



SUPPLEMENT

TO

The London Gazette

*Of TUESDAY the 20th of NOVEMBER.***Published by Authority.****TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1855.***Admiralty, November 20, 1855.*

DESPATCHES, of which the following are copies, have been received from Rear-Admiral Sir Edmund Lyons, Bart., G.C.B., Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Ships and Vessels in the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

Royal Albert, off Sevastopol,
SIR, November 6, 1855.

THE accompanying copy of a letter from Captain Sherard Osborn, of the Vesuvius, with its several enclosures, will place the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty in possession of a detailed account of the active and energetic proceedings of the squadron in the Sea of Azoff, under the command of that valuable officer.

The enterprize, which was undertaken and so successfully carried out by Commander J. E. Commerell, of the Weser, in crossing the Isthmus of Arabat, and in destroying a large quantity of forage on the Crimean shore of the Sivash, reflects great credit on that officer, and adds still further proof of his having deserved that promotion which their Lordships have lately been pleased to confer upon him. The gallantry of William Rickard, Quartermaster, of the Weser, deserves to be particularly mentioned; and I beg leave to recommend him to their Lordships' favourable consideration for the medal and gratuity for distinguished service.

Lieutenant Geo. F. Day, commanding the Recruit, has also displayed his usual activity and zeal in harassing the enemy on the north-east coast of the Sea of Azoff; and I regret to find that his foot has been severely injured by the recoil of a gun.

I am, &c.

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

The Secretary of the Admiralty.

*Her Majesty's ship Vesuvius,
At Sea, October 25, 1855.*

SIR,

I AM now returning westward towards Gheutch, having been employed with Her Majesty's ships named in the margin,* since the 9th October, 1855, along the north coast of this sea as far as Taganrog.

On Crooked Spit, as well as Bielosarai or White House Spit, the enemy had established a large force in the remains of the old fishing establishments, and constructed a series of rifle pits and breastworks, from which they opened fire upon any of our vessels taking shelter under those points; and as the enemy had a number of boats with them, with which they could easily board a vessel in distress, I thought it right to destroy the latter and dislodge the men.

The Recruit, Lieutenant Geo. F. Day, came in collision with them on the 15th instant, and although he could not dislodge the riflemen, he succeeded in destroying seven launches and five large fisheries, in spite of the enemy's cavalry and infantry.

Lieutenant Day, I am sorry to say, received a severe injury of the foot, by the accidental explosion of an 8-inch gun, but he speaks in high terms of the satisfactory manner in which Mr. Wm. Parker, Second Master of the Recruit, executed the service entrusted to him.

On the 20th October, the Ardent, Lieutenant Hubert Campion, drove in a large force of cavalry which attempted to prevent him approaching Crooked or Krivaia Spit, and he likewise destroyed three boats.

On the 24th October, the weather was sufficiently favourable to enable me to get the Vesuvius close enough to force the enemy from their rifle-pits upon the Bielosarai Spit; at 1 P.M., the small-arm men and marines of this ship landed, under Lieutenant Chetham H. Strode, Mr. R. R. Armstrong, Mate, and Mr. H. D. R. Farquharson, Midshipman, supported by the ship and boats.

* Curlew, Recruit, Ardent.

Directly the enemy saw their escape threatened, they beat a rapid retreat, though fully 150 in number, and effected their escape by a superior knowledge of the paths through the swamps.

Lieutenant Strode then destroyed their posts, which had been recently re-constructed; they were eight in number, and calculated to house 200 men; besides these, eleven fine boats and an extensive fishery were set fire to, near the town of Altı.

The Recruit, Lieutenant Day, at the same time destroyed, in the neighbourhood of Mariopol, two large fisheries and some fine launches, mounted on regular travelling land-carriages, and in the evening we were complete masters of the only portion of the coast the enemy have attempted to re-establish themselves upon; and, as the frosts have already set in, I am in hopes that they will not be able to recover their ground before next spring.

The extraordinary efforts made by the enemy to prosecute their fisheries upon this coast, are the best proof of their importance.

They sometimes move down two or three hundred soldiers, who escort large launches placed upon carriages and arabas drawn by oxen laden with nets and gear, as well as fishermen to work them.

The fish directly they are caught are carted off into the interior; and when it is remembered that we have destroyed some hundred and odd launches upon one spit alone, some idea can be formed of the immense quantity of fish consumed on this coast; and in proof of its being a large item in the sustenance of Russian soldiers, I would remind you that hundreds of tons of salted and dried fish were found and destroyed by us in the first destruction of the military depôts at Ghenitch in May last.

This report is closed at Ghenitch, where I had the satisfaction of learning, as the enclosed letter from Lieutenant Commerell will shew, that he had succeeded in destroying a large collection of forage and corn at the entrance of the Solgar or Kara-Su River.

The zeal and enterprize displayed by Lieutenant Commerell on this occasion, as well as whenever any service has to be performed, is most conspicuous; and his judgment in seizing the only good opportunity that has occurred for some time to cross Arabat Spit, and traverse the Putrid Sea, deserves to be particularly called to your notice. The Quartermaster, William Rickard, praised so highly by Lieutenant Commerell, was one of my boat's crew. I fully concur in the high character given of him.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) SHERARD OSBORN,
Captain and Senior Officer in the Sea of Azoff.

Rear-Admiral Sir Edmund
Lyons, Bart., &c., &c., &c.
G.C.R.

