

of the weather, and I ordered all the gun-boats that had anchored to the eastward of the town to get as near the shore as possible, to cover and assist the troops in their embarkation. The batteries at the town continued their fire on the Wolvereene, Asp and Biter, and as the Wolvereene had received much damage, and the Asp had been lying near four hours within 300 yards of the battery, I made their signal to move, and soon after directed the Dart, Harpy, and Kite to take their stations, that the enemy might be prevented from turning their guns against our troops; but it being low water, they could not get so near as their Commanders wished. At half past nine the Minerva came in, and as I thought an additional number of troops would only add to the anxiety of the General, from the little probability of being able to embark them, I sent Capt. Mackellar on shore to report his arrival with four light companies of the guards. In his absence, Colonel Ward filled two flat boats with his officers and men, and was proceeding with every zeal to join the battalion of guards, without considering the danger he was exposed to in crossing the surf, when Captain Bradley fortunately saw him, and advised him to return immediately to his ship. At twenty minutes past ten I had the pleasure of seeing the explosion take place; and soon after the troops assembled on the Sand Hills, near the shore; but the sea ran so high, that it was impossible to embark a single man; therefore I could only make every arrangement against the wind moderated; and this morning at day light I went in shore, in the Kite, for the purpose of giving every assistance, but I had the mortification to see our army surrounded by the enemy's troops; and as I had no doubt the General had capitulated, I ordered all the ships to anchor farther out, and I sent in a flag of truce, by Colonel Boone of the guards and Captain Brown of the Kite, with a letter to the Commandant, a copy of which I inclose for their Lordships information. At ten this morning the General's Aide-de-Camp, Capt. Williamson, came on board, and though it was very painful to hear that General Coote was wounded, after all his exertions, yet it was very satisfactory to learn, that under many disadvantageous circumstances, and after performing a service of such consequence to our country, the loss, killed and wounded, was only between 50 and 60 officers and privates; and that the General capitulated in consequence of being surrounded by several thousands of the national troops.

I inclose, for their Lordships information, a copy of such minutes as were left me by Capt. Williamson, from which their Lordships will see the sluice gates and works are completely destroyed, and several vessels intended for transports, burnt.

I this morning learnt that the canal was quite dry, and that the works destroyed yesterday had taken the states of Bruges five years to finish.

I hope your Lordships will be satisfied that the enemy was surprised, and every thing they wished was accomplished, although the loss of the troops far exceeded any calculation, except under the particular circumstances of the wind's coming to the northward, and blowing very hard. If the weather had continued fine, the troops would have been embarked by twelve, at which time the return of killed and wounded did not exceed four rank and file.

I cannot help again noticing the particular good conduct of Capt. Mortlock, Lieut. Edmond, and Lieut. Norman, and beg to recommend them to their Lordships protection.

Gen. Coote sent to inform me that he was highly pleased with the uncommon exertions of Captains Winthrop and Bradby, and Lieut. Bradby, who had acted on shore as his Aide-de-Camp: He also noticed the

assistance he had derived from Capt. Mackellar, after his landing.

I take the liberty of sending this dispatch by Capt. Winthrop of the Circe, who commanded the seamen landed from the different ships, and as he had the particular charge of getting the powder and mines up for the destruction of the works, in which he so ably succeeded, he will be enabled to inform their Lordships of every circumstance. Captain Mackellar, with the officers and men on shore, were included in the capitulation: But I have not yet been able to collect an exact return of the number of seamen taken.

I transmit you a list of killed and wounded on board his Majesty's ships; and I have the honour to be, &c.
HOME POPHAM.

*His Majesty's Ship Expedition, Ostend Roads,
May 20. 1798.*

SIR,

I have just heard with concern that the British troops and seamen, under the command of Major-General Coote, and Captain Mackellar, of the royal navy, have capitulated to the troops of the Republic, and I trust they will be treated with that attention which is due to officers and men executing the orders of their Sovereign.

It has been the invariable rule of the British Government to make the situation of prisoners as comfortable as possible; and I am sure, Sir, in this instance, you will do the same to the troops, &c. who have fallen into your hands.

It will not be against any rule to exchange the prisoners immediately, but, on the contrary, add to your name by marking it with humanity and liberality; and I give you my word the same number of troops, or other prisoners, shall be instantly sent from England to France, with such officers as you shall name, or as shall be named by the National Convention, provided no public reason attaches against the release of any particular person.

I have sent the officers what things they left on board the ship, and I am confident you will order them to be delivered as soon as possible.

I beg you will allow the officers and men to write letters to England by this flag, as a satisfaction to their families, it being impossible for me to know who have fallen or received wounds, which I hope will be very inconsiderable from the accounts I have received from the shore.

I beg your answer to this letter without loss of time, and confiding in your liberality towards the troops under capitulation, I have the honour to be, &c.

HOME POPHAM.

To the Officer Commanding the Troops of
the National Convention at Ostend.

Extract from the minutes left on board the Expedition by Capt. WILLIAMSON, Aide-de-Camp to General COOTE, dated 10 A. M. May 20, Ostend Roads.

Sluice-gates destroyed in the most complete manner, boats burnt, and every thing done, and the troops ready to embark by twelve o'clock. When we found it impossible to embark, took the strongest position on the Sand-Hills, and about four in the morning were attacked by a column of 600 men to our left, an immense column in front, with cannon, and a very large column on the right.

The General and troops would have all been off with the loss of not more than three or four men, if the wind had not come to the northward soon after we landed, and made so high a sea. We have not been able to ascertain the exact number of men killed and wounded, but it is supposed they amount to fifty or sixty.