

LIBERTADORES IV

War to the Death: The battles for the Independence of Venezuela

Scenarios 13, 14 and 15 of Libertadores.
Published in Alea magazine # 32

The most charismatic as well as cruel and merciless of the Royalist leaders was without doubt, José Tomás Boves (1782-1814). Born in Asturias (Northern Spain) his activities prior to the war were diverse and often illegal. The beginning of the war found him trading in the remote region of Los Llanos, the sabana of the Orinoco River in Venezuela. His in-depth knowledge of the region and its dwellers allowed Boves to recruit and raise an army practically out of nowhere. He would lead that army in the so-called War to the Death unleashed by Simon Bolívar with his announcement of the 15 June 1813. Very few times his men gave quarter, and this was the reason for the extremely high number of casualties suffered by the Patriot forces when defeated by Boves. During the taking of cities and towns raping, looting and murder were the norm, especially against the White *criollo* population. Boves took an active part in these deeds, and was always the first to enter combat. The officers in his host always had to order "Follow me" and never "forward." Boves' men, ferocious enemies of the elitist oligarchy from Caracas, the true core of the Patriot movement, were basically rugged, semi-civilized cowboys of the Orinoco region. There were also some slaves emancipated by Boves or that had volunteered in the hope of purchasing his own freedom by combat merits.

If there is a man who in the long career of Simon Bolívar deserved the title of "the Libertador's Nightmare" this can not be anyone other than Boves. Even today, in the rural regions of Venezuela, for children who misbehave badly are told: "If you don't act nicely, Boves will come!"

Scenario 13 **1st San Mateo, February 28, 1814**

Qué demencia la de nuestros enemigos al pretender reconquistar la América sin marina, sin dinero y casi sin soldados¹. --Simón Bolívar

On 20 February 20, 1814, Boves left from Calabozo with the intention of engaging the main corps of the Patriot army, commanded by Bolívar. Bolívar, in order to protect his troops from the charges of the dreaded Llanero cavalry, entrenched them at San Mateo, taking careful advantage of the rough terrain. The battle raged for the entire day. The Royalist leader, convinced that he could overrun his enemy,

¹ "What madness that of our enemies at pretending to conquer the Americas without a navy, without funds, and almost without soldiers. "

concentrated all his cavalry in the left wing. He personally led the cavalry charge, but the lively artillery and rifle fire stopped one charge after another. Bolívar, waited coolly for the right moment to send in his reserves and prevented the enemy breakthrough. The battle ended when Boves was wounded, causing the Royalists to retreat and left the field to their enemies.

Royalist Deployment

Boves A, Morales B, P. Rico C, Sagunto D, Corona E, Guardatinaja F, Guarico G, Apure H, Cumaná I, Cachirí J, Barinas K, Venezuela L, Casicure M, Paraguana N, Pedregal O, San Luis P, Coro Q, Llanos R, Orinoco S, Calabozo T, Granada U.

Patriot Deployment

Bolívar 1, Nueva Granada 2, Valerosos Cazadores 3, Valencia 4, Barlovento 5, Guaira 6, Defensores 7, Caracas 8, Soberbios Dragones 9, Agricultores 10, Aragua 11, Ospino 12, Marturinos 13, 1º Bía 14, 2ª Bía 15, 3ª Bía 16.

Scenario Length

9 turns

Royalists.

Demoralization: 40

Rout: 53

Patriots

Demoralization: 37

Rout: 50

Special Rules

Ravines.

Use rule "Ravines" described in scenario 1, Ayacucho.

Trenches.

Any unit firing against targets placed in a trench hex needs to score one more to hit. That is, if the minimum die roll to hit was 8, if firing against a entrenched target, it must roll 9 or more.

Elimination of leader Boves counts as seven (7) squares towards demoralization for the Royalist side.

Scenario 14 **2nd San Mateo, 25 March 1814**

*Las derrotas serán vengadas, los verdugos exterminados
Nuestro odio será implacable y la guerra será a muerte²-- Simón Bolívar*

Once Boves recovered from his wounds from 1st San Mateo (during his convalescence Bolívar sent in

