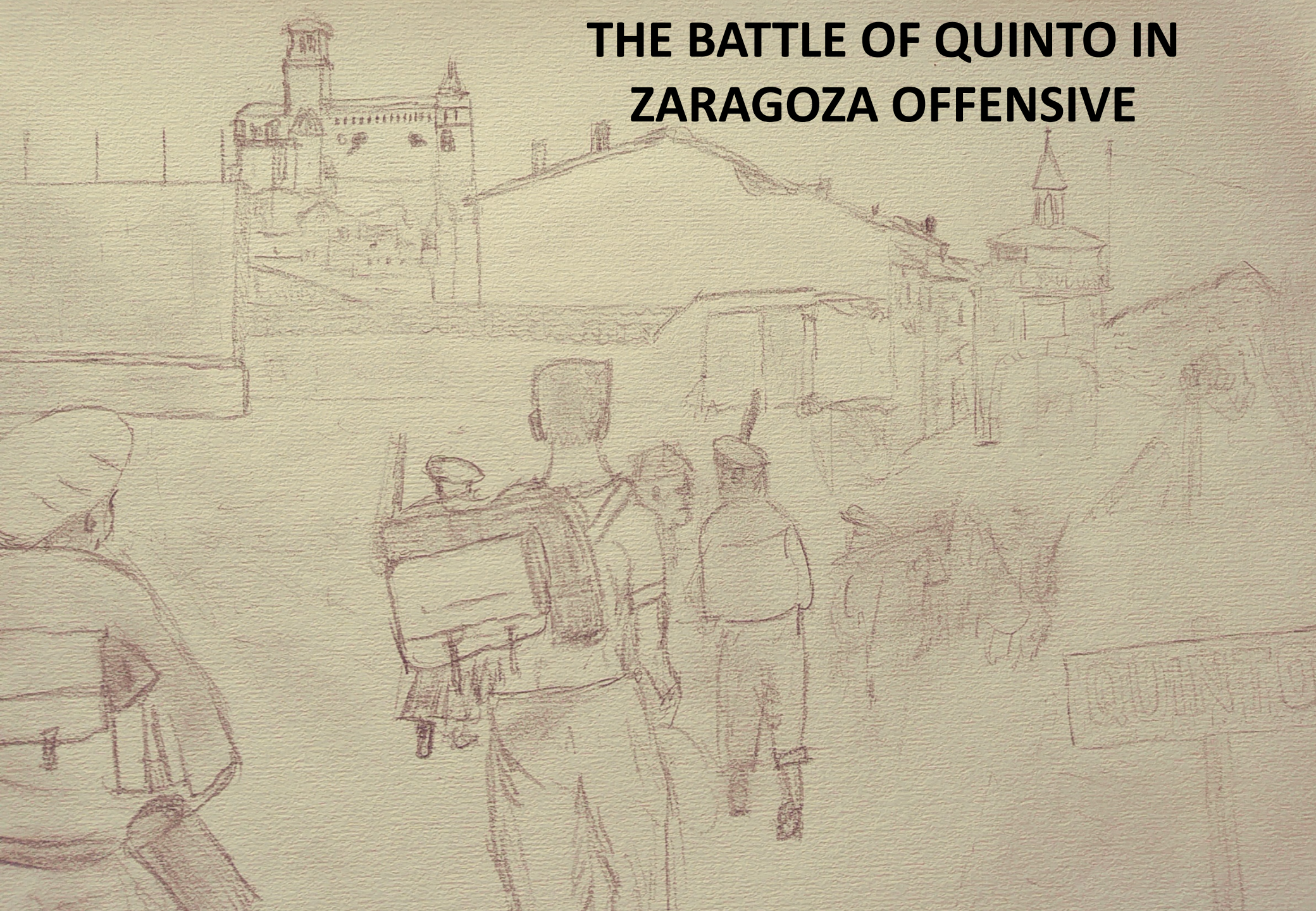


THE BATTLE OF QUINTO IN ZARAGOZA OFFENSIVE



THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR:

The Zaragoza Offensive (It is also called “Belchite Battle”) took place during the Spanish Civil War, in August 1937. One of its most important actions was the Battle of Quinto. This article describes that battle.

This work is based on the one published in the “Revista de Historia Militar” #115: “LA BATALLA DE QUINTO DE EBRO EN LA OFENSIVA REPUBLICANA SOBRE ZARAGOZA” (pages 89 - 134). It is a translated summary since the original was published in Spanish language.

You can download the original from here:

http://publicaciones.defensa.gob.es/pprevistas/2daba26b-fb63-65ab-9bdd-ff0000451707/pubData/source/RHM_115.pdf



Gonzalo Lorén Garay



Asociación Española
de Historia Militar



[Author's web: HISTORIA GONZALO](#)



FRANCE

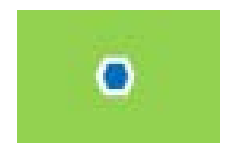
PORTUGAL

SEAT OF REBEL GOVERNMENT

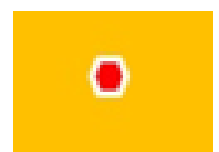
SEAT OF REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT

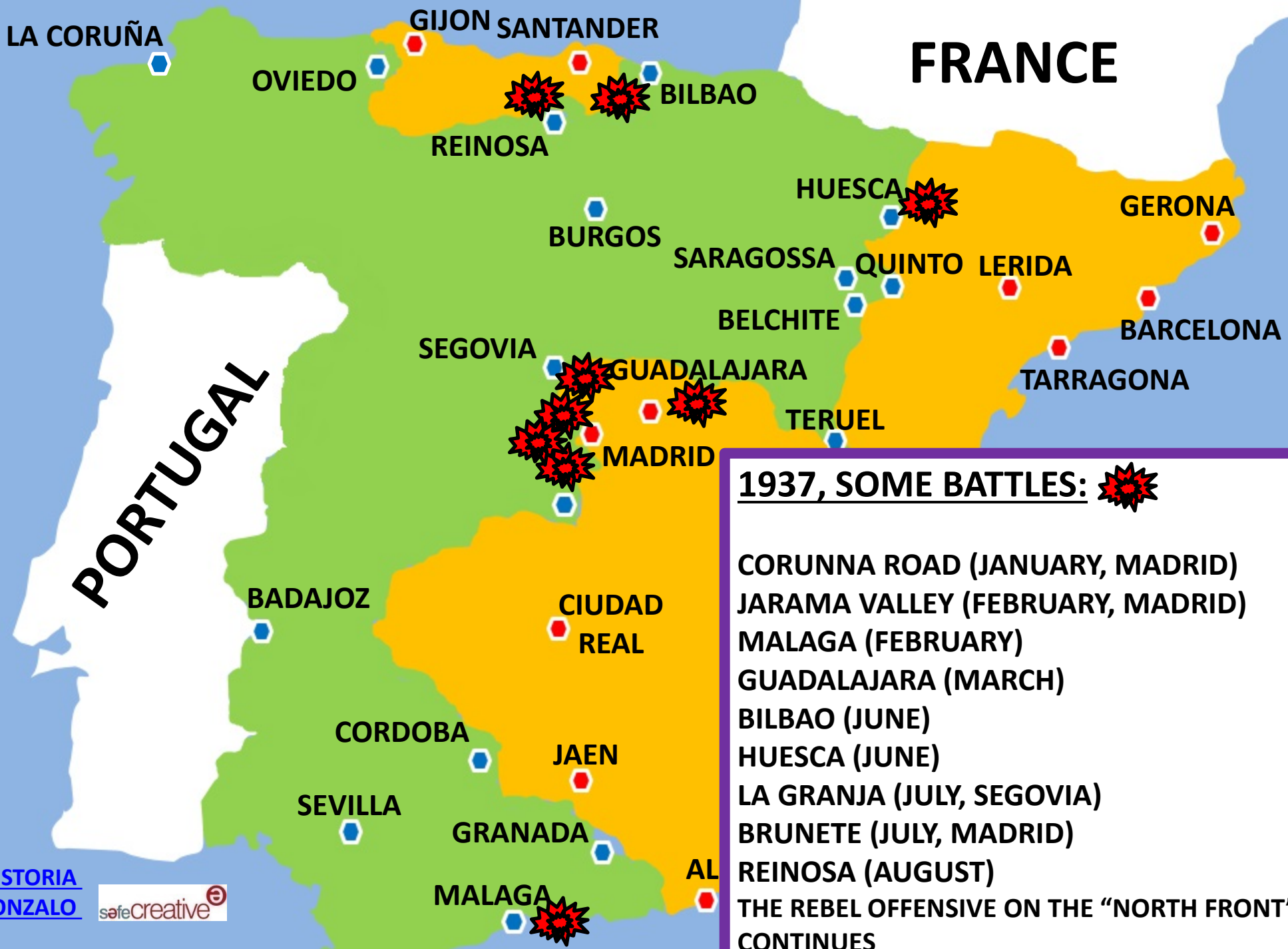
AUGUST 20th, 1937

REBEL CITY / ZONE



REPUBLICAN CITY / ZONE





FRANCE

LA CORUÑA

OVIEDO

GIJON SANTANDER



BILBAO

REINOSA

HUESCA



GERONA

BURGOS

SARAGOSSA

QUINTO

LERIDA

BELCHITE

BARCELONA

SEGOVIA

GUADALAJARA

TARRAGONA

TERUEL



MADRID

1937, SOME BATTLES: 

CORUNNA ROAD (JANUARY, MADRID)

JARAMA VALLEY (FEBRUARY, MADRID)

MALAGA (FEBRUARY)

GUADALAJARA (MARCH)

BILBAO (JUNE)

HUESCA (JUNE)

LA GRANJA (JULY, SEGOVIA)

BRUNETE (JULY, MADRID)

REINOSA (AUGUST)

THE REBEL OFFENSIVE ON THE "NORTH FRONT" CONTINUES

BADAJOS

CIUDAD REAL

CORDOBA

JAEN

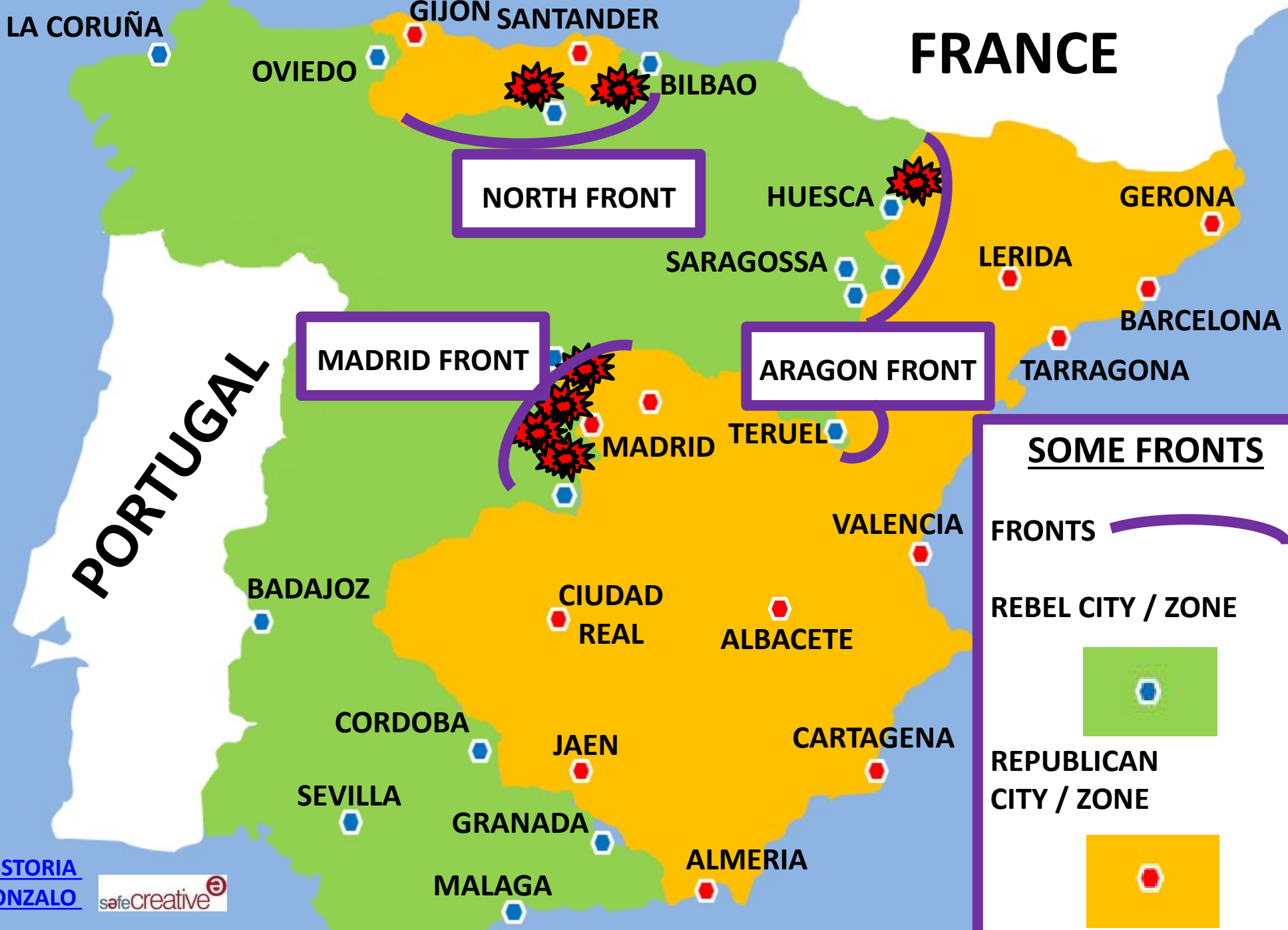
SEVILLA

GRANADA

MALAGA



AL



FRANCE


PORTUGAL

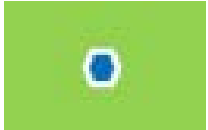
NORTH FRONT

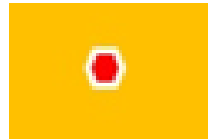
MADRID FRONT

ARAGON FRONT

SOME FRONTS

FRONTS 

REBEL CITY / ZONE 

REPUBLICAN CITY / ZONE 

FRANCE



ARAGON FRONT

HUESCA

GERONA
(GIRONA)

SARAGOSSA
(ZARAGOZA)

QUINTO

LERIDA
(LLEIDA)

BELCHITE

EBRO
RIVER

BARCELONA

TARRAGONA

REBEL CITY / ZONE

TERUEL

REPUBLICAN
CITY / ZONE

EBRO RIVER



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MILITARY UNITS (I)

In the Spanish Army the numbers of Army Corps, Brigades and Battalions are written using roman numerals. You will see them in Arabic numerals in this work.

