the centuries-old Mediterranean coastal enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Moroccan auxiliaries had previously been employed on an *ad hoc* basis as scouts, but the designation 'regulars' indicated that the new organization was to be permanent. Officers and senior NCOs were seconded from Spanish Peninsular regiments, and by 1914 four *grupos* (the equivalent of regiments) had already been raised. While



the Regulares were predominantly Berber infantry from the highlands, the Arab tribes of the Moroccan plains were renowned for their horsemanship, and organic cavalry squadrons were also created. Each *grupo* was composed of a headquarters and service company, two infantry *tabores* (small battalions) and a cavalry *tabor* (squadron strength).

In 1936 there were five regionally recruited regiments – Grupo No.1 de Tetuán, No.2 de Melilla, No.3 de Ceuta, No.4 de Larache, and No.5 de Alhucemas. Like Spanish units, their battalions were commonly separated between different tactical formations (see panel, order of battle in December 1936). Further wartime recruitment saw the creation of Grupos 6–10 (respectively, de Xauen, Llano Amarillo, del Rif, Arcila and Bab-Taza), plus 1a and 2a Grupos de Caballería.

Technically, Spanish Morocco was a ‘protectorate’ rather than a colony, so Moroccans were not considered Spanish citizens. The puppet ruler of the protectorate, the Khalifa, put his *Mehalla* gendarmerie at Franco’s disposal to take over local garrisons, thus freeing the Regulares for service in Spain. In total, as many as 75,000 Moroccans fought in the Nationalist ranks.

### The 1936 campaign

After the rebels gained control of Spanish Morocco the initial intention had been to transport the Army of Africa to Spain by sea. However, while most Spanish naval officers joined the rebellion, most of their crews remained loyal to the Republican government. Significant numbers of the Army of Africa were therefore flown to the mainland in an airlift, at first using seven Breguets seized at Tetuán airfield and later Junkers and Savoia-Marchetti transports that were supplied complete with crews by Germany and Italy. The Tercio’s V Bandera flew across first, to Seville beginning on 20 July, and a month later the whole corps had reached Seville, Granada, Jerez de la Frontera and Algeciras. By 15 September some 18,000 troops had arrived from Morocco by air and sea, and were concentrated around Seville.

Long before this had been achieved, the advance guard of the Army of Africa had mounted an audacious advance on 3 August. The mission of Col Asensio’s and Capt Castejón’s ‘Madrid Column’ (IV & V Banderas/Tercio, II Tabor/Regs de Tetuán, II Tabor/Regs de Ceuta, with some artillery) was to thrust rapidly northwards from Seville through Extremadura, secure the Portuguese frontier, make contact with Gen Mola’s troops from the north in Old Castile, and then turn eastwards towards Madrid. After taking Mérida on 11 August the column was led in person by LtCol Juan Yagüe Blanco, Inspector-General of the Tercio, who took Badajoz by storm, against superior odds, on 14 August. Yagüe was later obliged to hand over command to Gen José Enrique Varela Iglesias, who in

## Army of Africa in Spain, December 1936

*Column No.1*  
I Tabor/Regulares de Tetuán  
III Tabor/Regs de Tetuán  
VI Bandera/Tercio  
75mm battery

*Column No.2*  
I Tabor/Regs de Melilla  
II Tabor/Regs de Melilla  
I Bandera/Tercio  
75mm battery

*Column No.3*  
I Tabor/Regs de Alhucemas  
III Tabor/Regs de Alhucemas  
IV Bandera/Tercio  
105mm battery

*Column No.4*  
battalion/Regt de Sevilla No.40  
V Bandera/Tercio  
105mm battery

*Column No.5*  
VIII Bandera/Tercio

*Column No.6*  
III Tabor/Regs de Melilla  
battalion/Regt de Sevilla No.40  
battalion/Regt de Canarias No.39  
Sapper company  
75mm battery

*Column No.7*  
3 Bn/Regt de Toledo No.26  
5 Bn/Regt de San Quintin No.25  
Sapper company  
75mm battery

*Column No.8*  
I Tabor/Regs del Rif  
III Tabor/Regs del Rif  
VII Bandera/Tercio  
Falange Bandera de Marruecos  
1 bty each 75mm, 105mm, 155mm

*Cavalry:*  
7 sabre sqns, 2 MG sqns

*Force artillery:*  
2 groups each 65mm, 105mm;  
2 groups + 1 bty 155mm

In 1915 Sgt José Enrique Varela Iglesias of the Naval Infantry gained a second lieutenant’s commission in the Army infantry. In Morocco in 1920 and 1921 he would become one of only three officers ever to be twice awarded Spain’s highest decoration for valour, the Laurel Cross of San Fernando. A convinced Carlist, Varela was instrumental in the pre-war training of the *requetés* militia; he was promoted brigadier-general in 1935, and held commands in all the major campaigns of the Civil War. (AdeQHA)







A sentry on the Spanish plains wearing a *capote-manta* for warmth; this field cloak was probably the most characteristic garment of the whole war. His helmet appears to be the simple, shallow M1921, produced only in small numbers. Note the rudimentary protection of the machine-gun position, made of building rubble with a single-thickness log roof, and fronted with a thin barbed-wire fence. (AdeQHA)

One of the 300 German tank instructors of the Condor Legion's *Panzergruppe D*, wearing that unit's black Basque beret bearing the *Totenkopf* and swastika. Behind him is a Soviet T-26 tank captured from the Republicans; where possible these were reconditioned and taken into Nationalist service, since they were far superior to the German PzKpfw I light tanks and the Italian C/33 and C/35 tankettes. (AdeQHA)

September was diverted from the march on Madrid to relieve the besieged Nationalist garrison of the Alcázar fortress in Toledo.

By early 1937 the Army of Africa's strength had been roughly doubled to c.60,000 men. With the raising of substantial Nationalist forces in Spain its relative numerical importance diminished somewhat, but the divisions of the Moroccan Army Corps retained their status as shock troops until the end of the Civil War. (For details of the participation by Legion battalions on the major fronts, see MAA 161, *The Spanish Foreign Legion*.)

## FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS

### THE GERMAN LEGION CONDOR

Osprey Elite 131 *The Condor Legion* covers this subject in detail, and the following is the briefest overview for the sake of completeness.

The Condor Legion was an organization composed of volunteers from the German Air Force and Army, which served alongside the Nationalists in Spanish uniform from August 1936 to March 1939; the Luftwaffe contingent was commanded by Gen Hugo Sperrle and the Army element by LtCol Wilhelm Ritter von Thoma. Following the early provision of transport aircraft, the Luftwaffe provided a strong motorized AA regiment, and aircraft and crews for single *Gruppen* each of fighters, bombers and reconnaissance-bombers, plus a seaplane squadron. The experience gained while flying combat missions over Spain was to prove priceless in 1939–40.

By contrast, it was only by accident that German Army personnel in Spain occasionally became involved in combat. The main ground element of the Condor Legion was a tank training battalion equipped with PzKpfw I light tanks; by the beginning of 1938 this unit had been reduced to a single company as the tanks were progressively handed over to the Nationalist Army (which also bought tanks directly from Germany). Colonel von Thoma served on in an advisory role as Inspector of the Nationalist tank arm, and hundreds of other instructors also played a major part in the training of tens of thousands of Spanish NCOs and junior officers at various academies and schools.



### German naval assistance

The most valuable aspect of German maritime aid to the Nationalists was the steady flow of merchant ships carrying military equipment and supplies, discreetly escorted by the Kriegsmarine (German Navy).

From the outbreak of the war German warships were sent to Spanish waters, initially to evacuate German citizens and later to provide clandestine assistance to the Nationalists. In summer 1936 the German 'armoured ship' (heavy cruiser) *Deutschland* stood guard over Ceuta, Morocco, to prevent Republican naval interference while Franco shipped troops to Spain. In the undeclared war that followed, by mid-October 1936 the Kriegsmarine already had the *Deutschland* and *Admiral Scheer*, the light cruiser *Köln* and four torpedo-boats off the Spanish coasts. During 1936–37, in rotation, a total of three heavy cruisers, six cruisers, 12 torpedo-boats and 14 U-boats carried out patrols. From March 1937 German warships were also deployed (as were Italian, British and French vessels) to enforce the embargo imposed by the League of Nations Non-Intervention Committee; however, both Germany and Italy continued to break this international agreement on numerous occasions.

In May 1937 the *Deutschland* was docked at Palma, Majorca, along with several other neutral warships when the port was bombed by Republican aircraft. On 24 May two torpedo-boats escorted her to the island of Ibiza, where she was again attacked at anchor by a pair of Soviet-supplied Republican Air Force Tupolev SB-2 bombers with Russian crews. *Deutschland* suffered serious damage, and 31 dead and wounded among the crew. In reprisal, Hitler ordered the *Admiral Scheer* to bombard Almeria.



