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Volume 2 Part 12

SECOND SIEGE OF ZARAGOZA,

BY THE FRENCH ARMY OF ARAGON,
IN 1808 AND 1809.

41st NIGHT, of 7 to 8 February.

Attack on the right. The besieged having been forced to abandon the main thoroughfare of the Plaza del La Magdalena, from which they had flanked the Coso, Battalion Commander Haxo of the Engineers attempted to cross this wide street to establish a foothold in the ruins of the seminary. Located opposite the Calle del Medio, the seminary was destroyed on the 27th of July by the explosion of a powder magazine. A few men, having slipped in undetected, attached an explosive to the walled-up door of the church, and after the explosion, our troops entered the building through the opening without encountering any resistance. A double caponier, constructed with gabions and sandbags, was immediately established across the Coso, starting from the ruined houses at the tip of the Calle del Medio.

In the space of forty-eight hours, we suffered seven dead and thirteen wounded, including an officer of the Fourteenth.

Attack on the center. We entrenched ourselves in the three houses captured during the daylight to the right of the general hospital. We continued the trench line begun the previous day in the cellar of one of these houses, work that was slowed by encountering several walls that had to be breached.

On the left side of Santa Engracia Street, we crossed Munitions Street using a wooden barricade abandoned by the enemy and took up positions behind a garden wall, which was then crenellated. One sapper was wounded.

Attack on the suburb. On the reverse side of the right half of the parade ground, we assembled the gabions, fascines, and sandbags needed for the attack on the Convent of Jesus. The new batteries were armed and supplied. The enemy worked all night to demolish the convent's enclosure wall, which could conceal our movements, and continued to dig a ditch that they had started at the very foot of the building.

DAY of 8 February.

Attack on the right. The double caponier, begun on the Coso to reach the ruins of the seminary, could not be fully completed during the night due to a lack of materials. The gabions, left empty

and uncapped, offered no protection against the plunging fire from the tall houses situated to the right in the Plaza de La Magdalena, nor against that of a cannon positioned to the left on the Coso in front of the Convent of San Carlos Borromeo. The enemy, realizing the importance of an undertaking that would cut their defensive line, mustered sufficient forces to thwart it; but for some time they were unable to advance, hampered by the fire of some of our soldiers who had penetrated a house located this side of the Coso, to the left of the ruins at the tip of the Calle del Medio. In response to this fire, the Spanish aimed a cannon at the cornice of the house: the splinters of stone and wood sent flying by the cannonballs forced our men to retreat. Then the enemy advanced on the Coso River and forced us to return to the Rue del Medio. Captain Joffrenot of the Engineers was mortally wounded while trying to repel this attack.

To the right of the Calle San Agustín, the mine dug the previous day under one of the houses on the island bordering the Coso River between the streets of San Agustín and Alcober was detonated. After several unsuccessful attempts, the voltigeurs of the Forty-fourth finally managed to take cover on this island. We lost three sappers, and Lieutenant Suhard of the Engineers was wounded.

We also crossed the Calle Barrioverde at the corner it forms with the street of the Arcades, and a mine was detonated in the opposite block, which allowed us to occupy several houses.

At the very moment when, on the left bank of the Ebro, our troops were attacking the convent of Jesus, one hundred and twenty grenadiers were brought out from the isolated oil mill at Goicoechea to seize the enemy batteries on the right bank, at the head of the Tanneries suburb; but they were repulsed.

Attack on the center. Two more houses were taken beyond the three occupied the previous day in the alley parallel to the Coso, to the right of the general hospital. Our miners then abandoned the tunnel they had started the day before to open another in one of the cellars of these last two houses, where the ground was much easier to excavate. At four o'clock in the afternoon, a one-thousand-pound powder keg was placed at the end of this new tunnel and ignited. The explosion opened the large white house that separated us from the Coso. Immediately, our troops advanced on the breach; but, having failed in their attack, they were forced to retreat. We had taken a sixth house on the right, in the re-entrant corner of the alley, from which we could see the Coso and the entrance to the Calle del Refugio; the enemy brought up a 4-pounder cannon, with which they battered this house, and forced us to abandon it.

To the left of the Calle Santa-Engracia, the traverse begun in the Calle des Munitions was reinforced. The enemy, having reappeared in a house from which they were thought to have been driven out by a mine, was forced to cut new crenellations to dislodge them.

Attack on the suburb. At eight o'clock in the morning, our artillery began firing on the convent of Jesus, with twenty-two guns from batteries No. 23, 24, and 25. By ten o'clock, several breaches could be made in the two front walls. Without waiting for nightfall to attack the convent, as had initially been agreed, which would have facilitated our entrenchment and the construction of a communication route, Marshal Lannes immediately ordered the assault. Four companies of voltigeurs from the Twenty-eighth Regiment and the Hundred and Third,

supported by four companies of grenadiers, launched an assault and entered the convent, from which they drove out the Spaniards, who surrendered two 4-pounder cannons. Some of our tirailleurs, taking advantage of the enemy's panic, advanced as far as an enclosure near the banks of the Ebro, where they captured a battery of four guns positioned near a mill; but a very heavy fire was directed at them from the quay on the right bank, forcing them to retreat. Colonel Dode of the Engineers ordered the fortification of the Convent of Jesus, which was no more than thirty meters from the suburb. He also began work on a communication trench to reach the convent, but the intensity of the enemy fire forced the postponement of this work until nightfall. Ninety men, including two sappers, were put out of action.