- A Company, “Compañía”, is a military unit composed of 3 or 4 platoons (80-160 soldiers).
 - In the “Falangist” units was called “Centuria”
 - In the cavalry units is called “Escuadrón”
 - In the artillery units is called “Batería” (4 cannons or howitzers)

- A Battalion, “Batallón”, is a military unit composed of 4 or 5 “Compañías” (400-600 soldiers). One of these “Compañías” could be a Machine Gun Company.
 - In the “Falangist” units was called “Bandera”
 - In the “Requeté” (Carlist) units was called “Tercio”
 - In the cavalry or artillery units is called “Grupo”

MILITARY UNITS (II)

- A Brigade, “Brigada Mixta”, was composed of 4 Infantry Battalions. In addition It had Support Units such as a Field Artillery Battery, an Engineer Combat Company and Logistic Units. In the republican side It had 3,600 soldiers (in theory, probably 2,500).
- In the rebel side It used to be larger. For example, BMPE (Brigada Mixta de Posición y Etapas) had 7,800 soldiers; BM (Brigada Móvil) had 6,500 soldiers.
- A Division, is a military unit composed of 2 or 3 Brigades. In the Republican Army It could have 5,000 – 10,000 soldiers. In the Rebel Army, in Aragón, 51st Division had 22,300 soldiers, 52nd Division 17,400 and 105th Division 9,400.
- An Army Corps is composed of 2 or 3 Divisions. An Army is composed of 2 or more Army Corps.
- Military Aviation Units:
 - Air Group: 2 or 3 Squadrons
 - Fighter Squadron: 8-18 aircrafts
 - Bomber Squadron: 6-9 aircrafts

ORDER OF BATTLE (ARAGON FRONT)

REBEL SIDE

5TH ARMY CORPS

Commander:

General Miguel Ponte y Manso de Zúñiga

Chieff of Staff:

Colonel Darío Gazapo Valdés

Headquarter (HQ), Zaragoza (or Saragossa).

- BMPE (Defensive Brigade), HQ Zuera.
- BM (Mobile Brigade), HQ Zaragoza.
- 52nd Division (South Ebro) , HQ Calatayud.

These Units did not participate in this battle:

- 51st Division (North of Aragon)
- 105th Division (East Aragon / Soria)

REPUBLICAN SIDE

EAST ARMY

Commander:

General Sebastián Pozas Perea

Chieff of Staff:

Lieutenant colonel (Lt. Col.) Antonio Cerdón
García

Headquarter (HQ), Lérida (or Lleida)

- 10th Army Corps. HQ Barbastro
(North of Aragón)
- 11th Army Corps. HQ Sariñena
(North of Ebro)
- 12th Army Corps. HQ Alcañiz
(South of Ebro)

ORDER OF BATTLE (DETAIL)

- **BMPE, Commander, Colonel Antonio Civera Aixemus.**
- **BM, Commander, Lt. Col. Alfredo Galera Paniagua.**
- **52nd Division: Commander, colonel (enabled general) Mariano Muñoz Castellanos:**
 - **1st Brigade (North) HQ Cariñena. Commander, colonel Álvaro Sueiro y Vilariño.**
 - **1st Half Brigade. HQ Belchite. Commander, Lt. Col. Enrique San Martín Ávila**
 - **Rest of Units of 52nd Division: They did not participate in the battle.**

11th Army Corps:

- **27th Division (Former Carlos Marx Column, communist).**
- **26th Division (Former Durruti Column, anarchist). HQ Bujaraloz. Commander, Major (militias) Ricardo Sanz García**

12th Army Corps. HQ Alcañiz. Commander: colonel (Assault Guards) Pedro Sánchez Plaza:

- **25th Division (Former Juvert Division, anarchist). HQ Hajar. Commander, Major (militias) Antonio Ortiz Ramírez.**
- **30th Division (Former Macià-Companys Column, catalanist). HQ Montalbán. Commander, Lt. Col. Jesús Pérez Salas**

AIRCRAFTS

The main airfield (aerodrome) in the area on the Rebel side was Garrapinillos - Sanjurjo (7 miles west of Zaragoza).

Heinkel-46 (Reconnaissance) 2 Squadrons from 3G-11 Group (Major Pérez Pardo).

Heinkel-51 (Fighter) 1 Squadron from 1G-2 Group (Captain Corsini).

Reinforcements (from North & Madrid Fronts)

Fiat CR-32 (Fighter) "Chirri". 2 Squadrons.

Some Junkers -52 (Bomber).

Savoia-Marchetti SM79-I (Bomber) "Pava".

Messerschmitt Bf 109 (Fighter).

Total: About 35 + 50 aircrafts.

The main airfield (aerodrome) in the area on the Republican side was in Sariñena (near 11th Army Corps HQ).

Polikarpov I-16 (Fighter) "Mosca".
3 Squadrons.

Polikarpov I-15. (Fighter) "Chato".
2 Squadrons.

Tupolev ANT-40 (Bomber) "Katiuska".
3 Squadrons.

Polikarpov R-Z (Reconnaissance / bomber)
"Natacha". 6 Squadrons.

Total: About 140 aircrafts.

EBRO RIVER



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REPUBLICAN REINFORCEMENTS

5th Army Corps. Commander: Lt. Col. (militias) Juan Guilloto León “Modesto” (most of the commanders and soldiers were from communist militias)

- **11th Division. Commander: Major (militias) Jesús Liste Forjan “Enrique Lister”**
 - **1st Brigade**
 - **9th Brigade**
 - **100th Brigade. Commander: Major (militias) Luis Rivas Amat**

- **35th Division. Commander: Karol Świerczewski, “General Walter”**
 - **11th International Brigade**
 - **15th International Brigade**
 - **32nd Brigade. Commander: Major (militias) Nilamón Toral Azcona.**

- **45th Division. Commander: Manfred Stern, “General Emilio Kleber”**
 - **12th International Brigade**
 - **13th International Brigade**

Other Units: 4th Cavalry Brigade, 31st, 24th, 44th... Divisions

*** 46th Division (“El Campesino”) did NOT take part in this offensive.**

EBRO RIVER



ZUERA

PUILATOS HILL

ROBRES

CRUCETAS HILL

SAN MATEO

LECIÑENA

ALCUBIERRE

VILLANUEVA

PERDIGUERA

GALLEGO RIVER

VILLAMAYOR

FLORA HILL

FARLETE

ZARAGOZA

VILLAFRANCA

OSERA

EL BURGO

BUJARALOZ

FUENTES

PINA

RODÉN

TRAIN STATION
HERMITAGE

MEDIANA

SILLERO HILL

QUINTO

GELSA

LA PUEBLA DE
ALBORTÓN

No man's land

FUENDETODOS

CODO

ALMOCHUEL

AGUAS
VIVAS
RIVER

BELCHITE

VINACEITE

AZAILA

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CARIÑENA

REPUBLICAN OPERATIONS ORDER

East Army HQ, 20th August, Lérida (later Bujaraloz). Local forces and reinforcements were divided in seven Groups:

- Task Group (no letter, North). 2 Brigades (125th & 126th - from 28th Div.), to attack Puilatós Hill.
- Alfa Task Group : 4 Brigades (122nd, 123rd & 124th - from 27th Div. & 127th – from 28th Div.) to attack Zuera and then to go to Zaragoza.
- Bravo Task Group. Commander: general “Emilio Kleber”, 3 Brigades (12th & 13th – from 45th Div. & 119th – from 26th Div.), to attack Villamayor and then to go to Zaragoza.
- Charlie Task Group. 2 Brigades, to attack Pina Train Station and Bonastre Hermitage.
- Delta Task Group. 9 Brigades, to attack Mediana, Fuentes, Codo, Quinto and Zaragoza.
- Task Group (no letter, left flank). Commander: Lt. Col. Jesús Pérez Salas, 2 and a half Brigades (131st – from 30th Div. & 117th & 118th - from 25th Div.) to attack La Puebla de Albortón and then to go back to Belchite.
- Reserves: 24th Division (Hijar), 44th Division (Albalate) and 153th (Caspe), 141st(Castellnou) and 143rd (Escatrón) Brigades. Armored Vehicles and Engineer Units (Vinaceite).

REPUBLICAN ARMAMENT

Soviet light infantry TANKS (T-26 model 1933). We cannot find BT-5 model until October, in the battle of Fuentes de Ebro. A tank company had 10 or 15 tanks:

- **2 Companies with Alfa Task Group.**
- **4 Companies with Delta Task Group.**
- **1 Company (Reserve, in Hajar).**

Field ARTILLERY Groups (reduced):

- **1 Group with Alfa Task Group.**
- **1 Group with Bravo Task Group.**
- **3 Groups with Delta Task Group and 3 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Groups.**

ENGINEER Combat Battalions (reduced):

- **1 Battalion with Alfa Task Group.**
- **1 Battalion with Bravo Task Group.**
- **1 Company with Charlie Task Group.**
- **3 Battalions with Delta Task Group.**

THE REPUBLICAN PLAN:

Minister of Defense:
Indalecio Prieto Tuero

Chief of Central Staff:
Lt. Col. Vicente Rojo Llunch

Chief of Staff (East Army):
Lt. Col. Antonio Cerdón García



CARIÑENA

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CHARLIE TASK GROUP (DETAIL)

Commander: The same 102nd Brigade commander.

Mission: Charlie Task Group had to cross Ebro river near Pina (4 am. on 24th) and then to conquest train station, Bonastre hermitage and nearby positions. After that, it should go south and to support the conquest of Quinto (joining the Delta Task Group).

Units:

- **102nd Brigade (from 43rd Div.). 405th, 406th, 407th & 408th Battalions.**
 - **Commander: Major (militias, comunist) José Hernández de la Mano (he had just replaced the old commander Sebastián García-Peña Valencia).**
- **120th Brigade (from 26th Div.). 478th, 479th & 480th Battalions.**
 - **Commander: Major (militias, anarchist) Joaquín Morlanes Jaulín.**
- **Engineer Company (from 26th Div.).**

DELTA TASK GROUP (DETAIL)

Unit Commanders:

- **Delta Task Group: Lt. Col. (militias) Juan Guilloto León “Modesto”**
 - **Vanguard Group: Major (militias) Luis Rivas Amat**
 - **2nd Group : Major (militias) Jesús Liste Forjan “Enrique Lister”**
 - **3rd Group : General Karol Świerczewski, “General Walter”**
 - **“X” Group: Major (militias) Nilamón Toral Azcona.**

Units and Missions:

- **Vanguard Group: 100th & 4th (Cavalry) Brigades. To start movement quietly at 9 p.m. on August 23rd and infiltrate through rebel lines until it reach Mediana and Fuentes and to conquer both villages.**
- **Lister Group : 1th & 9th Brigades. To follow the Vanguard Group by trucks (motorized column) and to get Saragossa at 9 pm. on 24th and to conquest the city key points.**
- **Walter Group : 11th & 15th International Brigades. To take the hills in the west of Quinto, and to conquest this town.**
- **“X” Group: 32th & 116th Brigades (from 35th & 25th Div,s.). To conquest Codo.**
- **Reserve: 134th Brigade (from 31st Div.).**

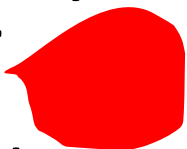
BACKGROUNDS

Most of the Republican reinforcements of the Delta Task Group arrived a few days before by train to La Puebla de Hijar Station or by road to Hijar (these are two different towns 2.5 miles apart). Some units (such as Lister's 11th Division) were already in the area since the beginning of August, because they had moved there to dissolve the Aragon Regional Defense Council (anarchist local government organization) in Caspe.

The units traveled by road to Azaila and from there deployed on August 23th along the line north of Vinacetite - Almochuel - Azaila, around the Lopín stream, which was the starting area of the Delta Task Group.

