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ARTURO O'NEILL: FIRST GOVERNOR OF WEST FLORIDA DURING THE SECOND SPANISH PERIOD

by ERIC BEERMAN

AN Irish lieutenant colonel in the Hibernia Regiment— Arturo O'Neill— gazed through the late afternoon haze that ninth day of March in 1781 and received his first look at Sigüenza Point on the western end of Santa Rosa Island at the entrance of Pensacola Bay. As the Spanish invasion fleet moved closer, Arturo O'Neill saw the hill behind Pensacola with British Fort George dominating the surrounding terrain. He no doubt felt a certain trepidation as the Spaniards would be making a nighttime assault on Sigüenza. However, this was not his baptism of fire and with veteran Hibernia troops around him, O'Neill's worries diminished. Little did this Irish lieutenant colonel realize with a tough battle ahead that Pensacola would be home for the next twelve years. At the battle's conclusion, O'Neill became governor of West Florida and served until 1793, proving to be an effective diplomat, an able administrator, in addition to being an old soldier. His brilliant career continued as captain general of Yucatán, lieutenant general, minister of the king's Supreme War Council, Marquis del Norte, Viscount de O'Neill, and finally hero in the war against Napoleon.

The O'Neill ancestral home was in the county of Tyrone in Northern Ireland, where Arturo O'Neill was born on January 8, 1736. He was the third of the five children of Henry O'Neill and Ana O'Kelly.¹ As a youth he came to Spain and entered the Irlanda Regiment as a cadet in 1752; the regimental commander

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1. Copy of O'Neill's baptismal document in Latin found in his probated will, "Dilixencias de Inventario y Tasación de Bienes presentadas por los Testamentarios del Exmo. Sr. Arturo O'Neill de Tirone, Marques del Norte, Teniente General de los Reales Exércitos, del Consejo de Su Majestad en el Supremo de la Guerra, mandadas protocolizar por auto de 3 de Marzo de dicho año, 1815," Archivo Histórico de Protocolos, Madrid (hereinafter cited as AHP), libro 24918.

was his cousin José Camerford.² The following year O'Neill transferred to the Hibernia Regiment where he spent the next twenty-eight years of his military career. He served nine years as sublieutenant, and in 1762, it was as Lieutenant O'Neill that he took part in the invasion of Portugal during the Seven Years' War under Count de Vega Florida that occupied the strategic center of Chaves. O'Neill's combat abilities came to the attention of his superiors, and he received promotion in 1764 to adjutant major of Hibernia. Nine years later he became captain while serving in Pamplona.³

Moorish pirates harassed Spanish shipping in the Mediterranean for years. Exasperated, King Carlos III of Spain decided to punish the pirates in their own lair—Algiers. The Hibernia left the capital of Navarre and went to Barcelona in April 1775, in preparation for the assault on the African coast. The next month O'Neill's regiment was at Cartagena from where 22,000 Spanish infantrymen, commanded by General Alejandro O'Reilly, departed in June with Algiers as their objective. O'Neill and his men went ashore on July 8. By the end of a bloody day of fighting some 2,000 Spaniards lay dead or wounded on the rocky Algerian beach.⁴ It was a disaster, and O'Reilly ordered all his men to re-board the offshore ships. O'Neill escaped unscathed and returned with his regiment to Alicante a week after the invasion. The following month the Hibernia was stationed a few miles inland at Elda and Monovar, before moving on to Malaga. In August 1776, O'Neill accompanied his regiment to its new station at Cadiz then under O'Reilly's command.

Spain and Portugal again declared war with the principal scene of action in South America. Marquis de Casa-Tilly and General Pedro Ceballos commanded a large naval and army expedition which sailed out of Cadiz in November 1776, destined for the Portuguese island of Santa Catalina off the southern coast

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2. "Expediente Personal del Teniente General Arturo O'Neill, 1814" (hereinafter cited as "Expediente de O'Neill"), Archivo General Militar de Segovia (hereinafter cited as AGMS), Sección I, expediente 0-364. Comerford entered the Military Order of Calatrava in 1747, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid (hereinafter cited as AHN), Orden Militar de Calatrava, expediente 614. O'Neill's 1791 service sheet is in Jack D. L. Holmes, *Honor and Fidelity* (Birmingham, 1965), 139-40.
 3. "Expediente de O'Neill."
 4. *Ibid.*; *Gaceta de Madrid*, January 10, 1815, 31-32.

of Brazil. The second battalion of Hibernia remained behind, so O'Neill was happy to be with the first battalion which put to sea.

