

ADMIRALTY, August 13, 1855.

**D**ESPATCHES, of which the following are Copies, have been received from Rear-Admiral Sir Edmund Lyons, Bart., G.C.B., Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Ships and Vessels in the Mediterranean and Black Sea :—

No. 613.  
SIR,

*Royal Albert, off Sevastopol,*  
July 30, 1855.

IN continuation of the proceedings of the steam squadron in the Sea of Azof, under the orders of Commander Sherard Osborn, of the *Vesuvius*, I beg leave to enclose, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, copies of two letters from that Officer, together with the several enclosures reporting the steps taken to deprive the enemy of the new harvest, and to cripple his resources of all kinds, since the proceedings which were communicated in my letter of the 7th instant (No. 538.)

During the time the squadron was detained from stress of weather under Berutch Spit, near Ghenitch, the vessels were at every break of the weather employed in destroying extensive fishing establishments which supplied the Army in the Crimea with fish, as well as guard-houses, barracks, stores of forage, and provisions on the Isthmus of Arabat; and the pontoon or only means of communication between Arabat Spit and the Crimea, at the entrance of the Kara-su River was burnt by Commander Rowley Lambert of the *Curlew*. The attack and destruction of Fort Petrovskoi, on the 16th instant, by the combined English and French squadrons named in Commander Osborn's letter, appears to have been accomplished with the usual skill and success which has attended the operations in the Sea of Azof; and their Lordships will observe that particular mention is made of Lieutenant Hubert Campion, Senior Lieutenant of the *Vesuvius*, who commanded the landing party, and rendered great service. I would particularly beg leave to call their Lordships' attention to the high-minded conduct of Captain De Cintré, of His Imperial Majesty's steamer *Milan*, who, on seeing that the bulk of the squadron was under the orders of Commander Osborn, to whom he was senior, waived his right to plan the attack, and placed his ship, as well as the *Mouette*, in the positions pointed out by Commander Osborn.

In the meantime Lieutenant Howett, in the *Beagle*, destroyed an extensive collection of fish stores, and two large granaries full of corn, in the neighbourhood of Berdiansk.

After destroying Fort Petrovskoi, the squadron proceeded to Glofira, where some extensive corn and fish stores were destroyed by vessels under the orders of Commander Rowley Lambert, of the *Curlew*, and a similar service was performed at the Crooked Spit, in the Gulf of Azof, by vessels under the orders of Commander F. A. B. Craufurd, of the *Swallow*. In the meantime Commander Osborn reconnoitred various parts of the coast as far as Taganrog.

The reports of Commander Osborn are so comprehensive that I will only remark that the admirable manner in which he has carried out my instructions "to clear the sea bord of all fish stores, all fisheries, and mills, on a scale beyond the wants of the neighbouring population, and indeed of all things destined to contribute to the maintenance of the enemy's army in the Crimea," fully corroborates the opinion I have before expressed,

that he is an officer possessing a rare combination of high qualities, and I beg to recommend him to their Lordships' most favourable consideration.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) EDMUND LYONS,  
Rear-Admiral and Commander-in-Chief.

*The Secretary of the Admiralty.*  
&c., &c., &c.

*Her Majesty's ship Vesuvius,*  
Gulf of Azof, July 17, 1855.

SIR,

HEAVY gales and much sea obliged the squadron in this sea to take shelter under Berutch Spit for several days. Coaling, provisioning, and completing stores was however proceeded with, and at every break in the weather the vessels were actively employed destroying some extensive fisheries upon Berutch Spit, as well as guard-houses, barracks, and stores of forage and provisions, to within an easy gun shot of Arabat Fort. The only pontoon or means of communication between Arabat Spit and the Crimea, at the entrance of the Kara-su River, has been burnt by Commander Rowley Lambert, H.M.S. *Curlew*, and we have now entire possession of the Spit. A lull in the weather enabled me to put to sea upon the 13th July, for a sweep round the sea of Azof; the *Ardent*, *Weser*, and *Clinker*, being left under the orders of Lieutenant Horton to harass Genitch and Arabat, as well as to cut off all communication along the Spit.

Delayed by the weather, we did not reach Berdiansk until the 15th July; a heavy sea was running, but anxious to lose no time, the senior Officer of the French Squadron (Captain De Cintré, of the *Milan*), and myself determined to go at once and endeavour to burn the forage and corn stacks upon the landward side of the hills overlooking the town.

No inhabitants were to be seen, but the occasional glimpse of soldiers showed that a landing was expected and that they were prepared for a street fight. I hoisted a flag of truce in order, if possible, to get the women and children removed from the town, but as that met with no reply, and the surf rendered landing extremely hazardous, I hauled it down, and the squadron commenced to fire over the town at the forage and corn stacked behind it, and I soon had the satisfaction of seeing a fire break out exactly where it was wanted. The town was not touched except by an occasional shell. The wheat and forage being fired, it became necessary to move into deeper water for the night, and from our distant anchorage the fires were seen burning throughout the night.

On the 16th July the Allied squadron proceeded to Fort Petrovskoi, between Berdiansk and Marianopol. As I approached the place there were evident symptoms of an increase to the fortifications since the *Vesuvius* silenced its fire three weeks ago. A redan, covering the curtain which faces the sea, shewed seven new embrasures, and much new earth led me to expect some masked works.

Captain De Cintré, commanding the French steamer *Milan*, although my senior, in the most handsome manner surrendered the right of planning the attack; and keeping alone in view the good of the Allied cause, gallantly took up the position I wished him to do, followed by Captain De L'Allemand, in the *Mouette*.