

# Storming of Gibraltar

Captain Edward Whitaker to Sir Richard Haddock

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*HMS Dorsetshire, in Gibraltar Bay, 29 July 1704*

July 21st we anchored here in the Bay, and about four in the afternoon landed about 2000 marines, Dutch and all. I commanded the landing with three captains more; all which was done with little opposition. About forty horse came down from the town, which was all; and they run away so soon as our guns began to play upon them. We landed about two miles from the town, in the Bay, and marched directly to the foot of the hill, where they posted themselves within musket shot of the gates; so cut off all manner of communication from the land. We hove into the town this evening about 17 shells. The Prince of Hesse landed with us and immediately sent a summons to the Governor, which did not return any answer till the next morning, and then the Governor said he would defend the town to the very last. Then Admiral Byng, who commanded the cannonading, began to draw up all his ships in a line before the town; but, it proving little wind, could not get in with them all, so that we did little this day. There was three small ships in the old mole, one of which annoyed our camp by firing amongst them, having about ten guns lying close in the mole and just under a great bastion at the north corner of the town. I proposed to [Sir George](#) the burning her in the night. He liked it; accordingly ordered what boats I would have to my assistance; and about 12 at night I did it effectually, with the loss of but one man.

July 23, at four this morning, Admiral Byng began to cannonade which made a noble noise, being within half shot of the town. After about two hours continual firing, I went to Sir George and gave him my opinion that the mole might be attacked. He immediately made the signal for all the boats in the fleet, and gave me the command of the attack; but some of the boats got ashore before I could reach them, with little or no opposition. Several of our men got into the Castle; upon which it blew up. We had killed between forty and fifty men. Most of all the boats that landed first were sunk; about a hundred or two wounded; upon which, all that remained came running down and leaped into the water, being so mightily surprised. I landed within a minute after the accident, and rallied our men. We went over a breach in the wall but one at a time, and took possession of a bastion of eight guns within less than half musket shot of the town wall; and there we pitched our colours. Soon after, Admiral Byng came ashore to me and sent in a drummer with a summons, who returned in about two hours with a letter in answer that they would surrender the next day; which they accordingly did. I believe I had with me, at the first onset, between two and three hundred men; but we grew in a very little time to near 1000. This was the manner we took Gibraltar, which I hope we shall maintain.

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