

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

52nd NIGHT, of 27 to 28 July.

To the left of the crowning work, and between the last two traverses, work began on a ramp to descend into the covered way of the demilune and gain access to the breach in the right face of that work. Within the glacis, the miners encountered an old wall four feet thick, which significantly delayed their progress. The right flank of the crowning work was extended by approximately seven meters to create a second descent from the covered way toward the left face of the demilune.

At daybreak, the miners were able to begin work on the right-hand descent. The breaching batteries completely demolished the salient of the demilune.

53rd NIGHT, of 28 to 29 July.

Work continued on the descents from the covered way. The miners encountered significant difficulties stemming from the nature of the terrain, which, composed almost entirely of loose, imported rubble, collapsed at every step. Work began on placing the initial frames for the gallery entrance.

54th NIGHT, of 29 to 30 July.

A sally was made from the parallel to establish a lodgment on the crest of the glacis facing the right face of Bastion A; the objective was to bring a single gun to bear upon the tambour guarding the postern, inside which the enemy still maintained a howitzer capable of hindering our consolidation within the demilune. This lodgment, along with the boyau (small trench) intended to connect to it, was undertaken using the flying sap method; however, the enemy repeatedly overturned the gabions with their bombs and shells. We suffered six men killed, three of whom were sappers, and three men wounded, including one officer.

At daybreak, this work, which was still in its early stages, was continued; however, only fourteen meters of boyau could be completed. The enemy had positioned two guns on the flank of Bastion B, which spent the entire day firing upon the visible sections of the lodgment. A bomb, landing on the shoulder, set fire to the fascines and gabions, and it proved impossible to extinguish. The construction of the lodgment therefore had to be postponed until the following night.

At nightfall, the miners, who had continued working on the descents of the covered way, reached the foot of the inner revetment of the glacis. The enemy succeeded in setting fire to the traverse covering the right-hand descent; however, this damage was immediately repaired. One of the miners' assistants was killed, and two others were wounded.

Batteries No. 14 and 15 fired throughout the day to widen the breach and reduce the steepness of its slope. At one of these batteries, a gun that had been put out of action was replaced.

One gunner was killed, and two were wounded.

55th NIGHT, of 30 to 31 July.

The lodgment, the construction of which had been undertaken the previous night, was completed upon the crest of the glacis on the right face of Bastion A; within it, a position was prepared for a gun intended to enfilade the tambour of the postern and sever the bridge of the demilune. The enemy fired upon this work throughout the entire night. We suffered one sapper killed and another wounded.

At ten o'clock that evening, just as our sappers were attacking the revetment wall of the covered way on the left-hand descent a bomb struck the roof of the gallery, smashing through it; one sapper and two artillerymen were wounded. Scarcely had the damage caused by this incident been repaired when a second bomb rolled into the gallery and exploded. The work had to be started all over again.

To the left of Battery No. 13, the artillery corps began constructing a new emplacement - Battery No. 17 - designed to accommodate two twelve-inch mortars.

At seven o'clock the following morning, a bomb fired from the city ignited a powder magazine containing one thousand kilograms of gunpowder, located within the San Luis Redoubt. The explosion partially leveled the redoubt.

Batteries Nos. 7, 8, 10, and 12 fired only sporadically; meanwhile, Batteries Nos. 14 and 15 which, over the previous two days, had successfully rendered the breach in the demilune practicable, slowed their rate of fire. The new mortar battery, No. 17, opened fire during the day and maintained a brisk rate of fire, as did Battery No. 16. The enemy had reinforced the armament of Fort Montjuïc and was returning fire with four mortars, a pierrier, and several light field pieces, the positions of which they frequently shifted. Batteries Nos. 6 and 11 fired sparingly against the city, whose own fire had also begun to slacken.

Now that Fort Montjuïc had been breached, with its direct and flanking fire neutralized by counter-battery fire, and a secure lodgment established atop the covered way, there was every reason to hope that the besieged garrison would be unable to withstand a fresh assault. However, in order to leave him with even fewer chances and to hinder his communication with the city, the decision was made to seize control of the San Daniel Convent and the San Juan Tower; this

operation required first silencing the fire from the small Fort Calvario, which commanded the Galligant Valley.

56th NIGHT, of 31 July to 1 August.⁵⁶¹

To bombard the Fort Calvary, work began on two batteries, No. 18 and No. 19, each mounting two pieces of 24; the first was situated directly upon the San-Daniel redoubt itself, and the second at the foot of that redoubt.

57th NIGHT, of 1 to 2 August.

At nightfall, the troops emerged from the left-hand descent into the covered way and, using sapping techniques, established a lodgment within the terreplein. At daybreak, the miners began sinking two shafts at this location in preparation for blowing up the counterscarp.

58th NIGHT, of 2 to 3 August.

