

men* in camp, whom, from their local knowledge, I at once engaged as guides, which circumstance enabled me to determine on a combined movement.

My plan of attack was to advance with the main body along the dray road to Orakau, to detach a force of 250 men under Major Blythe, 40th Regiment, who would take a circuitous route through a somewhat difficult country, crossing and re-crossing the Punia River, and marching on my right flank to take the enemy's position in reverse; and, thirdly, to draw a force of 100 men from Rangiahia and Hairini, under Captain Blewitt, 65th Regiment, who would march across to the enemy's position on my left; the three bodies of troops arriving, if possible, simultaneously before the enemy's stronghold, shortly before daylight.

At midnight Major Blyth, 40th Regiment, marched with 250 men, as enumerated in the margin,† with directions to take the road to the right, to cross and recross the Punia River, and to gain the rear of the enemy's position before daylight, halting there until he should hear my attack, and then to dispose of his force so as to cut off the retreat of the enemy.

The road from Rangiahia to Orakau, I found on enquiry to be very difficult, being intercepted by deep swamps and thick bush; however, having every confidence in Captain Blewitt's energy, I directed that officer, who commands at Rangiahia, to march during the night, and endeavour to form a junction with me before daylight on the proper right of the enemy's position, bringing with him one hundred men.‡

At three o'clock on Thursday morning, the 31st ultimo, I marched with the main body, as directed in the margin,§ along the dray road to Kihikihi, taking on Lieutenant-Colonel Haultain and 150 men from that post, and then proceeded by the same road to the village of Orakau, which I reached without opposition as the day dawned.

The enemy, evidently taken by surprise, opened fire on the advance-guard composed of 120 of the Royal Irish and 20 Forest Rangers, gallantly led by Captain Ring, 18th Royal Irish (and supported by 100 of the 40th Regiment), who immediately rushed forward to the attack in skirmishing order.

The position being found very strong (an earth-work, with strong flank defences, deep ditches, with posts and rails outside, and nearly covered from view by flax-bushes, peach-trees, and high fern), this party were forced to retire, but at once

reformed, and, being reinforced by another Company of the 40th Regiment, again tried to take the place by assault, but with no better success. Here Captain Ring, 18th Royal Irish, fell mortally wounded, and Captain Fisher, 40th Regiment, severely so, besides four men were killed and several wounded.

On Captain Ring's falling, Captain Baker, 18th Royal Irish, Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, most gallantly galloped up, dismounted, and, calling for volunteers, again endeavoured to carry the place by assault. This also failed.

Finding that there was no chance of taking the pah in this manner, from its immense strength, and other men having fallen, I determined to desist from this mode of attack, and having heard that both Major Blyth, 40th Regiment, and Captain Blewitt, 65th Regiment, were at their appointed posts, I decided on surrounding the place, and adopting the more slow but sure method of approaching the position by sap, which was shortly after commenced, under the very able directions of Lieutenant Hurst, 12th Regiment, attached to the Royal Engineer Department.

At this time, Lieutenant Carre, Royal Artillery, endeavoured to effect a breach in the enemy's work, but could make no impression upon it.

A further supply of entrenching tools and gabions (which latter had most fortunately been prepared at the neighbouring posts for service of head-quarters on the Horatin) were immediately ordered up, with the men's blankets, additional food, &c., and every possible precaution taken by the proper disposition of the force, to prevent the escape of the enemy.

During the afternoon, a reinforcement of some 150 or 200 of the enemy, from the direction of Maungatautari, appeared in sight, evidently determined on relieving the place. They advanced to a bush situated about 900 yards in rear of our outposts, but seeing that it was scarcely possible to break through the line formed by our troops, they halted and commenced firing volleys, at the same time exciting the men in the pah to increased energy by dancing the war dance, shouting, &c.

The wounded were sent in to "Te Awamutu" and "Kihikihi;" the sap was pushed forward vigorously, and the troops so posted as to prevent any possibility of escape by the natives during the night.

Heavy firing was kept up by the enemy on the troops, both in the sap and around the place during the day and night, causing but few casualties, the men contriving to cover themselves in temporary rifle pits, dug out with their bayonets and hands.

A reinforcement of 200 men, as detailed in the margin,* under the command of Captain Inman, 18th Royal Irish, reached me from head-quarters during the afternoon.

Having reported my proceedings to the Commander of the Forces in the morning, I was glad to receive a reinforcement as detailed in the margin,† sent by him and guided by Captain Greaves, D.A., Quartermaster-General, which arrived about daylight on the morning of the 1st April, and which enabled me to relieve the men in the sap more constantly, and therefore to carry on the work more quickly, Captain Greaves also affording me material assistance in the duties of his department. This day was spent in working

* 18th Royal Irish—1 captain, 2 subalterns, 8 sergeants, 2 drummers, 110 rank and file; 70th Regiment—1 captain, 2 subalterns, 4 sergeants, 1 drummer, 89 rank and file.

† 12th Regiment—1 captain, 1 subaltern, 3 sergeants, 1 drummer, 92 rank and file; Forest Rangers—1 captain, 1 subaltern, 4 sergeants, 44 rank and file.

* Mr. Gage and Mr. W. Astle.

† 40th Regiment—1 field officer, 1 captain, 1 subaltern, 1 staff, 3 sergeants, 2 drummers, 100 rank and file; 65th Regiment—1 captain, 3 subalterns, 6 sergeants, 3 drummers, 125 rank and file; Forest Rangers—1 captain, 2 sergeants, 25 rank and file. Total—1 field officer, 3 captains, 4 subalterns, 1 staff, 11 sergeants, 5 drummers, 250 rank and file.

‡ 65th Regiment—2 captains, 1 subaltern, 1 sergeant, 1 drummer, 53 rank and file; 3rd Waikato Militia—1 subaltern, 1 sergeant, 1 drummer, 52 rank and file. Total—2 captains, 2 subalterns, 2 sergeants, 2 drummers, 105 rank and file.

§ Royal Artillery—1 subaltern, 2 sergeants, 1 drummer, 31 rank and file, 3 guns; Mounted Royal Artillery, 1 subaltern, 1 staff, 1 sergeant, 1 drummer, 28 rank and file; Royal Engineers—6 rank and file; 12th Regiment—1 acting engineer; 18th Regiment—1 captain, 3 subalterns, 1 staff, 5 sergeants, 3 drummers, 140 rank and file; 40th Regiment—1 field officer, 4 captains, 2 subalterns, 1 staff, 14 sergeants, 5 drummers, 258 rank and file; 65th Regiment—1 subaltern, 2 sergeants, 1 drummer, 38 rank and file; Militia—1 field officer, 3 subalterns, 8 sergeants, 3 drummers, 137 rank and file; Forest Rangers—1 subaltern, 2 sergeants, 1 drummer, 22 rank and file. Total—2 field officers, 5 captains, 13 subalterns, 3 staff, 34 sergeants, 11 drummers, 660 rank and file.