

**The Naval War of 1812:  
A Documentary History**

**Volume III  
1814–1815  
Chesapeake Bay, Northern Lakes,  
and Pacific Ocean  
Part 3 of 7**

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(in consequence of the Information he has received & what he has Observed of the Enemy), to push on towards Washington, which I have confident Hopes he will give a good account of. I shall accompany him & of course afford him every Assistance in my Power<sup>1</sup>

I yesterday took One of the Gun Boats unhurt, which ~~will make~~ is a good Vessel for these Waters— I likewise took several light Schooners which are loading Tobacco at Pig Point, We therefore shall not return empty handed

Every Body in the Naval Department has behaved admirably & we are all in high Spirits No Sickness amongst us & but little as yet in the Army Believe me My dear Sir Most truly Your's

G: Cockburn

If you could Spare the *Hornet* to come as high as Nottingham with Spirits & Bread it would assist us, as we are all getting Short of Provisions, she may return to you immediately after delivering it

ALS, UkENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2329, fols. 3–4A.

1. Cockburn did not allude to Cochrane's short dispatch of 22 August (p. 197) recommending a recall of the forces, perhaps because the commander in chief did not phrase it as a direct order and because the rear admiral wanted to proceed against Washington. In his memoirs, Cockburn called the Cochrane note a "halter" that he disregarded. UKLNMM, Papers of Admiral George Cockburn, COC/11, p. 134.

## Naval Preparations for the Defense of Washington

*Washington was ill prepared for the invasion force that sailed up the Patuxent River on 19 August 1814. Seeing no strategic advantage the British could gain by attacking the capital, Secretary of War Armstrong denied any need to defend it. Brigadier General Winder, the newly appointed commander of the just-formed Tenth Military District, energetically undertook Washington's defense, but after six weeks had accomplished little due to his own lack of organizational skills and Armstrong's inertia. Secretary of the Navy Jones, as with most of Madison's cabinet, but not the president himself, did not consider Washington threatened. When faced with imminent peril, however, Jones acted quickly and decisively. He immediately enlisted the assistance of three of his illustrious naval captains, John Rodgers, David Porter, and Oliver H. Perry, and promised them glory in defending the capital. At the Washington Navy Yard, the secretary engaged Master Commandant John O. Creighton to reconnoiter the British squadron progressing up the Potomac. Meanwhile, the commandant of the yard, Thomas Tingey, responding to an oral order from Jones, employed the yard's clerk, Mordecai Booth, to secure wagons for transporting supplies to troops in the area. Booth's eyewitness account portrays the confused, panic-stricken state of the city in the days before the invasion.*

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Navy Department Augt. 19. 1814

Sir

The enemy has entered the Patuxent with a very large force indicating a design upon this place which may be real, or it may serve to mask his design upon Baltimore

In either case it is exceedingly desirable to collect in our vicinity all the disposable force within reach as soon as possible.

You will therefore with the least possible delay proceed to Baltimore with about three hundred men (including officers) of the force under your command and also order on the detachment of marines from Cecil furnace to meet you at Baltimore where the further orders of the Department will await you I am respectfully Your Obdt. Servt.

W Jones

Commodore John Rodgers  
US. Ship *Guerriere* Philada.

ALS, DLC, Rodgers Family Papers, Series III-B, Container 51, fols. 5532–33. Rodgers was at Philadelphia superintending the construction of *Guerriere*.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER

Capt: David Porter  
U.S. Navy New-York

Navy Department  
August 19th. 1814

Sir,

The Enemy has entered the Patuxent with a very strong force indicating a rapid movement upon this city.— The court of Enquiry<sup>1</sup> will therefore be suspended and you will proceed without delay to this place, with as many of your late officers & Crew as you can collect and any others you may be enabled to engage, as well for the defence of the U.S. new Ship *Essex*,<sup>2</sup> destined for your command as for that of the national Capital, and its important establishments.— I am respectfully &c

W: Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 410 (M149, Roll No. 11).

1. For more on the court of inquiry into the loss of *Essex*, see p. 760.

2. Jones was referring to the frigate *Columbia* that was building at the Washington Navy Yard.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO MASTER COMMANDANT JOHN O. CREIGHTON

Capt: John O. Creighton  
U.S. Navy, Present

Navy Department  
August 22d: 1814

Sir,

The reports from the vicinity of Cedar point yesterday, state that six ships of the enemy either had passed, or were at that time passing the Kettle Bottoms

and ascending the Potomac.—<sup>1</sup> What the nature of his force is, or whether accompanied with transports or troops is quite uncertain.—

It is desirable to ascertain by the discriminating eye of a naval officer the real extent & nature of this force as well as its probable object; whether it be to ascend the river, to act in conjunction with the invading army, or to create a diversion of our force from that army.— You will therefore apply to Como: Tingey, who will furnish you with a fast gig & crew with which you will proceed down the river & carefully reconnoitre the enemy, watching his movements & penetrating if possible his designs, which you will report to me by a trusty express over land, or in any other safe & expeditious manner,— when you have completed your observations & satisfied yourself as far as may be practicable you will return to this city & report the result to this Department.—<sup>2</sup> I am respectfully &c.

W: Jones

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 448 (M149, Roll No. 11). This letter was not entered in the letter book in its correct chronological sequence because there was no time to record it before it was sent. After returning on 9 March 1814 from a six-week cruise in the Caribbean with the brigs *Rattlesnake* and *Enterprise*, Master Commandant John O. Creighton was employed refitting those two ships at Wilmington, North Carolina, until he was transferred in early May to the Washington Navy Yard to superintend the construction of the new sloop of war *Argus*. Creighton would be Commandant Thomas Tingey's principal lieutenant at the navy yard during the summer of 1814.

1. As a diversion to deflect American attention from the main invasion body in the Patuxent, Cochrane ordered Captain James A. Gordon to lead a squadron of vessels up the Potomac River and attack Fort Washington on the Maryland shore. Besides his own frigate, *Seahorse*, Gordon commanded the frigate *Euryalus*, the bomb vessels *Devastation*, *Aetna*, and *Meteor*, and the rocket ship *Erebus*. For more on this expedition, see Gordon to Cochrane, 9 Sept. 1814, pp. 238–42.

2. No report was found. It may have been made orally.

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

New Castle Aug 23d. 1814 (at Sun rise)

Sir

Last night at 11 P.m. between Chester & Phila. returning from Reedy Island where I had been to inspect the Flotilla,<sup>1</sup> I recd. your Letter of the 19th Inst.— I immediately got into my Boat and Arrived here this moment.—

The Signal has been made for the Flotilla & answered; and I shall leave here for Balto. in compliance with your Orders as soon as the Men can be debarked, and be assured, Sir, I shall loose no time in getting them.—

Owing to some shameful irregularity in the Post Office, your Letter, altho' it is dated the 19th. Inst., was not delivered until ten O'clock yesterday morning.— With great respect I have the honor to be Sir Yr Obt Servt.

Signed—Jno Rodgers

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 131½ (M125, Roll No. 38).

1. The Delaware flotilla.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Camp. Old Fields.<sup>1</sup>  
9 Miles East of Washington City.  
Augt. 23d. 1814. ½ past 8. AM

Sir

Presuming that if circumstances have been favorable to your progress you will reach Baltimore this evening in pursuance of my order of the 20th.—<sup>2</sup> I have now to direct that with the utmost possible celerity you will move on with the seamen and marines under your command to Bladensburg and endeavour to have as early a communication with General Winder who commands in this district and afford to him all the cooperation in your power advising the Department of your movements in order that the most efficient means may be employed to aid in the common effort to preserve the national capital and its invaluable establishments from the ruthless hands of our vengeful foe. The President calculates with confidence and pleasure on the influence of your zeal and patriotism in giving the best effect to the exertions of your brave seamen who on all occasions and on either element are ready to prove their devotion to the sacred cause of their country.

You will arm them with muskets, and on your arrival in this vicinity as many field pieces as you can conveniently fight will be added. Mr. Beatty will comply with your requisitions for Baggage and provision waggons with cooking utensils and whatever else may be necessary for the service

The effort will be but for a few days and I anticipate with pleasure the full share of glory our gallant naval officers and seamen will acquire on this occasion. The President of the U States and heads of Departments are now in this camp, The enemy were last night at upper Marlbro', from which it is probable they will advance to day toward Bladensburg. Our force is fast accumulating and we shall now retard and ultimately repel if not destroy the forces of the enemy whose numbers are various estimated but I believe does not exceed at most 5.000. I am respectfully your Obdt. Servt.

W Jones

P S. Lieut. Solomon Rutter of the U S. Flotilla at Baltimore will report himself to you with about 250. men which you will combine with your own force

WJ.



please send me a copy of this letter<sup>3</sup>

ALS, DLC, Rodgers Family Papers, Series III-B, Container 51, fols. 5534-35. This letter was addressed to Rodgers at Baltimore where Jones presumed Rodgers must have arrived by the 23d. The preceding letter shows that Rodgers was still in Delaware on the 23d.

1. Long Old Fields, Maryland.

2. The letter book copy says 19th.

3. Jones wrote in such haste that he did not have time to have his clerk copy it.

CAPTAIN'S CLERK MORDECAI BOOTH TO COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY

[Extract]

Navy Yard Washtn. Monday 22nd: Augst: 1814.

In pursuance to your instructions to me of this day, to procure Waggons to remove the powder from the Naval Magazine—I proceeded fourthwith, to the execution of your order, After borrowing the Horse of Thomas Murray Master Cooper of the Yard, in consequence of your, regret, at my being obliged to ride one of the public Horses of the yard, then so much wanted. (Murrays Horse was borrowed of his Wife).—

I was aware of the demand for Waggons,—from the alarm then created by the removal of Public, as well as, private property—and my direction was, to the Turnpike road leading into the City from Baltimore.— I met with no waggons, but left directions at Longs Hotel<sup>1</sup> on Capitol hill, that from four to five Waggons should be directed to the Navy Yard to you, Should that number pass, that would be disposed to engage in public employment. I then proceeded with an intention of going to Alexandria, but seeing a Waggon on the Pennsylvania Avenue, I soon overtook it, it was driven by a black Man who called himself William Barnett, say'd he was a free man, and the team of five horses (which was a very good one) was his own, that he was from Baltimore, and loaded in part with Tea for R. Monroe<sup>2</sup> of Geo: town, some Boxes for the City—Molasses for Alexa. and 25 boxes Candles.— The Tea for Monroe, I made him lodge at Mc,Keowins Tavern, deliver his boxes for the City— Gave him a Certificate of having employed him for the service of the Navy Department, & permitted him to proceed to Alexa. to deliver his Molasses &c: ordered his return to the Navy Yard—where he arrived in the evening, deposited the Candles for safe keeping, not having found the owner, reported himself, and regularly received into Service.—

Understanding several Waggons had passed on to Geo: town, and wishing to inform Mr. Monroe of the deposit of his Tea—I shaped my Course thither, On my Way, I overtook the Honbl. Wm: Jones, Secretary of the Navy— he enquired where I was going— I informed him of your Order, and was on my way to Geo: town in pursuit of waggons— he asked me if you had waggons to dispatch provisions to Comdr. Barney, I replied I did not believe you had— he then ordered me to impress all I could get. I very soon met with the Waggons of George Vallandingham— he plead he was engaged to Mr. Nourse<sup>3</sup> to remove public papers— he had nothing to shew to that effect—and I impressed him,

and gave him a Certificate; at the moment I did it, Mrs. Nourse came to me, and claimed the waggon as being engaged by Mr. Nourse— The Secretary at the time drove up, when an appeal was maid to him and on Mrs. Nourse pledging her Word, it was for the public service—was instructed by the Secretary, to release it—(tho Vallandingham promised he would return to me, as soon as he delivered the load.) The Secretary then directed me to respect only, Waggons that was engaged for the public, and to impress all others I could.— I very Soon met with two Waggons in Geo: town from Baltimore, belonging to Virginia— them I impressed and put under charge of Nicholas Queen<sup>4</sup>— I then impressed John Anderson from Winchester Virginia, who was engaged to Daniel Renner, of the firm of Renner and Heath,<sup>5</sup> for the purpose of removing their Cordage— The younger Mr. Renner appeared in a violent passion on the occasion, but Renner the Partner of Heath, behaved most politely, he regreted the occurence—but Observed, private considerations must give way to the public good— I gave Anderson a Certificate of impressment— He soon unloaded, and went on to you— I have Since been informed by you and himself, that he took a load of Provisions in—and reached the Camp that Night— I could find no other Waggon in the town except one of three horses—that was engaged by the Bank of Columbia—and the Driver missing— Mr. Wm: Whan Cashier, Assured me,—that Waggon, would expressly take papers that the Government were particularly interested in; as that Bank, did a large proportion of the public Business—of course, I left it—and proceeding into the City—met with the Waggon of Richd. Love; it was taking in a load of furniture— A Black man was with it, who told me, he was loading for Doctr. Sims—<sup>6</sup> the waggon was a little distance from the Doctrs. House— I went to see the Doctr. to have the load put out— he was from home, his Lady was at the door— her distress was great indeed— I returned to the Waggon to do my duty, when on examining the Waggon, I found one of the tire broke, and the Wheel ready to break down— Mr. Renner was passing— he examined the Waggon, and with myself concluded, it was not fit for use—consequently left it— I soon met with another and taking it in charge, was proceeding by the Navy Department— where I found the two Waggons impressed in Geo: town, and put under Charge of Mr. Queen— they had been stop'd by Thos: Turner Esqr. Acctnt. of the Navy Deptnt. who advised me they would be wanted to remove papers of the Department—and spoke to the Secretary for his concurrence— before he gave his assent—he enquired of me, how many Waggons I had got, on observing—three others; Then Sir, (he Say'd) let the two remain, and the three can load in the provisions; and get as many more as you can— on returning to the opposite Side of the house—the waggon I had left, had run— I mounted my Horse to persue it— in passing around the Presidents Wall, I met with Seven Waggons loaded for Geo: town, from Baltimore, two only were impressed, they by Mr. Washington Booie<sup>7</sup>— the Other five I impressed— and finding I might run the risque of loosing them, to persue the one that had run thought it the better way to go to Geo: town, and hurry their unloading.— While they were discharging their loads, I rode through the Streets, and found three Waggons loading in private property—One of them for Rigs and Badon<sup>8</sup>— A White man was with the Waggon—who refused at the instance of Rigs, to tell his name, [n]or could I lern it, the waggon was drove by a Black man— I told the white man, I impressed the Waggon for and on account of the Navy Department—on which Rigs swore, I should not take it, at the risque of his life—



Wm. Ridgley was on the pavement, who also made use of language, Justifying & encouraging Rigs to opposition They went into the Store, I dismounted and followed them in— When they made use of such language, as was degrading to gentlemen—I had no one with me to enforce the detention of the Waggon— And it was hurried off, in opposition to my positive command to the contrary—and except I had used violence, could not have prevented it—in which, I did not think myself justified.— The second Waggon, was without a driver, he being absent—and while I was hunting him, the waggon was hurried off.— The third, I gave a regular Certificate of impressment to, but the Waggon being without a Cover—and the Waggoner assuring me, he was only to carry the load a few miles into the Country; and as he could get his tent, & feed, by going home, and would be at the Navy Yard the Next day, by ten O'Clock; I consented to his going— he you have since informed me, never reported himself.— His Name is Michael Conley, and lives in Mt. Gomery County, not far from George Town. The five Waggons, to wit Thomas Wade, three Negroes under his Charge, & Thomas Cowthon, I arrived with, a little before sun set—at the Yard.—

Tuesday 23rd. To day I was in the yard before sun-rise—and proceeded to have the Teams appraised &c: and as Soon as practicable, got off Thos: Cowthon and Wm. Barnett with provisions for Commdr. Barney.— The Other four—Wade and the three Negroes—I caused to go to the Magazine, where they were loaded with one hundred and twenty four Barrels, and two quarter Casks of Powder. Being without a Horse—and having to attend to the Securing the Powder, and understanding that Murry had objected to his Wife's lending his horse—and finding him in his Stable, I impressed him, with a Saddle and Bridle.— Before I left the City, I impressed the Waggon & team of four horses, of John Bair an old Dutchman—to whom I gave a Certificate of impressment, and got him into the Yard. I then followed the Waggons with the powder, and overtook them before they cross'd the Potomac Bridge. On the South side, and as I was about to ascend the ridge from the Causeway, I met Colo. Minors Redgment of Fairfax Militia<sup>9</sup>— The Colo. recommended six persons as a competent guard to take charge of the powder, and that night, I reached Wrens tavern at the falls Church, late at night, within one mile of the farm of Daniel Dulany Esqr. where the powder was to be deposited.— This Night a little before day, Captn. Smallwood<sup>10</sup> & family, with my Daughters and Son.—reached Wrens— The Acct: given me of the retreat of our troops, and the advance of the British, and the consternation of the Citizens—was to me truly distressing; but the Seeing my Children out of the reach of a ferocious and vandal enemy—was delight indeed.— And Now Sir! Permit me to pause—Untill I return you the warmest thanks of a grateful Heart, for the attention you paid to my unprotected Children in my absence—on public duty.— To your goodness, they owe their escape from a Sceen, the Most to be regreted of my life.— you can never be rewarded, beyond, the Sensations of a pure heart, and a sound mind—the Attribute of an all wise being, so bounteously bestowed on you.— . . . .

