

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

29th NIGHT, of 4 to 5 July.

Battalion Commander Fleury, convinced by his reconnaissance the previous day that the breach was passable, had proposed an immediate assault on Fort Montjuïc. He hoped to capitalize on the momentum of the troops spurred on by the success of Battery No. 10 and to prevent the enemy from recovering from their initial shock or constructing an inner entrenchment behind the breach. Despairing of seeing the assault delayed and thus losing precious time, this officer, whose brilliant valor had earned him distinction everywhere, decided to assault the breach that very night with two companies of sappers, hoping for support from the trench guards.

He left the San-Luis redoubt at half past nine on a dark night and, as he had done the day before, proceeded along the glacis of the redoubt's caponier towards the capital of the demilune. Then, guided by the dark mass of the fort silhouetted against the sky, he turned right, drawing closer for fear of losing his way. He encountered the recessed parade ground between the demilune and the breached bastion. Having arrived there, to follow his exact route from the previous day; he should have continued his movement to the right, as far as the salient parade ground of the bastion, behind which he had observed there was no counterscarp. But, seeing himself so close to the fort, he thought it best to spare his small column a flanking march under almost point-blank fire, and instead reach the breach directly through the re-entrant parade ground where he was positioned, considering the few feet of counterscarp he believed he only had to cross a minor inconvenience. He therefore hastened to answer the enemy's cry of *who goes there with France* and to rush forward into the ditch. But he was stopped by an obstacle he had not foreseen. The counterscarp facing, which was then under repair or construction, formed an isolated wall at the foot of the inner slope of the earthwork of the covered way. The sappers of the first company, commanded by Captain Lafitte, quickly descended this slope and, in their eagerness, ran up against this wall, the existence of which they could not comprehend nor measure its height. The enemy unleashed a terrible fire. The second company, which formed the rear of the column, thought they heard the order to retreat and returned to Battery No. 10. The first company remained for a few moments longer in the covered way, with Battalion Commander Fleury, who then decided to withdraw. We had thirty-two men killed or wounded, and among the latter was Captain Féraudy of the engineers, still recovering from the initial gunshot wound he received during the capture of the San-Narciso redoubt.

Such was the unfortunate outcome of this attempt, which would probably have succeeded if Commander Fleury, without being guided by conjecture, however well-founded, had scrupulously followed the path he had reconnoitered the day before.

General Verdier, perhaps believing the breach impassable because Commander Fleury's small column had been repelled, continued the artillery fire for three days before launching a decisive assault. This gave the Spanish time to construct a redoubt behind the breach. Brigadier Fournás, defending Fort Montjuïc with seven hundred men, used this time to have a trench cut built on either side of the breach by skirmishers who were relieved hourly and paid one piaster per man; the survivors inherited from those who were killed.

During the day of the 5th, the Army of Observation seized the important post of Palamós, whose port facilitated Spanish communication between Girona and Tarragona, the residence of the provincial junta and the captain general. This position was very strong; the town, situated at the tip of a peninsula, was protected by old entrenchments that the Spanish had rebuilt and armed with twenty cannons, and which they defended with six gunboats. General Fontane, of Pino's division, was tasked with capturing this post with a brigade of infantry, six artillery pieces, and two squadrons of dragoons. After several fruitless warnings, the town was attacked and taken by storm, despite the fiercest resistance: the garrison was put to the sword.

30th NIGHT, of 5 to 6 July.

With the assault on Fort Montjuïc postponed for a few days, the authorities decided to use this time to prepare sections of accommodation on the glacis to support the troops in their attack. They began by constructing new traverses around the old caponier that served as the communication link between the San-Luis redoubt and the demilune.

31st NIGHT, of 6 to 7 July.

Work continued on the caponier, and a parallel passage was opened fifty meters in front of the covered way of the demilune, extending slightly beyond the main body of the work. Although covert communication was not yet possible, the plan was to open it up a few moments before the assault, to create a small shelter of sandbags on the crest of the covered way, and to station a few fusiliers there. The entire night and the following day were spent filling sandbags for this shelter.

The artillery established a new battery, No. 12, in the San-Luis redoubt, consisting of two pieces of 16, to bombard the left shoulder of Bastion B, which was more visible from this position than from the main battery, No. 10. It was important to destroy this point to better expose the flank protecting the breach in Bastion A. Battery No. 12 was also to fire on the middle of the curtain wall to knock debris from the facing into the drum at its base, forcing the enemy to remove a howitzer they had kept there.

At daybreak, Battery No. 12 opened fire. Battery No. 10 resumed its fire to soften the slope of the breach and prevent the enemy from clearing its base. The right face of Bastion A was open along its entire length. Mortar Battery No. 9 dropped a large number of shells into the interior of

the fort. Batteries Nos. 7 and 8 fired on the defenses. Batteries Nos. 6 and 11 simultaneously directed a very heavy fire against the San-Juan tower and the lower works of the city.

We had two gunners killed and five wounded.

32nd NIGHT, of 7 to 8 July.

The assault on Fort Montjuïc was to take place that very night. The men advanced from the section of the parallel trench laid the previous day to reinforce the covered way on the left face of the demilune with sandbags, stretching for a length of one hundred meters. Captain Drouet of the engineers and three miners were wounded in this perilous task. More solid, well-prepared, and more extensive billeting would have spared the besieging army serious losses, and the commander of the attacks the pain of a dismal outcome.