42nd NIGHT, of 8 to 9 February.

Attack on the right. A 12-pounder was positioned at a cross street on Calle Quemada to enfilade the street and reach the enemy in the Plaza de La Magdalena. We barricaded ourselves in the houses captured during the day and established communications. In the morning, a Spaniard was audacious enough to venture as far as Calle del Medio and throw grenades into our positions; he was killed there.

Attack on the center. We continued to improve communications to the right of Calle Santa Engracia. The wool bales used at the Puerta del Carmen were replaced with gabions; these bales were moved to Calle des Munitions for reuse.

Attack on the suburb. A zigzag communication was established from the right half of the parade ground to the Convent of Jesus.

DAY of 9 February.

Attack on the right. The idea of crossing the Coso River opposite the seminary was abandoned as it was too perilous. Instead, the troops focused on improving the position established in the ruins at the tip of Calle del Medio, overlooking the promenade, and reinforced this position with four or five houses, which were then taken to the left. The enemy, fearing significant progress in this direction, set fire to the neighboring houses to create a barrier of flames. It was then that all our means of attack were directed to the right, according to the initial idea of General Lacoste, in order to extend our advance to the Ebro, where it was important to establish a foothold, to place our routes under the protection of the batteries on the left bank, and to link the attack on the right to that of the suburb, thus depriving the enemy of any means of counter-offensives through the Tanneries suburb.

We seized the rest of the island bordering the Coso River, between San-Agustín and Alcober Streets, without much resistance. The Spanish set a rather heavy fire on the University building opposite, wounding several of our men. We immediately began digging two tunnels in the island's cellars, thirty meters apart, to reach the main University building by passing under the Coso. We continued to advance on the island between Barrioverde and Arcades Streets, moving up towards Alcober Street; the enemy halted us again by setting fire to several houses. The small triangular island bordered by Barrioverde and Oletta Streets, having lost all communication due to our advance, was abandoned to us by the besieged.

Attack on the center. Opposite the small street leading to the Coso, facing the Calle del Refugio, we recaptured the house on the right, which had been evacuated the previous day. We tried to advance further but were prevented by enemy grenades and shells. We even had great difficulty repairing the damage caused by these projectiles in the houses we occupied. We began two more tunnels to finish destroying the large white house that separated us from the Coso. At the general hospital, our miners again took up positions in the cellars, from where they directed a tunnel under the Calle Santa Engracia, to try once more to open the Convent of Saint Francis by mining. To the left of this street, preparations were made to advance beyond the Calle des Munitions.

Attack on the suburb. We improved the communication established on the right, behind the Convent of Jesus.

However, as discouragement and despondency were rapidly spreading through the city, Palafox, in order to bolster the courage of the inhabitants, addressed them with a new proclamation¹.

43rd NIGHT, of 9 to 10 February.

Attack on the right. The door of a house located beyond Alcober Street and at the corner of the Coso was blown up; the enemy was forced to evacuate the house and a passageway adjoining it. A passageway was also constructed at the junction of Barrioverde and Oletta Streets to allow cover from the fire on Arcade Street and to provide free access to the block of houses between San-Agustín and Alcober Streets, where our miners were pushing their tunnels under the Coso to blow up the University.

Attack on the center. On the right side of Santa Engracia Street, mining operations and the construction of quarters in the houses continued.

On the left side of this street, the traverse of Munitions Street was extended by means of a standing cut to the wall of a garden six meters from a long building adjoining the Convent of Saint Francis. Throughout the night, the enemy disrupted this work with hand-thrown grenades and shells.

Attack on the suburb. A section of the third parallel was opened on the right to return fire from the suburb; and a second communication trench was opened on the left with the Convent of Jesus. The artillery began, at the far end of the right-hand parade ground, a new battery, No. 26, consisting of two 12-pounder guns and two 6-inch howitzers, to protect the routes and counter-battery the head of the suburb.

DAY of 10 February.

Attack on the right. We attempted to advance on the island between Alcober and Algeciras streets, aiming to reach the island on the other side of the latter street, in order to penetrate a traverse the enemy occupied on the Coso River in front of the Puerta del Sol. This traverse was

¹ See supporting documents, no. 30.

armed with cannons and flanked the University building. Despite our best efforts, we were unable to reach Algeciras Street, as the Spanish offered fierce resistance.

On the Barrioverde Street side, we made more progress on the island between Alcober and Arcades Streets, and the enemy abandoned the traverse they held on the latter street.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the two mines intended to blow up the University were ready to be detonated. Before setting them alight, they wanted to get rid of the large traverse of the Puerta del Sol, which flanked the building.