The largest single unit of the Condor Legion was the 1,400-strong motorized anti-aircraft artillery group *Flak-Abteilung 88*, which had five heavy batteries equipped with this powerful 8.8cm gun, three light batteries, one instruction battery, and supporting elements. The soldier at left wears a 'chambergos' sun hat, as long used by Spanish troops in Morocco. (AdeQHA)



Two Nationalist officers posing with a German rangefinder, typical of the wide variety of equipment supplied by Germany. In 1938 the Condor Legion received an Artillery Instruction Group with one battery each of 10.5cm field guns, 10.5cm field howitzers, and 15cm field howitzers, and there were instances of its German personnel becoming involved in combat. Incidentally, the officer on the right wearing a beret is not necessarily a Carlist; during the war berets of various olive shades were widely worn by Nationalist personnel of all ranks. (AdeQHA)



Italian members of the *Corpo Truppe Volontarie* which assisted Franco's forces throughout the war. They wear mounted troops' bandoliers, and most are armed with the M1891 Carcano carbine with a permanently attached folding bayonet. (AdeQHA)

## THE ITALIAN CORPO TRUPPE VOLONTARIE

By far the most important foreign support received by the Nationalists came from Fascist Italy; this would total some 78,000 men, about 750 aircraft and 150 armoured vehicles. Unlike the German armed forces, the Italians had recent combat experience from their invasion of Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in October 1935–May 1936. On 12 December 1936, after the failure of Franco's attempts to capture Madrid, Mussolini decided to send complete Italian ground units to Spain, and the first 3,000 men of the *Missione Militare in Spagna* arrived on 23 December. By the end of January 1937 some 44,000 Italians were in Spain, mostly members of the militarized Fascist Party 'Blackshirt' militia (*Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale*, MVSN). On 17 February the expeditionary force was renamed the *Corpo Truppe Volontarie*, CTV; commanded by Gen Mario Roatta, in March it numbered more than 50,000 men.

The CTV initially consisted of four small divisions. The 4th 'Voluntarii Littorio' ('Lictor Volunteers') Infantry Division was composed of Army volunteers organized as in a regular Royal Army formation, which had two infantry regiments each of three battalions, an artillery battalion with three batteries, plus a mortar and an engineer battalion. The other three divisions and an independent infantry brigade group were from the MVSN: infantry divisions designated 1st 'Dio lo Vuole' ('God Wills It'), 2nd 'Fiamme Nere' ('Black Flames') and 3rd 'Penne Nere' ('Black Feathers'), plus the independent Gruppo 'XXIII de Marzo' ('23rd of March'). An MVSN regiment (*legion*) had only two battalions (*cohortes*) each 670 strong. The CTV also had a battalion of armoured cars and light tankettes, and a corps artillery of ten field regiments and four AA batteries. It was motorized throughout, but the artillery was obsolete. In February 1937 the light armour was amalgamated with some motorized infantry and artillery into a *Raggruppamento Reparti Specializzati* ('Group of Specialist Units', RRS).

In early February 1937 the 1st MVSN Div took part in the successful Nationalist attack on Málaga. In March, at Mussolini's complacent insistence, the CTV was committed to another offensive near Madrid, at Guadalajara; this failed, however, with heavy losses among the MVSN divisions. The 3rd 'Black Feathers' Div was absorbed by the 2nd 'Black Flames' Div in April; Gen Roatta was replaced by Gen Ettore Bastico, and thereafter the CTV would not carry out operations independent of the Nationalist high command.



Many Italians served thereafter in mixed Italo-Spanish *'Flechas'* ('Arrows') formations, providing the officers and technical personnel while the majority of the rank-and-file were Spanish. From April to August 1937 the first of these mixed brigades, named *'Flechas Azules'* ('Blue Arrows'), took the field in Extremadura. The second, *'Flechas Negras'* ('Black Arrows'), fought in the Basque country on the Biscay front, supported by the '23rd of March' and 11th Artillery groups. There, in August, the CTV played a successful part in the offensive against Santander; they were then transferred to the Aragón front.

In September 1937 the '23rd of March' Group was redesignated as a division, and in October this was amalgamated, with the 1st 'God Wills It' and 2nd 'Black Flames' divisions, into a new consolidated 'XIII di Marzo – Fiamme Nere' MVSN division. In October 1938, with the repatriation of many time-expired personnel, this formation would in turn amalgamate with the 'Littorio' Div, leaving the CTV with a single consolidated Army/Blackshirt formation designated Assault Div 'Littorio', of two infantry regiments with support units. This fought in Catalonia from 23 December 1938 to 8 February 1939.

In March 1938 the Italo-Spanish 'Black Arrows' brigade had been committed to the Aragón offensive towards the Mediterranean coast, and by November it had been enlarged to divisional status. The 'Blue Arrows' mixed brigade provided the nucleus for two other mixed Italo-Spanish divisions named 'Blue Arrows' and 'Green Arrows', which in 1939 also took part in the final offensive in Catalonia, alongside the all-Italian 'Littorio' Assault Division.

In all, some 78,500 Italian volunteers served in Spain, at a cost of 3,819 killed and about 12,000 wounded.



**CTV gunners crew a 75mm *cannone da 75/27 Modello 11*. This pre-World War I field gun would remain in Italian Army service well into World War II, and was even pressed into service by the Germans in 1943–45 as the 7.5cm *Feldkanone 244(i)*. (AdeQHA)**



**The first foreign armour to enter service with the Nationalists were five Italian CV 3/35 tankettes, which arrived at the port of Vigo on 26 August 1936 accompanied by ten Italian crewmen to serve as instructors. This would be the most numerous type of AFV employed by the Italian corps in Spain, but – armed with two 8mm machine guns, and with a maximum armour thickness of 15mm – it proved quite inadequate when faced by the Republic's Soviet-supplied T-26 tanks with 45mm guns. (NARA)**

## THE PORTUGUESE VIRIATOS

From 1928 to 1968 the Portuguese state and colonies were under the effective dictatorship of the ultra-conservative Dr António de Oliveira Salazar. Fearing that victory for the Spanish Republican forces would lead to Marxist domination of the whole Iberian peninsula, Salazar gave material and diplomatic aid to the Nationalist forces while maintaining a formal neutrality. (This was not an obvious course of action, since both Falangist and Carlist leaders were calling for the reunification of the Portuguese and Spanish states.)

In the first weeks of the war the Portuguese Army began to form a 'Viriatos Legion' to aid the Spanish insurgents, and photographs of a uniform have appeared. However, this force was disbanded before major recruitment could take place, after pro-Republican incidents in Portugal warned Salazar's government that direct intervention on the side of the Nationalists might destabilize his own country. Due to the publicity given to this aborted unit, all Portuguese volunteers who subsequently enlisted directly into the Spanish Foreign Legion and the Carlist militias were known as 'Viriatos'.

Somewhere between 8,000 and 12,000 Portuguese served during the Civil War. Although the Viriatos were officially individual volunteers, a Portuguese Military Observation Mission drawn from all three branches of the Portuguese military was present in Spain from 1937 onwards, with the dual objectives of protecting the interests of Portuguese volunteers and recording useful lessons from the campaigns. (Although this group officially had a non-combatant role, its Air Force members did fly some combat missions.)

## THE 'IRISH BRIGADE'

This unit was formed of Irish Roman Catholics led by Eoin O'Duffy, a former IRA officer and Garda Síochána commissioner who had previously led the banned quasi-fascist 'Blueshirts' movement in Eire, and who left Fine Gael to form the small fascist National Corporate Party in June 1935. Following the massacres of Spanish clerics in the first weeks of the Civil War, he called for volunteers to defend the Catholic Church and to prevent Marxism gaining ground in Europe. At the invitation of a Navarrese Carlist leader O'Duffy travelled to Spain in August 1936 to meet Nationalist authorities, to whom he promised 5,000 Irish volunteers.

O'Duffy envisaged eight self-contained all-Irish battalions within the Tercio, with himself as inspector-general. The Irish government sought to discourage this effort, and Franco also proved half-hearted, dragging his feet over providing shipping. In the event only 700 Irish volunteers reached Spain; some 200 travelled out in small groups, and eventually 500 more embarked on the German ship *Urundi* (which O'Duffy had to

**Eoin O'Duffy was an Irish ex-soldier, ex-police commissioner and pro-fascist political activist, who led 700 Irish volunteers to Spain to fight on Franco's side in winter 1936/37 – a short-lived and unsuccessful venture. See Plate H1 for a reconstruction of this portrait, showing him in a tunic sporting Irish harps on his lapels, the badge of the Spanish Foreign Legion on his shoulder straps, and Spanish general de brigada ranking on his cap and cuffs. (AdeQHA)**



charter himself) at Galway in November 1936, subsequently docking at Ferrol. Another 600 volunteers gathered at Galway in January 1937, but Franco never sent a ship to collect them.

At their training base at Cáceres the volunteers were attached to the Tercio as its XV Bandera, with four lettered companies. O'Duffy was given the rank of brigadier-general; the Duque de Algeciras served as a liaison between this 'Irish Brigade' and Franco, and 20-plus Spanish officers and men were assigned to provide training and administration. The Irish volunteers had trouble coping with the local food, and the unaccustomed quantities of cheap wine.

