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1964 coup d'état in Brazil: A /kcl/ review



The Tiradentes Detachment crosses Areal, afternoon 1st of April 1964

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INTRODUCTION

Brazilian President João Goulart was overthrown after a lengthy civilian-military conspiracy erupted into an armed uprising which advanced in his direction, spread through the country, faced legalist troops and saw their morale break down, leading to successive flights across the country, Congress declaring the Presidency vacant and Goulart fleeing to Uruguay.

This literature review, if it can be called such, covers this from the perspective of military history. It focuses on the condition of military society at the time, the geographic distribution of military strength, the potential regional flashpoints from which the conspiracy against him could spring into armed rebellion, the strategic question of how to achieve victory from such points and finally, the course of events which developed as a field campaign between opposing armies but concluded with no combat at all. Because of this military history approach you can expect maps and NATO counters.

This isn't the main output of my research but just a way to share it to an international audience. There's zero rigour in sourcing anything written here and the bibliography is only a few texts of greater importance. The point is informal knowledge collection within a small circle and the formal-ish structure taken by this text is only a matter of clear presentation of information.

BRAZIL IN THE 1960s

2.1 OVERVIEW



Figure 1: Brazilian highway system and industrialization¹

¹After the capital moved to Brasília, the former Federal District became the single-municipality Guanabara state comprising Rio de Janeiro city. Rio de Janeiro state comprised everything else and was governed from Niterói. In 1975 they were merged.

Source: [Atlas Histórico do Brasil](#). Retrieved December 03 2020.

Population (1960): 70 992 343

Literacy rate (1960): 60,3%

Urbanization rate (1960): 55%

2.2 THE ARMY IN 1964

The Brazilian military reflected its country's low degree of development. It was woefully understrength with divisions lacking many formations defined in their paper organizations. Equipment was WWII American vintage (table 1). Motorization was limited: cavalry was horse cavalry and infantry was foot infantry, leading to extensive requisitioning of civilian buses and trucks during the coup. Organization and doctrine were also American-sourced since WWII, together with interwar French influences.

Standard small arms	
Pistol	Colt 1911, Smith & Wesson 1917 Revolver
SMG	.45 INA 1950 and 1953
Rifle	.30-06 Mosquetão M1949 (based on the Mauser M1908)
LMG	Madsen M1917 and Browning M1919
Artillery (in number of groups)	
Light	x14 of 75 mm guns, x11 of M101 105 mm howitzers, x1 mixed airborne
Medium	x2 of M114 155 mm howitzers
Antiair	x5 of M1 90 mm guns, x1 of C/56-Mod 18 88 mm guns, x4 of automatic L/60 40 mm guns
AFVs (in units)	
Light tank	x50 M41, x437 Stuart M3 and M3A1
Medium tank	x83 Sherman M4
Armored car	x84 Scout Car M3A1, ~x150 M8 Greyhound
APC (half-track)	~x400 M2, M2A1, M3, M3A1
APC (tracked)	x20 M59

Table 1: Land armaments, 1960
Source: Pedrosa 2018 p. 219-220

In command, the most powerful post after that of the Commander-in-Chief was the Minister of War. The Chief of Staff kept himself to doctrine. The force was divided in Great Commands - four Armies and two Military Commands,² which in turn fielded small independent formations and Great Units (figure 2) - 7 divisions of infantry, 4 of cavalry, one armored, one aeroterrestrial (core), a mixed brigade and a school-unit group³ - and territorial Military Regions mostly dealing with administrative formations, but also some support and in cases, *caçadores* (light infantry) battalions. The 4th, 5th and 7th Military Region commands, "territorial" and low-priority, were merged with the Infantry Divisions of the same number. The bulk of military strength was in Guanabara as the former capital and in Rio Grande do Sul facing the Argentine Army.

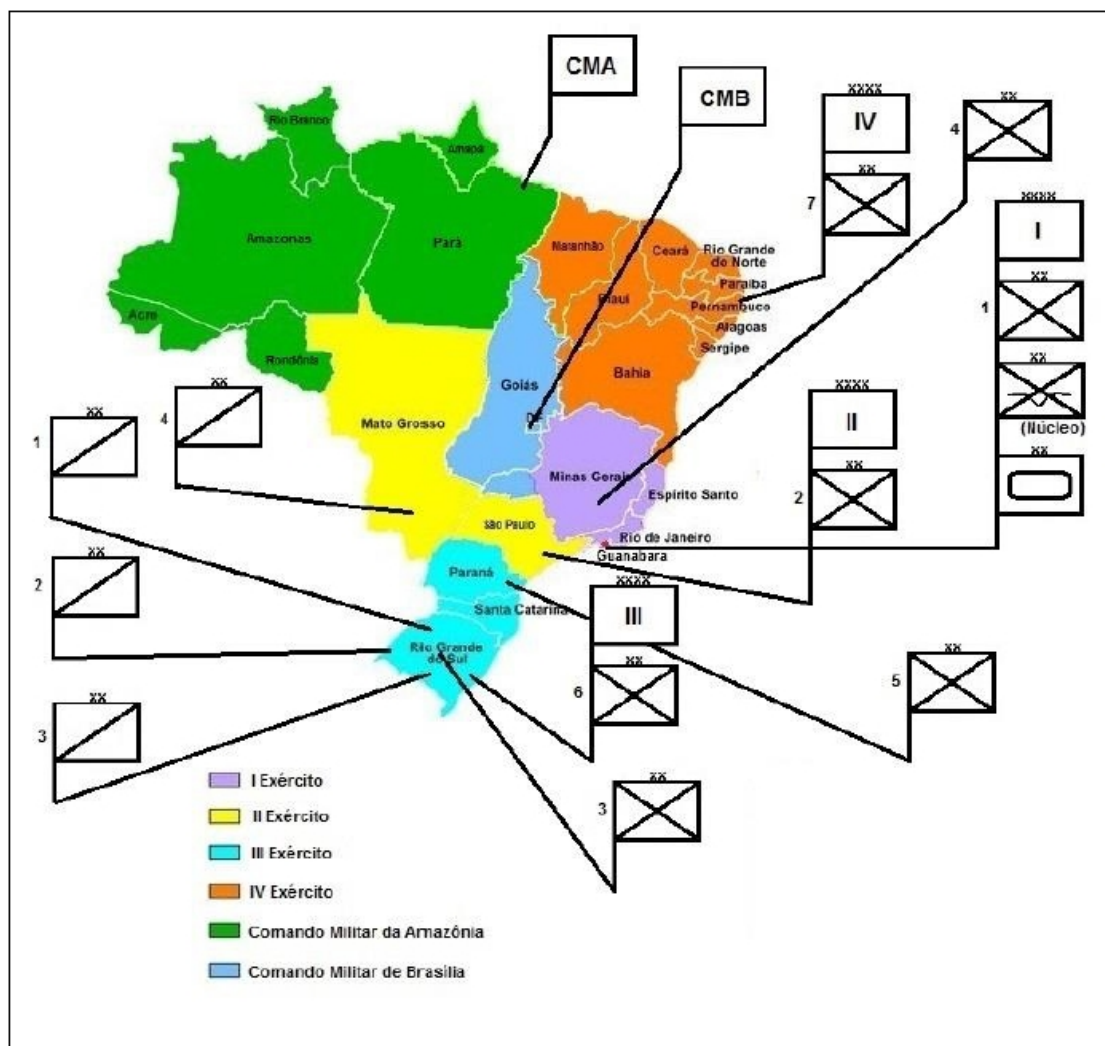


Figure 2: Great Commands and Great Units in 1960
 Source: Pedrosa 2018 p. 229
 See the Appendix for a detailed breakdown.

²Brigade level.
³Brigade level.

Rank	
Officers	<i>Praças</i> (enlisted)
<i>Marechal</i> ⁴	<i>Subtenente</i>
<i>General-de-exército</i> (army general)	<i>1º Sargento</i>
<i>General-de-divisão</i>	<i>2º Sargento</i>
<i>General-de-brigada</i>	<i>3º Sargento</i>
<i>Coronel</i>	<i>Cabo</i>
<i>Tenente-coronel</i>	<i>Soldado</i>
<i>Major</i>	
<i>Capitão</i>	
<i>Primeiro-tenente</i>	
<i>Segundo-tenente</i>	
<i>Aspirante-a-oficial</i>	

Table 2: Army ranks, 1960

Military interference in politics was a constant of national history since the Republic came into existence with an armed coup d'état in 1889. Having toppled the Emperor, the military usurped his role as the Moderating Power (a fourth power alongside the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary). It intervened not to take power but to weigh in favor of one or another faction of the civilian power struggle, then returning to its quarters.

In 1964 a coup d'état resulted not in continued civilian rule under a civilian faction but in a takeover of power, not military but military-civilian or even, more specifically, military-business. That the new regime lasted twenty years wasn't in all of the coupists' plans - the moderates wanted a mandate at most and Mourão Filho, the instigator, perhaps wanted immediate continuation of democracy. It wouldn't necessarily proceed like it did, but that's outside the scope.

⁴In peacetime only existed as retired highest-rank officers (retirement meant promotion).

THE BUILDUP TO THE COUP

3.1 POLITICAL SITUATION

3.1.1 Background 1945-61

The democratic Fifth Republic or Populist Republic was formed after WWII in the wake of Getúlio Vargas' dictatorship.

	Brazilian Labor Party (PTB)	Social Democratic Party (PSD)	National Democratic Union (UDN)
Source	Vargas' corporatist trade unions and militants	Vargas' political elites and their electoral base	Vargas' opposition
Stance before ~1961	Allied		Opposed to the other two
Stance after 1964	Joined the opposition	Joined the regime	
Programme	Social reforms, economic nationalism	Developmentalism open to foreign capital	Laissez-faire open to foreign capital

Table 3: Fifth Republic party system

After PSD & PTB hegemony in the 1946-1960 period, in the 1960 elections the Presidency fell to Jânio Quadros,⁵ a hard to identify protest candidate backed by the UDN. In August 1961 he resigned. By the existing system the President and VP were elected separately, and his VP was João Goulart (PTB), tied to that party's most radical currents; in that moment he was on a state visit to communist China.⁶ Jânio hoped that opposition to his VP would trigger some kind of coup d'état and allow him to return to power in a stronger position.

Jânio never returned, but the military ministers vetoed Goulart's return and takeover of the Presidential post, though not taking power themselves. The military had previously taken part in the power succession in 1955,^{54,45} and all the time before; its role was of a "moderating power", weighing in favor of one or another civilian faction.

This attempted coup d'état, however, was jammed by the governor of Rio Grande do Sul,⁷ Leonel Brizola, the IIIrd Army and overwhelming negative public opinion. The

⁵Part of the minor PTN (National Labor Party).

⁶Not a coincidence.

⁷And the governor of Goiás.

rest of the military and the IIIrd Army mobilized to fight each other but the coupists had low morale.

To prevent civil war a compromise was reached: Goulart would assume office, but a new parliamentary system would empty all his power. A referendum on its continuation would be held to take effect after his mandate was over.

3.1.2 Crisis 1962-64

The political system was in “decisionmaking paralysis”. The economy saw stagnation and uncontrolled inflation. Social struggle was in feverish heights: strikes were ever more numerous, organizations such as the CGT (General Workers’ Command) and Peasant Leagues ever more militant and demands ever greater.

In 1963 Goulart managed to anticipate the referendum on the parliamentary system, owing in part to military blackmail: the IIIrd Army claimed it couldn’t maintain order in its area if the anticipation weren’t approved. The electorate overwhelmingly backed the return to presidentialism and Goulart recovered his powers.

His attempts to further strengthen his position by declaring a state of emergency or federal interventions in states failed. He aimed to execute the “*reformas de base*” - land, urban, electoral (including giving the illiterate the vote), fiscal and educational, but those were blocked by the conservative Congress. Hence in his final months he took a radical turn, seeking to pressure Congress by rousing up the “popular forces”.

By this point, in reaction conspiracies were fully underway to overthrow him. Such plots existed all the way since 1961 but what prevailed prior to the return to presidentialism were just destabilization efforts.

A central institution in the anti-Goulart effort was the complex formed by the IBAD (Brazilian Democratic Action Institute) - IPES (Social Research and Studies Institute), which funneled business resources⁸ to collect intelligence, change public opinion and offer secret channels through which civilian and military oppositionists could interact. IPES is the closest thing to a shadowy cabal plotting a takeover.

3.1.3 Ways to understand the coup

As a countercoup: the opposition liked to label its organizations Democratic this and Democratic that, believing Goulart a threat to the regime’s continuation, as he’d allow, even if unwittingly, the communists or another radical faction to take over, was a communist himself or planned to continue and entrench his rule by changing the

⁸Though they, in fact, found many difficulties in convincing businessmen to support them, while landowners were put off by their support for moderate land reform.

law to enable reelections or seize power as a more “centrist” dictator like Péron or Vargas.⁹ But he definitively wasn’t a communist, the uppercase C Communist Party didn’t have such aims (though other sections of the radical left definitively did) and there’s no proof he wanted to seize autocratic power. It may be conceded that the game he played wasn’t purely a clean one: using military blackmail to recover his power, mulling a state of siege and federal interventions, and there’s the abduction plot by his military against Carlos Lacerda.

