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Volume 2 Part 13

SECOND SIEGE OF ZARAGOZA,

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

49th NIGHT, of 15 to 16 February.

Attack on the right. The sappers continued their work. A new attack was attempted, without success, against the house located at the corner of the Coso and the Calle Arcadas, where the traverse flanking the University was situated. The howitzer from the Calle Agustines was then brought to the Street of the Arcades to fire on the enemy at the point where this street opened onto the Coso.

Our losses during the twenty-four hours were two men killed and four wounded.

Attack on the centre. In the houses on the Coso, to the right of the Calle Santa-Engracia, a fortified battery of two howitzers was begun, intended to enfilade the Calle San Gil, which led to the bridge, and thus harass the enemy in the very heart of the city. A tunnel was pushed under the Calle Santa-Catalina to reach the other side of the palace of the Count of Aranda, located on the Coso, which, flanked by two towers, had been transformed by the besieged into a veritable citadel.

To the left of the Santa-Engracia Street, a position had been established on the Coso in front of the gate of the Church of San Francisco; a fortified shelter was begun there for a 12-pounder cannon and a howitzer, in order to enfilade this promenade on the front of our center attack. A deserter from the Walloon Guards was received at our outposts.

Our losses during the twenty-four hours were three men killed and six wounded.

DAY of 16 February.

Attack on the right. The breaching of the tower of the old city wall to the right of the Calle Arcadas continued, in order to advance towards the Puerta del Sol. Lieutenant Montauban of the engineers was wounded while directing this work. At three o'clock, the mine prepared under the house on the Mayor Street, in the Tanneries suburb, opposite the Augustinian convent, was detonated. But the branch tunnel proved to be more than four feet too short, so the mine exploded in the street, and the house remained intact. Battery No. 14 maintained a sustained fire

all day on the enemy's positions along the Ebro River. It destroyed the houses in the Tanneries suburb and breached the fortifications covering that suburb.

Attack on the center. During the night, the enemy had advanced under Santa Catalina Street to meet our sappers. At nine o'clock in the morning, we saw light in their tunnel through a crack in the wall of the cellar where we had entered the gallery. We only had time to place fifteen pounds of gunpowder and a large bomb to detonate it. Then our sappers bypassed them by digging a new gallery under the Coso, which, by turning to the right, reached the palace of the Count of Aranda.

To the left of Calle Santa-Engracia, the fortification of the battery, begun in front of the church of Saint Francis, was completed in order to command the Coso; but only one howitzer could be placed there. The church wall was breached to the left of this door to provide access to the Fuentes palace, which overlooked the Coso.

50th NIGHT, of 16 to 17 February.

Attack on the right. An 8-pounder cannon was placed in the courtyard of the Augustinian convent and fired against the house on Mayor Street, which the mine had failed to blow up the previous day. This house was soon breached; but we could not occupy it, as the floors and roofs had collapsed. It was then decided to bypass it; and, to this end, a double caponier descent was constructed, starting from the Saint Augustine convent and extending through the thickness of the parapet of a battery that blocked the entrance to Mayor Street, and which had been abandoned by the enemy during the capture of the convent. This allowed access to the foot of the courtyard wall, behind this house.

Work had been underway for two days on the mining gallery undertaken to blow up the house on the Coso where the traverse supporting the University building was located; but unfortunately, the miner encountered ground saturated with water from a cesspool, and the seepage became so abundant that he had to abandon this gallery. It was then decided to use cannon fire, and for this purpose, a route was opened from Barrioverde Street through the houses to bring a cannon into position.

Attack on the center. Our miners occupied the branch tunnel dug by the enemy under Santa-Catalina Street, and placed an explosive charge there, which the Spaniards attempted to neutralize by detonating a bomb. To secure our passage between Zurradores and Santa Catalina streets, we attacked houses in the gardens behind us; however, the resistance we encountered prevented us from occupying them.

To the left of Santa Engracia Street, work continued on the communication trench begun at the Fuentes Palace complex. The walls concealing the battery intended to enfilade the Coso were demolished.

DAY of 17 February.

Attack on the right. In the morning, we penetrated, not without difficulty, into the courtyard of the house located at the entrance to Mayor Street, in the Tanneries district, and took shelter under a shed where we had great difficulty maintaining our position. We had twenty men put out of action. We attempted to turn against the enemy a breach that had been made in Mayor Street between the Augustinian convent and the house that had been breached the previous day; but the Spaniards opened such heavy fire from the two guns of a battery they had at the foot of the Torre del Sol that we were forced to postpone this operation. Six sappers were wounded.

The work begun during the night to bring up the cannon, in order to bombard the house on Arcades Street that served as a strongpoint for the Coso barricade, was completed early. The 8-pounder, which had breached the house on Mayor Street, was brought into the courtyard we occupied, which was separated only by a wall from the courtyard of the house we intended to attack. An opening was made in this wall to pass the muzzle of the cannon; and after each shot, while reloading, this opening was closed with a sack of wool. Our cannonballs passed through the house from one side to the other; nevertheless, the Spaniards did not evacuate it. They retreated to the upper floor and the staircase, which were out of the line of fire, a shed in the courtyard preventing us from bombarding the entire front of the house. However, our cannon having made a breach that we could reach through the courtyard of a house on Calle Algeciras, fifteen Poles volunteered to assault it; but they were met with such a hail of grenades and bullets that, despite the encouragement of the battalion commander of engineers, Valazé, they could not bring themselves to enter.

Attack on the center. Several attempts were made, but always unsuccessfully, to attack the houses located behind us on the island, the head of which we occupied on the Coso, between Zurradores and Santa-Catalina streets. The sappers continued their work under the Coso and under Catalina Street to reach the Aranda palace. A sapper was wounded.