The Brazilian coast was sighted after two months, and Captain O'Neill led his infantry company ashore at Santa Catalina Island, and the Portuguese garrison surrendered on February 20, 1777. Fort Santa Cruz was the next objective several miles away on the mainland. Concerned about adequate clearance for large vessels, General Ceballos told O'Neill to make soundings of the channel between the island and mainland. The draft proved adequate, and the ships moved troops to the mainland which captured Fort Santa Cruz. The Spanish expedition sailed south for 800 miles, and O'Neill participated in the seizure of the Portuguese fort at Colonia de Sacramento and the island of San Gabriel in the River Plate. Ceballos appointed O'Neill governor of Santa Catalina in June and directed him to strengthen the island's fortifications in the event of a Portuguese counterattack. O'Neill returned with the expedition to Cadiz in March 1778.⁵

When war broke out between Spain and England in June 1779, Carlos III was determined to eliminate British power in Florida and the Caribbean. Bernardo de Gálvez, governor of Louisiana, led Spanish troops later that year in victories at Manchac, Baton Rouge, and Natchez. The forts at Mobile and Pensacola would require additional Spanish troops if they were to be captured also. O'Neill accompanied both battalions of Hibernia in April 1780 that sailed out of Cadiz bound for Havana. The fleet of 141 vessels commanded by Admiral José de Solano was carrying 11,752 infantrymen under Lieutenant General Victoria de Navia.⁶ This was perhaps the greatest concentration of Spanish military force ever sent to the Americas. It proved to be a long ocean crossing, and Hibernia suffered 272 losses.⁷

O'Neill and Gálvez had not seen each other since that tragic day on the rocky beach at Algiers five years earlier. After the conquest of Fort Charlotte at Mobile, Gálvez came to Havana to prepare for the coming assault on Pensacola, and the two soldiers

5. *Ibid.*; José María Soto Serafin, *Historia orgánica de las Armas de Infantería y Caballería españolas desde la creación del ejército permanente hasta el día*, 16 vols. (Madrid, 1851-1862), XI, 338-40.

6. "Estado General de la Expedición de Mar y Tierra que salió de Cádiz, con destino á América el 28 de Abril de 1780," Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Ms. 19445.

7. "Noticias de los oficiales que han muertos desde la salida de Cádiz hasta el día de la fecha, Havana, 1780," *ibid.*

met again. Gálvez wanted to attack Pensacola immediately after the fall of Mobile but there were not enough naval units available.⁸

All was ready on October 16, 1780, as Gálvez and Solano departed Havana for Pensacola. A few hours out of the bay, a fierce hurricane struck the invasion fleet and wildly scattered the ships. The *Hibernia* had remained behind on garrison duty in Cuba, and O'Neill, learning of the hurricane, imagined the worst as to the fate of the fleet. A month later he was surprised, however, to see Gálvez, aboard his frigate *Nuestra Señora de la O*, sailing back into Havana Bay with two captured British frigates in tow. The Pensacola expedition was only delayed; it was not abandoned.⁹

The army and navy quarreled over the responsibility of the October disaster, and for the next try at Pensacola, Captain José Calvo de Irazabal replaced Solano as fleet commander.¹⁰ On February 28, 1781, O'Neill and 319 men of his regiment sailed out of Havana Bay with Pensacola as the objective.¹¹ Santa Rosa Island came into view on the afternoon of March 9, and O'Neill led his grenadier company ashore at nine o'clock that same night, quickly securing Sigüenza Point. The Spaniards were delighted to find the British battery not operational. If it had been functioning, it could have raised havoc with the invasion. Governor Gálvez ap-

