

SIEGE
OF GIRONA,
BY THE FRENCH ARMY OF CATALONIA,
IN 1809.

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The attack from Montjuïc, on the other hand, had the advantage of being located directly on our line of operations, which was covered in the rear and supported on the flanks by the positions of Mare de Déu dels Àngels (Our Lady of the Angels), San-Miguel, Campdorà, la Costa Roja, Montegut, and the Colina verde (Green Mound)--all excellent and easy-to-defend positions. Thus, even if the enemy were to withdraw from the camps on Mount Llivia and Salt, the army could concentrate on the Ter River and continue the siege without any loss of artillery or ammunition. These same reasons had led to the decision to attack from this direction during the siege of 1711. It was also presumed that after the capture of Montjuïc, which overlooks the city, the city, being very weak on that side, would soon be forced to surrender, and that this moment could be hastened further by bombarding the city. It was agreed, however, that to divide the enemy's attention, a feint attack would be launched across the plain of Santa-Eugenia.

These were the measures by which General Verdier, in agreement with General Sanson, commander of the engineers, and General Taviel, commander of the artillery, hoped to capture the fortress¹.

The first operation of the siege was to be the capture of the San-Narciso, San-Luis, and San-Daniel redoubts, which bordered the crest of the Montjuïc plateau, and without whose possession this plateau was inaccessible; but, instead of launching this attack under cover of the large ravine of Can Aulet, they began to establish themselves on the heights of Tramon, twelve hundred meters from the San-Narciso and San-Luis redoubts; a timid advance which greatly emboldened the defenders and caused a delay of more than ten days. They also intended to bombard the town immediately and render uninhabitable the district through which they planned to enter after the capture of Montjuïc; but this premature attack only served to harden the inhabitants and consume a large quantity of ammunition, which was subsequently lacking at the decisive moment of the siege.

1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th NIGHTS, of 6 to 12 June.

The first work was on batteries No. 1 and 2, each designed to accommodate four pieces of 24 and one howitzer. Since these batteries were to be built on bare rock, earth had to be brought in from

¹ See supporting documents, nos. 6 and 7.

a distance of one hundred and sixty meters; however, as they were concealed by a hedge, work could be carried out under cover. On the sixth night, a communication trench over a hundred meters long was constructed, using stones to create a facing to support the earth brought in from a distance in sacks. The enemy only discovered this work at daybreak and immediately began firing.

At the same time, battery No. 6, with twelve mortars, was built on the Green Mound, intended to fire on the town, and a communication trench was dug to reach it.

7th NIGHT, of 12 to 13 June.

Batteries Nos. 1, 2, and 6 were armed, and their communications were completed, despite very heavy enemy fire. We had one miner killed and two wounded.

8th NIGHT, of 13 to 14 June.

At midnight, Battery No. 6 began bombarding the town. At first, the inhabitants were very afraid; but they gradually became accustomed to the danger and eventually even braved it. Battery No. 11, with two pieces of 24, was positioned on the high ground behind the Green Mound, thirteen hundred metres from the town, to prevent the enemy from leaving through the Porte de France and to monitor their movements on the reverse slope of the Montjuïc plateau.

On the plain of Santa-Eugenia, a first trench was dug a thousand meters from the ramparts. The enemy launched flares to illuminate the work and returned fire sharply at Battery No. 6.

At four o'clock in the morning, Batteries Nos. 1 and 2 opened fire on the San-Narciso and San-Luis redoubts; they quickly disabled a piece of 12 and a howitzer in the latter redoubt. We suffered one gunner killed and two wounded.

9th NIGHT, of 14 to 15 June.

At ten o'clock in the evening, our troops attacked the suburb of Pedret and captured the first houses. The sappers immediately began a traverse along the road, supported on one side by the houses and on the other by the river. At the same time, another column advanced ahead of batteries Nos. 1 and 2 and seized the hillocks of Can Aulet and Can Negreils, which extend to the main road. This two-pronged movement presented no difficulties and could have been undertaken on the first night.

Work continued on the feint attack at Santa-Eugenia, where the enemy directed a very heavy fire.

Battery No. 6 launched bombs day and night, setting fire to several houses. Batteries No. 2 continued to fire on the San-Luis and San-Narciso redoubts, some of whose parapets they had already destroyed.

10th NIGHT, of 15 to 16 June.

Work began on Battery No. 4, consisting of four pieces of 24, eight hundred meters from the San-Luis redoubt, with the aim of breaching it. The location of Battery No. 3, also consisting of four pieces of 24, was identified for bombarding the San-Narciso redoubt; but, as bedrock was found there, it was decided to construct this battery using sandbags on the ground, in a single night, to surprise the enemy during its construction.

The traverse that blocked the main road in the Pedret suburb was completed.