To the left of Santa-Engracia Street, work continued in the block of houses that includes the Fuentes palace overlooking the Cosso.

51st NIGHT, of 17 to 18 February.

Attack on the right. Communication was improved between the convent of Saint Augustine and the house opposite, at the entrance to Mayor Street, a task that enemy fire had forced us to abandon during the day.

Attack on the center. The sappers continued their work under the Coso and under Santa Catalina Street.

To the left of Calle Santa Engracia, work was carried out to restore the breastwork of the battery that commanded the Coso, which had been destroyed by enemy fire.

Attack on the suburb. The artillery completed the arming and provisioning of its batteries. Marshal Lannes ordered the construction of a section of parallel trench two hundred meters from

the edge of the suburb on the Villanueva road, to prevent the enemy from escaping in that direction at the time of the general attack that was to take place the following day. This parallel was constructed by a battalion of the Hundredth Regiment and a detachment of sappers. At dawn, two howitzers and an 8-pounder cannon were brought up. To simultaneously cut off any enemy retreat along the Juslibol road, several companies were positioned on the other side of the marsh formed upstream of the suburb by the overflowing of the Ebro River.

Marshal Lannes came to visit the outposts. Having advanced as far as the small parade ground, located to the right of the convent of Jesus, he narrowly escaped being killed by a Spanish skirmisher who had hid himself in the ruins bordering the parade ground. Irritated by this audacity, he climbed into the attic of the convent of Jesus, where, having a dozen loaded muskets brought to him, he himself began firing. To respond to this fire, the enemy directed several shells at the convent, one of which, entering through a skylight, cut in two Captain Lepot of the engineers, who was standing near the Marshal.

DAY of 18 February.

Attack on the suburb. At eight o'clock in the morning, the artillery began firing on the suburb and the quay with fifty-two guns, distributed among batteries Nos. 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32. Batteries Nos. 27 and 28 fired bombs on the suburb and the city, where they struck the archbishop's palace and the church of Our Lady of the Pilar. Several sections of the vaults of the latter building were destroyed, and their debris littered the pavement of the nave; it was a scene of desolation for the people of Zaragoza. Battery No. 14, located on the right bank, simultaneously bombarded the great bridge over the Ebro, to cut off communication between the suburb and the city: Baron de Warsage was killed by a cannonball on this bridge, at the moment he was hurrying to take command of the suburb. Battery No. 29 forced the enemy to abandon the battery they had in the suburb, on their extreme right, on the banks of the Ebro, and pierced through the first two walls of the gardens opposite, near the Saint Lazarus convent. But such was the ferocity of the Spaniards that every hole the cannonballs made in these walls became for them so many loopholes, which they immediately used to fire from. Finally forced to retreat into the Saint Lazarus convent, behind the convent's outer wall, they held out for more than three hours, even though the building was riddled through and through by our cannonballs. After the enemy's retreat, General Gazan sent forward twenty-five grenadiers who occupied the Spanish battery and established themselves in two small houses along the Ebro.

At noon, four breaches had been opened in the fragile walls that formed the enclosure of the suburb, namely: two at the first houses, near the enclosure of the Saint Lazarus convent; one at the church of that convent, and the fourth at the enclosure of the Saint Elizabeth convent, located on the other side of the Barcelona road. At this last convent, battery No. 31 had begun by bombarding a carriage gate that led into the courtyard. Soon this gate was knocked down, but Spanish peasants raised it again and propped it up with their arms. A new salvo from the battery knocked it down a second time, and a second time it was raised again. To put an end to this maneuver, the doorposts themselves were breached. A pile of corpses lay behind this gate, which, each time it fell, crushed those who were supporting it.

Three columns were formed from the troops assembled in the trenches for the assault. At the given signal, these columns charged. The first column, composed of a battalion of the Hundred-Third, divided: five companies, led by a detachment of twenty-five sappers under the command of Captain Clerget, scaled the breach nearest the convent of Jesus, seized the building, and advanced behind the second breach, opening access to it for the other companies that were attacking it from the front. The second column assaulted the breach made in the church of the convent of Saint Lazarus; but this breach had been made too high, and it presented a ledge that would have been impossible to surmount under enemy fire, had not the first column, guided by Captain Clerget, advanced on the flank of the convent through the inner enclosure, despite the terrible fire from the enemy on the right bank of the river. After a bloody fight in the church and on the main staircase, the defenders fled in disarray. At the same time, the third column attacked the convent of Saint Elizabeth and captured it. Then our troops, emerging from the houses, advanced to the abutment of the Ebro bridge. As a result of this movement, all the remaining Spaniards at the head of the suburb were taken prisoner, as well as a large number of fugitives who, driven back towards the upper Ebro, had been unable, like others, to escape in boats under the protection of fire from the city. We captured two thousand five hundred men and seventeen pieces of artillery in this brilliant action, which cost us only eighty men killed or wounded, including eight sappers.

As soon as we had secured the suburb, Colonel Dode of the engineers had a parapet of gabions and sandbags constructed at the bridgehead, with a communication leading back to the convent of Saint Lazarus, in order to provide cover against the grapeshot from the two guns the enemy had on the right bank at the Puerta del Angel.

Attack on the right. From early morning, we extended our lines to the right of Calle Mayor into the tannery courtyard where we had been quartered the previous day. We seized a large shed, behind whose wall the enemy was positioned. A petard was detonated under this wall, and we occupied the adjacent houses. The enemy, driven out, was pursued through their own lines of communication to the last house on the island. This retreat forced them to abandon the entrenchments and batteries they had at the head of the Tannery suburb. We had eight men killed and sixteen wounded, including three sappers.