8. For the battle of Mobile, see the author's manuscript on the translating and editing of the Gálvez Mobile Battle Diary included in Jack D. L. Holmes's forthcoming volume on the Battle of Mobile.
9. "Expedición contra Pensacola, 1780," José de Solano to Marqués González de Castejón, aboard the *navío Guerrero* in Havana Bay, December 23, 1780, Archivo General de Simancas (hereinafter cited as AGS), Marina, legajo 420, document 220.
10. Juan Bautista de Bonet to José Calvo de Irazabal, Havana, February 6, 1781, AHN, Estado, legajo 4201.
11. "Diario de las operaciones contra la plaza de Pensacola . . . baxo las órdenes del Mariscal de campo D. Bernardo de Gálvez . . . Pensacola, 12 de mayo 1781," AGS, Guerra Moderna, legajo 6912 (hereinafter cited as "Diario de Pensacola"). This diary was published in *Gaceta de Madrid*, August 21, 1781. For additional accounts of this siege, see Albert W. Haarmann, "The Spanish Conquest of British West Florida, 1779-1781," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXIX (October 1960), 107-34; Maury Baker and Margaret Bissler Haas, eds., "Bernardo de Gálvez's Combat Diary for the Battle of Pensacola, 1781," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, LVI (October 1977), 176-99; N. Orwin Rush, *The Battle of Pensacola, March 9 to May 8, 1781* (Tallahassee, 1966); and E. A. Montemayor, tr., *Yo Solo: The Battle Journal of Bernardo de Gálvez during the American Revolution* (New Orleans, 1978).

parently had much faith in O'Neill and named him his aide-de-camp and commander of the patrol scouts.¹²

Gálvez forced the entrance of Pensacola Bay on March 18 despite a furious barrage from the English battery at Barrancas Coloradas.¹³ The following afternoon at two o'clock, O'Neill sailed through a similar barrage unscathed as the remainder of the fleet joined Gálvez inside the bay and the siege of Fort George began.

O'Neill's patrol scouts blunted an attack by 400 Indians during the afternoon of March 28.¹⁴ Indians supporting British troops from Fort George launched a combined attack on April 12. At first the Spaniards fell back, but the patrol scouts rallied and forced the enemy to withdraw. Spanish losses included one killed and six wounded, one of whom was Gálvez, who was replaced temporarily by José de Ezpeleta.¹⁵ Gálvez recovered rapidly, however, and resumed command. The siege of Fort George until that time had moved slowly, so the Spaniards were pleased when on April 19, Solano's fleet arrived with 1,600 fresh reinforcements under the command of Field Marshal Juan Manuel de Cagigal.¹⁶

The siege lines tightened around Fort George in spite of sharp counterattacks. One came three days after Solano's arrival. O'Neill accompanied Gálvez and Cagigal in reconnoitering an artillery battery site some 550 yards from the Queen's Redoubt when 16th Regiment soldiers came out and fired on the Gálvez patrol.¹⁷ Two days later, April 24, an Indian attack caught the Spaniards by surprise, wounded five, including O'Neill's kinsman—Hibernia Sublieutenant Felipe O'Neill. On April 26, English soldiers from

12. "Diario de Pensacola;" and "Expediente de O'Neill."

13. "Diario de Pensacola." For an account on Gálvez's brother-in-law who entered the bay that day, see Eric Beerman, "Yo 'Solo' Not 'Solo': Juan Antonio de Riaño," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, LVIII (October 1979), 174-84.

14. "Diario de Pensacola;" and "Expediente de O'Neill."

15. *Ibid.* For accounts on Ezpeleta, see Eric Beerman, "José de Ezpeleta," *Revista de Historia Militar*, XXI (1977), 97-118; *ibid.*, "José de Ezpeleta: Alabama's First Spanish Commandant during the American Revolution," *Alabama Review*, XXIX (October 1976), 249-60; and Francisco Borja Medina, *José de Ezpeleta: Gobernador de Mobila* (Seville, 1980).

16. "Diario de lo ocurrido en la escuadra, y tropas, que al mando del Gefé Dn. Josef Solano, y del Mariscal de Campo Dn. Juan Manuel de Cagigal, salieron de la Havana el 9 de Abril de 1781, para socorrer al exercito español, que atacaba la plaza de Panzacola . . ." (hereinafter cited as "Diario de Solano"), *Archivo del General Miranda*, 24 vols. (Caracas, 1929-1930), I, 150.