At daybreak, the enemy laid a large fire on the fortress and forts during the feigned attack on Santa-Eugenia. The workers were withdrawn to avoid exposing them unnecessarily. A road was cleared to arm Batteries Nos. 3 and 4.

11th NIGHT, of 16 to 17 June.

The Spanish, worried about our establishment in the Pedret suburb, feared a repeat of the attack that, during the siege of 1711, had taken place through this suburb against the unflanked bastion of Santa-Maria, and they prepared a major sortie to raze our works.

At seven o'clock in the morning, a column of a thousand infantrymen and some cavalymen emerged from the Puerta de Francia and the Puerta San-Pedro, under the protection of the fortress's artillery fire, and advanced rapidly into the Pedret suburb. A second column of about five hundred men descended at the same time from Montjuïc and headed towards the Nuevo Molino (New Mill) to outflank the suburb. Our outposts, surprised by such a sudden attack, were forced to retreat. But soon a battalion of the Sixteenth Regiment of the Line, which occupied the New Mill, rushed to meet the enemy and charged them with bayonets. It was supported by the Thirty-Second Light, stationed on the Broca d'Oro plateau, and by a detachment of the German brigade of General Amey, while Colonel Legras of the Second Westphalian Regiment, positioned at Battery No. 6, advanced with four companies to the banks of the Ter River, despite the musket and grapeshot fire from the fortress, to outflank the enemy column that had advanced along the main road. This last maneuver, well-conceived and intrepidly executed, forced the retreat of the Spanish, who nevertheless had managed to destroy the bypass through the suburb. They withdrew in good order into the fortress amidst the applause of the population, who, from the rooftops and church steeples, had remained impatient spectators of the outcome of this attack. The column that had advanced from Montjuïc was also driven back under fire from the redoubts and the fort. Another sortie, launched simultaneously against the feigned attack at Santa-Eugenia, withdrew before reaching the trenches. We suffered thirteen killed and one hundred and fifteen wounded, including two officers.

Fearing a repeat of this attempt, which could compromise the stores at Pont-Mayor and Sarria, where all the siege supplies were located, part of the troops of Lechi's division were withdrawn from the Salt plain and placed in reserve behind Montjuïc.

A few bombs launched by Battery No. 6 set fire to the general hospital in the town, which was reduced to ashes. This loss was keenly felt by the Spanish due to the large quantity of supplies and medicines they were deprived of.

The Governor established a new hospital in the cathedral chapels, for which the inhabitants provided all the bedding.

12th and 13th NIGHTS, of 17 to 19 June.

The road crossing at the entrance to the Pedret suburb, which the enemy had destroyed, was repaired, and the advances to the mock attack on Santa-Eugenia continued.

Battery No. 3 was constructed using sandbags on the ground. The engineers and artillery worked on the construction of this battery, which was completed, armed, and ready to fire at five o'clock in the morning². The workers filled the sandbags behind the battery and carried them to the gunners who formed its flank. The chiefs of the artillery and engineers oversaw this work, which they did not leave all night. From that moment, the cooperation between the two branches was such that their magazines were combined and became shared. Each day the workers were sent en masse, without distinction of service, to be then distributed between the two branches, according to their respective needs.

At daybreak, batteries No. 3 and 4 opened fire. Within a few hours, they had destroyed the stone parapets of the San-Narciso and San-Luis redoubts. Simultaneously, skirmishers, some positioned on the slope of the plateau, within musket range of the San-Luis redoubt, others in foxholes prepared in front of battery No. 3, took aim at all the gunners who appeared in the embrasures. At seven o'clock in the morning, the troops, carried away by their ardor, approached the San-Luis redoubt and formed up on the crest of the glacis, despite the very heavy fire of grapeshot and shells coming from Fort Montjuïc. Intimidated by this movement, the garrison of the redoubt, which had already lost twenty-six men, including four officers, both to our fire and to stone fragments from the parapets, lowered the drawbridge and fled in haste. We found a spiked howitzer in this structure. The skirmishers of the Berg regiment then advanced on the San-Narciso redoubt, which the enemy evacuated as they had the first, leaving behind a howitzer and a piece of 4. A similar attempt was made on the San-Daniel redoubt by the Würzburg regiment, carried away by the momentum of the first success; but fire from Fort Montjuïc forced this regiment to withdraw.

The capture of the San-Luis and San-Narciso redoubts was a fortunate circumstance, entirely due to the audacity of the troops. There was still no breach, the ditches were nearly four meters deep, and nothing had been prepared for the scaling, which was deemed possible only once part of the scarp had been breached by cannon fire.