In the Calle de las Arcadas, we completed the breach in the tower of the old city wall that was blocking our advance on the right of this street, and a large bomb was thrown through the opening, driving out the enemy. We pursued the Spaniards into the neighboring house, the second to last on the island; but we were unable to hold this house. One sapper was killed and three were wounded. At noon, another unsuccessful attempt was made against the house supporting the traverse of the Coso, to the left of the Calle de las Arcadas.

Around three o'clock, at the moment when the capture of the suburb on the left bank of the Ebro spread terror throughout the city, the two large mines prepared under the University, ready for three days, were detonated; each was charged with fifteen hundred pounds of gunpowder. The explosion having created two large breaches in the church wall, five elite companies of the Fourteenth Light and the Second Vistula Regiment, forming two columns, rushed in despite the flanking fire from the Coso near the Puerta del Sol. The Spaniards offered little resistance; the building was completely occupied, and the troops advanced as far as the Church of the Trinity,

which remained in enemy hands. A parapet of sandbags was begun on the Coso, in the extension of Alcober Street, to provide cover against the flanking fire from the right and secure communication with the University. An attack was then launched for the tenth time against the house protecting this flanking position. The enemy withdrew, and the house was occupied without a shot fired at nightfall. In these actions, we had only two men killed and seven wounded, including an officer from the Vistula Regiment and three sappers; these casualties were mainly due to debris from the explosion, despite the precaution taken of keeping the posts at a distance.

Attack on the center. The attack, which had been attempted unsuccessfully on previous days against the houses located behind our lines between Zurradores and Santa Catalina streets, was resumed, and the Spaniards were driven out. An officer and a soldier of the Walloon Guards were captured there. We had one man killed and six wounded, including two sappers.

To the left of Santa-Engracia Street, we occupied a house in the block that included the Fuentes Palace overlooking the Coso, and we set fire to it in order to isolate our left flank.

52nd NIGHT, of 18 to 19 February.

Attack on the right. We took up positions in the University and completed the communication trench across the Coso. A mine was prepared against the flank of the Trinity Church.

Attack on the center. We established ourselves in the houses we had captured during the day, and the sappers continued their work.

To the left of Calle Santa-Engracia, the enemy managed to set fire to the doors of all the houses we occupied on the Coso in front of the Church of Saint Francis, from the Sástago Hotel to the Fuentes Palace. The fire, fanned by the wind, spread rapidly through the interior of these houses, despite our efforts to extinguish it.

At the Trinitarian convent, which is outside the city walls, two brigades of sappers entered a tunnel on the left side of the large church cellar, to prevent a subterranean attack that our soldiers feared from the enemy.

Our losses during the twenty-four hours were twenty-one men wounded, including four officers from the One Hundred and Fifteenth.

Attack on the suburb. The barricade at the bridge abutment and the covered communication route leading to it were improved. Barricades armed with light artillery pieces were also erected in the adjacent streets. The artillery changed the direction of its embrasures in order to fire on the quay of the right bank.

DAY of 19 February.

Attack on the right. At dawn, the mine prepared under the Trinity Church was detonated. Our troops immediately rushed into the breach, entered the convent, killed several Spaniards there,

and advanced as far as Trinity Street, parallel to the Coso. Two 4-pounder cannons, one of which was dismounted, had been abandoned by the enemy behind a barricade at the top of Subida del Sepulcro Street; as we could not retrieve them, we pierced loopholes in the houses on the left side of Subida del Sepulcro Street to prevent the enemy from recovering them. Our sappers, starting from the cellars of the houses to the right of the Trinity Church, began two mining tunnels, one to the left under Trinity Street, the other to the right, under Subida del Sepulcro Street. The enemy, having set fire to the houses near the Valencia Gate, on the Plaza del Magdalena, we were unable to extend our lines to the left of the University.

To the right of the Arcadas Street, we advanced along the old ramparts as far as the Puerta del Sol, where we opened a communication with Mayor Street through the very ditch of the battery that the enemy had abandoned in that street. We seized all the houses on the quay outside the city walls.

Attack on the center. Sixteen hundred pounds of gunpowder were loaded into the branch tunnel leading back to the right under the Coso, at the entrance to Santa Catalina Street, to blow up the palace of the Count of Aranda. The explosion brought down a corner of the building, along with the adjacent turret: about twenty Spaniards were buried under the rubble. Our troops immediately entered through the breach, repelled the enemy who tried to counterattack, and took several prisoners, including an officer; soon after, we were masters of the entire island. We had a few men out of action, including two sappers killed, one wounded, as well as a miner.

To the left of Santa-Engracia, the fire was extinguished in the houses we occupied on the Coso, in front of the church of Saint Francis. These houses were then fortified with battlements, connecting passages were made between them, and a brigade of miners began digging a tunnel from a cellar to cross the Coso.

Meanwhile, the courage and confidence of the Spaniards were beginning to waver. Palafox, already ill, had learned, beyond any doubt, of the successes of our armies in Spain. Finally realizing the necessity of entering into negotiations, this general sent one of his aides-de-camp to Marshal Lannes with a letter in which, responding to the summons the Marshal had issued on 24 January, he requested a suspension of hostilities for three days, and permission to send some officers to ascertain for themselves the state of affairs in the Peninsula; adding that if the time to capitulate had arrived, he expected that the garrison would be incorporated into the Spanish armies and would be allowed to take a certain number of covered wagons with them. Marshal Lannes angrily rejected these proposals, and the fighting continued¹.

