

Columbia Democrat.

"I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man."—Thomas Jefferson.

H. WEBB, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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TERMS:

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COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

DECEMBER 12, 1846.

FROM MONTEREY.

OFFICIAL DESPATCHES FROM GENERAL TAYLOR.

HEADQUARTERS 2d DIV'N ARMY OF OCCUPATION,
Monterey, Mexico, Sept. 28, 1846.

SIR.—I have the honor to report that in obedience to the verbal orders of the general in chief, the division under my command, composed of Lieut. Colonel Duncan's battery of horse artillery, artillery battalion, [Lieut. Colonel Childs,] and eighth regiment, [Captain Scriven,] constituting the first brigade, under Lieut. Col. Staniford; Lieut. Mackall's battery, horse artillery, fifth infantry, [Major Scott,] seventh, [Capt. Miles,] and one company Louisiana volunteers, [Capt. Blanchard,] second brigade, under Brigadier Gen. Persifer F. Smith, [Colonel R. Hays,] and Colonel Hays' regiment of Texas mounted riflemen, moved from the main camp at El Bosque de St. Domingo, at 2 P. M. on the 19th.

My instructions were, by a detour to the right, to endeavor to find and reach the Saltillo road, effect a thorough reconnaissance of the approaches to the city from that direction, to cut off supplies and reinforcements, and, if practicable, carry the heights.

Owing to the difficulties of the ground after leaving the Marin, and before striking the Presquina Grande road, the division had reached only six miles—in consequence of the delay in making the route practicable for artillery, which service was executed by Capt. Sanders—at 6 P. M., and was halted just within the range of a gun battery upon the summit of an isolated hill, called Loma de Independencia, midway on the ascent of which was the Bishop's Palace. Thence a reconnaissance was made, under cover of detachments of Hays' Texans, to the intersection of Presquina Grande road, then in our possession, with the Saltillo road. This examination resulted in the conviction that the grounds in our front and on our left, in advance, constituted at the same time the weak and the strong points of the enemy's position, and entered mainly into the defences of the city—the weak point because commanding the only lines of retreat, and of supply in the direction of Saltillo, and controlling that in direction of Presquina Grande; the strong point, because of the peculiarly defensive character of the hills and gorges, and of the very careful and skilful manner with which they had been fortified and guarded. It was also clearly indicated that our further advance would be strenuously resisted.

On the morning of the 21st the division was put in motion, and with such formation as to present the readiest order of battle on any point of assault. At 6 the advance, consisting of Hays' Texans

brigade, under Capt. C. F. Smith, [both extended, as the valley widened or contracted,] closely followed by Duncan's light artillery, and battalion, heads of columns, on turning an angle of the mountain, at a hacienda called San Jeronimo, came upon a strong force of Texans, received the heavy charge of cavalry and infantry, mostly the former, and usual gallantry; the light companies opened a rapid and well directed fire; Duncan's battery was in action in one minute, [promptly supported by a section of Mackall's,] delivering its fire over the heads of our men. Ever the close of the combat, which lasted but fifteen minutes, the first brigade had formed to the front, on the right and left, and delivered its fire. The second brigade was held in reserve, the ground not admitting of its deployment.

The enemy retired in disorder, leaving on the ground one hundred killed and wounded, among the former, Don Juan N. Najera, Colonel of the permanent regiment of lancers, upon the Saltillo road, and was closely pursued until we got possession of the gorge, where all the debouches from Monterey unite, whereby the force just defeated, as also reinforcements and supplies from that direction were excluded from entering the city. At this important point, the division was halted, and attention directed toward the mountain forts which envelope the city on its western and southwestern faces.—Soon discovering, however, that our position brought us within effective range of the batteries, the troops were advanced some eight hundred yards further on the Saltillo road.

The examination, thus far, had manifested, besides the importance of the positions, the impracticability of any effective operations against the city, unless possessed of the exterior forts and batteries. Independent, however, of ulterior objects, the occupation of these heights became indispensable to the restoration of our line of communication with head quarters, necessarily abandoned for the moment, in order to secure the gorges of the Saltillo road. At 12 M., a force was detached under Capt. C. F. Smith, with orders to storm the batteries on the crest of the nearest hill, called Federacion, and after taking that to carry the fort called Soldado, on the ridge of the same height, retired about 600 yards.