At the right-hand descent, the miners broke through into the covered way and began sinking two shafts within the terreplein. They detonated the mines at the left-hand descent, which brought down the counterscarp over a length of twelve meters. The sappers then smoothed the slopes of the resulting crater and constructed a passage across the ditch leading to the foot of the breach.

The artillery crews worked to arm Batteries No. 18 and No. 19, which were intended to support the assault on the San-Daniel Convent and the ruined Tower of San-Juan. The heavy rains that had fallen during the day rendered the ground so treacherous that it proved impossible, even with teams of sixteen horses, to haul the guns to these batteries; the only feasible course of action was to manhandle two guns into position at Battery No. 18, a task that required the efforts of one hundred and thirty men.

At first light, Battery No. 18 opened fire, effectively silencing the Fort Calvario. Immediately thereafter, a column advanced upon the San-Daniel Convent and seized it; one hundred and sixty Spanish soldiers, along with a considerable number of sick and wounded personnel, were taken prisoner. We suffered the regrettable loss of Major Maisonneuve, aide-de-camp to General Verdier, as well as two officers from the Würzburg contingent. Another column simultaneously attacked the head of the Pedret suburb, seizing the first houses on the city side as well as the ruins of the San-Juan Tower; the sappers began to entrench these two positions and establish connecting lines between them.

The enemy, realizing the importance of the San-Juan position, launched two sorties that same day in an attempt to retake it; however, they were repulsed on both occasions and forced to retreat to Montjuïc.

59th NIGHT, of 3 to 4 August.

The miners detonated the charges in the right-hand gallery, bringing down twelve meters of the counterscarp. The sappers, just as they had done on the left flank, leveled the slopes of the crater and pushed a trench through the ditch right up to the foot of the breach.

At daybreak, the batteries on the crowning works destroyed a sandbag parapet that the enemy had erected atop the breach. Battery No. 19, situated at the foot of the San-Daniel redoubt, was completed and armed. Four pieces of 24 were thus brought to bear against the Fort Calvary. Artillery Captain Godart and three gunners were wounded.

A column of two hundred men, having set out from Hostalric and landed behind the army's lines, appeared before the San-Daniel Convent, which they believed was still occupied by the Spanish; a portion of the column was captured by the detachment guarding the post, while the remainder was taken during its retreat by the Pino Division.

An hour before nightfall, the enemy launched another strong sortie against the San-Juan position, attempting to cut it off from the Pedret suburb. The steadfast bearing of the battalion of the Thirty-Second Light Infantry, which held this post, gave the reinforcements time to arrive; the Spaniards, taken in the flank, were forced to retreat precipitously to Fort Montjuïc, from which they had sallied forth.

General Verdier dispatched an aide-de-camp as a parley envoy, preceded by a trumpeter, bearing a letter for the Governor. In it, he requested that the Governor designate commissioners to receive the sick Spanish soldiers found at the San-Daniel convent; under the terms of a convention concluded in April between General Saint-Cyr and General Reding, these men were not to be considered prisoners of war. The envoy remained for a few moments before the Porte de France; however, a cannon shot fired directly at him forced him to withdraw.

Meanwhile, the insurgent force that had gathered at Olot was becoming more alarming with each passing day. General Gouvion Saint-Cyr, pressed by orders from the Minister of War, who had dispatched his own aide-de-camp, Banas, to the camp outside Girona, decided to move his forces closer to the city in order to provide better cover for the siege operations. On the 4th, he moved his headquarters to Fornells, a village of eight hundred souls situated on a plateau near the Onyar River, one league from Girona. General Souham, with his division, occupied the heights of Sant-Dalmai and Brunyola; his reserves were stationed at Bescanó, Estañol, and Vilobi. Colonel Espert remained detached at Bañolas with the Forty-Second Line and a squadron of dragoons, keeping a battalion at Forna to provide specific cover for the road leading from Bàscara to Girona, a route along which we had established several entrenched outposts. General Pino moved his headquarters to Casa de la Selva, where he continued to monitor the coastline and the roads approaching from Hostalric and Banas. General Fontane was detached with three battalions and a squadron to La Bisbal; there, the enemy, who had maintained a small garrison in the town since the commencement of the siege, remained in communication with the sea via the small port of Begur.

60th NIGHT, of 4 to 5 August.

As the breach in the demilune was practicable, the decision was made to launch an assault upon it. At nine o'clock that evening, one hundred grenadiers, drawn from the Second Line and the Fifty-Sixth, along with twenty sappers, emerged from the passages on the right and left; they scaled the breach unheard and fell with impetuosity upon the hundred-man garrison guarding the demilune. The Spaniards attempted in vain to defend themselves; fifty-six were killed by the bayonet, while the remainder fled into the tambour covering the fort's postern gate. Our troops immediately took cover within the embrasures, behind a guardhouse and a low wall at the gorge, from where they returned the enemy's very heavy fire of musketry, grapeshot, and bombs. Several times, the defenders within the postern tambour attempted to retake the demilune, but to no avail. Captain Vincenzi of the Engineers directed the sappers to construct a *nid de pie* (crow's nest) at the salient of the demilune, as well as a shoulder along the slope of the breach to provide covered access to the position. This lodgment was completed by two o'clock in the morning, and the troops took shelter within it.

