

smaller magazines, and exploded some charges in it. She also had one or two below the water line.

The "Ittis" also lost her gunner and seven men killed, while the Captain and about 30 men were wounded. The manner in which this ship was fought was the admiration of the whole squadron.

The "Lion" had one man wounded, since dead. The "Koreytz" had two officers and several men killed and wounded.

The "Bohr" had no casualties.

I have, &c.

R. H. JOHNSTON STEWART,
Commander.

Rear-Admiral James A. F. Bruce,
Commanding H.M. Ships
and Vessels at Taku.

Enclosure in Letter of Rear-Admiral, China Station, dated 27th June, 1900, No. 24.

List of Guns captured in North-West Fort, Taku, 17th June.

Number.	Calibre, &c.	Description.
4	12 c.m.	Krupp, B.L.
4	12-pr.	Smooth bore, M.L.
8	40-pr.	Rifled, M.L.
2	5-in.	Vavaseur, B.L.
4	8 c.m.	Krupp field guns, B.L.
3	4-in.	Brass, Rifled, M.L.
3	8 c.m.	Krupp, iron carriages, B.L.
4	6-pr.	Smooth bore, wooden carriages, M.L.
Guns bearing on the River.		
4	12 c.m.	Krupp, B.L.
5	40-pr.	Smooth bore, M.L.
2	5-in.	Vavaseur, B.L.
2	8 c.m.	Krupp, on field carriages.
Chinese killed at N.W. Fort.		

Found dead, 450.

Estimated by prisoner to have been thrown into moat by Chinese, 50.

Letter No. 26 from the Rear-Admiral on the China Station, dated 11th July, 1900.

No. 26. "Barfleur," at Taku,

Sir, 11th July, 1900.

IN continuation of my General Letter No. 24, of 27th June, I have the honour to report the following proceedings at this port.

The Council of Admirals sat on the 5th and 6th instant.

I forward a report from Lieutenant and Commander Keyes, H.M.S. "Fame," of the destruction of the Hsin Cheng Fort.

This fort commanded the river, and it is most important that it should have been destroyed.

It is with much pleasure I forward to their Lordships a letter received from the Russian Admiral, conveying the appreciation expressed by Captain Dobrovolsky, who commanded at Taku during the attack on the Taku forts, for the services of the British on that occasion; my reply to Admiral Hildebrandt is also enclosed.

H.M.S. "Whiting" returned from Nagasaki on the 9th July, her repairs having been expeditiously and efficiently executed by the Nagasaki Dock Company, and I have asked Her Majesty's Consul at that port to convey to the directors my thanks, they having put aside other work in order to hasten her.

A composite squadron was despatched to Shan hai kwan on the evening of the 8th instant. The decision to send this squadron was reached at the Council of 5th July.

The squadron consisted of:—1 German (Hansa,

Senior Officer); 1 French; 1 Japanese; 1 Russian; 1 British ("Aurora").

This squadron returned to Taku to-day.

I have, &c.

JAMES BRUCE.

Rear-Admiral.

The Secretary, the Admiralty.

Enclosure to letter from the Rear-Admiral on the China Station, dated 11th July, 1900, No. 26.

Reporting the Destruction of the Hsin Cheng Fort.

H.M.S. "Fame," at Taku,

26th June, 1900.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to report that, in accordance with your order of the 25th instant, to reconnoitre, and if possible destroy all munitions of war in the Hsin Cheng Fort, I embarked Lieutenant Duncan and 12 men of H.M.S. "Algerine," at 6 a.m. this day, and proceeded up the river.

On arriving there I anchored the "Fame" in the most suitable position for covering the operations and landed with 32 men, 24 being armed with rifles, the remainder with cutlasses and pistols. After posting sentries and taking every precaution against surprise I entered the fort without opposition and blew up the magazine and disabled the guns.

The guns disabled were six in number, and were 15 cm. Krupp B.L. on recoil mountings; these guns command the river and Tientsin Road, and if they were properly manned the passage of the river would be extremely difficult to force. They were in excellent order.

A 2½-lb. charge of guncotton was placed under the trunnions of each gun with the result that the carriage was shattered and bent and the gun rendered unserviceable, but, except in one case when a primer was also placed in the breech of the gun, the guns themselves were not permanently injured should they be required for Her Majesty's Service.

The magazine contained about 50 tons of powder pebble, prism, black and small grain.

The explosion was very severe, and though I took every precaution to ensure the safety of my men and the villagers, I regret to have to report that two men were slightly injured by the falling débris at a distance of a quarter of a mile from the magazine.

It is possible that there is more ammunition in the fort, but the time at my disposal was limited and did not admit of a systematic search being made. The 6-in. B.L. shell room was not discovered.

On the outside, to the eastward of the fort, there is a large store of projectiles (round) for the numerous obsolete guns which evidently were mounted all round the ramparts and in the three cavaliers; also some hundreds of war rockets, and the carriages and limbers of 27 field pieces—the guns for these could not be found.

I would submit that further investigation be made, as munitions of war must presumably still remain there in large quantities.

Mr. Baldwin (the manager of the mining company), who accompanied me, acted as interpreter, and his services were invaluable.

Lieutenant Duncan was in charge of the guncotton party; he performed the work with celerity and great success.

I have, &c.

ROGER KEYES,

Lieutenant and Commander.

To Captain George Warrender,
Commanding Naval Brigade at Taku, etc.