

SIEGE OF GIRONA,

BY THE FRENCH ARMY OF CATALONIA,

IN 1809.

Blake, aware of the critical situation in which Girona found itself, resolved to attempt to introduce a new supply convoy into the city. To this end, he assembled fifteen hundred pack mules, which he had loaded with a considerable quantity of provisions, particularly flour, rice, and dried legumes, and to this train, he added a herd of three hundred oxen and twelve hundred sheep. For several days, he maneuvered this convoy around Girona, watching for a favorable opportunity to bring it inside. Finally, on 26 September, he advanced with his entire army to La Bisbal, a position General Fontane had vacated to occupy the village of Salt, and, before dawn, he directed an assault column against the rear of the brigade of General Mazzucchelli, which was holding the heights facing the Constable and Capuchin forts.

This column first encountered a battalion of the Seventh Italian Regiment positioned near Castellar, followed by the Sixth Italian Regiment, stationed opposite the Constable Fort at the extremity of the San-Miguel spur. Unable to halt the enemy's advance, these troops executed a change of front, pivoting their right wing to the rear, and withdrew. Six battalions of the Spanish vanguard, commanded by Brigadier O'Donnell, swept through the camps, set fire to the barracks, and pressed on toward the city, which they fully expected to enter without further hindrance, accompanied by the convoy following close behind. However, Adjutant-Commandant Devaux had swiftly moved to the left flank of the enemy column with the Fourth Battalion of the Sixty-Seventh Line Regiment; and, supported by the First Italian Light Regiment, stationed at Mount Llivia, as well as by three battalions under General Fontane and a cavalry squadron positioned at Salt, he intercepted the head of the convoy just as the final platoon of the vanguard and the leading mules were passing beneath the Santa-Ana and Constable forts. The attack was so fierce that the enemy vanguard was forced to take refuge in the forts. Thereupon, the Sixth Italian Regiment and the battalion of the Seventh, which had withdrawn to allow the Spanish column to pass, returned impetuously to strike at its flanks; this fresh assault compelled the convoy to retreat rapidly. Soon, the sound of General Pino's fire could be heard; having advanced with the Palombini Brigade from Casa de la Selva toward Santa Pellaia, he was attacking the rear of the Wimpfen Division, which formed the convoy's rearguard.

These various maneuvers were so well coordinated that the entire convoy was captured, providing provisions for the besieging army for some time. The Governor of Girona, despite his vested interest in the preservation of the convoy, and even though he had been reinforced by three thousand men under O'Donnell, dared not venture beyond the city walls to attempt its relief. Blake's army, too, remained in observation on the heights of Sant Sadurní, undertaking no action whatsoever. By attacking General Pino, Blake could have immediately precipitated a

general engagement, one that the superiority of his forces seemed destined to turn to his advantage, yet he dared not make the attempt.

The enemy lost nearly three thousand men in this engagement. The Italians, who had for some time displayed extraordinary ferocity, showed even greater ruthlessness on this day, giving no quarter to anyone. The division of Souham, which had advanced closer to the Oña, was the only unit to take prisoners; it brought back approximately seven hundred captives, including forty officers. The staff of General Wimpfen was fortunate enough to escape by rapidly passing through the village of Fornells, where headquarters had been established, and where only administrative personnel and non-combatants remained.

General Blake, threatened by a maneuver designed to envelop his left flank, withdrew toward Sant Feliu de Guíxols, moving away from Girona and abandoning that unfortunate city to its fate, a city whose misery and famine he had only exacerbated by introducing O'Donnell's troops into the garrison¹.

General Gouvion Saint-Cyr, taking advantage of General Blake's withdrawal, left the army on the 1st of October to travel to Perpignan. For the previous three months, Marshal Augereau, who was slated to replace him, had been suffering from gout and taking the waters at Prades. It appeared that, before proceeding to Catalonia, he was waiting for Girona to fall and for the army to be reorganized. On 15 September, he had dispatched Battalion Commander Fouques, his aide-de-camp, to the scene to assess the situation, regarding which he had, in any case, already been briefed by General Verdier. He reported this to the Minister of War on 28 September, stating that not a moment could be lost in dispatching reinforcements and provisions to the army; failing this, it would be compelled not only to lift the siege of Girona but also to evacuate Catalonia².

For his part, General Gouvion Saint-Cyr was in poor health; for some time, he had regarded his command as provisional and ardently desired that Marshal Augereau take his place. In order to force the issue, he abruptly left Perpignan on 5 October 5 to return home³.

The army found itself without a commander; Marshal Augereau was obliged to set out to assume command. He left Perpignan on 10 October, taking with him General Verdier⁴. He arrived at the camp outside Girona on the 12th. On the very next night, the 13th, Brigadier O'Donnell sallied forth from the fortress with the six battalions that, since the loss of the last convoy, had been cut off from Blake's army. The moment he chose proved highly favorable; he had realized just how poorly the plain was guarded by the cavalry, a portion of which had been diverted to serve as an escort for Marshal Augereau, who, accompanied with great pomp by a large number of army officers, had taken the road to Fornells via Sarria and Salt, in full view of the fortress. At midnight, O'Donnell placed himself at the head of his troops, who had been joined by several families from Girona. He descended the Capuchin Mountain, crossed the Oña River, leaving Palau and the Barcelona road to his left, and Santa Eugenia to his right. He surprised and killed

¹ See supporting documents, Nos. 63, 64, and 65.

² See Supporting Documents, No. 66.

³ See Supporting Documents, No. 67.

⁴ See supporting documents, No. 68.

the first Italian sentries, then marched in tight formation and at a rapid pace through the camps of General Souham, which were established on the heights of Aiguaviva. He fell unexpectedly upon the General's headquarters, capturing his guards and looting his baggage; General Souham himself had barely enough time to escape in his nightshirt. Turning next toward Sant Dalmay, O'Donnell accelerated his march, linked up with the troops of the Milans, and came to a halt at daybreak in the mountains situated between Santa Coloma and Brunyola. This daring maneuver reflected the greatest credit upon Brigadier O'Donnell; the Supreme Junta rewarded him with the rank of Mariscal de Campo.

Two days after his arrival, Marshal Augereau reviewed the army. It numbered only twelve thousand available bayonets, as each regiment had three or four hundred sick men in the barracks⁵. In response to his requests, he received word from the Minister of War that twenty thousand quintals of flour and seven thousand quintals of grain had been requisitioned in the Departments bordering the frontier and were on their way to him; that similar measures had been taken regarding meat; that a battalion of the La Tour d'Auvergne Regiment, two thousand four hundred recruits from the supplementary levy, and a battalion of the military train were marching on Perpignan to reinforce him; that General Suchet, commanding the Third Corps in Aragon, had been ordered to execute a diversionary maneuver against Lerida and Mequinenza to compel Blake to fall back; and, finally, that a squadron, composed of three ships of the line, two frigates, and three barges, and escorting a convoy of nineteen vessels laden with provisions, was departing from Toulon under the command of Rear-Admiral Baudin to resupply Barcelona. However, this convoy never reached its destination; it was scattered by the British, and several vessels, having sought refuge in the harbor of Roses, were either burned or forced to run aground.

Aware of the weakened state of the Girona garrison due to a lack of provisions, and dreading the necessity of breaching the walls anew, as well as expending yet another vast quantity of ammunition to press the siege, Marshal Augereau deemed it more prudent to maintain the blockade, to overawe the enemy forces outside the city, to ensure the security of his camps, and to hold the open field; in doing so, he followed a strategy diametrically opposed to that of General Gouvion Saint-Cyr, a strategy that had proven so disastrous for the army. He judged it sufficient to keep the fortress under constant pressure through bombardment and frequent nocturnal assaults, launched both from the plain and directly against the breaches, thereby instilling in the garrison the fear of an imminent storming and compelling them toward a speedy surrender.

On the night of 14 to 15 October, an Italian detachment was dispatched against the Mercadal. A Spanish outpost situated on that side, outside the fortress walls, was assaulted, captured, or dispersed; however, fire from the ramparts forced the attackers to withdraw. Similar incursions were repeated on subsequent nights at varied intervals, yielding no further results. Our forward posts were also positioned closer together to facilitate the surveillance of the fortress approaches and to intercept any communication with the outside world. The Italians carried their precautions to the extreme, stationing guard dogs along footpaths and roads at night, and stretching ropes fitted with small bells from one point to another, a stratagem by which they

⁵ See supporting documents, Nos. 69 and 70.

managed to capture several peasants, thereby spreading terror among the few who still dared to attempt smuggling provisions into the city.

On 17 October, General Blake appeared in the vicinity of Bruñola with the divisions of O'Donnell and Loygorri, while simultaneously launching a vigorous assault on the outpost of Mare de Déu dels Àngels, a position that had been reoccupied and was being stoutly defended by soldiers from the Sixth and Seventh Italian Regiments. Marshal Augereau concentrated all his troops on the plain of Santa-Eugenia; there, with his flanks anchored by the rivers Ter and Oña, he offered battle to the Spanish army. The latter, fearing an imminent attack upon sighting several reconnaissance units advancing toward them, retreated from Bruñola that very night and took up a new position in the vicinity of Santa Coloma.

On 21 October, intelligence regarding a substantial accumulation of provisions and Spanish troops at La Bisbal led to the assumption that a new convoy was marching toward Girona. Marshal Augereau immediately directed a corps of three thousand Italians to this point, and they seized it without opposition. At the close of the day, these troops set out to return to their cantonments; however, they lost their way during the night and encountered the enemy, who were concealed in the woods or posted on commanding heights. It was not without some disorder that they regained the camp at Castellar, where they resumed their former positions before Blake, having been alerted to their absence, could make a move to exploit the situation.

On 26 October, General Fontane was dispatched with his brigade to Santa Coloma, where he encountered Blake's main force. Being too weak to engage in battle, he withdrew; yet he had barely reached the camps at Aiguaviva and Fornells when the Spanish army appeared directly before him, threatening to breach the line. Marshal Augereau immediately concentrated his army, just as he had done previously, on the plain situated between Salt and the hill of Palau, with his right flank resting on the River Ter and his left on the Oña. Thereupon, the Spanish army, whether due to its own weakness or to a lack of resolve on the part of its general, retreated to the heights of Bruñola. Marshal Augereau wished to launch an attack, but heavy rains compelled him to postpone his plans⁶.