Two thousand four hundred men from the elite companies of the siege division, grenadiers and light infantry, under the command of Adjutant Major Beurmann, had been assembled during the night behind a fold in the terrain situated to the right and in front of Battery No. 10. These troops were divided into two columns, each preceded by two companies of light infantry, a company of sappers, and a detachment of gunners carrying grenades. The first column was to assault the breach in Bastion A, via the salient parade ground of the covered way; and the second, equipped with ladders, was tasked with attempting to scale the half-moon at the embrasures. At the same time, a feint attack was to take place on the San-Daniel front. But no column was tasked with threatening the fort's gorge and cutting off its communication with the town, which would have had the twofold advantage of greatly alarming the defenders by depriving them of any hope of retreating, and of preventing them from receiving reinforcements.

At three o'clock in the morning, at a signal of ten cannon shots from Battery No. 10, the troops rushed forward at a run and crossed, in the open, with few losses, a distance of three hundred meters to reach the crest of the glacis. Battalion Commander Fleury of the engineers, who led the first column, composed of six companies of light infantry, one hundred Italian Royal Velites, sappers, and gunners, reached without hindrance the salient parade ground of Bastion A. He advanced into the ditch; and, although already hit by a bullet in the side, he climbed through the rubble to the top of the breach.

The second column advanced to the left face of the demilune and jumped into the covered way near the re-entrant parade ground. The counterscarp was four meters high at this point, and the troops could only descend into the ditch using the ladders they were to use for the attack on the demilune.

At the sound of the attackers, the enemy unleashed an extremely heavy fire from all parts of the attack front, halting most of the troops on the glacis. The head of the column, commanded by Battalion Commander Fleury, had reached the top of the breach, but was stopped there by the obstacles the enemy had managed to erect. Two small parapets of sandbags had been built to the right and left of the breach, perpendicular to the face of the bastion; they were preceded by a ditch, in which stood two rows of chevaux-de-frise, extending to the foot of the inner embankment of the rampart's earthwork, thus connecting the ends of the two small parapets.

Packed between these obstacles and the breach, shot at point-blank range from the parapets of the cuts, a crenellated barracks at the rear of the bastion, and a guardhouse to the left, and pounded on the ramp of the breach by grapeshot from several cannons and a howitzer loaded with three hundred rounds, our soldiers tried in vain to break the lances of the chevaux-de-frise. Commander Fleury and seven officers accompanying him fell wounded, as did a large number of velites, sappers, and gunners. Now leaderless, the soldiers broke ranks and returned in disorder to the covered way. The remaining attackers, crushed and scattered under the deadly fire from Fort Montjuïc, the San-Juan Tower, the lower works of the town, the Constable's Fort, the Calvary Fort, and the Chapter Redoubt, had retreated to points where they believed themselves less exposed to enemy fire, or had taken up positions in the open on the crest of the glacis to return fire from the fort. Colonel Mouff, of the First Regiment of Berg, at the head of several companies of Westphalians, tried in vain to rally them and lead them to the breach. This colonel was wounded, and Adjutant Commandant Beurmann, who was in charge of the main assault, only managed with difficulty to halt the fleeing troops. The attack attempted against the demilune was no more successful; some sappers were beginning to scale the escarpment with their ladders when the delay of the main force and the general disorder forced them to withdraw.

General Verdier, who had remained in Battery No. 10 with Generals Sanson and Taviel, awaiting the outcome of the battle, ordered a retreat to renew the attack on the bastion with a more coordinated effort, but to no avail. The brave Italian velites, at the head of the voltigeurs, reached the breach a second time, but were unable to hold it; and the rest of the column broke ranks even more quickly than the first time. Irritated by this disorder, General Verdier ordered Adjutant Beurmann to rally all the fleeing troops to the reserve and attempt a third assault. This attempt only served to increase the number of casualties and to demonstrate the troops' inability to overcome such formidable obstacles.

The enemy, emboldened by their successes, unleashed a terrible fire. Alvarez himself had rushed in with a reserve to reinforce the fort's garrison. After two hours of fighting, General Verdier, having lost all hope of forcing the defenders, ordered his troops to withdraw.

This unfortunate affair cost us one thousand seventy-nine men killed or wounded, including seventy-seven officers. The brave battalion commander of engineers, Fleury, and Lieutenants Grassi of the engineers and Euzenate of the sappers were wounded at the breach. Artillery Lieutenants Mathieu and Martin, sixty sappers, and seventeen gunners were put out of action. Captains Plazanet of the engineers and Ronzelli of the sappers were also wounded during the attack on the demilune. The Italian velites behaved admirably; they had fifty-two men out of action out of one hundred.

At six in the morning, a few minutes after the assault, the San-Juan tower, occupied by the Spanish, was blown up by a bomb explosion or by the negligence of those handling the gunpowder. It buried its garrison beneath its ruins. This event was a small consolation for our losses during the night¹.

¹ See supporting documents, nos. 12, 13 and 14.

33rd NIGHT, of 8 to 9 July.

Batteries No. 9 and 10 dropped bombs and shells on the breach to prevent the enemy from working there. Battery No. 12 continued its fire; four guns from Battery No. 10 were directed against the left face of Bastion B to destroy its defenses.