As a reaction to social reform: it’s simple, landowners reacting to proposed land reform and other cases. The following regime didn’t forget such topics but approached them on its own terms.

As part of a long-term implementation of a class project: the extensive economic changes implemented by the new regime were already desired many years in advance by the dynamic elites and the years of conspiracy and destabilization were their way of getting them.

As a foreign intervention: with the Cold War as a backdrop Goulart was seen as a threat to America’s power in South America and American pressure evicted him. I don’t think this is central, the historical dynamics were internal and foreign pressure was unnecessary for the coup to be carried out and succeed. Military interventions were already numerous, they didn’t need external input to happen.

As a result of Goulart’s mistakes: with his confusing, always shifting administration and his burning of his image with the officer class (see section below) he maneuvered himself into accumulating enemies and getting overthrown. This is also not central but he could’ve managed better.

3.2 MILITARY CLASS SITUATION

3.2.1 Officers

About a hundred officers, the secretive “*Setor Mil*”, were tied to the PCB. In the Air Force those were 20, including the commander of the powerful IIIrd Air Zone in Rio. Leftists of other stripes were much more numerous though a minority in the total.

A minority plotting against the government could be divided between “historical conspirators” and “young officers”, or between “modernizers”, “traditionalists” and “right-wing extremists”. “Modernizers” studied at the ESG (Higher War School) and

⁹And his tie to Vargas was concrete. A more “centrist” dictatorship was a hypothetical that also threatened part of the left, like governor Arraes of Pernambuco.

were tied to the most dynamic elites and their broad project to dismantle the populist system. “Traditionalists” were tied to the less dynamic, more reactive elites.

They commanded two Armies and a Division at the coup, giving them projection, but it was the “modernizers” that seized power with their stronger backing. “Modernizers” became the regime’s moderates, and “traditionalists” are said to have become the hardliners though that is a great simplification.¹⁰ “Right-wing extremists” didn’t matter as much. IPES is associated with the “modernizers” but also coordinated them with the other two.

The majority of the officer class was defined by “inertial legalism”: they looked after their own careers and avoided picking sides in a crisis, which proved an obstacle to the expansion of coupist networks.

Goulart coup-proofed with his “*dispositivo militar*”, a policy of stacking the upper ranks with trusted officers (tied by professionalism, careerism, ideology, etc.) ,starting with the Minister of War, Jair Dantas Ribeiro. Unreliable generals were retired or in paper-pushing positions. This gave the illusion that there was a strong grip on the military and even intimidated the conspirators. However it created resentment on those who were sent to a remote garrison or lost a promotion to a less competent sycophant, and in the end the “*dispositivo*” proved an abject failure as commanders expected to be loyal weren’t so and those who did couldn’t control their troops, as the middle and lower officer ranks were still oppositionist.

Another legalist failure was the underemployment of the intelligence services.

3.2.2 Enlisted

The “class struggle” taking place in endless strikes, peasant movements, etc. extended into the military, pitting the lower class *praças* (enlisted) against the officers, between which existed a rift - e.g. marriage was allowed for officers but *praças* needed a long period of service. As NCOs were at the top of their side and directly faced the rift, it was chiefly a *sergeants’ movement*. Their demands were internal - more reasonable career progression, reformed punishments, greater freedom in their private lives and the rights to political expression and to be elected (the Constitution was ambiguous and in the 60s the Supreme Court came to oppose it) - and external, backing other leftist demands.

Most members of this movement were “unaffiliated”, with the second largest group being, surprisingly enough, integralists (who still got purged after the coup); among 10Mourão Filho despised the regime outright, Krueel and Justino allied with the democratic opposition.

others there were those closer to the officers, tied to the government, tied to several communist factions, etc.

The effect of this movement was a breakdown in hierarchy and discipline, the humiliation of officers and, at its most extreme, the occurrence of revolts, namely the Sergeants' Revolt in Brasília (September 1963) and the Sailors' Revolt in Guanabara (March 1964), the former an actual violent uprising that left two dead and the latter a rally/mutiny.

Many officers saw this movement as the result of infiltration and subversion in their ranks, and the government's lenient and supportive attitude to this movement - it was part of the popular pressure strategy - convinced them it was waging an attack on the military institution itself. The Sailors' Revolt in particular pushed them into a hostile attitude.

An important note must be made. In the Navy, an elitist, aristocratic institution, the social rift between officers and *praças* was strong and so was this movement. For the Army there's a paper (Zimmerman 2013) demonstrating that the actual, not perceived strength of the sergeants' movement was minimal; the revolt in Brasília only involved the Air Force and Navy, and in Guanabara, only the Navy. A similar breakdown of order in the ranks had taken place in the 30s and as a result a decades-long effort in qualification, socialization and control had conquered the NCO's hearts and minds.

3.3 THE COUP'S STRATEGIC QUESTION

3.3.1 Where to start?

The coup began with Minas Gerais rising in revolt against the federal government, followed by São Paulo with a double invasion in Guanabara's direction. That Guanabara was the target, the revolt began in Minas and São Paulo converged with it need explanation - it didn't happen "because it happened".

Why not Brasília? The local garrison was meaningless and the only object of value was Congress. The federal administrative machinery, including the Ministry of War, was in Guanabara. That garrison was massive. So why didn't it just rise up? Rio as the most valuable city and garrison was where the coup-proofing effort ("*dispositivo militar*") was concentrated. The upper ranks were impenetrable.

This leaves the option of approaching Rio from the outside. Part of the garrison would be kept there to control unrest but another would move out to the hinterland in response, where far from their superiors, the oppositionist middle ranks would refuse to fight. Eventually Guanabara would fall. Consider, then, the options: the South (Illrd

Army), Northeast (IVth Army), São Paulo (IIInd Army) and Minas Gerais (4th Infantry Division).

The IIIrd Army was strong and it is not impossible to march from the south to Rio (see 1930) but it is quite a distance. The IVth Army was not only distant but also weak and lacked the trucks to move south. Hence this outside force must come from a nearby state, which leaves two, São Paulo and Minas Gerais; the latter was the better of the two.

Both of them were to cross the border and lay siege to Guanabara per the Ulhoa Cintra plan and this is what took place. In the rear, the two would do another pincer attack against Brasília. The IIIrd and IVth Armies were left with the task of controlling Porto Alegre and Recife.

3.3.2 Local conditions in the target area

3.3.2.1 Guanabara

Governed by Carlos Lacerda (UDN), rhetorically Goulart's greatest enemy, a fiery oppositionist. Despite this he was of little importance in the conspiracy to overthrow the President, partly because the governor of Minas Gerais was a competitor within his party for the presidential run and partly out of his own decision as the city's garrison was too strong and he was too obvious of an enemy. But he did know in advance there'd be a coup d'état. At his disposal was the city's gendarmerie.

The city also housed a huge number of conspirators. Most important among them was the Chief of Staff, Army general Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco, a "modernizer". Old and very prestigious, his present position was a great honor and second only to the War Minister, but toothless - he commanded no troops. Reluctant to join the conspiracy, once in he was accepted as its natural leader. He kept a low profile to take advantage of the "*dispositivo*" not noticing his subversive intent as well as to gain more credibility among his peers when, as someone seen as a legalist, he opposed the government.

He set up an informal "staff" for the revolutionary movement and helped tie together the several different plots across the country. Among his allies were Ernesto Geisel, President 1974-79, and Golberi do Couto e Silva, mastermind of the surveillance state. As the most prestigious member of the movement he'd succeed Goulart as President.

The other prominent conspirator was Army general Artur da Costa e Silva, who now only had an irrelevant bureaucratic post. He wasn't as influential but proved him-

self ambitious in the post-coup power struggle, winning himself the Presidency a few years later. He represented the "traditionalists".

Ahead of the 1st Army was General Âncora, whom Goulart trusted. Below him, the 1st Infantry Division and Divisional Infantry 1 commanders, Oromár Osório and Cunha Melo, were also legalist. So were Maj-Brigadier Francisco Teixeira of the IIIrd Air Zone, Colonel Rui Moreira Lima of Santa Cruz airbase and two marine battalions under the "people's admiral" Aragão.

3.3.2.2 São Paulo

Governor Adhemar de Barros (PSP)¹¹ was in the conspiracy, though not the most trustworthy as he could be erratic in his political allegiance. The IIInd Army was weaker than either the 1st or the IIIrd and had to take in account both. Commanding it was general Amauri Krueel. He had supported the return of presidentialism and Goulart had helped get his son a job and finance his acquisition of a plot of land; he was part of the "*dispositivo*" and nominally a legalist. However he was also anticommunist, opposed to leftism among sergeants and didn't like Goulart's ideological turn; his wish was that the President would turn away from the left so he could remain loyal to him. He had contact with the conspiracy.

3.3.2.3 Minas Gerais

Governor Magalhães Pinto (UDN) was finely attuned with the military leadership: generals Guedes, Divisional Infantry 4 commander in Belo Horizonte, and Mourão Filho of the 4th Infantry Division in Juiz de Fora. Guedes already conspired through IPES and Mourão had in 1962-3 devised conspiracies and battle plans in Rio Grande do Sul and São Paulo. Thus the civilian and military leaders were fully committed and had the highest cohesion among themselves.

Furthermore Mourão had total military control with both Division and Military Region commands; in São Paulo those were separate, and in Rio Grande do Sul there was the Region command and five divisions; he couldn't coordinate with the one (1st Cavalry) behind his, (3rd Infantry) tying down part of his force as a rear guard.

And he was less than 150 km from Guanabara; São Paulo was 430, and the south, 1,600. The state was centrally located, bordering São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasília, making it well positioned for an offensive, and at the same time its mountainous terrain favored defense.

3.3.3 Minas Gerais' strategic question

¹¹Progressive Social Party. Conservative, mostly restricted to São Paulo.

The aforementioned geographical position also made the state unfit for a revolt: landlocked and militarily weak. Continental and far from the border, it was treated as a mere resource pool by the Army, which gave it low priority for equipment and personnel. Many of the 4-5 thousand Army servicemen (compare to the 30 thousand in Rio) only served a few months a year and were poorly trained. How to square the circle?

1) *Acquire muscle by militarizing the police.* The *Força Pública/Polícia Militar* was both the governor's gendarmerie and an auxiliary to the Army; in effect, they were state armies. In the highly decentralized Old Republic (1889-1930) this was fully the case and their record of field campaigns was extensive. This was diminished but they still used rifles, machine guns, mortars and cavalry and every state police force could in theory be used in the campaign.

Magalhães Pinto began this years in advance, fearful of federal intervention; Adhemar de Barros did it to a lesser extent. The *PMMG* doubled in size in the decade and in 64 had 17.880 men. Training collaborated with the Army and focused on defensive warfare in the state's terrain. Weapons received from Army stores or mounted in workshops. In the end, though well organized it was still very light in firepower.

2) *Negotiate sea access with Espírito Santo.* A federal blockade in Rio could be countervailed through the railway connection to Vitória port. Allied with the local police and 3rd Caçadores Battalion, the *PMMG* would defend this corridor. The governor was politically neutral but given the fear of his state becoming a "unionist republic" his conservative background prevail. By March 1964 this was a diplomatic success. It was then expected that foreign armament would flow through the port and arm tens of thousands of volunteers. Further diplomacy with governors in Goiás and Mato Grosso secured the rear.

Nevertheless in protracted civil war even if Minas Gerais brought together 4 thousand Army men, 18 thousand police and 50 thousand volunteers the federal government could be expected to field 200 thousand against them.

3) *Do a surprise attack.* Magalhães Pinto and Guedes wanted to rise the state in revolt, entrench at the border and negotiate. For Mourão Filho, this was madness. The young, barely trained soldiers which Guedes thought couldn't go on the offense would, in fact, lose their morale in static defense, and only keep it if relentlessly pushing forward. There was nothing to negotiate - they were in a position of massive material inferiority and would simply be crushed.

He was of the belief that time always works against an uprising. In 1932 São Paulo's forces had invaded the *fluminense* (RJ) countryside but stopped to negotiate, missing the opportunity for further advance. Naturally, they lost. Instead he envisioned:

1. With what he had in Juiz de Fora (two battalions)¹², move south at night;
2. Cross the unprotected Paraíba River at 22-22:30;
3. Reach Guanabara at 05-06:00;
4. Behind the vanguard, have the remaining forces set position at the foot of the highlands, with a company further behind;
5. Overpower the 1st Tank Battalion in Avenida Brasil;
6. Detach a platoon to abduct the President;
7. Overpower the Ministry of War;
8. Issue a manifesto signed by the oppositionist governors;
9. Defend the Ministry; If the garrison resists, fight to the death;
10. Win?