On 27 October, the army learned of the conclusion of peace with Austria; celebrations were held to mark this event, which was bound to have a profound influence on the enemy's resolve. For their part, the Spaniards celebrated the feast of San Narciso, the patron saint of Girona and their own Generalissimo. With fair weather having returned, Marshal Augereau made all necessary preparations to attack General Blake on the morning of the 29th; however, the latter struck camp during the night of the 28th and vanished. A reconnaissance party sent in pursuit reported that he had taken up a position with eight thousand men on the heights of Santa Coloma, where he had entrenched himself. On the 1st of November, General Souham was dispatched against him with his division, six thousand men strong. After a long and bloody engagement, the town of Santa Coloma was taken by storm, and Blake's army was routed. The Spaniards suffered the loss of two thousand men killed or wounded, three hundred prisoners, and one hundred horses; they owed their salvation solely to the rugged terrain, which prevented our troops from pursuing them. The following day, General Souham returned to his camps outside Girona⁷.

⁶ See supporting documents, No. 71.

⁷ See supporting documents, No. 72.

Marshal Augereau, believing that the garrison would be demoralized by this setback, dispatched Adjutant-Commandant Dembowski, without forewarning anyone, to the Mercadal sector to summon the fortress to surrender. This marked the first time that the garrison and the populace, weary from their losses, ravaged by disease, and with scarcely any hope of relief remaining, did not view the approach of a French parley officer toward their walls with utter indifference. They ceased fire and appeared openly and in large numbers upon the parapets. Dembowski advanced along the Barcelona road, followed by a few mounted chasseurs and a trumpeter. He was already approaching the city walls when, suddenly, French artillerymen stationed at the outermost batteries of Montjuïc, unaware of the reason drawing such a large crowd of spectators to the Mercadal bastions, opened fire upon them with several mortar shells. The Spanish gunners, outraged by this act, which they perceived as an act of treachery, unleashed a fierce barrage of grapeshot upon the parliamentarian, forcing him to retreat precipitously with his escort. Alvarez seized upon this incident to rekindle the zeal of both the garrison and the inhabitants, portraying our gunners' blunder as an act of the blackest perfidy. Marshal Augereau sought to resume negotiations by immediately dispatching a second parliamentarian via the Montjuïc route, having first issued orders to all posts along the line to cease fire; however, this envoy was not received, and although several further attempts were made to open negotiations with the garrison of the city or the forts, they all proved futile.

Marshal Augereau surmised that the besieged forces' fierce resistance stemmed primarily from the ever-present hope of receiving outside relief. Consequently, rather than resuming siege operations, he deployed his entire force to conduct operations in the field. Having learned through various reconnaissance missions that Blake's main forces had withdrawn following the engagement at Santa Coloma, he resolved to seize this opportunity to capture Hostalric, where the Spanish had established substantial supply depots under the protection of the castle.

General Pino was entrusted with this expedition, commanding his entire division, comprising the Italian brigades of Mazzucchelli, Fontane, and Palombini. He set out on 7 November, just before dawn, leaving behind only two battalions and two squadrons under the command of Adjutant-Commandant Balabio to guard his camps, and proceeded along the main road toward Mallorquina. There, he received intelligence that a detachment of Blake's troops, commanded by O'Donnell, was descending from the San Hilario Mountains onto the flank of Santa Coloma. He immediately apprised Marshal Augereau of this development; the Marshal thereupon ordered a portion of Souham's division to advance in support of the Italian troops' right wing and rear, thereby enabling General Pino to boldly continue his march all the way to Hostalric.

The town was encircled by a high wall that appeared sufficient to render it secure against a coup de main. It was further protected by a large tower, known as the Torre de los Frailes, and by a castle situated atop an almost inaccessible rocky outcrop. Blake had garrisoned the town with two thousand men, while a force of equal strength, under the command of Brigadier Quadrado, had taken up a forward position on the heights of Massanes.

The brigade of Mazzucchelli first advanced against this latter force, compelling it to retreat under the protective cover of the castle. Simultaneously, the other two Italian brigades launched an assault on the suburb, seizing it at the cost of approximately one hundred casualties; the town

itself, however, put up a fierce resistance. General Mazzucchelli then descended from the heights of Massanes and equipped with scaling ladders and axes, approached from the right flank to assault the fortifications at their highest and least-defended point. In doing so, he facilitated the success of the main assault, which was being launched at the town's principal entrance. There, a few men having succeeded in scaling the ramparts, they opened the gate to the attackers, who surged into the city en masse, killing everyone they encountered. The Spaniards took refuge in the church situated at the upper end of the city, where Battalion Commander Saint-André was tasked with containing them.

General Pino, seeking to capitalize on this moment of terror, summoned the castle Governor to surrender; he informed him that all hope of salvation was lost, that Girona had capitulated, and that, Blake having been defeated, negotiation remained his only recourse to spare his garrison from the carnage to which the city was falling prey before his very eyes. The Governor, however, responded only by redoubling the intensity of his fire. Nevertheless, as the occupation of the city and the investment of the castle required a large number of troops, General Pino decided to withdraw during the night, a maneuver he executed after setting fire to the supply depots.

The Spanish losses amounted to eight to nine hundred men killed, not counting the wounded; those of the attackers consisted of thirty-five dead and sixty-four wounded.

This daring expedition brought great honor to the Italian troops and so intimidated the enemy that they dared not undertake any further action to relieve Girona. General Blake withdrew to Vic with his reserves and established his headquarters there⁸.

Scarcely had the Italian division returned to its camps when General Pino, emboldened by the success he had achieved at Hostalric, proposed launching a scaling assault: either against one of the two forts of the Constable or the Capuchins, against several of the Mercadal bastions, or against the city itself via the Anville and Areny gates, under cover of the dry bed of the Onyar River. However, Marshal Augereau turned a deaf ear to his entreaties, as well as to those of the army's other generals, and authorized operations against Girona solely in the form of diversionary night attacks and bombardment.

Famine was increasingly wreaking havoc within the city. The flesh of horses, donkeys, and mules, which served as the primary source of sustenance, was itself beginning to run out, whether due to sheer consumption or because the animals themselves had nearly all perished from starvation or disease. Whenever peasants, despite the tightest of blockades, managed, at the risk of their lives, to smuggle in a few provisions, these sold for exorbitant prices; Alvarez was compelled to issue a decree addressing this matter⁹. A single hen cost sixteen Piastras Fuertes, a partridge four, and other foodstuffs were priced in proportion. Even the most repulsive creatures had come to be regarded as exquisite delicacies; a mouse sold for five reals, and a cat for thirty. The Junta of Catalonia addressed a vigorous representation to General Blake, urging him to make a final effort on behalf of Girona¹⁰.

⁸ See supporting documents, Nos. 73 and 74.

⁹ See supporting documents, No. 75.

¹⁰ See supporting documents, No. 76.

Continuous rains fell from 8 to 14 November, causing floods that swept away the bridges over the Fluvià, the Ter, and the Oña, bridges that subsequently had to be rebuilt. Each passing day saw an increase in the number of deserters from the garrison. On the 19th, eight officers, including three lieutenant colonels, and eighteen non-commissioned officers or privates presented themselves at our outposts. On the 24th, six more deserters arrived. All of them painted a grim picture of the conditions within the city¹¹. Yet the Governor and the priests maintained their hold over the populace, keeping them in a constant state of heightened fervor and fanaticism.

On the evening of the 29th, a peasant was intercepted leaving Girona, carrying several letters¹². He was sent back into the besieged city with copies of a proclamation that Marshal Augereau had addressed to the inhabitants¹³. Additional copies of this proclamation were also distributed along the entire line of enemy outposts, as well as in Santa Coloma, Hostalric, and La Bisbal.

The desire to engage in combat, and to escape the arduous conditions in which the troops had languished for so long, grew more intense with each passing day. By the final days of November, this desire had become so acute that the impatience of both soldiers and officers began to manifest in open complaints; this ultimately prompted Marshal Augereau to resume the offensive and deliver the final blows against the besieged fortress. General Sanson, who had departed on 26 October to carry out a mission in Paris, had entrusted command of the Corps of Engineers to Battalion Chief Paris. General Verdier commanded General Souham's division, in the latter's absence due to illness, while General Amey had assumed command of the siege troops.

Since the siege had been converted into a blockade, no further additions had been made to the approach works. The breaching batteries and counter-batteries remained manned and in their original state. The only new measure taken was the installation of mines beneath the bastions of Fort Montjuïc, as well as within the redoubts of San-Luis, San-Narciso, and San-Daniel, with the intent of detonating them should the army be compelled to lift the blockade.

It was no longer feasible to exploit the existing breaches; according to reports from deserters, the besieged garrison had constructed impregnable entrenchments behind them. It was therefore decided to open a new breach in the Santa-Llúcia curtain wall, situated alongside the old one, using Battery No. 27. To achieve this, it sufficed to shift the two leftmost guns to the right flank, from which position they would have a clearer line of sight to the base of the wall targeted for demolition. Concurrently, a new emplacement, Battery No. 29, was constructed near San Pons, on the banks of the River Ter; armed with two heavy-caliber guns, it served the dual purpose of preventing the enemy from entrenching the new breach and of delivering enfilading fire across the entire San-Pedro quarter, the intended point of entry into the city. This battery was shielded against fire from the Mercadal bastions by a small house, packed with earth, against which it was positioned.

¹¹ See supporting documents, No. 77.

¹² See supporting documents, No. 78.

¹³ See supporting documents, No. 79.

During the execution of these works, it was decided to sever the communication between the city and the forts on the Capuchin Mountain by seizing the City Redoubt, the Chapter Redoubt, and the Calvary Fort. However, it was first necessary to gain control of the Marine Suburb, where the enemy still maintained positions.

On 2 December, at seven o'clock in the evening, this suburb was attacked by six hundred men from the First and Second Italian Light Regiments, under the command of Adjutant-Commander Balabio. The Spaniards offered little resistance and withdrew into the city. Work continued throughout the night to fortify the houses and to establish covered lines of communication, allowing troops to advance under cover as far as the head of the suburb, a point situated less than two hundred and fifty meters from the main fortress. Posts were also established on the slopes of the Capuchin Mountain in order to monitor enemy movements on that flank¹⁴.