The Marquis de Coupigny wanted to make another attempt to bring reinforcements into the fortress. A corps of troops under General Wimpffen and the bands of the two Milans coming from Hostalrich harassed Souham's division on the right for three days, in order to facilitate the passage to the left of a column of fifteen hundred grenadiers, commanded by the English Colonel Rodolphe Marshal and by D. Narcisse Rich, Alvarez's trusted aide-de-camp. On the morning of 9 July, this column had passed General Pino's line quite close to Llagostera, where his headquarters were located; but a straggler who was captured reported this movement. The Commander-in-Chief, judging that this column would head towards Cassà de la Selva to enter Girona during the night, hastily dispatched Adjutant Commandant Devaux to that point with the fourth battalion of the Sixty-Seventh Regiment, encamped near headquarters, which he was serving. This colonel had scarcely been in ambush near Cassà, as ordered, when the enemy column emerged at nightfall. Met by a heavy, sustained, and close-range volley, it retreated under cover of darkness and the woods; but the next day it fell into the hands of a party commanded by General Pino, who had been ordered to pursue it and scour the countryside until he found it. The English Colonel requested surrender and fled while negotiations were underway, heading for Girona, which he managed to enter. The loss of this troop, captured so close to the stronghold and at a time when the Governor so desperately needed them, was keenly felt by the enemy.

General Verdier, forced to resort to the regular method of sieges—the only way to compel the garrison of Fort Montjuïc to leave the ruins where they were defending themselves with such courage—ordered the siege works to be carried out to the foot of the breach. The new works were directed with as much prudence as bravery by Captain Boischevalier of the Engineers, the attack commander, and the officers under his command, but not without considerable delays and accidents caused by enemy fire and sorties, the rocky terrain, and the glacis's embankments, which consisted only of rubble.

34th NIGHT, of 9 to 10 July.

The section of the parallel already begun at the tail of the glacis of the demilune was weak, and it was impossible to reach it under cover. Efforts were therefore made to establish a secure communication route by constructing new traverses in the San-Luis caponier. A piece of artillery that the enemy had retained on the left face of Bastion B greatly hampered this work, which continued in daylight. Sandbags were filled on the ground to extend the parallel already begun.

35th NIGHT, of 10 to 11 July.

Work on the caponier continued; however, very heavy rain forced its suspension. At nightfall, the enemy launched a sortie from the fort, which our outposts repelled. Fearing in turn that they would be attacked, they twice engaged in a very lively exchange of gunfire and grapeshot.

36th NIGHT, of 11 to 12 July.

Two new traverses were constructed in the caponier, and a thirty-meter-long communication trench was opened in front to reach the position of the parallel.

The artillery began work on a new battery, No. 13, with six pieces of 24pdrs, to destroy the salient of the demilune and to demolish as much as possible the left face of Bastion B and the curtain wall parapet. It was thought that this battery, being closer and having a better command than Battery No. 10, would also be more effective.

At daybreak, the traverses of the caponier, which had been damaged the previous night by enemy fire, were improved. We had one man killed and two wounded.

37th NIGHT, of 12 to 13 July.

Two new traverses were constructed in the caponier, and communication could then be established under cover with the beginning of the trench begun the previous night to reach the position of the parallel. To reach Battery No. 13 under cover, a sandbag trench was constructed, which was also intended to serve as a parade ground. Battery No. 10 having become useless, the materials were removed for use in the trenches.

At six o'clock in the morning, Battery No. 13 opened fire on the attack front.

The sandbag trenches constructed the previous night in the caponier were replaced with stone traverses topped with gabions. Two sappers were killed and three wounded.

38th NIGHT, of 13 to 14 July.

The trench begun to connect the caponier to the parallel trench started on the glacis was completed. This parallel trench was itself extended to the left until it met the new trench. Twelve men were wounded, including four gunners.

39th NIGHT, of 14 to 15 July.

The parallel trench was extended to the left by a twenty-meter detour, and the section begun the previous night was improved. The enemy laid a heavy fire on these works, both from the fort and from the lower bastions of the town, from which they launched bombs. Ten men were wounded.

During the day, work continued on the parallel trench to the right as far as the capital of the demilune, and a large quantity of sandbags, gabions, and fascines were amassed on the rear for the work of the following nights. Battery No. 13, having achieved its objective, slowed its fire and fired only at the fort's defenses to protect the sapping works. Batteries Nos. 10 and 12, as well as Batteries Nos. 6 and 11, continued firing to draw back some of the city's indirect fire, which was directed against the main attack. Three gunners wounded.

40th NIGHT, of 15 to 16 July.

The parallel was extended sixty meters to the right of the capital of the demilune. At daybreak, part of the old sandbag fortification along this parallel was replaced with a gabion wall. Two men killed and three wounded.

That day, Alvarez sent a report to the Supreme Junta in Seville on the state of the city, in which he described the danger the fortress would face after the capture of Montjuïc. At the same time, his energetic words rekindled the hopes that the Spaniards had rightly placed in his firmness and courage². According to a report from the artillery commander of the garrison, attached to this document, it appeared that from the opening of the trench until 13 July inclusive, the besieger had launched seven thousand twenty-seven bombs and one thousand one hundred and ten shells into the town; and into Fort Montjuïc, one thousand eight hundred bombs and one thousand four hundred and sixty-one shells; that he had, moreover, fired twenty-five thousand nine hundred cannon shots; which would have led to an estimated consumption of over two thousand four hundred and thirty-three quintals of gunpowder; that the garrison, for its part, had sent nine thousand bombs, seven thousand shells, and ten thousand cannonballs.

The Catalan Junta had also sent a new request for assistance to the Seville Junta³.

The Marquis de Coupigny responded to the requests of the Governor and the Junta⁴; and, while waiting to be able to act more effectively in favor of Girona, he continued to disrupt the communications of the siege division. A band of men who had set out from Olot had succeeded, on 10 July, in seizing a convoy of gunpowder coming from Perpignan. This event was all the more unfortunate for us, as the consumption of munitions at the siege was considerable. General Verdier, who had recalled the brigade of General Guillot to his side, had to reorganize a mobile column to cover the main road to France, placing its command under Major Maisonneuve, his aide-de-camp. The Spanish were defeated on the 15th near La Jonquiere and driven back to Sant Llorenç de la Muga.