² *Defeats will be avenged, butchers exterminated
Our hate will be unstoppable and the war will be to the death*

a “commando” with the mission of assassinating Boves, but this mission was stopped by the Royalists troops) he launched a new assault of the Patriot position despite the numerous casualties suffered in February. This time the Royalist commander planned a general assault, looking for a weak spot in the line of his entrenched opponent. The Royalist assault quickly occupied mount Calvario and the Trapiche mill, where the Patriot ammunition depot was hidden. When the depot was about to fall into Royalist hands the Colombian Captain Ricaurte blew it up, killing himself and his men, as well as numerous Royalists who were on the verge of capturing the precious ammunition. Bolívar once again gave proof of his self-assurance and held firm in the centre without yielding to the enemy’s momentum. With nighfall Boves again retreated from the battlefield. However, aware of the fact that the Patriots are too debilitated to pursue, Boves prevented the Patriot force under Mariño to unite with the main Patriot main body, inflicting a defeat on Mariño at Bocachica. (31 March 1814)

Royalist Deployment

Boves A2, Morales B2, Sagunto d2, Corona e2, Apure h2, Cumaná i2, Cachiri j2, Venezuela l2, Pedregal o2, San Luís p2, Coro q2, Llanos r2, Orinoco s2, Calabozo t2, Granada u2.

Patriot Deployment

Bolívar I, Nueva Granada II, Valerosos Cazadores III, Barlovento IV, Caracas VI, Defensores V, Soberbios Dragones VII, Agricultores VIII, Aragua IX, 1ª Bía X, 2ª Bía XI, 3ª Bía XII.

Game Length

9 turns

Special Rules

Elimination of leader Boves counts as seven (7) squares towards demoralization for the Royalist side.

The Honor of Colombia

During any game turn (Patriot player’ choice) the unit placed in the Trapiche mill hex may “blow” the ammunition depot, thus eliminating the unit placed in that hex and all units in the six hexes surrounding the Trapiche mill. This may happen once per match. The Trapiche Mill may be occupied for victory conditions purposes.

Victory Conditions.

Add the number of hexes controlled by each player of the following terrain features: El Calvario (6 hexes), San Mateo (4 hexes), Hacienda Bolívar (1 hex) and Trapiche (1 hex.) The Royalist player is considered to control 2 more hexes for victory purposes. That is, if at the end of the game the Royalist player controls 3 hexes of Calvario, 2 of San Mateo and Hacienda Bolívar, he is considered to control $6+2=8$ victory hexes against 7 of the Patriots (the remaining 4 of el Calvario+2 (San Mateo) +1 (Trapiche).)

Scenario 15

Urica, 5 December 1814

*Es mérito suficiente para lograr premio o grado en el ejército patriota
presentar un número de cabezas españolas, con veinte se ascenderá
a alférez, con treinta a teniente, con cuarenta a capitán...³--Justo Briceño*

Like a set of dominos, one after another the Patriot cities and armies were captured and destroyed by the army of Boves. Against his horde there are only two options for the Patriots; lock themselves up in the city and endure a siege, or confront their enemy out in the open fields, where the Llanero cavalry reigned supreme. When the Patriots were left with only the town of Maturín, the senior Patriot officer, Ribas, opted for a ranged battle. Nevertheless, he committed the grave error of leaving behind a strong garrison that would be of little use in case of defeat. To defeat Boves, the Patriot commander trusted his elite cavalry, the so-called *Rompelíneas*, “Line Breakers”. At the beginning of the battle, the Patriots routed the Royalist right flank. Boves came to the rescue, but was killed. His men, instead of becoming demoralized, went berserk and overran the Patriot forces, taking no prisoners. Very few Patriots escaped the slaughter. After crushing the Patriot army, Boves’ forces assaulted the city. Ribas tried to flee but he was promptly captured and beheaded. His head, topped by the Phrygian hat he always wore in combat, was displayed in Caracas by the victors at the end of a lance.

Patriot Deployment

Ribas 1, Maturín 2, Barcelona 3, Piar 4, Rompelíneas 5, Zaraza 6, Monagas 7, Alto Llano 8, 2ª bía 9.

Royalist Deployment

Boves A, Rey B, Cazadores C, Tiznados D, Guayabal E, Espino F, Rastro G, Cumaná H, Llanos I

Duración

6 turns

Royalists

Demoralization: 26

Rout: 34

Patriots

Demoralization: 24

Rout: 31

³ ...In the Patriot army, in order to obtain a promotion or grade it is sufficient merit to present a certain number of Spanish chopped heads: 20 heads will be enough to achieve lieutenant rank, with 30 to first lieutenant, with 40 to captain...

Special Rules

Elimination of leader Boves counts as seven (7) squares towards demoralization for the Royalist side.

The turns after the elimination of Boves (only) the Royalist side gets a rightward odds shift of +1 in all Shock combat die rolls.

Credits

Designer : Enric Martí