53rd NIGHT, of 19 to 20 February.

Attack on the right. As the tunnel begun the previous day under Subida del Sepulcro street required considerable work, it was decided to cross the street through the trench the enemy had dug. This allowed us to reach the house opposite, against whose door we placed one hundred pounds of gunpowder. The explosion killed about twenty Spaniards in this house, which we then occupied. One sapper was wounded.

¹ See supporting documents, No. 36.

Attack on the center. We established ourselves in the houses adjacent to the Palace of Count of Aranda, which we had captured during the day. Mining operations continued under the Coso.

To the left of Santa Engracia street, preparations began for new battery positions in the houses overlooking the Coso.

Attack on the suburb. A trench was dug across the drainage canal of the marsh located to the right of the attack, in order to reach a small hill whose position was favorable for establishing a battery intended to bombard the city upstream of the bridge.

DAY of 20 February.

Attack on the right. From early morning, we extended our positions into the block of houses located between Subida del Sepulcro street and the ramparts of the Tanneries suburb. The two sections of the breach definitively fell into our hands. The enemy, returning with three hundred men to retake them, was quickly repulsed. They then set fire to everything around to halt our progress. We had two sappers killed and several men wounded, including two Polish officers.

From the left bank, our cannon had made a small opening in the house supporting the first breach on the right bank quay, opposite the abutment of the old wooden bridge. Marshal Lannes, having ordered an attack on this house around three o'clock in the afternoon, fifty Poles advanced there in the open along the city wall. Finding the breach abandoned, they entered the house; but they had already suffered fifteen casualties. A detachment of sappers was sent to their aid to help them entrench themselves and establish communication lines; fortunately for them, the siege ended a few hours later.

Attack on the center. We continued to consolidate our positions in the block of houses around the Aranda Palace, captured the previous day, and pushed a mining gallery under the Santa Catalina convent, located behind this block. The five branches that passed in different places under the Coso, from the left of our positions at the Saint Francis convent to Santa Catalina street, were completed, and mines were laid there.

The city was at its last gasp; the hour of its surrender had come. The day before, Palafox, ill with fever, had relinquished his authority into the hands of a Junta, composed of forty members, under the presidency of the regent of the Royal Audience, Don Pedro Maria Ric. This Junta met during the night to deliberate on the fate of the city. It acknowledged that there was no longer any hope of rescue; that the powder supplies were exhausted, and that two horse-powered mills, established by Palafox, which barely supplied two hundred and fifty kilograms a day, were no longer sufficient to meet the needs of the infantry and artillery. The city still had grain; but it lacked mills and was suffering from a complete shortage of other basic necessities. The epidemic was wreaking terrifying havoc; six to seven hundred people were dying every day.

However, public opinion still held the Junta in suspense, and some time passed before any member dared to speak of surrender. Finally, on the 20th, at four o'clock in the afternoon, the Junta, despite the opposition of eight members who still wanted to defend themselves, sent a parliamentarian to Marshal Lannes to request a twenty-four-hour armistice in order to draw up

the articles of capitulation. The Marshal ordered a ceasefire and sent an officer to the Junta to inform them that they were to surrender within two hours at his headquarters to make their submission, and to tell them that, after that time, he would no longer listen to any proposals. The President and some members submitted to this condition: they left through the Puerta del Angel, and, going around the city on the side of the castle, they walked to the large locks of the Imperial Canal. Marshal Lannes reproached them for the misfortunes of Zaragoza, and, showing them the line of our outposts on a map, he announced that six mines, dug under the Coso and each loaded with three thousand pounds of powder, were ready to be detonated simultaneously, which would devastate the rest of the city; that fifty cannons, placed on the left bank and aimed at the city, were ready to bombard it; finally, that everything was prepared for a general attack, and that it would take place the following day at noon. Zaragoza could no longer bear such suffering: the war had exhausted its resources. The Junta surrendered. Marshal Lannes dictated a convention, which was signed by the members present². The delegation returned but, fearing the fury of the people, they did not dare re-enter the city and remained at the castle. General Guillelmi, the former captain-general deposed by Palafox, was released from prison and taken to Marshal Lannes, along with the Count of Fuentes and several other people who had been imprisoned since the beginning of the siege, on suspicion of being partisans of the French.

The following day, 21 February, at noon, the garrison marched out through the Portillo gate. They paraded before Marshal Lannes and laid down their arms at the foot of the castle. Of the thirty-one thousand men that comprised the garrison at the beginning of the siege, only eight thousand two hundred remained. These unfortunate men were a pitiful sight. A considerable number of soldiers who had hidden in the houses were rounded up; and, adding those who had been captured in the suburbs, the number of prisoners rose to twelve thousand. The rest of the garrison were in the hospitals or had perished by the sword and disease. The prisoners were immediately sent to Bayonne in three columns, under the escort of General Morlot, with the One Hundred-sixteenth and One Hundred-seventeenth Line. Marshal Lannes simultaneously dispatched General Lejeune, aide-de-camp to Prince Berthier, the Major General, to Paris to announce the fall of Zaragoza to the Emperor. He appointed General Laval governor of the city and created a new junta. The inhabitants were disarmed by the municipal authorities. A guard was placed at Palafox's residence to secure his person until he could be taken to France. Our troops occupied the city gates and the main streets; but the army remained encamped outside the walls to avoid the effects of the epidemic.

Ninety-two pieces of artillery were found in the city. Fifty-three had fallen into our hands during the siege; making a total of one hundred and forty-five³. We also captured twenty-one flags. The magazines contained very little powder and projectiles. The inhabitants still had a large quantity of wine and oil, and enough wheat for more than six months; but, deprived of mills, they were reduced to grinding the grain with stones to make flour.