At daybreak, the city and the forts opened heavy fire upon the suburb, though to no effect. The Spaniards were deeply alarmed to see us positioned so close to their walls, within a sector of the city that, until that moment, had been the least exposed to attack and the least heavily guarded. They immediately redeployed troops and artillery to this sector; they fortified houses, erected barricades across the streets, and positioned heavy beams along the parapets of the main ramparts, ready to hurl them down upon any attacking forces. It was truly remarkable to witness the energy and speed with which they marshaled these new defensive measures. Their situation, however, remained as dire as could be imagined. The garrison, weakened by ceaseless toil, scant sleep, a lack of food, and the absolute deprivation of spirits and liquor, suffered the additional anguish of seeing those wretched souls who dared to drag their emaciated bodies to our outposts, seeking some means of survival or attempting to escape the besieged city, turned away. In the month of November alone, the garrison had lost 1,378 men to scurvy and dysentery. The number of sick and ailing continued to rise steadily; and, under the influence of contagion, nearly every wound proved fatal. Amidst half-collapsed houses and unpaved streets where stagnant, filth-laden waters pooled, the inhabitants remained homeless, breathing only air that was foul and corrupted by the exhalations of rotting corpses lying unburied amidst the rubble and ruins. Confronted with such manifold miseries, overwhelmed simultaneously by war, famine, disease, and the most grievous losses, even the stoutest hearts began to falter.

¹⁴ See supporting documents, No. 80.

No. 63

Report from General Gouvion Saint-Cyr to the Minister of War, regarding the capture of the convoy directed by Blake toward Gerona, on 26 September.

Fornells, 27 September 1809.

Monseigneur,

General Blake, who, on September 1st, had only been able to introduce into Gerona enough provisions to sustain the garrison for eight days (including the additional troops that had entered the fortress) as well as the inhabitants, had since that time been hovering around us with another, much more considerable convoy. Finally, yesterday morning, he attempted to bring this convoy into the fortress, escorted and supported by twelve thousand regular troops and an equal number of somatènes. He debouched from La Bisbal an hour before dawn, moving toward Castellar, where the battalion of the Seventh Italian was stationed; this battalion was forced from its position after having defended it with great tenacity. The enemy then advanced upon the Sixth Italian Regiment, which defended itself in the most honorable manner, even though it was obliged to yield a portion of its position, a breach the enemy immediately exploited in an attempt to introduce its convoy into Gerona. However, the resistance offered by this unit provided the time necessary to assemble forces of sufficient strength at the point of attack to thwart the enemy's enterprise. The head of the convoy was already touching the Fort of the Constable when I ordered the Fourth Battalion of the Sixty-seventh Regiment, part of General Souham's division, and commanded by Adjutant-Commander Devaux, to advance against it. This battalion, despite the musket fire and grapeshot from the Capuchin and Queen Anne forts, soon reached the convoy and forced it to retreat in utter confusion, having first routed the Tarragona Regiment that was covering it. The commander of that regiment was killed by the hand of Lieutenant-Colonel Bessenay of the Sixty-seventh Regiment, who himself sustained a slight wound.

This attack was supported by the First Italian Light Infantry Regiment, at the head of which marched General Mazzucchelli. General Pino, to whom I had sent orders at Casa de la Selva to march on Castellar with the Fourth Italian Infantry Regiment and the Napoleon Dragoons, was at that moment vigorously attacking a force of four thousand men that had taken up a strong position to support the convoy. The Spaniards were routed at this point as well, despite having fought with fierce determination.

The rout of the enemy was then complete. The convoy descended via precipices into the Oña Valley, where Colonel Villata's Royal Chasseurs inflicted a horrific slaughter upon them, as it was impossible for them to take prisoner such a large number of people fleeing, along with their beasts of burden, across the fields and woods that cover the countryside. The Twenty-fourth Dragoon Regiment and the French First Light Infantry Regiment, both belonging to the Souham Division, also pursued the portion of the convoy that had escaped the other troops, capturing the greater part of it. A few detachments fell back upon the reserve, commanded in person by General Blake, who withdrew toward La Bisbal and Palamós, a retreat we could not pursue any further without lifting the blockade of Girona; however, everything belonging to the convoy,

with the exception of some ninety to one hundred mules that managed to enter Girona, is lost to the Spaniards. The convoy consisted of one thousand sheep, a small number of oxen, and fourteen hundred mules laden with lard, dried vegetables, wine, brandy, chocolate, coffee, gunpowder, and other supplies; contrary to our initial belief, the convoy did not contain any flour. The garrison and the inhabitants will likely be able to subsist for some time longer on wheat, of which there is a large supply within Girona, yet this wheat is unpalatable to both the soldiers and the civilians and serves only to exacerbate the already high number of sick personnel they currently face.

We have taken a considerable number of prisoners, among whom were some forty-odd officers. This engagement reflects the highest credit upon the troops and the officers I have named, who led them in the field.

I beg Your Excellency to accept the assurance of my highest consideration.

Signed: COUNT GOUVION SAINT-CYR.

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## **No. 64**

*Supplement to the previous report.*

Fornells, 28 September 1809.

Monseigneur,

Reconnaissance patrols pushed forward against the enemy found him continuing his retreat, which he is conducting with great haste, and captured a few more prisoners.

Reports that have reached me indicate that the Spanish losses on the 26<sup>th</sup> amount to three thousand men killed or taken prisoner, approximately one thousand mules, and all the provisions from the convoy, which the drivers scattered here and there to facilitate their escape.

The surrender of Girona, given the situation in which that fortress currently finds itself, cannot be long delayed, provided, however, that the besieging army is not more starved than the besieged. For the past few days, I have had the Commissary-General in Perpignan to coordinate with the administrative authorities the means to ensure, with absolute certainty, the army's subsistence. He informs me that these authorities have placed such obstacles in his path that he intended to proceed to His Excellency the Minister Director of War Administration to have them removed. I have ordered him to remain in Perpignan; and since the rout the Spanish have just suffered gives me the certainty that Blake will be unable to undertake anything of significance for some time, I intend to take advantage of this respite to travel to Perpignan myself, in order to expedite and support the measures the Commissary-General may need to take to permanently secure the army's subsistence. I hope that a few days will suffice to achieve this objective, one that is of too great importance to me not to merit my utmost attention.

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

*Signed:* COUNT GOUVION SAINT-CYR.



## No. 65

*Letter from General Rey, Chief of Staff of the Seventh Corps, to the Minister of War, regarding the capture of the convoy directed by Blake toward Girona, on 26 September.*

Fornells, 2 October 1809.

Monseigneur,

His Excellency the General-in-Chief has had the honor of reporting to Your Excellency on the subsequent operations of the siege and the outcome of the assault of 19 September. In the days that followed, various reconnaissance missions took place, and we sustained a few killed and wounded.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup>, General Blake, advancing from the vicinity of Olot with an army sixteen to eighteen thousand strong (consisting almost entirely of line troops) and seven to eight hundred cavalry, maneuvered through the mountains to move upon La Bisbal, passing through Sant Hilari, Hostalric, and Palamós, and bringing in his train a considerable convoy which he had gathered from every corner of Catalonia. In order to accelerate his movement, Blake had marched day and night, hoping by this hasty maneuver to elude the vigilance of the General-in-Chief and his troops, and to resupply Girona.

On the night of the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup>, Blake set his convoy in motion from La Bisbal, protected by a division commanded by General Wimpfen, comprising six to seven thousand infantrymen drawn from his finest troops, and three to four hundred cavalymen. Blake himself remained in reserve on the heights behind Castellar, accompanied by another division of five to six thousand men and three hundred cavalry, while a third division was positioned in the second line. The Commander-in-Chief has already apprised Your Grace of the results of the brilliant engagement of the 26<sup>th</sup>: on that day, the enemy, having succeeded, despite the most spirited resistance, in forcing the withdrawal of the advanced posts at Castellar and a battalion of the Sixth Italian Regiment (an action coordinated with a sally of twelve to fifteen hundred men from the fortress itself, via the Capuchin sector), was vigorously attacked at the head of his convoy. This attack was executed through the Commander-in-Chief's superb tactical deployment, which involved advancing the battalion of the Sixty-seventh Regiment, commanded by Adjutant-Commandant Devaux, and two battalions of the First Italian Light, under the orders of General Mazzucchelli. These troops maneuvered under the fire of the Capuchin Fort, intrepidly swept aside everything in their path, seized the heights commanding the mountainous road from Castellar to Girona, and through this audacious maneuver, halted the convoy's advance and forced it to retreat. Almost simultaneously, the convoy was attacked in the rear by Divisional General Pino, who had been

ordered to march from Casa de la Selva with the Fourth Italian Regiment and two squadrons of the Napoleon Dragoons; Pino was compelled to wage a brilliant and tenacious battle against the troops that had remained in position to cover the convoy's withdrawal. The Spaniards, astonished to find themselves attacked so fiercely at both front and rear, fled across ravines, mountains, and woods, seeking refuge in the Oña Valley. A battalion of the French First Light Regiment and two squadrons of Royal Chasseurs, commanded by Colonel Villata, whom the Commander-in-Chief had held in reserve, gave chase and inflicted a heavy slaughter upon them. The convoy was annihilated; a considerable number of mules, exhausted by the fatigue of long marches, were captured. Many animals were killed or driven over the precipices into the ravines; however, nearly the entire stock of provisions, which consisted of a vast array of supplies, was lost. The sheep and oxen were distributed among the troops to serve as their rations. The Commander-in-Chief expresses his highest commendation for the troops of General Pino's division and those of General Souham, who distinguished themselves during this brilliant day. In his report, Your Excellency identifies, for your information, Monseigneur, those individuals who particularly distinguished themselves, and requests His Majesty's favors on their behalf.