The capture of the demilune facilitated the attack across the entire extent of the front AB. The right face of Bastion A had been destroyed; however, since the assault of 8 July, the enemy had cleared the foot of the breach and scattered the debris into the ditch, such that the escarp now presented a vertical drop of four to five meters. Instead of driving a mine gallery into the ditch, it was decided to direct the attack against the left face of Bastion B, the revetment of which could be breached by Battery No. 13. However, as the parapet of the re-entrant place of arms obscured a very large portion of the escarp, work began on a small lodgment to the left of the crowning works, with the aim of blowing up this parapet, along with the crest of the covered way, using a mine. At daybreak, the sappers began driving four galleries to accommodate twelve charges.

Later that day, Alvarez came to inspect Fort Montjuïc. He paused on the curtain wall of the sector under attack to observe our lodgment within the demilune. Several officers, who, just three days earlier, had urged him to abandon this work, which was already breached, and to whom he had sternly declared his resolve that it be held to the very last extremity, now pointed out to him the corpses of Spanish soldiers killed by bayonet, with which the terreplein was strewn; they lamented the fate of these unfortunate men, whose lives might have been saved. "*Gentlemen!*" Alvarez replied, "*this is precisely what I call defending oneself to the very last extremity; these brave men have lived up to my expectations. Do you truly believe that you or I will still be alive two months from now? ... We shall live on in the eyes of posterity and in the hearts of all loyal Spaniards.*"

On that same day, a Spanish column consisting of three thousand infantrymen and two hundred cavalry troopers, advancing from Guillena and Sant Llorenç de la Muga, launched an attack at Buscarós, near La Jonquera, against a battalion of the Thirty-Second Light. Commanded by Colonel Ruffini, this battalion was positioned there to cover the main road to Figueres. The battalion, numbering barely six hundred men, contested every inch of ground; and, having expended all its ammunition, it withdrew to Bellesguard, having suffered thirteen killed and thirty wounded, five of whom were officers. General Gouvion Saint-Cyr immediately dispatched troops in that direction; but the enemy had already withdrawn.

61st NIGHT, of 5 to 6 August.

Work proceeded to alter the alignment of the guns in the crowning works, which had previously breached the demilune, so as to batter the foot of the escarp on the left face of Bastion A through the gap in that work's ditch. Although this breach could be no wider than the demilune's ditch itself and would be exceedingly steep given the scant amount of earth remaining above the revetment, it was expected to heighten the besieged garrison's fears by providing a second entry point into the fort.

The alignment of the embrasures in Battery No. 19, situated at the foot of the San-Daniel Redoubt, was also adjusted: one was directed toward the Gironnella Tower, and the other toward the Chapter Redoubt.

The sappers continued their tunneling operations beneath the cover of the re-entrant place of arms, to the right of the demilune.

62nd NIGHT, of 6 to 7 August.

The same operations continued; additionally, work began within the demilune on a second gun emplacement, larger than the first, intended to house a cannon for the purpose of battering the tambour guarding the postern gate, where the enemy still maintained a howitzer.

63rd NIGHT, of 7 to 8 August.

The sappers completed the mines they had begun under the cover of the re-entrant place of arms, to the right of the demilune, and commenced eleven others beneath the crest of the glacis of that same place of arms, in order to bring breaching Battery No. 13 into action.

64th NIGHT, of 8 to 9 August 8.

The sappers continued their work; and, at daybreak, they charged and tamped twenty-three mines, both under cover and beneath the crest of the glacis. They were detonated at four o'clock in the afternoon. The effect was complete, and the revetment of the bastion was laid bare to Battery No. 13, which immediately began breaching operations; the batteries on the crowning works also resumed their fire.

65th NIGHT, of 9 to 10 August.

The breaching battery did not cease firing, and by daybreak, a section of the revetment had already been brought down; from the crest of the glacis, a portion of the fort's interior was now visible. The ditch had been almost entirely filled in by the explosion of the mines.

Alvarez, wishing to make a final effort to hold Montjuïc, ordered a general sortie with the aim of leveling our siege works. It was shortly past noon, the hour at which the soldiers, weary from

the heat of the day, had given themselves over to rest, when three Spanish columns sallied forth simultaneously from the city, from the Fort of the Constable, and from the Fort of Montjuïc. They launched simultaneous attacks against the Pedret suburb, the San-Juan Tower, the San-Daniel Convent, and the crowning works of the Montjuïc covered way. Faced with the unexpected emergence of the first column through the Porte de France, and the sheer impetuosity of its attack, the troops stationed at Pedret and San-Juan were forced to withdraw toward the Pont Mayor or retreat up the mountain. The post at San-Daniel, however, held firm; but the Spaniards penetrated the crest of the covered way at Montjuïc and began to destroy the parapets and mining galleries. They set fire to the gabions and fascines of Batteries No. 14 and 15, spiked three pieces of 16, a mortar, and two swivel guns located there, and cut the spokes of several gun carriages. They threatened to inflict similar damage upon breach Battery No. 13; however, the canister fire directed at them from that battery halted their advance; reinforcements rushed to the scene, and at every point, the enemy was repulsed. We suffered eleven killed, including an artillery lieutenant, and forty-eight wounded.