17. "Diario de Pensacola;" and "Expediente de O'Neill."

the Queens Redoubt attacked Spanish positions, but O'Neill's scouts managed to drive the enemy back.¹⁸

The Spanish batteries next began a heavy barrage against the Queen's Redoubt. A round hit the powder magazine on May 8, killing 105 English defenders. General John Campbell surrendered Fort George and Prince of Wales Redoubt two days later. O'Neill participated in the surrender ceremonies which ended British sovereignty in West Florida.¹⁹

The Spanish fleet with troops aboard sailed out of Pensacola for Havana on June 1 to assemble for the invasion of the remaining British bastion in the Caribbean.²⁰ O'Neill did not accompany the departing Hibernia; three days later, Gálvez named him governor of West Florida.²¹ He was told to improve Pensacola's defenses quickly as an English counterattack was possible. O'Neill realized that poor British marksmanship at Barranacas Coloradas was due to the battery being too far and too high from the entrance of the bay. He constructed a new battery of five thirty-two pounders on the beach below Barrancas and another battery across the water at Sigüenza Point. O'Neill drafted a plan for a Santa Rosa garrison. Fort George was strengthened to withstand an attack from the northwest. Indians had been one of the main lines of English defense at Pensacola, and so O'Neill gave top priority to winning their friendship by trade and alliance.²² He wrote Cagigal, describing his military position at Pensacola and detailing what would be needed from Spain and Cuba to with-

18. Ibid. For list of Spanish casualties at Pensacola, see *relación* at end of "Diario de Solano."

19. "Artículos de las capitulaciones convenidas entre D. Bernardo de Gálvez . . . y los Exemos. Señores D. Pedro de Chester, Juan Campbell . . . 12 Mayo 1781," AGS, Guerra Moderna, legajo 6912. For accounts of the Hibernia at Pensacola, see W. S. Murphy, "The Irish Brigade of Spain at the Capture of Pensacola, 1781," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXVIII (January 1960), 216-25; Thomas J. Mullen, Jr., "The Hibernia Regiment of the Spanish Army," *Irish Sword*, VIII (Summer 1968), 218-25.

20. Bernardo de Gálvez to Arturo O'Neill, Pensacola, June 1, 1781, Archivo General de Indias, Seville (hereinafter cited as AGI), Papeles de Cuba (hereinafter cited as PC), legajo 2359.

21. "Expediente de O'Neill"; and Gálvez to O'Neill, June 4, 1781, AGI, PC 2359, cited in John Walton Caughey, *Bernardo de Gálvez in Louisiana, 1776-1783* (Berkeley, 1934; reprinted, Gretna, 1972), 212. The author has submitted the manuscript, "Bernardo de Gálvez (1746-1786)," to *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*.

22. Caughey, *Bernardo de Gálvez*, 212-13.

stand an assault.²³ In August, O'Neill was promoted to colonel.²⁴

O'Neill concerned himself also with the need of building up the Spanish population in West Florida. He wrote Gálvez in January 1782, urging a settlement of Canary Islanders around Pensacola.²⁵

With the end of hostilities in 1783, O'Neill gave added attention to Indian friendship in West Florida. On January 1, 1784, Indian commissioner of the Upper Creeks, Alexander McGillivray, informed him of the danger of American infiltration on the Mississippi River.²⁶ O'Neill hosted a conference on May 31-June 1, 1784, in which Spain and the Creeks signed a treaty of friendship.²⁷

Vicente Manuel de Zéspedes, a native of Almagro in La Mancha, sailed from Havana with administrators and 460 soldiers from Hibernia and took possession of the East Florida capital of St. Augustine on July 12, 1784.²⁸ One of his first official acts gave William Panton permission to bring in goods from the Bahamas for the Indians of Florida so as not to have to trade with Americans. McGillivray represented Creeks, Chickasaws, and Cherokees the following year when he requested O'Neill's protection against continuing American encroachment.³⁰ The American settlers apparently not only posed a threat to the Indians but to Spain as well, and O'Neill sent reinforcements to Mobile when it seemed there might be an attack on that community.³¹

23. "Relación de la artillería, pertrechos y demás géneros que se hallan en los almacenes de Panzacola y de lo que falta," O'Neill to Cagigal, Pensacola, July 4, 1781, AGI, Indiferente General, legajo 1583.

24. "Expediente de O'Neill."