Attack on the center. They held their ground in the houses facing the small alley that leads to the Coso, to the right of the large white house. At noon, they loaded each of the two explosive mines located under this house, which they had already attacked on 8 February, with eight hundred pounds of gunpowder. At three o'clock, they set fire to one of these mines; a battalion of the One hundred fifteenth launched an assault and took up positions in the rubble. The enemy bombarded us with grenades and shells thrown by hand; they also had cannons on the other side of the Coso, which fired grapeshot and cannonballs incessantly. However, we managed to hold our ground without having to use the second mine. We even crossed the small alley to the right and seized the entire adjoining island. Nightfall prevented us from advancing further.

We had about forty men out of action. Captain Jencesse of the engineers, while assaulting the main house, had his thigh broken by a bullet and died from it.

To the left of Santa Engracia Street, the Convent of Saint Francis was attacked at the same time. Our miners, starting from the cellars of the general hospital, were to advance under Santa Engracia Street to the bell tower, so that its collapse would crush the church and the convent. But early in the morning, the enemy miner, having positioned himself four meters behind our gallery entrance, prompted us to hasten the construction of a three-thousand-pound powder keg, which was ignited at three o'clock in the afternoon. The explosion, which was terrible, blew up part of the convent near the main entrance and the lower cloister; the bell tower remained standing. A large number of inhabitants, who were working in the convent at the time under the direction of their mayors, and a company of the Valence Regiment, were buried under the rubble; the surrounding area was littered with corpses and scattered limbs. Seven hundred men of the One Hundred Fifteenth Regiment, under the command of Colonel Dupeyroux, were waiting behind the Calle des Munitions for the moment to launch the assault. They emerged from the Santa-Engracia Street, covered by an abandoned traverse, and entered through the breach. Colonel Dupeyroux led two companies, commanded by Captain Platel, to the left to seize the large building extending towards Munitions Street; then, with the rest of his troops, he attacked the convent and occupied it despite the enemy's stubborn resistance and the fire of a cannon positioned at the entrance to Cinegia Street on the other side of the Coso River. Commander Freytag even entered the church; but the Spaniards remained in the interior galleries, climbed onto the vaults, pierced them, and unleashed a hail of grenades and shells upon our troops, forcing them to retreat. We then entrenched ourselves in the convent to prevent the enemy from returning. The ends of the corridors leading to the church were blocked off with sandbags, and we established ourselves in several houses to the left of the large refectory². In

² See supporting documents, no. 31

this assault, we had twenty-eight men out of action, including six sappers. Captain Virvaux of the engineers was killed in the standing sap on the Street des Munitions. As the fighting dragged on, the Spanish feared we would penetrate the city. They sounded a general attack, and their cavalry formed up on the Coso and in the New Market Place (now Plaza del Mercado Central).

44th NIGHT, of 10 to 11 February.

Attack on the right. The barricades and communications in the occupied houses were improved.

Attack on the center. To the right of Santa Engracia Street, a firm foothold was established on the island captured during the day, and the miner was tied up beneath the last house that had not yet been taken.

The entrenchment continued in the Convent of Saint Francis. Two approaches were made to reach it: one on the left, through Munitions Street; the other on the right, in Santa Engracia Street, behind the enemy traverse that had served as cover when we launched the assault.

Attack on the suburb. The third parallel was extended to the right beyond the Barcelona Road. The left flank communication behind the Convent of Jesus was completed, despite the large number of ruined walls covering the ground. A Swiss officer deserted the position with forty-three men, after informing us of his plan.

The artillery began firing two new batteries:

No. 27, with six eight-inch mortars, to bombard the suburb.

No. 28, with five 12-pounders, two eight-inch howitzers, and four six-inch howitzers, to counter-batter the quay on the right bank.

DAY of 11 February.

Attack on the right. The enemy abandoned the last houses they occupied on the island between Alcober and Algeciras Streets. The island between the latter street and Arcades Street still needed to be captured in order to outflank the enemy traverse that flanked the University. But we were only able to take one house on the island, crossing Oletta Street and entering through two open doorways. We began a traverse in the street to reach this house. We had several men out of action; one sapper was killed, another was wounded.

Attack on the center. We crossed Calle de Zurradores, supporting ourselves on the right and left with sandbags, and took up positions on the other side in five houses, but without yet being able to see the Coso River. Starting from the island to the left of Zurradores Street, we began two attacks under the Coso River to blow up the houses on the other side of this promenade. Captain Vallantin of the engineers was wounded. One sapper was killed and another wounded.

To the left of Santa Engracia Street, we occupied the churches of Saint Francis and San Diego. Major Breuille of the engineers detonated a mine on the left side of the last church to isolate it

from the houses occupied by the enemy; but the explosion was incomplete. A sapper sergeant was killed.

Attack on the suburb. There was only mortar fire.

45th NIGHT, of 11 to 12 February.

Attack on the right. We advanced into the block of houses between Algeciras Street and Arcades Street. The enemy offered fierce resistance to our progress in order to hold the Coso traverse, which flanked the University. A few men managed to reach the house on the left side of this traverse after setting off an explosive under one of the doors; but the enemy forced them to withdraw. We then started a mine in a nearby cellar to blow up the house. Two sappers were wounded. We established ourselves in the houses we had just captured and improved the traverse on Oletta Street that connected to them.