This sortie served only to demonstrate to the Spaniards the impossibility of holding Fort Montjuïc any longer; and as early as the following night, they began to withdraw everything they could from the fortress.

66th NIGHT, of 10 to 11 August.

During the night, General Sanson had all the defensive works that the enemy had demolished or damaged repaired. General Taviel had the batteries resupplied, and a piece of 4 was brought into the demilune to fire upon the tambour guarding the postern gate.

At daybreak, the artillery once again opened a very heavy fire against Fort Montjuïc and the city. General Verdier assembled the elite companies of the siege division and received two battalions of the Sixth Italian Line from General Gouvion Saint-Cyr to support them. The assault was scheduled to take place between seven and eight o'clock in the evening¹; however, the enemy did not wait for that moment: at half-past six, they withdrew into the city, having removed or set fire to their powder stores and blown up a considerable section of the curtain wall on the attack front using a mine. Captain of Engineers Vincenzi, who was directing the works in the demilune, alerted to the enemy's retreat by the explosion of this mine, immediately advanced upon the breach with his sappers and a few men from the trench guard; he took possession of the fort, establishing himself at its gorge².

Eighteen pieces of ordnance were found within Fort Montjuïc; some were unserviceable, while the others had been spiked. The enemy had placed forty-six barrels of gunpowder beneath Bastion C, on the city-facing front, with the intention of blowing it up; however, the fuse failed to ignite the charge.

Thus fell Fort Montjuïc, after a siege lasting sixty-five days, thirty-seven of which involved an open breach, and after having repulsed two assaults and withstood the sustained fire of forty-four heavy-caliber guns. According to the reports of Spanish Lieutenant Colonel D. Pablo Miranda,

¹ See supporting documents, No. 21.

² See supporting documents, No. 22.

Commander of the fort's artillery, the besiegers had fired two thousand six hundred bombs, three thousand one hundred shells, and twenty-three thousand one hundred round shots at the stronghold. Of the nine hundred combatants comprising the Spanish garrison of the fort, eighteen officers and five hundred soldiers had perished.

On that same day, the outpost at Esponellà, situated near Bàscara and held by a battalion of the Forty-Second Line, came under fierce attack by superior forces; nevertheless, the garrison held its ground and compelled the Spaniards to withdraw. Its casualties amounted to four men killed and nineteen wounded.

The following day, General Guillot advanced with his brigade toward Bàscara in pursuit of a detachment that had once again penetrated the Empordà (Cat.; Ampurdán, Sp.) region.

67th, 68th, and 69th NIGHTS, of 11 to 14 August.

The munitions of war abandoned by the enemy in Fort Montjuïc were removed, and batteries No. 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17 were disarmed.

General Verdier transferred his headquarters from San Medir to Sarria (Eng.).

It was believed within the besieging army that the fall of Montjuïc would soon precipitate the fall of the fortress itself; indeed, on this side, the city wall is commanded by Montjuïc. It lacks an earthen rampart and is poorly flanked. Its thickness measures two and a half meters; however, it possesses neither a ditch nor a covered way, and it is exposed to view right down to its very base. Moreover, the dire situation of the besieged was well known; prey to every form of deprivation, they were being decimated by scurvy, dysentery, and nervous fevers. The city had been set ablaze in several places by the bombardment, and not a single house remained intact. Yet the besieging army itself found itself in scarcely any better situation: it was ravaged by fevers brought on by the rigors of the siege, by the damp and unwholesome air, by the scorching rays of the sun, by food shortages, and by a lack of rest. More than one-fifth of the troops were in the hospitals. Every day, a great number of Westphalians fell, never to rise again; the Würzburgers, the French, and the Italians, though far more accustomed to the fatigue and heat of a scorching climate, had also suffered heavy losses. The artillery had expended the greater part of its ammunition; many guns and gun carriages were out of service or in need of extensive repairs. The Corps of Engineers counted fourteen officers wounded or stricken with fever, and more than half of its sappers were out of action. All these circumstances significantly delayed the progress of the siege works. Had the attack been more vigorous, it is probable that the fortress, given the critical position in which it found itself, would have fallen before relief could arrive.