The two effectively guarded the slopes and roads in either valley, and consequently the approaches to the city. This command consisted of four companies, [K 21, B 34, and G and H, 4th artillery,] of the artillery battalion, and Green's McGowan's R. A. Gillespie's Chancellors, Ballows's and McCulloch's companies of Texas Riflemen, under Major Chevalier, acting in co-operation—in all about three hundred effective. It was impossible to mask the movement of the storming party. On approaching the base of the mountain, the guns of both batteries opened a plunging fire, and numerous light troops were seen descending and arranging themselves at favorable points on the slopes. Perceiving these indications of determined resistance, Capt. Miles was detached with the 7th to support & co operate with the first party. In a short time the fire became general, the enemy gradually yielding and retiring up the rugged acclivity, and our men as steadily pursuing. The appearance of heavy reinforcements on the summit, and the cardinal importance of the operation demanding further support, the 5th, under Major Scott, and Blanchard's company

accompanied by Brigadier Gen. Smith who was instructed to take direction in that quarter. On reaching the advanced parties, Gen. Smith discovered that in favor of the ground, he could, by diverting a portion of the force to the right, and moving it obliquely up the hill, carry the Soldado simultaneously with the Federacion. In accordingly very judiciously pointed and accompanied the 5th, 7th and Blanchard's company, in that direction.—Capt. Smith's command having most gallantly carried the first object of attack, promptly turned the captured gun—a nine pounder—upon the second, and moved on with his main body, to participate in the assault upon Soldado—which was carried in gallant style by the force under Scott, Miles, Blanchard and Hays, (who had been detached on special service, but who returned in time to share with fifty of his men in the first assault, and take a prominent part in the second,) the whole directed by Gen. Smith.

At this point we secured another 9 pounder, and immediately both pieces were brought to bear upon the Bishop's Palace, situated upon and midway the Southern slope of the hill Independencia, a valley of only six hundred yards intervening.—We had now secured an important advantage, and yet but half the work was done. The possession of these heights only made the more apparent the controlling importance of those opposite, and the necessity of occupying the Palace. A violent storm ensued, and night closing in, operations for the day ceased. The troops had now been thirty six hours without food, and constantly taxed to the utmost physical exertions. Such as could be permitted slept with arms in hand, subjected to a pelting storm, and without covering, at 3 A. M. when they were aroused to carry the hill Independencia.

Lieut. Col. Childs was assigned to lead this storming party, consisting of three companies, I and G 10th, and A 1st (artillery battalion) three companies 5th Infantry, (A, B and D,) under Capt. Scriven, with two hundred Texas riflemen, under Col. Hays and Lieut. Col. Walker, (Captain of rifles,) acting in co-operation. The command moved to B, conducted to its point of ascent by Capt. Sanders, and Lieut. Meade, topographical engineers. Favored by the weather, reached by dawn of day within about one hundred yards of the summit, in which position, among the shells of rocks, a body of the enemy had been stationed the previous evening, in apparent anticipation of attack. The enemy's retreating fire was ineffectual, and not returned until Col. Childs' and Hays' command had reached within a few yards of the summit, when a well directed and destructive fire followed by the bayonets of the regulars, and the Texas plebeians in possession of the work; this action having been previously with drawn, no impression could be made upon massive walls of the Palace, or its outworks, without artillery, except at enormous sacrifice.

Lieut. Roland, of Duncan's battery, was ordered from the main camp with 12 pound howitzers; and in two hours, (aided by fifty men from the line, under Capt. Sanders, military engineers, for the purpose of selecting the route least difficult,) that enterprising and gallant officer had his gun in position, having ascended an acclivity, as rugged as street between 7th and 8th, in two hours. A fire was immediately opened from the howitzer, covered by the epauletment of the captured battery, upon the Palace and its outworks—four hundred yards distant—and soon produced a visible sensation.

Meanwhile, to reinforce the position the 5th Major Scott and Blanchard's volunteers had been passed from the first heights, and

reached the second in time to participate in the operations against the Palace.