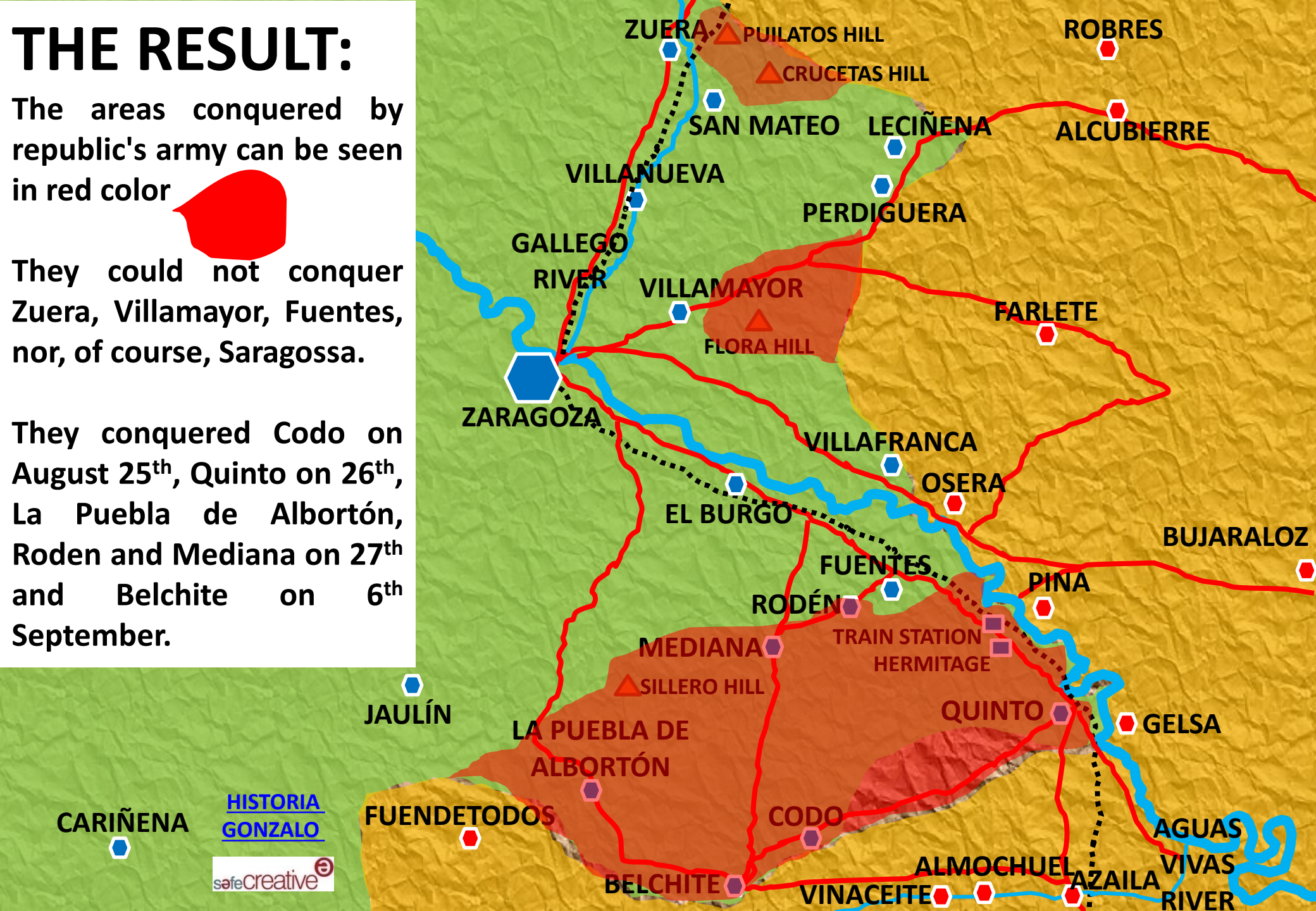
THE RESULT:

The areas conquered by republic's army can be seen in red color



They could not conquer Zuera, Villamayor, Fuentes, nor, of course, Saragossa.

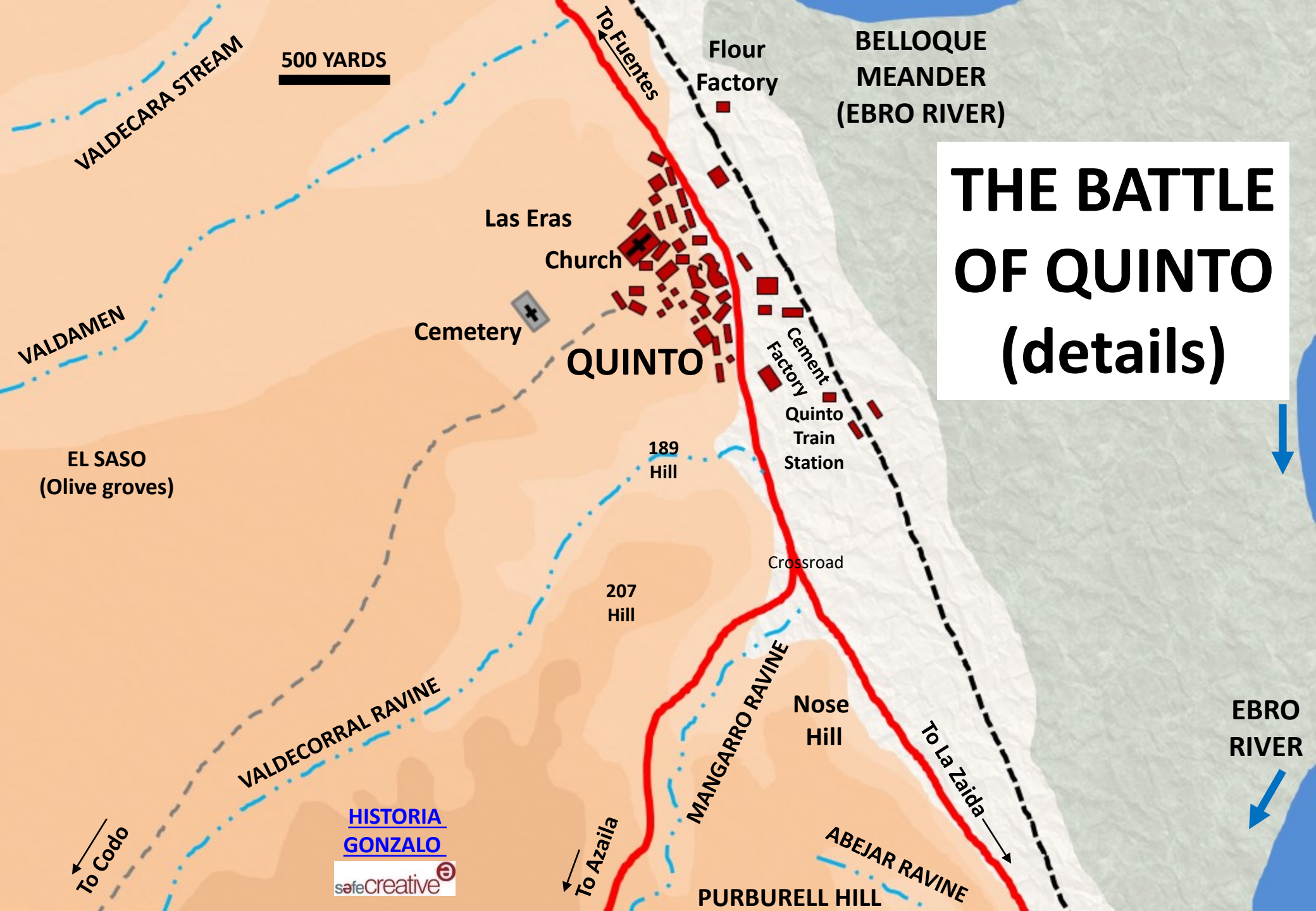
They conquered Codo on August 25th, Quinto on 26th, La Puebla de Albortón, Roden and Mediana on 27th and Belchite on 6th September.



CARIÑENA

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THE BATTLE OF QUINTO (details)

VALDECARA STREAM

500 YARDS

BELLOQUE MEANDER (EBRO RIVER)

Flour Factory

Las Eras

Church

Cemetery

QUINTO

Cement Factory

Quinto Train Station

189 Hill

Crossroad

207 Hill

Nose Hill

VALDECORRAL RAVINE

MANGARRO RAVINE

To La Zaida

EBRO RIVER

EL SASO (Olive groves)

To Codo

To Azaila

PURBURELL HILL

ABEJAR RAVINE

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11th INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE



Commander: Richard Staimer “General Hoffmann”.

Chief of Staff: Gustav Szinda (the old Chief, “Ludwig Renn”, did NOT take part in this offensive).

41st Battalion, “Edgar André”. Commander: “Louis”.

41EA

42nd Battalion, “Hans Beimler”. Commander: Johann Wilhem Hermann Schuldt “Willi Schwarz”.

42HB

43rd Battalion, “Thälmann”. Commander: Bruno Hinz “Georg Elsner” (when he died on the 24th, he was replaced by Anton Schichanowsky).

43TH

44th Battalion, “Austrian” or “February 12th”. Commander: Karl Bauer.

44AU

More than 50% of the Brigade soldiers were from Spain. There were also soldiers from countries in Central and Northern Europe (Germany, Austria, Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark, Luxembourg, Sweden, Norway, Finland... It was also known as “Hans Beimler Brigade” (don't confuse it with the 42nd Battalion).

15th INTERNATIONAL BRIGADE



Commander: Lt. Col. Vladimir Čopić .

Chief of Staff: Major Robert Hale Merriman.

57th Battalion, “British”. Composed of British and Irish soldiers. Commander: Peter Daly (when he was wounded on the 25th, he was replaced by Paddy O’Daire).

57BR

58th Battalion, “American” or “Lincoln–Washington” (it was the result of the merge of these two battalions one month before). Composed of American and Canadian soldiers.

Commander: Hans Amlie.

58AM

59th Battalion, “Spanish” or “24th”. Commander: Major Águila.

59SP

60th Battalion, “Dimitrov”. Composed of Czechoslovakians, Yugoslavs, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Poles, Greeks, Russians... soldiers.

Commander: Mihaly Salvai “Michael Tchapaiev”.

60DI

More than 50% of the Brigade soldiers were from Spain and from Hispano-American countries (like Cuba). The 15th Brigade was also known as “Abraham Lincoln Brigade” (don't confuse it with the 58th battalion).

ORDER OF BATTLE (REBEL SIDE)

In the area was the 17th Aragón Infantry Regiment. This Unit had six battalions. In Quinto were the HQ of 2nd Infantry Battalion and its 2nd and 3rd companies. Commanders: Major (Guardia Civil - Civil Guard) Miguel Andrés López, captain Juan García Laforga and lieutenant (enabled captain) Lucas Montesinos Lázaro. The battalion machine gun company was deployed around Belchite, Codo and Quinto. The 4th Company was in Pina Train Station The 1st Company was in Belchite.



“Tercio” (Battalion) of “Requetés” (Carlist) “Doña María de Molina y Marco de Bello”. The Command Post of the Tercio and its 1st Company were far from there. In Quinto there were only the 2nd and 3rd companies. Commanders: Lieutenant Antonio Sánchez Hernando (3rd) and Pantaleón López Rivares (2nd).



5th “Bandera (Battalion) de Falange de Aragón”. The Falangist Bandera was commanded by Captain Joaquin Riera Miñana. The Bandera was in full, except its 2nd Centuria (company) that was located in the “Paridera del Conde”, in the Fuentes de Ebro sector.



The Command Post of the 4th Field Artillery Group, the 6th Battery of the 9th Light Artillery Regiment (four 75 mm. canyons) and the 2nd Battery of the 12th Field Artillery Regiment (four 105 mm. canyons). There were also an Engineer Platoon (50 sappers), Signal Squad (12 soldiers) and Supply Support units (Intendencia) and some Civil Guards and militarized civilian. About 1500 combatants.

REBEL DEFENSIVE POSITIONS NEAR QUINTO

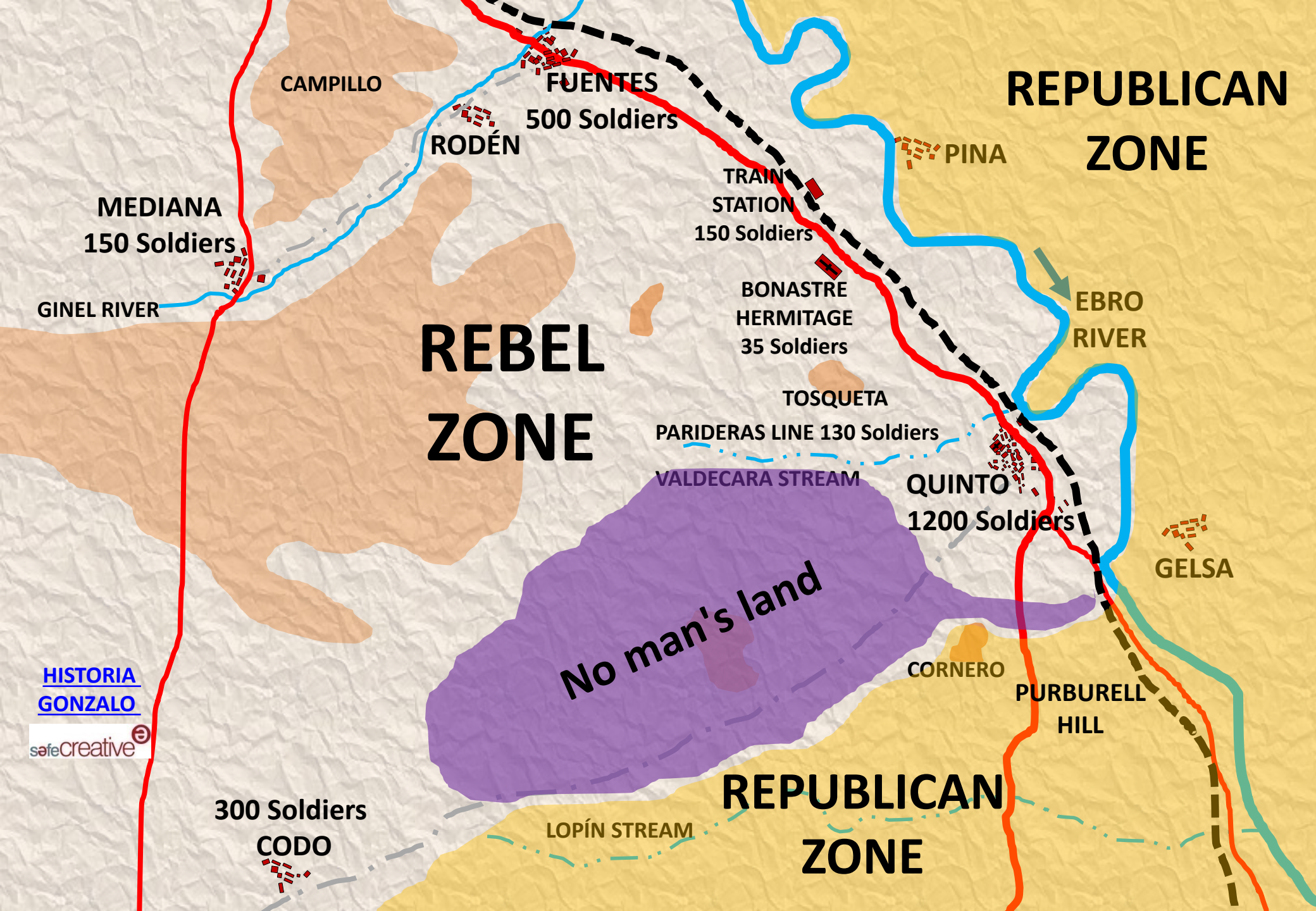
Pina Train Station Position: The town of Pina is on the other side of the river, therefore, in the Republican zone. There were 150 soldiers from 4th Company (2nd Battalion) to avoid the enemy crossing of the river.