Blake rallied as many fugitives as he could at his current position; then, observing the preparations General Pino was making to launch an attack against him, he commenced a retreat via La Bisbal, moving across the mountains. He marched throughout the night and the following day, halting for only two hours at Palamós to allow his troops to rest, before proceeding to bivouac in the mountains situated between Sant Feliu and Lloret. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, he set out toward Hostalric, where his rearguard rejoined him on the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup>. Reports from deserters indicate that he remained there on the 30<sup>th</sup> and appeared to be concentrating his forces at that location. I must, Monseigneur, speak to you of the staff officers who, on this day, served with vigor and fulfilled with distinction all the missions with which they were charged.

What contributed, Monseigneur, to hastening this precipitate retreat was the movement ordered along the Marine Road, executed by General Bessières with two squadrons of the Twenty-fourth Dragoons and one battalion of the First French Light.

We took nearly seven hundred prisoners, including forty-three officers; the enemy left between twelve and fifteen hundred dead on the battlefield. The Spaniards themselves admit to having lost nearly three thousand men and over a thousand mules on that day; for two days, orders were given to bury or burn the corpses to prevent the air from becoming infected.

According to all reports, the inhabitants and garrison of Girona are suffering greatly from a shortage of provisions. Two battalions of the vanguard, totaling eight or nine hundred men, which were cut off and driven back into the Capuchin sector during a sortie made by the garrison, have been bivouacking near that fort ever since; they appear to withdraw at night behind the town's advanced posts to prevent desertion. Deserters claim that the Governor refuses to admit them into the city; they are suffering severely from a lack of food.

Please accept, Monseigneur, the assurance of my profound respect.

*Signed: REY.*

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No. 66

*Report from Marshal Augereau, Duke of Castiglione,
to the Minister of War, regarding the situation of the troops
of the Seventh Corps before Girona.*

Prades, 28 September 1809.

As my health has not yet permitted me to assume command of the Seventh Army Corps in Catalonia, as I have already had the honor of apprising Your Excellency, I nevertheless deemed it my duty, in light of all the rumors circulating regarding this corps and the repeated entreaties of the administrators of the Pyrénées-Orientales department, to hasten to its aid. I proceeded immediately to Perpignan, where I learned that communications with the army had been severed, and that no news whatsoever was being received from it. The latest reports indicated that Girona had been resupplied by a force of three thousand men and twelve hundred mules laden with provisions and munitions of war. To verify this fact with certainty and ascertain all the details, I ordered M. Fouques, my Aide-de-Camp, to proceed to Girona to meet with General Verdier, who was commanding the siege, in order to obtain from him full particulars regarding his position. The day following his arrival, General Verdier decided to launch an assault, as there were three practicable breaches in the fortifications. The troops approached the breaches with hesitation; only forty or sixty brave men scaled the walls, and, despite the example set by the small number of officers leading them, the others steadfastly refused to follow. These officers fell victim to their own courage and devotion. This assault resulted in five hundred men being put out of action, including thirty officers, among whom were the four remaining colonels in the division. The five thousand men who now comprise the division are drawn from various nations: Westphalians, Tuscans, Neapolitans, Lombards, soldiers from several German principalities, and, finally, a few Frenchmen. All these units have suffered considerably since the commencement of the Siege of Girona, both from enemy fire and from disease to such an extent that this division, which originally numbered seventeen thousand men, is today reduced to five thousand. It has lost the majority of its commanders. Battalions of eight hundred men find themselves reduced to two hundred or one hundred and fifty, commanded by a captain or even a lieutenant; these troops are racked with fatigue and overwhelmed by sickness, and I venture to assert that their morale is so broken that it is impossible for them to continue the siege any longer.

As for the two divisions commanded in person by General Gouvion Saint-Cyr, they remain in excellent condition, according to the intelligence I have received; there are eight hundred draft horses in very good order.

The siege artillery has suffered heavily; some twenty pieces are out of action.

No resources remain in the country to feed the army; what is most unfortunate is that the coming year will offer no more, since, from La Jonquera to Girona, the cultivators have vanished, and, consequently, the fields have been left uncultivated. It is therefore necessary to draw everything from France, if we are not to let the army perish. I am writing to His Excellency, the Minister-

Director Dejean on this subject, to apprise him of the situation in which the army finds itself, both regarding provisions and regarding administration in general.

Thus, Your Excellency will see from all these details that it is impossible for an army so weak, so disheartened, and so destitute, to hold Catalonia for long unless the government dispatches fresh troops.

Communications between Perpignan and Girona are frequently intercepted by bodies of insurgents; as a result, two out of every three convoys are seized by them. Indeed, were these bands led by skillful and enterprising commanders, communications between France and Catalonia would have been severed long ago.

It is, therefore, absolutely imperative, and I cannot repeat this too often, that the government come to the army's aid. From this day forward, the army must be supplied entirely by France, for the country can no longer yield resources of any kind; furthermore, with our lines of communication to the rear cut off, any provisions sent there would inevitably be captured.

I shall not speak to you of our unfortunate sick and wounded; the picture is too distressing. I have laid the full details before His Excellency the Minister-Director Dejean. During my journey to Perpignan, I authorized the disbursement of forty thousand francs to the Hospice Commission, as it was no longer able to sustain the daily expenses it had undertaken, given that the number of sick patients is increasing every day.

If the government is unable to come to the aid of the Army of Catalonia by providing a substantial reinforcement of troops, it is imperative that it dispatch National Guardsmen drawn from the Ninth and Tenth Military Divisions to secure our rear as well as our fortified strongholds; this is the only means of preventing the evacuation of Catalonia.

I beg Your Excellency to give my letter your consideration. The needs are pressing; there is not a moment to lose. Mr. Fouques, my Aide-de-Camp, having just arrived from the army, will be able to provide you with any information you may desire.

As for myself, I await his return before proceeding to the army, despite not being fully recovered.

General Verdier writes to me at this very moment to say that his fever has returned and that he is racked with pain; he is heading to Perpignan to attend to his health. Thus, I foresee the siege of Girona being lifted within a few days.

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

Signed: MARSHAL, DUKE OF CASTIGLIONE.

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## No. 67

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

Perpignan, 3 October 1809.

Monseigneur,

I have been in Perpignan for three days now, the very place to which I had informed Your Excellency of my intention to travel. I was unable to apprise you of my arrival any sooner, as the rigors of the journey, which the difficulty of communications compelled me to undertake on horseback, so severely aggravated my delicate state of health (a condition entirely incompatible with such physical exertion) that I have found it impossible, until now, to attend to any official duties whatsoever.

I had been informed that there was a large number of military personnel, estimated at between three and four thousand, stationed both in the hospitals and in various communes throughout this department. These men belong to the Army and are fit to rejoin it, having made a full recovery. I had intended to take measures regarding this matter; however, I found neither the General commanding the division, who is currently in Toulouse, nor the General commanding the department, who is in Molitg, in attendance upon Marshal Augereau, present here.

One of the primary reasons that drew me here was also to ensure the dispatch and safe delivery to the Army of the provisions essential to its sustenance; yet I did not find the Departmental Prefect in Perpignan either, as he, too, is currently in Molitg, in attendance upon Marshal Augereau.

I regret the absence of these officials somewhat less, however, given that the Marshal, having them both at his immediate disposal, will be able to address with them the very matters I had intended to resolve myself. This task should prove straightforward for him, as he is fully apprised of the Army's requirements; indeed, his First Aide-de-Camp recently spent several days at the front; the Marshal has already initiated administrative measures here in Perpignan; and, finally, he is currently in correspondence regarding this very subject with both Your Excellency and the Director of War Administration. These measures on his part leave me in no doubt that he will proceed to Catalonia very shortly, should he deem his presence there necessary. This move is, moreover, a natural consequence of his recovery, which I am assured is complete; and I welcome this all the more gladly as any further efforts on my part to stand in for him in his command would have been futile. My three-month stay in a region where I could find no medical aid, combined with the physical rigors necessarily inherent in an active command, have brought me to a point where, despite the utmost zeal, I am absolutely no longer able to carry on.

Your Excellency may judge of my condition by the medical report provided by the Army's Inspector-General of Health, which I have attached to this letter.

I have therefore instructed the Army's Chief of Staff to proceed to the Marshal's headquarters to furnish him with any information he may require and to receive his orders.

General Souham is currently blockading Girona with his own division and that of General Pino. Generals Guillot and Dumoulin are securing and occupying the route leading to France; furthermore, recent dispatches from Barcelona indicate that General Duhesme, who faces no enemy forces in his sector, remains in a position of complete security.

As for myself, having taken a brief period of rest here, I shall set out for the interior of France in order to restore my health, insofar as is possible, and to ensure that I am fit to proceed, at the earliest opportunity, to whatever post His Majesty's confidence may call me.

The Commissary-General, notwithstanding the numerous obstacles he has encountered, has, through sheer zeal and diligence, succeeded in securing provisions for the Army for a period exceeding the estimated duration of Girona's continued resistance.

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

Signed: COUNT GOUVION SAINT-CYR.

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No. 68

*Letter from Marshal Augereau, Duke of Castiglione, to
the Minister of War.*

Perpignan, 9 October 1809.

I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that tomorrow, the 10th of the current month, I am leaving Perpignan to assume command of the Seventh Corps of the Army in Catalonia, even though my health is not yet fully restored, as I still suffer from swelling in my feet and hands. Were I in need of providing fresh proofs of my devotion to His Majesty the Emperor, this circumstance would afford me the opportunity; however, for the past fourteen years, His Majesty has been sufficiently convinced of it. I feel my strength reviving, and I hope that the little health remaining to me will not fail me, and that I shall have the good fortune to bring to a successful conclusion the task I am about to undertake.

I hasten to share with you two letters I have received from General Gouvion Saint-Cyr, as well as my reply. You will observe that the situation is extraordinary: this general has abandoned the army and handed over its command to General Souham. I was at Molitg, twelve leagues from Perpignan, in the department of the Pyrénées-Orientales, taking the waters in an effort to eradicate the root of my illness, when I received, via one of my aides-de-camp, the letter I have attached hereto as No. 1, in which General Saint-Cyr informed me that he had left the army. I also forward to you correspondence from Generals Souham and Bessières; the latter is currently here, I have not yet seen him, but I intend to persuade him to accompany me to the army.

General Verdier is also in Perpignan, but I am taking him with me so that he may resume command of his division.