The city was a horrific sight. The air was foul and suffocating. The fire that was still consuming several buildings covered the atmosphere with thick smoke. The districts where the attacks had taken place offered nothing, but heaps of ruins interspersed with corpses and scattered limbs. Even the houses spared by the explosions and the fire were riddled with loopholes or cannonball

² See supporting documents, No. 37.

³ See supporting documents, No. 38.

holes or crushed by bombs and shells; their interiors were opened up by large breaches for communication. At the top of some still-standing sections of walls, portions of roofs and floors hung precariously, threatening to crush anyone who approached. Along the Coso, which formed the boundary of our conquest, the ground was churned up by the effect of mines and bombs; the doors and windows were walled up or masked by sandbags, mattresses, or furniture; all the adjacent streets were obstructed with barricades and rubble. The population, having retreated to the districts least exposed to the attacks, had crowded into the dampest cellars and underground passages to seek refuge from the bombs. The hospitals were abandoned; and the sick, half-naked, wandered through the city like pale shadows emerging from tombs, and expired in the middle of the streets. The New Market Square, in particular, presented the most appalling spectacle: a large number of families, whose houses had been invaded or ruined, had taken refuge there under the arcades; there, the old people, women, and children lay pell-mell on the pavement with the dying and the dead. In this place of suffering, nothing was heard but cries wrung from hunger, pain, and despair.

On 24 February, the army took up arms; and Marshal Lannes, accompanied by the Duke of Trévisé, the generals, and their staffs, made his solemn entry into Zaragoza. He was received at the portal of Our Lady of the Pilar by the city's clergy, headed by the Bishop of Huesca, who was standing in for the absent archbishop. The Marshals took their places in two armchairs arranged in front of the high altar: a third chair had been provided for General Junot, who declined to attend the ceremony. The Junta and the various authorities swore an oath of allegiance to King Joseph. The Bishop delivered a speech on the misfortunes of Zaragoza, which deeply moved all those present. He then intoned a *Te Deum* in thanksgiving for our victory.

Thus fell Zaragoza, after a siege of fifty-two days of open trench warfare, twenty-nine of which had been spent gaining control of the city walls, and twenty-three in fighting from house to house. The Spaniards greatly extolled this heroic defense. It is true that no open city had ever sustained such an obstinate siege, and the nobility of spirit displayed by the inhabitants is one of the most admirable spectacles offered by the annals of nations, after the sieges of Saguntum and Numancia. However, judging the facts objectively, one should be less surprised by the defense than by the attack itself. What do we see, in fact? On one side, an army of more than thirty thousand men, further reinforced by the elite of the country's population, and sheltered in a considerable city, strong in the solidity of its own houses, and defended by fortifications which, although improvised, were nonetheless formidable; on the other hand, a force of twelve to thirteen thousand men, providing barely four thousand men for duty each day, both for attacks and for guarding the trenches and conquered houses, managed to penetrate, despite all obstacles and the disadvantage of numbers, to the heart of the city, maintain their position there, and constantly retain the offensive; while the enemy, so numerous, could concentrate all its forces at a single point and recapture in a moment what had cost us so much effort and loss. We could not conceal from ourselves the dangers or difficulties of our position; therefore, until the end of the siege, we took care to fortify ourselves well in the quarters of the city that we occupied, in order to compensate for the numerical weakness of our troops; and this measure itself might perhaps have been insufficient if the enemy had made more frequent use of mines against us, so great was the apprehension our soldiers had of them. The great glory of this siege should therefore reflect even more on the besiegers than on the besieged.

We had approximately three thousand infantrymen killed or wounded. Fifteen hundred soldiers were in the hospitals, and a large number died each day from typhus. The troops endured the privations and dangers with a courage worthy of the highest praise: the Poles vied with the French in their zeal.

The artillery fired thirty-two thousand seven hundred cannonballs, bombs, or shells against the city; it consumed sixty-nine thousand three hundred and twenty-five kilograms of powder, not including the nine thousand five hundred kilograms used for the mines⁴. It was only with the greatest difficulty that it managed to obtain enough ammunition to supply the immense scale of the attacks; it had only a small number of horses, and the local carts were so small and of such poor quality that each could not carry more than four hundred weight. If they had not had the Tudela canal at their disposal, the siege would have become impossible. They had one officer killed and five wounded, ten non-commissioned officers or soldiers killed and thirty wounded; eighteen infantry auxiliaries were also put out of action⁵.

The corps of engineers covered itself in glory and further enhanced its already distinguished reputation. Twenty-seven officers were put out of action; eleven died on the battlefield or shortly after being removed from it. One hundred and fifty-six sappers or miners were killed or wounded. Marshal Lannes and the entire army were lavish in their praise of the engineering officers: their services were recounted; their intelligence in conducting the works, their bravery in attacks, and their composure in the face of danger were all commended. The troops recalled having seen them at their head, whether opening up houses with the help of sappers and miners, or guiding them through the breaches amidst the rubble, mines, and a labyrinth of houses. They readily acknowledged that their intelligence in such warfare had often saved many lives.

The Spanish losses, caused by fighting but especially by the epidemic, were incomparably greater than ours. According to the census figures compiled by the Spanish authorities, fifty-three thousand eight hundred and seventy-three people perished in Zaragoza during the siege, at least half of whom were refugee peasants. The inhabitants who survived the bombardment and the epidemic were thin, pale, and resembled specters. Most hastened to leave the city to breathe fresh air in the countryside or return to their homes: Zaragoza was almost deserted. Efforts were immediately made to clear the streets of rubble, bury the corpses, and sanitize the city. Colonel Rogniat employed the sappers and miners to demolish the fortifications of the city walls. The castle was put in a state of defense; it received a garrison of three hundred men and was armed with thirty-three pieces of artillery, including twelve mortars or howitzers, which were directed against the city to keep it in submission⁶.