Bonastre Hermitage Position: There were 35 soldiers from 15th Field Artillery Battery (9th Regiment) and two 75mm. canyons. Comander 2nd Lieutenant Luis Pellicena Bolsa.

“Parideras Line”: There were 130 Falangist soldiers deployed in five Defensive Points to prevent enemy access from the south to Fuentes. Paridera is a small building to house the cattle.

- 1st Paridera (Bizco)
- Tosqueta Hill
- 2nd Paridera (Gordete)
- 3rd Paridera (Pallarés)
- Lomacería Hill

Codo: There were 250 Requeté soldiers from “Tercio de Nuestra Señora de Montserrat” and 50 Falangist soldiers from 2nd Bandera de Aragon.



**REPUBLICAN
ZONE**

**REBEL
ZONE**

**REPUBLICAN
ZONE**

No man's land

CAMPILLO

FUENTES

RODÉN

500 Soldiers

PINA

TRAIN
STATION

150 Soldiers

BONASTRE
HERMITAGE

35 Soldiers

TOSQUETA

PARIDERAS LINE 130 Soldiers

VALDECARA STREAM

QUINTO

1200 Soldiers

EBRO
RIVER

GELSA

CORNERO

PURBURELL
HILL

MEDIANA

150 Soldiers

GINEL RIVER

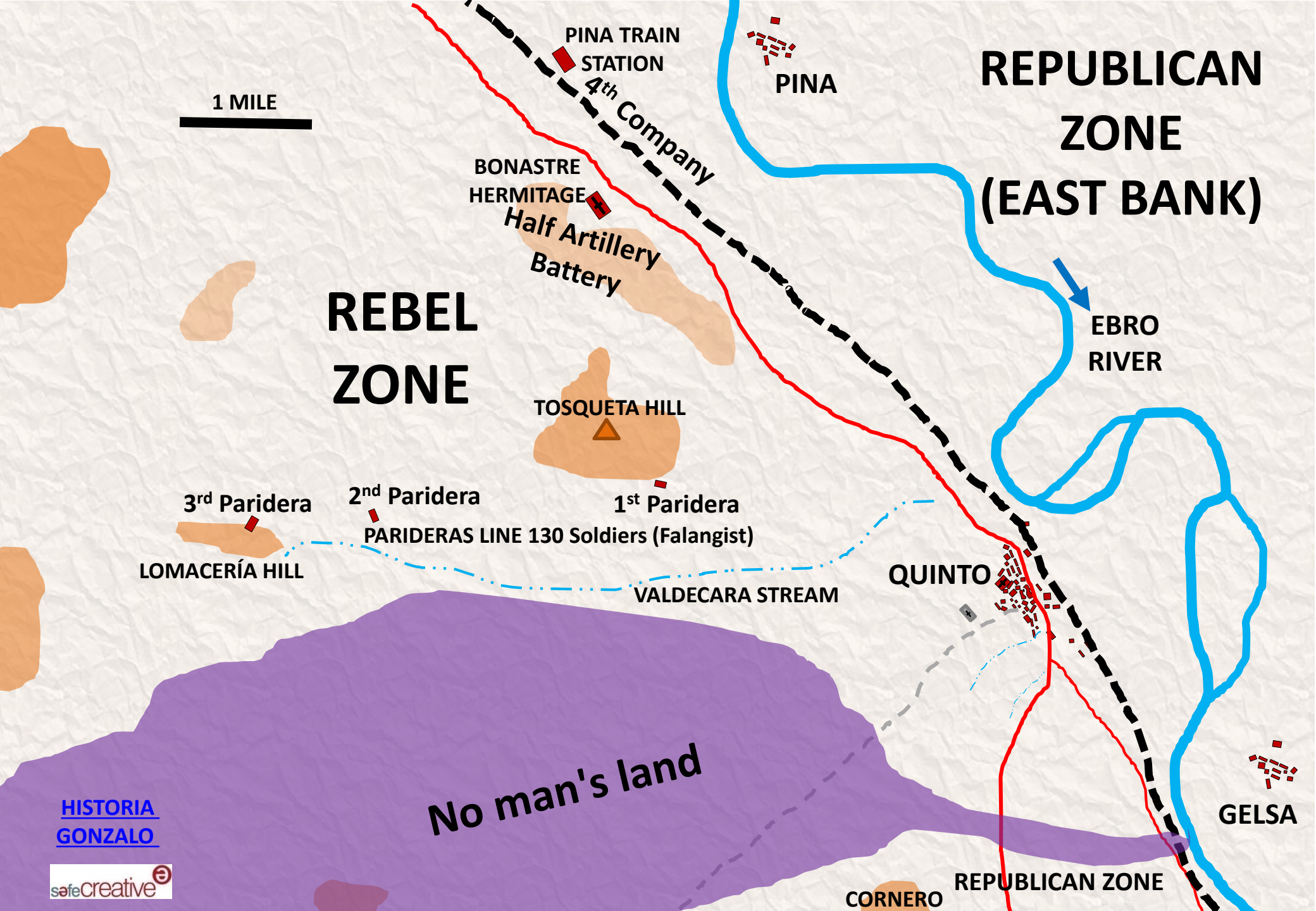
300 Soldiers

CODO

LOPÍN STREAM

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REPUBLICAN ZONE (EAST BANK)

REBEL ZONE

1 MILE

PINA TRAIN STATION

PINA

4th Company

BONASTRE HERMITAGE

Half Artillery Battery

EBRO RIVER

TOSQUETA HILL

3rd Paridera

2nd Paridera

1st Paridera

PARIDERAS LINE 130 Soldiers (Falangist)

LOMACERÍA HILL

VALDECARA STREAM

QUINTO

GELSA

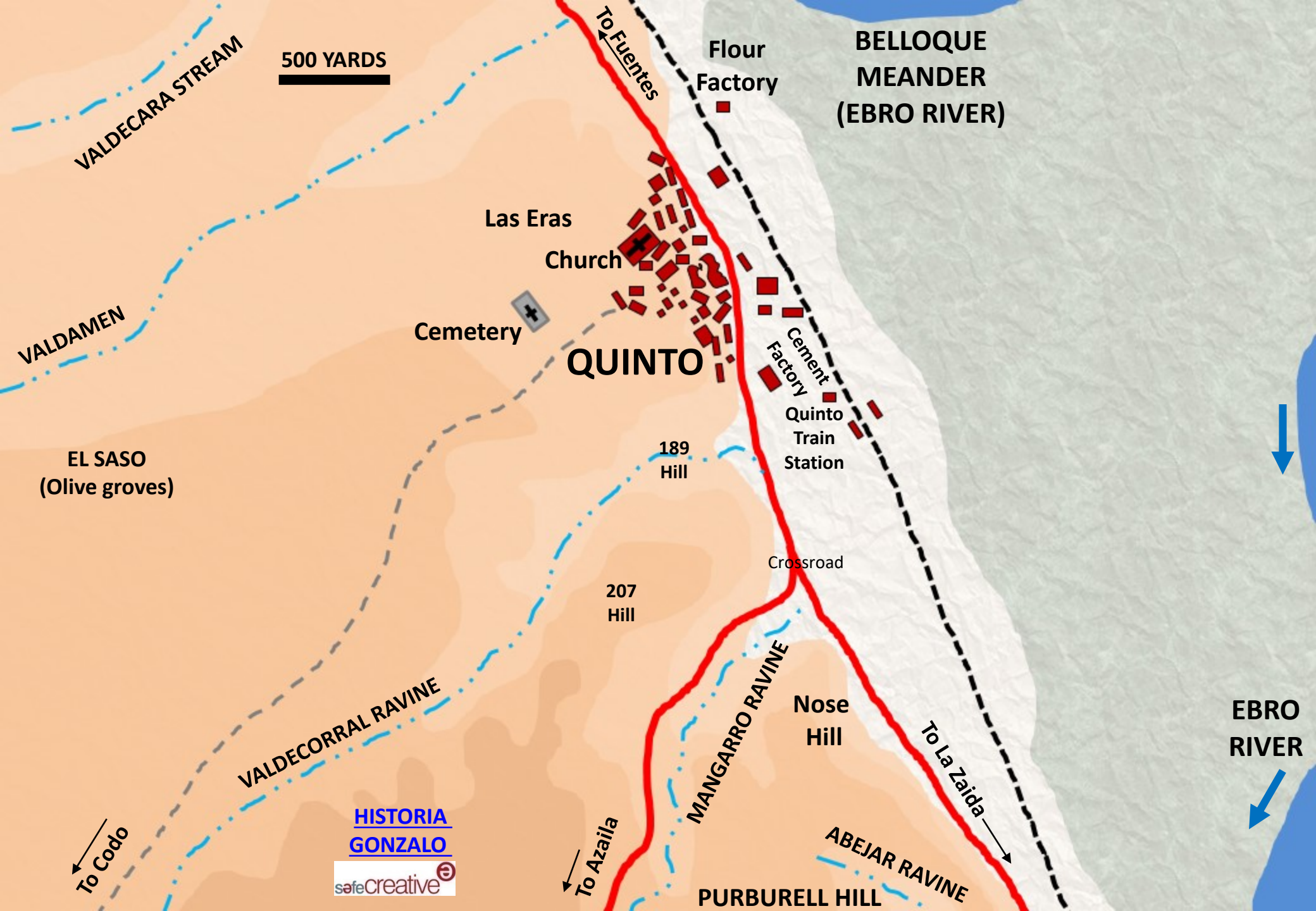
No man's land

REPUBLICAN ZONE

CORNERO

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VALDECARA STREAM

500 YARDS

BELLOQUE MEANDER (EBRO RIVER)

Flour Factory

Las Eras Church

Cemetery

QUINTO

Cement Factory
Quinto Train Station

189 Hill

Crossroad

207 Hill

MANGARRO RAVINE

Nose Hill

To La Zaida

EBRO RIVER

EL SASO (Olive groves)

VALDECORRAL RAVINE

To Codo

To Azaila

PURBURELL HILL

ABEJAR RAVINE

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QUINTO DEFENSIVE POSITIONS (I)

SURROUNDING QUINTO REBEL DEFENSIVE POSITIONS:

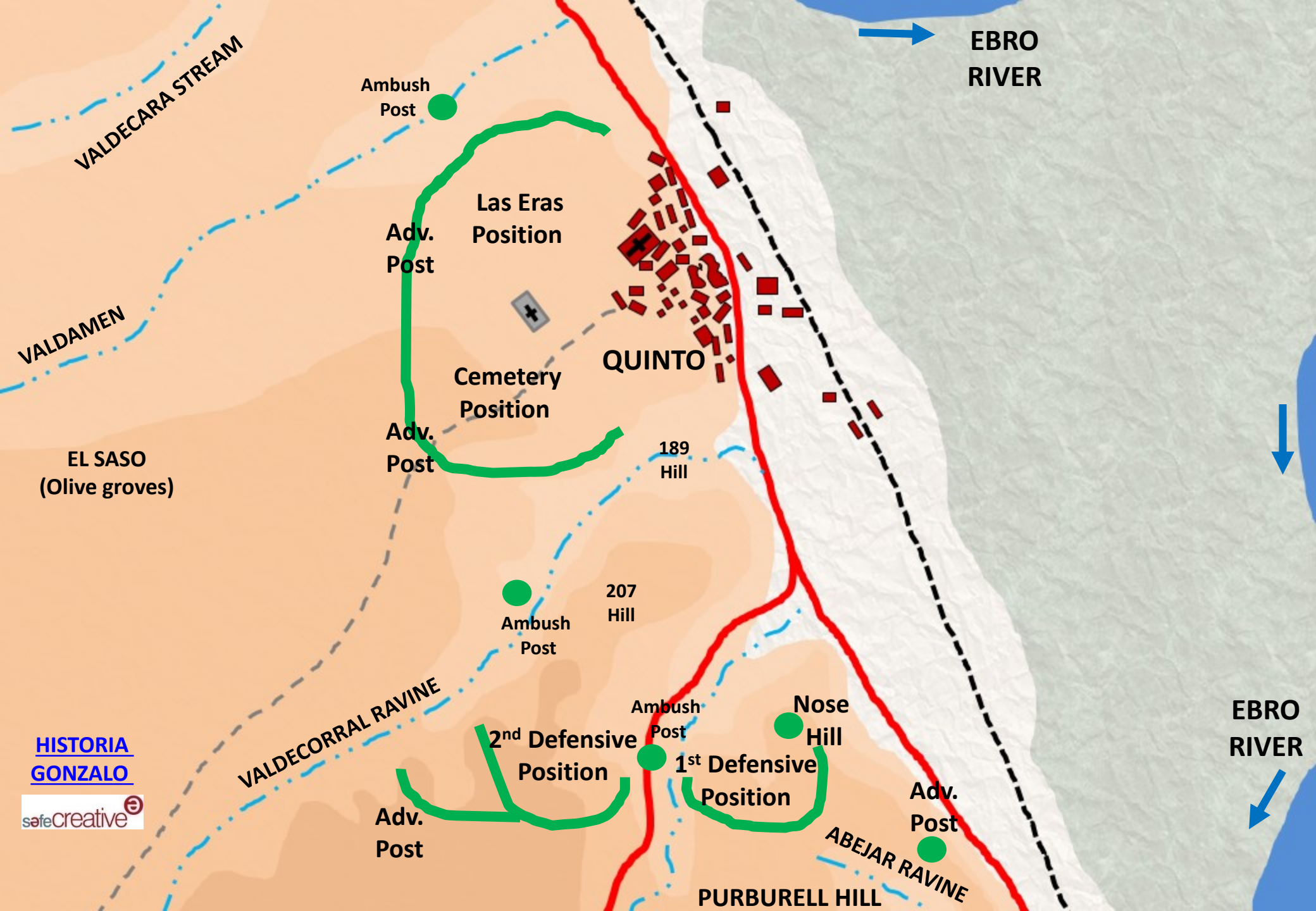
Starting from the south and clockwise

1st Defensive Position and advanced post: There were one and a half companies (from the 2nd Battalion) and a Falangist Platoon (in “Cabezo de la Nariz” – Nose Hill). 220 soldiers, 4 Machine Guns and a Mortar. The Advanced Post (in the South) was near Purburell Hill (which is still further south). The International Brigades sources confuse 1st and 2nd Positions with “Purburell Hill”.

2nd Defensive Position (204-207 Hill), Azaila road Ambush Post, Ravine (near Hospital) Ambush Post and Advanced Post: 120 Requetés from 3rd company and 2 machine Guns.

Cemetery Position, advanced posts and links to 2nd Position: 70 Requetés from 2nd (advanced posts) and 3rd companies. 2 machine Guns. 4 canyons (75mm.) and 60 artillery soldiers (6th Light Field Artillery Battery).

“Las Eras” (plains) Position, advanced posts and Valdamen Ravine Ambush Post: 100 Requetes from 2nd company. 4 canyons (105mm.) and 50 artillery soldiers (2nd Field Artillery Battery).



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QUINTO DEFENSIVE POSITIONS (II)

SURROUNDING QUINTO REBEL DEFENSIVE POSITIONS:

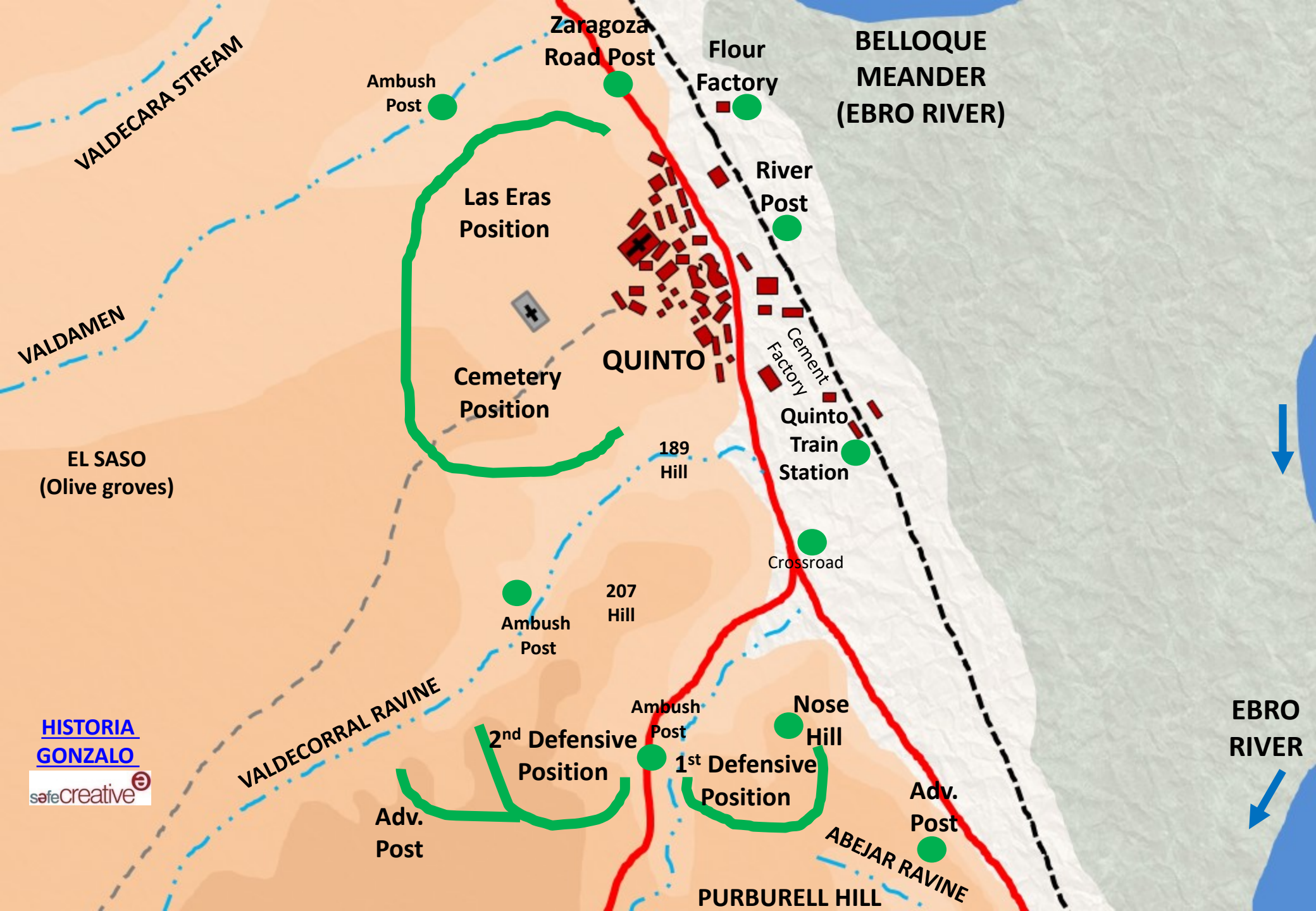
clockwise

Zaragoza road Position, Flour Factory and Belloque Meander: 70 soldiers (most of them falangist). A machine gun and an 81 mm. mortar.

River Ebro Position: 130 soldiers (included 2nd Battalion Headquarters)

Quinto Train Station, La Zaida Road, and Crossroad: 140 soldiers (most of them Civil Guards and falangist). A 70mm. infantry light cannon.

Downtown Quinto: 200 soldiers. Command and Control, logistics and reserve. The church, “Nuestra Señora de la Asunción” (Saint Mary of the Assumption), is in the Piquete Hill. This was not a military position (except the observatory on the tower) when the offensive began, it became a defensive position. The same happened with the hospital, some sturdy houses and the cement factory (near Quinto Train Station).



VALDECARA STREAM

VALDAMEN

EL SASO
(Olive groves)

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VALDECORRAL RAVINE

Zaragoza Road Post

Flour Factory

BELLOQUE MEANDER
(EBRO RIVER)

Ambush Post

Las Eras Position

River Post

QUINTO

Cemetery Position

Cement Factory

Quinto Train Station

189 Hill

Crossroad

Ambush Post

207 Hill

Nose Hill

2nd Defensive Position

Ambush Post

1st Defensive Position

Adv. Post

Adv. Post

EBRO RIVER

PURBURELL HILL

ABEJAR RAVINE

MILITARY UNIT SYMBOLS

The symbols on the rebel side represent about 50 soldiers (you should keep in mind that Republican symbols represent 10 times larger military units).

2nd B

Unit from 2nd Battalion (17th Infantry Regiment).

REQ

Unit from Requeté Militia

FAL

Unit from Falangist Militia

ART

Half Battery (2 canyons)

The symbols on the republican side represent battalions of about 500 soldiers.

41EA

Edgar André Battalion (11th Bgde.)

42HB

Hans Beimler Battalion (11th Bgde.)

43TH

Thälmann Battalion (11th Bgde.)

44AU

Austrian Battalion (11th Bgde.)

57BR

British Battalion (15th Bgde.)

58AM

American Battalion (15th Bgde.)

59SP

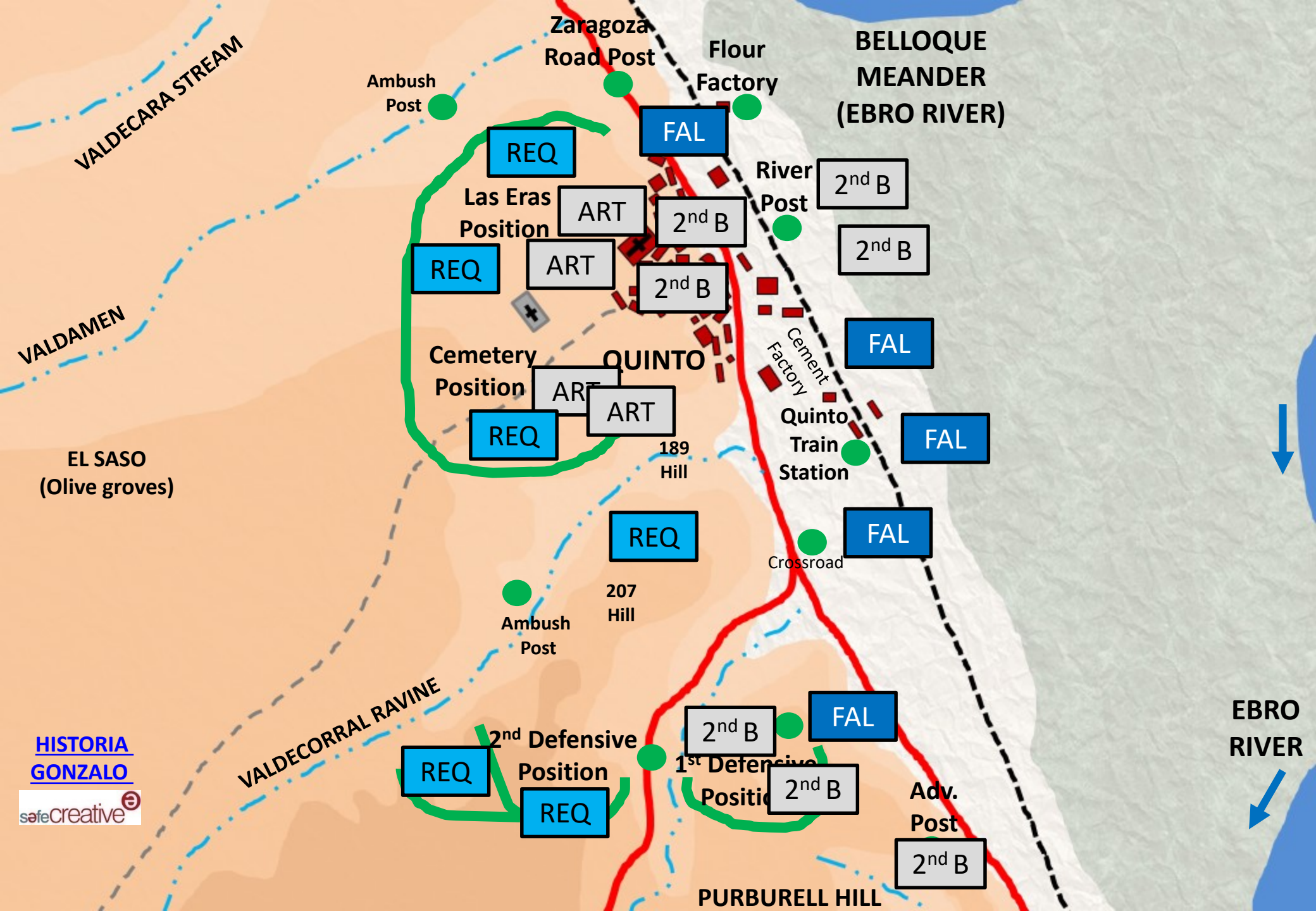
Spanish Battalion (15th Bgde.)

60DI

Dimitrov Battalion (15th Bgde.)

C

One of the C Task Group Battalions



VALDECARA STREAM

VALDAMEN

EL SASO (Olive groves)

VALDECORRAL RAVINE

HISTORIA GONZALO
safe creative

Zaragoza Road Post

Flour Factory

BELLOQUE MEANDER (EBRO RIVER)

Ambush Post

REQ

FAL

Las Eras Position

ART

2nd B

River Post

2nd B

REQ

ART

2nd B

2nd B

Cemetery Position

ART

QUINTO

Cement Factory

FAL

REQ

ART

Quinto Train Station

FAL

189 Hill

REQ

Crossroad

FAL

Ambush Post

207 Hill

VALDECORRAL RAVINE

REQ

2nd Defensive Position

1st Defensive Position

2nd B

FAL

REQ

2nd B

Adv. Post

2nd B

PURBURELL HILL

EBRO RIVER

AUGUST 24th, TUESDAY (I)

The Vanguard of the Delta Task Group began its movement on Monday 23rd at 9:00 pm, and advancing in the dark reached the line of Mediana, Rodén and Fuentes, where it was stopped (by the rebel reinforcements that arrived from Zaragoza) in the morning on the 24th.