25. O'Neill to Gálvez, Pensacola, January 18, 1782, AGI, Santo Domingo (hereinafter cited as SD), legajo 2548.

26. Alexander McGillivray to O'Neill, Little Tallassie, January 1, 1784, AGI, PC, legajo 36.

27. "Artículos de convenio, trato y pacificación y acordados por la nación española con los Indios Talapuches en el Congreso celebrado en Panzacola los días 31 de Mayo y 1º de Junio de 1784," AHN, Estado, legajo 3885.

28. J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *Florida in the American Revolution* (Gainesville, 1975), 135. For the Florida story on Vicente Manuel de Zéspedes, see Helen H. Tanner, *Zéspedes in East Florida, 1784-1790* (Coral Gables, 1963). For *hoja de servicios* of Zéspedes (Céspedes), see AGS, Secretaría de Guerra, legajo 7259, XVI, 3.

29. Vicente Manuel de Zéspedes to O'Neill, St. Augustine, September 12, 1784, AGI, PC, legajo 40. William S. Coker is preparing the terminal work on Panton, Leslie and Company.

30. McGillivray to O'Neill, Pensacola, July 24, 1785, AGI, SD, legajo 2250.

31. O'Neill to Esteban Miró, Pensacola, June 28, 1785, AGI, PC, legajo 37.

O'Neill sought the permission of Esteban Miró, governor of Louisiana, in 1786 to supply McGillivray with arms and munitions.³² McGillivray wanted additional muskets to be able to attack the Americans the following spring.³³ McGillivray then informed O'Neill that the Americans seemed to be changing their tactics and were trying to gain the friendship of the Creeks. O'Neill realized the danger of an American-Indian alliance to Spanish security in West Florida, and thought it could best be countered by another conference with the Indians at Mobile.³⁴

By the end of 1787 he had served as governor one year more than the customary five-year term, as well as having been sub-delegate of the Pensacola Intendencia. O'Neill requested promotion to brigadier and transfer as governor to Puerto Rico or to a similar post.³⁵ He failed to receive the transfer and was destined to stay on another six hectic years in Florida.

The British hoped to win over McGillivray in 1788 to fight Americans and Spaniards, and thus allow them to retake Pensacola.³⁶ William Augustus Bowles was a key element in the British plan through his expedition to the Apalachicola River with arms and goods for McGillivray's Creeks.³⁷ O'Neill's health was failing, and as the Bowles's threat seemed somewhat alleviated, he requested leave of absence to go to Mobile for a rest. He was replaced by Francisco Cruzat, former lieutenant governor of Illinois.

Madrid did approve the first part of O'Neill's request and promoted him to brigadier in 1789. Back in Pensacola the following year, he learned that Bowles had returned to Florida from the Bahamas and had landed near St. Marks.³⁹ To strengthen his

32. Miró to O'Neill, New Orleans, June 20, 1786, AGI, SD, legajo 2551, and McGillivray to O'Neill, Little Tallassie, August 26, 1786, AGI, PC, legajo 37.

33. O'Neill to Miró, Pensacola, March 1, 1787, AGI, SD, legajo 2552.

34. McGillivray to O'Neill, Little Tallassie, April 18, 1787, *ibid.*

35. O'Neill to Antonio Valdez, Pensacola, December 3, 1787, AGI, SD, legajo 2550. For an account of the Minister of the Indies and Navy Admiral Antonio Valdez, see Eric Beerman, "Spanish Admiral Antonio Valdez and Valdez, Alaska," *Alaska Journal*, IX (Spring 1979), 38-43.

36. O'Neill to Miró, Pensacola, July 28, 1788, AGI, PC, legajo 38, and O'Neill to Ezpeleta, Pensacola, August 15, 1788, *ibid.*

37. O'Neill to Miró, Pensacola, December 29, 1788, *ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*, November 21, 1788, *ibid.* For Cruzat's marriage dossier for matrimony to Nicanora Ramos of New Orleans (1768), see AGMS, Sección I, expediente 3918.