Sent to Ciempozuelos on the Jarama front in February 1937, during a tiring and confusing approach march they were fired upon by Nationalist troops from the Canary Islands, who took the Irishmen for a unit of the Republic's 11th International Brigade. The Irish would spend the next five weeks at Ciempozuelos; the town had recently been taken from the Republicans by Moroccan troops, and the Irishmen's first task was to bury hundreds of decomposing corpses. During their time in the Jarama Valley each company in rotation would spend four days in the trenches, often under sniper- and shellfire, and two days in the badly damaged town.

In pouring rain on 13 March 1937 the Irish battalion was ordered to capture the village of Titulcia on the opposite bank of the Jarama. In difficult terrain and under artillery fire, by nightfall they had failed to cross the river or to engage any enemy troops, at a cost of four Irishmen killed. O'Duffy received orders to repeat the advance at dawn, but refused, and ordered his men to stand down. The unit was then placed in defensive positions at nearby La Maranosa, where an inspection by Col Yagüe on 24 March reported widespread drunkenness, insubordination and low morale. Yagüe blamed this on the officers rather than the rank-and-file, and recommended that the unit be disbanded and the men distributed throughout the Tercio. Instead, O'Duffy wrote to Franco on 9 April requesting the unit's repatriation to Ireland. The Irish battalion was disbanded on 16 April, and most of the men returned to Cáceres, where morale and discipline collapsed completely (and O'Duffy's adjutant Capt Gunning made off with the wages). After a quarrel between a Nationalist colonel and a foolishly threatening Irish officer, Col Yagüe ordered the unit disarmed.

With difficulty, O'Duffy eventually negotiated transportation for his men, and on 17 June they sailed home from Lisbon on the SS *Mozambique*, leaving behind them 15 dead comrades and six in hospital. O'Duffy's political reputation at home did not survive this debacle, though his experience did not stop him offering Hitler an Irish volunteer unit for the Russian Front in 1941. (Documents dealing with his 'Blueshirts' and the Irish Brigade were among those burned by the Irish government in May 1940 during fears of a possible Nazi invasion.)

\* \* \*

Numbers of volunteers from other countries fought with the Nationalists, the largest single contingent probably being some 500 Frenchmen. Another thousand-odd came from countries as diverse as Spanish Guinea, Brazil, Belgium, Norway, Finland, Great Britain, Turkey, the United States



Joaquín García Morato y Castaño was the leading Nationalist fighter ace of the Civil War. He is seen here in the rank of lieutenant, wearing the 1931 naval-style double-breasted uniform of the *Cuerpo de Aviación* in dark blue with gilt buttons and cuff rank stars, silver pilot's 'wings', and below them a small non-regulation squadron badge; stacked above the stars on his left forearm are two badges of the Collective Military Medal, awarded to whole units. In 1933 the Air Corps branch distinctions, such as sidecap piping, became grass-green. In March 1938 a new Army-style uniform in blue-grey was introduced, often worn with a dark blue working-dress shirt. García Morato was credited with 40 air victories; having risen to the rank of major and command of the whole Nationalist fighter force, he was killed in a flying accident just three days after final victory, on 4 April 1939. (AdeQHA)



and Australia. In 1937 Franco turned down separate offers from foreign sympathizers to raise national legions from Belgians, Greeks and exiled White Russians. In December 1936 Ion Mota, the deputy leader of the Romanian Legion of the Archangel Michael (the 'Iron Guard'), had led a group of seven who visited Spain to ally their movement to the Nationalists, presenting a ceremonial sword to survivors of the Alcázar siege. While in Spain these men decided, against their orders, to join the Spanish Foreign Legion. Within days of joining Mota and Vasile Marin were killed at Majadahonda on the Madrid front; they were given ostentatious funerals, and became figures of Iron Guard mythology.

## THE AIR FORCE

The Nationalists initially had only a couple of dozen combat aircraft seized on airfields in Morocco and southern Spain; these were mainly Nieuport-Delage NiD 52 sesquiplane fighters and Breguet 19 biplane reconnaissance-bombers. By the end of August 1936 some 20 German-flown Junkers Ju 52/3m trimotor dual-role bomber/ transports and six Heinkel He 51 biplane fighters were operational, with a dozen Italian-flown Fiat CR.32 biplane fighters and about nine Savoia-Marchetti SM.81 trimotor bomber/ transports; on paper, the Italian crews joined the Foreign Legion to form an '*Aviación del Tercio*'. A couple of Spanish pilots were loaned He 51s, and six Ju 52/3ms were handed over to Spanish crews, but most still flew obsolescent types. In September–October four Spanish pilots joined the Italian CR.32-equipped squadron for on-the-job training, and would subsequently take their aircraft into Spanish service.

Support from France and particularly the USSR enabled the Republican Air Force to maintain air superiority over the Madrid fronts in November 1936–March 1937. However, both the *Legion Condor* (see above) and what the Italians called the *Aviazione Legionaria* were soon expanded and modernized. The Nationalist *Agrupación Española* soon included three Ju 52/3m bomber *grupos* each of two *escuadrillas*; five groups with Breguet 19s; two fighter *patrullas* each with three He 51s, and one with CR.32s; and two army cooperation groups with Heinkel He 46s.

Aircraft of these and other types were progressively sold to Franco's government by Italy and Germany, as their own expeditionary air units received reinforcements and newer designs. In March 1937 the Nationalists acquired three new squadrons of He 51s, released by the arrival of Messerschmitt Bf 109Bs for the Condor Legion. By May they had received a squadron of CR.32s, and were soon able to field a full group of each type: 1-G-2

(continued on page 33)

## GENERAL STAFF

1: *General Francisco Franco y Bahamonde*

2: *Teniente coronel*, winter campaign dress

3: *Capitán ADC*, summer campaign dress



1a





## REGULAR TROOPS

1: Cabo, infantry, 60a División

2: Sapper, Agrupación de Minadores

3: Soldado in winter campaign dress





## REGULAR TROOPS

- 1: *Capitán*, artillery, everyday service dress
- 2: Dispatch rider
- 3: *Teniente*, 1a Batallón de Carros de Combate
- 4: Insignia, 74a División



3a



2a

## NATIVE COLONIAL TROOPS

- 1: Soldado moro, Tropas Regulares de Marruecos  
 2: Cabo, Tiradores de Ifni; summer campaign dress  
 3: Alférez, cavalry, Tropas Regulares de Marruecos, 13a Div  
 4: Guardia moro, Guardia de SE el Generalísimo

3a



2



1



4



3





FOREIGN LEGION & MILITIAS

- 1: Gastador, Tercio de Extranjeros, summer 1936
- 2: Jefe de Centuria, Milicias de Falange Española, 1937
- 3: Cabo, Requetés Andaluz
- 4: Voluntario, Brigadas Navarras
- 5: Capitán, Cuerpo de Sanidad





## SECURITY FORCES

1: *Guardia, Guardia Civil*, service dress

2: *Cabo, Carabineros*, service dress

3: *Guardia, Cuerpo de Seguridad y Asalto*, service dress



## NAVY & AIR FORCE

1: *Marinero*, guard uniform

2: *Soldado, Infanteria de Marina*, field uniform

3: *Maggiore, Italian Aviazione Legionaria*, service dress





## FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS

- 1: General O'Duffy, early 1937  
 2: Irish Cabo, XV Bandera del Tercio, early 1937  
 3: Portuguese 'Viriato' volunteer, 1936  
 4: Italian Bersagliere, Div d'Assalto 'Littorio', 1938

4a



2



1



4



3







The most important Nationalist Air Corps fighter type was the Italian Fiat CR.32, of which seven squadrons were in service by August 1938. These two machines are '3-60' and '3-62' (type number – individual aircraft number), which served with *Escuadrilla* 2-E-3 during the Brunete campaign in summer 1937. By the end of hostilities 20 Nationalist pilots had been credited with five or more aerial victories; the top-scoring three were Joaquín García Morato (40 kills), Julio Salvador Díaz Benzumea (25), and Manuel Vázquez Sagistazabal (21½), all of whom won the great majority of their victories while flying the CR.32. (Courtesy A. Emiliani Archive)

(*Escuadrillas* 1-E-2 & 2-E-2) with He 51s, and 2-G-3 (1-E-3 & 2-E-3) with CR.32s.<sup>1</sup>

The German, Italian and Spanish squadrons were committed in strength to Franco's Biscay campaign in spring 1937, and during the summer the Nationalists could field two bomber groups with Breguet 19s, two with Ju 52/3ms, and one each with He 45s, He 46s, Meridionali Ro 37bis, captured Czech Avia A-101s, and Savoia-Marchetti SM.79s.

The Republican Brunete offensive in July 1937 saw considerable air combat; the slow Ju 52/3m and SM.81 now had to be relegated to night operations, and the Ro 37bis and He 51 ground-attack units later suffered severe losses during the prolonged fighting around Belchite. Nevertheless, in the bitter battle for Teruel in January 1938, 400 Nationalist aircraft flew repeated missions each day. That month the Condor Legion handed over its Henschel Hs 123 ground-attack biplanes, and a new delivery of CR.32s allowed formation of a second group.