ALS, DNA, RG45, Naval Shore Establishments, 1814–1911; PG-30, Entry 350; Washington Navy Yard; Reports on Removal of Powder from the Yard at the Time of British Invasion of Washington, August–September 1814. This report covered the period 22 August to 10 September 1814 and was enclosed in a letter of 10 September 1814 from Booth to Thomas Tingey. For a printed version of this transmittal letter, with editorial notes, see Booth, *Capture of Washington*. For Booth's account of events on 24 August, see pp. 208–14.

1. Robert Long.
2. Possibly Robert Munro.
3. Joseph Nourse was register of the U.S. Treasury from 1789 to 1829.
4. Queen owned a hotel in Washington.
5. Daniel Renner and Nathaniel K. Heath manufactured rope.
6. Dr. Thomas Sim was a Washington physician.
7. Washington Bowie was a Georgetown merchant.
8. Riggs & Badon was a store in Washington.
9. Lieutenant Colonel George Minor commanded the Sixtieth Regiment (Fairfax County), Virginia militia.
10. Samuel N. Smallwood of Washington.

## Battle of Bladensburg and the Attack on Washington, 24–25 August 1814

*After receiving Secretary Jones's letter of 20 August,<sup>1</sup> ordering him to leave a skeleton crew with the flotilla's ill-fated vessels, Joshua Barney left Nottingham on 21 August with about 400 of the flotillamen. This force joined with the army and militia to resist the British threat. From Washington, Jones sent a contingent of marines under Captain Samuel Miller to serve under Barney. Experienced military men were now more important than vessels in opposing the British onslaught. No one knew where the British would strike next. While the American army marched around the Maryland countryside, first in pursuit and then in retreat of the enemy, the British army under Major General Ross left Nottingham on 22 August for Upper Marlborough, but their momentary detour down the Woodyard Road (which led to Washington) frightened the Americans. The latter retreated to the Long Old Fields. After arriving in Upper Marlborough on 23 August, Ross and Cockburn conferred about whether to attack Washington, sixteen miles away, or to return to the fleet.<sup>2</sup> Brigadier General Winder had proposed assembling his forces from a twenty-mile radius and assaulting the British at Upper Marlborough, but was stymied when Ross took the offensive first by breaking camp at Upper Marlborough, marching west a few miles, and then stopping to bivouac just three miles from the Long Old Fields where the Americans were camped.*

*Winder was in a quandary. After considering all the places that the British could attack (Annapolis, Fort Washington, Bladensburg, and Washington via the bridges on the Eastern Branch), Winder opted to retreat to the capital. On the evening of 23 August, as the American forces poured across the Eastern Branch bridges to a camp near the Washington Navy Yard, the initiative had devolved to the British.*

*After a peripatetic night conferring about strategic matters, and with little sleep, Winder arose at sunrise on 24 August still undecided where to assemble his troops. Meanwhile, the British broke camp about 5:00 A.M. and, after a feint toward Washington, marched to Bladensburg. Conflicting intelligence reports paralyzed American reaction until 10:00 A.M. when Winder finally accepted that the British were heading to Washington from the north. All American forces were ordered to Bladensburg to stand and repulse the British. However, Barney's flotillamen and marines, who had retreated with the army to Washington on the evening of 23 August, were delegated to blow up the bridge nearest the navy yard when the enemy approached. Recognizing that this was an inefficient use of his manpower, Barney persuaded the cabinet to detail a smaller force for this task, thus permitting his men to join the army and militia at Bladensburg. Although the Americans held numerical superiority, their last minute arrival at the battle site precluded a coordinated de-*

fense against the disciplined and battle-tested British. The naval and marine contingent under Barney alone stood its ground.

In the days before the invasion, Secretary Jones was intimately involved with preparations for the capital's defense and joined President Madison and other cabinet members in conferences at the military encampments in Maryland and near the navy yard. After the British army broke through the American lines at Bladensburg on the afternoon of 24 August, Ross stopped to refresh his troops before proceeding on to the capital. Meanwhile, the Americans fled in all directions—to Baltimore, the Capitol, Georgetown, or their homes. Commandant of the Washington Navy Yard Thomas Tingey had no military force to guard the yard and by late afternoon he received an oral report from Secretary Armstrong that the army could not protect the yard. Under orders to destroy the yard's vessels and stores, rather than allow them to be captured by the British, Tingey delayed to the very last moment setting the yard on fire. Navy yard clerk Mordecai Booth and Master Commandant John O. Creighton diligently plied the streets of Washington to gather intelligence about the British for Tingey. On the evening of the 24th, they encountered some British regulars on Capitol Hill. They rushed to the navy yard with the news and Tingey set the fires just before escaping to Alexandria in his gig.<sup>3</sup>

1. Jones to Barney, 20 Aug. 1814, p. 188.

2. Cockburn to Cochrane, 23 Aug. 1814, pp. 197–98.

3. For more on this subject, see Lord, *Dawn's Early Light*, chapters five, six, and seven. For the congressional investigation into the burning of Washington, see pp. 311–23, below.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO MASTER COMMANDANT JOHN O. CREIGHTON

Capt: Jno: O. Creighton  
U.S. Navy, Present,

Navy Department  
August 24th: 1814

Sir,

Commodore Barney, who was charged with the defence or destruction of the Bridge over the Eastern Branch,<sup>1</sup> having by direction of the President, been ordered to join Genl: Winder at Bladensburg, you are specially charged with the eventual destruction of that Bridge, for which purpose a Serjeants guard of Marines, has been detailed & placed under your command.— You will see that sufficient combustibles are properly placed so as to explode & destroy the Bridge effectually on the instant the Enemy may approach its vicinity, which you will determine by a good look out or by such information as you may deem satisfactory.— This object is of vital importance, & I rely with confidence upon your vigilance.— Having performed this duty you will unite with Como: Tingey in preparing for the destruction of such vessels, magazines & Public Stores, as cannot be removed.— I am respectfully &c.

W: Jones

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 448 (M149, Roll No. 11). There was no time to record this letter in the secretary's letter book and so it is not in the correct chronological sequence.

1. Two bridges spanned the Eastern Branch (Anacostia River) and led to Washington. The one referred to here was the lower bridge found at the end of Kentucky Avenue. The upper bridge spanned the river near East Capitol Street.

CAPTAIN JOSHUA BARNEY, FLOTILLA SERVICE, TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Farm at Elk ridge.<sup>1</sup> Augt. 29th. 1814

Sir,

This is the first moment I have had it in my power to make a report of the proceedings of the forces under my command since I had the honor of seeing you on Tuesday the 23d. inst. at the Camp at the "Old fields," on the afternoon of that day we were informed that the Enemy was advancing upon us, The Army was put into order of battle and our positions taken, my forces were on the right, flanked by the two Battaln. of the 36 & 38th. Regiments where we remained some hours, The enemy did not however make his appearance. A little before sun set, General Winder came to me and recommended that the heavy Artillery should be withdrawn with the exception of one 12 lb. to cover the retreat; We took up our line of march and in the night entered Washington by the Eastern branch Bridge, I marched my Men &c to the Marine Barracks and took up Quarters for the night, myself sleeping at Comr. Tingey's at the Navy yard, About 2 O'clock. Genrl. Winder came to my Quarters and we made some arrangements. In the morning I recd. a note from Genrl. Winder and waited upon him, he requested me to take command, and place my Artillery to defend the passage of the Bridge on the Eastern Branch as the enemy was approaching the City in that direction, I immediately put my guns in Position, leaving the Marines & the rest of my men at the Barracks to wait further orders. I was in this situation when I had the honor to meet you, with the President, & heads of Departments, when it was determined I should draw off my Guns & men and proceed towards Bladensburgh, which was Immediately put into execution; on our way I was informed the enemy was within a mile of Bladensburgh we hurried on, The day was hot, and my men very much crippled from the severe marches we had experienced the preceding days ~~before, many of them being without shoes, which I had replaced that morning.~~ I preceded the men and when I arrived at the line which separates the District from Maryland the Battle began, I sent an officer back to hurry on my men, they came up in a trof, we took our position on the rising ground, put the pieces in Battery, posted the Marines under Capt. Miller and the flotilla men who were to act as Infantry under their own officers, on my right to support the pieces, and waited the approach of the Enemy, during this period the engagement continued the enemy advancing,— our own Army retreating before them apparently in much disorder, at length the enemy made his appearance on the main road, in force, and in front of my Battery, and on seeing us made a halt, I reserved our fire, in a few minutes the enemy again advanced, when I ordered an 18 lb. to be fired, which compleatly cleared the road, shortly after a second and a third attempt was made by the enemy to come forward but all were destroyed, The enemy then crossed over into an Open field and attempted to flank our right, he was there met by three twelve pounders, the Marines under Capt. Miller and my men acting as Infantry, and again was totally cut up, by this time not a Vestige of the American Army remained except a body of 5 or 600 posted on a height on my right from whom I expected much support, from their fine situation, The Enemy from this period never appeared in force in front of us, they pushed forward their sharp shooters, one of which shot my horse under me, who fell dead between two of my Guns; The enemy who had been kept in check by our fire for nearly half an hour now began to out flank us



on the right, our guns were turned that way, he pushed up the Hill, about 2 or 300 towards the Corps of Americans station'd as above described, who, to my great mortification made no resistance, giving a fire or two and retired, in this situation we had the whole army of the Enemy to contend with; Our Ammunition was expended, and unfortunately the drivers of my Ammunition Waggons had gone off in the General Panic, at this time I received a severe wound in my thigh, Capt. Miller, was Wounded, Sailing Master Warner Killed, actg. sailing Master Martin Killed, & sailing Master Martin wounded,<sup>2</sup> but to the honour of my officers & men, as fast as their Companions & mess mates fell at the guns they were instantly replaced from the Infantry. Finding the enemy now completely in our rear, and no means of defence I gave orders to my officers and men to retire— Three of my officers assisted me to get off a Short distance— but the great loss of blood occasioned such a weakness that I was compelled to lie down, I requested my officers to leave me, which they obstinately refused, but upon being Ordered they obeyed, one only remained. In a short time I observed a British soldier and had him called, and directed him to seek an officer, in a few minutes an officer came, on learning who I was, brought General Ross & Admiral Cockburn to me, Those officers behaved to me with the most marked Attention, respect, and Politeness, had a Surgeon brought and my wound dressed immediately. After a few minutes conversation the Generl. informed me, (after paying me a handsome compliment) that I was paroled and at liberty to proceed to Washington or Bladensburgh, as also Mr. Huffington<sup>3</sup> who had remained with me, offering me every assistance in his power, giving orders for a litter to be brought in which I was carried to Bladensburgh; Capt Wainwright first Capt. to Admiral Cochrane remained with me and behaved to me as if I was a brother—

During the stay of the enemy at Bladensburgh I received the most polite attention from the officers of the Navy & Army.

My wound is deep, but I flatter myself not dangerous, the Ball is not yet extracted, I fondly hope a few weeks will restore me to health, and that an exchange will take place, that I may resume my Command or any other, that you and the President may think proper to honour me with, yours respectfully

Joshua Barney

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 57 (M124, Roll No. 65).

1. Barney lived in Elkridge, Maryland.  
2. Sailing Master John Warner's warrant dated from 22 September 1813; he died at the Battle of Bladensburgh on 24 August 1814. Acting Sailing Master James H. Martin entered the Chesapeake Bay flotilla on 5 July 1814 and was discharged on 15 April 1814. Sailing Master William Martin's warrant dated from 12 January 1814 and he was discharged on 15 April 1815.  
3. Jesse Huffington entered the Chesapeake Bay flotilla as a sailing master on 21 September 1813 and was discharged on 15 April 1815.

CAPTAIN'S CLERK MORDECAI BOOTH TO COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY

[Extract]  
Wednesday 24th.—Desireous of having the powder delivered and under a guard, I was on my horse at the dawn of day, and ordered the waggons to geer

up, and follow me; on getting to the Farm,<sup>1</sup> I found Seventy five barrels of Powder had been deposited—the Barn in which it was,—Open, and much out of order— I went to the House of Mr. Dosier Bennett a respectable Citizen, recommended by Colo. Minor, in whom I might confide, for its care; he Agreed to have my orders attended to, and to have collected, a competent guard; on my stipulating to Allow him, two dollars Pr. day for his services, and one & a half dollars, for each person employed to aid him; untill I could relieve them, by sending a guard over; which Colo: Wharton<sup>2</sup> had promised me should be done— As soon as I had completed my orders, and directed the Waggons to hasten their return to the City—I set out to attend you.— On reaching the Navy Yard, I was told you had gone in the direction of the lower Eastern branch Bridge.— I found on reaching the Commons, the rear of the Army in motion, but was ignorant of its Movements— On getting in view of the door of the house lately Occupied by the Revd: A: Hunter;<sup>3</sup> I saw the Gig of the Secretary of the Navy, a number of horses, and several horsemen.— Thinking I might find you there, as from appearances the assemblage was, the heads of Departments and General Officers &c: I rode up— I saw the President of the U:S. through the Window. I inquired for you, an officer requested my name—and went in to see if you were there, he returned & informed me, you were not, & I went on to the bridge; on reaching it—saw you on it; I dismounted, and in approaching you, Met Commodore Barney and Captn. Creighton— receiving your orders to have the Waggons again loaded with powder, I returned to the Yard—prepared some certificates for the Waggons—left the Office, and went to your house, to know your Commands, if you wished me to attend to any thing particularly— The Secretary of the Navy was then in his Gig at your door— You had no order for me, and I passed on, to get my dinner— While Dining, was told an action was pending—<sup>4</sup> the first intimation, that one was expected— I was scarcely up from the table, before the four Waggons arrived—And I was giving them orders to proceed direct to the Magazine, when the retreat of our Army was pronounced.—and in the direction to the Potomac Bridge; Waggons and Men; were seen flying in the utmost confusion— those receiving my orders, waited not a moment; but fled with all precipitation— I went to my house lock'd my doors, and ran to the Yard, where I found you, and tendered my Services— What was my astonishment! on being informed by you, that, in the event of a retreat, or defeat, and the Yard could not be defended—You had orders to fire it.— And as you was left without defence—I could remain & assist in the execution of the order— I had put my Horse in the Stable, and determining he should not be lost, I went to the Stable & Saddled him, on bringing him out, I saw Mr. A: Thornton (overseer of laborers) who appeared to be leaving the yard— to him I intended giving the charge of the Horse; but, reflecting that, my ho[r]se was a good one (before he had taken him) and thinking I might be useful in reconnoitring; and not knowing you had received any communication from the Secretary of War, I proposed going in Serch of intelligence; At which you appeared well pleased.— Then Colo. Wharton and Captn. Crab<sup>5</sup> were in the Yard— The British Army were momentarily expected—and as I mounted my horse, was told that the whistling of the balls, had been distinctly heard at the Marine Barracks; Which you heard, as well as myself— I passed the commons, and to the turn-pike Gate; commanding a View of the Hills beyond the Gate, I saw not the Appearance of an Englishman— But Oh! my Country—And I blush Sir! to tell you—I saw the Commons Covered with the



fugitive Soldiery of our Army—runing, hobling, Creeping, & apparently pan-  
 nick struck—One solitary company Only, (a) that was formed— I was told the  
 Army had rallied at the Capitol— thither I intreated all I passed, that could  
 point a Bayonet, to haste. Finding there was no persuing Army, I confess, I did  
 believe, and that belief expressed to you, on my return to you—That there had  
 not been a General defeat, but that, some gallent spirits had sustained the Ac-  
 tion, and had checked our foe— With this impression—I received your order  
 to go to the Capitol, for intelligence.— I went but found only men who had  
 been dispersed, resting—Principally I conceived, Barneys Flotilla Men— The  
 Citizen-Militia had Chiefly taken refuge at their houses—as I saw Officers, as  
 well as men at their doors— It did not appear to me, that any Officer ranking  
 a Captain, was at the Capitol; or more than from 250 to 300 Men. Captn. Bacon  
 of Marines,<sup>6</sup> and Captn. Gohagan<sup>7</sup> of Barneys flotilla, were the only Officers I  
 knew— they seemed to be settling which should command. I was told the  
 Army had gone to the hights of Geo: town, this I could not credit; it had in ap-  
 pearance, Something too dastardly, to be believed by me—And I again went in  
 view of the turn pike Gate, and Commanding a view of the hights in every direc-  
 tion— No enemy had yet Approached—and my belief being strengthened by  
 that circumstance; that we were not entirely driven; and our Army, or that Part  
 of it, that deserved the Name of Soldiers, was Still between the City and  
 Bladensburg, I again returned to you to make my report.— When on my way, I  
 saw a portion of the Eastern Branch Bridge Blown, into Splintery fragments, in  
 the Air— At the Moment of my return to you, I heard a Communication  
 Made by a Young Officer, that the British Army was in full force in the City.—  
 And that, they had reached the Capitol, or were approaching it— this I knew  
 to be incorrect, and indignant at the Communication—and my ardour and  
 Zeal, alive to the public Good—And fearing you would fire the Yard, prema-  
 turely—Was induced to express myself in language, few Considerations but, my  
 Countrys Honour and Welfair would have prompted me to.— And Now Sir!  
 be assured, it was not from disrespect to You; But from my Knowledge of you—  
 Which I now unhesitateingly declare in my Opinion to be, devotedly and truly  
 attached to this, Your Country. Possessing undaunted bravery, and a Mind cooly  
 deliberate—I can but believe that, had you been left entirely to the “Sugges-  
 tions of your own Mind” and could have had the ordering the troops—or at  
 least a part of them, the result of this Unfortunate 24th. Augst: would have been  
 far different. Unfortunately “the Navy Yard could not be covered”— It had  
 not been recollected that, in the event of a retreat—Barneys Flotilla Men, could  
 be useful in the Yard— it was forgotten that the *Argus* &c: &c: had their guns  
 expressly Mounted for the protection of this desireable depot of Public prop-  
 erty & Wealth— Thither they had not been ordered to repair and rally—  
 NO Sir! Fate had decreed that—with the Capitol it should be an Additional  
 Monument of our Countrys disgrace and dishonour—And Alike, to exhibit one  
 general Chaos of tumbling ruins.— Wheather it was for want of Military  
 Means, or military Sience and knowledge in the Commanding General<sup>8</sup>—Or  
miscreant treachery in designing its fall, time may Never develope— This all  
 will agree in—that the Stain can never be blotted from the recollection of  
 Americans.—

