

The plan of operations was, that Captain Charles Brown, in command of the Militia and Volunteers, should proceed by the beach, keeping the sea coast, and passing in rear of the natives, who had built a pah on the Waireka Hills,—whilst I should proceed by the main road with a view to dislodge a party of rebels reported to have taken up a position at a spot called Whalers' Gate, for the purpose of cutting off the communication between Omata and the town. In the meantime, Captain Brown, should he succeed in recovering the European families, was to join me, at or near this spot. On reaching the spot named, I found the road clear and no trace of natives anywhere near. I accordingly moved on leisurely with a view to sooner meeting Captain Brown; but, on reaching the top of a hill about a quarter of a mile on this side of the Omata stockade, the sound of rapid firing, about two miles off and towards the sea, made it evident that the Volunteers were hotly engaged. I accordingly pushed on to the stockade, when I despatched Lieutenant Blake, R.N., with his men, supported by a subdivision of the company, 65th Regiment, under Lieutenant Urquhart with orders to proceed in a direct line to the assistance of Captain Brown's party,—whilst I continued along the road with the remainder of the force to a lane about a quarter of a mile beyond the stockade, which leads from the road down to the sea. About half way down this lane I turned into the fields and formed line of skirmishers, with the intention, also, of proceeding to the assistance of the volunteers, &c. The rebels, however, showed such a disposition to get round our left, and so cut us off from the main road, that I was obliged to abandon that intention, and manœuvre to prevent it: keeping up a fire whenever they gave us an opportunity, as they were covered by a wood and deep ravine, out of which we attempted to dislodge them with rockets. I ultimately took up a position in the lane so as to secure the main road; and the natives seeing us retire came down through the wood and ravine, but such an effective fire was kept up wherever they showed themselves that they retired to the bush again. Considering my force, however, too small to keep our communication open, should they attack us in force, I recalled Lieutenant Blake's party and Lieutenant Urquhart's, particularly as the day was far advanced and my orders were to return by dark. I continued to occupy this position until it became absolutely necessary to return, keeping up a frequent fire of rockets on the pah and any groups of rebels we observed. It became necessary, however, to detach Lieutenant Urquhart a second time to drive back the rebels, who were attempting to get up on our right; and between us and the Volunteers, which, having accomplished, he rejoined me in time to return. I beg to add that nothing I can say would adequately describe the steadiness and gallantry of both officers and men composing my little force. I have but one regret in reporting, that I was early deprived of the very able assistance of Lieutenant Blake, H.M. S.S. "Niger," who was severely wounded.

I enclose returns of casualties. I have received no report of Captain Brown's proceedings, who was too far off for observation, apparently in a gully, with the natives above him.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) G. F. MURRAY,  
Bt. Lieutenant-Colonel, 65th Regt.,  
Commanding Garrison.

The Major of Brigade,  
Taranaki.

### Enclosure 3 in No. 25.

CAPTAIN CRACROFT, R.N., TO COLONEL GOLD.

H.M. Steam Ship "Niger,"  
New Plymouth, 28th March, 1860.

SIR,—

In compliance with your requisition, I landed the force noted in the margin at 2 p.m. this day, and, at your request, that I should advance to the support of Colonel Murray, who was represented to be hard pressed by the natives and short of ammunition, I proceeded to the Omata blockhouse, from which post I was enabled to obtain a good view of the country and of a pah constructed on the crown of the hill about a mile beyond, which displayed flags, and from which a continued fire of musketry was kept up upon Colonel Murray's force on my right, with whom I immediately communicated.

It was now about half-past five, and, as there was only half an hour's daylight left, I determined to attack this pah at once. I accordingly planted the 24-pounder rocket tube about 700 yards from it, and after a few discharges the men stormed this pah under a heavy fire in the most gallant style—William Odgers, leading seaman, doing duty as my coxswain; being the first man in it—and having captured the flags and destroyed everything living in the trenches, as far as could be ascertained in the dark, I returned to the blockhouse.

In performing this service, I am thankful to say that there were only four men wounded, which may be in some measure accounted for by the rapidity of the attack, taking the enemy completely by surprise, and giving no time for the usual Maori tactics, while the increasing darkness also favoured our small force and prevented a good aim being taken by their sharpshooters.

It is difficult to estimate the numbers opposed to us, nor could their exact loss be ascertained. Sixteen dead were counted inside the entrenchments, and several were lying in the road outside.

After a short rest at the blockhouse I returned to town, placed the wounded in the military hospital, and re-embarked my men, as I did not consider the ship safe without them at this exposed anchorage.

Militia and Volunteer Rifles—No detail received. About 160.  
Names of Officers—  
Lieut. Urquhart, 65th Rgt  
" Whitbread, "  
Surgeon White, "  
Lieut. Blake, R.N., H.M. S. Niger.

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|------------------------------------|---|----|
| Lieut. A. J. Villiers              |   |    |
| Mr. W. W. Smyth, Acting Mate       |   |    |
| Mr. T. Gassiot, Mid.               |   |    |
| Mr. J. Carslake, Mid.              |   |    |
| Dr. W. Patrick, Surg.              |   |    |
| Mr. W. H. Hyde, Assist. Paymaster. |   |    |
| Officers                           | ~ | 7  |
| Seamen                             | ~ | 43 |
| Marines                            | ~ | 10 |
| Total                              | ~ | 60 |
| and a 24-pounder Rocket Tube.      |   |    |