The city's perimeter wall, on the side facing Montjuïc, is built, much like the city itself, upon the slopes of the Capuchin Mountain, descending quite steeply from the Gironnella Tower down to the Santa-Maria Bastion. Along this front, the enemy possessed four positions suitable for artillery placement, positions they had, in fact, already armed: the Gironnella Tower; the San-Cristobal Bastion, a small, irregular outwork covering the gate of the same name; the San-Pedro Platform, situated on the great flank of Sarracinas, directly above the point where the Galligant River enters the city; and, finally, the Santa-Maria Bastion.

The section of the perimeter wall extending from the Gironnella Tower to the Church of San-Pedro occupies a re-entrant angle relative to the great flank of Sarracinas on the left, and to the Fort du Calvario and the Chapter Redoubt on the right. The same, however, cannot be said of the Santa Lucia Curtain and the right face of the Santa-Maria Bastion; these formed an unflanked salient, left fully exposed to attack. The approaches to this area were easily accessible via the mountain slopes leading down from the San-Juan Tower, and even more so by emerging from the Pedret suburb to advance along the banks of the Ter River, just as was done during the siege of 1711. In this particular sector, situated some three hundred meters from the city walls, lay a small, level plain, easy terrain to traverse, albeit somewhat confined, which would have spared the attackers the necessity of advancing across the bare, rocky slopes that hung like an amphitheater above the fortress, exposed to both direct and enfilading fire from the city and its outlying forts. Finally, the Santa-Maria Bastion itself lay directly exposed to breaching fire from the San-Juan Tower. And it was possible to ricochet fire upon it from the left bank of the Ter, thereby destroying all its defenses early on.

Nevertheless, it was deemed preferable to attack the German Redoubt, which comprised the Gironnella Tower as well as a very tall building serving as a barracks, built atop the perimeter wall. This redoubt was confined, and the enemy would be unable to mass a large number of troops there at the moment of the assault. It lay in close proximity to the fortified Convent of San Daniel, which we occupied and where we could assemble substantial columns. Finally, as this point constituted the highest ground in Girona, it was hoped that once captured, it would prove less difficult to descend into the city should the besieged attempt to defend themselves house-by-house, as had been the case in Zaragoza. Moreover, the attack was to extend to the San Cristobal Bastion and the Santa Lucia Curtain, in order to secure additional entry points that would have allowed us to outflank the enemy's defenses in the upper sector of the fortress; however, the Fort of El Calvario was neglected, a critical position given its bearing upon the German Redoubt, and it was deemed sufficient merely to silence it temporarily through the fire of Batteries No. 18 and 19.

Such was the plan of attack executed against the city; however, before commencing the approaches, it was deemed indispensable to silence the enemy's fire along the threatened front.

70th and 71st NIGHTS, of 14 to 16 August.

Work began on three new batteries to protect the approaches against the city:

No. 20, comprising four pieces of 16, situated in the ditch of Fort Montjuïc, intended to silence the fire from the Gironnella Tower and the platform of the Germen;

No. 21, comprising four pieces of 16, located above the Pedret suburb, intended to destroy the defenses of the Santa Maria Bastion and those of the Santa Lucia Curtain;

No. 22, comprising four pieces of 16, situated on the Green Knoll, in front of the old Battery No. 6, intended to deliver enfilading fire upon the section of the city located on the right bank of the Galligant.

Battery No. 11 was disarmed; only two howitzers were left in place to operate in concert with Battery No. 22.

The construction of these batteries presented significant difficulties due to the nature of the terrain, which proved to be rocky almost everywhere; consequently, the parapets had to be constructed using sandbags. The enemy directed heavy fire upon the site, forcing a halt to all work during daylight hours. Artillery Lieutenant Jory and two gunners were killed, while two others were wounded.

On the 16th, four wagons, each loaded with six hundred kilograms of gunpowder, were making their way toward Montjuïc to resupply the batteries when, due to the jolting and bumping of the road, powder spilled onto the ground from the lead wagon; the wagon following immediately behind ignited this spilled powder as it passed, resulting in an explosion. This accident could have had grave consequences had the remaining two wagons not been sufficiently far away to prevent the fire from spreading to them. Nevertheless, two transport soldiers were wounded; two horses were killed, and two others were injured.

72nd NIGHT, of 16 to 17 August.

The artillery continued its operations. A ramp was constructed to mount the guns in Battery No. 22; as the ground consisted of solid rock, it was necessary to build the ramp partly using earth excavated from the old Battery No. 6.

While digging in the ditch of Fort Montjuïc, directly in front of the old breach, to fill sandbags, the troops discovered two thousand cannonballs that the enemy had buried there while clearing the base of the breach.

That same night, a column of eight hundred men, which had set out from Olot a few days earlier, succeeded in infiltrating Girona. After traversing the camps of the Westphalian Division and evading the vigilance of the sentries, the column crossed the River Ter near San Pons two hours before dawn, thereby gaining entry into the besieged fortress. Two hundred miquelets arriving from the direction of San Feliu had already managed to enter the town on two separate occasions prior to this.

73rd NIGHT, of 17 to 18 August.