Having left the Weser in charge of Mr. Haswell, Second Master, and accompanied by Mr. Lillingston, Mate; a Quartermaster, and two seamen, assisted by a party we hauled a small prize boat across the spit, embarked in her, and at half past four A.M., reached the opposite side.

Landing with the petty officer and one man, I forded the above-mentioned rivers, and at a distance of about two miles and a half from the boat, arrived at the corn and forage we were in search of, stacked on the banks of the Salghir River, evidently for transmission by water, as the river was perfectly navigable for barges, the sides being cut, and towing paths on either bank.

In a short time the forage and corn, amounting to about 400 tons, was totally destroyed, not however without alarming the guard, and from 20 to 30 mounted cossacks, who were encamped in a village close at hand. On our retreating, we were so hard pressed by them, that, but for the circumstance of the last 200 yards being mud, and the cover of rifles from Mr. Lillingston, and a man who remained in the boat, we could hardly have escaped capture. Having re-crossed the Spit, we returned to the Weser by 8 A.M.

I must bring to your notice the excellent behaviour of the small party who accompanied me, more especially that of William Rickard, Quartermaster, who, though much fatigued himself, remained to assist the other seaman who, from exhaustion, had fallen in the mud, and was unable to extricate himself, notwithstanding the enemy were keeping up a heavy fire on us, at the distance of 30 or 40 yards, as we crossed the mud.

Trusting my proceedings will meet with your approval, I have, &c.

(Signed) J. E. COMMEREELL,
Lieutenant Commanding.

To Captain Sherard Osborn,
Senior Officer.

*Her Majesty's ship Recruit, off
Berdiansk, October 18, 1855.*

SIR, I HAVE the honour to forward you a report of my proceedings since leaving Her Majesty's ship Curlew at this place on the 15th. According to my orders, I steered for my cruising ground between the Dolga Bank and Whitehouse Spit. When off the latter place, observing a number of men and boats engaged in fishing, and also that many large fishing store-houses had been built since my last visit here on the 14th of last month, I hauled close in to the shore, anchoring the Recruit about 700 yards off, with the intention of landing with my boats and destroying all I could, as soon as I had driven back the troops, who were coming down in great numbers, both cavalry and infantry, to prevent us; the former we soon disposed of, but the latter, scattering themselves about in twos and threes, threw themselves on the ground, creeping along so that we could not see them to stop their advance with our shells from the ship; I therefore resolved to land at once, in hopes, by the quickness of our movements, to get our work over before they could possibly close on us. Unfortunately for me, I regret to say, that whilst directing the pointing of an 8-inch gun to where I believed some of these riflemen to be, (just as I was on the point of going into the boat to land) the gun, from some unaccountable cause, went off, and, in recoiling, the whole weight of both gun and carriage came down on my left foot, injuring it very severely and breaking several bones, which I fear will lay me up for some time.

*Her Majesty's steam gun-vessel Weser,
Genitchi, 12th October, 1855.*

SIR, I HAVE the honour to inform you that on the evening of the 10th instant, I determined, in obedience to your discretionary orders, to launch a boat across the Spit of Arabat, and destroy large quantities of corn and forage, stored on the banks of Kara-Su and Salghir Rivers, on the Crimean shore of the Sivash; the proximity of a guard house and signal station, also the distance the corn lay from the beach, rendered anything but a night surprise impracticable.



I was thus rendered incapable of landing, so sent Mr. Parker, Second Master of this ship, on shore in charge of the boats and landing party, who succeeded in carrying out my instructions as to the destruction of all the boats there (seven in number), many new fishing nets of great length, five large new fishing establishments, full of quantities of fishing tackle and other gear: this service he performed in a most gallant manner, and much to my satisfaction, as they were the whole time exposed to a very smart and annoying fire from the enemy's concealed infantry (at a very short distance), who, in spite of our fire from the ship, had managed to creep down close to them, favoured by the inequality of the ground and the long grass, so that our party had to make a long detour (covered by a hot fire of rifles from the Recruit) to prevent them being cut off, and to get to their boats. The Russians kept up a constant fire of rifles from the lighthouse, in which they had succeeded in lodging themselves, upon the boats, and then upon the ship, which we returned with rifles only, and I think to some purpose, until we weighed and shifted further out. Not a man was hit, though ship and boat were many times. As I did not wish to injure the lighthouse, I did not attempt to fire, so as to dislodge them, with shot or shell from the guns.

The 17th I stood along the spit to see if any more boats or nets could be found along the shore

where I could destroy them, as also to drive away a number of troops I saw hidden behind some banks, and at the same time to try and set fire with carcases to a number of new stores, built on the broad part of the spit high up but too far off for me with my small force to attempt to land and destroy.

I could see no more boats, but their perseverance in thus rebuilding these houses, boats, and nets, with the fact of so many troops being there to protect them, tells its own tale, that they must be much in want of provisions.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) GEO. F. DAY,
Lieutenant-Commander.

Captain Osborn, Senior Officer.

In consideration of the services mentioned in the above Despatches—

Lieutenant George Fiott Day has been promoted to the rank of Commander; and

Mr. William H. Parker will be promoted to the rank of Master, so soon as he shall be qualified; and

A Medal and £15 gratuity, for conspicuous gallantry, have been awarded to William Rickard, Quartermaster of Her Majesty's ship Weser.

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