The First Division suffered four killed and six wounded within twenty-four hours.

Attack on the center. We entrenched the houses captured to the right of Zurradores Street.

To the left of Santa Engracia Street, a second blast was started, completely isolating us from the houses occupied by the enemy on our left. We entrenched ourselves in the Church of Saint Francis, blocking the doors and breaches with sandbags.

Within twenty-four hours, we suffered thirteen dead and fifty-one wounded.

Attack on the suburb. The third parallel was extended to the Ebro River, against which, at daybreak, the enemy directed a most intense fire from their batteries on the right bank.

The artillery began firing two new batteries:

No. 29, with eight 24-pounder guns, to breach the convents of Saint Lazarus and Saint Elizabeth, which defended the entrance to the bridge.

No. 30, consisting of five 12-pounder cannons and four 6-inch howitzers, was intended to destroy the defenses of the suburb and the city.

DAY of 12 February.

Attack on the right. We continued our advance into the island between Algeciras and Arcades streets; and around noon, we reached the party wall of the last house against which the Coso crossing was abutted. We placed a barrel of gunpowder on the first floor of this house to breach the wall. The explosion had more effect than we had hoped, especially on the house we occupied, which was completely destroyed. The enemy's house, although damaged, was isolated, and, its approaches being covered by the houses of Arcades Street, it was not deemed necessary to attack it again: the Spaniards thus remained masters of their crossing. Nevertheless, we decided to attack the University building. Consequently, the prepared mines under the

building, each loaded with five hundred pounds of gunpowder, were lit. However, as the branches had not been carried far enough by the mining officer, the craters formed in the street, and the building's walls were only cracked. Meanwhile, two columns were assembled for the attack: the right-hand column, composed of part of the Third Vistula under Colonel Estko, advanced too hastily at the moment of the explosion, when the smoke and dust still obscured everything. The Poles, finding no breach, advanced in the open along part of the Coso, where they encountered grapeshot from the enemy traverse flanking the building, as well as gunfire from the houses. They returned via Calle de San Agustín, having suffered nine dead and twenty-nine wounded, including two officers. Three sappers were also wounded. Battalion Commander Haxo of the engineers, who was leading the left column, believing he could break through, had a gate opened onto the Coso; but he halted his column when he saw there was no breach. To compensate for the mine's failure, a 12-pounder gun was placed in Alcober Street, opposite the University, intended to breach the building. A howitzer was also moved to the entrance of Quemada Street, to better discover the extension of the Coso. Artillery Lieutenant Vecten was killed while directing the construction of a ramp for this howitzer.

Attack on the center. We were unable to gain anything on our right flank in the block of houses between Zurradores and Santa Catalina Streets, the enemy putting up the fiercest resistance. We seized a house that remained to the left of the large white house taken on 10 February, and we completed our quarters in the ruins of the general hospital, so as to control the entire Coso district up to Santa Engracia Street. To the left of this street, we captured the two outer galleries of the Church of Saint Francis that lead to the bell tower.

Attack on the suburb. The third parallel was reinforced.

46th NIGHT, of 12 to 13 February.

Attack on the right. A fairly wide breach was opened at the University by the 12-pounder we had in Alcober Street; but, as this breach led into the lower part of an amphitheater, all of whose exits were barricaded and crenellated to prevent our advance, we were forced to abandon it. We then began laying two new mines to blow up the church. Major Breuille of the engineering corps, who was in charge of the central mines, was tasked with directing this work and that of all the mines subsequently dug for the right flank attack. Work was also carried out on the communications for the howitzer battery, positioned at the head of Rue Quemada, to enfilade the right flank of the Coso.

Our losses in the last twenty-four hours amounted to thirteen men killed and thirty-two wounded.

Attack on the center. An armored communication trench was established to attack a house overlooking the Coso River, on the island we partially occupied beyond Zurradores Street.

The enemy exposed the right-hand branch, which led to the Coso, between Refugio and San Christobal Streets, and forced our miners to abandon it by throwing grenades. They soon returned and set off a blasting furnace that crushed the remaining enemy within range.

To the left of Santa Engracia Street, an artillery communication trench was opened through the houses, from Santa Engracia Square to the Convent of San Francisco, and the convent's openings continued to be sealed with sandbags.

Our losses in the past twenty-four hours amounted to six men killed, including one officer, and four wounded.

Attack on the suburb. At the far right of the third parallel, a flanking maneuver was executed to provide cover from sorties from the suburb and from the enemy positions held eight hundred meters ahead on the Villanova road. A communication trench was opened to the right of the Convent of Jesus to serve as a parade ground, allowing access to the suburb during the assault. Sections of trenches were also dug for the same purpose along the convent walls on the quayside, and in the small courtyard of the church.

The artillery began work on two new batteries:

No. 31, with two 24-pounders and four 16-pounders, to breach the Convent of Saint Lazarus and the adjacent buildings.

