

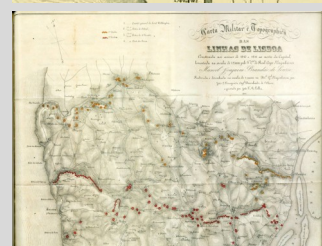
The Lines of Torres Vedras Historic Route (LTHR) is an integrated project for recovery, appreciation and divulgation of a significant part of military fortifications built between 1809-1811, for the defense of the city of Lisbon from the invasions of Napoleonic armies, during the Peninsular War (1807-1814). Supported by an inter-district network of Interpretation Centers, LTHR was designed and implemented in 2006 by an association of six countries, gathered in the Intercity Platform for Lines of Torres (Arruda dos Vinhos, Loures, Mafra, Sobral de Monte Agraço, Torres Vedras and Vila Franca de Xira). LTHR is co-funded by the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism, which donor countries are Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, and is supported by several entities, especially the Portuguese army and *Instituto de Gestão do Património Arquitectónico e Arqueológico* (IGESPAR—Institute for the Management of the Architectural and Archeological Heritage).

## A little history...

In the beginning of nineteenth-century, Napoleon Bonaparte starts the expansion of French Empire through all Europe and dictates the Continental Blockade, in order to isolate the rival England. Portugal, old English ally, challenges the Blockade. The first French invasion occurs in November 1807, under the command of General Junot, and, advised by the English, the Royal Family runs away to Brazil. The French troops passed through Vila Franca de Xira, and arrived Lisbon easily. In March 1809, the French army, under the command of Marshal Soult, invades the country once again, by North. After the Soult troops withdrawal, the Duke of Wellington decides to defend Lisbon, and orders the building of the one which is today considered the most efficient field fortifications system in Military History: Lines of Torres.

## Lines of Torres

Idealized by Wellington and built with Portuguese laborers, under the direction of the military engineers Richard Fletcher and John Thomas Jones, the Lines of Torres Vedras are today an historical reference, in what concerns to European strategy and military architecture. Built north of the capital between 1809 and 1812, this group covers, in its final shape, 152 military pieces disposed in an 85 Km area, between Atlantic Ocean and Tagus River, taking advantage of the sharp relief and the natural obstacles of the Region. The forts, redoubts and batteries, supplied with artillery pieces and powder from Lisbon Armory, had Portuguese and English gunners in its garrison, and ordinances companies and militias of several regions of the country. In October 1810, when the Napoleonic army arrives to the sight of the fortifications, the construction advance had two defense lines: the first, in a 46 km extension, went from Alhandra until the mouth of Sizandro river, in Torres Vedras. Tagus river was defended by a flotilla of gunboats, anchored close to Alhandra *Mouchão* (small river Island). This line defended the main line, placed in its rearward, which in an extension of 39 km went from the salterns close to Forte da Casa until Ribamar, in Mafra.



## 1st Fort of Suberra (Military work nr. 114)

It was placed in Military District nr. 1, defensive position of Alhandra, in the beginning of the 1st Line of Torres Vedras. It had as central goal to stop the enemy to attack the left side of the position, close to São Fernando Battery (nr. 4) and, crossing fire with the New Battery of Suberra (nr. 114a), prevent the advance of the enemy through Suberra valley, which contoured Alhandra position. It had a garrison of 100 men, and it was a redoubt equipped with 1 piece of caliber 6 and 2 pieces of caliber 9.

### Architectural characteristics

Pentagonal shape. It has 3 embrasures. Suberra Nucleus. Fort situated in Sierra of São Lourenço or Alhandra, São João dos Montes parish. Paths (road transport/ bicycle/ pedestrian): EN10 – Miradouro road, in Sobralinho parish.

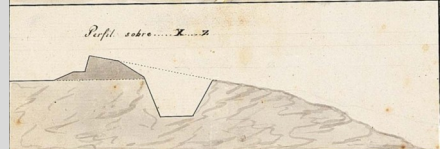
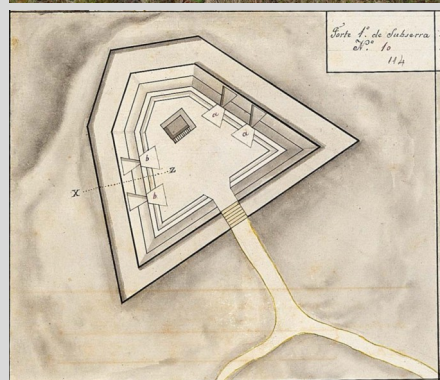
### Historical notes

Started to be built in February 1810. From October, defended by a garrison composed by Portuguese militia and ordinances, and Portuguese gunners, formed in 2nd Division of General Rowland Hill rearward, and in Alhandra by regiments of the Portuguese Division commanded by Major-General John Hamilton, which were opponents of the 2nd Army Corps commanded by General Jean Reynier, based in Vila Franca de Xira.