The artillery corps completed the mounting of guns in three Batteries: Nos. 20, 21, and 22. Battery No. 21 had sustained heavy damage from enemy cannon fire; consequently, the task of arming it proved both extremely difficult and highly perilous, given the treacherous nature of the terrain. When one of the artillery pieces overturned, the troops were forced to remove its wheels and cover it with sandbags to conceal it from the enemy. We suffered two men killed and four wounded.

At daybreak, Batteries Nos. 20, 21, and 22 opened fire. They came under intense counter-fire from the besieged fortress: Battery No. 20 was subjected to a heavy barrage of mortar shells

from the Constable Fort and the Chapter Redoubt, while Battery No. 21 was almost completely demolished. Artillery Captain Collet was wounded, as were nine soldiers, including a gunner.

74th NIGHT, of 18 to 19 August.

The artillery repaired Battery No. 21, though without being able to bring the fourth gun into position.

At daybreak, the three batteries, Nos. 20, 21, and 22, resumed their fire, which was supported by that of Batteries Nos. 18 and 19, firing against the Calvary Fort, which had been rearmed by the enemy. The two howitzers of Battery No. 11 also fired upon the city.

During this day, our artillery, though lacking a decisive superiority over that of the enemy, nevertheless managed to engage it with sufficient advantage to allow for the commencement of the approaches.

75th NIGHT, of 19 to 20 August.

Work parties debouched from the covered way of Fort Montjuïc to begin advancing toward the city. The first sap was constructed, along with half of the second, which ran in a re-entrant angle. As the terrain consisted of rock and did not permit excavation into the ground, it was necessary, for this sap as well as for those that followed, to employ gabions three and a half feet in height, topped with fascines and sandbags.

The enemy had two guns and a mortar positioned on the San Pedro platform, which bore upon the San Daniel Convent. They also possessed light guns which they brought up at night to the platform of the San Cristobal Bastion and to the Santa Lucia Tower, and which they withdrew during the day. They had retained a mortar on the Gironnella Tower and maintained fire from the Chapter Redoubt and the Calvary Fort. This fire, which proved highly lethal to the laborers, significantly slowed the progress of the approaches.

Our artillery succeeded in bringing the fourth gun of Battery No. 21 into position and began construction of Battery No. 23, located within Bastion C of Montjuïc, designed to accommodate two pieces of 24 directed against the San Pedro platform.

76th NIGHT, of 20 to 21 August.

Work was completed on the branch of the second sap, which had been started the previous night. The artillery repaired its batteries, which had suffered heavy damage. Battery No. 20 had been battered by plunging fire from the Fort Constable and the Chapter Redoubt, even though it was situated thirteen hundred meters away from these works. Battery No. 21 was in shambles; its merlons, constructed of sandbags, were destroyed, and three of its embrasures had been filled in.

The enemy managed to hoist two pieces of 12 onto the vaulted roof of the cathedral in order to bring more effective plunging fire down upon our trenches. Our artillery directed its fire against this battery and against the bell tower, which the enemy was using as an observation post to spy

on our movements and warn the inhabitants of incoming bombs. The Spaniards relocated their hospital from this church to the Church of San Martin.

77th NIGHT, of 21 to 22 August.

A third zigzag branch was constructed on the left flank of the attack.

At daybreak, Battery No. 23 added its fire to that of the other batteries; its fire was directed specifically against the Tower of Santa Lucia, where the enemy had emplaced a gun that frequently fired grapeshot at the San Juan outpost and at our work parties. Batteries No. 18 and 19 continued to fire upon the Fort de la Calvario. Battery No. 21 had attempted to breach the section of the city wall adjacent to the Santa Maria Bastion; however, as the masonry was extremely hard and the wall exceptionally thick, this battery, being positioned too far away, made little impression.

78th NIGHT, of 22 to 23 August.

Work began behind the San Juan Tower, and at a distance of four hundred and fifty meters from the wall, on a section of a parallel trench. This trench was to extend to the left, toward San Daniel, reaching as far as a mountain escarpment; its purpose was to accommodate new batteries intended to breach the fortifications and to provide covering fire for the approach trenches that were to be dug forward to reach the foot of the wall.

Within Bastion C of Fort Montjuïc, the artillery corps commenced construction of Battery No. 24, designed to mount two pieces of 24. This battery was tasked with engaging the Chapter Redoubt and the Calvary Fort, specifically a section of the latter's parapet facing our works, which remained poorly sighted from Batteries No. 18 and No. 19.

79th NIGHT, of 23 to 24 August.

The third zigzag trench on the left flank was completed, and work began on the fourth.

At daybreak, Battery No. 24 opened fire, joining its cannonade to that of the other batteries.

80th NIGHT, of 24 to 25 August.

The fourth zigzag trench was completed, and work continued on the parallel trench situated behind the San Juan Tower.

Within the covered way of Fort Montjuïc, the artillery corps began constructing Battery No. 25, mounting two mortars, intended to fire upon the defensive positions along the main front of attack.