But to return—On offering to reconnoitre the British Army—(after giving  
 way to my feelings) that confidence which you appeared to repose in me, by the  
 declaration that, you would depend on the intelligence I gave you; that you

would postpone the execution of your Order to the last moment—and that your  
 life and reputation should rest on the correctness of that intelligence, induced  
 me to determine at the hazard of my life, to ascertain, where the British Army  
 was, to ascertain to a Certainty if they had not been checked—or where the  
 American Army was, and if likely to make a stand by which the City might be  
 saved. I had left the Yard but a few minutes before I was in view of the Turnpike  
 Road leading from Bladensburg—(I had passed Colo. Tatum<sup>9</sup>)—and scarcely in  
 view before I saw a Man on horseback coming over the hill beyond the gate—in  
 full speed— A Waggon had been left about half way down the hill— the  
 Man came as far as the Waggon—then turned, rode to the top of the hill, and  
 turned to the left in the Woods, I saw no other person, and pushed on, passed  
 the gate, and at Some distance saw John Davis<sup>10</sup> (brother of Shadrack) & Mr.  
 Ivie, in the field to the right, but at the fence— They had Seen no British pass  
 the hill—and enquired where I was going— as I reply’d, we saw a man pass  
 the hill in full Speed, he was whipping his Horse at every jump— I galloped  
 on & met him— he stoped and told me he had seen the British Army & where  
 they were; that he was from Geo: town, was a Butcher, & had gone voluntarily to  
 gain information for the People of his Town— he Offered to turn about, and  
 Shew me where they were—and did.— On getting on the top of the hill, he took  
 me along a blind road to the left, the way he had before gone into A field—(for  
 he was the Man I had seen come over the hill to the Waggon) The ground was  
 open for a great distance—and on a Hill to the left of the Road beyond the  
 Farm House of Serjant-Major Forrest,<sup>11</sup> he Shewed me a Column of Men—  
 They Appeared to me to be dressed in Blue or dark cloaths— I saw distinctly  
 many red Coats—But took them for the drummers and fifers— Tho Miller  
 (for that was the name of the man with me) insisted they were the Officers— I  
 proposed to him to keep the ridge untill the sun, then near siting, might more  
 distinctly favor our view, on proceeding some distance, I believed them to be  
 American troops— Having seen a Company file off, that I took to be the Geo:  
 town Rifle-Men—The Circumstance Alone of not having seen persons convey-  
 ing intelligence of the Check—(if checked) of the British, made me doubt at  
 all— However, I determined to gain a hight that I think was within 300 Yards  
 of them, where I expected also, to have had a distinct view of the advancing  
 Company— I had to pass a fence before I reached the hill, on getting to it,  
 there was a gap, the rails scattered in every direction, Miller got down & opened  
 it.— I bid him remain there— before I had reached the top of the hill, he  
 called to me, I heard him, & looking round, he beckoned Several times; I still  
 went on, he Mounted his Horse and Strained after me—and halloooing told me,  
 he had seen several men run off into some bushes, that he expected, designed  
 to pick me off— I had gained the summit of the hill, but a Corn field being  
 between the Hill and Road, I could See nothing of the Company that had filed  
 off— I saw the Men as they left the bushes, runing towards me, but Galloping  
 off—before they Gained the hill, I was (I thought) pretty well out of their reach,  
 I saw two assend it, and of them, one only, fired. Miller then asked me, if I did  
 not think that proof? And thinking the Company that appeared to be advanc-  
 ing, might interrupt our return, we kept the field, passed down the meadows, at  
 the head of the Tiber, through Mrs. Casinaves plantation,<sup>12</sup> and out near the  
 Capitol, and then went in View of the Turnpike gate— The British had not  
 passed the hill, then Sundown—as I passed on, I again Saw Davis & Ivey, coming  
 in— I found you at the Navy Yard Gate—and told you I would make my re-

port, if it met your approbation, before Colo. Wharton— my reason was, that, you and the Colo. hearing My Report, if you fired the Yard, you might be justified— The Colo. was not with you, and you having Sent Sergeant Stickney<sup>13</sup> to look for him.—He returned and reported the Colo. had left the Yard.— Captn. Haraden<sup>14</sup> being present, I reported as here Stated— You Observed that, every thing was ready—but as Captn. Creighton had gone out to ascertain where the Army was, you would wait his Return— Miller had assured me, they had passed through Geo: town—

Desireous of knowing positively myself, I proposed to you, my going as far as the Presidents House, where I expected, were the Executive—by which I might ascertain by some one to be relied on, what was the fact, and if any thing was to be done—or could meet Captn. Creighton— you assented—and when I reached the Jersey Avinue below Mr. Carrols;<sup>15</sup> I met Mr. Walter Cox—Cornet in Coldwells<sup>16</sup> troop of horse— He told me he had left the Army at Tenley town—And I informed him where the British were— he went with me as far as the Presidents House— A Horseman in Uniform, appearantly a field officer, was at the Steps— I ask'd him his Name— He Seem'd much Agitated, was About to draw a pistol from his holster—when on observing—I perceived he was an American as well as myself, and requesting him, not to be flurried—that my object was to gain correct information of our Army; he informed me his Name was Tatum (who I recognized, to have seen in the evening, near the Turn-pike gate) and he returned his Pistol, on my mentioning, my wanting information to convey to you.

On Mr. Cox's coming up, (who was behind, having stop'd on meeting some acquaintance) and asking if any person was within—The Colo. reply'd he expected not; for he had Called John,<sup>17</sup> and was not answered— Mr. Cox desired his Servant to dismount and ring the Bell— The Colo. made the Servt. hold his Horse, Dismounted—went up the steps, pulled the Bell several times with much violence—Knocked at the Door, and called John— But all was as silent as a Church.—

Colo. Tatum made some observations of having had it in his power, to have taken the British General,<sup>18</sup> got hold of Mr. Coxes hand, and wished to detain him in conversation, but on my observing we must not be detained; he left the Colo. and we wrode off.— Then, and not untill then, was my mind fully impressed that, the Matropolis of our Country was abandoned to it's horrid fate. We had not proceeded far on the Pennsylvania Avinue, before we Overtook Captn. Creighton, when I lernt that, no further Opposition was to be expected. At the Tiber Bridge we met William Smith of Coldwells Troop; Mr. Cox turned him back, on telling him, they would return together to the Camp; after going to the Navy Yard. Mr. Cox proposed on our geting to Capitol hill, to pass to the North end of the Capitol, that we might see if any one was there; we saw not One Soul. We went on in the direction of Tomblinsons Hotel<sup>19</sup>—When about midway between that and Longs, Mr. Cox (we being in front) laid himself on his horses neck (it being sometime in the Night) as if observing something; I thought, he was looking at, what I took to be Cows; He observed he saw the Cows, but he also saw men advancing; they were riseing from the Hollow direct in front of Longs— we advanced untill within forty yards or less, when they began to display— I gave the reins to my Horse, and Captn. Creighton followed me— Cox & Smith & Cox's Servant, came to the right about— We were fired on by the party— I passed Carrols long row of Buildings<sup>20</sup>—turned

by the Revd. A: M'Cormicks—and with the Jersey Avenue, to the Virginia Avenue & to the Navy Yard—Captn. Creighton keeping with Me— We Made a report Accordingly— You then determined to fire the Yard—And Asked Captn. Creighton and Myself, if we would keep our horses, or take a Seat with you in your Boat— Captn. Creighton determined on going with you— My Horse was too good a One to be lost, I obtained your permission to relye on him— When you told me to take care of Myself & horse, and bad'e me farewell; turned yourself to the Lanthorn, drew out your watch, & observed it was Twenty minutes after eight.— I left you only to return to my Children— I passed from the Yard by the 20 Buildings, and by Mrs. Younge to the Potomac Bridge— The South draw was up— I had it put down—and was scarcely over, before I saw the flames of the Yard—and had but reached the levil beyond the Causeway, before I saw a Considerable explosion, which I conceived was the Ordnance Store— But possibly, was the one at Greenleafs Point<sup>21</sup>—as I Saw very Soon after the flames at the Fort, at that Place—and by the time I reached the Hill—which did not exceed fifteen Minutes—I saw the Capitol in flames—(tho I had seen lights within, while on the Bridge.) This I had no doubt, was the work of the British.— A sight, so repugnant to my feelings, so dishonourable; so degrading to the American Character, and at the Same time, so Awful—Almost palsied my facultyes.—

Finding many of the Citizens at Owin's on the hill, of Which a large portion were Women and Children—I remained from—two and a half, to three hours—viewing the tumbling Ruins—and about Midnight reach'd Wrens<sup>22</sup>—where I found my Children— . . .

ALS, DNA, RG45, Naval Shore Establishments, 1814–1911; PC-30, Entry 350; Washington Navy Yard; Reports on Removal of Powder from the Yard at the Time of British Invasion of Washington, August–September 1814. This report covered the period 22 August to 10 September 1814 and was enclosed in a letter of 10 September 1814 from Booth to Thomas Tingey. For a printed version of this transmittal letter, with editorial notes, see Booth, *Capture of Washington*. For Booth's account of events on 22–23 August, see pp. 202–5 above. About twelve manuscript pages detailing Booth's adventures from 25 August to 10 September are not printed here.

1. Daniel Dulany's farm near Falls Church, Virginia.

2. Franklin Wharton held the rank of lieutenant colonel commandant of the Marine Corps from 7 March 1804.

3. For more on Reverend Andrew Hunter, see Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, pp. 82–83.

4. For Joshua Barney's account of the Battle of Bladensburg, see pp. 207–8.

5. John Crabb's captaincy in the Marine Corps dated from 18 June 1814.

6. Samuel Bacon was promoted to captain dating from 18 June 1814.

7. Sailing Master John Geoghegan.

8. Brigadier General William H. Winder.

9. Possibly William Tatham, civil engineer and geographer, who served in the American Revolution.

10. John Davis owned the Indian Queen Hotel.

11. Sergeant Major Forrest, U.S.M.C.

12. The Casanove family was prominent in Washington.

13. Possibly Sergeant Levi Stickney, U.S.M.C.

14. Nathaniel Haraden had been stationed at the Washington Navy Yard since October 1806; his rank as a lieutenant dated from 31 March 1807.

15. Daniel Carroll.

16. Captain Elias B. Caldwell commanded a volunteer company in Washington.



17. Jean Pierre Sioussa (Sioussat), or French John, was the French doorkeeper at the President's House.
18. Major General Robert Ross.
19. B. H. Tomlinson was the proprietor of this hotel.
20. Daniel Carroll owned a row of buildings on Capitol Hill.
21. Greenleaf's Point, where an arsenal was situated, was at the confluence of the Potomac River and its eastern branch.
22. Wren's Tavern, Falls Church, Virginia.

## MEMORANDUM OF SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Memorandum[August 24, 1814]<sup>1</sup>

On Wednesday the 24th. Augt. 1814 the President and heads of Departments from 10 AM to 2 PM or after, were at and around Genl. Winders quarters when it was understood the enemy were advancing towards the Eastern Branch Bridge Commodore Barneys artillery being planted on the the hill in front of the Bridge and Materials placed under the Bridge ready to explode and destroy it should the enemy approach. Information being received that the enemy had pursued the road to Bladensburg to which place Genl. Winder with the military force had gone leaving Com Barneys force at the Branch Bridge for the purpose of destroying it and defending the passage over the river. It was determined after consultation among the members of the Cabinet that Commodore Barney should immediately proceed to join the army at Bladensburg and Captain Creighton should be left to explode the Bridge<sup>2</sup>

I took occasion to State to the President and Secretary of War particularly and in the presence I think of Mr. Campbell and perhaps Mr. Rush<sup>3</sup> that besides the new frigate Sloop of War and several small vessels,<sup>4</sup> at the Navy yard there were large quantities of provisions and naval & military Stores of all kinds, at the Navy yard which ought to be destroyed in the event of the enemy getting possession of the City as those vessels provisions and Stores would be to him extremely important and valuable and there could be no doubt that after emptying the buildings of their contents and removing the vessels that were afloat he would destroy all the buildings and the frigate on the ways unless indeed he should launch her which as she was entirely caulked and her launching ways principally prepared he could with the force he would command from the approaching squadron accomplish in three or four days. It was agreed by the President and Secretary of War that every thing that could be useful or valuable to the enemy should be destroyed in the event of his repulsing our army and entering the City. The Secretary at War proceeded to join the army at Bladensburg and since that time after the President & Secretary of State followed. I then went to the marine Barracks to give some necessary directions there and to Captain Creighton relative to the exploding of the Bridge in the event of the enemy getting possession of the City in order to prevent his passage over the eastern branch for the purpose of attacking fort Warburton<sup>5</sup> in the rear. From the Marine barracks I went to the Navy yard accompanied by Mr. Edward Duval one of the clerks in the Navy Depmt. and in front of Commodore Tingey's house in the presence of Mr. Duval at about three o'clock gave him the following verbal order

"you will make the necessary preparations for destroying the public shipping and all the Naval and Military Stores and provisions at the Navy yard including every thing that may be valuable and useful to the enemy, and after removing to a place of Safety all that may be found practicable of the most valuable articles, and having satisfactorily ascertained that the enemy has driven our army and entered the City you will Set fire to the trains and retire in your Gig."

I left the Navy yard at about half past three O'clock accompanied by Mr. Duval and not long after learned that our army was rapidly retreating and that of the enemy advancing rapidly. We proceeded to Georgetown where I met my family and that of the Presidents at the house of Charles Carrol Esqr. of Bellevue and received a message from the President requesting that I would join him at Foxalls Works.<sup>6</sup> at about 5 O'clock I set out in company with the family of the President, of Mr. Carrols and my own with Mr. Duval and proceeded through Georgetown to join the President but found he had crossed at masons ferry.

AD, PHi, Uselma Clark Smith Collection, William Jones Papers.

1. The archivists at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania dated this document 24 August 1814; the docketing in Jones's hand reads: "Mem. of the Occurrences on the 24th. August 1814 when the enemy entered and conflagrated the Capitol."

2. See Jones to Creighton, 24 Aug. 1814, p. 206.

3. In 1814, President Madison appointed George W. Campbell secretary of the treasury and Richard Rush attorney general.

4. Frigate *Columbia*, sloop of war *Argus*, schooner *Lynx*.

5. Fort Warburton, the precursor of Fort Washington, was built in 1808 in Prince George's County, Maryland, where Piscataway Creek joins the Potomac River. Located opposite Mount Vernon, Virginia, and about twelve miles from Washington, the fort was known under both names during this period.

6. Located just west of Georgetown was Henry Foxall's foundry.

## COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Navy Yard Washn 27th. Augst 1814

Sir

After receiving your orders of 24th directing the public Shipping, Stores &c: at this Establishment, to be destroy'd, in case of the success of the enemy, over our Army—no time was lost, in making the necessary arrangements, for firing the whole, and preparing boats for departing from the yard, as you had suggested.

About 4 PM: I rece'd a message by an officer from the Secretary of War—with information that, he "could protect me no longer"— Soon after this, I was inform'd that the conflagration of the Eastern branch bridge had commenc'd—and, in a few minutes the explosion announc'd the blowing up of that part, near the "draw," as had been arranged in the morning.

It had been promulgated, as much as in my power, among the inhabitants of the vicinity; the intended fate of the yard, in order that, they might take every possible precaution for the safety of themselves, families and property.

Immediately, several individuals came in succession, endeavoring to prevail on me to deviate from my instructions—which they were invariably inform'd





Thomas Tingey

was unavailing unless they could bring me your instructions in writing, countermanding those previously given.

A deputation also of the most respectable women, came on the same errand—when I found myself painfully necessitated to inform them, that, any farther importunities would cause the matches to be instantly applied to the trains—with assurance however that, if left at peace; I would delay the execution of the orders, as long as I could feel the least shadow of justification. Captain Creighton's arrival at the yard, with the men who had been with him at the bridge (probably about 5 o'clock) would have justified me in instant operation—but he also, was strenuous in the desire to obviate the intended destruction—and volunteer'd to ride out, and gain me positive information, as to the position of the enemy—under the hope that, our Army might have rallied and repulsed them— I was myself indeed, desirous of delay, for the reason that, the wind was then blowing fresh from the SSW, which would most probably, have caused the destruction of all the private property, north and east of the yard, in it's neighbourhood, when, I was of opinion that, the close of the evening would bring with it a calm, in which happily, we were not disappointed— Other gentlemen well mounted, volunteer'd as Captn. Creighton had done, to go out and bring me positive intelligence of the enemy's situation, if possible to obtain it.