By the time of Franco's Aragón offensive towards the Mediterranean coast in March 1938, each of the Spanish CR.32 groups had grown to three squadrons; by August a seventh *escuadrilla* would be formed, and they claimed many air-to-air victories. The He 51s flying ground-attack missions inevitably suffered badly, and in April the Condor Legion handed over its last He 51s, allowing formation of a second Spanish group. In the medium bomber role, by July 1938 Italy had supplied enough fast SM.79 trimotors to form four groups, which were soon followed by one of German Dornier Do 17s and one with Heinkel He 111s. The Nationalist bomber fleet continued to grow steadily, with ex-Italian SM.81s forming four groups in September, and two more being raised with Caproni Ca 310s in October.

### Final Cuerpo de Aviación Nacional order of battle, April 1939

Grupo	Aircraft type
Fighters:	
1-G-2	He 51
2-G-3	CR.32
3-G-3	CR.32
4-G-2	He 51
5-G-5	He 112 (+ Bf 109)
Multi-engine bombers:	
1-G-22	Ju 52/3m
2-G-22	Ju 52/3m
3-G-28	SM.79
4-G-28	SM.79
5-G-28	SM.79
6-G-28	SM.79
8-G-27	Do 17
10-G-25	He 111
11-G-25	He 111
15-G-21	SM.81
16-G-21	SM.81
17-G-21	SM.81
18-G-21	SM.81
Light bombers/attack aircraft:	
4-G-12	Ro 37bis
6-G-15	He 45
7-G-14	He 70
8-G-18	Ca 310
9-G-18	Ca 310
10-G-24	Hs 123
G-86/70	Ju 86, He 70, Hs 123
Seaplanes:	
1-G-70	Dornier Wal
2-G-62/73	CANT Z.501, Z.506

#### Note:

This table, and all other material in this chapter, is from Christopher Shores, *Spanish Civil War Air Forces* (Osprey Aircam/Airwar 3, 1977)

<sup>1</sup> Each aircraft type in service was given a number, e.g. the Heinkel He 51 was type '2'. The group 1-G-2 was thus the 1a Grupo de He 51s, comprising *Escuadrillas* 1-E-2 and 2-E-2. The number of aircraft in an *escuadrilla* varied according to availability, but between six and nine machines was normal.

The Nationalists and their allies once again gained air superiority over the Ebro front in summer–autumn 1938, and dominance during the winter fighting of 1938/39. In October 1938 the first Spanish pilots began familiarization training with Bf 109s; in November a squadron of Heinkel He 112 monoplane fighters arrived, to be followed early in 1939 by the first squadron of Bf 109s. The last new unit formed in wartime was a second group of He 111s in February 1939.

## THE NAVY

The refusal of most naval crews to follow their officers in supporting the Nationalists left Franco with only about 7,000 naval personnel. While his navy would prove the better organized and commanded, it followed a sensible policy of not deliberately seeking ship-to-ship engagements. Most activity was convoy warfare, with shore bombardments and port blockade/counter-blockade operations, backed by Italian and German aircraft and Italian submarines.

The *Marina Nacional*'s assets during the Civil War consisted of the following: one battleship (*España*); two heavy cruisers (*Canarias*, *Baleares*); two light cruisers (*Almirante Cervera*, *Navarra*); five destroyers (*Velasco*, *Ceuta*, *Melilla*, *Huesca*, *Teruel*); five torpedo boats; five sloops/gunboats; three mine-layers; four coast guard cutters; and two submarines (*General Mola*, *General Sanjurjo*) – though the status of the latter was complicated.

The Nationalists would eventually buy and man two Italian submarines of the Legionarii class: *Archimede* was renamed *General Mola*, and *Torricelli* became the *General Sanjurjo*. Manned by Italian crews, with only one Spanish liaison officer aboard, these originally gave covert support to the Nationalists in the Mediterranean from November 1936 to February 1937. A renewed submarine campaign was waged by the Italians between August 1937 and February 1938, without Spanish personnel aboard and operating

independently with fewer restrictions. In October 1937 four of these boats were integrated into the Nationalist Navy under a 'rental' agreement, with Spanish names but still with Italian crews. These were the Archimede-class *Galileo Galilei* (renamed *General Mola II*), and *Galileo Ferraris* (renamed *General Sanjurjo II*), and the Perla-class *Iride* (renamed *González López*) and *Onice* (renamed *Aguilar Tablada*). Subsequently, in February 1938, these were withdrawn in compliance with the Nyon Agreement, leaving just the two purchased boats.

Among the engagements by surface vessels, the cruisers *Canarias*, *Baleares* and *Almirante Cervera* bombarded Valencia on 22 February 1938, when the last-named was attacked and damaged by Republican aircraft. The same three warships were escorting a convoy on 6 March 1938 when they were engaged off Cartagena by a

Nationalist sailors taking part in the 1939 victory parade – compare with Plate G1. Junior ratings' rank insignia were worn to the full width of the upper sleeves: a red diagonal for *marinero preferente*, a yellow downward chevron for *cabo de mar* (as visible here), and two chevrons for *cabo de 1a clase*. (AdeQHA)





A detachment of the *Guardia Civil*, easily identifiable by their unique headgear; note also the contrasting colours of their leather equipment – see Plate F1. This rural gendarmerie had previously served loyally under whichever regime was in power, but the outbreak of civil war divided the 34,000-strong force into almost equal numbers for the Nationalists and Republicans. Under the conditions of a bitterly divisive ideological conflict, with front lines shifting across territory and communities, the *Guardia* on both sides were inevitably employed as instruments of repression, and acquired a reputation for brutality. (AdeQHA)

Republican squadron of two light cruisers and five destroyers in what became known as the battle of Cape Palos. In this largest naval engagement of the war the *Baleares*, hit by gunfire and torpedoes, suffered a magazine explosion and sank. The Republican ships then withdrew under cover of bad weather; when the convoy had reached harbour safely the other two cruisers returned to search for survivors, but some 700 of the 1,200 men aboard *Baleares* were lost (including a German liaison officer).

In the early days of the Second Republic the new Ministry of War had planned to disband the *Infantería de Marina* (Naval Infantry). However, the Civil War broke out before this could be done, and the naval infantry units then in existence divided between the Republican and Nationalist forces. In the latter case their main contribution was garrisoning the ports of Ferrol and Cádiz, but they also provided specialists for landing parties, and machine-gun platoons to reinforce Army units.

## SECURITY FORCES

### ***Guardia Civil***

The Civil Guard was an armed national gendarmerie with responsibility for law and order throughout the rural majority of the country. During the politically turbulent first half of the 20th century the Guardia, in their distinctive grey-green uniforms with glazed black bicorne hats, were frequently employed in a paramilitary role for the restoration of order. They normally proved loyal to whichever regime was established in power, including, for example, both the dictatorship of Gen Primo de Rivera (1923–30) and the different governments of the Second Republic





A member of the *Cuerpo de Seguridad*, the blue-uniformed urban police force. The collar badge of a silver 'CS' monogram was originally surmounted by a crown, but this was removed under the 1931 Republic. (AdeQHA)

(1931–36). During the Civil War the Guardia Civil split almost evenly (53 per cent/47 per cent) between, respectively, those who remained loyal to the Republic (whose title was changed to the Guardia Nacional Republicana) and those who sided with the Nationalists.

### ***Cuerpo de Seguridad y Asalto***

The 1931 Republican government reorganized elements of the blue-uniformed urban police into a more heavily armed *Cuerpo de Seguridad* for service in the cities, as distinct from the Guardia Civil patrolling the countryside. The first Assault Guard Sections were employed like a more militarized equivalent of modern riot police, and in 1932 the Security Corps as a whole was renamed the *Cuerpo de Seguridad y Asalto*. At the outbreak of the 1936 rebellion some 12,000 of the 18,000 Assault Guards remained loyal to the Popular Front government; they played a critical role in preserving the Republic during the early days, in particular by helping to crush the Nationalist uprising in Barcelona.

### ***Carabineros***

The *Cuerpo de Carabineros de España* was another paramilitary force subject to military discipline, responsible for guarding the Spanish frontiers and coastline and preventing smuggling. At the outbreak of the Civil War they had an effective strength of just over 16,000 all ranks, headed by two generals; of this total, about 6,000 sided with the rebels and the rest remained loyal.