According to general Muricy (we'll see him later) it was preposterous to imagine he could just move two battalions and enter Guanabara unnoticed, or that anyone would take his manifesto seriously. The massive garrison would simply roll out and swat him like a fly. On his defense it was more creative than static defense and, as was later found, the tank battalion's commander was oppositionist and wouldn't pose an obstacle.

Mourão would move with the vanguard but have one general commanding it and another in the remaining forces. He already had two brigade generals, Guedes and Ferreira (Divisional Artillery). His officers thought Guedes was the rightful head of the vanguard, but Mourão hated both of them; if he gave it to Guedes he'd stop at the border as was his plan. He'd rather promote a colonel to general. In December 1963 he did find a suitable replacement in Rio: Muricy, who agreed to move to Juiz de Fora when the time came.

This plan (Operation Popeye) was never put into effect as intended, as will be seen.

¹²122nd Police Battalion, 10th Infantry Regiment (one battalion strong), 4th Mechanized Recon Squadron, 1st Group of the 4th Howitzer Regiment. For São Paulo he'd use 3 infantry and 1 police battalion and a howitzer group, but was too far to reach Guanabara in one go.

3.4 AMERICA'S ROLE

Washington wasn't fond of Goulart's foreign policy, distancing an until then reliable satellite and even making a few moves toward the Eastern Bloc, though its direction was non-alignment. Its ambassador Lincoln Gordon was convinced Goulart was in the course to a Péron-style dictatorship. After 1963 a coup d'état was seen as a favorable outcome and several plots were found. American intervention took the form of funding oppositionist candidates, reducing aid or shifting it to oppositionist governors and planning, with the knowledge of a few Brazilian conspirators, logistical support and naval actions.

There was a plan for a land invasion, a massive operation involving six divisions, but only for extreme conditions. What was expected was that a parallel government would form, request aid, and it'd come mainly in the form of fuel (the railways were expected to be taken over by the internal enemy) brought by a task force, which would also show America's stance in favor of this parallel government.

On the 1st of April "Operation Brother Sam" was activated, employing the following ships: USS Forrestal (CVA-59), USS Leahy (DLG-16), USS Barney (DDG-6), USS Truckee (AO 147), USS Charles R. Ware (DD-865), USS Allen M. Summer (DD-692), USS Harwood (DD-861) and USS William C. Lawe (DD-763). Fuel was to be brought by the USNS Santa Inez, USNS Chepachet, SS Hampton Road and SS Nash Bulk.

The Forrestal and others did set sail, but barely got past 17° N (look up the deck logs) before being sent back as the crisis had been resolved; Castelo Branco himself had told the Americans he no longer needed help. 110 tons of ammunition and crowd control gas reserved for a fighter-escorted airlift were never sent. Thus the coupists succeeded before this support ever came. America did, however, have an influence because Goulart was informed that it'd recognize and back a parallel government, and this weighed into his decision to give up.

In conclusion, in Goulart's overthrow America was one of several factors.

From the "other side" it is known Eastern Bloc intelligence services were active in the country, particularly the Czechoslovaks.

3.5 GOULART'S FINAL DAYS

3.5.1 Situation

Four events are noted in March 1964:

1. In the 13th, a political rally in the Central do Brasil rail station, right beside the Ministry of War, was a mark of Goulart's turn to the left and radicalization. In addition the Army's extensive security provisions and the Minister's presence offended some.
2. In the 20th, the March of the Family with God for Freedom, a massive oppositionist demonstration in São Paulo, made the coupists feel popular support.
3. In the 25th the Sailor's Revolt broke out in Guanabara. Leftist leaders joined the mutinees, making it a fiery political rally. Marines sent in repression dropped their weapons and joined. When a strong operation was about to move against them, the mutinees were negotiated with. Afterwards they were held not in Navy but in Army installations, granted amnesty and walked the streets cheering and carrying leftist admirals Aragão and Suzano in their arms. The Minister of the Navy resigned and his successor was picked by the sailors.
4. In the 30th he spoke to thousands of sergeants at the Automobile Club in Rio de Janeiro. His subordinates had pleaded him not to speak, but he did. His action was deemed an escalation of the crisis in the military, and his words, politically explosive as he asked his audience to back his reforms.

In the last days of the month the Minister of War was hospitalized, recovering from a scheduled surgery. At that point the President had suggested him to delay the surgery given the heavy political crisis in the air, to no avail. It is possible this was deliberate and the minister made sure he was incapacitated at the moment of decision so he would neither have to betray the President nor face Castelo Branco.

By this point the officer class was gravely offended and the "inertially legalist" majority was no longer willing to stand by the government. The conspiratorial minority had its grasp across the entire country and planned to begin the coup d'état on the 2nd of April, date of a major oppositionist rally in Rio de Janeiro, or later. On the 30th the CGT called for a general strike in reaction to the coup on that date, and the Americans already knew of the impending outbreak.

3.5.2 Timing

The coupist group in Minas Gerais anticipated the date but botched the execution. It started with the last summit, on the 28th of March, between the big 3: Mourão Filho, military chief of the revolution, and the 2 based in Belo Horizonte, his subordinate Guedes and the civilian chief, Magalhães Pinto. It'd been decided that the governor would write a manifesto, hand a copy to him and then at his green light it could be broadcast. No manifesto was brought. Mourão Filho wanted to enact his plan that very night as the meeting itself was eyebrow-raising, but couldn't without a manifesto. Then for the following days he waited and waited for it but the governor made no contact.

According to himself he was willing to start at any moment and just waited. Other sources clash and state that after failing to start on the 28th he now wanted time to prepare. There's also the fact Guedes was superstitious and wanted an earlier date because of the Moon phases. And allegedly it was Marshal Odílio Denys, veteran conspirator present as a guest, who gave out the proper date (31st), knowing in advance Goulart's speech at night on the 30th would be explosive. I don't find Denys very trustworthy.

The conspirators tripped on themselves on the 30th. In the afternoon Magalhães made a manifesto in solidarity to the Navy, in light of the sailors' mutiny, and Guedes told his officers he was in rebellion. Both were meaningless. The governor's manifesto was only some vague words about democracy, allegedly it reached the President and he agreed with it! And Guedes' "rebellion" wasn't even known to the commander of the regiment stationed in Belo Horizonte (12th); he was in Juiz de Fora. Mourão Filho was only informed by telephone, when these events were a *fait accompli*.

By doing this the two won the political laurels of kickstarting the revolution and handed the hot potato to Mourão Filho who'd have to do the actual military work. Further, by writing a weak manifesto the governor even had an "exit strategy".

Yet it also compromised everything. By broadcasting their intentions before military preparations were made, they'd lose the element of surprise and have to mobilize under hostile conditions. If simultaneously telephone contact failed -that did happen with 60s communications- and the federal government took the rebellion seriously, then in the blink of an eye the Armored Division would be in Juiz de Fora while paratroopers fell on Belo Horizonte. And what if, on a whim, Mourão Filho chose to side with the government? With the 1st Army's support he'd march and crush Guedes & Magalhães.

However the federal government's intelligence failure and the weakness of the proclamations of rebellion meant nothing real happened. For the past days the police was moving huge convoys and even that they didn't notice.

It was just enough to enrage Mourão Filho, who, after still waiting for a copy, by dinner made the fateful decision to act. He'd use a manifesto of his own. He didn't want to watch the President at night as he'd commence his overthrow for before day-break. His wife convinced him to watch *because* he'd overthrow him.

After that at dawn the governor's emissaries came with the manifesto. It was as bad as he expected and such was his rage they left in a few minutes. At 04-05:00 he has the police occupy the telephone station and still wearing his pajamas and red silk robe sent a number of calls through the country, setting the coup d'état in motion.

THE COUP FROM ABOVE

4.1 OVERVIEW

Minas Gerais had begun a rebellion against the federal government, but very little actually happened in the following 12 hours. Outside the state nobody knew for sure what was going on, only rumors. Yet in Rio de Janeiro the government already missed a major opportunity to capture Castelo Branco at the Ministry of War, likely due to Âncora's sabotage.

The federal government prepared to quell the rebellion with units of the First Army led by BG Cunha Melo. Those had superior armaments and numbers. At 17:00, with his army at the border with Rio de Janeiro, Mourão issued his manifesto. An hour later they were facing the first enemy troops, the 1st Caçadores Battalion. News of open rebellion had great repercussion across garrisons. Goulart's strength so far had rested on inertia and as the way the wind was blowing became clear, all but a few stubborn legalists jumped ship.

In Rio another opportunity was missed as Goulart didn't give the greenlight for marines to attack Guanabara palace and unseat the city's oppositionist governor. As the stalemate dragged on, São Paulo's decision became central. The Ministry of War ordered a recon squadron to its southern border (an order ignored), and general Zerbini guaranteed control of his regiments in the Paraíba valley for the legalist side.

But Krueel himself stalled his decision until finally handing an ultimatum to Goulart - break with the left and I'll crush Mourão. With the negative response, at midnight the IIInd Army defected. Around the same time defections at the Minas frontline forced the 1st Caçadores to retreat.

At dawn Zerbini lost his grip, the IIInd Army marched eastward and the elite School-Unit Group was sent west against it. After daybreak the next legalist force in the Minas theater, the 1st Infantry Regiment, simply defected wholesale and by 10:30 the Paraíba river was crossed unguarded by Mourão's troops. In the São Paulo theater the Agulhas Negras Academy picked the IIInd Army's side and placed its cadets on the highway as a psychological barrier. Goulart was informed America would back a coupist parallel government.

The IVth Army switched sides and progressed against its greatest target, Pernambuco's governor, besieging him in his palace while invading his state from north and

south. The IIIrd Army was taken over by legalists but outside Porto Alegre almost all of it was going rogue and the 5th Infantry Division marched south.

After noon the São Paulo and Minas theaters were once again in an armed stalemate, the former between the cadets and the School-Unit Group and the latter between Mourão's troops and the 2nd Infantry Regiment. They were resolved anticlimatically when Goulart abandoned Rio de Janeiro and Âncora sought a ceasefire, by nighttime surrendering the 1st Army.

Upon arrival in Brasília in the middle of the afternoon, Goulart found it no better to mount a resistance from. The thin garrison wasn't in the best morale and enemy troops were close to the west and the east. After leaving at night, the 11th Military Region backstabbed him and allowed Congress to carry out an institutional coup d'état, declaring the Presidency vacant.

The last stand was in Porto Alegre, at morning on the 2nd of April. His rump government only controlled the city and a few enclaves throughout Rio Grande do Sul. Faced with the prospect of bloodshed and defeat at the hands of a much stronger enemy, he flew away to his estates and in time to exile.

Goulart's behavior was marked by the refusal to allow any blood to be shed and by an apathetic response to the coup, when much more could be done. The speedy collapse of the legalist reaction, however, was chiefly caused by the abysmal morale in its ranks; the officer class had no interest to stand in the President's defense.

4.2 "INTERNAL" FRONTS

Besides field movements belligerents (governments and military authorities) mobilized for a conflict spanning weeks or months by (table ?):

1. Controlling fuel supplies and requisitioning vehicles;
2. Enlisting volunteers;
3. Policing the streets, installing checkpoints and controlling the roads and exits;
4. Arresting the "internal enemies", such as leftists and union leaders;
5. Controlling communications.

Location	Fuel	Volunteers	Policing	Arrests	Media
Coupist					
Minas Gerais	x	x	x	x	x
São Paulo	x	x	x	x	x
Resende	x		?	x	x
Porto Alegre ¹³	x				x
Passo Fundo	x	x			x
Legalist					
Guanabara		x			See below
Brasília	x	x	x		x
Porto Alegre	x	x			x

Table 4: Comparative mobilization

In Guanabara there were volunteer's at the government's disposal but they weren't used. Marines guarded some pro-government media and shut down some oppositionist, but it wasn't systematic. It was a failure.

Minas Gerais meticulously planned its own mobilization a long time in advance. São Paulo's was marked by the active participation of industrialists and the requisitioning and orders for many items such as medical supplies and mattresses.

In both Minas Gerais and São Paulo the Air Force was an obstacle. The PMMG prepared to besiege the Belo Horizonte but its commander, uninvolved in the plan, chose to switch sides. In São Paulo the battle plan had to include besieging several airbases with police, tanks and AA. In Campo de Marte and Guaratinguetá the sergeants remained legalist and the bases were only controlled on the 2nd.

Minas Gerais' military operations weren't just its offensives against Guanabara and Brasília but also the formation of defensive detachments (figure 3): Triângulo, against federal forces in Goiás, East, to protect the sea corridor in Espírito Santo, South, reassigned to the capital, and Belo Horizonte. "Wartime" battalions were comprised of a 134-men machine gun company and three companies of 170 fusiliers each.