The evening came, and I waited with much anxiety the return of Captn. C—, having almost ~~perpetual~~ continual<sup>1</sup> information that, the enemy were in the neighbourhood of the Marine barracks—at the Capitol hill—and that their "advance" was near George town— I therefore determined to wait only until  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 8 o'clock, to commence the execution of my orders—becoming apprehensive that Captn. C— had, from his long stay, fallen into the hands of the enemy.

During this delay, I ordered a few Marines, and other persons who were then near me, to go off in one of the small galleys, which was done and she is saved. Colnl. Wharton had been furnish'd with a light boat, with which he left the yard, probably between 7 & 8 o'clock.

At 20 minutes past 8 Captn. Creighton return'd, he was still extremely averse to the destruction of the property, but having inform'd him that your orders to me were imperative; the proper disposition of the boats being made, the matches were applied, and in a few moments the whole was in a state of irretrievable conflagration.

When about leaving the wharf, I observed the fire had also commenc'd at the works at Greenleafs point, and in the way out of the branch, we observed the Capitol on fire. It had been my intention, not to leave the vicinity of the yard with my boat, during the night, but having Captn. Creighton, and other gentlemen with me, she was too much encumbered and overladen, to render that determination proper. We therefore proceeded to Alexandria, in the vicinity of which I rested till the morning of the 25th. when, having also refreshed the Gigs crew, we left Alexandria at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 7 o'clock, and proceeded again up to the yard, where I landed unmolested about a  $\frac{1}{4}$  before nine

The Schooner *Lynx* had laid along-side the burning wharf, still unhurt—hoping therefore to save her, we hauled her to the quarter of the hulk of the *New York*, which had also escaped the ravages of the flames

The detail issuing store, of the Navy store keeper,<sup>2</sup> had remain'd safe from the fire during the night; which the Enemy (being in force in the yard) about 8 o'clock set fire to, and it was speedily consumed. It appear'd that they had left

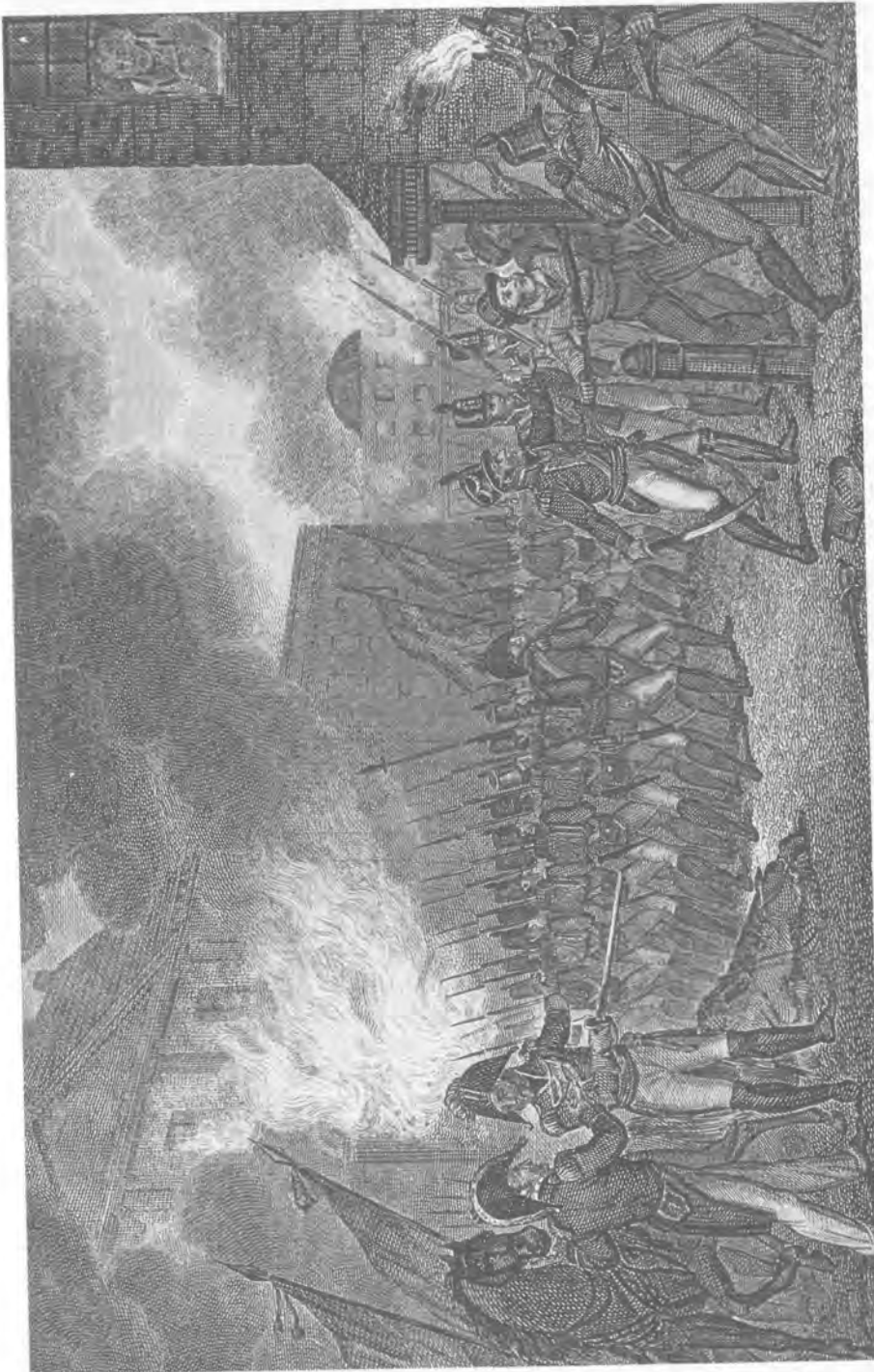
the yard, about ½ a hour when we arrived. I found my dwelling house, and that of Lieutnt. Haraden untouch'd by fire—but some of the people of the neighbourhood had commenc'd plundering them— therefore, hastily collecting a few persons known to me, I got some of my most valuable materials moved to neighbours houses, out of the yard, who tender'd me their offers to receive them, the enemy's officers having declared private property sacred— Could I have stayed another hour, I had probably saved all my furniture and stores—but being advised by some friends that I was not safe, they believng that, the Admiral<sup>3</sup> was by that time, or would very speedily, be inform'd of my being in the yard, he having expres'd an anxious desire to make me captive—but had said that the Officers dwellings in the yard, should not be destroy'd—I therefore again embark'd in the gig—taking along out of the Branch, one of the new launches, which lay safe, although along-side of a floating-stage envelop'd in flames— I had no sooner gone, than such a scene of devastation and plunder took place in the houses (by the people of the neighbourhood) as is disgraceful to relate—not a moveable article from the cellars to the garrets has been left us—and even some of the fixtures, and the locks off the doors, have been shamefully pillaged; some of the perpetrators however have been made known to me.

From the number and movements of the enemy, it would have appear'd rash temerity, to have attempted returning again that day—though my inclination strongly urged it, therefore reconnoitring their motions, as well as could be effected at a convenient distance in the Gig until evening, I again proceeded to Alexandria for the night. Yester'morn the 26th. it was impossible to form (from the various and contradictory reports at Alexandria) any sort of probable conjecture, either of the proceedings & situation of our Army—or that of the Enemy. Determining therefore to have a positive knowledge of some part thereof, from ocular demonstration, I again embark'd in the gig, proceeding with due caution to the yard—where I learned with chagrin the devastation and pillage before mentioned—and found also to my surprize that the old Gunboat,<sup>4</sup> which had been loaded with provisions, and had grounded in endeavoring to get out of the Branch, on the evening of the 24th. was nearly discharged of her cargo, by a number of our people, without connexion with each other.

Having landed in the yard, I soon ascertain'd that the Enemy had left the city—excepting only a serjeants guard, for the security of the sick and wounded. Finding it impracticable to stop the scene of plunder that had commenc'd, I determin'd instantly on repossessing the yard, with all the force at my command—repairing therefore immediately to Alexandria; lieutnt. Haraden, the ordinary men and the few marines there, were ordered directly up, following myself, and got full possession again at evening.

I am now collecting the scattered purloined provisions ready for your orders, presuming they will now become very scarce indeed— the quantity saved you shall be inform'd when known to me

The *Lynx* is safe, except her foremast being carried away in the storm of the 25th. about 4 PM— We have also another of the Gunboats with about 100 barrels of powder; and one of the large yard-cutters, nearly full with the filled cylinders, for our different guns previously mounted—the powder of those however is probably much wetted by the storm. I would most willingly have an interview with you, but deem it improper to leave my station without some justifiable



“Capture of the City of Washington”



cause, or in pursuance of your instructions—under which I am ready to proceed wherever my services may be thought useful. I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Your Obdt. Servt.

Tho: Tingey

P S: Sunday morn'g 28th. After terminating the foregoing last even'g I had scarcely laid down my pen, when a smart cannonading commenc'd at, or from fort Washington, which continued from heavy Cannon till after 7 o'clock, during which it appear'd as if two or three severe explosions had taken place. No doubt that it was between the enemy's frigates and the fort—but as to the result I am entirely without information<sup>5</sup>—nor have I at command the means of obtaining it, the wind blowing too fresh up the river, for a light boat to make any progress down.

I shall hire sufficient hands, as soon as practicable and collect all the materials, unhurt by the fire—which shall be suitably deposited and protected

T:T:

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 138 (M125, Roll No. 38).

1. *Continual* is written, in probably a different hand, above the struck out word *perpetual*.

2. Buller Cocke.

3. Rear Admiral George Cockburn.

4. Gunboat No. 140.

5. For the British account of the bombardment, see Gordon to Cochrane, 9 Sept. 1814, pp. 238–42.

REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N., TO  
VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N.

Copy

His Majesty's Sloop *Manly* off  
Nottingham Patuxent 27 August 1814

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that agreeably to the Intentions I notified to you in my Letter of the 22nd. Instant,<sup>1</sup> I proceeded by Land on the Morning of the 23rd. to Upper Marlborough, to meet and confer with Major General Ross as to our further operations against the Enemy, and we were not long in agreeing on the propriety of making an immediate attempt on the City of Washington.

In Conformity therefore with the wishes of the General, I instantly sent orders for our Marine and Naval Forces at Pig Point, to be forthwith moved over to Mount Calvert, and for the Marines, Marine Artillery, and a Proportion of the Seamen to be there landed and with the utmost possible expedition to join the Army, which I also most readily agreed to accompany.

The Major General then made his Dispositions, and arranged that Captain Robyns with the Marines of the Ships should retain possession of Upper Marlborough, and that the Marine Artillery and Seamen should follow the Army to the Ground it was to occupy for the Night. The Army then moved on, and bivouacked before dark about five Miles nearer Washington.

In the night Captain Palmer of the *Hebrus*, and Captain Money of the *Trave*, joined us with the Seamen, and with the Marine artillery under Captain Harri-

son— Captain Wainwright of the *Tonnant* had accompanied me the day before, as had also Lieutenant James Scott (acting 1st. Lieutenant) of the *Albion*.

At Daylight the morning of the 24th. the Major General again put the Army in Motion directing his March upon Bladensburg, on reaching which place, with the advanced Brigade, the Enemy was discovered drawn up in Force on a rising Ground beyond the Town, and by the Fire he soon opened on us as we entered the Place, gave us to understand he was well protected with Artillery; General Ross however did not hesitate in immediately advancing to attack him, although our Troops were almost exhausted with the Fatigue of the March they had just made, and but a small proportion of our little Army had yet got up; this dashing Measure was however, I am happy to add, crowned with the Success it merited, for in Spite of the galling Fire of the Enemy our Troops advanced steadily on both his Flanks and in his Front, and as soon as they arrived on even ground with him he fled in every direction, leaving behind him Ten Pieces of Cannon and a considerable Number of killed and wounded, amongst the latter Commodore Barney and Several other Officers. Some other Prisoners were also taken, tho' not many, owing to the Swiftness with which the Enemy went off, and the Fatigues our Army had previously undergone.

It would Sir be deemed presumption in me to attempt to give you particular details respecting the nature of this Battle, I shall therefore only remark generally that the Enemy, Eight thousand Strong,<sup>2</sup> on Ground he had chosen as best adapted for him to defend, where he had had time to erect his Batteries and concert all his measures, was dislodged as Soon as reached, and a Victory gained over him by a Division of the British Army not amounting to more than Fifteen hundred Men headed by our Gallant General whose brilliant achievement of this day it is beyond my Power to do justice to, and indeed no possible Comment could enhance.

The Seamen with the Guns were to their great mortification with the Rear Division during this Short but decisive action, those however attached to the Rocket Brigade were in the Battle, and I remarked with much pleasure the precision with which the Rockets were thrown by them under the Direction of 1st. Lieutenant Lawrence of the Marine artillery— Mr. Jeremh. McDaniel Masters Mate of *Tonnant* a very fine young man who has passed and who was attached to this party being Severely wounded, I beg permission to recommend him to your favorable Consideration— The Company of Marines I have on so many occasions had cause to mention to you, Commanded by 1st. Lieutenant Stephens, was also in the action, as were the Colonial Marines under the Temporary Command of Captain Reed of the 6th. West India Regiment, (these Companies being attached to the Light Brigade), and they respectively behaved with their accustomed Zeal and Bravery— None other of the Naval Department were fortunate enough to arrive up in Time to take their share in this Battle, excepting Captain Palmer of the *Hebrus*, with his Aid-de-Camp Mr. Arthur Wakefield Midshipman of that Ship, and Lieutenant James Scott 1st. of the *Albion*, who acted as my aid-de-Camp and remained with me during the whole Time.

The Contest being Completely ended and the Enemy having retired from the Field, the General gave the Army about two hours rest, when he again moved forward on Washington; It was however dark before we reached that City, and on the General, myself and some officers advancing a short way past the first Houses of the Town without being accompanied by the Troops, the Enemy opened upon us a heavy fire of Musquetry from the Capitol and two other



houses,<sup>3</sup> these were therefore almost immediately Stormed by our People, taken possession of, and set on fire, after which the Town submitted without further resistance.

The Enemy himself on our entering the Town set Fire to the Navy Yard, (filled with Naval Stores) a Frigate<sup>4</sup> of the largest class almost ready for Launching, and a Sloop of War<sup>5</sup> laying off it, as he also did to the Fort<sup>6</sup> which protected the Sea approach to Washington.

On taking Possession of the City we also set fire to the Presidents Palace, the Treasury, and the War Office, and in the morning Captain Wainwright went with a Party to see that the Destruction in the Navy Yard was Complete, when he destroyed whatever Stores and Buildings had escaped the Flames of the preceding Night— A large quantity of Ammunition and ordnance Stores were likewise destroyed by us in the Arsenal,<sup>7</sup> as were about Two hundred pieces of Artillery of different Calibres, as well as a Vast quantity of small Arms. Two Rope Walks<sup>8</sup> of a very extensive Nature, full of Tar, Rope &c. Situated at a considerable distance from the Yard were likewise set Fire to and consumed, in short Sir I do not believe a Vestage of Public Property, or a Store of any kind which could be converted to the use of the Government, escaped Destruction; the Bridges across the Eastern Branch and the Potowmac were likewise destroyed.

This general Devastation being completed during the day of the 25th. we marched again at Nine that night on our Return by Bladensburg to upper Marlborough. We arrived yesterday Evening at the latter without molestation of any sort, indeed without a Single Musket having been fired, and this Morning we moved on to this place where I have found His Majesty's Sloop *Manly*, the Tenders, and the Boats, and I have hoisted my Flag pro tempore in the former— The Troops will probably march to morrow or the next day at farthest to Benedict for re-embarkation, and this Flotilla will of course join you at the same time.

In closing Sir my Statement to you of the Arduous and highly important operations of this last week, I have a most pleasing duty to perform in assuring You of the good conduct of the Officers and Men who have been Serving under me— I have been particularly indebted whilst on this Service to Captain Wainwright of the *Tonnant* for the assistance he has invariably afforded me, and to Captains Palmer and Money for their Exertions during the March to and from Washington—

To Captain Nourse who has Commanded the Flotilla during my absence, my acknowledgements are also most justly due, as well as to Captains Sullivan, Badcock, Somerville, Ramsay and Bruce who have acted in it under him.

Lieutenant James Scott now 1st. Lieutenant of the *Albion* has on this occasion Rendered me essential Services, and as I have had reason so often of late to mention to you the Gallant and Meritorious Conduct of this Officer, I trust you will permit me to seize this opportunity of recommending him particularly to your favorable Notice and Consideration.

Captain Robyns (the Senior Officer of Marines with the Fleet) who has had during these operations the Marines of the Ships united under his Orders, has executed ably and zealously the Several Services with which he has been entrusted, and is entitled to my best acknowledgements accordingly, as is also Captain Harrison of the Marine Artillery who with the Officers and Men attached to him accompanied the Army to and from Washington

Mr. Dobie Surgeon of the *Melpomene* volunteered his professional Services on this occasion and rendered much assistance to the wounded on the Field of Battle, as well as to many of the Men taken ill on the line of March.

One Colonial Marine killed, One Master's Mate, Two Serjeants and Three Colonial Marines wounded, are the Casualties sustained by the Naval Department— A general List of the Killed and wounded of the whole Army will of course accompany the Reports of the Major General.<sup>9</sup> I have the Honor to be Sir Your very faithful and Most Obedt. humble Servant

(signed) G: Cockburn Rear Admiral.