## **SMALL ARMS**

After the establishment of the Second Republic in 1931 the Spanish arms industry came under strict government scrutiny, with a commission appointed to take inventory and control distribution of all firearms

Nationalist soldiers practising marksmanship with the Spanish-produced Mauser M1895 cavalry carbine, made at the government's Oviedo arsenal from 1897 to 1919. This weapon was basically a shortened M1893 rifle with minor modifications, and is easily recognizable by its being stocked to the muzzle like its German-manufactured forerunner. Note the contrast between the colours of the right-hand soldier's *cazadora* blouse and his cap and trousers; such variations from true uniformity were very common. (AdeQHA)



## Pistols

In 1921 Esperanza y Unceta, in Guernica, secured government adoption of its 9mm Astra Model 400 semi-automatic as the M1921 for the Army and Carabineers, and of the smaller Model 300 for the Navy and Air Force. In 1927, now renamed Unceta y Compañía, it began production of the Astra Model 900 series, a copy of the Mauser C96 'broomhandle' pistol intended for export to Nationalist China; the Guardia Civil also bought the Model 903F. After the Popular Front came to power in 1936 the owner of the company, Don Rufino Unceta, left the factory, but the workforce produced 14,800 Astra M1921s between July 1936 and April 1937. Following the notorious Condor Legion air raid on Guernica that month the town fell to the Nationalists, and Don Rufino resumed control; he produced an additional 20,300 M1921 Model 400s for the Nationalists in 1937–39, and also supplied several hundred Model 300s to the Condor Legion.

Star/Bonifacio Echeverría SA at Eibar, also in the Basque region, secured adoption by the Guardia Civil of its 9mm Star M1920. It later produced a commercial 7.63mm pistol-carbine Model 'A' with a wooden holster/stock. The Civil War disrupted Star's production, and by the time the Nationalists captured Eibar in 1937 the machinery had been removed.

Under the brand name Llama, Gabilondo y Compañía of Elgolibar produced high-quality copies of the Colt M1911 pistol in various calibres during the 1920s–30s, and the 9mm Llama Especial also saw use by Nationalist troops.

In 1926 Beistegui Hermanos also began manufacturing selective-fire 7.63mm copies of the Mauser C96 'broomhandle' for the Chinese market under the brand name Royal; these came with 10- or 20-round integral magazines or 10-, 20-, and 30-round detachable magazines. An unknown number of the roughly 23,000 Royals produced before the factory was destroyed in 1937 found their way into Nationalist hands.

**Laid out below an M1926 helmet, four common small arms of the Civil War: a Spanish 7mm M1893 Mauser rifle showing its straight bolt handle; a 7.65mm Ruby pistol made in Spain for a World War I French Army contract; a 7.63mm Astra Model 900 copy of the Mauser C96 'broomhandle' pistol; and the ubiquitous 9mm Astra Model 400, adopted by the Army as the M1921. (AdeQHA; author's photo)**

stored in arms factories. These were historically centred in the far north-western provinces of Asturias, Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa.

In October 1934 the brief but fierce 'Asturias Revolution' against the CEDA-backed government saw some 50,000 workers (many of them miners, who armed themselves with dynamite) capture Oviedo, site of the main government arms factory and arsenal, and equip themselves with about 30,000 rifles and many machine guns. This ensured that the Army was only able to crush the rebellion after heavy street-fighting, which reportedly left some 2,000–3,000 insurgents dead and 7,000 wounded. Thereafter the government reinforced the garrison at Oviedo, where arms and ammunition continued to be stored in large quantities.

On the outbreak of the Nationalist rebellion Col Antonio Aranda Mata raised the Army garrison at Oviedo with support from Civil Guards and Assault Guards, and held out against a siege by Republican popular militias from 19 July 1936 until 16 October, when a Nationalist relief column arrived from Galicia. Thereafter the Nationalists held on to a narrow corridor into the city, until the end of the northern campaign in October 1937 gave them complete control of this region. However, the damaged Oviedo arsenal was out of



production for the rest of the Civil War, which complicated the provision of weapons and ammunition for the rapidly enlarging Nationalist forces.

### Rifles

The Oviedo arsenal had manufactured the Army's bolt-action rifles under licence from Mauser: some 500,000 of the M1893 'long' rifle in 1896–c.1928; about 850,000 of the M1895 carbine in 1897–1919; and perhaps 325,000 of the shortened M1916 rifle from 1916 to 1936. All these were to be seen in use by Nationalist troops during the Civil War; all were in the standard Spanish 7mm calibre, and had 5-round non-detachable box magazines loaded from clips. Franco's forces also received from Germany quantities of the 7.92mm Gewehr 98 rifle that had been replaced by the newer Kar 98k adopted as standard for the Wehrmacht in 1935, and, after the 1938 annexation of Austria, numbers of Austrian 8mm Steyr-Mannlicher M1895 rifles.

### Submachine guns

The most numerous submachine gun to see service in Spain was the German 9mm MP28; a development of the World War I MP18, this was purchased by the Nationalists in significant numbers. (Under the name 'Naranjero', it was later copied in Republican factories at Eibar, in Valencia and perhaps Catalonia. The Republican version, in 9mm Largo, was identifiable by the brass trigger-guard and magazine housing.) The Nationalists also acquired a limited number of Spanish-made 9mm Star M1935 submachine guns.

### Machine guns

A 7mm version of the air-cooled, strip-fed French Hotchkiss M1914 machine gun was manufactured under licence at the government Fábrica de Armas de Oviedo. This became Spain's standard medium machine gun, and was widely used by both sides during the Civil War. An assortment of other types were brought in by the Germans and Italians during the war, and many Russian machine guns were captured from the Republican forces, but the Hotchkiss remained the most common weapon in this class.

A sandbagged Nationalist defensive position with a 7mm Hotchkiss M1914 machine gun. The lack of liner rivets around the sentry's helmet may identify it as an M1938 so-called 'Eibar' variant of the M1926, issued mainly to militia units. His jacket is the obsolete M1926 thigh-length, double-breasted *tabardo*, taken from old stores to meet the shortage of uniforms; it has a wide fall collar, two rows of four brown buttons, and no external pockets. (AdeQHA)







Officers from various branches of the Army and militias wearing a range of garments and headgear; they display their wound medals and, on the left sleeve, gold wound chevrons edged in red. (AdeQHA)

## AFTERMATH

Despite the very substantial help he had received from Germany and Italy, when World War II broke out only five months after his final victory Franco pleaded the exhausted state of his country as his reason to maintain a position of neutrality, shifting to a status of 'non-belligerency' in June 1940. While Franco refused to allow German troops to cross Spain to attack the British bastion of Gibraltar, he continued to provide diplomatic, espionage, banking and other behind-the-scenes assistance to the Axis throughout the war (for instance, by allowing covert naval activity from Spain's supposedly neutral ports, particularly Algeciras).

When Germany invaded the USSR in June 1941, Franco formed the 'Blue Division' of Spanish Army and Falangist volunteers to fight the Soviets. The flood of volunteers allowed this 250th Infantry Division (Spanish) of the Wehrmacht to go into the line with Eighteenth Army outside Leningrad that October. They acquitted themselves well over the next two years, and suffered nearly 13,000 casualties (some 80 per cent of the original establishment). In October 1943 – under diplomatic pressure from the Allies to improve his credentials as a neutral in a war that was obviously turning in their favour – Franco brought the division home.

As the *Caudillo* or 'Leader', Franco remained dictator of Spain until his death in November 1975. The monarchy was then re-established, and a transition to democracy soon followed. In 1977 a law of amnesty was passed, under which Franco's followers were given immunity for past abuses in return for supporting the new constitution.



Officers leading the Falangist *Bandera de Marruecos* during the 1939 victory parade; this militia battalion raised among Spanish colonists was listed among the Moroccan units in Spain in December 1936, and by the end of the war 3,680 men had served in its ranks. Note the battalion's distinctive red *tarbush*, worn with blue shirt, olive trousers and puttees, rolled-down white socks, and brown boots and leather equipment. The left sleeve patch (see fourth man from right) was a red oval showing the Falange yoke-and-arrows in black, with an upwards-pointing white crescent set on its bottom half. (AdeQHA)

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## PLATE COMMENTARIES

*Note:* Apart from contemporary photographs and surviving items in Spanish museums as listed in the Acknowledgements, these plates also owe a considerable debt to what remain, after so many years, the main secondary sources for this subject: the various works by José Maria Bueno – see ‘Further Reading’ – particularly *Uniformes Militares en color de la Guerra Civil Española*.

### A: GENERAL STAFF

#### 1: *General de Brigada* Francisco Franco y Bahamonde

Franco is seen wearing his famous lined and fur-collared *capote-manta*, a cold-weather campaign cloak cut to allow the use of the arms, which originated with the Spanish Foreign Legion in Morocco. His general’s version of the *gorrillo* sidecap bears special gold piping and tassel, and frontal rank insignia (see inset 1a) of a 4-point star set on a crossed baton and sword; this is repeated on the collar of his

olive-brown service tunic. As divisional general he wore one star each side of the crossed baton-and-sword, and as generalissimo a third star at top centre. The fashion for folding the shirt collar outside the tunic also came from the Legion, whose light green shirt Franco wears here. The general officers’ red sash worn instead of a belt has gold-tasselled ends knotted on the left hip.