Charlie Task Group crossed the Ebro at 4 am. and began the attacks on the Pina Railway Station and the Bonastre Hermitage without being able to conquer them throughout the day. At 7:28 am. the direct telephone communication of Quinto with Zaragoza was cut off. At 10 am. the wire from Quinto to Fuentes was also cut by Charlie Task Group. From that moment on, the only link between Quinto and the outside was the radio telegraph. Some companies of this Task Group approached the area north of Quinto at the end of the day.

Lister's remaining two brigades (and three T-26 Companies) should have started the movement at 2 am. transported by "camiones" (trucks). At 7 am. the "camiones" had not yet arrived. Lister, tired of waiting, decided to start the march on foot. This delay in the arrival of the vehicles was an important factor in the development of the operation.

**August
24th, 3 am.**

TRAIN
STATION

PINA

The 7 Battalions of Charlie
Task Group
crossed the river at 4 a.m.

BONASTRE
HERMITAGE

2nd B

ART

EBRO
RIVER

TOSQUETA

FAL

FAL

FAL

LOMACERÍA

REQ

ART

FAL

FAL

VALDECARA STREAM

REQ

QUINTO

2nd B

REQ

ART

FAL

REQ

2nd B

FAL

2nd B

GELSA

The 100th Brigade and the 4th Cavalry Brigade infiltrated
At dawn, the rest of the 11th Division followed them

CORNERO

AUGUST 24th, TUESDAY (II)

Walter's 35th Division (except the 32nd Brigade that was attached the "X" Group) advanced northward, with the 15th (on the right) and 11th (on the left) International Brigades. The HQs of 35th Division and 15th Brigade were placed around El Cornero. The 11th Brigade settled 2.5 miles to the northwest, in the olive groves of El Saso.

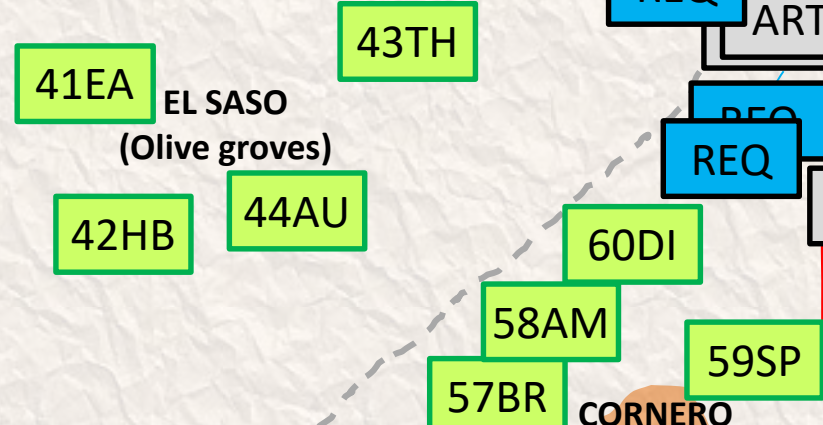
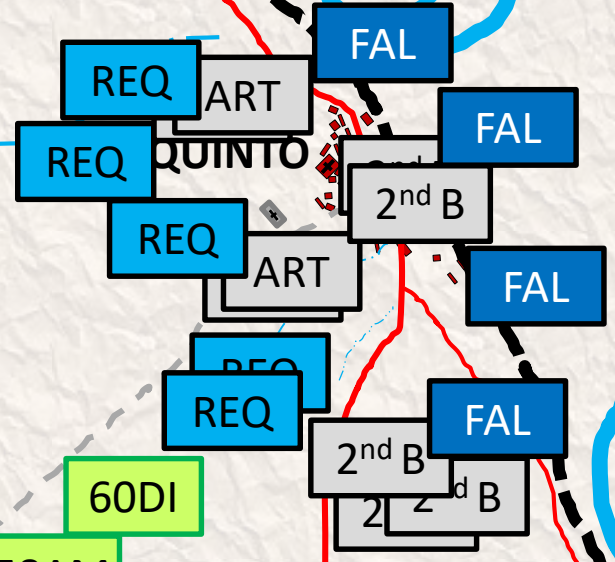
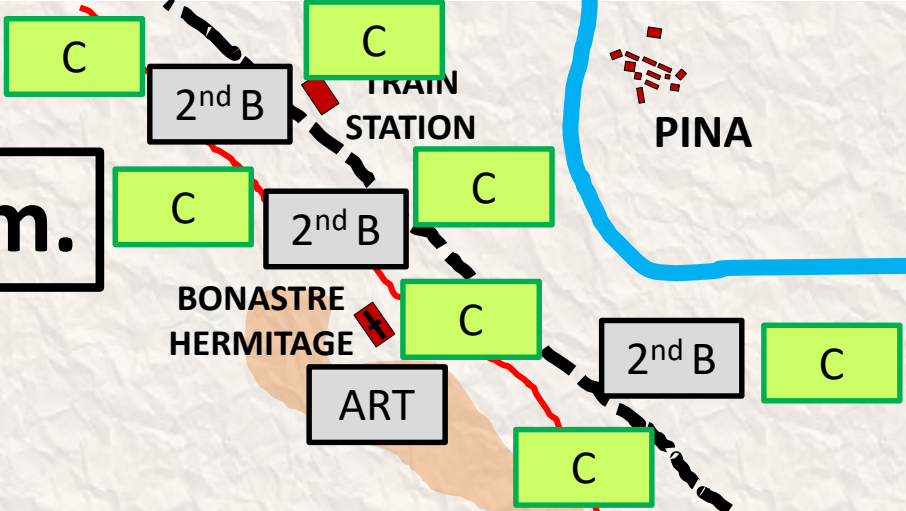
At dawn, Walter's eight battalions set out for the attack on Quinto and its surrounding positions. The Thälmann Battalion was lost and did not reach El Saso. At dawn he appeared in the middle of the plain completely uncovered and under enemy fire.

The Hans Beimler Battalion was a reserve of the 11th Brigade, while the British Battalion formed the Reserve of the Division. The Thälmann Battalion headed north of the cemetery and the Dimitrov Battalion south of it.

Between the 1st Paridera and the Cemetery should pass the Austrian Battalion to attack the houses further north of Quinto. The Spanish Battalion would be located south of the main rebel positions (1st and 2nd) to keep them under surveillance and prevent a possible counterattack.

At half past seven, Republican planes bombed the city of Quinto and its surrounding positions.

24th, 7 am.



AUGUST 24th, TUESDAY (III)

The first attack on the Cemetery occurred from half past eight to nine in the morning. In their approach the two attacking battalions (Thälmann and Dimitrov) received artillery and machine gun fire from the surroundings of the Cemetery and Las Eras. The approach was difficult and the attack unsuccessful.

At ten, Edgar André Battalion had already surrounded the 2nd and 1st “parideras” (half an hour later, they were conquered). Some defenders escaped to Tosqueta (which would be conquered shortly after) or to Quinto. Only a few falangists of the “parideras” positions, Tosqueta and Lomacería, managed to reach Fuentes.

In Quinto there was only one radio telegraph and it served to communicate with Zaragoza through that of Fuentes. All the links of the “Comandancia (HQ) de Quinto” with their subordinate positions were by telephone through wire. These wires were quickly cut by the attackers and therefore all internal communication was lost.

41EA

24th, 9 am.

44AU

43TH

60DI

42HB

58AM

57BR

59SP

Zaragoza Road Post

Flour Factory

BELLOQUE MEANDER (EBRO RIVER)

FAL

REQ

REQ

ART

2nd B

2nd B

2nd B

Las Eras Position

ART

2nd B

River Post

Cemetery Position

ART

QUINTO

ART

REQ

Cement Factory

FAL

Quinto Train Station

FAL

EL SASO (Olive groves)

189 Hill

REQ

207 Hill

FAL

VALDECORRAL RAVINE

REQ

2nd Defensive Position

REQ

2nd B

1st Defensive Position

2nd B

FAL

2nd B

EBRO RIVER

PURBURELL HILL

HISTORIA GONZALO

safe creative

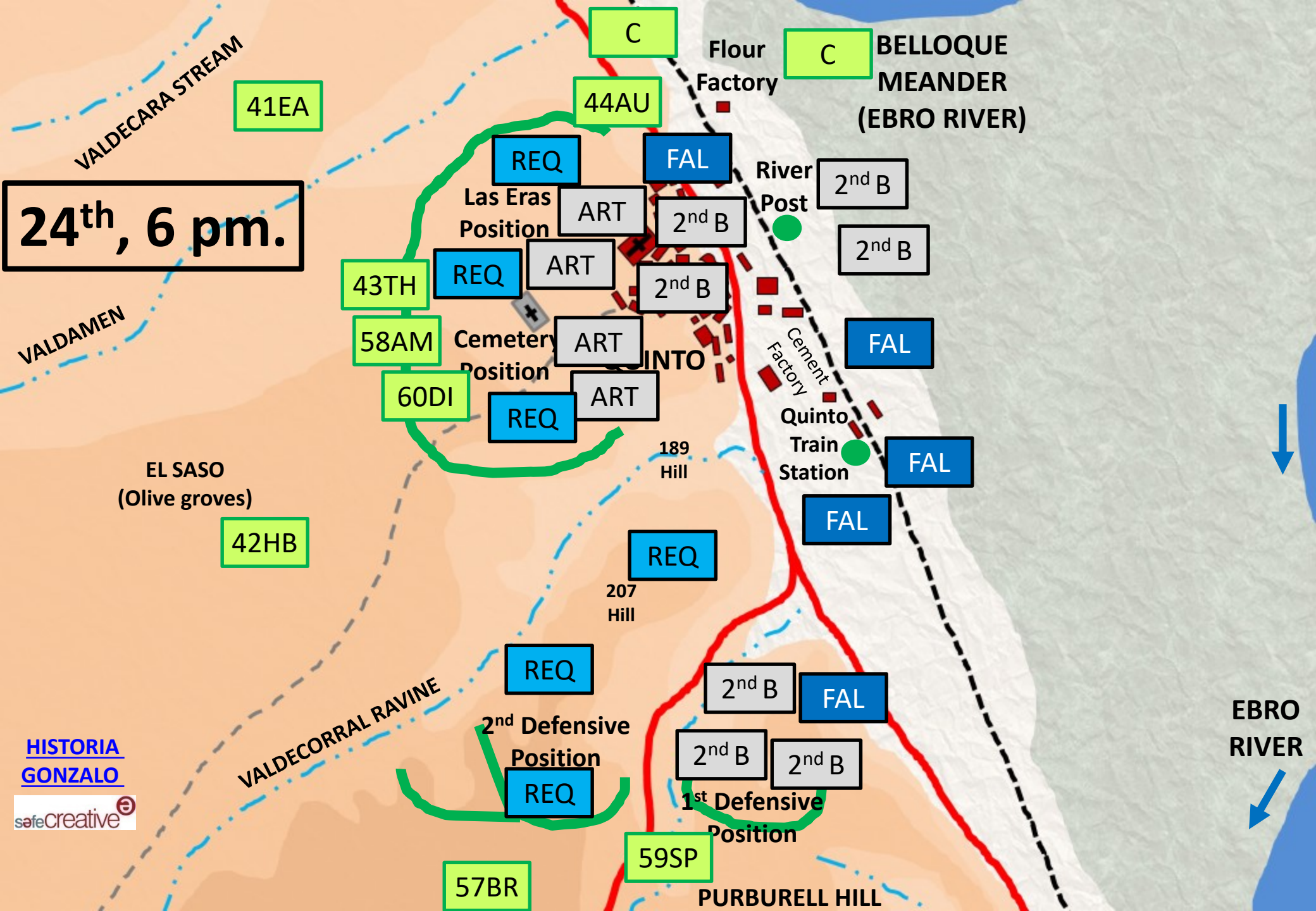
AUGUST 24th, TUESDAY (IV)

In the Cemetery and the Eras carried on the attacks, this time with previous bombardment from artillery and planes. About twelve, the Thälmann and Dimitrov Battalions try to penetrate supported by six T-26 tanks. The defenders answered with artillery, machine guns and individual weapons.

At two in the afternoon a new attack is launched but it is also rejected. From half past three to quarter past four, Republican bombers punished Quinto, especially its railway station. That is when the Comandancia asked for the civil population of Quinto taking refuge in the church. The Church had already been converted into a stronghold and its defense was in charge of the 2nd Lieutenant Alberto Jurado Rodríguez (who would die the next day in this place). At the same time it was arranged that the HQ of Quinto and the radiotelegraphic station be moved to the sacristy of the church.

Between six and eight pm. there is the last and successful attack on the positions of the Cemetery and the Eras. This time it is headed by the American Battalion but the Thälmann and the Dimitrov continue to participate. Starting at six and for forty minutes there was a short-range gunner fire preparation (antitank battery's 45mm. Canyons), especially looking for machine gun nests and key positions. Then, eight tanks crossed the trenches followed by the infantry.

24th, 6 pm.



AUGUST 24th, TUESDAY (V)

At eight pm. the Cemetery fell and the houses between it and the church too. It was tried to continue advancing through the streets of the upper part of the town (the Luco) but the crossfire from the houses was intense and Republicans had to turn back. In the Cemetery the Republicans captured nine machine guns but only six prisoners were made. It must be taken into account that many defenders were able to retire and forty serious wounded or dead were found in the Cemetery trenches, which gives us an idea of the intensity of the fighting.