After many affairs of light troops and several faints, a heavy sortie was made, sustained by a strong corps of cavalry, with desperate resolution, to repossess the heights. Such a move had been anticipated and prepared for. Lieut. Col. Childs had advanced, under cover, two companies of light troops under command of Capt. Vinton, acting major, and judiciously drawn up the main body of his command, flanked on the right by Hays, and left by Walker's Texas. The enemy advanced boldly, was repulsed by one general discharge from all arms, fled in confusion closely pressed by Childs and Hays, preceded by the light troops under Vinton; and while they fled past our troops entered the palace and fort. In a few moments the unpretending flag of the Union had replaced the gaudy standard of Mexico. The captured guns—one six inch howitzer, one twelve and two nine pounder brass guns, together with Duncan's and Mackall's field batteries, which came up at a full gallop, were in full and effective play upon the retreating and confused masses that filled the street (of which we had the prolongation) leading to the nearest plaza, la capella, also crowded with troops. At this moment the enemy's loss was heavy. The investment was now complete. Except the force necessary to hold the positions on Independencia and serve the guns (stationed to points whence the shot could be made to reach the great plaza,) the division was now concentrated around the palace, and preparation made to assault the city on the following day, or sooner, should the general in chief either so direct, or be forewarned by communication to renew the assault from the opposite quarter. In the meantime attention was directed to our own circumstances permitted, to alleviate the condition of our wounded soldiers and officers; to the decent interment of the dead, not omitting in either respect all that was due to those of the enemy.

About 10 A. M. on the 23d, a heavy fire was heard in the opposite quarter. It might have been a general attack, and that his orders for my co-operation having to travel a circuit of some six miles, I miscarried, or failed to reach me by means of the numerous cavalry of the enemy. Under these convictions, the troops were instantly ordered to commence an operation which, if not otherwise directed, I had designed to execute in part, under cover of the night. Two columns of attack were organized, to move along the two principal streets, leading from our position, in direction of the great plaza, composed of light troops slightly extended, with orders to mask the men whenever practicable, avoid those points swept by the enemy's artillery to press on to the first plaza, Capella, to get hold of the ends of streets beyond, then enter the buildings, and by means of picks and bars break through the longitudinal section of the walls, work from house to house, ascending to the roofs, to place them selves upon the same breast height with the enemy. Light artillery by sections and pieces, under Duncan, Roland, Mackall, Marun, Hays, Irons, Clarke and Curd, following at suitable intervals, covered by reserves to guard the pieces and the whole operation against the probable enterprises of cavalry upon our left. This was effectually done by seizing and commanding the head of every cross street. The streets were, at different and well-known points, barricaded by heavy masonry walls, with impregnable for one or more guns, and in every instance well supported by cross batteries. These arrangements of defence gave to our operations at this moment a complicated character, demanding much care and precaution, but the work went on steadily, simultaneously and successfully.

About the time our assault commenced the fire ceased from our force in the opposite quarter. Disengaged on the one side the enemy was enabled to shift men and guns to our quarter as was soon manifested by accumulation of fire. At dark we had worked through the walls and squares and reached to within one block of the great

plaza leaving a covered way in our rear—carried a large building which towered over the principal defences and during the night and ensuing morning crowned its roof with two howitzers and a six-pounder.—All things were now prepared to renew the assault at dawn of day when a flag was sent which led to the capitulation upon terms so honorable to our arms.—As the columns of attack were moving from the Palace hill, Major Monroe, chief of artillery, reached me with a ten inch mortar, which was immediately advanced to the plaza Capella, in position masked by the church wall, and adjusted as rapidly as possible, and by sunset opened upon the great square.

At this period our troops had worked to within one square of the plaza. The exact position of our comrades, on the opposite side was not known and the distance of the position to be assailed from the battery but conjectured; eight hundred yards was assumed, and fuzes and charge regulated accordingly; the first shell fell a little short of the point on which it was directed, and beside our troops, a slight increase of the projecting charge gave exact results. The whole service was managed by Major Monroe, most admirably, and combined with other operations, exercised a decided influence upon the final results. Early on the morning of the 23d, Major Brown, artillery battalion, was despatched with a select command, and one section of Mackall's battery, under Lieut. Irons, to occupy the stone mill and adjacent grounds, constituting, one league in advance, the narrow gorge near St. Catarina. The major took possession, repulsed the enemy's pickets, and was preparing his command to resist any attack, when he received my order to retrace his steps, enter the city, and form the main reserve to the assaulting columns. He came up in good time and good order, and was at once under fire.

On the 25th, in conformity with the articles of capitulation, the citadel was taken possession of by a command consisting of two companies of each regiment, and one section of each battery, 2d division. Gen. Smith was directed to take command of his corps and conduct the ceremony, which duty he executed with delicacy to the unhappy and humiliated foe.