Another Spanish corps of three thousand five hundred men had advanced from Olot towards Bañolas to threaten the camps of the siege division. General Verdier informed General Gouvion Saint-Cyr, who sent the Forty-Second Regiment of Souham's division, twenty-six hundred strong, under the command of Colonel Espert, to meet the enemy. This regiment arrived at Bañolas on 12 July at six in the evening and found the enemy there. They attacked the following

² See supporting documents, no. 15.

³ See supporting documents, no. 16.

⁴ See supporting documents, nos. 17 and 18.

day and routed them. The Spanish fled into the mountains, leaving thirty men killed on the battlefield; we had about twenty wounded.

The column defeated on the 15th near La Jonquiere had rallied at Sant-Llorenç de la Muga, where, recruiting a large number of peasants, it soon numbered five thousand men. General Verdier was again obliged to detach the brigade of General Guillo against it: this brigade and Major Maisonneuve's column, which had joined it, marched against the Spanish; but the latter, without waiting for the French troops, retreated into the mountains of the Sierra de Llorona, a land of appalling harshness, where it was almost impossible to pursue them.

At the same time, the gathering taking place at Olot was growing daily; it was already estimated at twelve thousand men. A combined attack would have been necessary to drive the enemy out; but General Gouvion Saint-Cyr, fearing an attack on the Barcelona road, refused to attempt any expedition⁵.

General Gouvion Saint-Cyr's system of inaction, not only against the fortress but also against the external enemy, was truly deplorable. The siege division was overwhelmed by escorting convoys, labors, and fatigues of every kind, while the observation army remained idle, even allowing itself to be blockaded in its camps. This army had already exhausted the small area of the country it occupied; supplies were beginning to run low, and the inactive soldiers were falling ill. Whereas by detaching mobile columns to distant locations, leaving only reserves in an entrenched camp near Girona, it could have extended its sphere of activity, procured supplies, and prevented enemy rallies; moreover, the soldiers, kept in a state of healthy activity, would have been less susceptible to disease.

41st NIGHT, of 16 to 17 July.

The parallel was extended to the right as far as the salient of Bastion A.

During daylight, this work was improved, and the construction of a gabion wall continued to replace the sandbag fortification of the parallel on the left side of the capital of the demilune.

42nd NIGHT, of 17 to 18 July.

The parallel being nearly finished, work began on the crest of the covered way of the demilune. At the noise made by the workers, the enemy thought they were under attack and fired so heavily for a time that our sappers were forced to retreat back into the parallel. They returned afterward and constructed, using gabions, a fourteen-meter crest on each arm of the covered way, a large traverse at each end, and a connection to the parallel on the left. In this operation, we had two sappers killed and two others wounded.

During the daylight, the left side of the parapet and the communication with the parallel trench were improved. A second communication trench was opened on the right, and the earth-bag fortification of the parallel trench continued to be replaced with a gabion wall. A miner and a gunner were killed.

⁵ See supporting documents, nos. 19 and 20.

43rd NIGHT, of 18 to 19 July.

The parapet of the covered way of the demilune was extended, and a traverse was made to the left and right of this extension in order to establish two breach batteries against the demilune, Nos. 14 and 15, each with two pieces of 16 and a stone-thrower (perrier). The enemy launched a large number of bombs and grenades at this work from the lower works of the town. He also fired grapeshot from a mortar or stone-thrower positioned at the salient of Bastion A. That same night, a sudden flood of the Ter River, caused by rains that had been falling for several days and by a violent storm, swept away the Salt and San-Julían bridges: the water rose four feet above the level of these bridges.

At daybreak, the section of the parapet built the previous night was completed, and the damage caused by the bombs was repaired. The entire section of the parallel wall that had been constructed with sandbags to the right of the half-moon was replaced with a gabion wall.

Three men killed and eight wounded, including three sappers and two gunners.

44th NIGHT, of 19 to 20 July.

Our sappers repaired the parapet of the covered way damaged by enemy fire; they thickened the parapet and widened the earthwork. The parallel was improved and finished with a hook to brace it against the exits. Captain Bourgoïn of the engineers was wounded, as were several workers.

During the day, work continued to thicken the parapet on the right side of the parallel, and preparations began in the crest of the covered way for the breach batteries against the demilune. The enemy fired heavily on this work and set fire, with fire pots, a considerable number of gabions that were filled only with stones and simply topped with sandbags and fascines; the heat of the day, drying out the wood, made them even easier to ignite. Several workers and trench guards were wounded.

45th NIGHT, of 20 to 21 July.

The sappers continued preparing the emplacements for the breach batteries in the crest of the covered way and repairing the parapet of the parallel, which had been damaged by enemy fire.

Three sappers were wounded.

At four o'clock in the morning, the enemy began firing on Battery No. 11, which, for six consecutive hours, was the target of all the fire from the bastions and lower batteries of the fortress. Several bombs caused considerable damage: Artillery Lieutenant Landrieux and five gunners were wounded, and two others were killed. Batteries Nos. 10, 12, and 13 continued firing. Work continued on thickening the parapet of the crest of the covered way of the demilune, widening the earthwork, improving the traverses, and adding overhangs to make communication more secure.

46th NIGHT, of 21 to 22 July.

