

Admiralty-Office, July 13, 1813.

*Copy of a Letter from Captain Adam, of His Majesty's Ship the Invincible, addressed to Rear-Admiral Hallowell, and transmitted by the latter to John Wilson Croker, Esq.*

*His Majesty's Ship Invincible, off the Coll de Balaguer, June 8, 1813.*

**I**N pursuance of your directions to take the ships and vessels, named in the margin\*, under my orders, and co-operate with Lieut. Col. Prevost in the siege of the fort of the Coll de Balaguer, I have the honour to inform you, that the troops were landed about noon of the 3d instant, and the Lieutenant-Colonel immediately invested the fort, the riflemen of De Roll's regiment, and other light troops, being pushed close up to the walls.

The fort is situated in a most difficult pass, through which the high road from Tortosa to Tarragona winds, and it is absolutely the key of the only road for cannon into this province, from the westward, without going round by Lerida. It is armed with twelve pieces of ordnance, including two ten-inch mortars, and two howitzers, and the surrounding heights are so difficult of access, that it has been a work of the greatest labour to establish the necessary batteries before it.

Two six-pounder field-pieces and a howitzer were landed on the evening of the 3d instant, dragged up and placed on the ridge of a steep and rugged mountain, to the S. E. of the fort: two twelve-pounders were added to the former by noon of the next day. The whole remained under the command of Lieutenant Corbyn, First of the Invincible, having under his orders a detachment of midshipmen and seamen from this ship, and a most excellent fire was kept up from them, which considerably damaged the defences of the fort, and checked its fire upon our working parties.

In the mean time three Spanish twenty-four-pounders were landed, and two more guns, of the same calibre, from this ship, to be got up by the high road to the foot of a very steep height, on the crest of which the breaching-battery was to be constructed, at about three hundred yards from the eastern face of the fort.

In the afternoon of the 4th instant the fort was summoned to surrender; and the Commandant answered, that he should defend the place committed to his charge.

During the night of the 4th every exertion was used to bring the guns up to the hill, and to complete the breaching-battery; but, as it could not be completed by daylight, the men were withdrawn.

The seamen and marines were landed early in the afternoon of the 5th, and carried up the stores for the battery, under a brisk fire of shot and shells from the fort.

The three Spanish twenty-four-pounders, notwithstanding their immense size and weight, were conveyed up the side of the hill, over the most difficult and rugged ground, by the united exertions of the soldiers, seamen, and marines, under the immediate direction of Captain Carroll, of the

\* Thames, Volcano, Strombolo, Brune, and eight gun-boats.

Volcano. Two eight-inch mortars were brought as far along the road as was practicable before dark; and the iron twenty-four-pounders were conveyed to the foot of the hill as soon as it was dark.

The work of the battery advanced rapidly, although it was necessary to fill all the sand-bags at the bottom of the hill; and I was in confident expectation that the battery would open soon after daylight; but by ten o'clock the rain fell in torrents, attended by the most violent thunder and lightning I almost ever witnessed.

The quantity of ammunition which had been brought up for the battery, laying in exposed situations, made it the more awful, and the enemy kept up an incessant fire of shells and grape shot.

In defiance of all these obstacles two of the guns were got high enough up to mount on the platforms, but all our exertion was unequal to place them there, owing to the violence of the rain, and the excessive difficulty of working in the extreme darkness of the night. From the same reason too the mortars could not be brought forward, and after a night of the most excessive labour, we had the mortification of being again obliged to retire: the officers and men being quite worn out.

The weather continued very bad until the afternoon of the 6th instant, when a party was landed, and the mortars were got forward; before day light the seamen and marines were on the pile, and all the guns were placed on the battery ready for mounting. The two mortars opened soon after day light, and the shells were thrown with great precision, by Lieutenant James, of the royal marine artillery, landed from the Strombolo, who worked the mortars with his party; and the fire from Lieutenant Corbyn's battery was resumed with excellent effect. This united force made very considerable impression on the fort: an exercise magazine was blown up, and the enemy's fire was very much slackened.

At seven o'clock, just before the breaching battery was ready to open, a white flag was shewn from the fort, Captain Stoddart, of the Strombolo, and Captain Zehnpfenning, were immediately sent to the fort, and the latter returned in a few minutes with an offer from the commandant, to surrender the fort and garrison upon conditions of marching out with the honours of war, the officers and men preserving their private property.

This was immediately acceded to by Lieutenant-Colonel Prevost and myself: the fort was taken possession of by the advance of the troops. The garrison marched out, grounded their arms on the Glacis, and were immediately embarked.

I have great satisfaction in stating, that during this service, which has so much depended on the united exertions of the army and navy, the most perfect cordiality has existed among all ranks, and I have met, in Lieutenant-Colonel Prevost, all that openness of communication and confidence which an acquaintance with the character of this excellent officer gave me reason to expect.

In an operation where the laborious exertions of the captains, officers, seamen, and marines under my orders, have been most conspicuous, I hope I shall be excused for having gone so much into detail; but it is my duty, and a most agreeable one