



T H E
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FROM THE LONDON GAZETTE.

ADMIRALTY-OFFICE—August 18, 1801.

Copy of a Letter from Lord Viscount NELSON, K. B. Vice-Admiral of the Red, &c. to EVAN NEPEAN, Esq. dated on board the Medusa, off Boulogne, August 16, 1801.

S I R,

HAVING judged it proper to attempt bringing off the enemy's flotilla, moored in front of Boulogne, I directed the attack to be made by four divisions of boats for boarding, under the command of Captains Sommerville, Cotgreve, Jones, and Parker; and a division of howitzer boats, under Captain Conn. The boats put off from the Medusa at half past eleven o'clock last night in the best possible order, and before one o'clock this morning the firing began, and I had, from the judgment of the officers, and the zeal and gallantry of every man, the most perfect confidence of complete success, but the darkness of the night, with the tide and half tide, separated the divisions, and from all not arriving at the same happy moment with Captain Parker, is to be attributed the failure of success; but I beg to be perfectly understood that not the smallest blame attaches itself to any person; for although the divisions did not arrive together, yet each (except the fourth division, which could not be got up before day) made a successful attack on that part of the enemy they fell in with, and actually took possession of many brigs and flats, and cut their cables, but many of them being aground, and the moment of the battle's ceasing on board them, the vessels were filled with volleys upon volleys of musketry, the enemy being perfectly regardless of their own men, who must have suffered equally with us, it was therefore impossible to remain on board even to burn them; but allow me to say, who have seen much service this war, that more determined persevering courage I never witnessed, and that nothing but the im-

possibility of being successful, from the causes I have mentioned, could have prevented me from having to congratulate their Lordships; but although in value the loss of such gallant and good men is incalculable, yet, in point of numbers, it has fallen short of my expectations. I must also beg leave to state, that greater zeal and ardent desire to distinguish themselves by an attack on the enemy was never shewn than by all the Captains, officers, and crews of all the different descriptions of vessels under my command.

The Commanders of the Hunter and Greyhound revenue cutters went in their boats in the most handsome and gallant manner to the attack. Amongst the many brave men wounded, I have with the deepest regret to place the name of my gallant good friend and able assistant Captain Edward T. Parker; and my Flag-Lieutenant Frederick Langford, who has served with me many years. They were both wounded in attempting to board the French Commodore. To Captain Gore of the Medusa I feel the highest obligations; and when their Lordships look at the loss of the Medusa on this occasion, they will agree with me, that the honour of my flag, and the cause of their King and country, could never have been placed in more gallant hands.— Captain Bedford of the Leyden, with Captain Gore, very handsomely volunteered their services to serve under a Master and Commander; but I did not think it fair to the latter, and I only mention it to mark the zeal of those officers.— From the nature of the attack only a few prisoners were made; a Lieutenant, eight seamen, and eight soldiers, are all they brought off.— Herewith I send the reports of the several Commanders of divisions, and a return of killed and wounded.

I have the honour to be, &c.

NELSON AND BRONTE.

P. S. Captain Somerville was the senior Master and Commander employed.

*Eugenie, off Boulogne,
August 16. 1801.*

MY LORD,

IN obedience to your Lordship's direction to state the proceedings of the first division of boats which you did me the honour to place under my command, for the purpose of attacking the enemy's flotilla in the bay of Boulogne, I beg leave to acquaint you, that after leaving the Medusa last night, I found myself, on getting on shore, carried considerably, by the rapidity of the tide, to the eastward of the above-mentioned place; and finding that I was not likely to reach it in the order prescribed, I gave directions for the boats to cast each other off. By so doing, I was enabled to get to the enemy's flotilla a little before the dawn of day, and in the best order possible attacked, close to the pier head, a brig, which, after a sharp contest, I carried. Previous to so doing, her cables were cut; but I was prevented from towing her out by her being secured with a chain, and in consequence of a very heavy fire of musketry and grape shot that was directed at us from the shore, three luggers, and another brig within half pistol shot; and not seeing the least prospect of being able to get her off, I was obliged to abandon her, and push out of the bay, as it was then completely day-light.

The undaunted and resolute behaviour of the officers, seamen, and marines, was unparalleled; and I have to lament the loss of several of those brave men, a list of whom I enclose you herewith.

I have the honour to be, &c.

P. SOMERVILLE.

*Lord Viscount Nelson, K. B. Vice-Admiral
of the Blue, &c.*

*Medusa, off Boulogne,
August 16. 1801.*

MY LORD,

AFTER the complete arrangement which was made, the perfect good understanding and regularity with which the boats you did me the honour to put under my command left the Medusa, I have an anxious feeling to explain to your Lord-