

This work the enemy continued to defend with great tenacity and resolution. I ordered two successive assaults to be made on it, the first by the Royal Artillery, armed with revolvers, and led by Captain Mercer; the second by 90 men of the Royal Navy, armed in a similar manner, and led by Commander Mayne, under the personal direction of Commodore Sir William Wiseman. Both assaults were made with great gallantry, but the formidable nature of the work, and the deadly fire directed on the assailants, rendered it impossible for them to effect an entrance. An attempt was afterwards made by a party of seamen, under Commander Philimore, H.M.S. "Curaçoa," to dislodge the enemy from the work by hand grenades, but without success.

It being now dark, I resolved to postpone further operations until daylight, ordering the troops to remain during the night in the several positions they had gained.

At daybreak Colonel Mould, C.B., Commanding Royal Engineer, suggested that a breach should be made in the redoubt by labour with the pick and shovel, and this operation was in progress when at about six o'clock the enemy hoisted a white flag, and 183 men surrendered unconditionally, and laid down their arms.

I enclose a list of our casualties.

Our loss has been severe, but not greater than was to be expected in attacking so formidable a position. The proportion of officers is large, most of them who led in the different attacks having been killed or severely wounded.

I deeply deplore, in common with all under my command, the loss the service has sustained in the death of Captain Mercer, Commanding Royal Artillery in this colony, who died from the effects of the wound he received whilst gallantly leading his men to the assault on the redoubt. I regard it as a serious misfortune that the force should be deprived at such a moment of the services of so able and energetic an officer.

The loss of the enemy must have been very heavy. We found 41 bodies in and about the works, and a great many were shot or drowned in their flight across the swamp. They must have removed their wounded during the night, as none were found among the prisoners.

I have been unable to ascertain the exact strength of the enemy at the commencement of the attack, but I think it could not have been less than 700.

I have every reason to be satisfied with the conduct of the whole of the troops engaged on this occasion. The 65th Regiment, under Colonel Wyatt, C.B., and the detachment Royal Engineers, under Captain Brooke, particularly distinguished themselves by the impetuosity of their attack on the left of the enemy's position, and were most gallantly led by their officers, amongst whom Captain Gresson and Lieutenant Talbot, with the skirmishers, and Lieutenant Toker, with the ladder party, were most conspicuous; also Lieutenant and Adjutant Lewis, 65th Regiment, who collecting a handful of men of his regiment together gallantly led them against the redoubt, and was severely wounded in the attempt.

The rapid and spirited manner in which the 40th Regiment, under Colonel Leslie, attacked and carried the ridge in rear of the position, reflects great credit on that corps.

The Royal Artillery displayed great daring and intrepidity in the assault on the central redoubt;

Serjeant-Major Hamilton, and other non-commissioned officers and men standing on the top of the parapet and discharging their revolvers into the work.

Captain Brooke, R.E., was most active throughout the engagement, and after the assault by the Royal Artillery on the redoubt this officer, with the assistance of Lieutenant Pickard, Royal Artillery, and men of the Royal Engineers, succeeded in masking with planks and earth a narrow opening in the parapet of the redoubt, through which the enemy kept up a deadly fire, and prevented the wounded who were lying close to the work, from being removed, amongst them Captain Mercer, R.A., Assistant-Surgeon Temple, R.A., here performed an act of courage and devotion to his duty worthy of record, by passing this opening for the purpose of attending the wounded, although the extreme danger of his doing so was pointed out to him, every man but one (Lieutenant Pickard) who had previously attempted to cross having been killed or wounded.

I am much indebted to the Commanding Officers of the various corps and detachments for the manner in which they carried out my instructions, and particularly to Colonel Mould, C.B., for his valuable advice and assistance.

I beg to bring to your Lordship's special notice the invaluable assistance afforded me by the Officers of the General Staff, Lieutenant-Colonel Carey, C.B., Deputy-Adjutant-General, Lieutenant-Colonel Gamble, Deputy-Quartermaster-General, and Lieutenant Colonel Sir Henry Havelock, Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General, and also by my two Aides-de-Camp, Major McNeil and Lieutenant S. Hill.

Deputy-Inspector-General Mouat, C.B., Principal Medical Officer, was in the field, and under his superintendence the wounded were promptly attended to, and carefully conveyed on board the steamers.

I cannot conclude this despatch without drawing your Lordship's attention to the part taken by the Royal Navy in this engagement, for the success of which I am greatly indebted to the cordial co-operation of Sir William Wiseman, and to the zeal and gallantry of the officers and men under his command.

I beg to mention the names of Commander Mayne, Her Majesty's ship "Eclipse," and Lieutenant Alexander, Her Majesty's ship "Curaçoa," who particularly distinguished themselves, the former in the assault which he led on the redoubt, and the latter in the first attack on the enemy's left, in which he joined with the greater part of his detachment. Both officers were severely wounded, as were also Lieutenant Downes, Her Majesty's ship "Miranda," and Lieutenant Hotham, Her Majesty's ship "Curaçoa," who were prominent in the assault on the redoubt.

Captain Lacy, commanding her Majesty's ship "Himalaya," accompanied me in the march to Rangiriri, and was present during the whole of the engagement.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) D. A. CAMERON,
Lieutenant-General.

The Right Honourable
The Secretary of State for War,
War Office, London.