

# OPERATIONS AGAINST THE BARBARY POWERS

## Commodore Decatur to B.W. Crowninshield, Secretary of the Navy

US SHIP GUERRIERE, off Carthage, 19 June 1815

I have the honor to inform you that on the 17<sup>th</sup> instant, off Cape de Gat, the squadron fell in with and captured an Algerine frigate of forty-six guns, and between four and five hundred men, commanded by Rais Hammida, who bore the title of Admiral. She struck her flag after a running fight of twenty-five minutes. The admiral was killed at the commencement of the action. After the GUERRIERE (who from her favorable position was enabled to bring the enemy to close action) had fired two broadsides, they, with the exception of a few musketeers, ran below. The GUERRIERE had four men wounded by musket shot, which is only injury done by the enemy in this affair. It is with pain I have to communicate to you that one of our main deck guns burst in the first discharge, by which accident five men were killed and thirty badly wounded and burnt. This gun was only doubly shotted; and permit me to state, that, unless some more effectual mode is adopted in proving our guns, I fear the frequency of such accidents will be injurious to the service, beyond the loss of men occasioned thereby. The steadiness of our men adjoining the bursting gun was worthy admiration. Although many of them were much burnt and wounded, it did not occasion a pause in their fire. We have four hundred and six prisoners, including the wounded. The prisoners state about thirty were killed and thrown overboard.

Their squadron is said to be cruising in our vicinity; five days ago they were off this place. Unless I obtain some further intelligence of them by to-morrow, I shall proceed to the port of Algiers in the hope of intercepting their return. For the present I have determined to send the prize into Carthage.

The enclosed is a return of the wounded by the enemy, as also those who were killed and wounded by the bursting of the gun.

US SHIP GUERRIERE, off Cape Palos, 20 June 1815

I have the honor to inform you that, on the 19<sup>th</sup> instant, off Cape Palos, the squadron under my command captured an Algerine brig of twenty-two guns and one hundred and eighty men. After a chase of three hours, she ran into shoal water, where I did not think it advisable to follow with our large ships, but despatched the EPERVIER, SPARK, TORCH, and SPITFIRE, to whom she surrendered after a short resistance. Twenty-three men were found dead on board. We received from her eighty prisoners, the residue of her crew having left her in boats; many of them must have been killed by the fire of our vessels, and one of the boats was sunk. None of our vessels sustained any damage, nor was there a man killed or wounded. This brig is larger than the EPERVIER, was built in Algiers five years ago by a Spanish constructor, the same who built the frigate captured on the 17<sup>th</sup> instant, and is perfectly sound.

*American State Papers, Naval Affairs (14<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session), I:396.*