This engagement was a great success for the Sixteenth Line Regiment, the Thirty-Second Light Regiment, and the Berg and Würzburg Regiments, which took part. Our losses amounted to ten men killed and sixty-eight wounded; they would have been much less had the troops not remained exposed for so long on the earthworks of the two redoubts. They were finally

² A similar battery had been constructed by the British at Aboukir using sandbags.

withdrawn, and work began on occupying these works. The sappers destroyed the drawbridges to prevent counterattacks by the enemy and worked to open a breach in the scarp, with a ramp leading to it. Captain Feraudy of the engineers and several sappers were injured in this operation.

14th and 15th NIGHTS, of 19 to 21 June.

The San-Daniel redoubt could not offer much resistance after the capture of the other two. Its gorge was exposed and could be breached by the San-Luis redoubt; therefore, a battery, No. 5, consisting of three guns, was built behind this redoubt using sandbags, stones, and whatever earth could be found. Artillery Captain Lefébure was wounded in this operation, and a gunner was killed.

At daybreak, this battery opened fire, broke the drawbridge of the San-Daniel redoubt, and destroyed part of the gorge wall. The enemy could no longer access this work except via the ditch and ladders. After an eight-hour bombardment, they decided to evacuate it and set fire to the powder magazine. In the redoubt, we found two pieces of 8 dismantled and one piece of 4 in good condition. Our sappers immediately began breaching the redoubt and constructing a ramp for access. This work was extremely difficult under the deadly fire from the forts of Montjuïc, Constable, and Calvario. The scarp was merely a foot-thick masonry facing, abutting extremely hard rock, making it impossible to breach with cannon fire had we not been able to bombard the rear wall.

Possession of the San-Luis, San-Narciso, and San-Daniel redoubts gave us control of the approaches to the Montjuïc plateau and allowed us to reach it unseen from the fort. This result was only achieved after fifteen days of work, and thanks to a fortunate circumstance, without which the capture of these three redoubts, situated on the rock, would certainly have been more difficult and much longer than that of Mercadal itself, which they had feared attacking.

Meanwhile, Alvarez and the Girona junta, fearing that the city, already battered by continuous bombardment, would be unable to resist if Fort Montjuïc were to fall, had sent a request for assistance to the provincial junta. But General Blake, who had gathered under his command all the Spanish troops of Catalonia, Valencia, and Aragon, had marched from Valencia on Alcañiz to try to reconquer Zaragoza. The Marquis de Coupigny had remained in Tarragona with six thousand men and was leading the provincial troops. He had detached the two Milans to the vicinity of Barcelona, and Brigadier Wimpffen towards the upper Llobregat. D. Juan Claros and Canon Rovira had placed themselves at the head of the rallies in the Empordà region and were disrupting General Verdier's communications. While awaiting Blake's return to try to save Girona, the Marquis de Coupigny, to satisfy Governor Alvarez's demands, first wanted to send him supplies and some troop reinforcements.

General Gouvion Saint-Cyr readily grasped this plan; moreover, pressed by the orders of the Minister of War to protect General Verdier's operations, and having nothing more to fear for Barcelona, which had been resupplied in April by the squadron of Rear Admiral Cosmao (Kerjulien), he left Vic on 18 June with his troops and took up position on the 20th at Caldes de Malavella, located three leagues from Girona.

This movement began so opportunely that a brigade under General Pino encountered and routed three Spanish battalions coming from Hostalrich, escorting the convoy bound for Girona. Our troops seized between one thousand and twelve hundred oxen and a large quantity of wineskins: this was a true stroke of luck for them after the privations they had endured. They occupied a line whose right flank rested on the Oñar River, in front of Bruñola, and which extended through Santa Coloma and Vidreres to the sea at San Feliu de Guíxols. This small port, which served as a refuge for Spanish corsairs, was taken by the Italian Division after the most stubborn resistance.

General Gouvion Saint-Cyr established his headquarters at Caldes. He had received news on 12 June that Marshal Augereau was to replace him in command of the Seventh Corps. The Emperor had been displeased with his retreat towards Girona and would have preferred, on the contrary, that he had moved closer to the Ebro River to join forces with General Suchet, who commanded the Third Corps in Aragon, and then march on Valencia. From that moment on, General Gouvion Saint-Cyr no longer considered his command merely provisional, and this decision had a detrimental influence on the course of operations. Upon his arrival at Caldes, he received from General Verdier the plan of attacks, agreed upon in consultation with Generals Sanson and Taviel, and reports on the progress of the work since the opening of the trench: the difficulty of communications had prevented these reports from being sent to him earlier. General Gouvion Saint-Cyr agreed with General Kirgener, who commanded the engineers of his army corps, that since the interval between the Oñar and the Ter rivers was covered by the observation force, it would be better to abandon the attack on the French front, containing only the sorties from Fort Montjuïc by means of the three redoubts already captured and a simple countervallation line linking them, in order to launch the main and decisive attack against Mercadal, in the plain of Santa-Eugenia. There, the only threat was the distant fire from the forts on the Capuchin mountain, and the attack fronts could still be effectively repelled, albeit from a distance, by batteries established on the slopes of Mount Llívia and the Green Mound; there, above all, one could find all the earth necessary for building paths, whereas the Montjuïc plateau offered only bare rock, where earth had to be moved for cover. Furthermore, it was considered almost certain that the immediate capture of the city, by isolating the garrison from the inhabitants, would force the forts to fall, reducing them to their meager resources; whereas attacking the forts first, which admittedly gave the besieged a great advantage for sorties, would strengthen their resistance with all the city's defences.