In the assault on Las Eras position, carried out at the end of the afternoon, a bullet crossed the chest of the commander of the Thälmann Battalion, Georg Elsner, who died and was buried there. It was replaced by Anton Schichanowsky.

When the position of the Cemetery fell, the defenders of the Eras were overwhelmed and obtained authorization to retreat to other positions. However, their casualties had been such that only a few more than twelve men survived. For this defense, the 2nd Company of the Tercio obtained a military award (collective Laureate Cross of San Fernando). After this retreat, the Austrian Battalion conquers part of the houses in northern Quinto.

AUGUST 24th, TUESDAY (VI)

By the end of the 24th, Republicans had taken the three Parideras, Tosqueta and Lomacería, a few houses North of Quinto and the control of the Meander of Belloque. Also the Thälmann, Dimitrov and American battalions had conquered the Eras, the Cemetery and their positions to the south (hill 189), as well as the houses between the Cemetery and the Church. The Spanish Battalion had delayed and diminished the 1st and 2nd positions more by retracting of the defenders than by a direct attack. The Charlie Task Group passed under Walter's orders. This Task Group had successfully completed the passage of the river but It had not been able to conquer Bonastre Hermitage or Pina Train Station.

At dusk the HQ of 15th Brigade and British Battalion moved to the Cemetery. At night some occasional shooting “paqueo” was heard but there were no fighting. The rebels, meanwhile, were also reorganized in the town. They built barricades and choose the houses with thicker walls to form defensive points in the urban area.

Rebel reinforcements of this day went to Zuera, Villamayor, Mediana and, above all, Fuentes. Belchite, Codo and Quinto could not receive reinforcements because they were practically isolated.

AUGUST 25th, WEDNESDAY (I)

At two am. the command rebel post and the radiotelegraphic station were moved back to a private house in the main square.

The defenders had organized themselves in the town center, barricading and moving some canyons to the streets. They still keep in the church (200 defenders), the hospital, the cement factory and some private houses, especially in the main square.

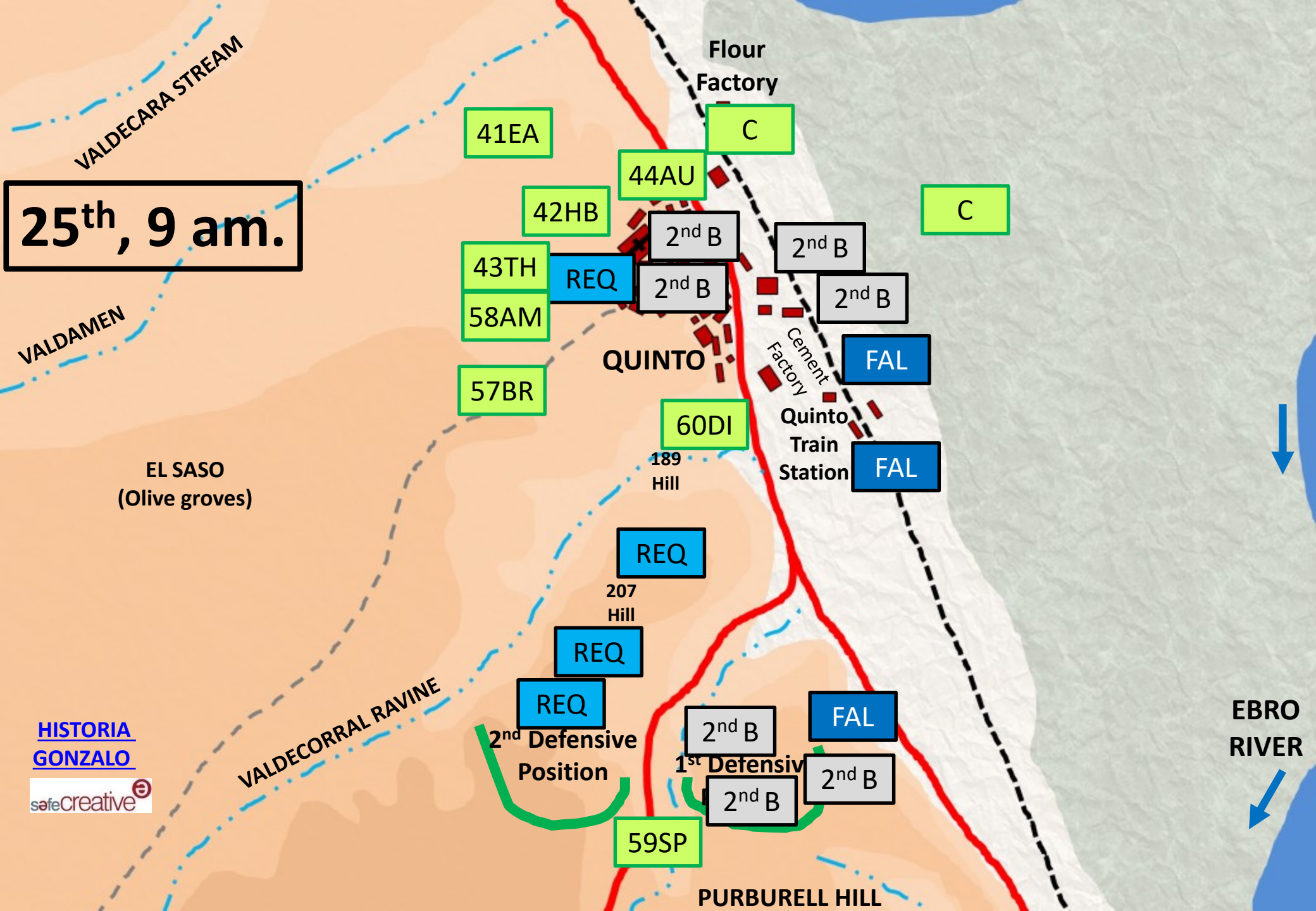
To assault this defensive system, 11th Brigade would be in charge of attacking the part of the town to the north of the church and 15th Brigade from the church to the south.

Throughout the day about five hundred civilians would leave the city in different batches in a southerly direction, towards the republican lines.

At seven am. some groups began attacking the town on their own, then it would continue in a more organized way.

The Austrian Battalion was controlling house by house from north to south, while the Hans Beimler Battalion (which was in reserve on the 24th) did the same from the north of the church to the east (to be able to meet both at some central point of the town).

25th, 9 am.



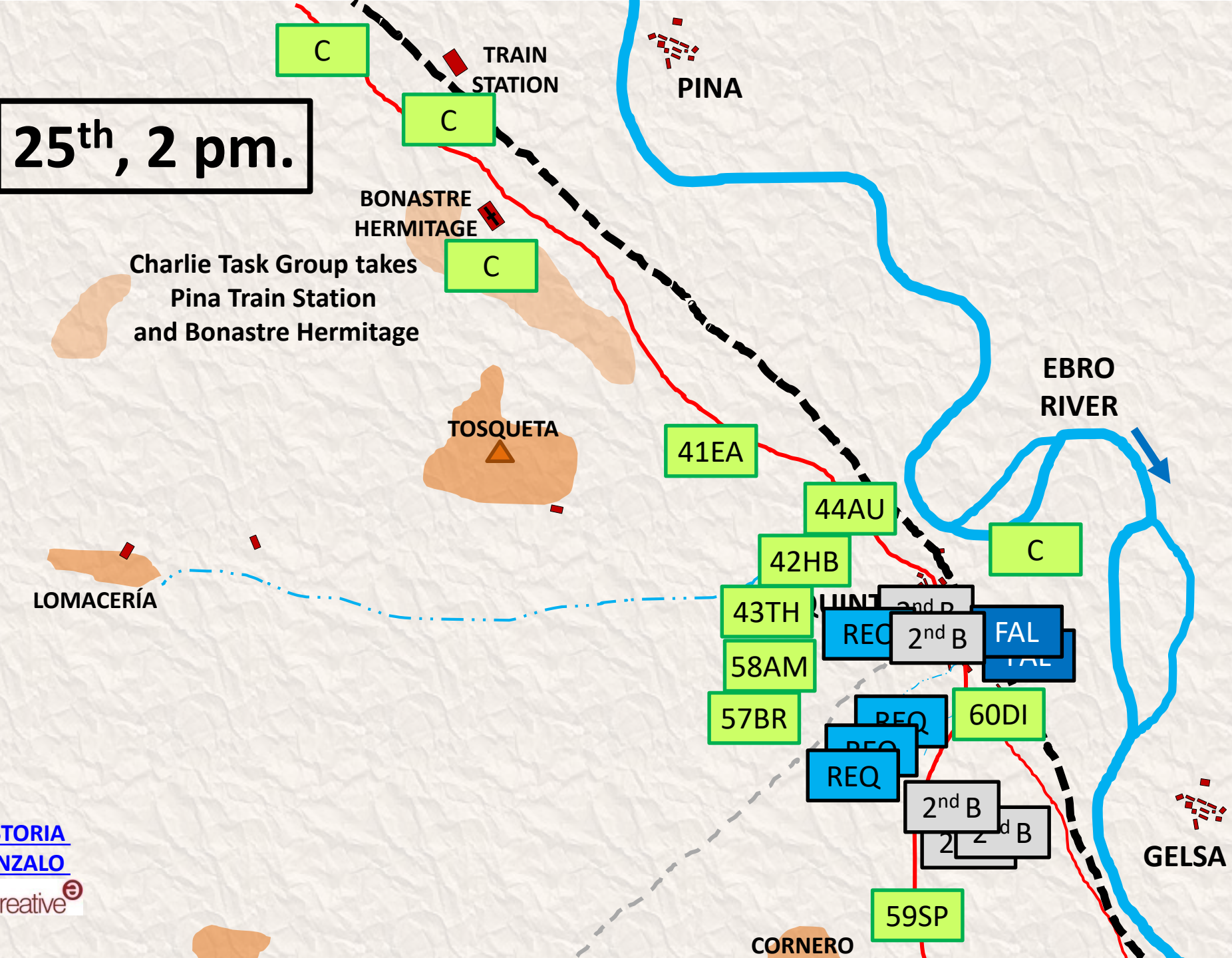
AUGUST 25th, WEDNESDAY (II)

This day was the Edgar André Battalion who constituted the reserve of 11th Brigade and was located north of Quinto linking with the Charlie Task Group. This Task Group continued to attack the positions of the Bonastre Hermitage and the Pina Train Station, and also collaborating in the control of the vegetable fields, North - East of Quinto. The Dimitrov Battalion was ordered to attack the southern part of the town (including the hospital and the cement factory). The American Battalion (from the south and west) and the Thälmann (from the north) had the mission of attacking the church (which in the east was still linked to the town). Walter hoped to end the conquest of the town in the first half of the day. The church was the most difficult goal of the day. It had two heavy machine guns in the bell tower (moved from other positions) as well as lighter ones in some windows. At noon the attackers try to set the church on fire with means of circumstances (they had neither phosphorus nor flamethrower), but still the rebels did not give up.

At half past two in the afternoon, the troops of Charlie Task Group conquered the Bonastre Hermitage. Shortly before Pina Train Station had fallen. At three, twenty planes from Rebel Air Force bombed HQ of 35th Division in Cornero. At five, a Republican Field Artillery Group (with batteries of 75 and 105mm, from the cemetery area) shot against the Quinto Train Station, factory, church, and 2nd Position. The Station was greatly affected by the bombshells and was conquered by the Dimitrov Battalion. The church tower also received direct impacts and after its partial collapse its machine guns were neutralized, although others ones remained in the windows and the church did not give up.

25th, 2 pm.

**Charlie Task Group takes
Pina Train Station
and Bonastre Hermitage**



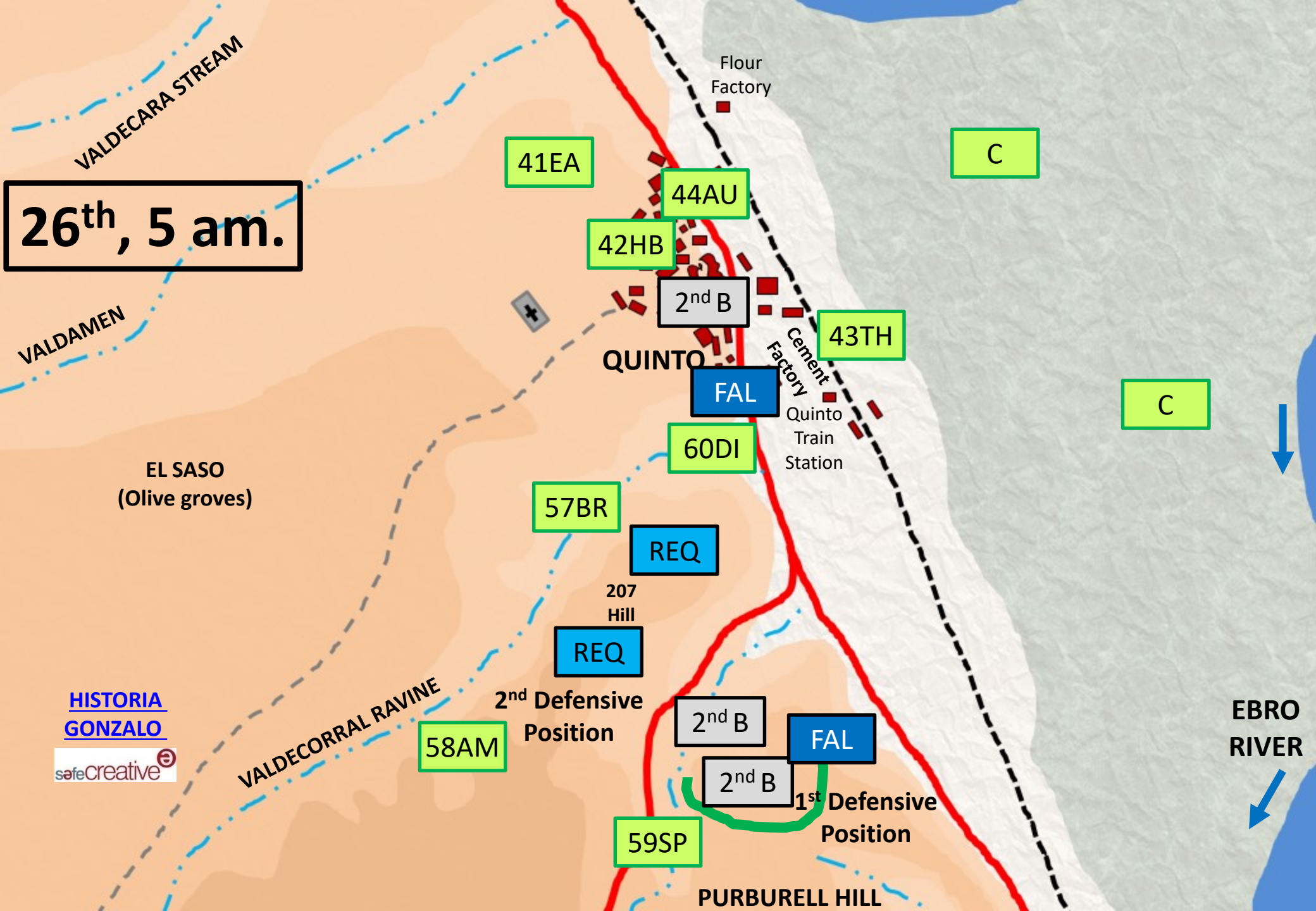
AUGUST 25th, WEDNESDAY (III)

