

party of seamen from Her Majesty's ships Wellesley, Blenheim, and Melville, detachments of the 26th and 49th regiments, a battalion of royal marines, the 37th Madras native infantry, and a detachment of Bengal volunteers, in all fourteen hundred men, landed yesterday at nine o'clock, two miles below Chuenpee Point, for the purpose of capturing the several forts and batteries on Chuenpee.

The troops landed without opposition, and having formed them, I sent forward an advance of two companies of royal marines under Captain Ellis; the guns were then moved on, supported by the detachments of the 26th and 49th regiments, followed in column by the marine battalion, the 37th native infantry, and the Bengal volunteers.

After advancing a mile and a half, on reaching the ridge of hill, we came in sight of the upper fort, and of a very strong intrenchment, having a deep ditch outside, and a breastwork round it, which was prolonged upwards, connecting it with the upper fort; it was also flanked by field batteries, having deep trenches in rear of the guns for the purpose of shelter. The whole was strongly lined with Chinese soldiers, who immediately on seeing us cheered, waived their flags in defiance, and opened a fire from their batteries; our guns were promptly placed on the crest of the ridge, and commenced firing; this was duly returned by the Chinese for about twenty minutes, and indeed in this, as well as our other encounters with them, it is but justice to say they behaved with courage. During this time the advance crossed the shoulder of the hill to the right, driving before them the Chinese who had lined it in considerable numbers; then, descending into the valley, took possession of a field battery placed there; I had previously ordered two companies of the 37th native infantry, under Captains Bedingfield and Wardroper, to scour round a hill to the right of the advance, where they encountered the Chinese in some force, and drove them away with much loss. Captain Duff, commanding the corps, speaks highly of the conduct of these companies, which he had supported by another under Lieutenant Hadfield.

Seeing that the fire from our guns was causing the Chinese to fly from the entrenchment and batteries, I moved the column down the slope, causing the two leading companies of marines, under Captain Whitcomb, to clear the wooded hill in front, I took a subdivision of them, got into the entrenchment, and proceeded up inside the breastwork to the upper fort, in which there was still a number of men; these were speedily dislodged by the two marines who first reached it; the fort was entered, and the British ensign hoisted by a royal marine.

The lower fort, which had sixteen guns facing the sea, and was surrounded by a high wall, and a small battery between, was, from this, completely exposed, but the fire of these, as well as of the upper fort, had been silenced by the ships attacking on the sea face; they were still in considerable numbers in the lower part of the fort and had locked the gate; a fire was therefore kept up from the hill, and the advance coming round the lower side to the gate, forced it by musketry. On entering they met with considerable resistance, which was speedily subdued; some men then entering an embrasure on the flank, the fort was taken and our flag hoisted.

The whole of the forts and batteries being now in our possession, we proceeded to render the guns un-serviceable and dismantle the fort, setting their encampments on fire, and on re-embarking the magazine in the lower fort was blown up.

I am happy to say that the loss on our side has been small, and would have been less but for the explosion of an extensive magazine in the fort after the capture. The Chinese, however, suffered severely; between three hundred and four hundred were killed and wounded, including amongst the killed the Heptae, an officer with rank equivalent to our Brigadier-General. About one hundred prisoners were taken, who were released at the close of the day.

I have great pleasure in stating to your Excellency the admirable manner in which the whole force behaved, and I beg to recommend to your notice Major Johnson, of the 26th regiment, commanding a detachment of the 26th and 49th regiments. I must particularly mention Captain Ellis, commanding the marine battalion, an old and previously distinguished officer, who conducted the advance during the whole day with the greatest gallantry and judgment, and he speaks in the highest terms of the men forming the advance. Captain Knowles, R. A. who placed his guns admirably, and dismantled the forts after their capture; Captain Duff, commanding the 37th native infantry; and Captain Bolton, commanding the detachment of Bengal volunteers. From Lieutenant Stransham, Adjutant of the royal marines, who acted as Brigade-Major, I received most valuable assistance during the day, and gladly availed myself of the services of your military secretary, Lieutenant Stewart Mackenzie, 96th regiment, who volunteered to act on my Staff, and took charge of a party of skirmishers of the advance the better part of the day.

Lieutenant Wilson, Her Majesty's ship Blenheim, commanded the seamen, and the guns were dragged forward in good style, and the disembarkation and re-embarkation of the troops were ably managed by Lieutenant Symons, of Her Majesty's ship Wellesley.

I enclose the list of guns captured and destroyed, and also the return of casualties.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. L. PRATT, Major, 26th
Cameronians, Commanding the Force.

To his Excellency Sir J. J. G. Bremer,
C.B., K.C.H., &c. Commodore of the
First Class, Commander-in-Chief.

*List of Casualties in the Force employed at the
Assault and Capture of the Forts and Batteries on
Chuenpee, on the 7th of January 1841.*

Wounded.

Officers' Names.

Second Lieutenant White, Royal Marines, slightly.
Assistant-Surgeon M'Pherson, 8th Madras Light
Cavalry, burnt by explosion.
Mr. Arthur Vyner, Mate, R. N. (Her Majesty's ship
Blenheim), severely.