39. Diego de Vegas to O'Neill, San Marcos de Apalachee, January 19, 1789,

military position in West Florida, O'Neill organized the third battalion of the Louisiana Fixed Infantry Regiment.⁴⁰ The former San Marcos de Apalachee commandant Diego de Vegas was replaced in 1798 by a native of France, Captain Luis Bertucat, who rebuilt the old Spanish fort and made three sallies against Bowles, the "Director of the Talapuche Nation." Bertucat captured arms and ammunitions in one of these attacks in 1791.⁴¹

Meanwhile Miró's replacement in New Orleans was Baron de Carondelet, a native of Flanders and a decorated veteran of the siege of Pensacola. Soon after taking office in 1792, Carondelet told O'Neill to send reinforcements to Mobile because of another possible attack.⁴² He informed O'Neill that William Panton had Spanish authorization for the importation of muskets from the Bahamas for Florida Indians.⁴³ Lord Durnford, the English governor of the Bahamas, sent a naval vessel to intersect this navigation between the Bahamas and Florida. To counter this, the captain general of Cuba, Luis de las Casas, dispatched a coastguard ship San Luis to protect Spanish interests in that area.⁴⁴

O'Neill was replaced as governor in 1793 by his fellow Irishman Carlos Howard, and was assigned as captain general of Yucatán and intendant of Tabasco and Laguna de Términos.⁴⁵ The war which broke out that year between Spain and France delayed his departure from Pensacola, but he was able finally to begin his 1,000 mile journey to Campeche, port for the inland city of Mérida, the capital of Yucatán, where he succeeded the assassinated Lucas de Gálvez.⁴⁶ Soon after arrival at his new post,

AGI, PC, legajo 15-A; Miró to O'Neill, New Orleans, AGI, PC, legajo 7; and "Expediente de O'Neill."

40. "Relación de las fuerzas del Tercer Batallón del Regimiento de Infantería de Luisiana," O'Neill to Miró, Pensacola, August 19, 1790, AGI, PC, legajo 38.
41. O'Neill to Miró, Pensacola, October 3, 1791, AGI, PC, legajo 39. For *hoja de servicios* of Bertucat, see AGS, Secretaría de Guerra, legajo 7291, VIII, 25.
42. Baron de Carondelet to O'Neill, New Orleans, May 2, 1792, AGI, PC, legajo 18. For a biographical sketch on Carondelet, see Eric Beerman, "XV Barón de Carondelet: Gobernador de la Luisiana y la Florida, 1791-1797," *Hidalguía*, No. 148 (March 1978), 179-91.
43. Carondelet to O'Neill, New Orleans, September 14, 1792, AGE, PC, legajo 18.
44. O'Neill to Carondelet, Pensacola, April 24, 1793, AGI, PC, legajo 26.
45. "Expediente de O'Neill," and AGS, Títulos de Indias, signatura 188-300 (January 20, 1793).
46. "Expediente sobre el asesinato del Gobernador de Yucatán D. Lucas de Gálvez cometido en 1792 según su mujer Da. María Francisca de Moya

O'Neill received the welcomed news of his promotion to field marshal.⁴⁷

O'Neill's conduct as governor of West Florida underwent the customary investigation by a Spanish judge, Luis Carlos de Jaen, a lawyer of the Real Audiencia of Louisiana. The inquiry began in 1796 and was concluded in 1807, when the judge announced that O'Neill had performed his duty in Pensacola with great skill and impartiality.⁴⁸

O'Neill traveled a great deal that first year of 1794, seeking a first-hand impression of his new command. As a result, he was able to write an account of the region, "Descripción, población, y censo de la Provincia de Yucatán en la Nueva España, 1795."⁴⁹ Possibly he was on the road too much, or perhaps his spiritual qualities did not measure up to his martial attributes, but the Bishop of Yucatán noted in a communication to Minister of State Manuel Godoy that O'Neill was noticeably absent from a special mass in the Mérida Cathedral honoring Queen Maria Luisa.⁵⁰

Spain's war with France ended in 1795, but peace did not last long; conflict broke out with England the following year. O'Neill instituted the training of black *militamen* and put his forces on wartime alert. English vessels from the Jamaica squadron blockaded Campeche.⁵¹ O'Neill developed a plan to expel the English from their foothold in Central America at Belize and requested Godoy's approval in 1797 to undertake this expedition.⁵² Godoy concurred, and the following September, Spain and England fought a naval engagement near Belize. English ships carried the day, however, and destroyed O'Neill's plans of expelling the

por los llamados Quijanos y sus incidencias," AGS, Secretaría de Guerra, legajo 7219.