The covered wayside parapet was extended thirty meters to the left to reach the parade ground where the shield covering bastion B was located. This section of the quarters was reinforced by a traverse to provide a new location for the breaching battery. The enemy set fire a second time, using fire pots, to the gabions and fascines of part of the parapet; but this damage was repaired despite very heavy gunfire directed from the fort against the workers.

One man killed and four wounded.

At daybreak, work began on breaching Batteries No. 14 and 15 in the covered wayside parapet of the demilune, to the right and left of the salient. During this work, Artillery Captain Ragmey was killed; Artillery Lieutenant Chandon and two gunners were wounded. The damage caused the previous night by enemy fire to the parallel and traverses of the caponier was repaired. Some sections of the parapets along this parallel were thickened.

47th NIGHT, of 22 to 23 July.

The parapet of the covered way was extended twelve meters to the right, and a traverse was constructed. This work was completed when the enemy launched a firepot which set fire to the gabions and fascines, so that the work had to be rebuilt.

One sapper was killed and three wounded.

At daybreak, the damage caused the previous night by enemy fire to the traverses of the caponier and the parallel was repaired.

48th NIGHT, of 23 to 24 July.

The traverse on the right side of the parapet was rebuilt, and the left parapet was extended to the exit of the re-entrant parade ground. Captain Binarville of the engineers was wounded, as were three sappers.

During daylight, a path was prepared to arm the gun emplacements. We had one miner killed and one sapper wounded.

49th NIGHT, of 24 to 25 July.

Two stone-throwing emplacements were placed in the crest of the covered way to harass the defenders of the demilune. The road intended to arm the breaching batteries continued. The last traverse on the right of the crest was almost entirely razed by the besieged's bombs.

Two sappers were killed, and three others were wounded.

During daylight, work began on repairing the parapets of the crest. Rain delayed the transport of artillery to the breaching batteries.

50th NIGHT, of 25 to 26 July.

The last traverse on the right of the crest was rebuilt. The damage to the parapets caused by enemy fire was repaired, and the exit from the re-entrant parade ground on the right side of the demilune was closed to prevent the enemy from advancing. Captain Renard of the mines was wounded.

The artillery constructed Battery No. 16 for two eight-inch mortars.

51st NIGHT, of 26 to 27 July.

Breach Batteries Nos. 14 and 15, located in the crest of the covered way, were armed with two guns each. A howitzer was placed in the salient, near the two stone-throwers already there. The gabion shoulder, which enemy bombs had destroyed at Battery No. 16, was rebuilt. Artillery Captain Scheleinstein was wounded during this work. One gun of Battery No. 12 was dismantled by fire from Fort Constable⁶.

At four o'clock in the morning, Batteries Nos. 14 and 15 began breaching the demilune salient. They were supported by the two swivel guns and the howitzer in the salient, by Mortar Battery No. 16, by Ricochet Batteries Nos. 7 and 8, and by the other Batteries Nos. 10, 12, and 13. Batteries Nos. 6 and 11 also continued firing.

Two gunners were wounded. Repairs continued to be made to the damage caused by the besieged's bombs.

⁶ This is quite remarkable, as the battery was located eighteen hundred meters from the fort.

No. 12

*Report from General Verdier to the Minister of War,
on the assault on Fort Montjoux.*

San Medir, 8 July 1809.

Excellency,

I have the honor of sending to Your Excellency the reports on the siege of Girona, from the 3rd to the 7th of this month inclusive.

The breach at Montjuïc having been deemed passable by the generals of engineers and artillery, the assault was launched this morning at daybreak. I had taken care to employ all the elite companies of the division for this operation: they reached the top of the breach three times, and three times they were repelled.

I will have the honor, by the first courier of giving Your Excellency a precise account of the losses we have suffered.

I have the honor of requesting Your Excellency to please accept the expression of my deepest respect.

Signed: VERDIER.

No. 13

*List of officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers of the elite companies
who were killed or wounded in the assault on Montjuïc.*

DIVISIONS.	REGIMENTS.	KILLED.		WOUNDED.		OBSERVATIONS.
		Officers.	Non-commissioned officers and soldiers	Officers	Non-commissioned officers and soldiers	
French.....	2 nd Line Inf. Regt.....	2	9	1	42	The bn. chief wounded.
	16 th id.....	"	15	5	76	
	56 th id.....	"	12	3	63	
	32 nd Light Inf. Regt...	"	21	2	57	
	Troops from Berg.....	"	17	7	105	A colonel and a bn. chief wounded.
	Würzburg Regts.....	1	22	5	141	
Italian.....	Royal Velites.....	2	10	2	38	
	5 th Line Regt. It.....	"	2	2	22	
	1 st Neapolitan Line Regt.....	"	5	8	24	
	2 nd Regt. id.....	1	10	7	32	
Westphalian	Westphalian staff.....	1	"	1	"	An ADC of Gen. Morio killed. An Adj. wounded. A bn. chief wounded. A bn. chief wounded.
	2 nd Line Inf. Regt.....	2	13	6	54	
	3 rd id.....	1	11	4	74	
	4 th id.....	1	11	6	35	
Artillery.....	3 rd Foot Regt.....	"	"	1	12	
	4 th id.....	"	"	1	5	
	1 st Westphalian Regt.	"	"	"	1	
Engineers....	Staff.....	"	"	3	"	A bn. chief wounded.
	1 st Bn. of Miners.....	"	"	"	3	
	2 nd Bn. of Sappers.....	"	5	"	14	
	3 rd id.....	"	2	1	28	
	Bn. of Italian sappers.	"	1	1	11	
		11	166	66	836	General total, 1079

The Battalion Commander,
Chief of Staff of the Siege Division.