At daybreak, Battery No. 20 successfully dismounted two concealed guns that the enemy had emplaced on the first floor of the German Barracks, an installation undoubtedly intended to

hinder the establishment of our own breaching batteries. A portion of the gable wall of these barracks was also demolished by our cannonballs.

81st NIGHT, of 25 to 26 August.

Work continued on extending the parallel to the left. The artillery commenced construction there on two breaching batteries situated four hundred and fifty meters from the enceinte: one, No. 26, consisting of six pieces of 24, intended to breach the wall between the Gironnella Tower and the San Cristobal Bastion; the other, No. 27, consisting of four pieces of 24, intended to demolish the Santa Lucia curtain wall.

The houses situated at the foot of the Gironnella Tower were seized; however, the enemy directed a very heavy fire upon them, launched a sortie against them from the Constable Fort, and, at daybreak, compelled us to abandon them.

Mortar Battery No. 25 opened fire.

Since 3 August, the Spaniards had maintained a post of two hundred and fifty men at the small port of Begur, where they had established strong entrenchments. This location was of great utility to them for maintaining communication between Girona and the sea, and they had gathered a large number of boats there to evacuate the town's garrison in the event of a retreat. General Gouvion Saint-Cyr, having learned of the enemy's plans, ordered General Pino to capture this post. The Italian Second Light, commanded by Colonel Cotti, was entrusted with this mission. During the night of the 25th, the enemy's entrenchments were scaled, and twenty-eight boats were captured in the harbor; the remaining vessels managed to escape out to sea.

82nd and 83rd NIGHTS, of 26 to 28 August.

A new zigzag trench was dug to the left of the attack lines, and a section of the parallel was initiated to link up with the portion being simultaneously constructed on the right.

At daybreak, breaching Battery No. 26 opened fire against the German Redoubt. The enemy attempted a sally from the Fort of the Capuchins against our posts on the left, established above the Galligant Valley; but they were repulsed with loss.

84th NIGHT, of 28 to 29 August.

A section of trench sixty meters in length was dug at the center of the parallel in order to link the two portions on the right and left. At daybreak, breaching Battery No. 27 opened fire against the Santa Lucia curtain wall.

85th NIGHT, of 29 to 30 August.

A sap was pushed forward from the center of the parallel, directed toward the Santa Lucia Tower.

At daybreak, the enemy launched a fresh sally from the Capuchin Fort against our left flank. They were repulsed, and five prisoners were taken; from them, it was learned that the garrison was awaiting a large convoy³.

³ See Supporting Documents, No. 23.

No. 21

Letter from General Gouvion Saint-Cyr to the Minister of War.

Fornells, 11 August 1809.

Monseigneur,

The mines laid beneath the couvreface of Montjuïc having been detonated, and their effect having been as favorable as could be wished, we have begun breaching the right bastion, while simultaneously completing the lodgment on the demilune. The effect of our batteries has been so rapid that I have received word that the breach is practicable. To avoid the confusion that typically attends a night attack, the assault has been scheduled for tomorrow between seven and eight o'clock in the morning; the enemy will be harassed and kept on high alert throughout the night by means of feigned assaults. As General Verdier does not feel sufficiently confident of success using only the siege troops, who are thoroughly exhausted and somewhat dispirited by the previous assault, I have ordered two battalions of the Italian Sixth Regiment, commanded by the regiment's colonel, to take up a position from which they may launch a second assault. Finally, ten companies of the French First Light Infantry Regiment, six of which are elite companies, under the command of Adjutant-Commandant Devaux, will be poised to launch a third assault should the first two prove unsuccessful.

It seems to me impossible that these arrangements should fail to make us masters of Montjuïc by the end of tomorrow, notwithstanding the tenacity and ferocity with which the enemy is defending it. Indeed, if I harbor any apprehension at all, it is that the enemy might evacuate the fort in order to reinforce the garrison of the main fortress. It would be far more advantageous for us to encounter even fierce resistance within the fort, enabling us to capture its garrison, than to enter it without striking a blow, only to see that garrison withdraw into the city, where it would undoubtedly contribute significantly to the resistance we must overcome. For this reason, the column commanded by Adjutant-Commandant Devaux, tasked with the third assault, also bears the mission of throwing itself upon the enemy should the latter attempt to evacuate the fort during the preceding attack, and of preventing his return to the stronghold.

Your Excellency's Aide-de-Camp, M. de Banas, whom Your Excellency dispatched to me a few days ago, having requested to take part in tomorrow's assault; I have assigned him to serve alongside Adjutant-Commandant Devaux. The zeal he has displayed on this occasion does him great credit.

I shall have the honor of reporting to Your Excellency tomorrow on the outcome of the assault.

I beg Your Excellency to accept the assurance of my respect.

Signed: COUNT GOUVION SAINT-CYR.