47. "Expediente de O'Neill."

48. Residencia of O'Neill, AHN, Consejo de Indias (hereinafter cited as CI), legajo 21225. O'Neill's nephew Juan Mapoter had his uncle's power of attorney to act on his behalf in the residencia. Judge Jaen recommended that Pensacola should be considered a suburb of New Orleans and instead of having a governor, it should have an *alcalde* (mayor).

49. O'Neill to Duke de Alcudia, Mérida de Yucatán, June 30, 1795, AGI, Estado, legajo 35.

50. Bishop of Yucatán to Alcudia, Mérida, July 18, 1795, AGI, Estado, legajo 41.

51. O'Neill to Prince de la Paz (Godoy), Mérida, April 22, 1796, AGI, Estado, legajo 35.

52. O'Neill to Pas, Mérida, January 27, 1797, AGI, Estado, legajo 26; and *Diccionario Porrúa de Historia, Biografía y Geografía de México*, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (Mexico City, 1970), II, 1517-18.

enemy from Bacalar to the Walix River.⁵³ The Spanish expedition returned to Campeche in November.⁵⁴

Completing the mandatory five-year term at his post, O'Neill who was nearly sixty-five years of age, requested reassignment to Spain. He was replaced in 1800 by Benito Pérez, who took his predecessor's *residencia*.⁵⁵ The only apparent blemish to O'Neill's record was the Belize expedition, and, Pérez concluded that O'Neill's service had been superior.⁵⁶

The conflict with England continued, and Campeche remained blockaded, so O'Neill was forced to take an American frigate to Havana, and to wait there until he could secure safe passage to Spain. He departed Havana in November 1801 on the corvette *El Príncipe* and arrived without incident at El Ferrol in Galicia on Christmas Day. He immediately wrote to Madrid, asking to be received in court "to kiss the royal hand."⁵⁷

On the occasion of the marriage of Prince of Asturias (Fernando VII) to Princess María Antonia in October 1802, Carlos IV signed the Royal Order promoting O'Neill to lieutenant general.⁵⁸ Three weeks later O'Neill wrote the king, requesting an audience to express his deep gratitude.⁵⁹ The following May, O'Neill became minister of the king's prestigious Supreme War Council.⁶⁰

The process commenced in 1804 to secure an aristocratic title for O'Neill, and it was necessary for him to write his former commander and then Minister of State Pedro Ceballos to obtain genealogy papers from Ireland.⁶¹ All was in order, and the follow-

53. O'Neill to Sancho de Luna, Presidio de Bacalar, September 26, 1798, AGI, Estado, legajo 35; "Defensa del Capitán de fragata Dn. Sancho de Luna, contra las acusaciones del Capitán General de Yucatán Dn. Arturo O'Neill, hecho en la Havana en 3 de Octubre de 1802," Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, Ms. 17617.

54. O'Neill to Francisco Saavedra, Mérida, November 6, 1798, AGI, Estado, legajo 35.

55. "Expediente de O'Neill," and Residencia of O'Neill, AHN, CI, legajo 20752.

56. Ibid. For Pérez's appointment as captain general of Yucatán, see AGS, Títulos de Indias, signatura 2-86-126 (June 19, 1799).

57. O'Neill to Mariano Luis de Urquijo, Mérida, October 13, 1800, AGI, Estado, legajo 35, and O'Neill to Joseph Antonio Caballero, Bahía del Ferrol, December 25, 1801, "Expediente de O'Neill."

58. Royal Order of October 5, 1802, Palacio de Madrid, *ibid*.

59. O'Neill to Señor [Carlos IV], Madrid, October 26, 1802, *ibid*.

60. Marquis del Norte (Viscount de O'Neill) to Señor [Fernando VII], Madrid, February 14, 1814, *ibid*.

61. O'Neill to Pedro Ceballos, Madrid, June 30, 1804, *ibid*.

ing year Arturo O'Neill became Marquis del Norte and Viscount de O'Neill.⁶²

The Marquis del Norte no doubt thought that at seventy-one years of age in 1808 his combat days were over. But he was in Madrid during the epic Dos de Mayo and served heroically that day when that city rose against Napoleon's troops. Nonetheless, the odds were too great, and O'Neill joined the Spanish forces which withdrew to the south. When these forces regrouped, O'Neill became commander of the Second Division in the Castilla Vieja Army which played an important role in the Spanish victory at Bailén in July. This action stemmed the tide in Andalusia and caused the French to withdraw. The Second Division was in the vanguard several months later in the liberation of Madrid.