In the afternoon, British Battalion was ordered to attack 2nd Position, (which they mistakenly call Purburel). During the attack of the British Battalion, his commander, Peter Daly, was wounded in the stomach. The wound was serious but he could be evacuated to Benicassim Hospital. He died there days later and is buried in that town. He was replaced by also Irish Paddy O'Daire. The new commander of the Battalion continued with the attack but finally suspended it because he considered the casualties suffered to be excessive. At dusk he ordered his unit to retreat. At the same time the water pipe that supplied the 1st and 2nd Positions was cut from the town.

At dusk half a hundred defenders of the church managed to leave it and return to the town on the unguarded side. As a Defensive Point, Church was considered conquered, although there would still be some minimal group of volunteers and wounded who had not wanted or could leave it.

At that time the hospital, the cement factory and a few houses were still in rebel hands. 1st and 2nd Positions remained unconquered too.

26th, 5 am.



VALDAMEN

VALDECARA STREAM

EL SASO
(Olive groves)

[HISTORIA GONZALO](#)
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VALDECORRAL RAVINE

QUINTO

PURBURELL HILL

EBRO RIVER

41EA

42HB

44AU

43TH

2nd B

60DI

57BR

REQ

REQ

58AM

2nd Defensive Position

2nd B

2nd B

59SP

1st Defensive Position

2nd B

FAL

FAL

C

C

Flour Factory

Cement Factory

Quinto Train Station

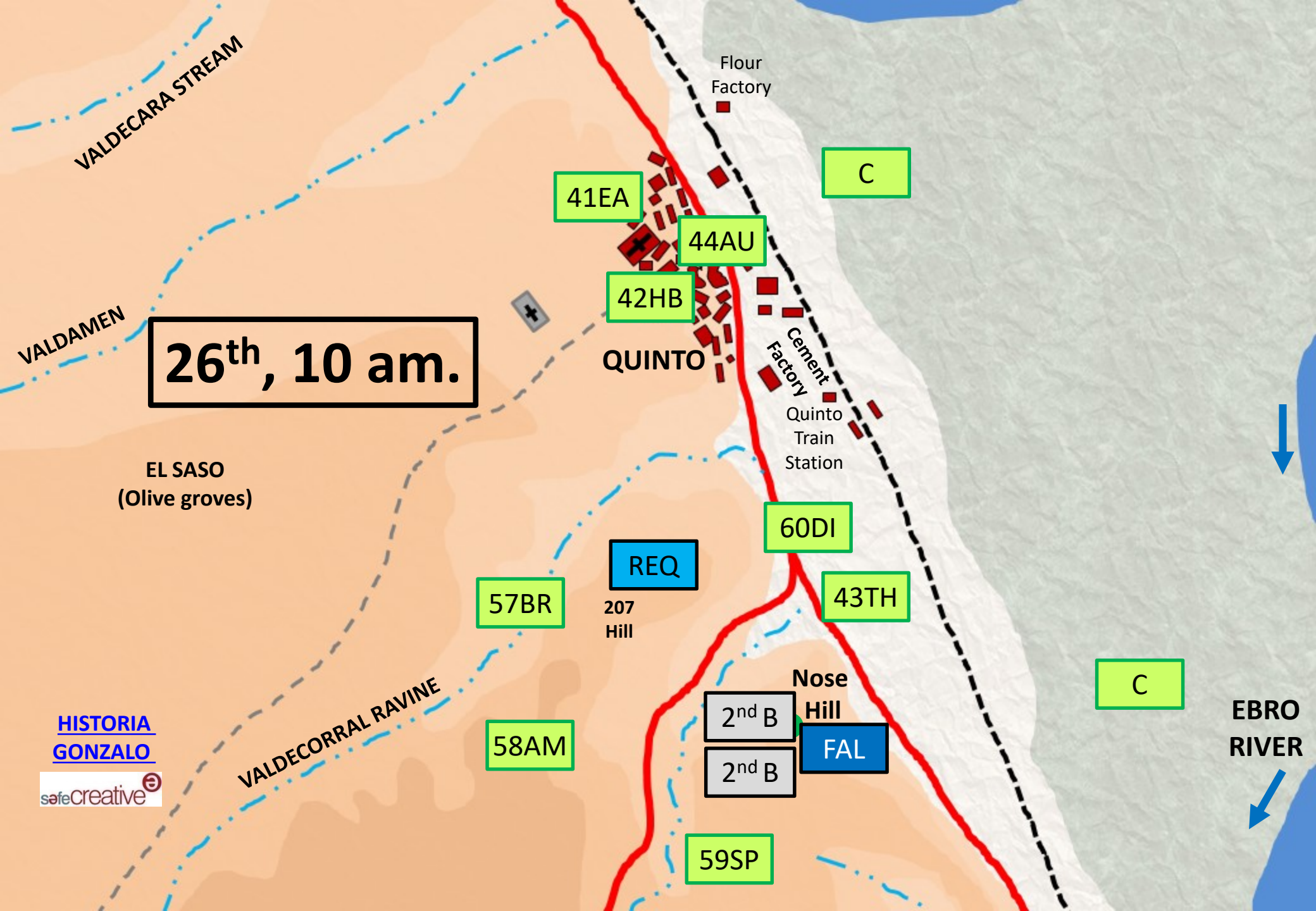


AUGUST 26th, THURSDAY (I)

Since the dawn the last assaults on the houses begin, which concluded at seven in the morning.

At half past nine, Thälmann and Dimitrov battalions conquered the cement factory and the hospital.

At the end of these last actions, 240 prisoners were made in the town. 1st and 2nd Positions were the only ones that resisted.



26th, 10 am.

EL SASO
(Olive groves)

QUINTO

Flour
Factory

Cement
Factory
Quinto
Train
Station

207
Hill

Nose
Hill

EBRO
RIVER

[HISTORIA
GONZALO](#)

safe creative

VALDECARRAL RAVINE

VALDECARA STREAM

VALDAMEN

41EA

44AU

42HB

C

60DI

43TH

57BR

REQ

58AM

2nd B

2nd B

FAL

59SP

C

AUGUST 26th, THURSDAY (II)

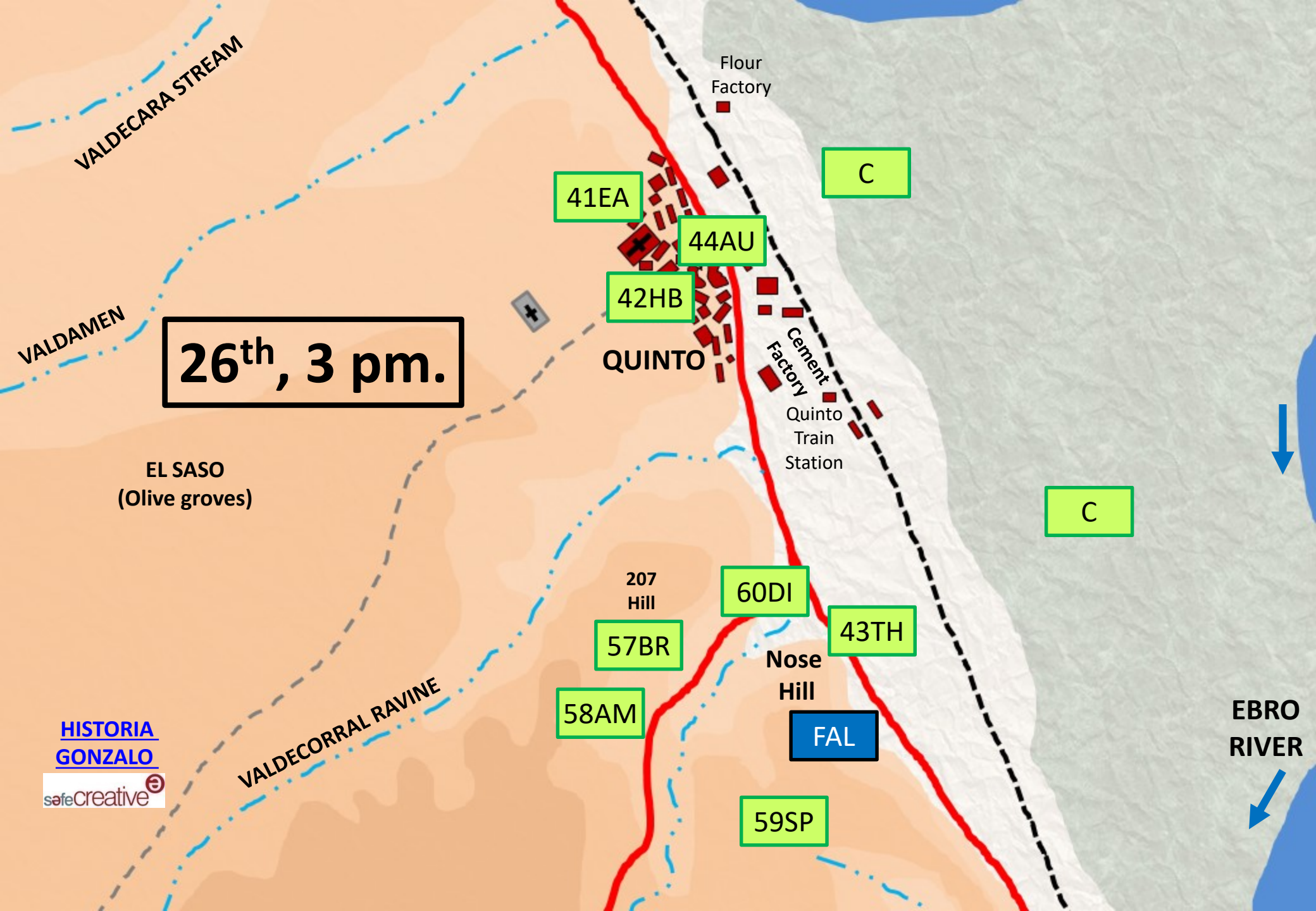
At half past ten a generalized attack on the positions of the southern hills begins, completely surrounding them.

Do not forget that the defenders had great shortage of water and ammunition.

Two companies of the Spanish Battalion attacked in the south and one of the American, with the T-26 Tanks, in the southwest. The British Battalion carried the main part of the attack from the northwest, while part of the Thälmann Battalion guarded in the northeast and the Division's Cavalry Escuadrón did so in the southeast. The artillery was located south of the hills firing at close range (especially the antitank canyons).

At noon rebel planes bombed its own soldiers. No wonder they thought it was the enemy because they had no knowledge that they still resisted in 1st and 2nd Positions. Then the defenders raised a white flag but the fighting resumed unexpectedly.

Later negotiations are held between the defenders and a Spanish Republican officer. Around half past four in the afternoon the great majority of the defenders gave up but there are some who have no intention of doing so under any circumstances.



VALDECARRAL RAVINE

VALDAMEN

26th, 3 pm.

EL SASO
(Olive groves)

41EA

44AU

42HB

QUINTO

60DI

57BR

58AM

43TH

59SP

FAL

C

C

Flour
Factory

Cement
Factory

Quinto
Train
Station

207
Hill

Nose
Hill

EBRO
RIVER

[HISTORIA GONZALO](#)

safe creative

AUGUST 26th, THURSDAY (III)

At 6:30 pm. Republicans took all positions with the conquest of the Nose Hill .

Only in these hills were taken 470 prisoners. Near the river, another forty more were captured.

The conquest of Quinto and surroundings (including Parideras, Bonastre and the Pina Station) caused the republicans about 120 killed and 300 wounded soldiers. On the rebel side there were 400 killed and 950 prisoners (one third of them wounded). Only a hundred defenders managed to escape from the siege to Fuentes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Asociación Española
de Historia Militar



Instituto Universitario
General Gutiérrez Mellado

Investigación sobre la Paz, la Seguridad y la Defensa

In memory of

Pascual Garay Gómez

and

Milo V. Damjanovic