Aragon had lost the flower of its inhabitants under the ruins of its capital. This province remained quiet for a time. Marshal Lannes took advantage of this moment to complete the subjugation of the country. Adjutant-General Fabre was detached with six battalions, some artillery and engineering troops, and eighteen pieces of artillery, to besiege the citadel of Jaca. The garrison of this stronghold surrendered at the first summons, although it numbered two thousand six hundred men. The occupation of this important point allowed us to establish direct

⁴ See supporting documents, No. 39.

⁵ See supporting documents, No. 40.

⁶ See supporting documents, No. 41.

communication with France through the Canfranc Valley. General Grandjean arrived at Alcañiz with part of his division and was reinforced by the troops of General Wattier. He occupied Caspe and drove back towards Morella, the insurgents from Valencia, who had made extensive preparations to come to the aid of Zaragoza. General Suchet was sent to Castile, towards Molina, with the first brigade of his division, to disperse several gatherings and open communications with Madrid.

Marshal Mortier advanced to Fraga on the Cinca River, with the Gazan Division, the second brigade of the Suchet division, and three cavalry regiments, in order to observe the garrisons of Lleida and Mequinenza, and to support the operations of General Gouvion Saint-Cyr in Catalonia. The Marquis of Lazan and Don Francisco Palafox withdrew with their troops to Tortosa, abandoning the post of Monzón where we found seven cannons, six thousand cannonballs, and one hundred quintals of gunpowder. Colonel Briche crossed the Segre River with a squadron of hussars, a battalion of the Hundredth Regiment, and two 4-pounder cannons. He headed towards Tarragona via Montblanc to communicate with the Seventh Corps, which was still in the vicinity of that city. However, attacked on all sides by Catalan irregulars, he was unable to retrace his steps and remained temporarily attached to General Gouvion Saint-Cyr's army corps⁷.

On 21 March, Marshal Lannes departed for France, along with a large number of general and other officers, to participate in the campaign that was about to begin against Austria. Several artillery and engineering companies, and part of the siege train, were sent to Madrid for the expedition being prepared against Andalusia. Sixteen horse-drawn caissons from the engineering park, a company of sappers, and the artillery train of the Guard returned to Bayonne.

Marshal Mortier, after remaining three weeks in Fraga, received orders to proceed to Burgos with the Fifth Corps, to form a reserve in northern Spain and be in a position to return to France if the events unfolding in Austria required it. General Habert replaced him on the Cinca River with his brigade and the Thirteenth Cuirassiers. General Junot was appointed governor of Aragon and received orders to begin preparations for an expedition against Valencia.



⁷ See supporting documents, No. 42.

No. 36

Letter from Marshal Lannes to Palafox.

In the trenches before Zaragoza, 19 February 1809.

General,

I have just received your letter. Your proposals have irritated me to the highest degree. When a man of honor like myself gives his word, it should be considered sacred; I assure you that I have never broken it. I am sending you with this letter the capitulation of Corunna and Ferrol. As for reinforcements, I repeat to you on my word of honor, you have no reason to expect any. There are no more armies in Spain; everything has been destroyed; the King has entered Madrid; all the cities have sent him delegations, and perfect tranquility reigns in Spain. Several Spanish regiments have entered the service of King Joseph Napoleon, and the great nations have formed a coalition to support him. General, this is the unvarnished truth. The sentiments of the French nation are too well known to everyone for there to be any doubt about its loyalty and generosity: I am ready to grant a general pardon to all the inhabitants of Zaragoza, and I offer to respect their lives and property.

The Marshal Duke of Montebello,

Signed: LANNES.



No. 37

*Surrender of the City of Zaragoza. --Order of the Day
of 20 February 1809.*

The Junta of Zaragoza, composed of the following members: Don Pedro Maria Ric, President, General D. Juan Butler, the Duke of Villa Hermosa, the Marquis of Fuentes Olivar, D. Joaquin Perez Nueros, the Baron of Purroy, Intendant D. Mariano Dominguez, D. Joachim Ignacio Ciscala, D. Mariano Cerezo, D. Manuel Forcés, D. Michel Dolz, Secretary, presented themselves on 20 February at four o'clock in the afternoon, at the headquarters of His Excellency Marshal the Duke of Montebello, to offer the surrender of the city of Zaragoza.

The Marshal has always manifested his intentions, and his sentiments have always been to save this city.

He therefore grants, in the name of His Majesty the Emperor and King Napoleon I and His Catholic Majesty King Joseph Napoleon I, a general pardon to all the inhabitants of Zaragoza, under the following conditions:

ART. Ist. The garrison of Zaragoza will leave the city tomorrow, the 21st, at noon, with their arms, through the Portillo Gate, and will lay them down one hundred paces from the said gate.

ART. II. All officers and soldiers of the Spanish troops will swear an oath of allegiance to His Catholic Majesty King Joseph Napoleon I.

ART. III. All Spanish officers and soldiers who have sworn the oath of allegiance will be free to enlist in the service for the defense of His Catholic Majesty.

ART. IV. Those among them who do not wish to enlist will be taken as prisoners of war to France.

ART. V. All inhabitants of Zaragoza and any foreigners, if there are any, will be disarmed by the mayors, and the arms will be deposited at the Portillo Gate tomorrow, the 21st, at noon.

