

Parliament-Street, June 6, 1796.

A DISPATCH, of which the following is a Copy, has been received by the Right Honorable Henry Dundas, one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, from Sir Ralph Abercromby, K. B. Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces in the West Indies.

*His Majesty's Ship Prince of Wales,
off Porto Rico, May 2, 1797.*

S I R,

AFTER the Reduction of Trinidad, the Force destined for the Expedition against Porto Rico being assembled, on the 8th of April the Fleet sailed from Martinico and arrived at St. Kitt's on the 10th, where we waited the Arrival of Captain Woolley of His Majesty's Ship *Arethusa*, who had been sent to Tortola and St. Thomas to procure Pilots and Guides. This occasioned the Delay of a few Days.

On Monday the 17th we made the Island of Porto Rico, and came to an Anchor off Congrejos Point. The Whole of the North Side of this Island is bounded by a Reef, and it was with much Difficulty that a narrow Channel was discovered, about Three Leagues to the Eastward of the Town, through which His Majesty's Sloops the *Beaver* and *Fury*, with the lighter Vessels, passed into a small Bay, in which the Troops, on the next Morning, were disembarked with little Opposition from about a Hundred of the Enemy, who were concealed in the Bushes at the Landing Place. In the Afternoon of the same Day the Troops advanced, and took a Position very favourable for our Numbers, with our Right to the Sea, and the Left to a Lagoon, which extends far into the Country. The Artillery was brought up without Loss of Time, and every Preparation made to force a Passage into the Island on which the Town of Porto Rico is situated. It is necessary here to observe, that as the *Moro Castle* completely commands the Passage into the Harbour, the Enemy kept open their Communication with the Southern and Western Part of the Island, and even teased and harassed our Left Flank with their numerous Gun-Boats. The only Point, therefore, on which we could attack the Town was on the Eastern Side, where it is defended by the Castle and Lines of St. Christopher, to approach which it was necessary to force our Way over the Lagoon, which forms this Side of the Island. This Passage was strongly defended by Two Redoubts and Gun-Boats, and the Enemy had destroyed the Bridge which connects in the narrowest Channel the Island with the Main Land. After every Effort on our Part, we never could sufficiently silence the Fire of the Enemy, (who had likewise entrenched themselves in the Rear of these Redoubts,) to hazard forcing the Passage into the Island with so small a Force; and this indeed would have been in vain, as the Enemy could support a Fire ten Times more powerful than we could have brought against them. The only Thing left was to endeavour to bombard the Town from a Point to the Southward of it, near to a large Magazine abandoned by the Enemy. This was tried for several Days without any great Effect on Account of the Distance.

It appearing, therefore, that no Act of Vigour on our Part, nor that any combined Operation between the Sea and Land Service; could in any Manner avail, I determined to withdraw, and to re-embark the Troops, which was done on the Night of the 30th of April, with the greatest Order and Regularity.

All our Artillery and Stores were brought off, except Seven Iron Guns, Four Iron Mortars, and Two Brass Howitzers, which were rendered unserviceable, it being impossible to remove them. Not a sick or wounded Soldier was left behind, and nothing of any Value fell into the Hands of the Enemy.

During the Whole of our Operations, I have experienced from Admiral Harvey the most cordial Co-operation, and every Act of personal Kindness. At my Request he landed Three Hundred Seamen, under Captains Toddy and Browne, of the Royal Navy, to whose Exertions while on Shore we are under the greatest Obligations. From the Arrangements of the Admiral, the Landing and Re-embarkation of the Troops were conducted in the best Order. To Captain Renou, of the Royal Navy, principal Agent of the Transports, I desire to express the Sense I have of his good Conduct upon all Occasions.

I beg Leave to assure you, that the Behaviour of the Troops has been meritorious; they were patient under Labour, regular and orderly in their Conduct, and spirited when an Opportunity to shew it occurred. All the Departments of the Army exerted themselves to my Satisfaction. A Return of our Killed and Wounded accompanies this Dispatch.

I have the Honor to be, &c.

RA. ABERCROMBY.

P. S. I have omitted to say, that Four Spanish Brass Field Pieces fell into our Hands, which were brought off.

Return of Killed, Wounded and Missing at Porto Rico, May 2, 1797.

Royal Artillery—7 Rank and File killed, 5 ditto wounded.
 Royal Engineers—5 Rank and File killed.
 26th Light Dragoons—1 Rank and File killed, 2 ditto wounded.
 14th Regiment—3 Rank and File wounded.
 42d Ditto—1 Rank and File killed, 2 ditto wounded.
 53d Ditto—1 Captain wounded, 1 ditto missing, 3 Rank and File killed, 3 ditto wounded.
 60th Ditto—1 Rank and File killed, 3 ditto wounded.
 87th Ditto—2 Rank and File killed, 3 ditto wounded, 13 ditto missing.
 Loewenstein's Chasseurs—1 Lieutenant-Col. wounded, 1 Lieutenant missing, 6 Rank and File killed, 15 ditto wounded, 38 ditto missing.
 Ditto Fusileers—1 Captain killed, 1 Lieutenant missing, 4 Rank and File killed, 30 ditto wounded, 70 ditto missing.
 Tobago Blacks—2 Rank and File wounded.
 Total—1 Lieutenant-Colonel wounded, 1 Captain killed, 1 ditto wounded, 1 ditto missing; 2 Lieutenants missing; 30 Rank and File killed, 68 ditto wounded, 121 missing.

Names of Officers Killed, Wounded or Missing.

53d Regiment—Captain Rynd wounded, Captain Dover missing, supposed taken Prisoner.
 Loewenstein's Chasseurs—Lieutenant-Colonel Stammendorf wounded. Lieutenant de Gand missing, supposed taken Prisoner.
 Ditto Fusileers—Captain Grasse killed, Lieutenant Montagnac missing.

John Hope, Adj. Gen.