As for the objection raised by the siege engineer commander against the attack on Mercadal, namely that the trenches would be dug from the forts on the Capuchins ridge, it was unfounded; for subsequent leveling surveys have proven that these forts, located approximately twelve hundred meters from the most advanced bastions of Mercadal, are one hundred and seven meters above the plain. It follows from this that, regardless of the uncertainty of the shots at the distance from the forts, the maximum inclination of the trenches' line of descent would have been only one-twelfth; now, as the ordinary profile of the trenches corresponds to a line of descent inclined at one-seventh, this would have been sufficient, and even more so, to cover the men in all their movements.

Despite these reasons, General Gouvion Saint-Cyr did not deem it necessary to give orders to change the direction of the attacks; he allowed them to continue on the Montjuïc plateau, and this critical error affected the rest of the siege.

General Verdier, overconfident in the sole effectiveness of his artillery to reduce Fort Montjuïc, as he had reduced the advanced redoubts, did not deem it necessary to employ a system of regular approaches. Instead, he focused all his efforts on erecting various enfilading, rear, and breaching batteries against the AB front, which he chose as his point of attack.

In the 1711 siege, the BC front had been preferred; but then it lacked a demilune, the covered way was imperfect, and the resistance was so weak that it was not necessary to complete the approaches to reach it. The demilune had been constructed with casemates at the shoulder angles and crenellations to cover the ditch. It was protected from flanking fire by a large traverse positioned at the capital, and it communicated with the fort via a vaulted and crenellated masonry caponier. The bastions were also well protected by a glacis parapet, built very close to the counterscarp within each re-entrant place of arms; so that it was necessary to advance right up to the crest of the covered way to breach the scarp. On this same front, movement was also very difficult, due to flanking fire from the Calvary and Constable forts, and moreover, there was the risk of sorties that the enemy could launch from this direction, emerging from the San-Daniel convent where they were entrenched.

Front AB presented fewer difficulties: the demilune was not breached, and its left face was exposed to the flanking fire of the San-Daniel redoubt. The communication bridge to this demilune was defended only by a small masonry drum, which also covered the postern gate of the curtain wall. The covered way was still imperfect, and its earthwork behind the counterscarp was not yet entirely filled in. The left face of bastion B had been covered by a mask built in the recessed parade ground since General Duhesme had attempted to breach it in 1808; but the right face of bastion A presented a considerable height from its facing to the first batteries, and the caponier adjoining the San-Luis redoubt offered favorable cover for advancing onto the glacis. Finally, on the plateau, and within four hundred meters, there was sufficient space to develop both direct and breaching batteries, and, between the Santa-Narciso and San-Daniel redoubts, a favorable location for ricochet batteries.

16th NIGHT, of 21 to 22 June.

This night, which followed the capture of the San-Daniel redoubt, was, like the following day, spent in preparations.

17th NIGHT, of 22 to 23 June.

The construction of batteries No. 7 and 8 began approximately five hundred and sixty meters from bastion B; the first, with two pieces of 24, to destroy the bastion's salient; the second, with four pieces of 16, to ricochet the attack front, despite the difficulty arising from the slope of this front towards the fortress. These two batteries were sheltered from the fire of Fort Calvary and Fort Constable by the San-Daniel redoubt. The engineers and artillery contributed to their construction.

18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st NIGHTS, of 23 to 27 June.

The hardness of the rock into which batteries Nos. 7 and 8 had to be hewn greatly delayed the construction of these two batteries, which did not begin firing until the morning of the 27th.

At the same time, extending along the diagonal part of the fort, Battery No. 9, equipped with four mortars, was built to harass the defenders with angled fire. This battery fired on the 25th.

Battery No. 4 had been turned against the fort to protect the construction of Batteries Nos. 7 and 8. Finally, Battery No. 11 had been extended to include two pieces of 16 and two howitzers, in order to more effectively counter the low-level fire on the town and to undermine the defenses of the Santa-Maria bastion: the pieces of 12 already there were replaced by two pieces of 16.