¹³Pro-coup in the 31st, legalist in April.

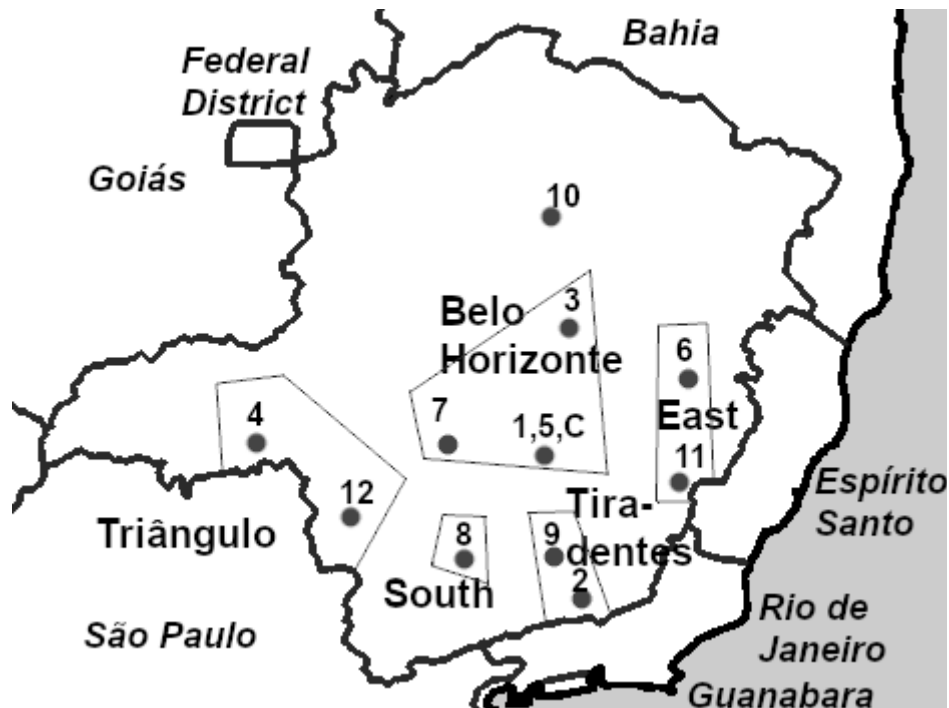


Figure 3: Minas Gerais police battalions during the coup d'état¹⁴

Trade unions could've been an asset for Goulart, but were in fact a net *liability*. They declared a nationwide strike but it only properly took place in Guanabara and Rio de Janeiro, preventing the mobilization of militants from the suburbs to the city center and not interfering with the rebel states. I've found one source claiming fifth-column activity but the call was for a general strike, it didn't go far (though it did reach Santos in São Paulo) because of limited communications.

It's also worth noting Minas Gerais began its wave of leftist arrests early on so it was in no condition to be hampered by a strike. Carlos Lacerda had his police arrest some unionists a day before the coup, which is probably the main reason. Then during its course there was a wave of arrests. In one case, in front of the Air Ministry, Air Force personnel and then marines expelled the policemen, but elsewhere they operated widely.

4.3 RIO DE JANEIRO

Figure 4: Field operations in Rio's hinterland

¹⁴The 1st wasn't part of the Belo Horizonte detachment, which also included the Auxiliary Service Corps and Instruction Department.

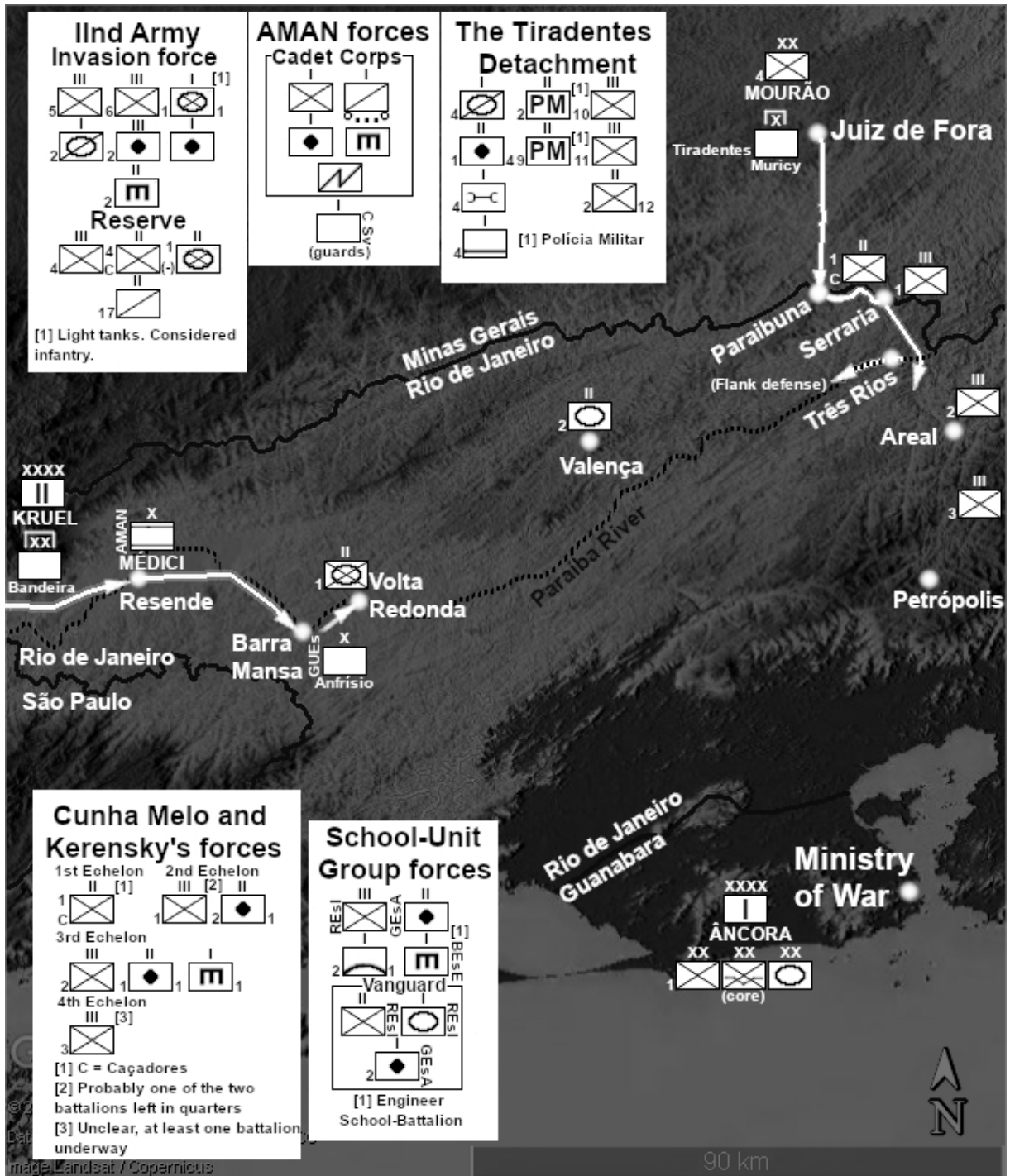


Figure 4: Field operations in Rio's hinterland

4.3.1 Minas theater

The battlefield was mountainous, full of bottlenecks and river lines. It seems clear the legalists will win. The rebels are outnumbered - 2,714 men and 193 vehicles against perhaps 5,000 legalists.¹⁵ Not to mention that Mourão had used everything he had while Âncora had entire Great Units (Armored, Aero-terrestrial, School) unused.

¹⁵From a source that gives 4.000 rebels versus 5.000 legalists.

The 1st is the strongest Infantry Division. The 4th moves against it with ammunition for a few hours of combat and young soldiers with a few months of training, save for the 11th Infantry which is thus its best regiment. The police battalions? Light infantry only fit for urban combat. And what of the 4 Gloster Meteors earmarked for the theater? The weather and terrain are bad, legalist pilots are few, but the long column of rebel vehicles on the road will run away if fired at from the air.¹⁶

By an oversight the federal government had not blockaded Minas Gerais and fuel trucks continued to head on its way. When they stumbled into the Tiradentes Detachment fuel, truck and driver were requisitioned into the column, keeping its tanks full in the field.

Legalist echelons faced Muricy in three moments. The first was at the Minas/Rio border on the Paraibuna river, good defensive terrain, where crucially the rebels were on a bridgehead in the Rio bank, seized by a vanguard¹⁷ at 14:00. Part (variously referred as a company, 5 platoons, 300 men) of Lt Col Kerensky's 1st Caçadores Battalion faced them off at 18:00. Muricy prepared an offensive for daybreak: the 10th Infantry Regiment would charge, while the 11th Infantry reinforced by light tanks would swing around in the rear, coming from the east, and get south of the Paraíba river from where it could attack the 1st Caçadores from behind.

Kerensky stalled through negotiations but had to retreat under threat of artillery (not intended to actually fire - that'd hit their own vanguard company), the defection of 2 of his 5 frontline platoons at midnight and his remaining officers wanting to defect.

The next was the 1st Infantry, which agreed to defect on the way and did so by daybreak, with the rebels pressing forward. Of its accompanying howitzer batteries, the 6th escaped and the 4th defected. Remnants of the 1st Caçadores were assimilated in Serraria.

And last was the 2nd Infantry. It missed the opportunities for a defense on the Paraíba river, which thanks to the 1st Infantry's defection was crossed unguarded at 10:30, or on the bottleneck south of Areal, instead entrenching north of that town.¹⁸ That was still good defensive terrain.

¹⁶An unarmed sweep did take place near Areal and briefly had that result.

¹⁷2nd Company of Fusiliers.

¹⁸I don't understand why, and nobody has wondered.

Muricy guarded his western flank, facing two battalions of unknown (to him) allegiance,¹⁹ with the 2nd Police and an antitank company. Against Cunha Melo, the 1st Infantry's defection had changed the balance of power. He considered he was now of equal or greater strength but still not ready for a regular open field battle.

By noon he prepared an attack with the 11th Infantry and his group of howitzers. They'd get ahead of the column in a wider formation and charge enemy lines ASAP, even with a disorganized attack. The point was to strike fast to take advantage of the enemy not having much time to entrench. In the process they'd also get defections. One source on the legalist perspective believed the 1st Group's 18 howitzers would've been brutal on a rebel attack; whether it'd succeed is not known.

For civilians in the small towns crossed by these thousands of men, the general feeling was of shock and fear of the destruction war would bring.

4.3.2 São Paulo theater

While Mourão and Âncora's field commanders faced off north of Guanabara, west of it general Krueel's IIInd Army was undecided and could weigh into the balance of power, although it was weaker than either the IInd Army or the IIIrd Army to its south. Just to be sure, at 22:50 the Ministry of War ordered the 5th Military Region/Infantry Division, immediately south of São Paulo, to move the 5th Mech Recon Squadron to the border. They ignored the order, already planning to switch sides.

And whilst Krueel didn't decide, after 21:00 general Zerbini of the Divisional Infantry 2 rallied the Paraíba valley, gateway to Rio, to the legalist cause. He controlled the two regiments (5th and 6th) and sent them on recon north, to the Mantiqueira range at the Minas border, and west. To the north Mourão's 4th Engineer Battalion was quiet.²⁰ West, the rest of the IIInd Army could go rogue, and thus he was promised reinforcements from the School-Unit Group (GUEs), including tanks.

Krueel switched sides at midnight, ordering an attack force led by the 2nd Infantry Division's general Bandeira. His direct orders overrode Zerbini's authority and the Paraíba valley's regiments joined the IIInd Army's eastward march. The GUEs marched west.

191st Armored Infantry (Barra Mansa, actually moved to Volta Redonda and on his side) and 2nd Tank (Valença).

20The other forces in the area would be an artillery group, which moved north that dawn, the Sergeants' School in Três Corações, which remained neutral, and the PMMG's southern detachment which was reassigned north.

Right in the middle lies Resende and the Agulhas Negras Military Academy. Its brigade general Médici, who'd been outside the conspiracy but immediately sympathized with the rebellion, had to do something to gain credibility.

At 09:30 the bulk of his cadets moved east of Resende and occupied the Dutra (Rio-SP) highway before Barra Mansa to fend off the GUEs while the IIInd Army approached. The nearby 1st Armored Infantry Battalion sided with Médici but was tied down in neighboring Volta Redonda suppressing labor unrest.

The 5th Infantry had arrived at 11:30, and other elements of the IIInd Army followed. On the other side, at 13:00 came the GUEs vanguard, a battalion of the REsI (Infantry-School Regiment), its organic tank company and the 2nd battery of the GEsA (Artillery-School Group). More were coming in the road. Under brigade general Anfrísio, who stayed legalist, the GUEs served to show officers what proper units should look like, and thus had the highest standard of training and equipment. It was the elite.