I shall devote my utmost care to reorganizing the remnants of this unfortunate army.

Under No. 2, you will find the letter in which General Gouvion Saint-Cyr announces that he is leaving Perpignan to recuperate in the interior. Under No. 3, you will find the latest letter I have received from General Souham. These various letters, the disputes that provoked them, and the complete disorganization of the army, have compelled me, as I mentioned earlier, to proceed there immediately to assume command. I shall not dwell further on the army's current situation; you would find it difficult to believe everything I could tell you, and doing so would contribute neither to its reorganization nor to its sustenance. Moreover, I have already written to you regarding this matter, as well as to the Minister-Director.

I am dispatching Mr. Rey, Chief Commissary of the Seventh Corps, to Minister Dejean to apprise him of the state of the army's administrative services. Unless he comes to our aid promptly, we shall be forced to fall back upon our own frontiers; furthermore, should the rains set in, it will become utterly impossible to provision the army. In the letter I am writing to him, I emphasize the critical importance of stockpiling at least three months' worth of supplies at Figueres and Bellegarde, as well as at Perpignan, which serves as our third line of defense. Disease continues to wreak terrible havoc within the army, and if this trend persists, not a single man will remain.

Commissary Rey will be able to provide you with any further information you may require.

Just as I was about to seal this letter, I received the report which I have enclosed in this packet under No. 4; I may yet arrive in time to command the retreat. As you are aware, the siege of Gerona has been reduced to a mere blockade.

Please accept, Sir, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Signed: MARSHAL, DUKE OF CASTIGLIONE.

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## No. 69

*Letter from Marshal Augereau, Duke of Castiglione, to  
the Minister of War.*

Fornells, 21 October 1809.

I wrote to Your Excellency on the 9<sup>th</sup> of this month stating that I was proceeding to Girona; I arrived there on the 12<sup>th</sup> and immediately assumed command of the army.

On the night of my arrival, a corps of fifteen hundred men, which was stationed within the fortress under the command of an intelligent and daring officer named O'Donnell, abandoned the position it had taken up between the forts and the city. At ten o'clock that evening, taking advantage of the profound darkness, the column forced a passage through the French army. This column was attacked and subjected to heavy musket fire; it suffered approximately two hundred killed and two hundred captured, and, having been routed, scattered into the woods.

These troops had escorted the last convoy, which had partially entered Girona on 26 September; however, the Governor had refused to admit them into the interior of the fortress, so as to avoid the obligation of feeding them; consequently, they had bivouacked for fifteen days on the Capuchin Heights.

I have reviewed the army; there are fewer than twelve thousand bayonets fit for duty. Every regiment has three or four hundred sick men in the barracks.

I intend to order all convalescent officers and soldiers capable of marching to rejoin their units. I have dispatched orders to the Ninth and Tenth Military Divisions to ensure that this measure is carried out without delay.

I have just learned that Blake is massing all the Spanish troops in Catalonia to attack me and attempt to force a new convoy into Girona. I have issued orders for everyone to be at their post, so as not to be taken by surprise; unfortunately, the terrain is highly favorable to the enemy's undertakings.

I would require twenty-five thousand men to blockade the fortress and prevent it from receiving reinforcements; furthermore, I would need a corps of observation, of at least twelve thousand men, to cover the siege, and four thousand men to secure my rear and protect the convoys arriving from France. Yet I possess barely twelve thousand effective bayonets!

I shall not speak to you of the laxity of discipline among the troops, nor of their manner of service, that is my concern; but what is truly distressing is that these troops are in want of everything, and that, unfortunately, everything must be drawn from France. In short, such is my situation.

I have the honor to remain, with the most perfect consideration,

*Signed:* MARSHAL, DUKE OF CASTIGLIONE.

## No. 70

### *Situational Report of the Seventh Corps as of October 1<sup>st</sup>.*

#### ARMY OF OBSERVATION

Marshal Augereau, Duke of Castiglione, Commander-in-Chief.  
Rey, Brigadier General, Chief of Staff.

##### FRENCH DIVISION, General Souham.

|                                                |                                        |   |     | M. pres. |     |    | Det. | Hosp. | Eff. |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---|-----|----------|-----|----|------|-------|------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Brigade,<br>General Bessières. | 1 <sup>st</sup> Light.....             | 3 | bn. | 1598     |     |    | 1    | 248   | 1847 |
|                                                | 42 <sup>nd</sup> Line.....             | 3 |     | 1790     |     |    | 15   | 625   | 2430 |
|                                                | 24 <sup>th</sup> Dragoons.....         | 3 | sq. | 582      | 607 | h. | "    | 2     | 584  |
|                                                | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Light, below Girona... | 1 | bn. | 569      |     |    | "    | 117   | 686  |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Brigade,<br>General Dumoulin.  | 7 <sup>th</sup> Line.....              | 2 |     | 607      |     |    | 56   | 709   | 1372 |
|                                                | 93 <sup>rd</sup> id.....               | 1 |     | 402      |     |    | 14   | 431   | 847  |
|                                                | 3 <sup>rd</sup> prov. Chasseurs.....   | 2 | sq. | 323      | 291 |    | 15   | 156   | 494  |
| General Headquarters,<br>Adj-Cmdr. Devaux.     | 67 <sup>th</sup> Line.....             | 1 | bn. | 548      |     |    | "    | 184   | 732  |
|                                                | Gendarmerie.....                       |   |     | 57       | 29  |    | 7    | 18    | 82   |

##### ITALIAN DIVISION, General Pino.

|                                                   |                            |   |     |       |      |  |     |      |       |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|-----|-------|------|--|-----|------|-------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Brigade,<br>General Mazzucchelli. | 1 <sup>st</sup> Light..... | 2 | bn. | 1186  |      |  | 43  | 478  | 1707  |
|                                                   | 6 <sup>th</sup> Line.....  | 2 |     | 1272  |      |  | 6   | 709  | 1987  |
|                                                   | Royal Chasseurs.....       | 3 | sq. | 479   | 445  |  | 22  | 21   | 522   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Brigade,<br>General Fontane.      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Light..... | 3 | bn. | 1556  |      |  | 71  | 350  | 1977  |
|                                                   | 7 <sup>th</sup> Line.....  | 1 |     | 40    |      |  | 11  | 249  | 660   |
|                                                   | Napoleon Dragoons.....     | 3 | sq. | 405   | 400  |  | 15  | 36   | 456   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Brigade,<br>General Palombini.    | 4 <sup>th</sup> Line.....  | 3 | bn. | 1488  |      |  | "   | 405  | 1893  |
|                                                   | 5 <sup>th</sup> id.....    | 2 |     | 325   |      |  | 24  | 169  | 518   |
|                                                   | Crown Prince Chasseurs...  | 2 | sq. | 140   | 132  |  | "   | 41   | 181   |
| TOTAL.....                                        |                            |   |     | 13729 | 1895 |  | 300 | 4948 | 18975 |

NOTE: The number of men present includes those who remained in camp due to illness, to receive treatment in the barracks.

As of 12 October, the Italian Division numbered 6,794 men present, 1,941 in hospitals, and 792 men on detached duty.

## SIEGE ARMY

### FRENCH DIVISION, General Verdier.

|                                      |                             |       | M. pres. | Det. | Hosp. |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|----------|------|-------|
|                                      | 32 <sup>nd</sup> Light..... | 1 bn. | 503      | 25   | 71    |
| Below Girona.....                    | Würzburg Regiment...        | 2     | 682      | 51   | 616   |
|                                      | 1 <sup>st</sup> Berg.....   | 2     | 872      | 21   | 490   |
|                                      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> id.....     | 2     | 934      | 35   | 378   |
|                                      | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Line.....   | 1     | 205      | 48   | 305   |
|                                      | 7 <sup>th</sup> Line.....   | Det.  | 468      | 69   | 133   |
| At Figueres, and on<br>the line..... | 16 <sup>th</sup> id.....    | 1 bn. | 324      | 11   | 143   |
|                                      | Valaisan.....               | Det.  | 175      | 13   | 5     |
|                                      | 56 <sup>th</sup> .....      | 1 bn. | 449      | "    | 269   |
|                                      | Princes Battalion.....      | 1     | 504      | "    | 272   |

### WESTPHALIAN DIVISION, General Morio.

|                   |                           |   |     |    |     |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---|-----|----|-----|
|                   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Line..... | 2 | 363 | "  | 888 |
|                   | 4 <sup>th</sup> id.....   | 2 | 539 | 11 | 871 |
| Below Girona..... | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Line..... | 2 | 510 | "  | 728 |
|                   | Gendarmes.....            |   |     | "  | 4   |
|                   | Cuirassiers.....          |   |     | "  | 12  |

### ITALIAN DIVISION, General Lechi.

|                   |                                                  |       |                |           |            |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------|-----------|------------|
|                   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Neapolitan Line.....             | 2     | 302            | "         | "          |
|                   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> id.....                          | 2     | 403            | "         | "          |
| At Figueres.....  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Neapolitan<br>Chasseurs à Cheval | 3 sq. | 251 234 h.     | 80        | 69         |
|                   | TOTAL.....                                       |       | <hr/> 7758 234 | <hr/> 314 | <hr/> 5299 |
| Below Girona..... | Artillery.....                                   |       | 1158 568       | 131       | 636        |
|                   | Engineers.....                                   |       | 187 "          | "         | "          |

NOTE: The Westphalian Division, which, at the commencement of the campaign, stood at a strength of 6,490 men, numbered only 853 men present by the end of October (including those ill in camp); 3,432 were in hospitals, and 32 were on detached duty.

## No. 71

### *Report from General Rey, Chief of Staff of the Seventh Corps, to the Minister of War.*

Fornells, 26 October 1809.

