



Almansa

302nd Anniversary

Photos and Article:
Phil Thomason



In April this year, Almansa, near Alicante in Spain, celebrated the 302nd anniversary of the Battle of Almansa, which took place in 1707.

This battle falls into the period known as the War of the Spanish Succession, which involved many countries across Europe. The period is also known as the Marlborough period, due of course to the involvement of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough. The War of the Spanish Succession involved battles such as Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde and Almansa.

The re-enactment in Almansa, 2007 had been a great success for the organisers. Two years later, another re-enactment was organised to even greater public acclaim. From a living history point of view the event was even better in terms of attendance, as re-enactors from across Europe joined in the commemoration. Nearly half of the re-enactors came from Italy, while countries including some Wild Geese, France, UK, Belgium, Netherlands and of course Spain were represented. Both events were surprisingly affected by rain, presumably due to the fire power on the field which this year included Holcroft Blood's Ordnance. A Spanish riding display team provided the opening to the first battle of the weekend, while other cavalry included the North Irish Dragoons. The redcoats were pro-

vided by the Orkney Regiment of Foote ably led by Mr P. Wisken.

The last great battle of the War of the Spanish Succession will be commemorated in Malplaquet, France in September 2009.

It is also of note that Marlborough's notes on potential battle sites made during his long stay in what is now Belgium, included a reverse slope in Mont St. Jean, otherwise known as Waterloo. Wellington is known to have owned a copy of Marlborough's notes.

The Town Council of Almansa also marked the occasion by inviting the mayors of Almansa's twin towns of Lymington, Hampshire and Messina, Italy. The two visiting mayors raised the European flag as a mark of respect, and a notable statement on the ongoing 64 years of peace in Europe.

The organisers also paid this photographer a tribute by hosting an exhibition of his own re-enactment photography in the Town Hall during the event.

For a photographic review of the re-enactment of battles in this period go to: www.thomason-photography.net