Battery No. 6 continued bombarding the town, but with four fewer mortars, which had been withdrawn to arm Battery No. 9. It had already launched five thousand shells. The enemy carefully collected the shrapnel to use against us as grapeshot. Battery No. 11 was firing at the town, but at a distance far too great to be effective. Certainly, these two batteries would have been more usefully employed against Fort Montjuïc, which was under attack; they consumed a very large quantity of ammunition, the loss of which was later regretted.

On the day of 27 June, materials began to be gathered to construct, about four hundred meters from Fort Montjuïc, a large battery, No. 10, consisting of twelve pieces of 24 and eight pieces of 16. This battery, called the Imperial, was intended to occupy almost the entire width of the plateau, in order to directly counter batter the attack front and open up the right face of Bastion A, of which it could see most of the facing. Since it was to be built on bare rock and exposed to all the fire from the fort's artillery, it was essential to erect it using sandbags in a single night, so that the enemy would not see it before it was ready to fire. The heavy rains that fell in the evening, and for several days without interruption, greatly delayed the preparations. The same cause forced the abandonment, as early as the 27th, of the feigned attack on Santa-Eugenia, the ground to the right of the canal being flooded, and the trench full of water. This circumstance could have been an obstacle to the capture of the town, had the main attack been launched from that direction; but the delay would have been only temporary, had the town not already been forced to capitulate.

This feigned attack was not repeated due to a lack of manpower. The siege division had just suffered a significant loss; on the 22nd, Rovira had advanced from Olot to Castellfollit with a corps of Miquelets and Somanténs, numbering approximately three thousand men, and had captured a convoy of carts and one hundred and twenty artillery horses. General Guillot, who occupied Mount Llivia, was sent with two thousand men in pursuit of the enemy. He attacked them on the 24th, on the heights of Bañolas. The fighting was fierce; General Guillot lost two hundred men and was forced to entrench himself in the convent of San-Morteria, awaiting reinforcements of ten elite companies, which General Verdier sent him. But during the night, the enemy withdrew to Olot, from whence they had come. General Guillot remained at Bañolas to protect the main road and escort convoys. Part of Lechi's division had also been withdrawn from the Salt plain to cover Pont-Mayor, and the remaining troops were barely sufficient for the work of the attack on Montjuïc.

22nd NIGHT, of 27 to 28 June.

A section of parade ground was constructed to the right of the San-Luis redoubt to support the troops intended to defend it. A road was begun to lead the artillery to the No. 10 battery.

23rd, 24th, 25th, and 26th NIGHTS, of 28 June 28 to 2 July.

Bags were filled with earth for the construction of the No. 10 battery. The rains presented major obstacles to the work. The earth was slick and the ground slippery. The roads became impassable for transporting artillery and supplies.

Two peasants who had escaped from the town were captured at the outposts; they carried a letter from the junta to General Blake, informing him of the town's plight and urging him to come to its aid. This letter confirmed General Verdier's resolve to seize Fort Montjuïc and then force the town to capitulate³.

For his part, General Gouvion Saint-Cyr, hoping to persuade the Governor to surrender before Blake's arrival, tasked General Kirgener, commander of the engineers in his corps, with initiating negotiations with Alvarez. General Kirgener sent Alvarez a letter via a prisoner⁴; but Alvarez replied that he refused to negotiate and that under no circumstances would he admit any representative. He seized this opportunity to repost in the streets and public squares his proclamation of 5 May, which stipulated the death penalty for anyone who spoke of capitulation. It was received with the same enthusiasm as the first time by the inhabitants who, despite the bombs, the fire, the progress of the siege, and the presence of a new army, making escapes from the fortress more difficult and diminishing their hope of rescue, were all roused to the idea of serving the cause of their country and religion through their obstinate resistance.

General Verdier, not having been informed of General Gouvion Saint-Cyr's actions, complained bitterly to the Minister of War⁵.

27th NIGHT, of 2 to 3 July.

Eighty thousand sandbags filled by the infantry were deposited in rocky hollows and folds of the terrain hidden from view of the fort and the town, approximately one hundred and fifty meters from the location of the large battery no. 10, for which they were intended. Five piles of sixteen thousand each were formed, well separated from one another to avoid confusion, and each designated to serve as the ammunition depot for a corresponding division within the battery. With all the materials thus prepared, construction of the battery began at nine o'clock in the evening. Two thousand men were employed. Each of the five sandbag piles and each of the five corresponding sections of the battery were surrounded by a line of sentries, within which the workers were placed, who, under no circumstances, could leave. Two engineering officers were assigned to each section of the battery, and the whole operation was supervised by Battalion

³ See supporting documents, no. 8.

⁴ See supporting documents, nos. 9 and 10.

⁵ See supporting documents, no. 11.

Commander Fleury of the Engineering Corps, the attack commander, assisted by two officers acting as senior officers. Battalion Commander Lasseron of the Artillery Corps and eight officers of the same branch directed the construction of the battery's shoulder.