Monseigneur,

Various reconnaissance missions took place up until the 20<sup>th</sup>, without any serious engagements. On the 21<sup>st</sup>, the Marshal, having learned that the enemy had gathered twenty-four thousand bread rations and some forty oxen at La Bisbal, ordered Major General Pino to proceed there with two regiments and two squadrons, in order to seize these provisions and destroy any supply depots the enemy might have established. Major General Pino executed his mission in every respect; he returned on the evening of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, having encountered only eight or nine hundred miquelets or somatènes, who dispersed upon his approach.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the rain began. On the 24<sup>th</sup>, the enemy conducted a strong reconnaissance thrust against the Forty-second Regiment, which occupies the heights extending from the right bank of the Ter to the road leading from Vic to Girona via Aiguaviva. Vigorously repulsed and pursued, the enemy suffered forty-two killed and over two hundred wounded, including seven or eight officers, and we took some twenty prisoners. We sustained four killed and twenty-five wounded, among whom is Battalion Commander Rubillon, a distinguished officer. The rain continued unabated on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>; this foul weather, which, unfortunately, persists, could significantly hinder the army's operations by severing communications between the various corps of the blockading force, which are separated by the Ter and the Oña rivers. Every measure has been taken, Monseigneur, to mitigate this drawback as much as possible; it is to be hoped that the weather will soon take a turn for the better.

According to reports from deserters, the inhabitants and garrison of Girona are suffering greatly from a shortage of provisions; however, the rising water levels will now provide them with the means to utilize the mills located in the interior. It is certain that the troops receive only a quarter-loaf of bread every three or four days, along with wheat, which is found in abundance within the fortress, and horse or mule meat. There is neither wine nor brandy, almost no oil, and no salt; the number of sick is considerable, and the hospitals lack medicines.

Blake occupies the mountain range with his army, extending from Santa Coloma to the right bank of the Ter. This position enables him to operate on both banks of the river, with the bridge at Salera situated on his left flank. He appears to be drawing his supplies from Hostalric, Olot, and Vic; however, he surely faces difficulties in doing so. This general is reportedly preparing a large convoy at Vic and intends to attack us with his full strength in an attempt to force us to lift the blockade. The bands led by Claros and Rovira have once again attempted to intercept our lines of communication with France; they are currently being pursued. The army is in the highest spirits. Should the rain persist, it will largely neutralize the effectiveness of our artillery and cavalry, as the horses are suffering acutely from a lack of fodder. The inclement weather only serves to exacerbate this shortage.

The Marshal hereby reports to Your Excellency on the intelligence he has received regarding the entry into the port of Roses of twelve vessels laden with provisions and gunpowder. These vessels were part of a convoy bound for Barcelona, the escort of which had been dispersed by an enemy fleet. Orders have been issued to secure, unload, and warehouse the cargo of these vessels, thereby safeguarding it against any attempts by the English to seize it.

Upon his return on the evening of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Major General Pino reported that he had been alerted at La Bisbal that the English were cruising between Palamós and Sant Feliu with sixteen ships of the line and six frigates. I immediately apprised the Maritime Prefect of Toulon of this matter, presuming that this information might be of use to him.

We receive between twenty and twenty-five deserters daily.

Please accept, Monseigneur, the assurance of my profound respect.

*Signed:* REY.

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No. 72

*Report from General Souham to Marshal Augereau, Duke
of Castiglione, regarding the engagement at Santa-Coloma.*

Camp below Bescanó, 1 November 1809.

Monseigneur,

In accordance with Your Excellency's orders, I set out today, November 1st, at four o'clock in the morning, with eight battalions, three squadrons, and three pieces of artillery, to attack the insurgents occupying the position at Santa-Coloma. This division, composed entirely of veteran troops and forming part of the corps commanded by General Blake, numbered eight thousand infantrymen and four hundred cavalymen. I found the enemy entrenched within the village of Santa-Coloma, every house of which they had loopholed for defense. The remainder of their force was positioned on the neighboring heights, with its front covered by a massive ravine. I immediately ordered Colonel Espert, commanding the Forty-second Regiment of Line Infantry, to descend into this ravine and cross it near Riudarenas in order to gain the heights and turn the enemy's right flank; meanwhile, the Third Battalion of that regiment, along with the Fourth Battalion of the Third Light Infantry, was to attempt to turn the enemy's left flank by crossing the ravine near Farners. At the same time, Brigadier General Dumoulin was to attack the village of Santa-Coloma with three battalions of the First Regiment of Light Infantry and three squadrons of cavalry. All orders were executed to perfection, and after three hours of very heavy musketry fire, the enemy was driven from all its positions and thrown into the utmost rout; they owed their escape solely to the insurmountable terrain difficulties presented by the region's mountains. All their camps were burned and pillaged, and their entrenchments were destroyed. The Spanish

losses are very considerable; I estimate them at two thousand men killed or wounded. We have taken three hundred prisoners from them. Our own losses consist of one officer killed and three wounded, and ten soldiers killed and forty wounded. Any praise I might offer regarding the bravery displayed by the division under my command would fall far short of what it truly deserves; every man performed his duty to perfection. I have particular cause to commend M. de Chavanges, Your Excellency's Aide-de-Camp; this young officer executed the orders I gave him with remarkable composure. I commend him to your kind favor.

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

Signed: SOUHAM.

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### **No. 73**

*Report from Marshal Augereau, Duke of Castiglione,  
to the Minister of War, regarding the Affair of Hostalric.*

Fornells, 9 November 1809.

Following the affair at Santa Coloma, of which I have already rendered an account to Your Excellency, I was informed that the enemy was establishing large supply depots at Hostalric and preparing a convoy to resupply the fortress of Girona. Unwilling to allow them the means to do so, I ordered Major General Pino to set out, with a portion of his division, to attack the Spaniards should he find the opportunity. My orders were executed beyond my expectations. My Aide-de-Camp, who accompanied the expedition, reported to me that the Italian troops attacked the town of Hostalric with a vigor and coolness that defy all praise. Your Excellency will find attached hereto a copy of the report submitted to me by General Pino.

I have the honor to be, etc.

*Signed:* MARSHAL DUKE OF CASTIGLIONE.

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No. 74

Report from General Pino to Marshal Augereau, Duke of Castiglione.

Fornells, 8 November 1809.

I have the honor to report to Your Excellency that, pursuant to the orders you issued to me, I advanced upon Hostalric with a portion of my division in order to seize that stronghold and capture the supply depots that Blake had established there to provision his army and resupply Girona. Having set out on the 7th instant at five o'clock in the morning, I arrived that same day, without encountering the slightest obstacle, directly beneath the walls of Hostalric.

All enemy outposts positioned in front of the stronghold were driven off by my vanguard; a battalion of eight hundred men, deployed for battle at Massanes, an almost impregnable position, was also routed by General Mazzucchelli at the head of the First Light Regiment; the battalion commander and the adjutant-major were taken prisoner.

Another force of two thousand men, commanded by Brigadier Don Pedro Quadrado, and joined by a large portion of the local population, attempted to defend the town, which was enclosed by a sturdy wall and protected by several towers. I immediately ordered an assault upon it by Colonel Eugène, leading the Ninth Line Regiment and a battalion of the Seventh, while awaiting General Mazzucchelli's emergence from Massanes on the right flank.

Colonel Eugène's column was met by heavy musket fire and cannon fire from the castle; yet, without returning this fire, it marched directly upon the town, only to find its gate shut. Any hesitation could prove disastrous: the Colonel ordered the gate set ablaze and commanded his men to scale the walls, an order the voltigeurs executed instantly, clambering over one another amidst a hail of bullets. The quarter of the town situated to our left, home to a substantial tower, was taken by storm. The enemy, entrenched within the houses and garrisoning this tower, maintained a murderous fire; they were supported by the troops of Quadrado, who had positioned themselves between the castle and the town, as well as by the castle garrison, six hundred men strong. Nevertheless, our troops forced their way into the town and put to the sword every soul they encountered.

Just as Colonel Eugène was seizing control of the town's left flank, General Mazzucchelli launched an attack from the right. Finding the walls too high to scale unaided, the General had ladders requisitioned from houses in the suburbs and ordered the assault. Thus assailed from both ends of the town, the insurgents converged upon a plateau situated at its center. I then ordered a battalion of the Second Light Infantry to advance; heedless of the grapeshot raining down upon them, they, too, scaled the wall and launched a frontal assault on the plateau, while the other corps simultaneously attacked it in the flank. The resistance was tenacious; yet our courage prevailed, and nearly every man was put to the sword.

An enemy column descending from the mountains appeared poised to seize the town's left extremity, a sector left exposed by Colonel Eugène's maneuver. I ordered a battalion of the

Fourth Regiment, commanded by the brave Major Saint-André, to advance against this column; he charged the enemy with the bayonet and also entered the town, despite a very heavy cannonade from the castle.

Finally, I have the honor to report to Your Excellency that the outcome of my expedition has fully met your expectations. The enemy was defeated at every point; all their camps were captured and burned; considerable stores of cod, rice, oil, and brandy, along with eighteen oxen belonging to Blake's army, were seized, and those parts of the town that the inhabitants attempted to defend were set ablaze. The enemy suffered eight or nine hundred killed, as well as a large number of wounded who managed to retreat to the castle. On my side, I sustained thirty-five killed, including two officers, and sixty-four wounded. Among those who distinguished themselves, I shall for the moment limit myself to citing General Mazzucchelli, Colonel Villata, and Colonel Eugène, who displayed exemplary courage and consummate skill.

The enemy's terror was such that neither Blake nor O'Donnell dared to come to the relief of Hostalric, even though they were no more than four or five leagues distant from the battlefield.

I have the honor to be, etc.

Signed: PINO.

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## **No. 75**

*Ordinance by Governor Alvarez to regulate the price  
of provisions within the fortress of Girona.*

Girona, 9 November 1809.

In the critical circumstances of a siege such as the one we have been enduring for so long, both reason and the public interest demand, on the one hand, that those who, at the peril of their lives, introduce provisions into the fortress be duly rewarded; and, on the other, that the prices of goods already present within the fortress prior to the siege be kept in check. For while it may be permissible to allow those who possess such goods, without having faced any danger to acquire them, to raise their prices slightly (given the necessity they face of replenishing their stock), it is equally imperative that avarice and greed be kept within bounds. We have observed with distress a sudden surge in the price of foodstuffs, as well as scandalous monopolistic practices, which have given rise to complaints from the officers of the garrison. To put an end to these abuses, I hereby order:

1. That, within twenty-four hours, all inhabitants of this city shall report to the Economic Junta the exact quantities of lard, rendered fat, wine, oil, and wheat currently in their possession, so that the government may accurately determine how long these provisions are likely to last. Any individual failing to comply with this order shall be liable for a fine of fifty livres, and their

goods shall be confiscated; one-half of the fine and one-third of the confiscated goods shall be awarded to the informant, thereby ensuring that nothing remains concealed.