Signed: SAINT-HILAIRE.

No. 14

Report from Governor Alvarez to the Marquis de Coupigny, on the assault on Fort Montjuïc.

Girona, 8 July 1809.

Monsignor,

While the commanders of the various corps are compiling a list of the names of all those who, on this memorable morning, covered themselves in immortal glory during the defense of Fort Montjuïc, I could not resist the desire to share such pleasant news with Your Excellency, asking you to announce it to His Majesty.

How can I convey the details of this glorious day! I will only tell you that the enemy, at daybreak, surrounded the fort with six thousand men of select troops, according to the report of a wounded prisoner, threatening the three breaches, and directing their main attack on the largest, which is at the bastion of the Lance of the Flag. All the troops at the castle immediately went to the posts the Governor had assigned them the day before, and there they met the enemy with firm resolve. Five assaults were launched in the two hours the action lasted; but in these five assaults the French were routed, and they retreated towards the San-Luis redoubt, leaving the road strewn with corpses.

The artillery of the fortress and the forts fired with its usual skill and wreaked havoc in the enemy ranks. The latter continued to hurl grenades, bombs, and cannonballs at the forts and the town; but these projectiles caused little damage and could not force the defenders to abandon their posts. All fought like heroes. I went up to the castle with the reserve, some infantry pickets, and the general staff, as well as a few people who were kind enough to accompany me. And I gave these brave fighters the tokens of the nation's gratitude and the rewards due to each man's merit. Our losses were slight; those of the enemy, on the contrary, must have been immense, due to the gunfire and the large quantity of hand grenades, rolled bombs, fulminating canisters, and other projectiles that were launched against them. This day crowned the arms of King Ferdinand VII with glory.

On this glorious day, when only cries of victory resounded in our ears, fate, or rather destiny, came to mingle some bitterness with our happiness: the San Juan Tower, which served as our outpost, exploded into the air without the cause being discovered. But this misfortune had no further serious consequences; the small garrison defending the tower had left and was fighting guerrilla warfare. The tower was completely destroyed.

Exercising the right granted to me by Your Excellency, I will distribute rewards to the combatants, some of which will be particularly prestigious, as they must be commensurate with the actions that earned them; I will provide Your Excellency with the details later.

I am pleased to be able to demonstrate to Your Excellency that I cannot remain silent when it comes to such a remarkable action as this; and if, until now, I have not distracted Your

Excellency with daily reports of the enemy's work and attacks, it is because I knew full well that you were more familiar with them than I was, and that you needed no further information. As for my actions, both public and private, they have always aimed to incite the inhabitants to a stubborn defense, which, until now, seems to be their sole thought.

Moreover, the enemy withdrew with losses to the batteries they had previously occupied, and from where they continued to unleash a terrible fire on Montjuïc and the fortress, avenging their affront by piling up the ruins.

I am convinced that among all the enemy's remarkable feats of arms, none can be compared to that of this memorable day, for the breach, opened four days earlier, could allow six men abreast to pass through.

To properly conclude this happy morning, we went together to the cathedral with the Bishop and the chapter to attend a solemn *Te Deum*, which was sung in thanksgiving, to the sound of all the bells. I was accompanied by the finance minister, Don Carlos Beramendi, whom I had met on the road to Montjuïc, on my return, near the ruined tower of San Juan, where, despite enemy fire, he was working tirelessly to ensure aid was given to the unfortunate wounded and had them taken to the military hospitals, which we visited together.

May God grant you many years.

Signed: MARIANO ALVAREZ.



No. 15

*Report from Governor Alvarez to the Supreme Junta
of Seville, on the situation in the city of Girona.*

Girona, 16 July 1809.

Sire, I believe it is my duty to lay at Your Majesty's feet a brief account of the siege and bombardment being endured by this heroic city, whose command Your Majesty has deigned to entrust to me.

However, as a detailed account of the specific events and a compilation of supporting documents would constitute too large a volume, and as, moreover, Your Majesty's precious time is occupied by his high duties, just as my own is demanded by the critical situation in which I find myself, I will confine myself here to expressing my feelings and giving you an idea of the state of the city.

We have counted seventy days of siege, forty-eight of open trench warfare, and thirty-four of continuous bombardment. The Castillo de Montjuïc, which completely overlooks the town at close range and can be considered its principal defense, has, for the past thirteen days, presented a breach passable for fifty men abreast. During this time, the enemy has hurled ten thousand

bombs and grenades at us: this fury has produced no other result than the ruin of private buildings. The courage of the inhabitants has not wavered; each day more devoted to the cause they defend, they are seen rushing with ever-increasing fervor wherever their presence is needed.

The garrison, though very small, numbering no more than fifteen hundred men fit for service, has performed prodigies of valor. Three sorties and two attacks, one of which was repeated up to three times by the enemy, and in which they were repelled with inexpressible bravery, have demonstrated with what discipline and vigor we know how to fight. But the account of these partial matters will probably have come to Your Majesty's attention through the Commander-in-chief, to whom I have successively reported them.

Your Majesty, whose paternal care safeguards national honor, will doubtless feel how much all those in this place have served their country well. Sire, I have never seen their enthusiasm falter for a single moment, and a thousand times they have longed to rush headlong into the enemy ranks to meet a glorious death, but their insufficient numbers have forced me to restrain them.

In this difficult situation, I have repeatedly requested reinforcements of at least two thousand men from the Marquis de Coupigny, second-in-command of the army, which would barely provide half the garrison necessary for the defense of the fortress. I have renewed my pleas in vain, as my needs have become more pressing.