Two long Six pounder Guns intended for a Battery at Nottingham were taken off and put on board the *Brune* and one taken at Upper Marlborough was destroyed.

Copy, UklPR, Adm. 1/506, fols. 606–13. This letter was enclosed in Cochrane to Croker, 2 Sept. 1814, pp. 226–28.

1. See pp. 195–97.

2. Brigadier General Winder, who commanded the American forces at Bladensburg, reported about 5,000 troops at his disposal. Winder to Armstrong, 27 Aug. 1814, *ASP: Military Affairs*, Vol. 1, p. 548.

3. One of the houses was owned by Robert Sewall.

4. *Columbia*.

5. *Argus*.

6. There was a battery protecting the arsenal at Greenleaf's Point.

7. Greenleaf's Point.

8. The British destroyed three ropewalks owned respectively by Tench Ringgold, John Chalmers, and (Daniel) Renner & (Nathaniel K.) Heath.

9. The casualty list enclosed in Ross to Bathurst, 30 August 1814 (see succeeding letter) is not reproduced here. The list can be found in UklPR, WO 1/141, pp. 43–50. Ross reported sixty-four killed, one hundred eighty-five wounded, and none missing.

MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT ROSS, BRITISH ARMY, TO  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR AND THE COLONIES EARL BATHURST

No. 1. *Tonnant* in the Patuxent 30th August 1814.

My Lord,

I have the honour to Communicate to your Lordship that on the night of the 24th Instant after Defeating the Army of the United States on that day the Troops under my Command entered and took possession of the City of Washington.—

In compliance with Your Lordships Instructions to attract the attention of the Government of the United States and to cause a Diversion in favour of the Army in Canada it was determined between Sir Alexr. Cochrane and myself to disembark the Army at the Village of Benedict on the Right Bank of the Patuxent with the intention of co-operating with Rear Admiral Cockburn in an Attack upon a Flotilla of the Enemy's Gun Boats under the Command of Commodore Barney. On the 20th. Instant the Army commenced its March having landed the

previous day without opposition, on the 21st it reached Nottingham and on the 22nd. moved on to Upper Marlborough a few Miles distant from Pig Point on the Patuxent where Admiral Cockburn fell in with and defeated the Flotilla taking and destroying the whole. Having advanced to within Sixteen Miles of Washington and ascertaining the Force of the Enemy to be such as might authorize an attempt at carrying his Capital I determined to make it and accordingly put the Troops in Movement on the Evening of the 23rd. A Corps of about Twelve hundred Men appeared to oppose us but retired after firing a few Shots.— On the 24th. the Troops resumed their March and reached Bladensberg a Village situated on the Left Bank of the Eastern Branch of the Potowmack about five Miles from Washington

On the opposite side of that River the Enemy was discovered strongly posted on very Commanding Heights formed in two Lines his Advance occupying a fortified House which with Artillery covered the Bridge over the Eastern Branch across which the British Troops had to pass. A Broad and streight Road leading from the Bridge to Washington ran through the Enemy's Position which was carefully defended by Artillery and Riflemen.—

The Disposition for the attack being made it was commenced with so much Impetuosity by the Light Brigade consisting of the 85th Light Infantry and the Light Infantry Companies of the Army under the Command of Colonel Thornton, that the Fortified House was shortly carried the Enemy retiring to the Higher Grounds.—

In support of the Light Brigade I ordered up a Brigade under the Command of Colonel Brooke who with the 44th. Regiment attacked the Enemy's Left, the 4th. Regiment pressing his Right with such effect as to cause him to abandon his Guns:— His First Line giving way was driven on the Second which yielding to the irresistible attack of the Bayonet and the well directed Discharge of Rockets got into confusion and fled leaving the British Masters of the Field. The rapid flight of the Enemy and his knowledge of the Country precluded the possibility of many Prisoners being taken more particularly as the Troops had during the Day undergone considerable fatigue.—

The Enemy's Army amounting to 8. or 9,000 Men with 3 or 400 Cavalry was under the Command of General Winder being formed of Troops drawn from Baltimore and Pensilvania.— His Artillery, ten pieces of which fell into our Hands was Commanded by Commodore Barney who was wounded and taken Prisoner. The Artillery I directed to be destroyed.—

Having Halted the Army for a short time I determined to March upon Washington and reached that City at 8. O'Clock that Night.— Judging it of consequence to complete the Destruction of the Public Buildings with the least possible delay so that the Army might retire without Loss of time the following Building were set Fire to and consumed—the Capital including the Senate House and House of Representation, the Arsenal the Dock Yard, Treasury, War Office, Presidents Palace, Rope Walk and the Great Bridge across the Potowmack, in the Dock Yard a Frigate<sup>1</sup> nearly ready to be Launched and a Sloop of War<sup>2</sup> were consumed.— The two B[r]idges leading to Washington over the Eastern Branch had been destroyed by the Enemy who apprehended an Attack from that Quarter. The Object of the Expedition being accomplished I determined before any greater Force of the Enemy could be assembled to withdraw the Troops and accordingly commenced retiring on the Night of the 25th; on

the evening of the 29th. we reached Benedict and re-embarked the following day.—

In the performance of the operations I have detailed it is with the utmost satisfaction I observe to Your Lordship that Cheerfulness in undergoing fatigue and anxiety for the Accomplishment of the Object were conspicuous in all Ranks.—

To Sir Alexander Cochrane my Thanks are due for his ready Compliance with every wish connected with the welfare of the Troops and the Success of the Expedition.—

To Rear Admiral Cockburn who suggested the attack upon Washington and who accompanied the Army I confess the greatest obligation for his Cordial co-operation and advice

Colonel Thornton who led the attack is entitled to every Praise for the noble Example he set which was so well followed by Lieut. Colonel Wood and the 85th. Light Infantry and by Major Jones of the 4th. Foot with the Light Companies attached to the Light Brigade.— I have to express my approbation of the spirited conduct of Colonel Brooke and of his Brigade, the 44th. Regiment which he led distinguished itself under the Command of Lieut. Colonel Mullens, the Gallantry of the 4th. Foot under the Command of Major Faunce being equally conspicuous.— The exertions of Captain Mitche[ll] of the Royal Artilley in bringing the guns into Action were unremitting to him and to the Detachment under his Command including Captain Deacons Rocket Brigade and the Marine Rocket Corps I feel every obligation.— Serious disadvantage being experienced from the want of Cavalry Capt. Lempriere of the Royal Artillery mounted a small Detachment of the Artillery Drivers which proved of great utility.—

The assistance afforded by Captain Blanchard of the Royal Engineers in the Duties of his Department was of great advantage. To the zealous exertions of Captains Wainwright, Palmer and Money of the Royal Navy and to those of the Officers and Seamen who landed with them the Service is highly indebted, the latter Captain Money had charge of the Seamen attached to the Marine Artillery.— To Captain McDougall of the 85th. Foot who acted as my Aid de Camp in consequence of the Indisposition of my Aide de Camp Captain Falls, and to the Officers of my Staff I feel much indebted.—

I must beg leave to call your Lordships attention to the zeal and indefatigable exertions of Lieut. Evans Acting Depy. Qr. Master General. The Intelligence displayed by that Officer in circumstances of considerable difficulty induces me to hope he will meet with some distinguished Mark of approbation.— I have reason to be satisfied with the Arrangements of Ast. Comy. Genl. Lawrence.—

An Attack upon an Enemy so strongly posted could not be effected without Loss. I have to lament that the wounds received by Colonel Thornton and the other Officers and Soldiers left at Bladensberg were such as prevented their removal.— As many of the wounded as could be brought off were removed the others being left with Medical care and attendants;— The arrangements made by Staff Surgeon Baxter for their Accomodation have been as satisfactory as circumstances would admit of.— The Agent for British Prisoners of War<sup>3</sup> very fortunately residing at Bladensberg I have recommended the wounded Officers and Men to his particular attention and trust to his being able to effect their Exchange when sufficiently recovered.—



Captain Smith Asst. Adjutant General to the Troops who will have the honour to deliver this Dispatch I beg leave to recommend to Your Lordships Protection as an Officer of much Merit and great Promise and capable of affording any farther information that may be required

Sanguine in hoping for the approbation of His Royal Highness the Prince Regent and of His Majesty's Government as to the conduct of the Troops under my Command.— I have the honor to be My Lord Your Lordships most Obedient humble Servant

Rob<sup>l</sup>. Ross Major Genl

LS, UKLPR, WO 1/141, pp. 31–38. See pp. 43–50 for the British returns of killed, wounded, and missing at Bladensburg and a statement of the ordnance, ammunition, and stores captured from the Americans from 19 to 25 August 1814. For a summary of the casualties, see note 9, p. 223 above.

1. *Columbia*.
2. *Argus*.
3. Thomas Barclay.

VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N., TO  
FIRST SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

No. 98

*Tonnant*, in the Patuxent, 2nd. September 1814.

Sir,

I have the honor to acquaint you, for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, of the proceedings of His Majestys combined Sea and Land forces since my arrival with the Fleet within the Capes of Virginia, and I beg leave to offer my congratulations to their Lordships upon the successful termination of an Expedition in which the whole of the Enemy's Flotilla under Commodore Barney has been captured or destroyed—his Army, tho' greatly superior in number and strongly posted with Cannon, defeated at Bladensburg—the City of Washington taken—the Capitol with all the public buildings, Military Arsenals, Dock Yard and the rest of their Naval Establishment, together with a vast quantity of Naval and Military Stores, a Frigate of the largest Class,<sup>1</sup> ready to launch, and a Sloop of War afloat,<sup>2</sup> either blown up or reduced to Ashes.

Such a series of Successes in the centre of an Enemy's Country, surrounded by a numerous population, could not be acquired without loss and we have to lament the fall of some valuable Officers and Men; but considering the difficulties the Forces had to contend with, the extreme heat of the Climate and their coming into Action at the end of a long march, our Casualties are astonishingly few.

My Letter No. 77 of the 11th. August<sup>3</sup> will have acquainted their Lordships of my waiting in the Chesapeake for the arrival of Rear Admiral Malcolm with the Expedition from Bermuda.

The Rear Admiral joined me on the 17th. and as I had gained information from Rear Admiral Cockburn, whom I found in the Potowmac, that Commodore Barney with the Baltimore Flotilla had taken shelter, at the head of the Patuxent, that afforded a pretext for ascending that River to attack him near its source, above Pig point, while the ultimate destination of the combined Force

was Washington, should it be found that the attempt might be made with any prospect of Success. To give their Lordships a more correct idea of the plan of attack I send a Sketch of the Country upon which the movements of the Army and Navy are portrayed.<sup>4</sup> By it their Lordships will observe that the best approach to Washington is by Port Tobacco upon the Potowmac and Benedict upon the Patuxent, from both of which are direct and good Roads to that City, and their distances nearly alike: the Roads from Benedict divide about five Miles inland—the one by Piscataway and Bladensburg, the other following the course of the River although at some distance from it, owing to the Creeks that run up the Country: this last passes through the Towns of Nottingham and Marlborough to Bladensburg, at which Town the River called the Eastern branch that bounds Washington to the eastward is fordable and the distance about five Miles. There are two Bridges over this River at the City, but it was not to be expected that the Enemy would leave them accessible to an invading Army.

Previously to my entering the Patuxent I detached Captain Gordon of His Majesty's Ship *Seahorse*, with that Ship and the Ships and Bombs named in the Margin,<sup>5</sup> up the Potowmac, to bombard Fort Washington (which is situated on the left bank of that River about ten or twelve miles below the City) with a view of destroying that Fort and opening a free communication above, as well as to cover the retreat of the Army should its return by the Bladensburg Road be found too hazardous from the accession of Strength the Enemy might obtain from Baltimore. It was also reasonable to expect that the Militia from the Country to the northward and westward would flock in, so soon as it should be known that their Capital was threatened.

Captain Sir Peter Parker in the *Menelaus* with some small Vessels was sent up the Chesapeake above Baltimore to divert the attention of the Enemy in that quarter<sup>6</sup> and I proceeded with the remainder of the Naval force and the Troops up this River and landed the Army upon the 19th. and 20th. at Benedict.

So soon as the necessary Provisions and Stores could be assembled and arranged Major General Ross with his Army moved on towards Nottingham while our Flotilla, consisting of the armed Launches, Pinnaces, Barges and other Boats of the Fleet, under the command of Rear Admiral Cockburn passed up the River: being instructed to keep upon the right flank of the Army, for the double purpose of supplying it with Provisions and, if necessary, to pass it over to the left bank of the River into Calvert County, which secured a safe retreat to the Ships should it be judged necessary.

The Army reached Nottingham upon the 21st. and on the following day arrived at Marlborough; the Flotilla continued advancing towards the Station of Commodore Barney, about three Miles above Pig point, who, altho' much superior in Force to that sent against him, did not wait an attack, but at the appearance of our Boats set fire to his Flotilla, and the whole of his Vessels, excepting one, were blown up.

For the particulars of this well executed Service I must refer their Lordships to Rear Admiral Cockburn's Report No. 1,<sup>7</sup> who, on the same Evening conveyed to me an account of his success and intimation from Major General Ross of his intention to proceed to the City of Washington, considering, from the information he had received, that it might be assailed if done with alacrity; and in consequence had determined to march that Evening upon Bladensburg. The remaining Boats of the Fleet were immediately employed in conveying up the River Supplies of Provisions for the Forces upon their return to Nottingham, agreeably to an arrangement made by the Rear Admiral, who proceeded on in company with the Army.



The Report No. 2 of Rear Admiral Cockburn<sup>8</sup> will inform their Lordships of the brilliant successes of the Forces after their departure from Marlborough, where they returned upon the 26th, and having reached Benedict upon the 29th., the Expedition was reembarked in good order.

On combined Services, such as we have been engaged in, it gives me the greatest pleasure to find myself united with so able and experienced an Officer as Major General Ross, in whom are blended those qualities so essential to promote success where co-operation between the two Services becomes necessary; and I have much satisfaction in noticing the unanimity that prevailed between the Army and Navy as I have also in stating to their Lordships that Major General Ross has expressed his full approbation of the conduct of the Officers, Seamen and Marines acting with the Army.

I have before had occasion to speak of the unremitting zeal and exertions of Rear Admiral Cockburn during the time he commanded in the Chesapeake under my Orders—the interest and ability which he has manifested throughout this late arduous Service justly entitle him to my best thanks, and to the acknowledgements of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

Rear Admiral Malcolm upon every occasion and particularly in his arrangement for the speedy re-embarkation of the Troops rendered me essential assistance, and to him as well as to Rear Admiral Codrington, Captain of the Fleet, I am indebted, for the alacrity and order with which the laborious duties in the conveying of Supplies to the Army were conducted.

For the conduct of the Captains and Officers of the Squadron employed in the Flotilla and with the Army I must beg leave to refer their Lordships to the Reports of Rear Admiral Cockburn, and to call their favorable consideration to those whom the Rear Admiral has had occasion to particularly notice. While employed immediately under my eye, I had every reason to be perfectly satisfied with their zealous emulation, as well as that of every Seaman and Marine, to promote the Service in which they were engaged.

Captain Wainwright of His Majesty's Ship *Tonnant* will have the honor to deliver this Dispatch to you and as he was actively employed both with the Flotilla and the Army, in the whole of their proceedings, I beg leave to refer their Lordships to him for any farther particulars.

I have not yet received any Returns from the Ships employed in the Potomac, the winds having been unfavorable to their coming down; but by the information I gain from the Country people—they have comple[tely] succeeded in the capture and destruction of Fort Washington, which has been blown up. I have the honor to be, Sir, Your most obedient humble Servant

Alex<sup>r</sup> Cochrane  
Vice Admiral and Commander in Chief

LS, UKLPR, Adm. 1/506, fols. 598–601.

1. *Columbia*.

2. *Argus*.

3. See pp. 189–90.

4. This sketch is not filed with this letter. A sketch of Major General Ross's march on Washington is reproduced in Shomette, *Flotilla*, p. 182.

5. "*Euryalus Devastation Aetna Meteor Manly Erebus*." Cochrane was misinformed about *Manly*; it stayed with the squadron in the Patuxent. For documents relating to Gordon's diversion in the Potomac, see pp. 237–58.

6. For more on Parker's feints in the upper Chesapeake, see pp. 231–37.

7. Cockburn to Cochrane, 22 Aug. 1814, pp. 195–97.

8. Cockburn to Cochrane, 27 Aug. 1814, pp. 220–23.

## British Treatment of Noncombatants

*Although cases of depredations against the American population by the invading British forces, from the time of their landing at Benedict on 19 August to their reembarkation on 30 August, appear in the record, the following documents outline the official British policy regarding their victualing practices. The British established a list of market prices for livestock and paid for the items that they took, while punishing looters. Rear Admiral Edward Codrington, as captain of the fleet, provisioned the vessels and maintained discipline.*

REAR ADMIRAL EDWARD CODRINGTON, R.N., TO RESPECTIVE CAPTAINS

Genl. Memo.

*Iphigenia* 22nd August 1814

The Officers of the different Ships and Vessels in the Patuxent may purchase Stock of any of the Inhabitants who remain on their property but they are not to give more than the prices current at Baltimore and other Towns which Admiral Cockburn ascertained to be as underneath.

Oxen	—————10	or at most 12 Dollars
Sheep	————— 2	————— "
Calf	————— 4	————— "
Yearling	————— 5	————— "
Ducks	————— 1/10	————— "
Fowls	————— 1	Shilling
Geese	————— 1/2	————— "

When poultry or other Stock is taken from any uninhabited House an Account is to be rendered of it and the above Sums paid into the general prize Stock of the Fleet. Great caution is to be observed in communication with the shore for the above purpose and the people accompanying the Officer so employed must be Armed.