In between were Médici's cadets. A motorized cavalry squadron would fight a delaying action and retreat to a reinforced infantry company. An artillery battery would give them coverage. An engineer platoon would detonate the highway bridges, forcing the enemy into the awful outlying roads. The forces were at most a few km away. It was a war zone.

In conventional military logic, the cadets were doomed. They were 250 infantry and 80 cavalry, well-motivated but clueless, against 800 elite infantrymen. The two other batteries of the GEsA came with 35,000 shells, while Médici's had 250, no radios and no training on the vertical fire they'd have to use on the hilly terrain.

This is why Krueel had suggested Médici he'd mount a defense with his most forward regiments plus the 1st Armored Infantry and the Academy's Command and Service Battalion, which had a company of guards. He refused. The cadets had to be at the front, but not to fight: they were a human shield that nobody would want to shoot at. It was psychological.

Cpt Ustra's AA battery was on its way to reinforce the GUEs. And on its way. And at 20:00 it was still on its way, because he sabotaged transit. They'd arranged his battery's equipment with the politically reliable personnel of another, underequipped, battery, and an older captain that would obviously overthrow him midway. Through protest he managed to get his own soldiers and corporals back, and with them main-

tained control and delayed movement. This is an example of the political struggle that took place within units, and a demonstration of the degree of legalist morale.

The GEsA's 1st and 3rd batteries arrived at 14:00. Notably they, like the 2nd/1st Howitzer, had been kept isolated and uninformed by command. Only now they learned, dumbfounded at the very idea, that they'd fight cadets. The two batteries got on the road at full speed to defect. Thus they turned their backs to the 2nd battery and REsI battalion, with which they didn't coordinate, but those didn't mow them down as they could have - they hadn't the slightest loyalty to the government, either. Likewise a REsI mortar platoon, ordered to point at cadet positions, refused the order.

4.3.3 Guanabara theater

4.3.2.1 Carlos Lacerda

He knew an uprising would commence on the 2nd of April, that he'd be a prime target for the legalists, that they'd control his state in the beginning and that his police was no match for the Army's garrison. He was advised to shelter far away, but took a courageous attitude and chose to entrench in his palace and resist.

From early in the morning in the 31st he already activated his security ring, centered on the 1st Independent Company and 2nd Battalion of police, with more battalions and soon, hundreds of volunteers. At night and later on the defenders would repeatedly fear an imminent attack by marines, which never materialized. Lacerda could hold out no longer than two hours in combat.

The decision to stand was by itself courageous, but would he die fighting or escape? That was never tested. Aragão wanted to attack and thought it'd be a moral triumph, but never received Goulart's approval. Likewise Francisco Teixeira received suggestions of bombing the palace, but refused out of lack of officer support and that such an attack on a densely populated area would just be terrorism.

Interestingly, Lacerda's Secretary of Security claims that Âncora phoned Aragão and threatened to move the Mech Recon Regiment's tanks from the Ministry of War against the marines if they attacked the governor. This is huge but no other source sheds more light on this.

4.3.2.2 Castelo Branco

Castelo Branco failed to interrupt the coup and simply went to work on the Ministry of War's palace. Right from the nerve center of the legalist military he nonchalantly coordinated the uprising through the official telephone. In doing so he gave a demonstration of leadership. Costa e Silva and others couldn't miss out and joined him.

The handful of officers in the Army General Staff, wielding only pistols, called general Mamede to help. At 10:00 classes on ECEME were suspended; it was now the focal point of rebellion. The school had 400 officers, 28 revolvers, 30 rifles and 3 Thompsons plus 10 INA SMGs ceded by the police.

20 to 60 ECEME officers entered the Palace to protect Castelo Branco. This alarmed the legalists, who brought reinforcements. After 15:15 civilians were evacuated. The Mechanized Recon Regiment and 2nd Tank Battalion parked tanks on the avenue, blocking the main entrance. There were Presidential Guard and AA elements in the courtyard. Army Police flooded the lower levels.

It was a tense standoff. Legalists controlled the exterior and up to the 4th level. Rebels were on the 5th to the 8th level. The 9th and 10th levels were legalist again and prepared to fight the rebels going up. In turn, the rebels prepared to fight the legalists going up. Elevators were shut down and passages blocked. The rebels were on the disadvantage, some thought the Army Police would force them out with bazookas at night.

Âncora was two staircases above Castelo Branco. He had on his hands an order to imprison him at the Laje Fort. All he had to do was give it. So he did, at 18:00. Castelo Branco had left the building, completely unharmed, at 16:00. It is very possible Âncora deliberately stalled the order until its target could leave.

Castelo Branco and Costa e Silva fled into hiding places, from where they continued their work through telephone lines. ECEME entrenched in Urca, cut off the cable car to the Sugarloaf, where there was a marine observation post, captured some marine patrols on its way and prepared for battle, but none came its way. Through dawn Mamede persuaded the other schools to his side.

ECEME did a number of other missions, like reinforcing Lacerda. One that never took off was sabotaging Santa Cruz airbase together with elements of the nearby 1st Engineer Battalion; this was at the request of the IIInd Army, which feared the legalist Air Force (yet somehow kept its sole AA asset in reserve).

The most spectacular act was the attack on the Coast Artillery HQ by 21 officers in 12-12:30, 1st of April. With one wounded on each side it seized the HQ with its handful of bureaucrats; the commander was away. Though militarily irrelevant this was a famous moment as it got televised.

The neighboring Copacabana Fort was uninvolved, having defected earlier in the morning.

4.3.4 Resolution

Coupists in the Navy immobilized the “people’s admiral” Aragão’s marines. Hence Âncora told him his remaining muscle in Rio, the Army Police and Guards Battalions, couldn’t ensure his safety in Guanabara. Rio’s garrison was still in quarters, under legalist control but perhaps neutral. Attempts to persuade units failed, and forceful takeovers were deemed too risky. The rebellion consisted only of governor Carlos Lacerda, his police, the military schools in Urca and the Copacabana Fort.

But at 12:30 Goulart left for the airport to take off for Brasília after continually hearing bad news, from Krueel’s and other’s betrayals to the fact that America would recognize a parallel government.

In the hinterland there was no combat because Âncora decided to negotiate with Krueel at the Academy. After the President flew away the legalist apparatus in Rio was hollow. Goulart had ordered him not to shed blood, and Costa e Silva, one of the leading coupist generals in Rio, phoned him from his hideout to make the suggestion. At 15:00 a ceasefire entered effect. In Areal Cunha Melo negotiated his retreat with Muriçy and posed no further resistance.

In Resende the old, asthmatic, exhausted Âncora was embarrassed at the full honors with which he was received, saying a loser was entitled to none. To Médici, “there are no losers except the fatherland’s enemies”. Enemy or not, he was vanquished. When Zerbini begged him for a command to continue the legalist cause, he told him there wasn’t even a government to fight for anymore. There was, but he got a point across. He surrendered the 1st Army to Krueel, who arrived at 18:00.

Defeat was negotiated at the frontline. Within Rio there’s no watershed moment at which the government loses. But it did in the afternoon onwards. Coupist generals left their hideouts and assumed the empty edifice of power. The Tiradentes Detachment marched in at the beginning of the 2nd of April.

4.4 BRASÍLIA

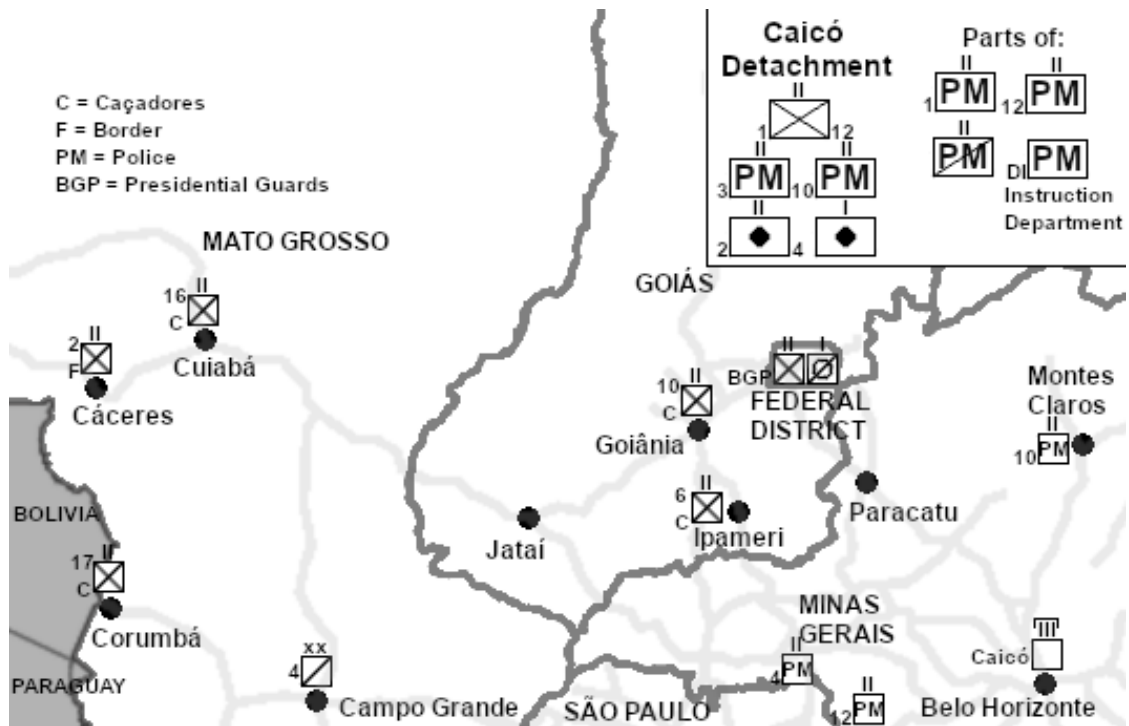


Figure 5: The Brasília theater

This theater was a repeat of Rio de Janeiro: a double invasion by the IIInd Army and 4th Infantry Division, with much smaller forces and a vast area - the highway distance from Cuiabá to Brasília was 1,700 km, of which only 200 km paved. Yet the timing differed.

Facing east it was the legalists that moved first. The 4th Company of the Presidential Guard Battalion (BGP), sole infantry unit in the capital,²¹ left it at 05:00, 1st of April and by noon was defending the border with Minas Gerais. The movement was spotted by air and greatly concerned the leadership in Belo Horizonte, who feared an invasion. In that same morning Montes Claros' 10th Police Battalion was making a rush "worthy of a Rommel" to the border.

In Paracatu, 40 km away, Lt Georgino realized he was outgunned - the legalists even had 2-3 tanks. He entrenched in urban terrain to gain a tactical advantage. This endangered the locals, and that was the point. With visibly armed officers he told the town hall there *would* be bloodshed and the city *would* be destroyed. As expected, the civilians went to BGP positions to plead them not to attack.

Also on that morning a company of the 16th Caçadores Battalion was on the road and another got airlifted to Jataí, already in Goiás. The 4th Cavalry Division was ready to reinforce them by rail. No troops were moved in response, but the 10th Caçadores sources number them at 600, which contradicts a single company movement.

dores Battalion stood in the way in Goiânia and was still legalist. Col Meira Mattos flew there in the afternoon and, backed by police, convinced it to switch sides.

When Goulart landed in Brasília at 15:00, some advisors suggested he'd carry on the struggle from the city, bolstered by its prestige as capital. Yet the situation was dire. General Fico's Planalto Military Command/11th Military Region was too weak. Its infantry consisted solely of the 6th and 10th Caçadores and the BGP, which was all but mutinied. Goulart once again gave up and at 22:00 took off for Porto Alegre.

The BGP company guarding the border retreated after 21:00. There's no record of its reaction to the civilian plea, only that its retreat was a result of the IIInd Army's defection and IInd Army's surrender. But would it even have resisted an offensive? When it left quarters it was already considering defection.

All that was left was to prevent the oppositionist Legislative from making a move. This hinged on Fico's troops not defending Congress, keeping it in fear of the mob, more concretely, a popular militia gathering in the National Theater 2 km away. Until then Congressmen had been in fear, prohibited from leaving the city and censored from making national broadcasts. They'd requested a defense to Fico, who agreed and then didn't provide it.

So when Goulart's advisors returned from the airport, they found the lights on in Congress and troops outside. Now it executed an institutional coup d'état, declaring the Presidency vacant, though the President was in national airspace. Ranieri Mazzilli, President of the Chamber of Deputies, usurped the "empty" seat at 03:45. This'd been enabled by Fico's double-facedness. For a time he received orders both from the coup in Rio and from Goulart's main agent in the city, Darcy Ribeiro. Darcy called him a "treasonous monkey" and left the presidential palace.²²

Meira Mattos used further airlifts and reached the city on the 2nd of April, taking over the BGP, on the same day as Georgino's police arrived. Minas Gerais then moved the Caicó Detachment to the city but the situation was already resolved.

