

river, with the intention of attacking the enemy's entrenched position at Rangiriri, in which operation Commodore Sir William Wiseman, Bart., had arranged to co-operate with the "Pioneer" and "Avon," steamers, and the four gunboats.

The troops under my command and the steamers and gunboats arrived near Rangiriri at the same hour—3 p.m.

The enemy's position consisted of a main line of entrenchment across the narrow isthmus which divides the Waikato river from Lake Waikare. This line had a double ditch and high parapet, and was strengthened at the centre (its highest point) by a square redoubt of very formidable construction. Behind the left centre of the main line and at right angles to it there was an entrenched line of rifle-pits parallel to the Waikato river, and obstructing the advance of troops from that direction.

On a reconnaissance made on the 18th, I had determined on landing a force in rear of the position simultaneously with attacking it in front, with the view of turning and gaining possession of a ridge 500 yards behind the main entrenchment, and thus intercepting the retreat of the enemy.

With this object, 300 men of the 40th Regiment were embarked in the "Pioneer" and "Avon," to land, on a preconcerted signal, at a point which I had selected.

Unfortunately the strength of the wind and current was such that the "Pioneer" and "Avon" were unable to reach this point, notwithstanding the persevering efforts of Sir William Wiseman and the officers and men under his command. The same cause deprived us of the assistance of two of the gunboats.

After shelling the position of the enemy for a considerable time from Captain Mercer's two 12-pounder Armstrongs and the Naval 6-pounder, under Lieut. Alexander, R.N., in which the two gunboats joined, and it being now nearly five o'clock, I determined not to wait any longer for the landing of the 40th from the steamers, and gave the word for the assault. This was brilliantly executed by the troops, who had to pass over a distance of 600 yards in the face of a heavy fire, the 65th Regiment leading and escalading the enemy's entrenchment on the left.

After passing the main line of entrenchment, the troops wheeled to the left towards the enemy's centre, and came under fire of the line of rifle pits facing the Waikato river. This they at once stormed and carried, driving the enemy before them to the centre Redoubt, which they now defended with desperate resolution.

While the troops were forcing their way over the parapet of the main line, as already described, I was glad to perceive that the 40th were landing sufficiently near the point I had indicated to enable them to carry and occupy the ridge in rear, and to pour a heavy fire on a body of the enemy, who were driven by them from that part of the position, and fled by the Waikare Swamp. In this part of the attack, they were joined by a portion of the 65th Regiment detached from the main body after the latter had passed the main line of entrenchment.

The troops who carried the main line being still checked by the fire from the centre Redoubt, two separate assaults were made on this work—the first by 36 of the Royal Artillery, armed with revolvers, and led by Captain Mercer; the second by 90 seamen of the Royal Navy, armed in a similar manner, and led by Commander Mayne, under the personal direction of Sir William Wiseman.

Both attacks were unsuccessful on account of the formidable nature of the work, and the overwhelming fire which was brought to bear on the assailants. An attempt was also made by a party of seamen under Commander Phillimore to dislodge the enemy with hand grenades, thrown into the work.

It being now nearly dark, I resolved to wait the return of daylight before undertaking further operations, the troops remaining in the several positions they had gained, in which they almost completely enveloped the enemy.

Shortly after daylight on the 21st, the white flag was hoisted by the enemy, of whom 183 surrendered unconditionally, gave up their arms, and became prisoners of war.

The exact strength and loss of the enemy I have been unable to ascertain, but he must have suffered severely. We buried 36 bodies, and there is no doubt a large number were shot or drowned in attempting to escape across the swamp of Waikare Lake.

Their wounded must have been removed during the night, as there were none among the prisoners.

Our loss, necessarily severe in carrying so formidable a position, testifies to the gallantry of the troops I have the honor to command, and also, I am bound to say, to the bravery and determination of its defenders. I enclose a list of casualties. Your Excellency will observe that it includes a large proportion of officers, most of those who led in the different attacks being severely wounded.

It will afford me the highest gratification to report to the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for War, and to His Royal Highness the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, the admirable conduct of the troops engaged on this occasion, and to bring to their special notice the names of those officers and men who more particularly distinguished themselves.

I have, &c.,

D. A. CAMERON,

Lieut.-General.

His Excellency Sir George Grey, K.C.B.