

the shipping in that port, which was happily accomplished without having occasion to fire a shot.

Enclosed I have the honour to transmit a copy of my reply to Captain Key's despatch.

I have, &c.

CHAS. NAPIER, Vice-Admiral and  
Commander-in-Chief.

To the Secretary of the Admiralty,  
London.

Enclosure No. 1 in Sir Charles Napier's Letter  
No. 107.

*Her Majesty's Ship Amphion, Coast of  
Kourland, May 18, 1854.*

SIR,  
I HAVE the honour to inform you that I arrived off the port of Libau on the evening of May 10th, in company with Her Majesty's Ship Conflict, and having received information from various sources that the town was defended by only 500 or 600 soldiers, and two or three guns, and that several Russian merchant vessels lay dismantled in the port, I determined to bring them out.

On the morning of the 17th we stood in towards the entrance of the river, and by careful sounding with boats ahead succeeded in anchoring both ships within gun shot of part of the town. I then directed Captain Cumming to take a summons to the Governor, under a flag of truce, calling on him to surrender the merchant vessels within three hours. The Governor refused, but said that a final answer would be sent before the time specified in my letter. At 3.30 P.M., Captain Cumming, who had informed me that there was a considerable body of troops in the town, again landed to receive the answer—a letter, which I enclose. On ascertaining its contents I took the armed boats of both ships, with Captain Cumming in command of those of Conflict, into the river. With the exception of one or two, the soldiers kept out of sight, and not a shot was fired. It was well for us that they did so, as we pulled up the creek, which was fifty yards broad, for one and a half miles before arriving at the shipping. I desired the authorities to point out the Russian vessels, of which I then directed Captain Cumming and Lieutenants Wodehouse and Hore to take possession. I detained a small steamer (originally Russian, now owned by a Dane), got her steam up, and kept her as a refuge for the boats in case of an attack.

The magistrate stated that they were induced to yield thus submissively, from their being convinced that if they were to overpower us, a large force would be sent, and the town perhaps destroyed.

The boats captured eight merchant vessels all new and well found, but dismantled, sails unbent, some scuttled and aground, nevertheless they were all brought out and taken in tow by Amphion and Conflict, before 9 P.M.

The private property found on board was restored to the owners on application for it.

Although I had the opportunity of destroying a large amount of the enemy's property, such as their houses, vessels on the stocks, and vessels repairing, I did not consider it right to do so, as the troops had left the town so pitifully to its fate, and the people had assisted in getting the vessels out, by opening the bridge, &c., which would have detained us some considerable time, had we been obliged to blow it up, though I was prepared to do so.

The fact of the town of Libau containing 12,000

inhabitants and formed by nature with unusual facilities for defence, being temporarily taken possession of by 130 men without a shot being fired, I attribute almost entirely to the judicious conduct of Captain Cumming during his conference with the magistrates when he landed with a flag of truce.

I have great pleasure in testifying to the exemplary behaviour of all the officers, seamen, and marines, employed on this service.

I have, &c.,

A. COOPER KEY, Captain.

To Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Napier,  
Commander-in-Chief.

Sub-Enclosure No. 1, in Sir Charles Napier's  
Letter No. 107.

*Her Majesty's Ship Amphion,  
off Libau, May 17, 1854.*

SIR,

THE duty of summoning you to surrender the merchant vessels in the port of Libau, has fallen upon me.

I would willingly spare the town and the lives of the inhabitants; if, therefore, the steam vessel, and all the Russian merchant vessels in the port (above and below the bridge), are sent out in their present condition, within three hours after the receipt of this letter, not a shot shall be fired. The men bringing them out shall be landed under a flag of truce.

If at the expiration of that time this demand is not complied with, the consequences rest with you. In which case I trust that you will cause the women and children to leave the town, and the invalids to be removed to some conspicuous building, which, if indicated by a flag, will be respected.

I have, &c.

A. COOPER KEY,  
Captain and Senior Officer.

His Excellency the Governor of Libau.

Sub-Enclosure No. 2, in Sir Charles Napier's  
Letter, No. 107.

SIR, *Town Hall, Libau, May 17, 1854.*

THE notification addressed by Her Britannic Majesty's Commander of the Amphion, to deliver up the Russian merchant vessels in the port of Libau, has been received by the magistrates of this town, there being no Military or Civil Governor.

The town of Libau being in a defenceless state has no power to resist the demand.

The peaceable inhabitants are compelled to submit themselves to any demands put to them; they expect, however, that Her Britannic Majesty's power will only undertake that which is consistent with humanity and honour.

The ships demanded cannot, and will not, be refused; but it is entirely impossible to deliver them in the time prescribed, as the most of them are unrigged and lying on a swampy ground.

Under these circumstances the magistrates can only reply that Her Majesty's Commander should convince himself of the impossibility, and resolve in which way the said merchant vessels are to be brought out of harbour.

Trusting that meantime no hostilities will be undertaken against the town and its inhabitants.

I have, &c.

In the name of the Magistrate of Libau,  
the presiding Burgomaster.

(Signed) FRES'DOR GRENTHER.