General Francisco Javier Castaños, the hero of Bailén and brother-in-law of Carondelet, asked O'Neill to remain in Madrid with the Supreme War Council. The Spaniards believed the war might be over, but the following year, 1809, Napoleon laid siege to the Spanish capital. O'Neill left his desk at the War Council and took command of a vital artillery battery at the Puerta de los Pozos. One of his rounds struck a French ammunition deposit which caused many enemy casualties. But his combativeness was not matched by the governor of Madrid who asked for capitulation terms.

O'Neill, still full of fight, joined the armies of Castaños and the Duke of Wellington, which retreated towards the Portuguese frontier. At the tiny Salamanca village of Vitigudino, Napoleon caught up with the Princesa Regiment commanded by O'Neill and severely mauled the unit. Most of the Spaniards, however, made it across the border to Freixo. After regrouping, the Spanish and English force returned to combat in Spain. O'Neill fell desperately ill and went to recover at the Sierra de Gata near Ciudad Rodrigo, but there he fell prisoner to the French. Because of the gravity of his illness and age, he was not sent to France like most of the other captives. When O'Neill recovered, and at great risk, he escaped and returned to Spanish lines and rejoined the fight. In August 1812, O'Neill proudly marched back into Madrid with the liberating Spanish and English armies.⁶³

62. Royal Order of April 18, 1805, Aranjuez, AHN, Consejos Supremos, legajo 8979, No. 5137.

63. Marquis del Norte to Señor Fernando VII, Madrid, February 14, 1814, "Expediente de O'Neill," and *Gaceta de Madrid*, January 10, 1815, 31-32.

Possibly the Marquis del Norte was feeling his years of age and long military service, and one of the first things he did in Madrid the following month was to make his last will and testament.⁶⁴ He was married to the army and had remained a lifelong bachelor. O'Neill's parents were deceased, as well as his brothers and sisters: Nicolás, Isabel, Ana, and Julio. Arturo O'Neill passed away just before his seventy-ninth birthday at his Madrid home on San Onofre 22, in the evening of December 9, 1814. He was attended in his final days by his nephew, Brigadier Julio O'Neill, who was heir to his uncle's estate and who became II Marquis de Norte.⁶⁵

As Arturo O'Neill's obituary stated in the *Gaceta de Madrid*, he possessed "valor, loyalty, zeal, and skill." These were qualities he had amply demonstrated as the first governor of West Florida during the critical Second Spanish Period, serving longer probably than any other Spaniard. Few governors became a lieutenant general, few received an aristocratic title, and fewer attained both.

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64. Last will and testament of Arturo O'Neill, Madrid, September 1, 1812, AHP, Libro 22628. According to this 1812 will, O'Neill made previous wills in 1807 and 1810.
65. Probated will of O'Neill, Madrid, March 3, 1815, AHP, Libro 24918; Jack D. L. Holmes, "Some Irish Officers in Spanish Louisiana," *Irish Sword*, VI (Winter 1964), 243-44; Micheline Walsh, *The O'Neills in Spain* (Dublin, 1957), 37-38. O'Neill's oldest brother Nicolás was born in Ireland in 1734. Both brothers came to Spain at the same time, entering the Irlanda Regiment together in 1752. Nicolás died as lieutenant colonel in 1790, leaving a widow, Brigida Kil Kelly, and a daughter Elena. O'Neill's older sister Isabel came to Spain and was married in 1778 to Tadeo O'Sullivan, Count de Birabén. A younger sister, Ana, remained in Ireland and married Edmund McCormick. They bore five children, one, of whom, went to Puerto Rico. The youngest child, Julio, came to Spain and married Catherine O'Keef, and raised two daughters and two sons. One of the sons, Arturo, established in Puerto Rico and the other, Julio, had a brilliant army career as a brigadier. In addition, Julio was heir to his Uncle Arturo's estate (II Marquis del Norte). He married Manuela de Castilla, Marquise de la Granja. The Casa contains archival documents of the Marquis del Norte.