(Signed) E. Codrington Captain of the Fleet

LB, UKLNM, Papers of Sir Edward Codrington, COD/6/4.

REAR ADMIRAL EDWARD CODRINGTON, R.N., TO RESPECTIVE CAPTAINS

Memo.

*Iphigenia* Patuxent 24th Aug./14

It appears that the prices pointed out by the Genl. Memo. are in respect to the better sort of stock inferior to the price usually given by the Natives of the River Patuxent to one another, the following prices are therefore to be substituted.

Sheep of 40 to 60 lbs	—————	\$ 3	under 40 lbs 2 Dollars
Calves	—————	5	————— "
Common	—————	2 1/2 to 3	————— "

Bullocks of 400 lbs broke ———	22½ or 5 dollars pr Cwt
Unbroke —————	20 ————— Dollars
Geese and Turkeys —————	½ ————— "
Ducks and Fowls —————	¼ ————— "
Chickins —————	1½ pr dozen ————— "

The above prices with a view to prevent imposition.— But it is the object of the Commander in Chief to do fair justice and to give due encouragement to such inhabitants as remain on their property & have shewn no disposition to act hostile towards us.— Officers purchasing stock are therefore to be guided by this principle, and where stock already received has not been paid for according to this proportion the proprietors are to receive a satisfactory remuneration.

(Signed) E. Codrington Captain of the Fleet

LB, UklNMM, Papers of Sir Edward Codrington, COD/6/4.

REAR ADMIRAL EDWARD CODRINGTON, R.N., TO RESPECTIVE CAPTAINS

Genl. Memo. *Iphigenia* Patuxent 25th. Augt./14

Great outrages having been committed upon the Houses and property of Inhabitants in this Neighbourhood who have remained peaceably in their Houses by persons belonging to the Fleet, unaccompanied by any Officer to restrain and regulate their conduct.— It is the direction of the Commander in Chief that no Stewards or Servants be permitted to go onshore under the pretence of procuring Stock without being accompanied by a Midshipman or some other Officer.— And as a warning to others the following order<sup>1</sup> for the punishment of persons guilty of Robbery in a House near Benedict is to be read to the Crews of the respective Ships and Vessels in the River Patuxent/

(Signed) E. Codrington Captain of the Fleet

LB, UklNMM, Papers of Sir Edward Codrington, COD/6/4.

1. See the following memorandum.

VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N., TO RESPECTIVE CAPTAINS

Memo. *Iphigenia* Patuxent 25th. Augt. 1814

The Persons named in the Margin<sup>1</sup> having been found guilty of Robbery on shore, and as the Service will not admit of my immediately assembling a Court Martial for their Trial,— in order that the Inhabitants may be assured that their property will be protected from indiscriminate plunder.

You are to cause the Persons to be taken onshore to the Village of Benedict and there, in the presence of the Inhabitant whose House they robbed cause the Captains-Steward to receive in the usual manner four Dozen Lashes, and

the Gun Room Steward three dozen Lashes making the Boys who accompanied them and who acted under their directions witness this Punishment that they may be deterred from aiding such practices in future.— The Surgeon of the *Trave* is to attend to see that no more of this Punishment be inflicted at one period than the Parties can well bear.

(Signed) A. Cochrane Vice Admiral and Commander in Chief

LB, UklNMM, Papers of Sir Edward Codrington, COD/6/4.

1. There are no names written in the margin of the letter book copy.

REAR ADMIRAL EDWARD CODRINGTON, R.N., TO RESPECTIVE CAPTAINS

Genl. Memo./ *Tonnant* 3d September 1814

It has been represented to the Commander in Chief that plunder and Robbery has been committed on shore near Drum point upon even the poorest Inhabitants who have remained quietly at their houses under the faith of their property being respected; and that even women from some of the Transports have been guilty of enormities shocking to humanity.— It is therefore his positive order that no persons beneath the Rank of ~~Flag~~ Field Officers and Captains of the Navy be allowed to go on shore except upon duty or by permission of a Flag Officer or the General— That no watering parties be permitted to go on shore before daylight or to remain there after dark, and that the guard stationed on the Hill to prevent straggling do not permit any persons whatever to go beyond the limits of their station without a pass; which pass the Officer is to countersign that he may know the persons in possession of it.— none of the Women are to be permitted to leave their ships.— A Commander will superintend the watering place for the day to see that order and regularity be observed beginning with the Senior.—

Boats will row guard at Night for the purpose of enforcing obedience to this order—

(Signed) E. Codrington Rear Admiral and Captain of the Fleet

LB, UklNMM, Papers of Sir Edward Codrington, COD/6/4.

## Sir Peter Parker's Feints

*Vice Admiral Cochrane decided on 17 August, at a meeting of the commanding officers of the invasion forces in the Chesapeake Bay, to land the main body of the military units at Benedict. Seeking to confuse the Americans, Cochrane dispersed two diversionary squadrons: One under Captain James Gordon sailed up the Potomac<sup>1</sup> and the other, under Captain Sir Peter Parker, scouted the upper Chesapeake and disrupted communications between Baltimore and Elkton. After probing the defenses at Annapolis and Baltimore, Parker raided coastal areas on the Eastern Shore. Overtly confident after some unopposed incursions, the British were rebuffed by Maryland militiamen at Caulk's Field in*



*Kent County, Maryland. The subsequent reports by the opponents illustrate differing perspectives on force strength and who won.*

1. For more on this expedition, see Gordon to Cochrane, 9 Sept. 1814, pp. 238–42.

CAPTAIN SIR PETER PARKER, R.N., TO  
VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N.

His Majestys Ship *Menelaus*  
off Pools Island in the Chesapeake  
29th. August—1814.—

Sir,

Running down the Eastern shore of Maryland on the 27th: Inst. in His Majestys Ship under my command, I was surprizd to observe the Enemy's Regular Troops and Militia in Motion along the whole coast, and yesterday that he had taken up a strong Position close to a large Depôt of stores; this induced me instantly to push on Shore with the small arm men and Marines, and I have great satisfaction in acquainting you that the result has been the total Defeat of the Enemy's force who were dispersed in every direction, and driven into the Woods, and the capture of the Depôt of Corn, Hemp and Flax to an immense amount, which I immediately ordered to be burnt and the whole was consumed before Dark.—

My acknowledgements are due to Lieutenants Pearce and Warre; Lieutenants Beynon and Poe (of the Royal Marines) and to the Petty Officers, Seamen and Marines employed with me, for their Zeal, Gallantry and steadiness on this occasion.—

Lieutenant Warre being very severely wounded is the only casualty in this affair, and as he is an Officer of particular merit and ability I presume to recommend his Conduct and sufferings to your Consideration.— I have the Honor to be Sir Your most Obedient Humble Servant

Peter Parker. Captain.

List of Officers Wounded.—

Lieutenant William A. Warre shot through both thighs.

Peter Parker. Captn.  
A S Merving. Surgeon.

LS, UKENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2329, fols. 15–16.

CAPTAIN SIR PETER PARKER, R.N., TO  
VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N.

His Majestys Ship *Menelaus* off Pools  
Island in the Chesapeake 30th August 1814

Sir

Since my last report by the Prize Schooner which I dispatched to you on the 18th inst.— I have been continually employed in reconnoitring the Harbours &

coves and Sounding the Bay and Acting for the annoyance of the enemy. From the observations I have been able to make I may with safety give it as my opinion that Annapolis would face a very easy conquest (Two of my Officers walked round Fort Madison<sup>1</sup> in the Night without being discovered.) The Enemy have several Gun Boats at Baltimore which have been twice driven in by His Majestys Ship, and on the 24th inst. Lieut. Warre with two Boats burnt a Schooner in Narrows creek close to Bodkin point in face of these Gun Vessels.— On the 24th we Experienced a Violent Squall in which I regret to add the *Mary* Tender upset and was totally lost We were however fortunate in saving Mr. Martin (Masters Mate) and the Crew (with the exception of two notwithstanding they had been upwards of an hour in the Water, on the 27th. in the morning I proceeded into the Petasco river in the *Jane* tender close to the Forts of Baltimore and compleatly Sounded the Passage and reconnoitred the Port where there is a large frigate<sup>2</sup> with topmast rigged two Sloops of War<sup>3</sup> and Several Schooners and Gun Vessels also a Brig which has the appearance of an Armed Vessel I captured a Boat laden with Fruit close to the Forts and a boat which came out to us from the Harbour with an Officer in her mistaking us for a Friend only escaped by a momentary calm between the Lands For my further operations I beg to refer you to the accompanying Letters—<sup>4</sup> Not a vessel of any description is to be seen and not even a boat has escaped us having captured eight from the very beach one from under the Guns at Annapolis

I transmit herewith in Cypher intelligence I have received<sup>5</sup> I have the Honor to be Sir Your most obedt. humble Servant

Peter Parker—Captain

LS, UKENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2329, fol. 17.

1. Fort Madison, located on the northern side of the Severn River, and Fort Severn, on the opposite shore, were built in 1808 to protect Annapolis. Both were poorly manned and ill-equipped to defend the Maryland capital.

2. *Java*.

3. *Erie* and *Ontario*.

4. See the following unsigned letter.

5. This letter was not found.

CAPTAIN SIR PETER PARKER, R.N., TO  
VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N.

His Majestys Ship *Menelaus* off Pools Island Chesapeake  
30th August—1814.—

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that I this morning at day light dispatched Lieut. Crease with the small arm men and Marines of His Majestys Ship under my Command, to destroy some Granaries & adjoining houses which were observed near the beach; this Service he executed with the greatest promptitude, burning them in the face of three companies of the Enemys Militia.—

He expresses in the strongest terms his approbation of the conduct of Lieut. Pearce, and of Lieuts. Beynon and Poe of the R.M. and of the Petty officers Seamen and Marines engaged in this affair.— After their embarkation, the Enemys

cavalry shewed themselves in numbers, but were dispersed by the fire of the boat's carronades.— I have the Honor to be Sir Your most Obedt. Hble Servt.

Captain<sup>1</sup>

L, UkENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2329, fol. 19.

1. The following was written in the margin: "This letter intended to be sent but not sign'd—Lt. Hy. Crease." Captain Sir Peter Parker died in an engagement on the evening of 30–31 August 1814. See the following letter.

LIEUTENANT HENRY CREASE, R.N., TO  
VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N.

His Majestys Ship *Menelaus* off Pools Island Chesapeake  
1st. September 1814—

Sir

With Grief the deepest it becomes my duty to communicate the Death of Sir Peter Parker, Bart. late Commander of His Majestys Ship *Menelaus*, and the occurrences attending an attack on the Enemies Troops on the night of the 30th Inst. encamped at Bellair; the previous and accompanying letters of Sir Peter Parker, will I presume fully point out the respect the Enemy on all occasions evince at the approach of our Arms retreating at every attack, tho possessing a superiority of Numbers of five to one; An intelligent black man gave us information of two hundred Militia being encamped behind a Wood distant half a mile from the beach, and described their situation so as to give us the strongest hopes of cutting off and securing the largest part, as our Prisoners, destroying the Camp, Field pieces &c. and possessing also certain information, that one man out of every five had been levied as a requisition on the Eastern shore for the purpose of being sent over for the protection of Baltimore; and who are now only prevented crossing the Bay by the activity and vigilance of the Tender & ships boats; One hundred & four Bayonets with twenty Pikes were landed at 11 OClock at night, under the immediate direction of Captain Sir Peter Parker Bart. the first Division headed by myself—the second Division by Lieut. Pearce; On arriving at the Ground we discovered the Enemy had shifted his Position, as we were then informed to the distance of a mile farther; having taken the look out Picket immediately on our landing, we were in assurance our motions had not been discovered, and with the deepest silence followed on for the camp; after a march of between four and five miles in the Country we found the Enemy posted on a Plain surrounded by Woods, with the camp in their Rear; they were drawn up in line and perfectly ready to receive us; a single moment was not to be lost, by a smart fire and instant charge we commenced the attack, forced them from their position putting them before us in full retreat, to the rear of their Artillery where they again made a stand, shewing a disposition to out flank us of the right; a movement was instantly made by Lieut. Pearce's Division to force them from that Quarter, and it was at this time while animating his Men in the most heroic manner that Sir Peter Parker received his mortal wound which obliged him to quit the field and he expired in a few minutes.

Lieut. Pearce with his Division soon routed the Enemy, while that under my Command gained and passed the Camp; one of the Field pieces was momentarily in our possession, but obliged to quit it from superior numbers;

The Marines under Lieuts. Beynon and Poe formed our Centre and never was bravely more conspicuous. Finding it impossible to close on the Enemy from the rapidity of their Retreat, having pursued them upwards of a Mile I deemed it prudent to retire toward the Beach, which was effected in the best possible Order, taking with us from the field twenty five of our wounded, the whole we could find, the Enemy not even attempting to regain the ground they had lost; from three Prisoners (cavalry) taken by us, we learnt their force amounted to 500 Militia, a troop of Horse and five pieces of Artillery, and since by Flags of Truce I am led to believe their numbers much greater.—

Repelling a Force of such magnitude with so small a body as we opposed to them, will I trust speak for itself; and altho our loss has been severe I hope the lustre acquired to our arms will compensate for it.—

Permit me Sir to offer to your notice the conduct of Mr. James Stopford Hoare Masters Mate of this Ship, who on this so well as on other trying occasions, evinced the greatest zeal and gallantry.— In justice to Sub Lieut. Johnson, commanding the *Jane* Tender I must beg to notice, the handsome manner in which he has at all times volunteered his Services.—

Herewith I beg leave to enclose you a list of the Killed Wounded & Missing in this affair.—<sup>1</sup> I have the Honor to be Sir Your most Obedt. Humble Servt.

Hen<sup>y</sup> Crease Actg. Commr.

LS, UkENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2329, fols. 30–31. Cochrane sent a copy of Crease's letter to the Admiralty and enclosed a diagram of the attack. Cochrane to Croker, 3 Sept. 1814, UkLPR, Adm. 1/507, fols. 8–11.

1. The list of British casualties (fourteen killed, twenty-seven wounded) is located at fols. 20–21.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL PHILIP REED, MARYLAND MILITIA, TO  
BRIGADIER GENERAL BENJAMIN CHAMBERS, MARYLAND MILITIA

Camp at Belle Air, 3d Sept. 1814.

Sir—

I avail myself of the first moment I have been able to seize from incessant labor, to inform you that about half past 11 o'clock, on the night of the 30th ult. I received information that the barges of the enemy, then lying off Waltham's farm were moving in shore. I concluded their object was to land and burn the houses, &c. at Waltham's and made the necessary arrangements to prevent them, and to be prepared for an opportunity which I had sought for several days to strike the enemy. During our march to the point threatened, it was discovered that the blow was aimed at our camp. Orders were immediately given to the quarter master, to remove the camp and baggage, and to the troops to countermarch, pass the road by the right of our camp and form on the rising ground about three hundred paces in the rear—the right towards Caulk's house, and the left retiring on the road, the artillery in the centre, supported by



the infantry on the right and left. I directed capt. Wickes and his second lieutenant Beck, with a part of the rifle company to be formed, so as to cover the road by which the enemy marched, and with this section I determined to post myself, leaving the line to be formed under the direction of major Wickes and capt. Chambers.

The head of the enemy's column soon presented itself and received the fire of our advance party, at seventy paces distance, and, being pressed by numbers vastly superior, I repaired to my post in the line; having ordered the riflemen to return and form on the right of the line. The fire now became general along the whole line, and was sustained by our troops with the most determined valor. The enemy pressed our front; foiled in this he threw himself on our left flank, which was occupied by capt. Chambers's company. Here too his efforts were equally unavailing. His fire had nearly ceased, when I was informed that in some parts of our line the cartridges were entirely expended, nor did any of the boxes contain more than a very few rounds, although each man brought about twenty into the field.— The artillery cartridges were entirely expended. Under these circumstances I ordered the line to fall back to a convenient spot where a part of the line was fortified, when the few remaining cartridges were distributed amongst a part of the line, which was again brought into the field, where it remained for a considerable time, the night preventing a pursuit. The artillery and infantry for whom there were no cartridges were ordered to this place. The enemy having made every effort in his power, although apprized of our having fallen back, manifested no disposition to follow us up, but retreated about the time our ammunition was exhausted.

When it is recollected that very few of our officers or men had ever heard the whistling of a ball; that the force of the enemy, as the most accurate information enables us to estimate, was double ours; that it was commanded by *sir Peter Parker* of the *Menelaus*, one of the most distinguished officers in the British navy, and composed (as their officers admitted in a subsequent conversation,) of as fine men as could be selected from the British service, I feel fully justified in the assertion, that the gallantry of the officers and men engaged on this occasion, could not be excelled by any troops. The officers and men performed their duty. It is however but an act of justice to notice those officers who seemed to display more than a common degree of gallantry. Major Wickes and captain Chambers were conspicuous— captain Wickes and his lieutenant Beck of the rifle corps, lieutenant Eunick and ensign Shriften of captain Chambers' company exerted themselves, as did captain Hynson and his lieutenant Grant, capt. Ussleton of the brigade artillery and his lieutenants Reed and Brown— Lieut. Tilghman who commanded the guns of the volunteer artillery, in the absence of captain Hands who is in ill health and from home, was conspicuous for his gallantry, his ensign Thomas also manifested much firmness.

