



SUPPLEMENT

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SATURDAY, JUNE 19, 1813.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Downing-Street, June 19, 1813.

A DISPATCH, dated Boitzenburgh, the 4th of June 1813, of which the following is an extract, together with an enclosure, of which a translation is annexed, has been received this day from Brigadier-General Lyon, employed upon a particular service in Germany.

HAVING arrived here late last night from Wismar, I avail myself of the earliest moment to transmit a copy of the official details received from General Czernicheff, giving an account of his affair with the enemy near Halberstadt.

SIR, *Bernburg, May 31, 1813.*

I HASTEN to congratulate your Excellency on the signal advantage just gained at Halberstadt by the detachments which I have the honour of commanding.

Fourteen pieces of cannon, an immense park of artillery, more than eight hundred draught horses, above one thousand prisoners, including a General of Division (Ochse), a colonel, and several officers, and very considerable stores, have fallen into the hands of the conquerors.

Having received permission from your Excellency to act according to circumstances, I in conse-

quence passed the Elbe at Ferchland on the night of the 16th, and proceeded in the direction of Burgstall; here I learnt, from various letters which had been intercepted by my parties, that a large convoy of artillery, escorted by about two thousand men, were to pass the night of the 17th, at Halberstadt. My horses having been sufficiently rested, and being in the best possible condition, I resolved on going the fifteen miles (German), which was the distance to Halberstadt, without halting. To my great surprise, I succeeded in performing the whole of this distance, without stopping, in thirty hours.

On my arrival at Hadmersleben, I learnt that a second convoy was at Hessen, on the Brunswick road, three miles and a half from Halberstadt, where it was intended to arrive in the morning to join the first, in the view of proceeding with greater safety on its march to the Grand Army. This last convoy was escorted by four thousand infantry, five hundred cavalry, and many pieces of artillery. Notwithstanding the fatigue of my men and horses, after so harassing a march, I resolved to continue my route, and to make an immediate attack upon the enemy at Halberstadt, before the arrival of the reinforcement; and in order to take advantage of the fault he had committed in placing his guns and the convoy outside of the town, although at a very

short distance from the walls. After reconnoitring at four o'clock in the morning, I ascertained that the enemy had placed his guns in a square, the middle of which was filled with ammunition waggons and other carriages, and was lined with infantry, the flanks being covered by two hundred and fifty horse. The whole formed a sort of fortress, almost impenetrable to cavalry. One of my first cares having been to cut off the enemy from the town, a single gate which the enemy had neglected to close, afforded me the means of getting possession of the town, where the brave Colonel Trecoff charged the rear of the troops which were marching out to join the square, and pursued them very nearly up to the guns. On the other side, Colonel Wlassaw, whom I had sent forward with two regiments, in hopes of surprising the enemy, made two very fine charges against the square; but the enemy having notice of our march, and being upon their guard, he could not make any impression. The enemy now opened a heavy cannonade from fourteen guns, to which I could only oppose two; by the fire of which, however, five of the enemy's ammunition waggons were blown up. One of mine met with the same fate, and four horses were killed.

At this moment, a regiment of Cossacks, which I had detached upon the road by which the enemy's reinforcements were advancing, brought me intelligence that they were within two miles of us; this determined me to make a general and decisive effort against the square with all my troops. With this view I ordered all the scattered Cossacks to seize the same moment at which the attack would be made by the regular cavalry. After exhorting my soldiers to do their duty, I ordered all my people to charge at the same moment. This brilliant attack

against a formidable square, defended by fourteen pieces of cannon, surpassed my expectations, and covered with glory the Hussars of Isoum, commanded by Colonel Tieman, and two regiments of Riga dragoons; the Cossacks also seconded admirably the efforts of these four hundred horse. In an instant the batteries were carried, and my brave men in the middle of the square: here the carnage was horrible, as the enemy defended himself obstinately, even firing upon us from under the carriages: More than seven hundred were killed, the rest taken, and I venture to assert that not an individual escaped out of all this corps. Scarcely was the slaughter terminated, when the enemy's columns began to appear, pressing upon my Cossacks. I was then obliged to support them, in order to gain time to send off the captured guns and prisoners. From want of time I could carry off only the fourteen guns and twelve ammunition waggons; I blew up the rest in the very presence of the enemy. I destroyed or distributed to the inhabitants all the stores which were in the town, and at seven in the evening I retired with my booty to Cochstedt. Such is the summary account of this exploit: it has the more merit from its having been undertaken after a march of fifteen miles, which has been followed by an engagement of more than seven hours. It is beyond my power to express to your Excellency how well all my people have done their duty in this brilliant affair.

That the Cossacks should have been able to support a march of fifteen miles, and a combat of seven hours, afterwards has not surprised me so much as to see my regular cavalry perform it as well as them, without leaving a single horse behind.

(Signed) CZERNICHEFF.

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