No. 32, four six-inch mortars, to reach the enemy behind their entrenchments.

At that time, reports from General Wattier, who occupied Alcañiz and Caspe, and those from General Suchet, who was observing from the left bank of the Ebro, announced that the two Palafox brothers, Don Francisco and the Marquis of Lazan, had assembled a force of ten to fifteen thousand well-armed men at Mequinenza and Lleida, both regular troops and peasants, to lift the siege of Zaragoza. The vanguard of this army was at Fraga and was to begin its advance on the 13th. Its outposts had already approached the city and were communicating with the garrison by signals. Reding, who was near Tarragona at the head of thirty to forty thousand men, was maneuvering to cut off General Gouvion Saint-Cyr's army from Barcelona, and also intended, after defeating it, to march to the relief of Zaragoza. Marshal Lannes decided to advance in that direction to reconnoiter the Palafox brothers' army and disperse it. He left only one of the two brigades of Gazan's division before the suburb, and he set out on February 13th with the remainder of the Fifth Corps and the Thirteenth Cuirassier Regiment. Having learned en route that the enemy was moving towards Huesca, he returned to Villamayor, where he remained on observation duty³.

The city was still the scene of fierce fighting. A continuous bombardment, the explosions of mines, the collapse of buildings, the cries of the combatants, and the gunfire engaged on all sides filled the air with a dreadful noise, while clouds of dust and smoke hung over the heads of the combatants. The epidemic was taking an ever-increasing toll, and the garrison had been reduced by almost half. Palafox tried to revive the courage of the besieged by announcing the arrival of reinforcements. He congratulated the defenders of the University and the Puerta del Sol for their valiant resistance⁴. On the other hand, our troops were beginning to be discouraged by the constantly recurring obstacles they had to overcome; they were exhausted, and all these deadly

³ See supporting documents, nos. 32 and 33.

⁴ See supporting documents, no. 34.

battles, hand-to-hand combat so to speak, in which we were losing our officers, sappers, miners, and bravest soldiers daily, without making any significant progress, were spreading discouragement throughout the army. *"Has anyone ever seen,"* people were saying in the camps, *"an army of twenty thousand men besiege one of fifty thousand? We only control a quarter of the city, and already we are exhausted. We must wait for reinforcements, otherwise we will all perish; and these cursed ruins will become our tombs before we can force the last of these fanatics into their final retreat."* Marshal Lannes tried to revive the army's morale: he explained to the officers that the enemy was losing far more men than we were in this type of warfare; that, having exhausted their forces through the stubborn defense of their front lines, they would no longer offer us the same resistance in the future; and that, finally, if these fanatics, repeating the example of the Numantines, tried to bury themselves under the ruins of their city, our bombs, our mines, and disease would soon destroy them all to the last man. Indeed, a great number of inhabitants were perishing daily; the houses and courtyards we captured were so cluttered with corpses that it seemed we were fighting for nothing more than a cemetery.

Meanwhile, Marshal Lannes received a letter from the Major General announcing reinforcements and supplies⁵.

DAY of 13 February.

Attack on the right. On the right side of Algeciras Street, we advanced as far as Arcades Street, and the enemy was forced to abandon a crosswalk made of wool sacks that they had constructed in this latter street. We again tried in vain to penetrate the house that abutted the Coso crosswalk. The explosion that had occurred the previous day had completely isolated it from the Algeciras Street side; and it was also isolated, by its construction, from the Arcades Street side.

Attack on the center. We made our way with difficulty through the island of houses overlooking the Coso River between Zurradores and Santa Catalina Streets, the Spanish having set fire to the houses that, since the previous day, they had been contesting with us on this island. We attacked a large house at the corner of the Coso and Zurradores streets by sapping, and we entered it, as well as the neighboring house to the right, despite the fire in the adjacent houses.

The communication trenches begun for the artillery through the houses on the left side of Santa Engracia Street were completed. We finished establishing ourselves in the upper galleries of the convent church and in the bell tower. Our troops entered several chapels on the right and the mansion of Count of Sástago, which overlooks the Coso; but several floors had collapsed, and they did not deem it prudent to remain there. Our sappers began to cut a door in the church wall to provide direct access to the church. The miners opened a tunnel in the convent, near the station hall, to completely dislodge the enemy from the houses they occupied on our left. We had several men put out of action, including two sappers.

47th NIGHT, of 13 to 14 February.

Attack on the right. A branch line was pushed under the Arcade Street, between Oletta Street and the Coso, to occupy the houses at the head of the street, near the Puerta del Sol, and thus take

⁵ See supporting documents, no. 35.

the traverse flanking the University from the rear. A six-inch mortar was placed in a small courtyard on the island we occupied, to harass the enemy behind the traverse and in the part of the Coso extending to the Puerta del Sol.

Attack on the center. We established ourselves in the two houses captured during the day on the right side of Zurradores Street. A 12-pounder cannon, a six-inch howitzer, and an eight-inch mortar were positioned in the ruins of the general hospital to breach the buildings opposite on the Coso River; the howitzer was placed under armor plating.

