

acting under his orders on this important service so just, that I feel that it would only be weakened by any observations or recommendations of mine.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) E. LYONS,  
Rear-Admiral and Commander-in-Chief.

*The Secretary of the Admiralty,*

REPORTS PROCEEDINGS AT TAGANROG.

*Her Majesty's ship, Miranda,*  
Taganrog Roads, June 3, 1855.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to inform you that I anchored in 18 feet water, with the squadron under my orders, in Taganrog inner roads, at about  $8\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the town, on the evening of the 1st instant, without any accident, although the enemy had removed the light vessels and beacons. During the night an easterly wind sprang up, and the water fell three feet, with every appearance of still falling; we were, therefore, obliged to remove a mile and a half further from the town.

2. The 2nd was employed in reconnoitring the town, which I was enabled to do satisfactorily in the Recruit; Lieutenant Day, commanding that vessel, having found a passage during the night.

I had arranged to proceed at 3 A.M. the following morning to summon the town, and in the event of a refusal to surrender, to endeavour to destroy the immense stores of grain and other Government property in that place.

3. Matters were in this state, when at sunset, to my great satisfaction, the Sulina, Danube, and Medina, with the twelve armed launches of the line of battle ships, hove in sight: this most welcome and opportune reinforcement of exactly the description of force required for the purpose in view, rendered success certain; and not long after the French steamers, with launches in tow, arrived.

4. Having concerted measures with Monsieur de Sedaiges, commanding the French steamers, I proceeded at 3 A.M. in the Recruit with the vessels and boats, and accompanied by the lightest French steamers (M. de Sedaiges being on board one of them), towing their launches. Having anchored the Recruit at 1400 yards from the Mole Head, and collected all the boats astern, I sent Lieutenant Commander Horton with a flag of truce, accompanied by a French officer with similar orders from M. de Sedaiges, to demand the surrender of all Government property of every description whatsoever, and of all grain, flour, and provisions (which I considered as contraband of war, knowing that even in the event of its not being government property, that it could only be intended for the supply of the Russian army in the Crimea), the whole to be delivered over to us to destroy; the troops to remove, during this necessary destruction, to a place five miles from the town, and within sight of the ships; the inhabitants to withdraw, except those appointed by the authorities to open the stores and assist us; any approach of troops, or any infraction of these terms, if accepted, to be considered as cancelling them, and to be punished with instant bombardment: one hour to be allowed for a decision, and no modification of the terms to be entertained. At the expiration of the hour, Lieutenant Horton and the French Officer were informed that the Governor refused the terms, and that, having troops at his disposal, he intended to defend the

place. On this, these officers came off, and the flag of truce was hauled down from the Recruit.

5. Shortly afterwards the Recruit commenced firing, and the boats proceeded under the command of Commander Cowper P. Coles, of the Stromboli, in tow of one another, and accompanied by the French boats, until, having arrived in the required position, the tow was cast off, the boats' heads pulled round to the beach, and so heavy a fire opened, that, although the enemy made repeated attempts to get down to the houses lining the beach, so as to save the long range of storehouses from destruction, they never succeeded in doing so in sufficient numbers. Lieutenant Mackenzie (the senior lieutenant of this ship) had charge of a separate division of light boats, with rockets and one gun, to cover the approach of Lieutenant Cecil Buckley, of the Miranda, who, in a four-oared gig, accompanied by Mr. Henry Cooper, Boatswain 3rd Class, and manned by volunteers, repeatedly landed and fired the different stores and government buildings; this dangerous, not to say desperate, service, when carried out in a town containing upwards of 3,000 troops constantly endeavouring to prevent it, and only checked by the fire of the boats' guns, was most effectually performed. The Recruit, from her light draught of water, was enabled to take an effective position at 1,400 yards, and so was the Mouette, French steamer, and the Danube, with 24-pounder howitzer and rockets, was very useful.

6. By 3 P.M., all the long ranges of stores of grain, plank, and tar, and the vessels on the stocks, were in a blaze, as well as the Custom House and other Government buildings, and unfortunately, but unavoidably, the town in many places; and our purpose being amply effected, the boats returned to the Recruit. The loss of the enemy in men must have been severe, as many were seen to fall; they deserve credit for the obstinacy with which they endeavoured to gain positions to prevent our effecting the object we had in view, but it was impossible to face the continuous and well directed fire kept up. Their loss in grain of different descriptions I cannot estimate, but as it comprises all, or very nearly all, in store at Taganrog, it must be enormous.

7. The only casualty in carrying out this service, was one private, Royal Marine-Artillery, severely wounded in the face by a musket ball.

8. I must now beg to be allowed to bring to your notice the very meritorious conduct of Commander Coles on this occasion, in command of so large a force of boats; and I cannot speak too highly of his energy, decision, and ability, which left me nothing to desire. He speaks in the highest terms of all under his orders, and particularly of Lieutenant J. T. C. Mackenzie, in charge of a separate division, who behaved with his accustomed spirit and judgment; and of Lieutenant Buckley, who so well carried out the hazardous service he had volunteered for. All the officers and men employed conducted themselves to my entire satisfaction, but as those above-mentioned were in such conspicuous situations, I trust I may be pardoned for submitting their names to your favourable consideration.

9. I cannot refrain from bearing my testimony to the admirable conduct and cordial co-operation of our Allies, under the personal direction of Monsieur de Sedaiges; the boats being under the immediate command of Monsieur Lejeune, Capitaine de Frégate, and First Aide-de-camp to Admiral Bruat.

10. A Russian Serjeant, who deserted, and