I am indebted to captain Wilson of the cavalry, who was with me, for his exertions, and also to adjutant Hynson, who displayed much zeal and firmness throughout— To Dr. Blake, Dr. Gordon and to Isaac Spencer, Esq. who were accidentally in camp, I am indebted for their assistance in reconnoitering the enemy on his advance.

You will be surprised, sir, when I inform you that in an engagement of so long continuance in an open field, when the moon shone brilliantly on the rising ground occupied by our troops, while the shade of the neighboring woods, under the protection of which the enemy fought, gave us but an indistinct view

of any thing but the flash of his guns; that under the disparity of numbers against us, and the advantage of regular discipline on the side of the enemy, we had not one man killed, and only one serjeant, one corporal, and one private wounded, and those slightly. The enemy left one midshipman and eight men dead on the field, and nine wounded; six of whom died in the course of a few hours. *Sir Peter Parker* was amongst the slain—he was mortally wounded with a buck-shot, and died before he reached the barges, to which he was conveyed by his men. The enemy's force, consisting of marines and musqueteers, was in part armed with boarding pikes, swords, and pistols, no doubt intended for our tents, as orders had been given by *sir Peter* not to fire—many of these arms, with rockets, muskets, &c. have fallen into our hands, found by the picket guard under ensign Shriften, which was posted on the battle ground for the remainder of the night— nothing but the want of ammunition saved the enemy from destruction.

Attached are the names of the wounded; and, as an act of justice to those concerned, I inclose you a list of the names of every officer and soldier engaged in the affair—<sup>1</sup> certain information from the enemy assures us, that his total loss in killed and wounded was forty-two or forty-three, including two wounded lieutenants. I am, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

PHIL. REED,  
*Lieut. Col. commandant*

*Benjamin Chambers, brigadier-general,  
6th brigade Maryland militia.*

*Names of the wounded of capt. Chambers' company.* John Magnor, serjeant, slightly, in the thigh.— Philip Crane, corporal, a ball between the tendons and the bone of the thigh near the knee.

*Of captain Page's company.*— John Glanville, a private, in the arm.

Printed, *Niles' Weekly Register*, Supplement to Vol. 7, pp. 151–52.

<sup>1</sup> This list was not printed by *Niles'*. It was printed by Marine, *British Invasion of Maryland*, pp. 122–24.

## James Gordon's Diversion in the Potomac

*After arriving in the Chesapeake from Bermuda, Admiral Cochrane assembled a war council to outline his offensive strategy. Initially, the main invasion force would disembark at Benedict, Maryland, to destroy Barney's flotilla and depending on circumstances proceed to Washington. Cochrane ordered two diversions: Sir Peter Parker was sent to the upper Chesapeake and Captain James A. Gordon to the Potomac. The latter's squadron was to destroy fortifications along the river and act as a rear guard to assist the invading force if its return route were cut off. Gordon's three-week expedition was a success, measured in prize goods—twenty-one captured vessels laden with tobacco, sugar, and wine. Psychologically, the attack on Fort Washington (and its premature abandonment by the American forces) and the abject capitulation of Alexandria that followed were humiliating to a capital already reeling from the British incursion. But the lengthy duration of Gordon's expedition eventually delayed the commencement of operations against Baltimore*

since the bombardment of Fort McHenry required the rocket and bomb vessels in his squadron.

From the Americans' perspective, Gordon's presence in the Potomac was almost as humiliating as the attack on the capital. After entering the river on 17 August, Gordon confronted shoals, squalls, and contrary winds. Grounding innumerable times, his ships did not reach Fort Washington until the 27th. After destroying the fort, Gordon proceeded to subjugate Alexandria, lingering there until receiving orders on 1 September from Cochrane to return to the fleet. By then the victors in the contest for Washington, had reembarked at Benedict having encountered no opposition while withdrawing. The captors of Alexandria were not so lucky. Eager for revenge, Secretary of the Navy Jones marshaled the expertise of three of his naval captains (John Rodgers, David Porter, and Oliver H. Perry), and with a joint naval and military force attacked the withdrawing British squadron with fire ships and from batteries hastily erected on the Virginia and Maryland shores. Ultimately unsuccessful in destroying the squadron, the Americans did retard its withdrawal, thereby purchasing more time for the Baltimoreans to prepare their defenses.<sup>1</sup>

1. For more on Gordon's expedition, see Perrett, *Real Hornblower*, pp. 107-19.

CAPTAIN JAMES A. GORDON, R.N., TO  
VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N.

Seahorse Chesapeake 9th September 1814

Sir,

In obedience to your Orders I proceeded into the River Potomac with the ships Named in the Margin<sup>1</sup> on the 17th. of last Month.— But from being without Pilots to assist us through that difficult part of the River called the Kettle Bottoms, and from contrary winds we were unable to reach Fort Washington until the evening of the 27th.— Nor was this effected but by the severest labour.— I believe each of the Ships was not less than twenty different times aground and each time we were obliged to haul off by main Strength,—and we were employed warping for five whole successive days, with the exception of a few hours, a distance of more than fifty miles.

The Bomb Ships<sup>2</sup> were placed on the evening of the 27th. and immediately begun the bombardment of the Fort, it being my intention to attack it with the Frigates<sup>3</sup> at day light the following Morning.— On the bursting of the first shell the Garrison were observed to retreat.— But supposing some concealed design I directed the fire to be continued.— At 8 O'clock however my doubt was removed by the explosion of the powder Magazine which destroyed the inner buildings, and at day light on the 28th we took possession.—<sup>4</sup> Besides the principal Fort which contained

Two Fifty-two pounders  
Two Thirty-two pounders &  
Eight Twenty-four pounders  
there was a Battery on the beach of  
Five Eighteen pounders  
a Martillo Tower with  
Two Twelve pounders and loop-holes for Musquetry, & a Battery in the Rear  
Two Twelve and  
Six Six pound Field pieces.



James A. Gordon



The whole of these Guns were already spiked by the Enemy and their complete destruction with their Carriages also was effected by the Seamen and Marines sent on that Service in less than two hours.— The populous City of Alexandria thus lost its only defence.— And having buoyed the Channel I deemed it better to postpone giving any answer to a proposal made to me for its Capitulation until the following morning when I was enabled to place the shipping in such a position as would ensure assent to the terms I had decided to enforce.—

To this measure I attribute there ready acquiescence as it removed that doubt of my determination to proceed, which had been raised in the minds of the Inhabitants by our Army having retired from Washington. This part of our proceedings will be further explained by the accompanying documents.—<sup>5</sup>

The Honorable Lieutenant Gordon of this Ship was sent on the evening of the 28th. to prevent the escape of any of the Vessels comprized in the Capitulation and the whole of those which were sea worthy—amounting to twenty one in Number were fitted and loaded by the 31st.<sup>6</sup>

Captain Baker of the *Fairy* bringing your Orders of the 27th. having fought his way up the River past a Battery of five Guns and a large Military force confirmed the rumours which had already reached me of s[t]rong measures having been taken to oppose our return.—<sup>7</sup> And I therefore quitted Alexandria without waiting to destroy those remaining Stores which we had not the means of bringing away.—

Contrary winds again occasioned us the laborious task of warping the Ships down the River, in which a days delay [n]early took place owing to the *Devastation* grounding. The Enemy took advantage of this Circumstance to attempt her destruction by three fire vessels and attended by five row Boats.— But their object was defeated by the promptitude and gallantry of Captain Alexander who pushed off with his own Boats and being followed by those of the other Ships chased the boats of the Enemy up to the town of Alexandria— The cool and steady conduct of Mr. John Moore, Midshipman of the *Seahorse*, in towing the nearest fire Vessel on shore whilst the others were removed from the power of doing mischief by the smaller boats of the *Devastation*, entitles him to my highest commendation.—

The *Meteor* and the *Fairy* assisted by the *Anna Maria* despatch boat, a prize gun Boat, and a boat belonging to the *Euryalus* with a howitzer, had greatly impeded the progress of the Enemy in their works, notwithstanding which they were enabled to encrease their battery to eleven guns with a furnace for heating Shot.— on the 3d the wind coming to the North west the *Ætna* and the *Erebus* succeeded in getting down to their assistance and the whole of us with the prizes were assembled there on the 4th., except the *Devastation*, which in spite of our utmost exertion in warping her, still remained five miles higher up the River.— This was the moment when the Enemy made his greatest efforts to effect our destruction.— The *Erebus* being judiciously placed by Captain Bartholomew in an admirable position for harrassing the workmen employed in the trenches, was attacked by three field pieces which did her considerable damage before they were beaten off.— And another attempt being made to destroy the *Devastation* with fire Vessels I sent the Boats, under Captain Baker, to his assistance.— Nothing could exceed the alacrity with which Captain Baker went on this Service, to which I attribute the immediate retreat of the boats and fire Vessels.— The loss however was considerable owing to their having sought

refuge under some guns in a narrow Creek thickly wooded, from which it was impossible for him to dislodge them.—

On the 5th at Noon the wind coming fair and all my arrangements being made the *Seahorse* and *Euryalus* anchored within short Musquet Shot of the Batteries<sup>8</sup> whilst the whole of the prizes passed betwixt us and the shoal, the Bombs, the *Fairy*, and *Erebus* firing as they passed and afterwards anchoring in a favourable position for facilitating by means of their fire the further removal of the Frigates. At 3 PM having completely silenced the Enemy's fire, the *Seahorse* and *Euryalus* cut their Cables, and the whole of us proceeded to the next position taken up by the troops where they had two Batteries mounting from 14 to 18 Guns on a range of Cliffs of about a mile extent under which we were of Necessity obliged to pass very close.—<sup>9</sup> I did not intend to make the attack that evening, but the *Erebus* grounding within Range we were necessarily called into action.— On this occasion the fire of the *Fairy* had the most decisive effect as well as that of the *Erebus* whilst the Bombs threw their shells with excellent precision; and the Guns of the batteries were thereby completely silenced by about 8. O'clock.— At day light on the 6th I made the Signal to weigh and so satisfied were the whole of the parties opposed to us of their opposition being ineffectual, that they allowed us to pass without further molestation.— I cannot close this detail of operations comprizing a period of 23 days without begging leave to call your attention to the singular exertion of those whom I had the honor to Command by which our success was effected.— Our Hammocks were down only two Nights during the whole time and the many laborious duties which we had to perform were executed with a cheerfulness which I shall ever remember with pride, and which will ensure I hope to the whole of the detachment your favourable estimation of their extraordinary Zeal and abilities.—

To Captain Napier I owe more obligations than I have words to express.— The *Euryalus* lost her bowsprit, the head of her foremast, and the heads of all her topmasts, in a Tornado which we encountered on the 25th., just as our sails were clewed up, whilst we were passing the flats of Maryland point; and yet after twelve hours work on her refittal she was again under way, and advancing up the River.— (Captain Napier speaks highly of the conduct of Lieutenant Thomas Herbert on this as well as on every other of the many trying occasions which have called his abilities into action).— His exersions were also particularly conspicuous in the prizes; many of which already sunk by the Enemy were weighed, Masted, hove down, caulked, rigged and loaded by our little squadron during the three days which we remained at Alexandria.—

It is difficult to distinguish amongst Officers who had a greater share of duty than often falls to the lot of any, and which each performed with the greatest credit to his professional Character.— I cannot omit to recommend to your notice the meritorious conduct of Captains Alexander, Bartholomew, Baker, and Kenah, the latter of which led us through many of the difficulties of the Navigation: and particularly to Captain Roberts of the *Meteor* who besides undergoing the fatigues of the day employed the night in coming the distance of ten miles to communicate and to consult with me upon our further operations preparatory to our passing the Batteries.—

So universally good was the conduct of all the Officers, Seamen and Marines of the detachment that I cannot particularize with justice to the rest.— But I owe it to the long tried experience I have had of Mr. Henry King first Lieutenant of the *Seahorse* to point out to you that such was his eagerness to take the

part to which his abilities would have directed him on this occasion, that he even came out of his sick Bed to command at his quarters, whilst the ship was passing the Batteries The two first Guns pointed by Lieut. King each disabled a Gun of the Enemy; nor can I ever forget how materially the Service is indebted to Mr. Alexander Louthian the Master for both finding and buoying the Channel of a Navigation which no Ship of similar draft of water had ever before passed with their guns and Stores onboard; and which according to the report of a Seaman now in this Ship was not accomplished by the *President* American Frigate even after taken her guns out, under a period of forty two days.—

Enclosed is a list of the Killed and Wounded, and also of the Vessels captured with the cargoes they have onboard.—<sup>10</sup>

I have the honor to be Sir Your most obedient humble Servant

Sigd. James A. Gordon Captain

Copy, UKLPR, Adm. 1/507, fols. 153–57.

1. *Seahorse, Euryalus, Devastation, Aetna, Meteor, Erebus, and Anna Maria.*

2. *Devastation, Aetna, and Meteor.*

3. *Seahorse and Euryalus.*

4. For more on the American abandonment of Fort Washington on the approach of the British squadron, see *ASP: Military Affairs*, Vol. 1, pp. 588–91, and Pitch, *Burning of Washington*, pp. 153–60.

5. For documents relating to Alexandria's capitulation, see UKLPR, Adm. 1/507, fols. 162–68.

6. For a list of the captured ships, public stores, and merchandise, see UKLPR, Adm. 1/507, fols. 163–64.

7. Commander Henry L. Baker, carrying dispatches from Admiral Cochrane, encountered resistance from the American battery commanded by Captain David Porter at the White House, just a few miles south of Mount Vernon. The White House was a large fishing house on the beach and was a landmark for vessels navigating the Potomac.

8. The British first encountered a battery on the Virginia shore commanded by Captain David Porter. For his account, see Porter to Jones, 7 Sept. 1814, pp. 251–55.

9. Captain Oliver H. Perry commanded the batteries at Indian Head, Maryland. Perry to Jones, 9 Sept. 1814, p. 256.

10. This foray up the Potomac cost the British forty-two casualties—seven killed and thirty-five wounded. UKLPR, Adm. 1/507, fol. 160.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Navy Department  
Augt. 28. 1814

Sir

Captain Creighton has undertaken to convey this in order to explain to you the nature and extent of the Naval force of the Enemy now near Alexandria which place capitulated this morning but upon what conditions I know not.

The enemy will acquire a large property in produce and shipping, and his captivity will occupy his attention for some days.

I write this to invite your consideration of the means we may possess to annoy or destroy the enemy on his return down the river.

A few pieces of heavy cannon with a furnace on Maryland point protected by a competent military force in the rear would effect the object. The only difficulty is in the transportation which cannot be effected by land and the full moon forbids the hope of effecting it by water. Will you be pleased to hold a

conference with the Officers around you and if any practicable mode of accomplishing the object shall present itself you will either undertake its execution yourself or detach Captain Porter with a competent force for that purpose. These Suggestions are offered for your contemplation and decision according to your own views of the probability of Success. I am respectfully Your Obdt. Servt

W Jones

ALS, DLC, Rodgers Family Papers, Series III-B, Container 51, fols. 5536–37. A note on the address page described the British force at Alexandria thus: “3 Brigs—1 Schooner & a pilot Boat Dropping down/3 Ships & 4 or 5 Small craft loading in the stream/1 Brig loading at the Wharf/1 Ship Lieing above the Town unrigged.” Jones addressed this letter to Rodgers at Baltimore.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Navy Department  
Augt. 29. 1814

Sir

The terms of capitulation of the town of Alexandria are so degrading and humiliating as to excite the indignation of all classes of people. Those who have hitherto been the most vehement in their denunciations of the War and of the Administration are no less ardent in their zeal and determination to defend this City and George town to the last extremity than the warm advocates of both.

The arrogant foe had required the surrender of all articles of produce and merchandize even retrospectively to the 19th. Inst. including all that has been sent from the town subsequent to that date together with all the shipping whether afloat or sunk to be delivered to him in perfect order to carry off his immense booty which he is now busily engaged in lading and preparing for departure.

We are menaced with a renewed attack which however it is confidently believed must result in the defeat of the foe if attempted— I send you enclosed a list of his force which may be relied upon.—<sup>1</sup>

It is probable the large property at George town together with his recent success may induce him to make a bold attempt which can only be done in his barges and boats. If at such a moment you were present with 600. picked men his Ships might be carried beyond doubt, as boats sufficient for the purpose can be collected Viz the long light boats from the upper part of the Potomac At all events your presence with such a force would produce the best possible effect and plans might be laid to annoy or destroy his Squadron in its descent.

You will therefore without a moments delay repair to Bladensburg with 650 picked men (or more if you shall deem it expedient) where you will receive further orders either by letter from the Department or a personal interview which I shall be happy to avail myself of.

You will order on the necessary provisions and supplies for your expedition as every thing has been destroyed that was in Store here except some Beef Pork and Whiskey I am respectfully Your Obdt. Servt.

W Jones



P S. A party has been dispatched for the purpose of sinking Hulks and other obstructions in the River below.

ALS, DLC, Rodgers Family Papers, Series III-B, Container 51, fols. 5540-41. Jones addressed this to Rodgers at Baltimore.

1. This list was not found in either the Rodgers Family Papers or the secretary of the navy's letter book. A list of British strength at Alexandria was added to the address page of Jones to Rodgers, 28 August 1814. See the source note for this letter, p. 243.