#### 2: *Teniente coronel*, winter campaign dress

The double-breasted, thickly lined winter campaign coat worn by this staff lieutenant-colonel is one of many slightly varying types collectively known as the *Canadiense*; it is made of pale khaki canvas-type fabric, with leather buttons, and this example shows a caped chest effect inspired by the Italian *Sahariana* style. His *gorrillo* has the all-gold tassel of field rank, and gold and red band piping for officer status and infantry arm of service respectively, and bears the two embroidered 8-point gold stars of this rank arranged vertically. Metal stars are repeated horizontally on a left chest patch; the distinctive colour of the Estado Mayor was blue, but many officers who

were necessarily promoted to appointments senior to their substantive rank (so-called '*habilitados*') wore their stars on a black background. His leather 'Sam Browne'-type belt supports a holstered Astra 400 pistol. High-laced field boots were popular with officers on both sides.

### 3: *Capitán ADC, summer campaign dress*

The cap bears the infantry junior officers' red and gold piping and tassel, and the gold aiguillette identifies this captain as a general's adjutant. His lightweight campaign tunic in pale olive has non-regulation cuffs, so the three 6-point gold stars of this rank are not worn in regulation position in a triangular arrangement above them. Ranking was displayed in a line above the left breast pocket, or, on various other field garments, on an open lapel. A regulation of November 1936 stated that they should be on a strip (*galleta*, 'biscuit') of branch-of-service colour: infantry, red; *cazadores* mountain infantry, green; cavalry, sky blue; artillery, black/red; engineers, garnet-red; medical corps, yellow, etc. The standard service tunic in darker olive-brown had a closed collar with long points; brown buttons, with five visible down the front; plain shoulder straps; pointed cuffs, with a single rear-seam button above the edge; pleated breast pockets with flaps of a 'scalloped' shape, and unpleated skirt pockets with straight flaps. This officer wears olive-brown riding breeches, but mounted officers usually wore them in pale twill cord. Here the belt is worn with both braces attached as support straps, crossing behind the back.

During the immediate enlargement of the Nationalist forces in 1936–37 the shortage of junior leaders led to the appointment of many minimally qualified lieutenants. This process was then regularized by setting up training academies where thousands of recruits were instructed by superannuated or unfit Spanish Army officers assisted by German Wehrmacht personnel of the *Imker-Ausbilder* organization. On graduation the duration-only subalterns were given the rank of temporary second lieutenant (*alférez provisional*), wearing their rank star on a black background.

## B: REGULAR TROOPS

### 1: *Cabo of Infantry, 60a División*

The 60a División was a component formation of the Ejército del Sur, at first serving as part of II Cuerpo de Ejército and later under the C de E de Extramadura. This corporal's rank is identified by the red diagonal stripes on both forearms, divided into three by black stitching, and by a pointed three-stripe patch set vertically on the front of the *gorrillo* (or '*isabellino*') sidecap, which is piped and tasselled in Infantry red. The *sargento* wore the same insignia in gold (or silver, depending on branch of service), and the *soldado de 1a clase* an inverted 'V' of narrow red tape from elbows to shoulders. The pre-war olive-brown *guerrera* service tunic has four brown front buttons, and bears on the collar points the brass Infantry device of a bugle-horn set on

a crossed sword and rifle. Bueno's illustrations often show divisional (**inset 1a**) or army corps insignia displayed on the upper left sleeve, but photos suggest that in the field this practice was not widespread. The distinctive Spanish *granadero* gaiter-trousers are full in the thigh and gathered and buttoned from the knee down, secured by leather straps beneath the boots. His brown leather equipment comprises the belt with a brass buckle plate bearing the branch device; buckled support straps (suspenders) in a 'Y' arrangement; three rigid, squared cartridge boxes; and the bayonet frogged on the left hip – while not universal, this equipment was standard issue throughout the war. Additional field equipment was usually an off-white canvas haversack slung on the left hip, and a metal canteen slung on the right. The canteen was often cloth-covered; its base fitted into a metal pot, and a tin cup fitted over its neck. Here the weapon is the ubiquitous Spanish Mauser M1893 rifle.

Under the conditions of the Civil War the clothing and equipment of soldiers of both sides was far from uniform.



Barcelona, 1936: rebel troops in their shirtsleeves, handing around bandoliers of ammunition clips for their M1893 rifles. Note the '*granadero*' trousers, and the piping and tassel on the '*gorrillo*' sidecap. (Roger-Viollet)

Photos show many variations depending upon availability, the seasons, and areas of operation. Stores were emptied of obsolete stocks, items were made up locally, and there was a good deal of improvisation and 'make-do and mend'.

## 2: Sapper, *Agrupación de Minadores*

This specialist group from the *Cuerpo de Ingenieros* was assembled for positional warfare on the Madrid front, which involved both offensive mining and counter-mining. The sapper is wearing standard summer service dress of an olive shirt with pleated breast pockets and *granadero* trousers, but instead of the sidecap all ranks of the *Agrupación de Minadores* sported a black beret bearing the silver tower branch device of the Engineers (*inset 2a*). Another affectation was wearing the collar of the four-pocket service tunic opened. The branch badge is repeated on the buckle plate and as a chest pin, and the sapper is armed with a carbine.

## 3: *Soldado* in winter campaign dress

A typical infantryman in winter, though the sidecap was often replaced with a knitted wool *pasamontañas*. This was a substantial 'balaclava helmet', often complete with a knitted front peak (visor) above the face hole, and it could be worn either rolled down or rolled up above the eyes. Various woollen sweaters were widely worn, and the *capote-manta* was almost universal. Made from a large rectangle of sturdy cloth in a wide variety of drab shades, this had doubling on the shoulders and chest, and a deep stand-up collar with a button-across flap; some soldiers lined the collar with sheepskin, and officers often bought lined and fur-collared versions (see Plate A1).



A pre-war enlisted soldier wearing Infantry collar insignia pinned on his 1926 *tabardo*. While old stocks were issued during the war, the commonest winter garment was the *capote-manta* cloak, which was quick and cheap to manufacture in large numbers. (AdeQHA)

Badges such as NCOs' horizontal 'sharpened' rank stripes or, as here, the infantry branch device were often sewn to the left breast. This soldier wears his mantle over his equipment and weapon; the leather belt kit and field equipment could be worn over it, but the mantle then had to be carefully arranged and 'bloused' so as not to hamper the movement of the arms. Many photos show the use of woollen puttees and socks rolled at the ankle over the trousers.

## C: REGULAR TROOPS

### 1: *Capitán* of Artillery, everyday service dress

This officer wears a smart but comfortable '*uniforme de diario*', with the collars of the shirt and lightweight tunic opened; the latter has *Sahariana*-style breast pocket flaps. The regulation insignia displayed are gilt Artillery flaming bombs on the collar points, and above the left pocket the three stars of captain's rank on a diagonally divided black-over-red 'biscuit'. Additionally, photos show some artillery officers wearing the branch badge repeated on that pocket on a diamond or oval of red or halved black/red cloth. For the mounted branches the sidecap was worn with a brown leather chinstrap secured by two small buttons. For the same reason he wears spurred riding boots.

### 2: Dispatch rider

This figure, may be a volunteer who has provided himself with a private-purchase leather helmet and two-piece riding outfit, and has brought his own motorcycle with him when he joined the Army. Note his DR's chest badge (*inset 2a*). Bueno's similar figure shows a left-arm corps badge.

### 3: *Teniente*, 1a *Batallón de Carros de Combate*

The Nationalists began the war with the *Regimiento de Carros No.2* based at Saragossa, but this was weakly equipped with obsolete vehicles. The new tank battalion, initially of three companies, was formed from part of the *Inf Regt de Argel No.27*, and was trained by the Condor Legion's *Panzergruppe Dohne* at Cubas de la Sagra. By 1938 it had been divided into two tactical groups each of three companies (two with *PzKpfw I Ausf B* tanks, one with captured Soviet *T-26s*); that February it was transferred to the Foreign Legion as the *Bandera de Carros de Combate de la Legión*, under the administrative command of the 2a *Tercio*. The Nationalist tankers kept the black beret and silver *Totenkopf* (death's-head) badge worn by their German instructors, here with the lieutenant's rank stars added. In the field most crews wore simple *mono* overalls in some shade of brown, khaki or dark blue. Photos show the (unofficial) death's-head also worn on the right breast, where Legion tank officers wore a brass Renault tank badge (*inset 3a*). This officer carries an Italian tanker's leather crash-helmet, individually acquired from a CTV unit.

### 4: Insignia, 74a *División*

This formation is an example of how often divisions might be moved between army corps and armies. It is listed under I and then V *Cuerpos de Ejército* of the *Ejército del Centro*; the C de E Marroquí, and then the C de E del Maestrazgo, of the *Ejército del Norte*; and finally, in 1939, under the C de E de Toledo in the *Ejército del Centro*. Among its line infantry units from mid-1937 we find Bn 131/*Regt de Bailen No.24*; Bn 184/*Regt de Argel No.27*; Bn 285/*Regt de Tenerife No.38*, and Bn 289/*Regt de Canarias No.39*.