4.5 THE NORTHEAST

4.5.1 Situation

An area the size of Mongolia with 24 million people, it was agrarian and undergoing intense social strife, with a number of property invasions. The communist-tied

²²This presidential inauguration took place with a tiny entourage on a dark palace in which Darcy and Fico were still present. It was farcical.

"Peasant Leagues" were famous. Recife, largest city and "capital", housed Miguel Arraes, leftist governor of Pernambuco and a potential presidential candidate.

The other leading figure in Recife was general Justino, a "traditionalist", commander of the IVth Army. During WWII this area had a global strategic relevance due to its position in the Atlantic, housing an USAF presence and the newly-created 7th and 14th Infantry Divisions. Afterwards it returned to its backwater condition. The 14th division was gone and the newly-organized Army was the weakest of the four.

It did not have enough trucks to operate south of its area. For Justino, part of the conspiracy, his role was thus local, to crush the "internal enemy" - Arraes, the Peasant Leagues, the communists - who were expected to pose strong and violent resistance.

Arraes' position was impossible. He had some 4 thousand policemen against Justino's 20 thousand soldiers. The Army was hostile, and in the past year had moved troops to prevent leftist demonstrators from converging from the hinterland to the capital, notably putting an intimidating armed presence right in front of the state palace.

What was Goulart's reaction? Approval. Arraes could be his rival within the left and thus the federal government intimidated him through the IVth Army and sided with Pernambuco's conservatives. The state government's only strength was in the political field.

4.5.2 Development



Figure 6: Locations in the northeast

Upon the outbreak of the coup Justino remained neutral, but at night on the 31st he already had forces moving through the hinterland as part of his battle plan. At 23:00 the 15th Infantry Regiment was already in Goiânia, entering Pernambuco. Both the battle plan and a hit list of arrests were ready days earlier. The IVth Army's silence and its prohibition of demonstrations were signs of which side it favored.

At dawn on the 1st of April Goulart phoned Justino, said he had the other three armies under his control (a lie) and asked of his. Justino replied it was "well, in rigorous readiness, President". His officers, overhearing the conversation, almost laughed.

At 09:00 the IVth Army made its stance public, backed by the 3rd Naval District and 2nd Air Zone. The Naval District's position was a surprise to Arraes, who expected it to be legalist. In the ranks there was no legalist reaction of note. It was a one-sided military sweep against civilian resistance.

The IVth Army's interventions in the hinterland seem like a random list of cities, but as explained in the Oral History, they were chiefly an invasion of Pernambuco from north and south, where the situation was under control; the governor of Alagoas was part of the coup and that of Paraíba folded under pressure and his police was

employed. It was expected that Arraes would try to move forces through the state and thus the roads were taken over. Meanwhile the capital's garrison moved against Arraes himself.

Peasant Leagues and others made a handful of insurrections, one weaker than the other. The greatest was in Vitória, where they occupied the town hall, media and rail station. The other locations were Caruru and Rio Tinto, the latter quelled by the police. On the 2nd the leftist mayor of Propiá was seen with an armed crowd but arrested by the 28th Caçadores.

And in southern Pernambuco there wasn't even an attempt: armed peasants could be seen in the roads but Gregório Bezerra, leading communist peasant leader, told them not to try. They wouldn't receive weapons from the state government, as expected. The 20th Caçadores left troops in the latifundia on their side of the border and then took part on the manhunt against Bezerra.

The 15th Infantry headed to Recife, where the IVth Army controlled all access and had an overwhelming presence. The 2nd Police Battalion defected. In the morning the 14th Infantry, 1st/7th Howitzer, 7th Army Police Company and a mech recon squadron besieged Arraes in his palace. The infantry was the left flank and the howitzers (who'd been rigorously trained for internal conflict months in advance) the middle. The 3rd Naval District was to be the right flank but didn't show up. The palace had a company or battalion of guards with MG nests. Justino didn't want bloodshed and first attempted diplomacy. Arraes stalled.

At 13:30 a platoon of the 1st/7th Howitzer rushed to the palace. The policemen were ordered to give their guard posts to the Army and obeyed. By at most 16:00 Arraes had been removed.

His police commander, Colonel Trench, entrenched himself in the HQ, but four light tanks made the defenders immediately rout and at 14:30 the HQ was captured.

Seixas Dória, governor of Sergipe, met the same fate. Rio Grande do Norte's governor sided with Justino while the mayor of Natal had to be overthrown. Other governors, by their poverty and dependence on the federal government, made declarations favorable to it but changed their stance under military pressure: those of Bahia and Piauí. The latter, before the declaration, had to concede to his police being spread through the capital as part of the security plan; little did he know the 25th Caçadores thus had a company ready to take the police HQ and another his palace, which wasn't necessary. Bahia's later thrived under the new regime.

General Justino thus became the most powerful man in the Northeast.

What happened in the North? Nothing. The Amazon Military Command waited for the situation to develop and then declared itself for the coup at 15:00, April 1st.

4.6 THE SOUTH

From Porto Alegre, the nationally-important capital of Rio Grande do Sul, the heads of the state government, Ildo Meneghetti, IIIrd Army, general Galhardo and 6th Infantry Division were all involved in the conspiracy. Hence, though they didn't formally switch sides, the coup had a head start in the south.

Its divisions were:

- 3rd Infantry in Santa Maria, controlling the railways in the middle;
- 6th Infantry in the capital;
- 1st Cavalry in Santiago on the west;
- 2nd Cavalry in Uruguaiana on the southwest;
- 3rd Cavalry in the south.
- 5th Infantry/5th Military Region in Curitiba, on the states of Santa Catarina and Paraná, the buffer with the rest of the country.

Surprisingly the situation evolved in the government's favor. At 21:55 a flight took off from Rio de Janeiro towards Porto Alegre with a stopover in Curitiba, carrying the 5th Infantry's vacationing commander, the legalist Silvino, and the also reliable general Ladário Telles of the 1st Military Region, now appointed commander of the 6th Infantry. Galhardo was appointed to the General Staff in Rio.²³ By seniority Ladário would take over the IIIrd Army. It seemed a genius move.

The 5th Infantry's pro-coup officers blackened out the landing strip, preventing Silvino's arrival. Meanwhile Galhardo also had his solution: imprison Ladário upon arrival. Yet he chickened out and by dawn, 1st of April, Ladário commanded the IIIrd Army, promptly requisitioning fuel and communications. Government supporters started a media campaign and demonstrations, securing Porto Alegre.

The 6th Infantry's commander fled to the hinterland (Cruz Alta garrison), a decision repeated by the governor prior to 14:00, trapped by Ladário's requisitioning ultimatum over the state police - the only thing protecting him from a mass of demonstrators. By 20:40 he'd reorganized his government in Passo Fundo, where he gathered his forces for a reconquista.

²³Replacing Castelo Branco.

Though a weak force, the 5th Infantry pledged its bets with the coup and the IInd Army, which later supplied the Tactical Group 4 (2nd of April) and a tanker for their desperate fuel situation (4th). In Silvino's enforced absence, general Coelho took over and at 07:00 ordered his troops south, to the border with Rio Grande do Sul. Silvino opened communications and gave northward orders, which were ignored. Ladário then ordered forces from the 3rd Infantry and 3rd Cavalry to reclaim Silvino's territory (figure 6). The independent 3rd Highway Battalion was also ordered. It obeyed and secured the Socorro Pass on the border; the battalion on the other side had it as its objective and was forced to form its line further north.

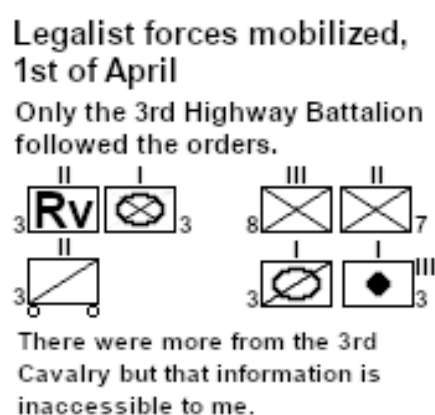


Figure 7: Units ordered northward by Ladário

All the other orders were ignored. From dawn to noon generals Camarinha (2nd Cavalry), Garrastazú (3rd Cavalry) and Poppe (3rd Infantry) were convinced to switch sides by their officers. It'd have been easy to overthrow them but dragging them along was preferable for post-coup cohesion. Their profiles were similar: anticommunist but bound by personal ties to the Minister of War, President, etc.

Saraiva (1st Cavalry), of the same profile, remained legalist and was summoned to Porto Alegre. This mistake left his division leaderless and two regiments defected. And the 6th Infantry was hampered by pro-coup officers. By nighttime coupists had prevailed in the 19th Infantry Regiment quarters, though an armed legalist group entrenched in a corner.

The police requisitioning went nowhere: it was blocked by the courts. In the capital the police took a neutral attitude towards the IIIrd Army.

Meanwhile much happened in the hinterland: further defections, divisions consolidated their control and activated defense plans. The 2nd Cavalry had its access to the rest of the state blocked by its legalist Alegrete garrison, headed by its engineering commander. The 3rd Cavalry had a legalist regiment and a sergeant's uprising in

its own HQ in Bagé, taking many officers hostage. When on the next day cavalry was sent to retake the HQ, sergeants mutinied, and recon sergeants almost moved armor in its defense if not for the threat of artillery, which ultimately made the HQ surrender.

The 1st Cavalry was hostile territory to them but had no rail connection to the capital. By the 2nd of April the 3rd Highway Battalion was threatened by an AA Group to its south and the Alegrete garrison could fall to the rebels from within.

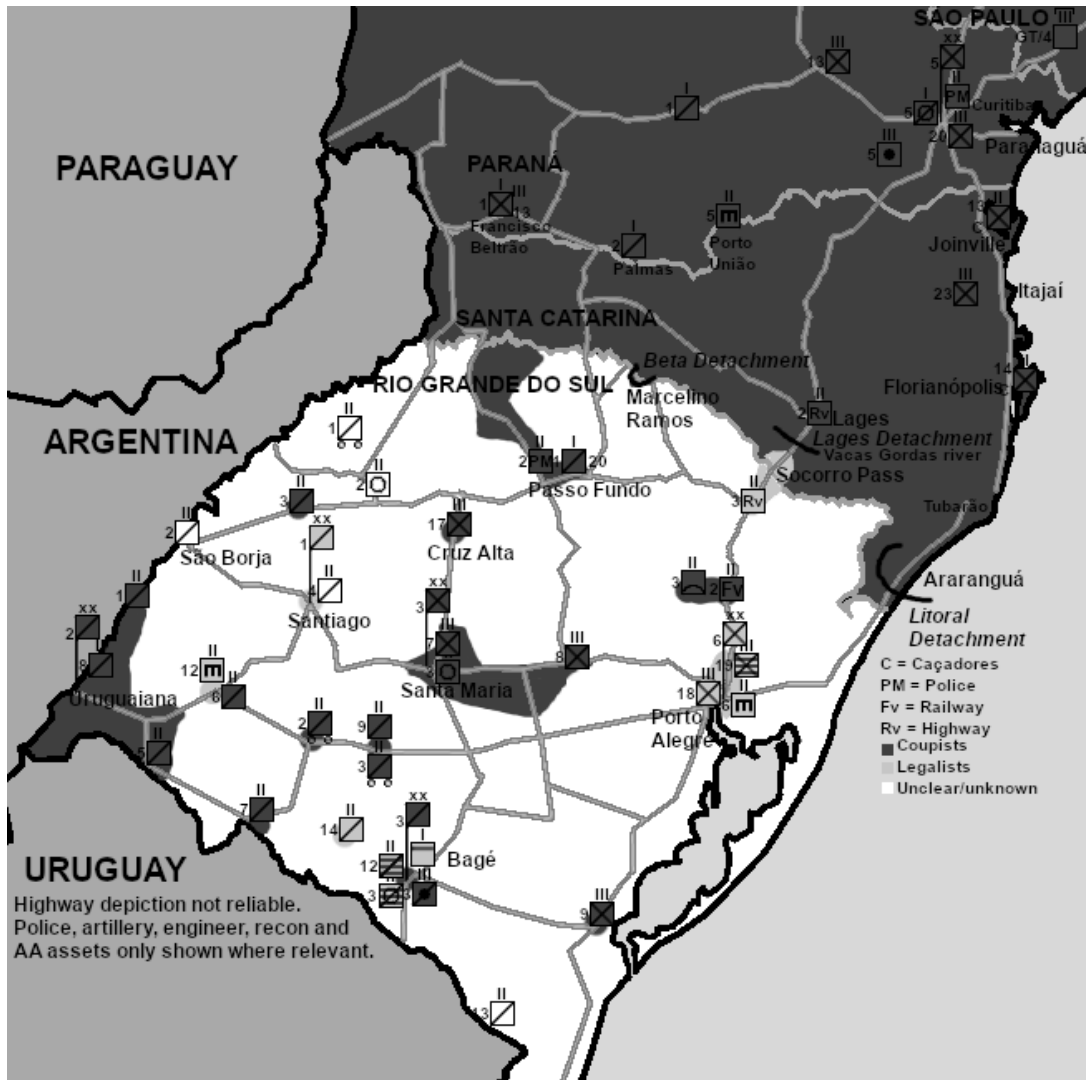


Figure 8: Territorial control in the IIIrd Army in the 2nd of April and original positions