Our sappers continued breaching the doorway that was to connect the Church of Saint Francis to the side chapels and the palace of Count of Sástago, which overlooked the Coso. Wooden shields were made to cover, day and night, the main passage prepared for the arrival of artillery at the convent. The bell tower staircase having been restored, we occupied it, which proved very useful for observing the enemy and plunging them into the houses they occupied on the Coso.

Attack on the suburb. The artillery continued to work on the new batteries. Construction of the trenches was suspended due to a lack of men, as Marshal Lannes had taken two regiments of the Gazan Division to Villamayor.

DAY of 14 February.

Attack on the right. At noon, the explosive mine prepared under the Calles del Arcades was ignited to breach the block of houses located on the right side of that street. The explosion created a wide opening through which our troops entered, after crossing the street, despite very heavy musket fire from a traverse established at the entrance to the Coso. A caponier was constructed in the street and quickly executed. All the houses to the right of the one we had just taken had been evacuated by the enemy, who no longer had easy access due to the large wall of the old city enclosure against which these houses abutted. But on the left, a very thick, intact partition wall prevented us from advancing towards the Puerta del Sol. At four o'clock, the enemy, master of the Tanneries Suburb, scaled the old city wall with ladders, which separated them from us on the Calles del Arcades side, and reappeared in the houses built against this wall, which they had evacuated the day before, and which we were poorly defending, not thinking they would return. It took further efforts to drive them out: Captain Daguene of the engineers was seriously wounded.

The new mines prepared under the University were ready; but before setting them alight, we wanted to seize the traverse that flanked this building.

Attack on the center. We took two houses on the Coso, to the right of Zurradores Street; the enemy had set them on fire, as well as the adjoining house that separated us from Santa Catalina Street. Efforts were made to extinguish the fire.

On the left side of Santa Engracia Street, the opening of the connecting door from the Church of Saint Francis to the chapels and the Count of Sástago's residence was completed. We took up quarters in this residence, and from the right-hand side, which overlooked the Coso River, we began firing. However, the enemy responded with cannon fire from behind a distant traverse, so

we ceased fire because the building was not sturdy, and we wanted to maintain this important observation point, the only one we had in front of the Church of Saint Francis.

48th NIGHT, of 14 to 15 February.

Attack on the right. We finished retaking the houses we had lost in the evening to the right of Arcade Street. Further attempts were made, but without success, to seize the house against which the Coso traverse, flanking the University, was built.

Attack on the center. The miners of one of the tunnels leading under the Coso, near the opening of Zurradores Street, noticed towards evening that the enemy was countermining to reach them. They immediately set up a two-hundred-pound powder keg at the end of their tunnel, which they ignited at midnight. The explosion created a considerable crater on the Coso and demolished part of the theater, which was located opposite. To bombard this building, an 8-pounder cannon and a 6-inch howitzer were brought in during the night and positioned under two carriage entrances opening onto the Coso.

To the left of Santa Engracia Street, the communication between the Church of Saint Francis and the chapels and the Palacio de Sástago was improved.

Our losses in the last twenty-four hours amounted to six men killed, including a sapper and a gunner, and fifteen wounded.

DAY of 15 February.

Attack on the right. The miner was quartered in a cellar on Algeciras Street to blow up the house against which the Coso traverse abutted, flanking the University building; but, as the distance to be covered was quite great, a quick result could not be expected. The explosive mine that, the day before, had opened the house through which we had entered the right-hand row of Arcade Street, had removed the floors. Now, the tower of the old city wall against which this house leaned presented a high and very solid escarpment, blocking the passage to the Puerta del Sol. At first, it was thought possible to bypass this obstacle by opening a new passage under the Calle del Arcades; but, as the only house on the left side of this street, from which they could have started, had been set on fire, it was necessary to abandon this plan for the time being. Then, they approached the tower using some beams from the second-story floor of the adjoining house, which were still resting against it, and began to break through the masonry, which was thick and very solid. The uncertainty of success, and especially the time this work would require, led them to proceed to the right, outside the old city wall, into the suburb of the Tanneries. To this end, we resumed work on a mine gallery previously begun in the Augustinian convent, in order to reach, beneath Mayor Street, the house located opposite at the entrance to that street.

We had one sapper killed and five men wounded.

Attack on the center. Despite the fire and the destruction, we managed to take shelter in the house located at the corner of the Coso and Santa Catalina streets; but we had not yet been able

to cross this street where the enemy was bombarding us with incendiary materials. A sapper was wounded there.

To the left of Santa-Engracia Street, two explosive mines were set in motion to isolate the left side of the San Francisco convent from the neighboring houses. The explosion had a significant impact and even destroyed sections of the convent walls.

No. 30

Palafax's Proclamation to the Inhabitants of Zaragoza.

At Zaragoza Headquarters, 10 February 1809.