## Landscape Observatory

### Lines of Torres Vedras Memorial

On the hill of Alhandra, rises a monument, which intends to celebrate the victory of Anglo-Portuguese troops over the Napoleonic armies and the construction of Lines of Torres Vedras itself. It is a monument designed by the Lieutenant-Colonel of Artillery, Joaquim da Costa Cascaes, by order of Sá da Bandeira Marquis. The works were concluded in 1883. The statue (the classical Greek figure of Hercules), was done by the sculptor Simões de Almeida. The shaft corresponds to a marble piece done by Pêro Pinheiro. In it were placed, in 1911, two tribute cards to the military engineers involved in this mission, lieutenant-colonel of engineering, Sir Richard Fletcher of the English Army and Neves da Costa, Officer of the Royal Corps of Portuguese Engineering, responsible for the fundamental studies of the fields where the Lines were raised. From the Observatory, it can be seen the Lezírias (Marshlands), Tagus river, Alhandra and the surrounding industrial area. In this place, there was a defensive redoubt, Boavista Fort, composed by artillery and 200 soldiers.





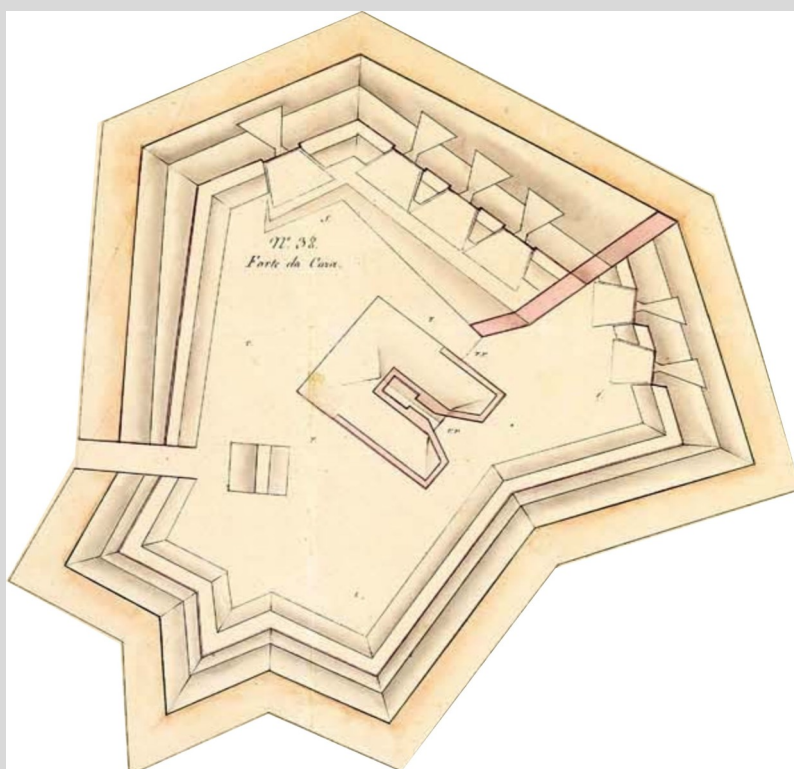
## Forte da Casa Interpretation Center and Military Work nr. 38

Military work nr. 38, was built in the beginning of the second line of fortifications, in a privileged strategic position: Albueira Sierra, today, in Forte da Casa parish area. Integrated in a series of seven forts, which extended from Tagus Riverside until the mountain, had the goal to stop the advancement of the enemy army by the two main roads that led to the capital, the Royal road D. Maria I, along the river, and the Royal road of Vialonga.

Its plan is in a star shape, with ditch, six embrasures and a capacity for 340 men. Stocked with five pieces of caliber 9, handled by gunners and Portuguese ordinances. In case of attack, it had rearwards the help of national militias of Colonel Carlos Frederico Lecor.

The Interpretation Center is established in the perimeter of the military work nr. 38, and has the goal to inform the visitor about some episodes of the troubled history of the Napoleonic Invasions to Portugal, the testimonies and its impact in Vila Franca de Xira County, and the relationship of Forte da Casa with the strategy and regional implantation of Lines of Torres Vedras.

The visitors can go inside the original fortification structures, uncovered by archeological diggings in 2008 and 2010. Ditch, magazine and embrasures can be visited with the help of informative signage panels, which give an historical background.





## Aguieira Sierra Nucleus - Aguieira Forts

### Aguieira Fort (nr. 40)

It belonged to the second Line of Torres Vedras, closing the left side of the defensive position of Vialonga, which connected itself to the beginning of the Line along Tagus river, in Forte da Casa [nr. 38]. It is located on the top of Aguieira Sierra, which dominates Bucelas gorge. Without any pieces, it was destined for rifle shooting, in barbette, with the goal to cover Portela Pequeno [nr. 42] and Portela Grande [nr. 41] Forts and to hit by fire the front of the mountain, where are São Tiago dos Velhos and Alverca roads to Casal da Portela. It had a garrison of 150 men.

### Portela Grande Fort (nr. 41)

### Portela Pequena Fort (nr. 42)

Were built on the top of Aguieira Sierra, an elevation which dominates Bucelas gorge, from where you can have a superb view over Tagus river and its *lezírias* (marshlands). Its goal was to hit by fire the East and West fronts of the mountain, but mainly to stop the advancement of the enemy army by the roads from Alverca and São Tiago dos Velhos, which passed through Casal da Portela. Fort nr. 42, further north, guarded impressively Bucelas gorge, and the road to Alverca, conjugating its defense with Arpim Fort [nr. 125] built later. They have both a unique particularity in Lines of Torres: the magazine is covered by a stone arched roof, still today well preserved, while the remaining ones had wooden one.

Fort nr. 41 had a garrison of 240 men, and fort nr. 42, had a garrison of 350 men.