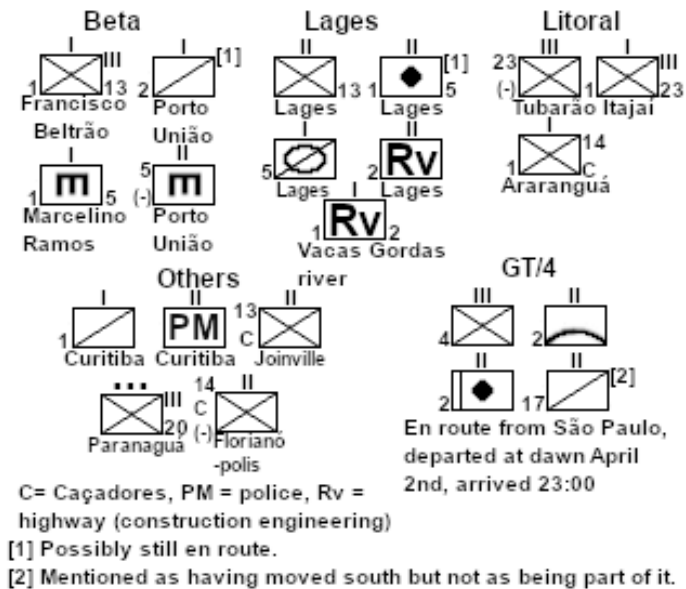


Figure 9: 5th Division/Military Region operational OOB, 14:45 April 2nd

At 10:00 on the 2nd rebel forces (2nd and 3rd Cavalry, 3rd Infantry, some smaller units) united as the “Revolutionary IIIrd Army” under general Poppe. Everything converged against the legalist redoubt in Porto Alegre, reinforcements would come from the rest of the country and the 5th Infantry was still moving south. And America’s at least diplomatic support was guaranteed.

In the preceding hour Poppe had ordered the 2nd and 3rd Cavalry in Porto Alegre’s direction,²⁴ unciphered, through public radio. The point wasn’t to move troops (e.g. Garrastazú was at one point unsure he could) but to convince the enemy troops were being moved.

And the enemy was intimidated enough. Goulart landed in Porto Alegre at 03:58, almost at the same time Congressman Ranieri Mazzili occupied the “vacant” Presidency. He with his leaders at 08:00. Congressman Brizola, his brother-in-law and political heavyweight, agreed with Ladário that he should pursue resistance. Rio Grande do Sul was his homeland and political base, and a display of persistence would rouse up support in the rest of the country. Thousands of volunteers could be armed. The national government would reorganize in Porto Alegre whilst Goulart hid in his hometown²⁵ on 1st Cavalry territory.

Allegedly Saraiva added that he could move his cavalry division north and then east, enveloping the Revolutionary IIIrd Army and then attacking north. But the consensus among the other generals, chiefly Floriano of the 3rd Military Region, was

²⁴The 2nd also guarding its flank against the 1st.

²⁵Also Vargas’ hometown.

that the military situation was dire and fighting would be madness. Ladário's reply - "*my soldier's mindset is to resist as long as one has a few men, until victory is conquered by miracle*" convinced Goulart that Floriano was right. Refusing bloodshed, at 11:30 he flew to his estates in São Borja.

Ladário posed no further resistance and returned to Rio. Though Goulart remained in his lands until flying to exile in Uruguay on the 4th of April, his retreat from Porto Alegre effectively marks the triumph of the coup d'état.

THE COUP FROM BELOW

5.1 TENSION IN THE RANKS

Every legalist formation had pro-coup members and vice versa. Reading their stories - the *Oral History of the Army* allows a microscopic look - there are too many cases to count of a small number of dissidents. Mourão had the commander of the 10th Infantry Regiment given vacations after he refused; Cunha Melo had to arrest his engineering company commander.

The “class struggle” and sergeants’ movement can be observed in significant, even armed levels in a few units, whereas in others such as the 2nd Highway Battalion the comradeship between officers and NCOs is emphasized. To list the cases:

1. **Fortaleza Air Base:** after 19:00 on the 1st, some 300 enlisted led by sergeants, armed, demanded the commander’s position. They were faced by a smaller group led by officers and armed with SMGs. The situation was pacified without incident.
2. **Santa Cruz Air Base:** neighboring 1st Combat Engineering Battalion feared the sergeants would revolt and requested reinforcements. Nothing happened.
3. **Aeroterrestrial Division Core:** fear of the significant number of legalist sergeants and warrant officers.
4. **Copacabana Fort:** ECEME reinforcements required to offset the number of sergeants.
5. **3rd Battery of the Artillery-School Group:** as seen, sergeants had to be deceived to ensure the safety of defection.
6. **1st 90 mm AA Group:** as seen, sergeants used in an unsuccessful attempt to keep it under control.
7. **3rd Mechanized Recon Squadron:** some officers and most sergeants remained legalist.
8. **2nd Group of the 4th Howitzer Regiment:** At dawn on the 1st, moved from Pouso Alegre to Belo Horizonte as part of the Caicó Detachment. A warrant officer and several sergeants refused to go, and the two batteries used corporals in their place. On the departure there was fear they’d be fired at from behind, which never happened. Those who refused, however, were married into the local population and pressured to change their minds by their conservative families. In

Belo Horizonte the group was informed but sought to avoid their reintegration. It only happened in Paracatu, under orders from above, but the sergeants were met with insults written in the dust on the trucks.

9. **5th Cavalry Regiment:** 49 out of 54 sergeants, inspired by a captain, refused to move with the regiment²⁶ and had to be replaced with corporals.

10. **12th Combat Engineering Battalion:** Sergeants stood behind their legalist commander to remain in spite of his pro-coup officers.

11. **19th Infantry Regiment:** armed legalist sergeant holdout in a corner of the quarters.

12. **3rd Cavalry Division:** as seen, legalist sergeants in 3 out of 4 formations in Bagé, the division HQ, 12th Cavalry Regiment and 3rd Mechanized Recon Regiment, with an armed takeover in the HQ and resistance in the other two.

#1-2 don't concern the Army. #2-5 are only fears which could very well have been unfounded. Cases of small numbers of sergeants are more frequent but not cited here; #7-10 are only the maintenance of their stance, though #8 is relevant because of the mood it exposes. Only in #11-12 weapons are used.

Can I draw a conclusion from this? This would be worth a paper but I'd have to draw on more sources, like the internal discipline inquiries, which have been made public, and try to quantify several kinds of reaction. Compared to those cases there are countless units which saw little to no resistance. But case 12 in particular means that even if the sergeants' movement as a whole didn't grasp the Army, there were small pockets of potential militancy.

It must also be considered that expressions of unrest in "peacetime" are different from expressions of legalism in the course of a coup, which is naturally more divisive. Perhaps many sergeants in the examples given were previously quiet and only now the situation demanded action.

²⁶An actual mounted movement with horses.

AFTERMATH

Ranieri Mazzili was the new President but the highest power was with the "Supreme Command of the Revolution" composed of Costa e Silva, vice admiral Grünewald and lieutenant brigadier de Mello, who also occupied the military ministries.

While heading to Guanabara at night on the 1st of April, Mourão Filho and Muricy heard on the car radio that Costa e Silva had taken over the Ministry of War and named general Ururahy to the 1st Army. At dawn he arrived on a Ministry full of sleeping officers. The Minister's cabinet was empty, Costa e Silva was soundly asleep in his old cabinet at the Works Department.

Mourão had big ambitions, of becoming Minister of War or at the very least, as the prize of a conqueror, the 1st Army. He was outraged at the opportunistic naming of someone else. Hence he and Costa e Silva argued over who should receive the 1st Army. Mourão was unconvinced but accepted Costa e Silva's decision as, although an usurper, he was still his legal superior.

There were now four contenders: Krueel, Mourão Filho, Costa e Silva and Castelo Branco.

Mourão's original plan was to march on Guanabara and storm the Ministry of War. That was still a possibility but he rejected it, refusing to go against the legal order. He distrusted Costa e Silva, already suspecting he wanted to be dictator. "Supreme Command of the Revolution" had an autocratic, "Spanish" ring to it - he even uses the term "El Supremo". But he didn't know him enough to justify an attack, which would be on revolutionary, extralegal terms. He later wrote he'd have done it if he knew Costa e Silva better, and also thinks Muricy should've warned him.

Could he? He thinks he could. He had muscle, the original 2,714 men under Muricy at the Maracanã. Castelo Branco had none, Krueel was in the hinterland and Costa e Silva theoretically had the stronger Guanabara garrison through Ururahy but his grip was weak because he was new. Ururahy's regiments were precisely the ones that had defected. But the political situation would be different - coupist against coupist. There's little speculation on the subject but perhaps such an action would be poorly seen and end up in blood.

At Costa e Silva's request Mourão remained in Rio for a few days, but he had no more action. Castelist officers suggested he'd attack Costa e Silva, another poorly-covered event, but he refused. He despised Castelo Branco, who in turn scorned

him. He returned empty-handed, disappearing from history books. He was brutally sidelined and lost the political fight. His memoir is bitter and harsher on his fellow officers than even leftist sources, to the point that when published posthumously it was at first censored.

Mourão Filho removed himself from the board. There were still conflicting aims over the Ministry of War, as the Castelist faction for a long time already had a name for it. Krueel, a personal enemy of Castelo Branco, weighed in Costa e Silva's favor and he kept the Ministry.

Finally was the question of the Presidency. Costa e Silva would rather keep the status quo and prolong the ongoing purge of the former regime's members, but Castelo Branco pushed for Congress to elect a new one and formalize the new regime. That new one was, of course, himself. The governors already wanted to elect a military president to prevent the friction a civilian would have with the Armed Forces. There were several candidates - Dutra, former President; even Krueel could be a contender, though he was seen as tied to the old regime - but Castelo Branco with his greater prestige and elite coalition was picked in the 11th of April.

Costa e Silva remained the strongman, controlling the Army through the Ministry of War. With his brute force and continued military unrest he cemented his position as successor and assumed the Presidency in 1967.

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²⁷The e-book. Same for Hélio Silva's book.

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APPENDIX: ARMY ORGANIZATION

Based on a 1960 organization with changes made for known alterations 1960-64. Only complete for battalion and higher formations of infantry, artillery (but not coastal, which was important in Guanabara bay), cavalry and engineering. Great Units underlined.

NOMINAL STRENGTH IN ENLISTED MEN

Strength	Great Command	Of which	Strength
48,695	Ist Army	Direct command	4,639
		1st Military Region	15,091
		1st Infantry Division	7,381
		Armored Division	3,816
		Aeroterrestrial Div.	3,143
		School-Unit Group	7,783
		4th Military Region	1,741
		4th Infantry Division	5,091
19,525	IIInd Army	Direct command	2,269
		2nd Military Region	4,711
		2nd Infantry Division	5,504
		9th Military Region	657
		4th Cavalry Division	4,005
		2nd Mixed Brigade	2,379
47,607	IIIrd Army	Direct command	3,578
		3rd Military Region	4,739
		3rd Infantry Division	6,011
		6th Infantry Division	6,471
		1st Cavalry Division	5,705
		2nd Cavalry Division	6,057
		3rd Cavalry Division	5,212
		5th Military Region	4,584
17,118	IVth Army	5th Infantry Division	5,250
		Direct command	138
		6th Military Region	2,576
		7th Military Region	3,290
		7th Infantry Division	4,628
		1st Engineer Grp	3,511
3,660	Brasília Military Command	10th Military Region	2,975
4,480	Amazon Military Command		

DIRECTLY UNDER GREAT COMMANDS AND MILITARY REGIONS

Ist Army Rio de Janeiro (GB)

1st Automatic 40 mm AA Group Rio de Janeiro (GB)

4th 90 mm AA Group Niterói (RJ)

1st Caçadores Battalion Petrópolis (RJ)

3rd Caçadores Battalion Vila Velha (ES)

1st Guard Cavalry Regiment Rio de Janeiro (GB)

1st Army Police Battalion Rio de Janeiro (GB)

Guards Battalion Rio de Janeiro (GB)

1st Military Region Rio de Janeiro (GB)

1st Infantry Division Rio de Janeiro (GB)

Armored Division Rio de Janeiro (GB)

Aeroterrestrial Division (Core) Rio de Janeiro (GB)