## D: NATIVE COLONIAL TROOPS

### 1: *Soldado moro*, *Tropas Regulares de Marruecos*

The standard pre-war uniform of the *Regulares* in Morocco



was a sand-khaki military shirt; a sand-khaki version of the four-pocket *guerrera* tunic, and baggy *zaraguelles* trousers gathered at the knee; dark blue puttees; and white canvas *alpargatas* boots with hemp soles (see page 46). The branch collar badge was a silver, upwards-pointing crescent bearing the Grupo number set on brass crossed rifles with fixed bayonets. A waist sash was tied at the left hip, under the leather equipment, in the Grupo colour: Tetuán No.1 red, Melilla No.2 bright blue, Ceuta No.3 green, Larache No.4 dark blue, and Alhucemas No.5 dark red. The usual headgear of the rank-and-file was the small, flattish, white Moroccan turban (*rexá*). As overcoats-cum-blankets they used long, loose, hooded Moroccan '*chilabas*' (djellababs), woven in various drab shades of mixed wool and goat hair giving an appearance of fine vertical stripes of contrasting shades. Their leather equipment was sometimes of standard pattern, sometimes of the colonial model (see D2); in place of the standard field-kit haversack they carried flat leather Moroccan satchels, sometimes with tooled decoration and/or long-fringed flaps.

During winter 1936/37 in Spain the Moroccans were issued some olive-brown woollen uniform items, *pasamontañas* caps (which they often cut down into something resembling a sailor's watch-cap), and Spanish field kit. As the war progressed and the corps doubled in size their special distinctions were limited to parade dress, though they retained the turban, *tarbush* and *chilaba*.

This figure is from a photo of troops on an airfield with a Ju 52/3m transport, but apparently not during the initial 1936 airlift. All wear this *tarbush* instead of the turban; the olive-brown waist-length *cazadora* blouse, which began replacing the *guerrera* tunic throughout the Army early in the war and was common by 1938; sand-khaki *zaraguelles*, olive puttees, and *alpargatas*. Their leather harness is standard Spanish issue; however, about half of the platoon in the photo have cylindrical leather pouches for the Lafitte hand grenade behind both hips flanking the central rear pouch. None have haversacks, canteens or any other field kit.

## **2: Cabo, Tiradores de Ifni; summer campaign dress**

This regiment of light infantry from the southern Atlantic coast of Spain's Moroccan possessions sent troops to Spain throughout the war, with up to six Banderas assigned to the 13a, 52a and 54a Divisiones at various dates (a Bandera de Ifni-Sahara is listed separately). It was only during the initial 1936 campaign that the first battalion retained this original lightweight Saharan '*siroquera*', and thereafter the Tiradores were generally indistinguishable from the Regulares. Note the standard Spanish corporal's breast insignia of three red bars 'sharpened' at both ends; below it on a red diamond-shaped patch is the pre-1937 badge of this unit, an open yellow 5-point Sharifian star. At some date during 1937, while serving with the 13a Div, the distinctive colour was ordered changed from red to bright blue, and the badge acquired a white, upwards-pointing crescent below the star. The brown leather equipment is the colonial rig typical of the Army of Africa early in the Civil War; first introduced in c.1925, it had up to eight small flat ammo pouches on the belt, and two could be attached to the suspenders.

## **3: Alférez of Cavalry, Tropas Regulares de Marruecos, 13a División**

Mounted cavalry saw widespread service in the reconnaissance role during the Civil War. The Cavalry branch

wore silver ranking and insignia; the branch collar badge was crossed silver lances, and for the cavalry of the Regulares an upwards-pointing silver crescent was superimposed. This Spanish officer wears the 6-point star of second lieutenant's rank on his red *tarbush* (which was regulation for native officers, and often worn in the field by Spanish officers of the Regulares); the star is repeated on a left-breast 'biscuit' in the green identifying colour of the Grupo de Regulares de Ceuta No.3. He wears summer campaign uniform with rolled sleeves, the light 'lentil'-coloured jacket contrasting with the shade of his cord riding breeches. On the left sleeve Bueno shows the patch of the famous 13th 'Black Hand' División (**detail 3a**) of the Moroccan Army Corps. During the battles on the Ebro in summer 1938 this division would suffer about 70 per cent casualties among its officers and 60 per cent among the rank-and-file; during the whole war it would lose 136 officers killed and 817 wounded, 3,570 enlisted men killed and 21,947 wounded.

## **4: Guardia moro, Guardia de Su Excelencia el Generalísimo**

Franco's ceremonial escort evolved under various titles from February 1937 onwards, on a nucleus of Spanish and Moroccan personnel from the Guardia Civil in Tetuán and II Tabor of Grupo de Regulares de Tetuán No.1. These Moroccan guardsmen had a prominent place in the 1939 victory celebrations as the 'Guard of His Excellency the Generalísimo' – a significant compliment, given the centuries-old Spanish suspicion of the 'Moors'. The white-and-red cloak was a lightweight parade garment modelled on the *chilaba*, with a long hanging hood; similar *capas* were worn over parade uniform by officers of the Regulares. The white tunic has silver Cavalry buttons and yellow aiguillettes.

## **E: FOREIGN LEGION & MILITIAS**

### **1: Gastador, Tercio de Extranjeros, summer campaign dress, 1936**

The Legion's woollen uniform followed that of the rest of the Army in cut but was produced in a greener shade, and the shirt was light green rather than khaki. During the years in Morocco the corps had acquired a self-consciously swaggering style, typified by this bearded battalion pioneer; in winter dress the collars of the *guerrera* and shirt were worn folded open. The Legion's badge of a crossed arquebus, crossbow and halberd was displayed on the shoulder straps when in shirtsleeve order. It was also attached to the front of the rankers' red-trimmed cap, so NCO tabs were worn on the right side level with the front of the ear. In Spain the canvas *alpargatas* would soon be replaced with standard-issue leather boots. The Legion's change from brown to black leatherwork had officially begun in 1936, but under wartime conditions this took years, and it was not unusual to see brown colonial-pattern equipment (or even the old 1920s khaki web Mills equipment, with four-pocket pouch sets).

In February 1938 the Legion began a wholesale change from the *guerrera* tunic to the waist-length *cazadora* blouse, and from *granadero* to *bombacho* trousers (also called '*gudaris*'), which fell straight to the ankle and were tucked into modern-looking high-lacing black boots with buckled integral anklets. The Legion's original M1893 rifles were largely replaced later in the war with captured Czech-made 7.92mm Mausers.

### **2: Jefe de Centuria, Milicias de Falange Española, 1937**

This Falangist militia officer from southern Spain in everyday

summer field uniform wears the blue cap and shirt of the Falange with privately acquired riding breeches, leggings and ankle boots. He has armed himself with an Astra 900 (a Spanish version of the Mauser C96 'broomhandle' pistol) complete with wooden holster/stock. The cap is trimmed with red and silver and bears the two stars of his equivalent Army rank of lieutenant, as ordered in 1937. He continues to wear his Falange insignia, however. Those on his left breast are, from top to bottom: his Army rank stars on an infantry-red 'biscuit'; the Falange badge of a red yoke and arrows; and his Falange rank of three horizontal white arrows, on black. The white chevron on his left sleeve (worn by all ranks, and also seen on the left side of the cap) was the Falange distinction



Moroccan infantrymen in Spain, wearing the red *tarbush* and lightweight khaki uniform, with dark blue puttees and white canvas ankle boots with hemp soles. Tropical service uniforms in the 1930s were often 'lentil'-coloured – a faintly reddish tinge of sand-khaki. The central soldier wears the red diagonal sleeve stripes of a corporal, and above them the green-wreathed badge of the Collective Military Medal; note that all these *regulares* seem to wear a metal badge on the left breast pocket. The brown leather colonial belt equipment, with its distinctive flat pouches including provision for attaching some to the support straps, had begun to appear in the latter stages of the Rif War. (Bridgeman Art Gallery PNP 371734)

for a front-line combatant. When Falangist units received Army uniforms they tried to retain blue elements (if not a complete shirt, then sometimes blue collars and/or shoulder straps added to khaki shirts), and the yoke-and-arrows badge.

### 3: *Cabo, Requetés Andaluz*

The Carlist Requeté militia were not limited to Navarre; those raised in southern Spain were distinguished by a larger red beret with a central yellow disc and sometimes a tassel, while in the north the berets were plain red and smaller. This wounded soldier has received basic Nationalist summer uniform of a khaki shirt and olive trousers with puttees. The Requetés used upwards-pointing chevrons on the sleeves for

NCO ranks: two gold for *brigada*, two green for *sargento* and one red for *cabo*. Different sequences of officers' rank insignia were worn depending on region; those in the north used fleur-de-lys symbols on the left breast, those in the south horizontal bars. In both cases the field officer ranks wore three, two, or one gold, and the company ranks three, two, or one silver. Like many Carlists this man sports a white scarf, and a Catholic religious badge on his pocket; these came in various designs, but the Sacred Heart was very common. Carlist units were often led on the march, and even in the field, by a sergeant carrying a large crucifix on a tall staff. They were often accompanied by priests as field chaplains, who were known for risking their lives to give the Last Rites on the battlefield.