The workers retrieved the sandbags from the piles and brought them to each section of the battery, where they were received by the gunners who were building the parapet as if with rubble. The night was very dark, and the incessant rain made the ground slippery, especially on the slopes, and further increased the weight of the sandbags. Each man carried up to three bags at a time. The workers' activity slowed down at one o'clock in the morning; they were then told that the sum they had been promised would be doubled. At three-thirty, the excessive fatigue having produced another moment of laziness, they were told that the work would not be interrupted by daylight, and that they would not leave until it was entirely finished. They were reminded at the same time that they were within grape shot range of the fort, making them aware of the danger to which their laziness exposed them. The workers redoubled their efforts, and at five o'clock in the morning, after eight hours of work, the battery was not only finished but also armed with its twenty guns and abundantly supplied with projectiles and powder. It opened fire at half past five. The earth-filled shoulder was one hundred and twenty meters long, six meters thick, and two meters thirty centimeters high. The work had been protected by batteries Nos. 6, 7, 8, and 9, which maintained a heavy fire on the fort throughout the night.

The astonishment that struck the enemy in the morning at the sudden appearance of this battery did not, however, weaken their resolve. They immediately withdrew part of their artillery from Fort Montjuïc to prevent it from being dismantled, keeping only a few light pieces in battery, the positions of which they frequently changed. They repaired the upper crest of the parapet as it was destroyed, using gabions and sandbags, behind which he occasionally engaged in heavy firing. That same day, the Imperial battery breached the right face of Bastion A by about twelve meters, and a cannonball broke the mast of the Spanish flag flying over that bastion. The enemy returned with heavy fire from the upper and lower works of the town and the San Juan Tower and managed to dismantle two pieces of 24 of the Imperial battery, also destroying some of its embrasures. One gunner was killed; Lieutenant of Artillery Bosse and fifteen gunners were wounded.

28th NIGHT, of 3 to 4 July.

Battery No. 10 was repaired, and the two guns that had been dismantled were replaced by two howitzers. We began two traverses in the caponier which leads from the San-Luis redoubt to the salient of the demilune.

At ten thirty in the night, Battalion Commander Fleury of the engineers reconnoitered the breach. He advanced with three sappers to the crest of the glacis of the bastion's parade ground. Finding no enemy there, he descended into the earthwork of the covered way, which, in this section, was level with the bottom of the ditch. Under cover of darkness, he was thus able to reach the foot of the breach, which he determined to be passable. A sentry in the demilune, hearing some noise, shouted twice *who's there*, but did not fire.

At daybreak, Battery No. 10 resumed its fire to widen the breach. Forts Constable and Calvary fired heavily on this battery, as did the lower works of the town.

Battery No. 11, having received its additional armament, began firing on the Santa-Maria bastion with four 16-pounder guns and two howitzers. This attack was as pointless as the continued action of Mortar Battery No. 6 on the town.

No. 6

Letter from General Verdier to the Duke of Feltre, Minister of War.

San Medir, 7 June 1809.

Excellency,

Since the last letter I had the honor of addressing to Your Excellency on 4 June, we have been occupied with containing the enemy in Girona, positioning our outposts as close as possible to the city walls, completing the siege as far as our troops have been able, bringing in artillery and munitions, thoroughly reconnoitering the fortress, and finally finalizing the attack plan, which you will see outlined in the plan I have the honor of sending to Your Excellency. I enclose the official report that will accompany it. Your Excellency will note that our attacks are linked and very close together. I preferred this course of action to attacking the city from the plain because, once I control Montjouy (Montjuïc), I neutralize all the other forts; because I avoid large artillery transports, double our ammunition, needing to use only about half my artillery; and because, finally, in an extraordinary situation, I can concentrate my entire force on a very small front, protect the siege with strong positions, and command anything that might come against me.

An attack on the city from the plain would undoubtedly have been more brilliant and perhaps shorter; but I could not guarantee that I could extinguish the fires of the forts located on the mountain or counter their attacks; moreover, my artillery would have been scattered over too large an area, and I would have been forced to keep my troops separated into two corps, without them being able to support each other, unless I abandoned the artillery and the fortifications.

With everything thus arranged and ready, the trench will be opened tonight, and the batteries will be constructed with all possible speed; I hope that in four or five days at the latest, we will be able to fire on the fortress.

Our communications with France are becoming more difficult every day due to the large number of brigands and armed peasants who infest the Empordà region. I have been forced to detach a corps of twelve hundred men from the siege, as I had the honor of reporting to Your Excellency in my letter of the 4th of this month; this column completely defeated the enemy on the heights of the Montaña Negra (Black Mountain), and it has succeeded, for the time being, in re-establishing our communications from Figueres to Bellegarde. It will take up position and will not return until all our convoys of munitions and provisions currently at Le Perthus have arrived at Figueres. If circumstances force me to recall it to Girona, our communications with France will once again be cut off.