Your country calls to you, sons of Zaragoza. We fear losing the divine protection of our most holy patroness and mother: her temple is in peril. Your precious lives, those of your wives and children, your homes, depend on your courage and valor. What is our obligation? What are our duties? Is it to allow what we hold most dear in life to be snatched from our hands to heed the most insidious intrigue that leads us to cowardice, or to resolve to defend our property? People of Zaragoza, reflect; question yourselves, listen to no one, consult only your heart and your obligations. If you so desire, you need no help to conquer. Go up to the towers, look, count the number of enemies besieging us, and you will see that it is a shame to find ourselves oppressed by so few. You will then know that you are being deceived. Therefore, be the true sons of Pilar. If you believe that I lack the energy to bear the high office and the burden you have entrusted to my care, cast that error far from you. Know that I am lenient with you because I love you. Believe that I am steadfast, and that the mere fact of being a son of Zaragoza inspires and inflames my courage to the extreme. I swear to you that I will never be a slave, and that I will never serve any other king than my rightful sovereign, Ferdinand VII, and my country. It is for these reasons that you have dragged me from my retreat to defend the city and the province. I gladly accepted this heavy burden, trusting in your valor; but if you abandon me now in this critical moment, the world will blame you. It knows that I have omitted nothing, and that I will omit nothing, to preserve the freedom of the city and your families, worthy of a better fate than that which seduction and cowardice have in store for them. Be assured that valor is necessary to hasten the arrival of reinforcements. We must make a vigorous effort to assist their arrival; for if we appear complacent, the enemy's intrigues may lead them to believe we are afraid and thus render your zeal useless and destroy us. Let every true patriot and true Spaniard present themselves with their weapons. Let the soldiers be at their posts, and the inhabitants in their designated places, as they did during the last siege. If you have courage, in a few moments your enemies will be confounded, the intrigue thwarted, and the oath of the Aragonese to the holy temple of El Pilar will be fulfilled, an oath that fear must not profane. The city will be free from the shameful slavery into which some domestic enemies seek to drag it, enemies whom God himself will expose and punish, as he has already done on occasion. I know full well that these men will work with you, and that you will hear their timid cries, those cries that caused you to scandalously abandon your posts. But he who fails to come forward to defend the homeland will be unworthy of it and will rightly deserve the scorn of his fellow citizens. I will no longer regard him as a son of Zaragoza. I am certain that our most holy Mother del Pilar will cease to protect him and will not allow him to share in the immense sums that our brothers in America are preparing for us, sums they are offering to repair the public and private losses of this city, the object of universal admiration. He will bear the mark of contempt on his brow and will become infamous in the eyes of God and men.

Signed: PALAFOX.



No. 31

*Second Division of the Third Corps. -- Report of 10
to 11 February 1809.*

The day of the 10th was one of the most exciting and brilliant days of the siege for our troops. Around two hours afternoon, the engineering commander was forced to blow up the mine at the San Francisco convent, even though it had not yet reached its intended target because the enemy had pushed one that had already passed the tip of ours and forced us to abandon two branches. I then deployed the One Hundred Fifteenth Regiment for the attack on this convent and for that of a small island of houses to the right, which was to be blown up simultaneously.

Immediately after the explosion, a company of grenadiers and a company of voltigeurs advanced on the convent, and despite the few openings they found to enter, and the enemy's resistance, they managed to establish themselves in a large corridor. From there, advancing with bayonets fixed, along with two other companies, they successively drove the enemy from the cloister, the church, and the entire convent.

Our troops displayed great courage on this occasion; for, while the enemy opposed them with trenches defended by very heavy fusillade, they launched grenades and shells at them through openings made in the upper floors.

They offered no less stubborn resistance in the defense of the houses on the right, against which, in addition to extremely heavy gunfire, they ceaselessly hurled shells and grenades. But after an action lasting more than three hours, we first captured a large house, and then an entire island facing the Coso River.

Our losses amount to approximately thirteen men killed and fifty wounded. Among the latter are, unfortunately, four highly meritorious officers whose wounds are very serious: Grenadier Captains Charpin and Platel, grenadier Lieutenant Portais, and voltigeur Lieutenant Parès, both of whom commanded their companies.

Colonel Dupeyroux, of the One Hundred Fifteenth Regiment, distinguished himself by his remarkable composure. I request Your Excellency to request for him the rank of Officer of the Legion of Honor, and the Legion of Honor decoration for grenadier Captain Platel and voltigeur Lieutenant Parès, who were wounded. To Lieutenant Cébron of the grenadiers, who distinguished himself in the right flank attack, and to Captain Schneider, my aide-de-camp, who supported Colonel Dupeyroux with great courage and intelligence in the attack on the convent.

Brigadier General Razout directed the right flank attack, while I commanded the left.

The engineering officers displayed their customary valor and intelligence today.

The Major General,

Signed: MUSNIER.

P.S. Last night, the enemy having found a way to breach the nave of the church and to hurl shells and grenades into it, our troops were forced to evacuate; but they have entrenched the ends of the connecting corridors with sandbags and are firmly entrenched in the convent.



No. 32

*Letter from Marshal Lannes to the Duke of Abrantès,
Commander of the Third Corps.*

At headquarters in Les Écluses, 12 February.

