

Report of an Eye Witness of the Expedition Sent by Colonel Ampudia to Destroy the Rebel Factory of War Materials and Encampments of Nagua.

MANZANILLO, July 4, 1862.

General Valmaseda having learned that the rebels were strongly intrenched in the Sierras, sent for Ampudia to come to Bayamo, and finally confided the enterprise of destroying their camps to Ampudia and the contra-guerrillas.

The attack was to be combinedly consummated by three columns—one composed of the Ampudia Guides, the volunteers of Campechueta and Bicana with the contra-guerrillas, a few troops of the Corona and Cuba companies, and the volunteer artillery of Manzanillo, all of which were to attack from Cerro Pelado, skirting all the hills up to the enemy's encampments; another, composed of 300 troops of the San Quintin Chasseurs, who were to attack from Zarzal, also proceeding as far as Nagua; and the other, composed of the volunteers of Barrancas and a force of 100 mobilized troops from Havana, which, starting from Yaguabo, were to ascend to the Sierra on the same route as the rest; the two last columns under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Lopez Campillo and Colonel Heredia, of the Santa Domingo reserves, and the united forces under the command of Colonel Ampudia. The general attack was to be made on the 26th ult., at six A. M.

Ampudia, having returned from Bayamo, conferred with Heredia and Campillo in their camp at Naranjo. Ampudia left Manzanillo on the 25th for Jibacoa, our camp of operations on the skirts of the Sierra. Arriving there, found the guides and the volunteers coming in small parties, and in the evening the initiating column was ready. The camp in Jibacoa was strategically situated on the river's margin, and the position important. The column left at one in the night, preceded by a bail. In the march the Manzanillo column had to wade through rain and mud, and arrived at Cerro Pelado at six A. M. We learned that to arrive at the Nagua camp ten rivers had to be traversed, and that the chiefs Modesto Diaz, Marciano, Massot and others contemplated defending their last intrenchments. The contra-guerrillas saluted to reconnoitre on the first river pass, called Paso Malo, but finding no enemy returned. The column commenced moving by another pass, named Jesus Maria, while the contra-guerrillas took the Paso Malo, to enclose the enemy by the flank should he appear. The troops had to carry their cartridge boxes over head, owing to the swell of the river; the artillery had to convey their carriage and munition boxes on their shoulders, though fortunately we had only one cannon with us. The column passed the first river breast deep, and afterwards had to ascend a stupendous hill, while the contra-guerrillas, under Lieutenants Rios and Elizaga, were keeping up a hot fire on the intrenchment of the enemy just discovered at the second pass. The guides made a bayonet charge with impetuosity, under Captain Martin and Ensign Venecia; crossing the river under the enemy's fire at the Clara pass, they reached the intrenchment simultaneously with the contra-guerrilla, found three dead and killed two more, capturing several arms. The rest of the columns crossed this second pass under great fatigue and under a continuous fire, till we reached the third pass, called Rondon. Here the enemy made a formidable resistance, as foreseen by Ampudia, but to no avail. The rebels were positioned behind an intrenchment of eighty meters' extent and commenced firing with impunity at our guides, who valiantly threw themselves into the swelling and rapid current, full of snags, and we had a hard struggle to get over. Commandant Rafael Jerez had just been mortally shot and one of the guides was drowned, while the enemy kept pouring down his fire at a distance of sixty paces. Two artillery shots well aimed by Lieutenant Broton favored the guides, and shortly after their captain and two ensigns rushed forward with "*Fuiz España*," having forded the river, at which moment Lieutenant Rios and three more contra-guerrillas were slightly wounded. The enemy's intrenchment was instantly covered. He had another, fronting the one just taken, at the belt of a small wood, but one impetuous charge was enough to take that also. His losses must have been immense, as the streams of blood showed that our fires had been well aimed, and a large quantity of arms were captured. This formidable intrenchment was defended by 300 rebels under Diaz. It was their Malakoff—their Sebastopol.

The movement was then continued, ever ascending hills and crossing rivers. Colonel Frosmeta was thrice at the bottom of the river, and Ensign Calmary five times. The mules were often assisted by the artillerymen to ascend with their heavy loads; on all sides there were precipices and we were surrounded with obstacles. Under small volleys from the enemy the column moved on till it reached the camp of Lower Naguas, which we took without resistance, with every evidence of disorderly departure on the part of the enemy. The contra-guerrillas of Rios proceeded to occupy the camp of Upper Naguas, also taken without any opposition. Ten minutes after taking possession up came the column under Campillo, and how they accomplished it is almost incredible, while they (the San Quintin regulars) had only had three killed, and must have gone about like goats; of course they had to dismount their mountain piece.

Once in possession of the enemy's camps the troops were divided in companies among the Sierras to give him a general fight, in which he lost fifteen more, including Don Ramon Izaguirre, lawyer. A large number of women and children, almost naked and hungry, were taken in charge by our men, who immediately gave them their rations.

Ampudia having learned that the enemy had an extensive factory of arms on an elevated hill, a company of regulars under Captain Gonzalo was sent to attack. We had to ford ten river passes, submerged to the neck, before we reached the Carboneral hill, after crossing the Hediondo pass, near Corral Arroyon. The enemy sustained firing at every pass, but in vain. Finally we arrived at a barraca, sixty yards long by twelve wide, where we found the following:—two large forges for making guns, five carpenters' boxes, complete and well assorted; a laboratory for manufacturing gunpowder, containing a ton of pulverized coal; three tins of nitric acid, eight tins of sulphur, several tins of different spirits, a large quantity of nitre, nitrate of potash, a ton of burned coal prepared, 209 lances, 197 muskets, two revolvers, eight sabres, one barrel with copper cuttings for caps, four coal sieves, five anvils, six metal instruments for manufacturing screws, &c.; many steel models for moulding, a chemical laboratory containing a complete complement. The lead found exceeded a ton. For the space of three hours the force of Gonzalo did nothing else but burn, destroy and hurl into the river all what could not be conveniently carried away. According to documentary evidence the existence of this factory dates before the commencement of the insurrection.

The following day at ten A. M. the columns of Ampudia and Campillo commenced their march, along with the 157 women and children under their protection.

The municipality has named a committee to attend a mass being performed for the soul of the brave Jerez.

Don Carlos Segrera, the public surveyor, is making a sketch of the ground where the attack and capture of the Nagua took place.