School-Unit Group Rio de Janeiro (GB)

Infantry School-Regiment (REsI) Rio de Janeiro (GB)

Cavalry School-Regiment Rio de Janeiro (GB)

Artillery School-Group (GEsA) Rio de Janeiro (GB)

Engineering School-Battalion (BEsE) Rio de Janeiro (GB)

1st 90 mm AA Group Rio de Janeiro (GB)

Mechanized Recon School-Squadron Rio de Janeiro (GB)

4th Infantry Division Juiz de Fora (MG) *merged command*

4th Military Region Juiz de Fora (MG) *merged command*

IInd Army São Paulo (SP)

2nd Caçadores Battalion São Vicente (SP)

4th Caçadores Battalion Lins (SP)

1st Light Tank Battalion Campinas (SP)

17th Cavalry Regiment Pirassununga (SP)

2nd Military Region São Paulo (SP)

2nd 90 mm AA Group Quitaúna (SP)

5th 90 mm AA Group Campinas (SP)

2nd Automatic 40 mm AA Group Barueri (SP)

5th Automatic 40 mm AA Group Santos (SP)

2nd Infantry Division São Paulo (SP)

9th Military Region Campo Grande (MT)

2nd Mixed Brigade Corumbá (MT)²⁸

16th Caçadores Battalion Cuiabá (MT)

17th Caçadores Battalion Corumbá (MT)

2nd Border Battalion Cáceres (MT)

4th Cavalry Division Campo Grande (MT)

IIIrd Army Porto Alegre (RS)

1st Railway Battalion Bento Gonçalves (RS)

2nd Railway Battalion Rio Negro (PR)

2nd Highway Battalion Lages (SC)

3rd Highway Battalion Vacaria (RS)

3rd Automatic 40 mm AA Group Caxias do Sul (RS)

3rd Military Region Porto Alegre (RS)

2nd Light Tank Battalion Santo Ângelo (RS)

3rd Light Tank Battalion Santa Maria (RS)

3rd Infantry Division Santa Maria (RS)

6th Infantry Division Porto Alegre (RS)

1st Cavalry Division Santiago (RS)

2nd Cavalry Division Uruguaiana (RS)

3rd Cavalry Division Bagé (RS)

5th Infantry Division Curitiba (PR) *merged command*

5th Military Region Curitiba (PR) *merged command*

13th Caçadores Battalion Joinville (SC)

14th Caçadores Battalion Florianópolis (SC)

6th 75 mm Artillery Group Castro (PR)

1st Border Battalion Foz do Iguaçu (PR)

1st Independent Cavalry Squadron Guarapuava (PR)

2nd Independent Cavalry Squadron Palmas (PR)

IVth Army Recife (PE)

6th Military Region Salvador (BA)

19th Caçadores Battalion Salvador (BA)

28th Caçadores Battalion Aracaju (SE)

1st Independent Fusilier Company Paulo Afonso (BA)

10th Military Region Fortaleza (CE)

²⁸More administrative than operational.

23rd Caçadores Battalion Fortaleza (CE)
24th Caçadores Battalion São Luís (MA)
25th Caçadores Battalion Teresina (PI)
10th 105 mm Artillery Group Fortaleza (CE)
7th Military Region Recife (PE) *merged command*
20th Caçadores Battalion Maceió (AL)
7th Infantry Division Recife (PE)
1st Engineering Group João Pessoa (PB)
4 construction battalions
Planalto Military Command Brasília (DF)
11th Military Region Brasília (DF) *merged with the Command*
Presidential Guard Battalion Brasília (DF)
6th Caçadores Battalion Ipameri (GO)²⁹
10th Caçadores Battalion Goiânia (GO)
Brasília Army Police Battalion Brasília (DF)
1st Independent Mech Recon Squadron Brasília (DF)
1st Independent Automatic AA Group Brasília (DF)
Amazon Military Command Belém (PA)
8th Military Region Belém (PA)
26th Caçadores Battalion Belém (PA)
Border Elements Group Manaus (AM)
27th Caçadores Battalion Manaus (AM)

GREAT UNIT COMPOSITION

Infantry Division

	x3 Infantry Regiment	105 mm Howitzer Regiment	155 mm Howitzer Group	Engineering Battalion
1st	1st, 2nd, 3rd	1st	1st	1st
2nd	4th, 5th, 6th	2nd	2nd	2nd
3rd	7th, 8th, 9th	3rd	3rd	3rd
4th	10th, 11th, 12th	4th	-	4th
5th	13th, 20th, 23rd	5th	-	5th
6th	17th, 18th, 19th	6th plus the 6th 75 mm	-	6th
7th	14th, 15th, 16th	7th	-	-
	Divisional Infantry location		Divisional Artillery location	
1st	Rio de Janeiro (GB)		Rio de Janeiro (GB)	
2nd	Caçapava (SP)		Jundiaí (SP)	
3rd	Pelotas (RS)		Santa Maria (RS)	
4th	Belo Horizonte (MG)		Pouso Alegre (MG)	
5th	Ponta Grossa (PR)		Curitiba (PR)	
6th	São Leopoldo (RS)		Cruz Alta (RS)	
7th	Natal (RN)		-	

Each division would also have an automatic AA group, a tank battalion and a health battalion, all of which were missing save for the 1st and 2nd Health Battalions. Each division had an Army Police company and a mechanized recon squadron. Infantry and Artillery were under brigade-level Divisional Infantry and Artillery Commands.

Cavalry Division

	x3 Cavalry Regiment	Mechanized Recon Regiment	Motorized Cavalry Regiment	x4 75 mm Artillery Group	Engineering Battalion
1st	1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 20th	1st	1st	1st, 2nd, 7th	-
2nd	5th, 6th, 7th, 8th	2nd	2nd	3rd, 4th, 8th	12th
3rd	9th, 12th, 13th, 14th	3rd	3rd	3rd Regiment (2 groups)	-
4th ³⁰	10th, 11th	4th	4th	9th, 10th	9th

Each division would also have an automatic AA group, but none had.

³⁰Mechanized and motorized regiments didn't exist, only squadrons designated as part of the regiments, and likewise, a company as part of the engineering battalion.

Armored Division

Heavy tank battalion	-
x3 Tank battalion	1st, 2nd (Valença - RJ), 3rd
x3 Armored infantry battalion	1st (Barra Mansa - RJ), 2nd
Mechanized recon regiment	Present
x3 Armored 105 mm howitzer group	-
Armored 155 mm howitzer group	-
Self-propelled automatic AA group	-
Armored engineer battalion	-
Maintenance battalion	Present

All formations in Rio de Janeiro unless indicated otherwise. Artillery, if it existed, would have a Divisional Artillery.

Aeroterrestrial Division (core)

An one-battalion paratrooper regiment and an artillery group with a 75 mm and a 105 mm battery.

INFANTRY REGIMENTS

They were meant to have 3 infantry battalions, but all but the REsI had either 2 or 1. Two-battalion regiments usually had two fusilier companies in each battalion, whilst one-battalion ones had three; the exception was the REsI, which had three fusilier companies in each of its two battalions. It was also notable for its organic tank company. A full battalion (e.g. in the REsI) had a command and a heavy weapons company; a full regiment had command, service, medium tank and heavy mortar companies. Tanks were only in the REsI, though several others had antitank companies.

Regiment	Location	Battalions	Title
School	Rio de Janeiro (GB)	3	
1st	Rio de Janeiro (GB)	2	Sampaio
2nd	Rio de Janeiro (GB)	2	Avaí
3rd	Niterói (RJ)	2	Ararigboia
4th	Quitaúna (SP)	1	Raposo Tavares
5th	Lorena (SP)	1	Itororó
6th	Caçapava (SP)	2	
7th	Santa Maria (RS)	2	Gomes Carneiro
8th	Santa Cruz do Sul (RS)	1	
9th	Pelotas (RS)	2	
10th	Juiz de Fora (MG)	1	
11th	São João Del-Rey (MG)	1	Tiradentes
12th	Belo Horizonte (MG)	2	
13th	Ponta Grossa (PR)	2	
14th	Jaboatão (PE)	2	Guararapes
15th	João Pessoa (PB)	1	
16th	Natal (RN)	1	
17th	Cruz Alta (RS)	2	
18th	Porto Alegre (RS)	2	
19th	São Leopoldo (RS)	2	
20th	Curitiba (PR)	1	
23rd ³¹	Blumenau (SC)	1	

³¹As of 1960, incomplete and only a regiment "core".

CAVALRY REGIMENTS

Save for the 11th, with three fusilier squadrons, all divisional horse regiments only had two.

Regiment	Location	Title
School	Rio de Janeiro (GB)	Andrade Neves
1st Guard	Rio de Janeiro (GB)	Independence Dragoons
1st	Itaqui (RS)	
2nd	São Borja (RS)	João Manuel
3rd	São Luiz Gonzaga (RS)	
4th	Santiago (RS)	Sá Brito
5th	Quaraí (RS)	
6th	Alegrete (RS)	José de Abreu
7th	Livramento (RS)	
8th	Uruguaiana (RS)	
9th	São Gabriel (RS)	
10th	Bela Vista (MT)	
11th	Ponta Porã (MT)	
12th	Bagé (RS)	
13th	Jaguarão (RS)	Osório
14th	Dom Pedrito (RS)	
17th	Pirassununga (SP)	
<i>20th</i> ³²	Passo Fundo (RS)	
1st Motorized	Santa Rosa (RS)	
2nd Motorized	Rosário do Sul (RS)	
3rd Motorized	São Gabriel (RS)	
<i>4th Motorized</i> ³³	Três Lagoas (MT)	

³²The regiment didn't exist, only a squadron of it.

³³The regiment didn't exist, only its 1st squadron.

MECHANIZED RECONNAISSANCE REGIMENTS & SQUADRONS

Regiment	Location	Title
<i>Unnumbered (Armored Division)</i>	Rio de Janeiro (GB)	
1st	Santo Ângelo (RS)	
2nd	Porto Alegre (RS)	
3rd	Bagé (RS)	
4th ³⁴		
Squadron	Location	Title
School	Rio de Janeiro (GB)	
1st Independent	Brasília (DF)	
1st	Rio de Janeiro (GB)	Tenente Amaro
2nd	São Paulo (SP)	Anhanguera
3rd	Santa Maria (RS)	
4th	Juiz de Fora (MG)	
5th	Curitiba (PR)	
6th	Porto Alegre (RS)	
7th	Recife (PE)	

105 MM HOWITZER REGIMENTS

All were supposed to have three groups of three batteries each, instead having two or one groups of two batteries each. Though all were meant to be 105 mm, the 3rd and 6th had a 105 mm group and a 75 mm group.

Regiment	1st Group	2nd Group	Title
1st	Rio de Janeiro (GB)	Rio de Janeiro (GB)	Floriano
2nd	Itu (SP)	-	Deodoro
3rd	Santa Maria (RS)	Santa Maria (RS) ³⁵	Mallet
4th	Juiz de Fora (MG)	Pouso Alegre (MG)	
5th	Lapa (PR)	Curitiba (PR)	
6th	São Leopoldo (RS)	Cruz Alta (RS)	
7th	Olinda (PE)	Natal (RN)	

³⁴The regiment didn't exist, only its 1st squadron.

³⁵No vehicles or communications material, couldn't operate as artillery.

75 MM ARTILLERY REGIMENTS & GROUPS

Regiment	Group	Location
	1st Horse	São Borja (RS)
	2nd Horse	Santiago (RS)
	3rd Pack	Castro (PR)
	3rd Towed ³⁶	Alegrete (RS)
	4th Horse	Uruguaiana (RS)
	7th Towed	Ijuí (RS)
	8th Horse	Livramento (RS)
	9th Towed	Nioaque (MT)
	10th Towed	Campo Grande (MT)
3rd Horse	1st	Bagé (RS)
	2nd	
6th Towed ³⁷	1st Group	Cruz Alta (RS)
	10th Transported ³⁸	Fortaleza (CE)

155 MM HOWITZER GROUPS

Group	Location
1st	Rio de Janeiro (GB)
2nd	Jundiaí (SP)
3rd	Cachoeira do Sul (RS)

ENGINEER BATTALIONS

Battalion	Location
School	Rio de Janeiro (GB)
1st	Rio de Janeiro (GB)
2nd	Pindamonhangaba (SP)
3rd	Cachoeira do Sul (RS)
4th	Itajubá (MG)
5th	Porto União (SC)
6th	Porto Alegre (RS)
9th ³⁹	Aquidauana (MT)
12th	Alegrete (RS)

³⁶“Auto Rebocado”, literally “self-towed”. Don’t think it means motorized any more than the 105 mm ones, perhaps it’s just in contrast to pack and horse artillery.

³⁷It *seems* the regiment didn’t exist.

³⁸Unsure of the nature of its transport.

³⁹Just a company.