

marines, 8. "Aurora," seaman, 1; marines, 6. "Orlando," seamen, 3; marine, 1. Wei-hai-wei guard, marine, 1; total 38; making a grand total of 44.

J. H. BURKE,

Captain Commanding Naval Brigade.
Tientsin, 14th July, 1900.

Letter No. 24 from the Rear-Admiral on the China Station, dated 27th June, 1900.

No. 24. H.M.S. "Barfleur," at Taku.

Sir, 27th June, 1900.

IN continuation of my letter of the 17th instant, No. 4, I have the honour to report the following for the information of their Lordships:—

1. Communication with the shore was cut off the whole of Monday the 18th on account of the weather, but heavy firing was heard in the direction of Tientsin during the night of the 17th, and on the 19th a letter was received from Captain Bayly, H.M.S. "Aurora," who is in command at Tientsin, stating that the Chinese troops had openly appeared on the 17th, and had fired on a party sent out to drive off rail wreckers, subsequently shelling the foreign settlement, and a series of skirmishes or small engagements took place during the whole day.

The Chinese Military College was taken and destroyed that afternoon; of our forces, 48 marines, under Major Luke and Lieutenant Armstrong, of the "Barfleur," were engaged. Major Luke received a graze on the cheek from the bullet which killed Private Henry Robinson, R.M.L.I., of the "Orlando."

On the 20th a cipher message from the Consul at Tientsin, asking for reinforcements, was brought down by runner, and H.M.S. "Terrible," having arrived on the morning of the 21st with 350 officers and men of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers and Royal Engineers, they were landed as soon as possible, and sent on by train to join up with a party of seamen under Commander Cradock, which had started from the N.W. Fort at five that morning for the relief of Tientsin.

A strong party of Russian troops, with a party of Americans, had previously advanced, but fell into an ambush some few miles from Tientsin, and were repulsed with some loss; they eventually joined up with our men, who reached Tientsin on the 23rd, having engaged the enemy with the loss of one bluejacket killed and some wounded.

Commander Cradock reports that the British bluejackets were in Tientsin 20 minutes before any of the others arrived. The Consul at Tientsin, writing on the 25th, says that news had been received from Sir Robert Hart, dated 19th instant, saying that the foreign Ministers had been ordered to leave Peking within 24 hours; nothing has since been heard from them.

He further informs me that the Commander-in-Chief was a few miles to the north of Tientsin, very short of provisions, and that on the morning of the 23rd he had 40 killed and 70 wounded, but does not say what communication has been made with him.

A force of 2,000 men started to the relief of the Commander-in-Chief from Tientsin on the 24th, and at the time he wrote an action was taking place in that direction.

A large fort on the south bank of the Peiho, above Tong-ku, was reconnoitred yesterday, and being found to be deserted, Lieutenant and Commander Keyes, of H.M.S. "Fame," proceeded

there this forenoon, and destroyed it by exploding the magazine.

This fort, which was armed with 6-inch guns, commanded the river, which is now believed to be open for communication with Tientsin.

In view of the probable number of wounded being too great for the medical staff of Her Majesty's ships to cope with, I have engaged two civilian doctors to serve where required; one I have sent to Wei-hai-wei in charge of the sick quarters there, and the other is serving in the base hospital, which has been established at Tong-ku.

I received a signal from the Russian Admiral this evening to the effect that the Commander-in-Chief was "disengaged," and I hope to be able to telegraph to-morrow that he has been relieved, but up to the present have had no confirmatory news from Tientsin.

I forward herewith printed copies of the protocols drawn up at meetings of the Allied Admirals held on the 17th, 20th, and 23rd instant.

I also enclose detailed reports from Commanders Stewart and Cradock of the attack on the Taku forts on the 17th instant, and the capture of the four torpedo boat destroyers of the Hai-Lung class on the same date.

As previously reported, I have turned over a destroyer to the Russian, German, and French Admirals; the one retained for H.M. service having been re-named the "Taku." Her boilers were found to be in need of cleaning and overhaul, but she will be ready for service in a few days.

A list of guns captured in the north-west fort at Taku is forwarded herewith.

I have, &c.

JAMES BRUCE,

Rear-Admiral.

To the Secretary, the Admiralty.

Enclosure in Letter of Rear-Admiral, China Station, dated 27th June, 1900, No. 24.

Submitting Reports of Proceedings from H.M. Torpedo Destroyers "Fame" and "Whiting."

H.M.S. "Algerine," Taku,

Sir, June 19th, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to submit the reports of proceedings of H.M. ships "Fame" and "Whiting" during the operations for the reduction of the Taku forts on the morning of 17th June.

I take this opportunity of bringing to your notice the very able and gallant manner in which Lieutenant and Commander Roger Keyes carried out my orders, and also the brilliant way in which both Lieutenant and Commander Keyes and Lieutenant and Commander Mackenzie handled their vessels under a heavy fire.

I have, &c.,

R. H. JOHNSTON STEWART,

Commander.

To Rear-Admiral James Bruce,

H.M.S. "Barfleur."

Enclosure in Letter of Rear Admiral, China Station, dated 27th June, 1900, No. 24.

H.M.S. "Fame," Taku,

Sir, June 17th.

IN compliance with your order of 16th instant to take H.M.S. "Whiting" under my command and capture the four Imperial Chinese destroyers lying between Taku and Tongku, so as to ensure the safe passage of the "Itis," German, and "Lion," French, gun vessels at 3 a.m., I beg to report that, having visited the place during the evening