No. 22

*Report from General Verdier to the Minister of War,
regarding the capture of Fort Montjuïc.*

San-Medir, 12 August 1809.

Excellency,

I have the honor to submit to Your Excellency the reports on the siege operations at Girona, covering the period from the 7th of the current month up to this day. Based on these reports, Your Excellency will be able to judge the patience and courage displayed by the corps of troops that pleased His Majesty the Emperor to entrust to my command.

Fort Montjuïc fell into our hands yesterday at six o'clock in the evening. This significant conquest, wrested from the ruggedness of the terrain and the obstinacy of the enemy (an enemy as worthy of respect for his courage as he is to be pitied for the misguided reasoning that drives him), affords us almost complete certainty that eight to ten days, at most, will suffice to subdue the remainder of the city; its defenses now present us with nothing more than a flimsy perimeter wall, which only slight effort should be required to bring down.

Within this short span of time, Girona will either submit or resolve to emulate Zaragoza; yet, even in the latter case, it would not be for long: the city is short on provisions and ammunition—of this, I am certain. Fort Montjuïc, once one of the finest strongholds in Europe, and the most advantageously situated, is today nothing more than a shapeless mass of rubble. It was only after compelling us to crown the covered way, and after we had successfully stormed the demilune on the main line of attack and opened several practicable breaches, that the enemy garrison defending it finally resolved to abandon the fort to us, withdrawing into the city in a retreat that we were never able to cut off.

Your Excellency will deign to observe that this is the first time such a perilous and arduous operation has been executed in the course of the Revolutionary War. It presented all the greater difficulty in that we were compelled to conduct our operations upon solid rock, and because all our works were entirely artificial, constructed by means of flying sap in the face of a most tenacious enemy.

Generals Sanson and Taviel, commanding, respectively, the Corps of Engineers and the Artillery, directed this operation with the utmost zeal, prudence, and courage.

Within Fort Montjuïc, we discovered eighteen pieces of ordnance, almost all of them unserviceable, along with a limited quantity of ammunition; the remainder of the armament had already been evacuated as it was successively disabled by our fire.

I beg Your Excellency to accept the homage of my profound respect.

Signed: VERDIER.

No. 23

Report from General Verdier to General Gouvion Saint-Cyr.

Sarria, 30 August 1809.

Excellency,

I have just inspected the progress of our attacks upon the city; we are, give or take a little, exactly where we stood when I last wrote to Your Excellency, that is to say, we have achieved almost nothing in front of the six-gun battery, while we are quite advanced in front of the four-gun battery. Unfortunately, I have discovered that the ground immediately behind the battered wall lies considerably lower than the ground outside it; consequently, I believe there is a drop of eighteen to twenty feet from the top of the breach down to the level of the interior ground, a very formidable obstacle to surmount. It appears, however, that by widening this breach toward our right, we will encounter a much less formidable interior escarpment; I have, therefore, issued orders to have this breach significantly widened on our right flank.

General Sanson, having observed the situation just as I did, has decided to open a communication trench that, starting from the left angle of the four-gun battery, descends into the ravine and ascends again to the foot of the breach. This work is scheduled for completion by tomorrow night, or the night after, at the very latest, which will enable us to reach the breach without sustaining casualties, or to "*crown*" it (establish a foothold upon it) should a full-scale assault appear too hazardous. In the latter event, General Sanson would assign a detachment of sappers to follow the natural slope of the bedrock upon which the perimeter wall is founded, with the aim of clearing away the obstacles presented by the terrain and thereby securing a wide, unobstructed passage for the troops designated for the assault. I have resolved to proceed with the execution of this plan, which may appear time-consuming on the surface, given the limited success achieved by our artillery batteries thus far, and the scarcity of resources remaining at our disposal to sustain their rate of fire for any extended period. Yesterday and today, the enemy sallied forth from Capuchins, heading toward the mountain and the village of Quart; they were repulsed, leaving behind dead and wounded. Five prisoners were brought to me; they stubbornly insist that they did not know where they were going, though they believe they had set out to meet a convoy that the garrison is expecting along this route. I am maintaining a watch on my side; General Pino, having been alerted, could, from his position, thwart the enemy's intentions or seize this convoy, should it exist anywhere in the vicinity. Quart lies a short distance from Castillo de la Selva.

In accordance with your instructions, the troops currently deployed along the road will remain there to ensure the safe passage of His Excellency the Duke of Castiglione. The latest intelligence from Olot indicates that all the regular troops previously stationed there have departed to take up positions closer to Hostalric, and that Claros, Rovira, and the other bandit leaders had proceeded to that town; however, having failed to reach an agreement with the regular army generals, they have led their men back to their original positions in and around Besalú, where they have since been abandoned by a great many peasants who have returned to

their homes. Claros's miquelets, in particular, have broken up into small bands with the specific aim of attacking our convoys on their own initiative; I believe I can place some credence in these reports.

I beg Your Excellency to accept the assurances of my highest respect.

Signed: VERDIER.