I therefore believe it is my duty to bring these facts to Your Majesty's attention, and to assure you, moreover, that this important bulwark of Catalonia will be defended to the bitter end; that we will sacrifice ourselves for our beloved monarch, Lord Ferdinand VII, may God protect him, and that we will follow the example of Numancia and Sagunto, rather than submit to the tyrant's yoke.

Such was my oath at the head of these brave Spaniards, and I repeat it now at Your Majesty's feet: the enemy will not enter this place except on my dead body. The enclosed proclamation will further convey to Your Majesty the sentiments that inspire me.

Sire, at Your Majesty's feet.

Signed: MARIANO ALVAREZ.

~~~~~

## No. 16

### *Representation of the Catalan Junta to the Supreme Junta of Seville, in favor of the city of Girona.*

Poblet, 9 July 1809.

Sire,

The Junta of the Principality of Catalonia views with the greatest joy the royal decree of June 28<sup>th</sup> last, in which Your Majesty gives striking proof of your satisfaction with the courage and steadfastness of the inhabitants of Girona and the entire principality. The Junta has no doubt that this publication will serve to rekindle the enthusiasm of the Catalans and renew their desire to defend our legitimate sovereign to the death.

But, Sire, the Junta cannot, without committing a crime, conceal from Your Majesty the fears it feels that the hope you instill in it in your royal decree concerning the defense of Girona will vanish like a shadow, despite the love and loyalty of its inhabitants; this Junta, which sees the city's agony drawing nearer day by day; which has ordered a mass conscription from the entire province; which, to revive the courage of the defenders, has issued a proclamation calling all the Somanténs and most of the reserve companies to the aid of Girona, with a view to joining their efforts with those of the troops against the common enemy; this junta, I say, sees that these Somatén companies, which were already on the march, can now make no move, since their commanders have not received orders, and they do not know which points they are to occupy.

Finally, although the Junta requested that one of the province's commanders general move with all his forces to the vicinity of Girona, if not to engage in battle, then at least to observe the enemy's movements and take advantage of any opportunity (the Junta, in its letters of 15 June and 2 July 2, informed Your Majesty of the efforts it had made in this regard), His Excellency the Marquis de Coupigny did not even leave Tarragona, even though His Excellency Joaquin Blake, who had advanced as far as Cervera, had fallen ill there.

In this state of affairs, the enemy seized the San-Luis and San-Narciso towers, which served as a rampart for the town; he approached the fort of Montjuïc and erected against it a battery of ten cannons, three mortars, and two howitzers, which has been bombarding it for five days with extraordinary violence and is bound to triumph over its garrison, exhausted and depleted by the terrible fire that is decimating it. The Junta, warned by one of its members, stationed in the vicinity of the fortress to bolster the spirits of the people, who now possess only the strength of despair, watches with sorrow as the moment of Girona's fall draws ever closer; and this misfortune will inevitably occur if the promised reinforcements do not arrive with lightning speed. What can this Junta do but tremble for Girona and for the entire principality, whose fate is bound to that of this city? The High Junta cannot see the fruit of so much effort lost without lamenting; because everything we have done for the past year to keep this city for Your Majesty will now be in vain.

May God bless you for many years to come.

~~~~~

No. 17

*Letter from General Coupigny, Second-in-Command
of the Spanish Army of Catalonia, to Governor Alvarez.*

Tarragona, 24 July 1809.

Your dispatch of the 16th of this month caused me the greatest surprise, and I would find your reproaches even strange were it not for the fact that Your Lordship is in a place so heavily besieged by the enemy. I know very well what I promised; I also know that I did not fail to send reinforcements at the very moment when they were due to arrive in Girona. But Your Lordship is doubtless unaware of the latest developments in our armies: you are unaware that I have not been joined by the troops from Aragon, without whom it would have been impossible for me to even consider lifting the siege; you are also unaware that the province has a captain-general, who is currently in the vicinity of the city. I have done everything in my power to try to come to your aid: Girona is the object of my most earnest attention and my highest esteem. I would have liked to lead this relief effort myself and take refuge in the city with its brave defenders; but circumstances prevented me from doing so, and I entrusted this expedition to the officers whom you yourself had indicated to me as the most capable of ensuring its success, thanks to their skills and local knowledge.

That one of them was abandoned by his troops, and that the other, who was recommended to me and had just been promoted in the army, refused to fulfill his duties—these are things that no one can avoid. But what I managed to avoid were the recriminations I might have been the first to make, had I not so often resisted the pull of a first impression, influenced by private opinions and reports.

At what point do you claim that reinforcements should have been brought into the city? Was it at the beginning of May when I was told that if provisions had to be made for the troops, it would become impossible to survive for fifteen days in the event of a siege? When two thousand more men, thrown into Girona, could have hastened the depletion of supplies and dampened the enthusiasm of the inhabitants—an enthusiasm that has produced so many wonders, that continues to produce new ones every day, and that alone can sustain our cause? Was it when the entry of troops into your city would have brought the seeds of a terrible disease and recreated the scenes of affliction and death that unfortunate Zaragoza witnessed?

We know full well that there is more than one way to wage war, and that different means can lead to the same results. If the inhabitants of Girona had not been aware of the immediate danger threatening them, they would not have rushed so ardently to the defense; if the besiegers had not been continually harassed on several points, they would not have been forced to execute the maneuvers you observed from your ramparts; if other parties had not intercepted their supply convoys, the fire from their batteries would have been maintained as effectively as during the first days of the siege, and the city and Montjuïc would be nothing but heaps of ruins.