You will receive lists of captured munitions of war.—Lists of such as were surrendered have already been handed in. It is a source of high gratification that we have been able to accomplish such fortunate results with so moderate a sacrifice of gallant men. Annexed is a return of killed and wounded, exhibiting dates, actions and circumstances.

When every officer and every soldier, regular and volunteer, has through a series of harassing and severe conflicts, in the valley and on the mountain, in the street and on the house-top, cheerfully bravely and successfully executed every service and completed with every exertion of valor and patriotism, the task is as difficult as delicate to distinguish individuals; and yet it will always happen, as it always happened in the varied scenes of battle and siege, that fortune presents to some of those opportunities which all would have seized with gladness and avidity. It is my pleasing and grateful duty to present to the consideration of the general in chief, and through him to the government the distinguished conduct of Brigadier General Smith, Colonel of the rifles Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Childs, artillery battalion; Colonel Hays, Texas rifle men Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Duncan, horse artillery and Captain C. F. Smith, 2d artillery commanding light troops first brigade.

My thanks are also especially due to Lieut. Col. Staniford, 5th (commanding the first brigade) Major Monroe, chief of artillery (general staff) Brevet Major Brown, Captain J. R. Vinton, artillery battalion, (light troops) Major Scott commanding and Captain Merrill 5th—Captain Miles commanding Holmes and Ross 7th infantry and Capt. Scriven commanding 8th infantry to our quarter as was soon manifested by accumulation of fire. At dark we had worked through the walls and squares and reached to within one block of the great

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Particular attention has also been called to the Lieutenants Nicholls, (brothers,) Louisiana volunteers, as having highly distinguished themselves by personal daring and efficient service. The officers of brigade and regimental staffs were conspicuous in the field, or in their particular departments.—Lieut. Hanson (commanding) Vandorn, aid de camp, 7th; Lieut. Robinson 5th, (quartermaster's department,) of the staff of Gen. Smith; Lieut. and Adjutant Clarke, 8th infantry, staff 1st brigade; Lieutenants Benjamin adjutant artillery battalion—Peck ordnance officer, artillery battalion G. Dear, adjutant 5th and Page adjutant 7th infantry, are highly commended by their respective chiefs, to the justice of which I have the pleasure to add my personal observation. In common with the entire division, my particular thanks are rendered to assistant sergeants Porter, (senior,) Byrne, Conrad, De Leon and Roberts (medical department) who were ever at hand in the close fight, promptly administering to the wounded and suffering soldiers.

To the officers of the staff general and personal more especially associated with myself—Hon. Col. Balie Peyton Louisiana troops who did me the honor to serve as aid-de-camp; Capt. Sanders military engineers; Lieut. Meade topographical engineers Lieut. E. Deane Daniels and Ripley quartermasters and commissary's staff, and Lieut. Penaberton 4th artillery and Wood 8th infantry my aide-de-camp—I have to express the greatest obligation. In such diversified operations during the three days and nights they were constantly in motion, performing every executive duty with zeal and intelligence only surpassed by daring courage in conflict. I beg to commend each to special consideration.

We have to lament the gallant Captains McKavett 6th infantry an officer of high merit killed on the 21st and Gillespie Texas volunteers on the 22d. The latter eminently distinguished himself while leading his brave company at the storming of the first height and perished in seeking similar distinction on a second occasion Captain Gastin and Lieut. Porter 7th Lieuts. Roswell 5th and Wainwright 8th infantry and Lieuts. Reece Texas riflemen received honorable mention in the reports.

The following non-commissioned officers are reported as having highly distinguished themselves Sergeants Hazard 4th and Dilworth 3d artillery Quartermaster Sergeant Henry 7th infantry Cross company C: Rounds Bradford, (color sergeant,) and Magg, company D; Bailey, company I; and Pallard, 7th infantry.

In the several conflicts, with the division the enemy's loss, is ascertained to exceed four hundred and fifty men; four nine pounders, one twelve-pounder brass gun, one twenty-four pounder howitzer, and two national (garrison) standards captured.

I am, sir very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
W. J. WORTH,
Brevet Brigadier Gen'l, commanding 2d division.
Major W. W. S. Bliss, Assistant Adjutant General Army of Occupation.

A Novel Plea—A murderer was acquitted in Illinois a short time since,—the jury having probably sanctioned the doctrine of the counsellor that there were some men in every community who ought to be killed, and that the unfortunate man who had been murdered belonged to that class.