ART. VI. The persons and property of the inhabitants will be respected by the troops of His Majesty the Emperor and King.

ART. VII. Religion and its ministers will be respected. Guards will be placed at the gates of the principal buildings.

ART. VIII. The French troops will occupy all the city gates, the castle, and the Coso tomorrow at noon.

ART. IX. All artillery and ammunition of every kind will be in the possession of His Majesty the Emperor and King tomorrow at noon.

ART. X. All military and civil treasuries will be placed at the disposal of His Imperial Majesty.

ART. XI. All civil administrations and all types of employees will swear an oath of allegiance to His Imperial Majesty.

Justice will be administered in the same manner and in the name of His Imperial Majesty, King Joseph Napoleon I.

Done in duplicate at headquarters before Zaragoza, 20 February 1809.

(Signatures follow).

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# No. 38

*Statement of the artillery pieces captured from the enemy from 21 December 1808 to 21 February 1809, the date of the surrender of the city of Zaragoza.*

| DATES<br>and emplacements.                                                                | ARTILLERY. |          |          |         |         |         |              |             |            |            |            | TOTAL |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------|----------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------|------------|
|                                                                                           | Cannons    |          |          |         |         |         | Swivel guns* | Mortars     |            |            | Howitzers  |       |            |
|                                                                                           | Of<br>24   | Of<br>16 | Of<br>12 | Of<br>8 | Of<br>6 | Of<br>4 | of 4         | of<br>12lb. | of<br>9lb. | of<br>3lb. | of<br>8lb. |       | of<br>6lb. |
| 21 December, at the capture of Monte-Torrero, in the redoubt and locks.....               |            |          |          |         |         | 3       | 1            |             |            |            |            | 3     | 7          |
| 2 January, upon taking of San Jose.....                                                   |            |          |          |         |         | 2       |              |             |            |            |            | 1     | 3          |
| During the operation against the rebels by the troops of the Fifth Corps....              |            |          |          |         | 2       | 1       | 1            |             |            |            |            |       |            |
| 27 January, in the enemy fortifications, between the Carmelites and the Trinitarians..... |            | 3        | 1        | 3       | 2       | 3       |              |             | 1          |            | 1          | 3     | 17         |
| 8 February, in the Convent of Jesus, also known as the Swiss Barracks.....                |            |          |          |         |         | 2       |              |             |            |            |            |       | 2          |
| 18 February in the works of the suburbs.....                                              |            |          |          | 4       |         | 9       |              |             |            |            |            | 3     | 16         |
| 19 February in the traverse near the Sun Gate..                                           |            |          |          | 1       |         | 3       |              |             |            |            |            |       | 4          |
| 21 February throughout the city.....                                                      | 5          | 3        | 4        | 11      |         | 36      | 14           | 5           | 3          | 1          | 4          | 6     | 92         |
| TOTAL.....                                                                                | 5          | 6        | 5        | 19      | 4       | 59      | 16           | 5           | 4          | 1          | 5          | 16    | 142        |

At headquarters before Zaragoza, 23 February 1809.  
The Divisional General commanding  
the siege artillery.

*Signed:* DEDON SENIOR.

\*pierriers

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No. 39

*Statement of the main artillery supplies consumed from
21 December 1808 to 20 February 1809,
the date of the surrender of Zaragoza.*

DESIGNATION OF OBJECTS.		QUANTITIES.			OBSERVATIONS.
		sent into the batteries by the siege park.	recovered in the batteries after the seizure of the city.	Actual consumption.	
Projectiles	of 24	7,350	1,087	6,263	
	Cannonballs of 16	3,578	637	2,943	
	of 12	7,300	850	6,450	
	of 12lb	3,168	255	3,515	
	Bombs and shells of 8lb	7,045	705	6,340	
	of 6lb	8,053	862	7,191	
Munitions: gun powder (kilograms)		99,175	20,350	78,825	Including 9,500 kg. for mines.
Supplies--sacks of earth		73,700	300	73,400	

At headquarters before Zaragoza, 23 February 1809.
The Divisional General commanding the
siege artillery.

Signed: DEDON SENIOR.

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## No. 40

### *Statement of the artillery officers, non-commissioned officers, gunners, and auxiliaries who were killed or wounded during the siege of Zaragoza.*

| Names of officers killed.                                  | Observations.                                                                                           | Names of officers wounded.      | Observations.                                                               |        |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Veckten , Lieutenant                                       | Killed by a gunfire, while supervising the construction of a battery in Quemada Street, on 16 February. | Lallier (Dominique), Bn. Chief. | Commanded the attack on the right. Wounded at Battery No. 11 on 26 January. |        |
|                                                            |                                                                                                         | Hulot, Captain                  | Wounded at Battery No. 19, which he commanded, on 3 February.               |        |
|                                                            |                                                                                                         | Letourneur, Captain             | Wounded while constructing a battery in the city, 16 February.              |        |
|                                                            |                                                                                                         | Fresnel, Lieutenant             | Wounded at Battery No. 5, 13 February.                                      |        |
|                                                            |                                                                                                         | Mariau (Éloi), Conductor        | Wounded by a gunfire at Battery No. 17, 28 January.                         |        |
| <i>Non-commissioned officers, gunners and auxiliaries.</i> |                                                                                                         |                                 |                                                                             |        |
| DESIGNATION OF THE REGIMENTS.                              |                                                                                                         | Killed.                         | Wounded.                                                                    | TOTAL. |
| Foot Artillery.....{                                       | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Regiment.....                                                                           | 8                               | 12                                                                          | 20     |
|                                                            | 6 <sup>th</sup> id.....                                                                                 | 4                               | 18                                                                          | 22     |
|                                                            | 14 <sup>th</sup> Line Infantry Regiment.....                                                            |                                 | 2                                                                           | 2      |
| Auxiliaries.....{                                          | 115 <sup>th</sup> id.....                                                                               | 1                               | 2                                                                           | 3      |
|                                                            | 117 <sup>th</sup> id.....                                                                               | 1                               | 2                                                                           | 3      |
|                                                            | 3 <sup>rd</sup> id. Vistula.....                                                                        | 4                               | 5                                                                           | 9      |
| TOTAL.....                                                 |                                                                                                         | 18                              | 41                                                                          | 59     |

NOTE: The artillery of the Third and Fifth Corps, part of which was employed in the siege, has not provided a statement of its losses, and is therefore not included in this statement.