### 4: *Voluntario, Brigadas Navarras*

This grizzled veteran in shirtsleeve campaign dress is taken largely from the photograph on page 14. He wears the Spanish M26 steel helmet, recognizable by its deep skull, steeply flared brim and neck-guard, and shallow 'step' above the ears; painted initially in various drab shades and usually in green from autumn 1937, it was far from universal issue in the front lines. Here it is worn crammed down over a beret; in the north of Spain the Carlists of the regular brigades wore either small red berets, or olive berets from old Army stores. A crucifix can be seen pinned to his breast, and note the Carlists' widely worn red-on-white 'cross of Burgundy' patch sewn below. He has basic belt equipment and a haversack, and carries other possessions in a rolled blanket or *capote-manta*.

### 5: *Capitán, Cuerpo de Sanidad*

This captain of the greatly enlarged wartime Medical Corps is a member of the Falange (whose Sección Femenina also provided a high proportion of the nurses in military hospitals). His M26 helmet is painted with a white disc bearing a red cross with the yellow lettering 'SANITAT MILITAR'. He wears a blue Falange shirt under regular Army uniform; the tunic bears the Medical Corps' silver collar badges of a wreathed Maltese cross, his three rank stars on a yellow branch-colour 'biscuit', and the red Falange badge. His armband has the word 'MEDICO' in white stitching on the red cross.

## F: SECURITY FORCES

### 1: *Guardia, Guardia Civil, service dress*

This rural gendarme wears the uniform and equipment of the July 1935 regulations (these also introduced a grey-green *gorrillo* with a red band, piping and tassel, as an alternative to the glazed black hat for barracks dress). The light grey-green uniform has a closed collar, two

unpleated breast pockets, seven silver front buttons, red cuff piping, and unusual red three-button cuff flaps scalloped at the front rather than the rear edge. The collar insignia are ornate silver shields filled in with dark red, bearing an entwined silver 'GC' monogram. Where appropriate a long, narrow, white re-enlistment stripe was worn horizontally on the upper right sleeve. The 1935 regulation equipment has white metal buckles, a black belt and cartridge boxes, but tan brown support straps, carbine sling and cavalry-style pouch belt.

### **2: Cabo, Carabineros, service dress**

These frontier guards wore similar uniform to the Guardia Civil but without red distinctions and with some Army features. The buttons and buckles are brass, and the brass collar badge – crossed carbines set on a 4-point starburst – is repeated on the front of the flat crown of the service dress cap or *gorra de plato* (note that the black chinstrap is worn down). The Army corporal's red ranking is worn on the forearms, and on the cap band is the type of rank tab worn on the Army sidecap.

**3: Guardia, Cuerpo de Seguridad y Asalto, service dress**  
Bueno states that in the Nationalist zones these urban security police were seldom seen wearing the *gorra de plato* favoured by the Republic's Assault Guards, but rather this blue *gorrillo* trimmed with white. The plain dark blue woollen uniform still has the original crowned cap and collar badges.

## **G: NAVY & AIR FORCE**

### **1: Marinero, guard uniform**

The Marina Nacional continued to wear pre-war uniforms – blue in winter and white in summer. This seaman's cap has a chinstrap, and bears the name of his ship, the cruiser *Canarias*, in yellow capitals on a black ribbon tally. The uniform is of the type that was conventional for many navies, comprising a long dark blue woollen jumper worn over bell-bottom trousers, and black shoes. The jumper is dressed up for formal duty with a large calico collar with triple white edging, a black neckerchief and a white lanyard. The black leather belt equipment has a brass buckle plate bearing the Navy's crowned anchor badge. The rifle is the Mauser M1893, with bayonet fixed for this duty.

### **2: Soldado, Infantería de Marina, field uniform**

The Naval Infantry wore a distinctive gaberdine uniform of Army cut but in a 'lead-grey' colour. The *gorrillo* is trimmed with red, and bears a brass badge of crossed, bayoneted rifles set against the crowned anchor; this is repeated on the collar and the belt buckle plate. Bueno shows the equipment as Army brown leather but with a black bayonet scabbard. These units had dark grey *capote-mantas*, as worn here in a strapped roll around the body.

### **3: Maggiore, Italian Aviazione Legionaria, service dress**

This major is wearing an olive-brown uniform similar though not identical to that of officers of the German *Legion Condor*, and with a different cap. His *gorrillo* has gold and red trim but no tassel, and displays the gold 8-point star of his Spanish rank of *comandante*; this is repeated in Spanish fashion centred on his cuffs. In keeping with the fiction that these Italian airmen had joined the Foreign Legion he displays its badge on his shoulder straps. Some of these officers displayed several pilots' 'wings'; on his right breast, those of the Aviazione Legionaria have a Legion badge instead of the propeller of the Nationalist Air Corps (**inset 3a**); he wears those of the Italian Regia Aeronautica on his left breast, plus

a German pilot's badge on his left pocket. The decoration beside it is the Spanish breast insignia of the War Cross.

## **H: FOREIGN VOLUNTEERS**

### **1: General de Brigada O'Duffy, early 1937**

As Inspector-General of the short-lived 'Irish Brigade', Eoin O'Duffy was photographed wearing an olive-green tunic with *Sahariana*-style pockets, embroidered Foreign Legion badges on the shoulder straps, silver Irish harp badges in a 'mirrored' pair on the opened lapels, and on the cuffs the gold rank badge of a *general de brigada* – a single 4-point star superimposed on a crossed baton and sword. He also wears a Falange pin on his right breast as a sign of political solidarity. His cap is trimmed with gold, and displays the rank badge on the front.

### **2: Cabo of Irish volunteers, XV Bandera, Tercio de Extranjeros, early 1937**

The Irish volunteers received Spanish uniform clothing, though some may possibly have kept the German-style green M1922/M1924 uniforms of the Free State's National Army. This corporal has the Spanish *guerrera* with the shoulder-strap badges of the Tercio, and white metal harp badges on the closed collar. His shirt collar shows that he is a veteran of O'Duffy's 'Blueshirts' movement.

### **3: Portuguese 'Viriato' volunteer, 1936**

Puzzlingly, although formation of the planned 'Viriato Legion' was never completed, and the mass of Portuguese volunteers enlisted in and were clothed by either the Requetés or the Foreign Legion, there are photos that show men parading in Spain in this uniform; Bueno considered it probable that at least some uniformed elements did enter the country. The cap, shirt and tie are all black. The stone-grey tunic has pointed red-and-white collar patches, and a left sleeve shield showing the Portuguese national coat of arms. Here the trousers hang loose over black ankle boots, though Bueno illustrates buttoned grey canvas leggings below the knee. The buttons are white metal, the leather equipment black, and the rifle is a Portuguese Mauser M1904.

### **4: Bersagliere motorcyclist, Divisione d'Assalto 'Littorio', Italian CTV, 1938**

The personnel of the Corpo Truppe Volontarie originally wore the Adrian-style helmet, but this M1933 soon became common, here with the distinctive cock's-feather plumes of the elite Bersaglieri light units. In cool weather he wears the Italian Army's M1937 grey-green service dress with black collar facing, here bearing the crimson 'two-flamed' patch of the Bersaglieri with the silver national star. On his left upper sleeve he displays the divisional patch of this newly amalgamated formation (**inset 4a**). He wears the grey-green leather cartridge-pouch bandolier of the mounted branches, and at this date his leather leggings are brown; the slung carbine is the 6.5mm Carcano M1891 with folding bayonet. The Moto Guzzi GT 17 motorcycle was also used by the Italian companies integrated into the Nationalist Army's 'Arrows' divisions, including the so-called *Speccializzati Reparti Commando* equipped with Breda M1930 machine guns operated by the motorcycle rider himself.



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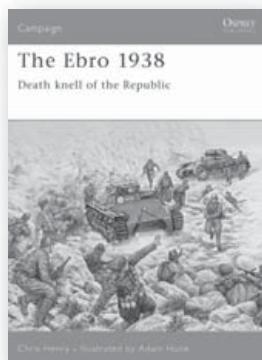
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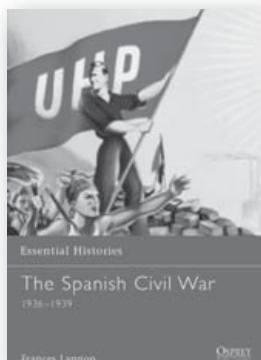
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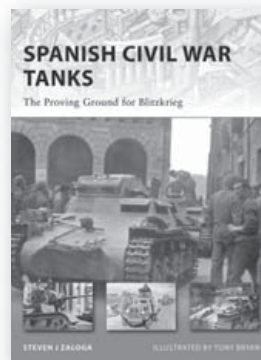
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## Dedication

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To the late Alejandro de Quesada, Infantry, Nationalist Army, and Francisco 'Paco' de Quesada, Republican Customs Service; and to Ken Seitz, Abraham Lincoln Brigade, Republican Army

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