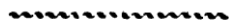
Therefore, let Your Lordship refrain from addressing me with reproaches that you should not allow yourself under any pretext, especially when you have before your eyes the example of

leaders so inclined to moderation that they treat their subordinates with a kind of indulgence, in consideration of the services each renders.

And as for the threat of appealing to higher authority, Your Lordship may carry it out when you deem it appropriate; for, besides the fact that my operations are established on solid foundations, I would be most flattered if your complaints against me were to coincide with the recommendations I myself am sending to the government in favor of Your Lordship and all those fighting under your command in the fortress of Girona.

May God grant you many years.

Signed: MARQUIS DE COUPIGNY.



No. 18

*Letter from the Marquis de Coupigny, Second-in-Command
of the Spanish Army of Catalonia, to the Junta of the Girona government.*

Tarragona, 24 July 1809.

I have received Your Lordship's dispatch of the 17th of this month; I see your excellent disposition to employ sorties, which are the best way to repel and neutralize the enemy's efforts. I am very sorry that the reinforcements I sent, as promised and at the agreed time, were unable to enter the town. By entrusting this operation to the English officer Don Rodolphe Marshall and the aide-de-camp Don Narcisse Rich, whom the Governor had recommended to me, I had nothing to reproach myself for: I respected the trust the inhabitants of Girona placed in these two officers.

The English colonel proved himself worthy of this trust and knew the terrain very well; if the troops did not support him, it was an unforeseen event that was difficult to remedy. However, those responsible will be punished as they deserve.

If Aide-de-Camp Rich retraced his steps, even before seeing the enemy's face, I have ordered him to be tried according to martial law. That is all I can do in this regard. I continue to harass the enemy relentlessly and seek to intercept their convoys so that, deprived of ammunition, they will lack the means to fire on the city; in such a way that if the siege is abandoned, this satisfactory result will be due as much to the heroic resistance of the inhabitants as to the measures I will have taken, on my side, to deprive the besieger of the resources necessary for the success of his undertaking.

God bless, etc.

Signed: MARQUIS DE COUPIGNY.



No. 19

Report from the Minister of War to the Emperor on the Siege of Girona.

25 July 1809.

A letter from General Verdier, which Your Majesty will find enclosed, accompanied the reports on the siege of Girona, from 10 to 17 July. The defense of the besieged remains as tenacious as ever, and their fire continues to be intense and sustained. The difficulties arising from the nature of the terrain and the movements of the external enemy are greatly slowing down the siege operations. General Verdier complains that he is continually obliged to send out considerable detachments: one of them defeated the insurgents on 15 July near La Jonquera (Cat.); this was the same corps that had destroyed a gunpowder convoy coming from Perpignan on the 10th, which my report of the 22nd mentioned. Another corps of four thousand men had been defeated on the 13th by the Forty-Second Regiment, sent by General Saint-Cyr. However, the column defeated on the 15th regrouped, and on the 17th, it was necessary to detach more troops against them. General Saint-Cyr could only cover the siege from the Barcelona side, and the enemy was primarily attacking General Verdier's communication lines with Figueres and Bellegarde. Consequently, the latter requested, in order to improve his position, some troops to contain the Empordà region.



No. 20

Report from the Minister of War to the Emperor, on the siege of Girona.

30 July 1809.

My report of the 28th of this month informed Your Majesty of General Verdier's repeated complaints regarding the difficulties he was experiencing in advancing the siege of Girona, both due to the nature of the terrain and the necessity of relentlessly fighting external enemies and, for this purpose, deploying considerable detachments. He had already sent one on 17 July, under General Guillot, to reinforce the column he had previously dispatched with Major Maisonneuve, which was facing a force of over five thousand men. The insurgents did not wait for General Guillot and withdrew into the Sierra Llorena mountains. General Verdier, in a letter dated the 21st, forwarded to me the report of General Guillot, in which he deemed it necessary to coordinate a decisive operation against the enemy's position, involving the Forty-Second Regiment of the division of Souham, which was stationed at Bañolas. General Verdier asked General Saint-Cyr to give the necessary orders in this regard; but the latter replied with a letter in which he absolutely refused to participate in this operation and even threatened to withdraw the Forty-Second Regiment from the post at Bañolas. General Verdier rightly observed that he could not simultaneously conduct the siege, maintain communications with France, and detach the forces necessary to contain an enemy that was harassing him on all fronts. Furthermore,

General Saint-Cyr, writing to me directly on the later date of 25 July, said nothing of General Verdier's requests, and expressed hope that the siege would be overcome, again outlining all its difficulties. He adds that the enemy has thus far confined itself to disrupting their communications, and that it appears to have postponed the battle it threatens until the arrival of troops reportedly embarked at Malaga and Cadiz to reinforce the army in Catalonia. It is undoubtedly the anticipation of this event that makes them fear being weakened by detachments. Your Majesty may recall that in my report of the 3rd of this month, I transmitted to you a statement of the enemy forces in Catalonia, sent by General Saint-Cyr, which reported them at fifty-five battalions and more than three thousand cavalymen, while he himself had been reduced to nineteen battalions and eleven squadrons, after having reinforced General Verdier and the garrison of Barcelona. Your Majesty will find enclosed the reports of the artillery and engineers at the siege of Girona, from July 18th to 21st, where she will see that, albeit slowly and with great difficulty, the covered way of the demilune on the Montjuïc attack front has been completed, and that the artillery was about to be in a position to establish breach batteries No. 17, which are to cover the salient of this demilune.

~~~~~