

*Admiralty, June 14, 1854.*

DESPATCHES, of which the following are copies, have been received from Rear-Admiral Sir James Stirling, Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Ships and Vessels on the East Indian and China Station:

No. 23.  
SIR,

*Barracouta, Singapore,  
April 26, 1854.*

1. I TRANSMIT herewith, for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the accompanying communications as per schedule from Captain O'Callaghan, of Her Majesty's ship Encounter.

These communications contain the particulars of a very serious conflict between considerable numbers of the Chinese Imperialist soldiers, employed in the siege of Shanghai, and the naval force, commanded by Captain O'Callaghan, in conjunction with the commander of the United States sloop of war, Plymouth, and assisted by a body of volunteers from the factories in that vicinity.

2. The operations reported by Captain O'Callaghan appear to have originated in the necessity for taking vigorous measures for the defence of the British and other factories, and to have led eventually to the seizure of the Chinese war-junks, and to the expulsion of the Chinese soldiers from the camps they occupied contiguous to the borders of the settlement.

3. I regret that it is not in my power to afford their Lordships any further official information on this subject, beyond that which is contained in Captain O'Callaghan's reports herewith transmitted.

4. In bringing this subject to their Lordships' notice, I beg to point attention to the very gallant conduct evinced by Captain O'Callaghan and by all the officers, seamen, and marines engaged. The conduct of Commander the Honourable G. D. Keane, and of Lieutenants Dew and Majendie, and of a party of 10 marines, who resolutely withstood the attack of an enormously superior force, is particularly commended by Captain O'Callaghan, and I trust it may be considered such as to merit some mark of their Lordships' favour and approval.

I have, &c.

JAMES STIRLING,

Rear-Admiral, Commander-in-Chief.

*The Secretary to the Admiralty.*

Enclosure No. 1 in No. 23.

SIR,  
*Her Majesty's Steam-sloop Encounter,  
Shanghai, April 4, 1854.*

I HAVE the honour to inform you, that a collision has taken place between the Imperialist Forces before the city of Shanghai and ourselves, under the following circumstances.

2. At about 4 P.M. on the 3rd instant I observed the signal (previously arranged) for the small arm men of Her Majesty's ships to land, which was promptly obeyed.

3. I shortly received a message from Commander the Honourable G. D. Keane (who happened to be on the spot at the time) that the Imperial troops were firing on our people, and the ground was being held by the marines of the main guard.

4. I advanced with the Encounter's men to the spot indicated (the race course), which is within the limits of our boundary, where a sharp firing was being maintained on either side.

5. Her Majesty's Consul and Vice-Consul were there; and at the former's requisition, and quite in accordance with my own views, I determined on

at once acting on the offensive, and having clearly ascertained the camp from which the aggression had been made, took it and burnt it, which I am happy to say was effected without loss, as the troops retired the moment we opened fire upon them.

6. Commander Kelly, of the United States ship Plymouth, also landed his crew, and having arranged with him for the protection of the settlement during the night by means of strong patrols, the rest of the crews were re-embarked.

7. Her Majesty's Consul deeming it advisable to take further steps for the security of the settlement, I suggested the taking possession of the Chinese Fleet, and holding it until a camp (which most unnecessarily has been pitched close to the boundary, and from which most wanton attacks have frequently been made) was removed, and in this he concurred.

8. In accordance with the above, I sent the boats of the Grecian, with the pinnace of the Encounter (commanded by Lieutenant Dew) under the command of Commander the Honourable G. D. Keane, to take possession of the junks, and bring them down under the Encounter's guns, which he effected most judiciously; and I take this opportunity of stating that from him I received every assistance that adroitness and promptitude could afford.

9. I think it my duty to call your attention to the conduct of Lieutenant Majendie, of Her Majesty's sloop Grecian; he was officer of the guard at the time the aggression took place, and on being sent for repaired to the spot with 10 marines, and there kept a considerable body of men at bay until reinforced; and I feel it due to Lieutenant R. Dew, 1st Lieutenant of this ship, to mention the promptitude and smartness with which the crew of the Encounter were landed.

*Advanced Post, Shanghai,  
April 5, 1854.*

10. Since the above was written I have the honour further briefly to inform you, that at the request of Her Majesty's Consul, in accordance with the other Consuls, we have found it requisite to attack the Imperial camps near our boundary, which have been most gallantly taken. I have not time to enter into details, as I am writing this on the field.

11. The Imperialists have retired in considerable force (4 to 5,000 men) to the main camp. My object will be now to defend the settlement, but the force at my disposal is small, and I urgently request a reinforcement, if possible some troops; indeed so critical do I deem our position that I have resolved on ordering the Styx up, if the senior officer at Amoy can spare her.

12. I cannot too strongly praise the conduct of Commander Keane, and Lieutenant Dew, who most gallantly stormed the very strong works thrown up.

13. I am anxious this should reach as soon as possible, and for this purpose the Nymph clipper will sail to night or to morrow morning.

14. Our available force is about 300 men with the Americans. Captain Kelly with his gallant crew has operated with me in a most effective and cordial manner. I am much indebted to the gallant and steady conduct of himself, officers, and men, and to all under my command. (Enclosed is a list of the killed and wounded). Her Majesty's Consul and Vice-Consul,—the latter with 40 gentlemen of the settlement,—have been with me in the field, and afforded me much assistance.

15. I will take the earliest opportunity of affording you a more detailed account; but of this