The reports of General Wattier are confirmed, Your Grace. Adjutant Commander Fabre, whom I sent to Paniza at the head of eight hundred infantrymen and fifty cavalrymen, writes to me that a large force has left there for Mequinenza, where it is to join the troops commanded by the Palafox brothers.

I am leaving tomorrow with part of the Fifth Corps to meet the enemy. I am leaving the Thirty-fourth Regiment at your disposal; it has four battalions and has replaced the Fortieth in its positions.

I am taking only the four grenadier companies with me. Adjutant-Major Fabre has orders, should he find no assembly, to return with the four companies of voltigeurs of the Thirty-fourth.

Should you have any interesting news, please let me know; I will be at Pina or Mequinenza.

I am taking the cuirassier regiment with me. I am leaving one of my Aides-de-camp here: he will deliver all letters and reports addressed to me.

During my absence, please keep an eye on General Gazan's position to ensure that the work I ordered is proceeding actively, so that upon my return I will find everything ready for the attack on the suburb. I am instructing the commanders of the engineers and artillery to take your orders.

Please accept, Your Grace, the assurance of my devotion,

Signed: LANNES.



No. 33

*Letter from Marshal Lannes to the Duke of Abrantès,
Commander of the Third Corps.*

At headquarters in Villafranca, 14 February 1809.

It appears, Your Grace, that the enemy has left Mequinenza via Barbastro and is heading from there towards Leciñena.

I am returning with the troops to Villamajor, where we will await them, and I hope that if they have the audacity to appear, not a single one will escape everything is arranged accordingly.

Give orders to ensure that as few men as possible are lost in Zaragoza. I do not want a single house taken by storm: let it be blown up by mines or explosives.

It is a safe bet that when the suburb is taken, and we have defeated this rabble coming from that direction, the city will surrender.

Let the construction of large explosive mines continue, let the mine proceed at its pace; it's the surest way to terrorize them.

Send me any news you receive from General Wattier.

I will remain at Villamajor until all this is finished. I will go to the Swiss convent every day to expedite the work and to have the suburb attacked as soon as possible.

Please accept, Your Grace, the assurance of my devotion.

Signed: LANNES.

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No. 34

*Proclamation of Palafox to the inhabitants of Zaragoza.*

At Zaragoza Headquarters, 13 February 1809.

My dear compatriots, yesterday you fulfilled the duties of true sons of Zaragoza. Those who were at the Puerta del Sol and the Plaza de la Magdalena satisfied the obligations of good citizens; they earned my esteem, and they made themselves worthy of receiving the prize for courage and patriotism. It is right that I give you all the badge of honor and the means to support your wives, sons, and families. This new proof that you are receiving in recognition of your efforts should serve to encourage your fellow citizens and to awaken those whom treason and perfidy have plunged into a deep sleep. You have arrived at the most opportune moment to escape the state of oppression in which you find yourselves. You have seen the movement the enemy made today. No doubt, having learned that reinforcements are arriving, he hastened to meet them. We must help our brothers, and how easy it is, the enemy having left so few forces on their line! We can seize their artillery, destroy their fortifications, and emerge from our current state of apathy! At the sound of the bell, we will assemble and take advantage of the most opportune moment of the day to carry out our undertaking. Be assured that if you gather in great numbers, the Virgin of the Pilar, our patron saint, will grant us every kind of blessing!

*Signed:* PALAFOX.

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No. 35

*Letter from Prince Berthier, Major General, to Marshal
Lannes, Duke of Montebello.*

Paris, 10 February 1809.

The Emperor, Duke of Montebello, received your letters of the 30th. We sincerely regret the loss of the brave and excellent General Lacoste: it is a true loss. H.M. strongly approves of the plan to advance slowly and methodically on Zaragoza, employing bombs, cannon, and especially mines, which have a terrible effect on the besieged and preserve the besieger's troops.

I have just given orders for the pay for December 1808, January, and February 1809 to be adjusted. I have just placed at the disposal of the artillery commander 60,000 francs, the same sum at the disposal of the engineering commander, and finally 80,000 francs at the disposal of the quartermaster, to be used, according to your orders, for the most pressing needs of your army's administrative services.

I order Marshal Kellermann to stop the medical officers arriving in Bayonne and send them to Pamplona for the siege of Zaragoza. I have also ordered the Duke of Valmy to send to Pamplona eight hundred thousand rations of biscuit and one hundred thousand kilograms of gunpowder.

I have informed General Bisson of the Emperor's displeasure with the lack of activity of the Navarre government. His Majesty orders that you place General Bisson at the head of this government and that he run the administration in such a way that its sole purpose is to supply your army. Navarre has grain and sheep; everything must be used up.

The fortress of Ferrol has capitulated. We found twelve Spanish ships there, both armed and equipped. La Romana is fleeing to Andalusia with the six hundred men remaining on him.

I am giving orders to the three commanders of Biscay to direct all conscripts and isolated veterans belonging to the regiments of the Third and Fifth Corps to Zaragoza, where each will return to his unit.

Signed: ALEXANDRE.