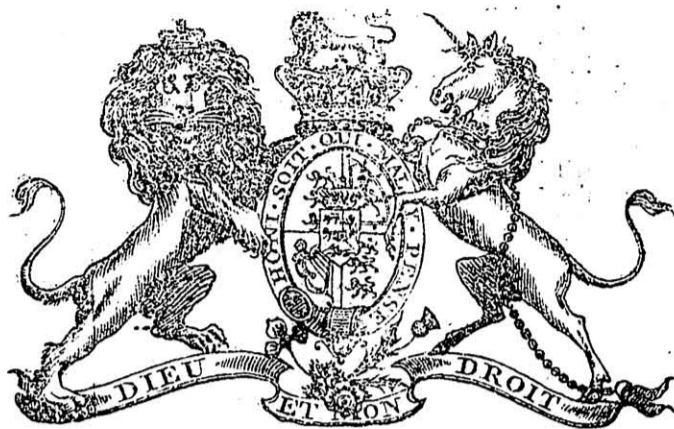


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FROM FRIDAY, MAY 26, to TUESDAY, MAY 30, 1809.

DOWNING-STREET, MAY 24, 1809.

A dispatch, of which the following is a copy, was received this evening from Lieutenant-General the Right Honourable Sir Arthur Wellesley, by Viscount Castlereagh, one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State.

MY LORD, Oporto, May 12, 1809.

I had the honour to apprise your Lordship, on the 7th instant, that I intended that the army should march on the 9th from Coimbra to dispossess the enemy of Oporto.

The advanced guard and the cavalry had marched on the 7th, and the whole had halted on the 8th, to afford time for Marshal Beresford with his corps to arrive upon the Upper Douro.

The infantry of the army was formed into three divisions for this expedition, of which two, the advanced guard, consisting of the Hanoverian legion and Brigadier-General R. Stewart's brigade, with a brigade of six-pounders, and a brigade of three-pounders under Lieutenant-General Paget, and the cavalry under Lieutenant-General Payne, and the brigade of guards; Brigadier-General Campbell's and Brigadier-General brigades of infantry, with a brigade of six-pounders, under Lieutenant-General Sherbrooke, moved by the high road from Coimbra to Oporto, and one composed of Major-General Hill's and Brigadier-General Cameron's brigades of infantry, and a brigade of six-pounders, under the command of Major-General Hill, by the road from Coimbra to Aveiro.

On the 10th in the morning, before daylight, the cavalry and advanced guard crossed the Vonga with the intention to surprize and cut off four regiments of French cavalry, and a battalion of infantry and artillery, cantoned in Albergaria Nova and the neighbouring villages, about eight miles from that river, in the last of which we failed; but the superiority of the British caval-

ry was evident throughout the day; we took some prisoners and their cannon from them; and the advanced guard took up the position of Oliviera.

On the same day Major-General Hill, who had embarked at Aveiro on the evening of the 9th, arrived at Ovar, in the rear of the enemy's right; and the head of Lieutenant-General Sherbrooke's division passed the Vonga on the same evening.

On the 11th, the advanced guard and cavalry continued to move on the high road towards Oporto, with Major-General Hill's division in a parallel road, which leads to Oporto from Ovar.

On the arrival of the advanced guard at Vendas Novas, between Sonto Redondo and Grijon, they fell in with the outposts of the enemy's advanced guard, consisting of about four thousand infantry, and some squadrons of cavalry, strongly posted on the heights above Grijon, their front being covered by woods and broken ground. The enemy's left flank was turned by a movement well executed by Major-General Murray, with Brigadier-General Langworth's brigade of the Hanoverian legion; while the 16th Portuguese regiment of Brigadier-General Richard Stewart's brigade attacked their right, and the rifle men of the 95th, and the flank companies of the 29th, 43d, and 52d of the same brigade under Major Way, attacked the infantry in the woods and village in their centre.

These attacks soon obliged the enemy to give way; and the Honourable Brigadier-General Charles Stewart led two squadrons of the 16th and 20th dragoons, under the command of Major Blake, in pursuit of the enemy, and destroyed many and took many prisoners.

On the night of the 11th the enemy crossed the Duero, and destroyed the bridge over that river.

It was important, with a view to the operations of Marshal Beresford, that I should cross the Douro immediately; and I had sent Major-General Murray in the morning with a battalion of the Hanoverian legion, a squadron of cavalry, and two six-pounders, to endeavour to collect boats, and, if possible, to cross the river at Ovintas about four miles above Oporto; and I had as many boats as could be collected brought to the ferry, immediately above the towns of Oporto and Villa Nova.

The ground on the right bank of the river at this ferry is protected and commanded by the fire of cannon, placed on the height of the Sierra convent at Villa Nova, and there appeared to be a good position for our troops on the opposite side of the river, till they should be collected in sufficient numbers.

The enemy took no notice of our collection of boats, or of the embarkation of the troops, till after the first battalion (the Buffs) were landed, and had taken up their position under the command of Lieutenant-General Paget on the opposite side of the river.

They then commenced an attack upon them, with a large body of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, under the command of Marshal Soult, which that corps most gallantly sustained, till supported, successively by the 48th and 66th regiments, belonging to Major-General Hill's brigade, and a Portuguese battalion, and afterwards by the first battalion of detachments belonging to Brigadier-General Richard Stewart's brigade.

Lieutenant-General Paget was unfortunately wounded soon after the attack commenced, when the command of these gallant troops devolved upon Major-General Hill.

Although the French made repeated attacks upon them, they made no impression, and at last Major-General Murray having appeared on the

Price Sixpence.