2. That lard and rendered fat shall not be sold for more than twenty reals de vellón per pound of thirty-six ounces; common wine shall not exceed ten reals per porrón, and fine wine sixteen reals per porrón; and a mallal of oil, as well as a cuartera of wheat, shall not exceed nine Catalan livres. In the event of a violation, a fine of fifty livres shall be imposed upon both the seller and the buyer; furthermore, resellers accustomed to stocking such commodities shall incur the same penalty if, in an attempt to evade this order, they cease their trade. The informant shall be entitled to half of the seized goods and one-third of the fine.

3. Whereas certain goods introduced into the city, such as chocolate and poultry, which are of such great utility to the sick, to hospitals, and to private households, are purchased from the importers at exorbitant prices; and whereas these goods, having been concentrated in the hands of a few individuals, are subsequently sold to resellers at prices that remain exorbitant; the Government hereby undertakes to purchase these types of commodities directly from the importers at a fair price. The sick and the hospitals shall be supplied first; the remainder shall be sold, poultry by the quarter, and chocolate by the ounce or half-ounce, upon presentation of medical certificates countersigned by Canon Don Julian Cafi, a member of the Junta. The gatekeepers are hereby ordered to escort any persons presenting themselves in possession of the aforementioned goods to the residence of Don Jose Jonama, who has been entrusted with this duty by the Junta. As for those who distribute these goods within the city, they shall incur a fine of fifty livres, one-third of which shall go to the informant, in addition to forfeiting half of the seized goods.

Finally, I hereby order that, for the entire duration of the siege, this edict be strictly observed, and that, in accordance with custom, it be posted and publicly proclaimed for the public good and the defense of the homeland.

*Signed:* MARIANO ALVAREZ.

By order of the Governing Junta.

The Secretary, *Signed:* FRANCISCO PUIG Y DORCA.

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No. 76

*Representations from the Supreme Junta of Catalonia
to General Blake, Captain-General of the Province,
regarding the critical state of Girona in November 1809.*

Manresa, 10 November 1809.

Monseigneur,

The peace, so disastrous to our interests, that the Emperor of Austria has just concluded with our enemy portends the most terrible misfortunes for us: should the reinforcements now being sent against Spain find this province laid open by the capture of Girona; should our army be diminished by the loss of the gallant garrison of that fortress; and, finally, should nothing remain to prevent the French from seizing control of the coast. This circumstance, combined with the despondency of the entire province, whose hopes for the relief of Girona have been dashed, compels this Junta to address further representations to Your Excellency.

This Junta is firmly convinced that Your Excellency never for a moment loses sight of the grave obligations imposed by your office; it recognizes and appreciates Your Excellency's military talents, and, given the critical situation in which the province currently finds itself, it regards the command with which you are invested as its most powerful ally. The purpose of this statement is to convey to you the sentiments of the Principality.

Whether well-founded or not, the general consensus is that Girona, being the foremost city of the province, demands a sacrifice; a sacrifice we are prepared to make, whatever the cost.

If we lose Girona, some argue, what hope will remain to us? What obstacle could possibly halt the enemy as they sweep down upon the districts of Mataro, Barcelona, Vilafranca, and even Tarragona? From where shall we draw the resources to sustain the war? What will become of the raising of troops, a process already proceeding so slowly due to the loss of our hopes? What, others ask, will become of the defenders of Girona and its heroic inhabitants? Shall we abandon them, defenseless, to the fury and barbaric cruelty of our enemies? For on the day the city's physical and moral strength is extinguished, the enemy will enter it without resistance.

The people are unversed in the precepts of military art, yet they perceive the horrible precipice toward which we are marching; they know that great ills require great remedies; they know, despite the dangers inherent in the undertaking, that we must tempt fate now, while we may do so to our advantage; whereas, should we delay any longer, the odds will turn against us, and it may well be too late. Such is the sentiment of the Catalan people; the entire province, animated by this spirit, has its eyes fixed upon the army and its commander, and desires to risk one final stroke that might save it from the ruin that looms over it.

The Junta does not presume to issue orders to Your Excellency; it seeks only to apprise you that, should you choose to act in concert with the people, it stands ready to support you through every conceivable sacrifice, ensuring that, in the hour of peril, you shall lack neither funds nor

provisions. It is possible that, by consolidating all the troops currently scattered across various points, we may risk ceding some ground; yet such ground may easily be retaken, whereas Girona and its defenders, once lost, will be lost forever. We shall undoubtedly be able to muster six thousand men from the reserve companies to reinforce the army, thereby demonstrating to the enemy that the province is resolved to strike a decisive blow.

In these critical circumstances, the Junta has deemed it its duty to convey to you the prevailing temper of the public mind. May this heroic segment of the Spanish people, which has contributed so mightily to the defense of the nation's just cause, not see the fruits of its labors and sacrifices come to naught!

May God keep you, etc.



No. 77

*Report on the Sanitary Conditions in Girona, for the Month of November
1809, addressed to Governor Alvarez by Don Juan Nieto Samaniego,
Chief Surgeon of the Hospitals of this City.*

Girona, 29 November 1809.

Monseñor,

Public health, which, amidst your grave duties, occupies your thoughts so keenly, finds itself in such a deplorable state that we, to whom it has been entrusted, are compelled to conceal its true condition as much as possible; yet, for the common good, it is essential that Your Excellency gain an accurate understanding of it, so that you may plumb the depths of the abyss into which we are being dragged.

For nearly seven months, as the enemy has laid siege to us, our city has been reduced to nothing more than a heap of ruins; there is not a single house left fit for habitation, and the eye beholds nothing but destruction and death. No place remains safe from the terrible effects of the bombs; and those buildings where a fatal sense of security had caused the inhabitants to congregate have become the scenes of ghastly tragedies. The streets, stripped of their paving stones and choked with the rubble of demolished houses, offer no outlet for the rainwater, which carries along with it the filth from the shattered sewers and drains. All this accumulated matter decomposes, filling the atmosphere with pestilential miasmas, as do the corpses of both man and beast, buried beneath the ruins.

The public squares and streets are strewn with bomb fragments, grenades, and cannonballs of every description, objects of horror, and the very instruments of our calamities.

The pallor of death is etched upon the faces of all the inhabitants; indeed, for the majority, an unnatural swelling serves as an infallible sign of their imminent demise. A languid voice, a

heavy gait, rapid breathing, and a weak, thready pulse all point to a state of extreme prostration, not merely physical, but moral as well. Everyone shuns company; and if, on occasion, people do gather together, it is only to speak of their suffering, of the horrors of hunger, and of the cruel fate that looms before them, whether through an absolute lack of food or through the enemy's entry through the breaches in the walls. What completes this sense of despair is the cruel abandonment in which we find ourselves, left to perish from exhaustion or starvation, from contagion or from the sword of the terrible besieger.

What remains of the porticoes is occupied by wretched victims of hunger, who have taken the place of other victims, even more numerous, who are now, at least, beyond the reach of pain. They implore the pity of passersby, who can do no more than mingle their own tears with those of these unfortunates; for in Girona, no one person is any richer than another.

Another cause of the deplorable state of public health is the sudden change in lifestyle, not only for laborers and others accustomed to physical work, but also for priests and those whose sedentary lives had previously kept them indoors. Now, seeking to escape danger, they find themselves huddled together in underground passages, cellars, and stables, deprived of the air essential to life, as well as of light and food. Into these places of horror, chosen out of cruel necessity, they bring with them the seeds of every manner of unwholesomeness, thereby becoming, themselves, the passive agents of the very air's contamination, the very air that must serve to sustain their lives. A ceaseless dread weighs heavily upon us, for bombs, grenades, and projectiles of every kind rain down incessantly with terrifying explosions amidst the ruins we inhabit. It is not uncommon to see human limbs still quivering all around, often those of one's own kin and friends. Throughout these many months of suffering, habit has failed to stem our tears, and the groans of the afflicted rend our very hearts; for everywhere, the horrors of starvation torture those wretched souls who have managed to escape the bombs or the enemy's blade. Amidst this terrible crisis, the plight of the garrison is even more pitiable; indeed, one might view the city as an altar surrounded by defenseless victims, abandoned to the fury of barbaric sacrificers.

Even as my conscience compels me to rend Your Excellency's heart with the recital of these terrible truths, yet another factor serves to compound our misery: a rumor has spread throughout the entire nation that Girona has received abundant supplies of food and ammunition. An execrable lie! A villainous fabrication devised to stifle, within the hearts of the Supreme Junta, our pleas for the aid essential to the deliverance of this stronghold! For you know full well that on only two occasions have we received provisions, and then, merely enough to last six or eight days; as for military munitions, Your Excellency is better aware than I of the dire state in which they stand.

All these destructive factors, combined with the disease's endemic to the climate, initially gave rise to colic and dysentery, ailments that are inevitable for anyone inhabiting underground shelters or damp environments, as well as for those sleeping directly on the ground, such as the officers and soldiers. Poor digestion and the shock of fear suppressed perspiration in the majority of individuals and disrupted the normal processes of digestion and bodily secretions, a condition that ultimately degenerated into a state of general physical collapse.

Such dire physiological conditions soon gave rise to a multitude of fevers, continuous, remittent, and intermittent alike; subsequently, symptoms of nervous fevers began to appear, which later evolved into bilious and gastric forms. This resulted in a weakening of the nervous system and of the sensory faculties, the very organs most directly affected by emotional and psychological shocks.

The vast number of unfortunates who, in addition to enduring so many other hardships, also bore the burden of being wounded, suffered far more acutely than the rest; for their injuries induced a chronic fever that frequently degenerated into a complex, compounded illness. From this stemmed cases of gangrene and horrific ulcerations.

Although we continued to find some medical supplies in the pharmacies until the end of September, since the loss of Saint-Daniel and the subsequent burning of the military hospital, we have suffered from a severe shortage of pharmacists, surgeons, and hospital supplies. The ranks of the medical staff have had to be continually augmented to cope with the workload; indeed, they frequently succeed in effecting cures and achieving extraordinary recoveries.