I have the honor to ask Your Excellency to accept the expression of my deepest respect, etc.

Signed: VERDIER.

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## No. 7

*Note on the planned attack on the fortress of Girona, arranged by General Verdier, Commander of the Siege, General Sanson, Commander of the Engineers, and General Taviel, Commander of the Artillery.*

San Medir, 7 June 1809.

The siege works will begin with an open communication channel on the heights of Tramon, in order to reach Batteries No. 1 and 2 under cover. Each of these batteries will consist of four pieces of 24 and a howitzer "de chasse" (bow chaser); they are intended to extinguish the fires and destroy the defenses of the San-Narciso and San-Luis redoubts. Battery No. 2 commands a significant portion of the San-Luis redoubt; Battery No. 1 is at approximately the same height as the San-Narciso redoubt; the parade ground linking these two batteries will house the troops necessary to protect them against attacks from the besieged.

While Batteries Nos. 1 and 2 are destroying the redoubt defenses, the most favorable features of the terrain, and especially the ravine in front of the Justices, will be used to establish Batteries Nos. 3 and 4 on the hillock of Can Aulet. These batteries, armed with guns from Batteries Nos. 1 and 2, will be used to bombard the San-Narciso and San-Luis redoubts and to breach the escarpment, which can be seen quite far below. The parade ground connecting these batteries will serve to contain the troops intended to defend them.

At the same time as Batteries Nos. 3 and 4 are firing on the two redoubts, the troops will approach these works as far as the counterscarp, which will be reinforced if necessary. From there, they will engage the siege engine, in case the defenses are not sufficiently breached.

With the San-Narciso redoubt captured, Battery No. 5 will be established there, directing its fire into the San-Daniel redoubt and forcing its evacuation.

Having thus secured the perimeter of the plateau on which Fort Montjuïc is built, an attack will be launched from the parallel line linking the San-Narciso and San-Luis redoubts, attacking the fort from the Pedret bastion, which is considered the most vulnerable to attack and the easiest to destroy.

Possession of Fort Montjuïc will facilitate an attack on the city from the Santa-Maria bastion, which appears to be the easiest to access. To facilitate this attack, and as soon as Batteries Nos. 1 and 2 are established against the redoubts, Battery No. 6 will be erected, composed of twelve mortars of ten to twelve inches, intended to bombard the section of the city through which an attack is planned. This battery can be built without preliminary work, as it is covered by the crest of the hill behind which it is situated; only a shoulder will be needed to protect it from frontal fire.

The work on the low attack will begin with the trenches necessary to reach the parallel where Batteries No. 9 and 10 will be erected. These batteries will breach the scarp, destroy the

defenses of the Santa-Maria bastion, and also fire on the collateral works, attempting to breach them.

Meanwhile, Battery No. 12 will be built at the head of the Pedret suburb, intended to open up the right side of the Santa-Maria bastion as well as the section of the rampart adjacent to it. The approach to this battery will be from the Pedret suburb.

With Montjuïc taken, and while work is underway on the attack from below, the fort's covered way will be breached, and Battery No. 11 will be established, intended to destroy the ramparts and the adjoining Santa-Llúcia tower; it will also bombard the small San-Juan tower, which provides a flanking view for the lower attack.

The mortars of Battery No. 6 will be lowered into the parallel and used to arm Nos. 7 and 8, which will fire on the collateral works of the ramparts, rendering the interior uninhabitable.

With the city breached by Batteries Nos. 9, 10, 11, and 12, and its defenses in ruins, the advance will begin at Battery No. 11 and proceed to the Santa-Maria bastion and the section of the fortifications between this bastion and the Santa-Llúcia tower. From then on, the only obstacles to overcome will be those found within the city itself. However, we dare to hope that none will be encountered, since the city has been harassed by heavy mortar batteries firing continuously since the beginning of the siege, and will be within easy cannon range, making it easy to crush any resistance.

The three forts located on the Capuchins ridge could still house the garrison after the city's capture. But this resource must be considered useless, since these forts contain neither the water nor the provisions necessary to sustain them.

According to the plan, it would have seemed appropriate to attack the lower town from the bastions of Santa-Clara and the Governor, as well as the heights of Montjuïc: this idea had initially been considered; but when this part of the fortress was reconnoitered, it was found that the forts of the Constable, Reina Ana (Queen Anne), the Capuchins, and Montjuïc would control the roads; and that these roads would be bombarded by twenty or thirty cannons that could not be countered or ricocheted from any surrounding position; these considerations forced the abandonment of this attack and the undertaking of the one we have described.