Certified as true, in Zaragoza, 21 February 1809.

The Chief of Staff of the siege artillery.

ROQUEFERT

Seen by the Divisional General commanding the siege artillery.

DEDON, SENIOR.

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No. 41

Letter from Colonel Rogniat to the Major General.

Zaragoza, 16 March 1809.

Monseigneur,

According to the orders of the Duke of Montebello, I am employing the three companies of sappers to blow up the fortifications of Zaragoza, with the exception of the castle, known as the Inquisition. I have already demolished two-thirds of the city's fortifications.

The Inquisition Castle, which can serve as a citadel against the city and a secure stronghold for the arsenals and war munitions, is being put in a state of defense. It is a square flanked by four bastioned towers, surrounded by a good revetted moat, with a parade ground on the side facing the city. The bastioned towers are connected by curtain walls with unembanked masonry parapets. The interior is occupied by buildings and magazines for fifteen hundred men. The water necessary for the garrison is supplied by three wells. There is a bomb-proof powder magazine.

I am sending two engineering officers to Jaca to reconnoiter that place and the roads leading to it. One is going there via Pamplona and Sangüesa, with the Morlot Division, and the other is leaving Zaragoza by the direct route. The citadel of Jaca, which is the only fortified part, is a regular pentagon of approximately one hundred fathoms on each side. The escarpments and counterscarps are revetted, and the moat is surrounded by a covered way. There are no ravelins. As soon as I receive the report from the engineering officers, I will have the honor of sending a summary of it to Your Highness.

I have the honor to be, with respect,

Your Highness's most humble servant,
The Colonel commanding the engineers,

Signed: ROGNIAT.

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No. 42

*Letter from Marshal Lannes, Duke of Montebello, to  
Prince Berthier, Chief of Staff.*

At the large locks before Zaragoza, 19 March 1809.

I had the honor of informing Your Highness, in my letter of the 13<sup>th</sup> of this month, that General of Division Morlot had received orders to proceed to the citadel of Jaca and lay siege to it.

I have sent an engineer officer to reconnoiter this citadel; as soon as I receive his report, I will send General Dedon with the necessary artillery to begin the siege.

It is not possible to lay siege to the castle of Mequinenza: it is situated on a plateau surrounded by rocks, where it is impossible to build a road to approach it. I regret this, because this garrison will cause us some trouble. These are the only troops remaining in Aragon. I had the honor of informing Your Highness that the Palafox brothers had retreated with the remainder of their forces to Tortosa.

The country is perfectly calm. I believe that the Third Corps would be sufficient to maintain this tranquility in Aragon and lay siege to Jaca, and that the Fifth Corps, which is currently at Fraga, Mequinenza, and before Lleida, could lay siege to the latter city. I have sent a strong reconnaissance force to Montblanc to obtain news of General Gouvion Saint-Cyr, who, it is said, had an engagement in that area.

I had some skirmishers approach Lleida close enough for the enemy to fire upon them, so that General Gouvion Saint-Cyr would learn that we were in the vicinity.

The Grandjean Division has moved from Alcañiz to Morella, on the Valencian border, to prevent the enemy from raising troops in that area. I have received no letter from Your Highness other than the one dated the 28<sup>th</sup> of last month. I am, however, very anxious to receive the order to return to France to attend to my health, which is completely broken down, as I have had the honor of mentioning in several letters to His Majesty.

I therefore await orders for my departure as soon as possible, and for the movements to be ordered for the Third and Fifth Corps, should what I have the honor to propose to you be in accordance with His Majesty's intentions.

I have had a count made of the people who died in Zaragoza from December 21<sup>st</sup> to February 21<sup>st</sup>, the day of our entry into the city. Your Highness will see from the enclosed report that fifty-four thousand and some people died there; it is inconceivable. Since our entry, between eight and ten thousand more have died; so that this city is now reduced to approximately twelve or fifteen thousand inhabitants.

I also enclose a letter that Palafox wrote to me before his departure, as well as one of his proclamations. Your Highness will see that this poor wretch was merely lending his name to the

monks and intriguers. Almost all of the former are dead; only a very few remain in each convent, with utterly cadaverous appearances. It is impossible for Zaragoza to recover; this city is a horrifying sight.

I am extremely pleased with the auxiliary bishop. He is a man who has contributed greatly to the tranquility of the country. It would be good if His Majesty were to appoint him bishop or even archbishop of Zaragoza: he is extremely well-regarded. I think His Majesty would do well to send him his portrait.

I must not conceal from Your Highness that I am extremely distressed that I have not been given permission to go and attend to my health. His Majesty must surely think that I am in great need of it, since I am requesting it.

I beg Your Highness to accept the assurance of my devotion.

*Signed: LANNES.*

*P.S.* Monzón has been evacuated; ten thousand pounds of gunpowder, six thousand cannonballs, and seven cannons were found there.