Yet the underlying causes of this suffering continue to mount; the effects of famine are becoming increasingly acute. For a considerable time now, we have been reduced to a meager ration of horse or mule meat, entirely without bread, subsisting instead on a small amount of poorly cooked wheat, due to the critical shortage of fuel. The inhabitants are so utterly destitute that the sick lie upon the bare earth, exposed to the rain and the harsh elements of winter, with no means of relief. The air in the hospitals is foul, and there is a dire lack of even light and fire.

Scurvy has just broken out among us, as has dysentery; the suffering we endure from the latter disease is so severe that, within the infirmary of the hospice alone, five hundred and one soldiers have died in the space of twenty-four days. Your Excellency is aware that losses no less grievous have occurred in the other hospitals, proportionate to the numbers housed therein, to say nothing of the unfortunate souls who are expiring in their own homes and amidst the ruined buildings.

The terrible mortality rate prevailing here leaves few defenders fit for duty; indeed, those whose sturdy arms were but recently so adept at chastising the arrogance of the French would now scarcely possess the strength to withstand the rigors of a fresh assault, should the enemy attempt one simultaneously through the three existing breaches, as well as through a fourth that has just opened up along the banks of the Oña following the sudden collapse of several houses.

Such, Monseñor, however inadequately sketched, is the horrific tableau of the state of public health and of the plight of these heroes: men so worthy of the world's admiration who, to this very day, have defended, amidst such manifold perils, their religion, their homeland, and their liberty.

If such sacrifices, which must surely inspire universal admiration, if so many heroic deeds already accomplished can, at the cost of the lives of those who remain, those who have miraculously survived their brethren, determine the freedom of our homeland, then let us rejoice; for we shall find happiness in the life to come, our memory shall not perish among men, and our

sons shall find the reward for our labors in the esteem of their fellow citizens. But if, despite all this, Girona should fall... Great God!

May God preserve you for many years to come.

Signed: JUAN NIETO SAMANIEGO.

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## **No. 78**

*Report from General Rey, Chief of Staff of the Seventh Corps, to Marshal Augereau, Commander-in-Chief.*

Fornells, 24 November 1809.

Monseigneur,

.....Six deserters arrived today, one of whom was a musician; their account remains invariably the same: great misery and high mortality, yet always the same fierce obstinacy on the part of the Governor, the monks, and the priests.

..... General of Division Pino has just handed me various letters found on a peasant leaving Girona; another individual appears to have escaped in the direction of the troops commanded by the Grand Duke of Berg.

I am writing to General Amey to request that he ensure, if at all possible, that even stricter vigilance is maintained at this particular point. I urge him to temporarily increase the number of his outposts and to position them closer to the Sixth Italian Line Regiment. The arrested peasant has been sent back into the besieged town, entrusted with a quantity of your proclamations. Reconnaissance patrols will distribute these tonight along the entire line of enemy outposts, reaching right up to the city gates. Tomorrow morning, further patrols will carry them to Santa Coloma, Hostalric, and La Bisbal.

I have enclosed herewith, Monseigneur, the papers found on the peasant. From Letter No. 1, Your Excellency will observe that the Governor and the Junta have dispatched a courier to Seville to deliver dispatches, which are expected to arrive there between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and the 24<sup>th</sup>, and that a reply is awaited at San-Celoni between the 29<sup>th</sup> and the 30<sup>th</sup>. This letter merely instructs that the reply from Seville be forwarded in duplicate. The Secretary of the Junta states that the city will be unable to hold out beyond the first days of December.

No. 2 is a letter from General Alvarez, reporting to General Blake on the desertion of a sub-lieutenant from the Cervera Tercio.

No. 3 contains a complaint from the Junta against Captain Gailler, former Governor of Montjuïc, for having struck a member of said Junta. General Alvarez reports to General Blake that he has relieved this officer of his command and sent him to the Capuchin Fort, pending further orders.

In No. 4, notice is given that an agent of the Junta of Girona is proceeding to Sant Celoni to await orders from Seville regarding the request, submitted to the government by said Junta on the 16<sup>th</sup>, to surrender the fortress to the French; it is further noted that, until the courier returns, the besieged garrison will be reduced to subsisting on bread and water.

No. 5 is a letter from the Governor of Girona, in which he depicts the deplorable situation of the city and inquires whether he may expect relief anytime soon; he urges that the letters he is dispatching to Seville be forwarded securely.

No. 6 is a letter from an officer of the Girona garrison, addressed to the Governor of Hostalric, commending the aforementioned letter to his care. He informs him that his uncle, Claros, has arrived in Seville; that the Junta received him favorably; and that he has been provided with funds and supplies for Girona, cargo destined to be shipped aboard two frigates currently at Cádiz. He adds that he himself is scheduled to depart Seville on the 4<sup>th</sup> to embark, and that his arrival is expected momentarily.

No. 7 is a curious letter written by a monk, which His Excellency would do well to read.

No. 8 is a packet of inconsequential letters.

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

*Signed: REY.*

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No. 79

*Proclamation by Marshal Augereau, Duke of
Castiglione, etc., to the inhabitants of Girona.*

Unhappy inhabitants, unfortunate victims sacrificed to the caprice and fury of ambitious men greedy for your blood, come to your senses, open your eyes, and consider your plight and the evils that surround you. And you, soldiers, whom honor should guide in every action of life, do you not see the perfidious men who gamble with your blood merely to evade the punishment they have so richly deserved? With what composure do they fill the graves with corpses! Do you not recoil in horror from these cannibals, whose jubilation erupts amidst a human hecatomb, and who dare to raise hands stained with blood toward the throne of a God of peace? They style themselves apostles of Jesus Christ. Infamous and cruel men, tremble! He who judges the deeds of mortals may be slow to render justice, but His vengeance is terrible.

Catalans, consider your situation; famine, pestilence, and death are the consequences of the obstinacy of a few men who are deceiving you in such an infamous manner. I warn you, for the last time, inhabitants of Girona: reflect upon this; there is still time. If you force me to abandon my true nature, your ruin is inevitable. I shall be the first to lament it, but the laws of war impose upon me this harsh necessity.

Twice have I offered you the olive branch of peace, yet you have responded only by driving back my envoys with cannon fire. I have exhausted every means to deliver you from the blindness that is driving you onto the very shoals where you are destined to perish. I have acted with the utmost generosity; it is now up to you to make the voice of truth and reason heard by those who command you, and to enable me to distinguish between reckless temerity and true valor. Catalans, every day I receive in my tent the unfortunate defectors fleeing the miseries of Girona. Question them, and you will convince yourselves of the kindness and gentleness with which they are received and protected. I know that cunning and perverse men are persuading you that, the moment you arrive at our outposts, you will be shot; spurn these treacherous suggestions, by means of which they deceive you in order to make you the instruments and victims of their frenzy. Tear aside the veil covering these hypocritical impostors, and you will uncover the dark machinations they set in motion, in their fury, to bury you beneath the ruins of your homeland. Then you will see that those who crossed over to our camp received a generous asylum there, and that, under the protection of our army, they returned to their homes, where they now find rest amidst their families from the terrible sufferings that are the fruit of an overly obstinate defense.

The exaggerated aid and resources that you have been promised for so long have suddenly vanished. Blake's bands have met the fate that awaited them; at Santa Coloma, at Hostalric, and at Besalú, they were put to utter rout. Now this general is unable to rally the remnants of his army, for the foreigners are deserting in droves, and the Spaniards, their illusions dispelled, are withdrawing to their homes; thus, all hope of relief has been stripped away from you.

I am severe, but just. Unfortunate Girona! If your defenders persist in their obstinacy, you shall perish amidst blood and flames!

Signed: AUGEREAU.

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## **No. 80**

*Report from Major General Pino to Marshal Augereau  
on the capture of the Faubourg de la Marine.*

Fornells, 3 December 1809.

I have the honor to report to Your Excellency that yesterday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the current month, at seven o'clock in the evening, in execution of Your Excellency's orders, I ordered the seizure of the Faubourg de la Marine, which is situated within half a musket-shot of Girona. A portion of

the troops from General Mazzucchelli's brigade, along with two companies of voltigeurs from the Second Light of General Fontane's brigade, were entrusted with this attack.

Adjutant-Commandant Balabio commanded the expedition; he attacked the faubourg (suburb) from the right bank of the Oña, while Battalion Commander Perceval of the First Light, at the head of a detachment of his battalion, attacked from the left. The faubourg was taken at bayonet-point without the slightest hesitation, despite the musket fire and grapeshot raining down from the fortress.

Two elite companies from the First Light, one elite company from the Fifth, and one elite company from the Sixth have been established within the faubourg.

A company of voltigeurs from the Sixth Line occupies the mill house and is tasked with detaching a post to the house situated on the mountain slopes, between the forts and the fortress itself. The two companies from the Second Light are positioned in reserve in front of the new battery at Mont-Llivia, while three additional companies from the First Light are also held in reserve at the entrenchment of the carabineer post.

The outcome of this expedition has fully met Your Excellency's expectations; the garrison must surely be struck with terror, and communication between the fortress and the outlying forts will henceforth be extremely difficult.

I hereby reiterate to Your Excellency my requests to secure the rank of Brigadier General and the title of Commander of the Order of the Iron Crown for Adjutant-Commandant Balabio; the decoration of Commander of the Iron Crown for Colonel Rougier, of the First Light; the title of Knight for my Aide-de-Camp Duplessis; and the decoration of the Legion of Honor for Battalion Commanders Perceval and Cometti, of the First Light. I take the liberty of seizing this opportunity to reiterate the other requests for awards that I have already had the honor of submitting to Your Excellency.

We suffered only a dozen men killed or wounded. All Spaniards found in the suburb with arms in hand were killed.

Captain of Engineers Rougieri marched at the head of the troops, with the division's company of sappers.

The joy of the division knows no bounds, for in strictly executing Your Excellency's orders, we were able to celebrate the anniversary of the coronation of the greatest and most beloved of sovereigns.

I have the honor to be, etc.

*Signed:* PINO.