The Division General, The Artillery General,  
*Signed:* SANSON.                      *Signed:* TAVIEL.

The Division General,  
*Signed:* VERDIER.

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No. 8

Letter from the Girona junta to General Blake.

Girona, 27 June 1809.

Excellency,

The enemy, after harassing Fort Montjuïc for two days with a vast quantity of bombs and grenades, began their bombardment of the fort this morning at four o'clock with nine large-caliber artillery pieces, and continued throughout the day with extraordinary activity and vigor. It is certain they will not waste a moment in carrying out their plan to breach it.

From the cathedral bell tower, we observe that the enemy, on the side of Santa Eugenia, is advancing along the Royal road to Barcelona with ten artillery pieces and a column of cavalry and infantry, undoubtedly intending to attack some of the troops sent to our aid, or perhaps to fortify themselves at certain points. And if, with the works he is making this side of the village of Santa Eugenia, he places artillery there again, the loyal inhabitants of Girona, after having suffered so much from the bombardment, will find themselves again exposed to the fire of the new battery, which will not fail to cause very great damage to the walls of this faithful city.

The critical and desperate situation we are in needs no exaggeration. We were unable to receive the meager funds sent to Lieutenant Don Manuel Massanas, and we were forced, in order to survive a few more days, to borrow money from the inhabitants; but, after exhausting this temporary relief, we will lack everything. If, unfortunately, Montjuïc falls into enemy hands, the fortress cannot hold, and even less so if a new battery established on the south side breaches the walls.

Your Excellency, it is not fabricating imaginary perils to speak the truth; and since these perils are real, there is neither cowardice nor despondency in making them known, especially when it is out of the desire to see the heroic valor, constancy, and generous sacrifices of the inhabitants not be in vain for the country and for themselves, and to avoid the bitter pain of losing so many sacrifices due to the delay of aid that has become indispensable.

This illustrious Junta has no doubt that, after so much suffering, its pleas will reach Your Excellency's heart; circumstances are such that prompt action is necessary, because time is of the essence. It earnestly begs Your Excellency to deign to deploy all your authority and energy so that the troops under your command, destined to relieve this important stronghold, may arrive immediately to liberate it, preserve its glory intact, and avoid the grave and irreparable damage that its loss would cause to the principality and perhaps to the entire Kingdom.

May God grant Your Excellency many years.

Signed: IGNACIO DE ROS.
FRANCISCO PUIG Y DORCA.
RAMON GLILAX.

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## No. 9

*Letter from General Kirgener, Commander of Engineers in  
the Sixth Corps, to Governor Alvarez.*

At the camp before Girona, 2 July 1809.

M. Governor,

I have the honor to inform you that I am authorized by His Excellency Count Gouvion Saint-Cyr, Commander-in-Chief of the French Army, to receive any proposals you may have for me, given your current circumstances. I therefore invite you to come or send one of your senior officers worthy of your trust, to communicate with me at the outposts where the prisoner who brought you this letter left me.

To avoid any misinterpretation, you may also include a member of the Junta and one of the leaders of the clergy.

I have the honor to remain, with the most distinguished consideration, etc.

*Signed:* KIRGENER, Baron de Planta.

*P.S.* I will await your reply until 10:00 a.m.



## No. 10

*Reply of Governor Alvarez to the preceding letter.*

Girona, 2 July 1809.

Monseigneur,

I have nothing to discuss with Your Excellency. I know in advance what your intentions are; and henceforth, let Your Excellency know that, under no pretext, will I admit either parliamentarian or trumpeter. This is the reply I have to give to Your Excellency.

May God grant you many years.

*Signed:* MARIANO ALVAREZ.



## No. 11

*Letter from General Verdier to the Minister of War.*

San Medir, 2 July 1809.

General Gouvion Saint-Cyr, no doubt misled by the letter from the Girona Junta of 27 June, a copy of which I had the honor of sending to Your Excellency, or wishing to add to his glory by capturing Girona, sent General Kirgener, Commander of the Engineers in his army corps, this morning to deliver proposals to the garrison of that city to persuade them to surrender. General Saint-Cyr, forgetting all propriety, did not see fit to inform me of his actions, and I only learned of the mission of General Kirgener through reports from my outposts and the cannon fire that the city fired at him after receiving his letter; one Neapolitan soldier was killed by this volley and four others were wounded.

The city's governor, believing he owed a response to the proposal of General Kirgener, threw the enclosed letter, attached to a stone, from the top of the city walls, deeming it more appropriate to keep General Kirgener's messenger than to send him back with his reply.

The enemy, who expects to be rescued at any moment, attributes our apparent eagerness to persuade him to capitulate to the proximity of the reinforcements he is counting on; this is what he shouts at us from his walls, and it only makes him more tenacious.

*Signed:* VERDIER.