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

10 O'clock PM Balte Aug 29. 1814

Sir

I have recd. your Letters of yesterdays date,<sup>1</sup> and would to God it had been in my power to have reached Washington in time to have aided in its protection.

In the present state of this place, I thought it hazarding too much to attempt sending a detachment of my Corps to Maryland Point; particularly as I could not calculate with any certainty on finding support in that quarter.— I have however detach'd Capt. Porter with 100 Seamen and Marines under orders to march to Washington; but more with a view to Guard the Executive, than any thing else.— From his known patriotism, Zeal & Activity however he may be enabled to check in some instances that petty Warfare, which frequently takes place in the Environs after sacking a Town.—

It is believed here that, after a short pause, the Enemy will attack this place, which if they were to do with success, would be productive of consequences, dreadful to ruminat on, as it is now the only Barrier between it and Phila.— consequently I could wish to remain, until the place is better Fortified and there is more certainty of my being able to render essential Service elsewhere.— at any rate, I shall be ready to march with all my strength at a moment, wherever you may think our Services can be of more benifit, for believe me, that I would cheerfully spill the last drop of my blood to revenge my injured country.—

The people now begin to shew something like a patriotic spirit: they are Fortifying the Town by all the means in their power, and those who direct their exertions, are pledged to me to defend the place to the last extremity, otherwise I should have been at Washington before this could reach you.—

I have only further to add Sir, that Capt. Porter will inform you of the confidence produced, by the stand our little Band took on reaching here, and of the effect likely to result, should it depart at the present moment, at any rate, I repeat again, that I am ready at a moments warning, to direct my course to any other point, where you may deem our Services of more importance.— With great respect I have the honor to be Sir Yr Obt. Servt

Jn<sup>o</sup> Rodgers

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 146 (M125, Roll No. 38).

1. One of Jones's letters of 28 August 1814 to Rodgers is reproduced on pp. 242-43. The other deals with the destruction of the Washington Navy Yard and Fort Washington, and Jones's concerns for the fate of Alexandria. Jones to Rodgers, 28 Aug. 1814, DLC, Rodgers Family Papers, Series III-B, Container 51, fols. 5538-39.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER

Navy Department  
Augt. 31. 1814

Sir

You will proceed with the detachment of Seamen and Marines which arrived here under your command last evening, to the White House on the West Bank of the Potomac where you will find a train of five or Six 18 pounders ordered there by the War Department in concert with this Department, which you will take the Command of and place in Battery in the most favorable position or positions and endeavour to effect the destruction of the Enemys Squadron on its passage down the Potomac.

The ordnance Depmt. I presume will have furnished the necessary ammunition and a furnace for heating Shot. I am respectfully Your obdt. Servt.

W Jones

ALS, MiU-C, David Porter Papers. Porter was in Washington at this time.

SECRETARY OF STATE MONROE TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

washington Spr 2. 1814

Dear Sir

The battery erected at the white house under the command of Com: Porter, promises to embarrass, if not impede the progress of the enemy down the bay. If you could re'stablish the post at Fort washington, to night,<sup>1</sup> & Com: Perry could place a few pieces, the more & heavier, the better, at a point opposite the white house, I think we might demolish them. I suggest this for yours & his consideration. Dispatch, is of the highest importance. with great respect I am yr very obt servt

Ja<sup>s</sup> Monroe

ALS, DLC, Rodgers Family Papers, Series III-B, Container 51, fols. 5549a-b. This was addressed to Rodgers at the Washington Navy Yard.

1. Rodgers was occupied with forming a squadron of fire vessels to attack the British as they sailed from Alexandria for the bay.

CAPTAIN OLIVER H. PERRY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Greenway, opposite the White House 3d. Sept. Meridian

Sir

I proceeded from the navy yard, with our Artillery &c last night in the hope of being able to take a position, (before day light) to annoy the enemy and to cooperate with Comr. Porter after arriving with in musket shot of the enemy at 3. this morn<sup>g</sup>.<sup>1</sup> I had the mortification to find, that there was no position I

could take that was tenable— this morning I have fallen in with Genl. Stewart with a body of men, and a few pieces of artillery— we have been hovering over the enemy all the morning,— and as we find we cannot be of any service here, Genl. Stuart and myself have determined, to proceed to the high grounds about 8. or 9 miles below and fortify, so as to annoy the ships as they pass down—<sup>2</sup> May I ask Sir, that some heavy guns may be immediately forwarded to me— Our men are entirely exhausted, but we will make an effort, to go to our destined post— Very Respy. I am Sir Your Obed. Sert

O. H. Perry

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 7½ (M125, Roll No. 39).

1. On 11 August, Secretary Jones had ordered Perry to make arrangements for equipping *Java* and to leave Baltimore for New York to serve on a court of inquiry charged with examining into the loss of the frigate *Essex*. By 19 August, Jones suspended the inquiry and ordered Porter and Perry to aid in the defense of the capital. Arriving in Maryland after the Battle of Bladensburg, the two captains stopped at Baltimore to join forces with John Rodgers who was assisting in that city's defense. By the end of August, Jones ordered these naval captains to Washington either to stop a possible second attack on the capital or to harass the enemy on his descent down the Potomac. Jones to Perry, 11 Aug. 1814, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 404 (M149, Roll No. 11); Jones to Porter, 19 Aug. 1814, p. 199; and Jones to Rodgers, 29 Aug. 1814, pp. 243–44.

2. Perry removed to the cliffs at Indian Head, Maryland, because this site was better suited to attacking the British squadron.

#### CHARLES SIMMS TO NANCY SIMMS

Alexandria Sept. 3d. 1814

My Dear Nancy

The British Squadron began to fall down the river yesterday morning and was not as low as the Fort<sup>1</sup> this morning, except one Vessel which the day before yesterday went down in the neighbourhood of the white House, and a pretty heavy firing has been kept up this morning in that neighbourhood. Mr. Cook has gone into the vicinity of the White House and on his return will be able to give you a full account of the state of things there Alexandria has so far had a most providential escape. It is impossible that men could behave better than the British behaved while the Town was in their power, not a single Inhabitant was insulted or injured by them in their persons or houses your fear that something might occur to provoke them to ~~St~~ fire the Town was not ill founded—

The Day before yesterday Capt. Porter, Lieutenant Creighton and Lieutenant Platt<sup>2</sup> naval officers rode into Town like Saracens and seized on a poor unarmed Midshipman<sup>3</sup> a mere strapping, and would have carried him off or killed him had not his neck handkerchief broke this rash act excited the greatest alarm among the Inhabitants of the Town, Women and children running and screaming through the Streets and hundreds of them layed out that night without Shelter I immediately prepared a message to the Commodore<sup>4</sup> explaining the manner and circumstances of the insult and sent it on board by Mr. Swann and Edmd. J. Lee,<sup>5</sup> while I was preparing the message One of the Captains<sup>6</sup> rushed into the parlour with the strongest expressions of rage in his countenance bringing with him the midshipman who had been so valiantly assaulted by those Gallant Naval Officers, I explained to him by whom the outrage was commit-

ted, that the Town had no control over them; and ought not to be held responsible for their conduct, and I was at that time preparing a message of explanation to the Commodore he said it was necessary that it should be explained, after which his fury seemd to abate and he went off, before Mr. Swann and Mr. Lee got on Board the Signal of Battle was hoisted and all the Vessels were prepared for action when Mr. Swan and Mr. Lee made their explanation & the Commodore said he was satisfied and orderd the signal of Battle to be annulld thus the Town was providentially preserved from destruction, by the accidental circumstance of the midshipmans neck handkerchief giving way for had he been killed or carried off, I do not believe the Town could have been saved from destruction.

I do not consider the Town perfectly safe yet If the British Vessels should be prevented from passing the white House they or some of them may probably return here, and wait untill troops sufficient to drive off the militia &c at the white House shall come to their relief from Patuxin, and in that case this part of the country will become the seat of war. I can not therefore wish your return untill we are in a more quiet State— John<sup>7</sup> had better remain in the Country untill his health is restored as he will no doubt be compeld to go to Camp as soon as he returns, I have desired Mr. Cook to sell Bet if he can and you approve of it. Mr. Cook is in a hurry to return home I can only add that my blessing attends my children and that I am Your affectionate husband

Ch: Simms

ALS, DLC, Charles Simms Papers, Vol. 6, Peter Force Collection, Series 8D, fols. 35428–29 (Reel 66). Charles Simms, a prominent attorney and merchant, was mayor of Alexandria from March 1813 to March 1815; his wife was the former Nancy Douglas.

1. Fort Washington.
2. Charles T. Platt's midshipman's warrant dated from 18 June 1812.
3. Midshipman John Fraser, R.N.
4. Captain James A. Gordon, R.N.
5. Thomas Swann was an attorney in Alexandria and Edmund J. Lee was a former member of the Alexandria Common Council and succeeded Simms as mayor.
6. Probably Captain Charles Napier, R.N., commander of *Euryalus*.
7. John D. Simms, son of Thomas Simms.

#### COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Alexa. Sept. 3d. 3 P.M.

Sir

I have to inform you that I this morning manned four Barges with about 50 Men (including Lieuts Newcomb & Forest Sailg Master Ramage & M Mate Stockton)<sup>1</sup> for the purpose of conducting three small fire vessels which I have no doubt we should have been able to attach to the Enemy's Ships had not the wind failed by the time we reached Alexandria

After reaching the Enemys uppermost ship within ½ a mile I ordered the vessels to be fired giving them a proper direction— At this time the Enemy had 19 or 20 boats in motion, a few of which he employed in towing the fire vessels



clear of his Ships of War & with the rest pursued our boats yet he shew no disposition to come within reach of our Musketry altho we laid up our oars, whilst he fired upwards of 20 shot one or two of the shot fell into Alexa. but did no damage— I have now two 12 lb Carronades mounted on wharfes & with the 50 N Officers & Seamen have with me & a detachment of about 200 mounted riflemen & Infantry under the command of Major Camper<sup>2</sup> I feel myself sufficiently strong to defend Alex against any force the Enemy may be disposed to land— I have just sent up for another fire vessel which I mean to try the effect of to night, should an opportunity offer.— I can see he feels very uneasy & he certainly acted with great prudence this morning I have the honor to be Sir yr Ob St.

Jn<sup>o</sup> Rodgers

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 9½ (M125, Roll No. 39).

1. The lieutenant's commission for Henry S. Newcomb was dated 24 July 1813. Dulany Forrest served as an acting lieutenant from 29 July 1813 to 9 December 1814 when he was commissioned a lieutenant. James Ramage's sailing master's warrant dated from 1 June 1813; he was appointed an acting lieutenant on 18 November 1814 and his commission was dated 9 December 1814. Robert F. Stockton's midshipman's warrant was dated 1 September 1811; his lieutenant's commission dated from 9 December 1814. Stockton attained the rank of captain before resigning from the navy in 1850. He served briefly as a U.S. senator from 1851 to 1853.

2. Major John Kemper served with the Eighty-fifth Regiment (Fauquier County), Virginia militia, at Alexandria from September to October 1814.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Navy Department  
Sepr. 3 1814. ½ past 5. PM

Sir

Your note of this day 3 PM. is before me. The enemy having taken possession of Kent Island are in a situation to make a rapid movement on Baltimore and I therefore wrote you this this morning directing the movement of the force under your command at Snowdens and with you, toward Baltimore without delay<sup>1</sup>—that Captain Perry would follow you as soon as possible and captain Porter as soon as the object in which he is engaged would admit

I have ordered Lieut. Gamble<sup>2</sup> to proceed to Baltimore and await your orders.

You will however try what effect can be produced by the fire vessel you have sent for and in the course of tomorrow will return to Washington unless in your opinion some decisive effect can be produced by your longer delay very respectfully your Obdt. Servt.

W Jones

ALS, DLC, Rodgers Family Papers, Series III-B, Container 51, fols. 5551–52. Jones addressed this letter to Rodgers at Alexandria.

1. In this earlier letter, Jones was fearful of an imminent attack on Baltimore and ordered Rodgers to that city "without a moment's delay." Jones to Rodgers, 3 Sept. 1814, DNA, RG45, SNL,

Vol. 11, p. 412 (M149, Roll No. 11). By 5:30 P.M., however, Jones was calmer and he permitted Rodgers to use his discretion in deciding whether to attempt another foray with the fire ships against the British squadron in the Potomac. The Snowden family lived at Montpelier plantation, about eight miles north of Bladensburg. In late August, when Jones ordered Rodgers from Baltimore to Washington, the commodore left part of his force at Snowden's while he proceeded on to Washington and Alexandria.

2. Thomas Gamble's commission as a lieutenant dated from 27 April 1810. That summer he joined *President* as one of John Rodgers's lieutenants and continued to serve with the commodore until late 1814. Gamble commanded Rodgers's detachment of seamen left at Snowden's. For the order to proceed to Baltimore, see Jones to Gamble, 3 Sept. 1814, DNA, RG45, AOR, 15 May 1813–23 Nov. 1815, p. 211 (T829, Roll No. 382).

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Alexa. Sept 4th. 1814.

Sir

Yr. letter of yesterday ½ past 5 PM reached me at 11 last night— The fire vessel has not yet got down & it is now so calm & foggy that if she was even near at hand she could not be seen

Nothing material has occurred since I wrote you last further than that we fired on three of the enemy's Boats which came up at 2 this morning for the purpose of reconnoitering I suppose— The weather to day is unfavorable for our operations at least with the fire vessel—

All the Enemy's manoeuvres serve to convince me that he would willingly relinquish all his Booty to be once clear again of the Potomac & I can not but regret there should be a necessity for my leaving here just at the moment when I believe that with the small water force I have collected I should in conjunction with the artillery on each side, be able to do him serious injury if not effect his destruction— It is still so foggy that the position of his frigates,<sup>1</sup> which were last night about three miles above fort Washington can not be seen;— I am about to go down in my gig, however to reconnoitre— If it is yr. desire that I should proceed immediately to Baltre. I beg you will notify me of the same by the videt who hands you this

On taking possession of Alexandria yesterday at a moment when the Enemy menaced me with an attack with at least 5 times my force I can not in Justice avoid mentioning that Majors Kemper & Brokenburgh commandg. about 300 mounted Riflemen & Infantry of Genl. Hungerfords Brigade<sup>2</sup> march in[to] Town with all possible dispatch to my assistance (In haste) with great respect I have the honor to be Sir Yr. Ob. St.

Jn<sup>o</sup> Rodgers

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 13 (M125, Roll No. 39).

1. *Seahorse* and *Euryalus*.

2. Major Moore F. Brockenbrough, Forty-first Regiment (Richmond County), Virginia militia. A force under Brigadier General John H. Hungerford, commander of all the Northern Neck militia, had been ordered in late August by the Alexandria government not to assist that city against the British incursion.

## SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Navy Department  
 Sepr. 4. 1814

Sir

I have received your note of this morng. and am really embarrassed between the desire of affording you an opportunity of effecting either the destruction or injury of the enemy and the dread of an attack upon Baltimore before you shall have reached that place

There is good reason to believe that the enemy has been very considerably reenforced and we ought to believe that he will not remain long inactive and that his operations will be in the upper part of the Chesapeake

Could we destroy or seriously injure the enemy in the Potomac, or destroy or compel him to desgorge his plunder a most important object would be gained, as well in depriving him of so large and seasonable a supply of provisions as is the lesson it would teach him, and the security it would give to the shores of our rivers.

you will therefore use your discretion for two or three days and in the interim should the state of things at Baltimore become more alarming you shall be instantly informed. I have sent to the navy yard to hurry off the fire vessel Very respectfully your Obdt. Servt.

W Jones

ALS, DLC, Rodgers Family Papers, Series III-B, Container 51, fols. 5553-54. This was addressed to Rodgers in Alexandria.

## LIEUTENANT HENRY S. NEWCOMB TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Alexandria September 5th.

Sir

Yesterday At 1 PM got under way from Alexandria with four boats & the Navy Yard lighter—Two Ships in sight— at 4—one of them doubled the point— at 7.30 came to close under the land, abreast of Johnsons Springs— observing two men on the hill watching our motions, sent Mr. Ramage with a small party to take them, but he returnd unable to effect it— at 8 pm silently got under way & dropted up with the tide about half a mile— Then crossed to the Maryland side— Beached the small boats— formed their crews on the bluff with small arms to cover them & anchored the lighter close in shore with springs on her cable— at 10, pm heard the enemys barges in motion and making for the place where we first came to— at 10,30—bright moonlight & calm—perceived five large barges standing for us & several others keeping the other shore on-board waited till they came within half musket shot & then open on them with round, grape & langrage— The seamen on the hill commenced at the same time— The enemy appeared to be in great confusion— gave them a second fire, when they returnd it with some vivacity from their great guns—small arms and Rocketts— at 11,45—silenced their fire— heard loud & distressing cries from their boats & on its being reported to me that they called for quarter ceasd firing— a short time afterwards the headmost boat appeared to be ap-

proaching & attempting to rally the others astern—those from the other side having joined them— when they recommencd firing—returnd it from the great guns & in five minutes heard several exclaim they were sinking—when they dis[c]ontinued firing & returnd to their ship— at midnight reembarked & came to below Alexandria— Their fire, tho well lined, was too high to do execution & I had only one man wounded— Respectfully

H. S. Newcomb

P.S. Midshipman Stockton came on board during the rencontre & was of much service to me—

Want of sleep for several nights past & incessant fatigue will apologize for the appearance of this letter

ALS, DLC, Rodgers Family Papers, Series III-B, Container 51, fols. 5557-58.

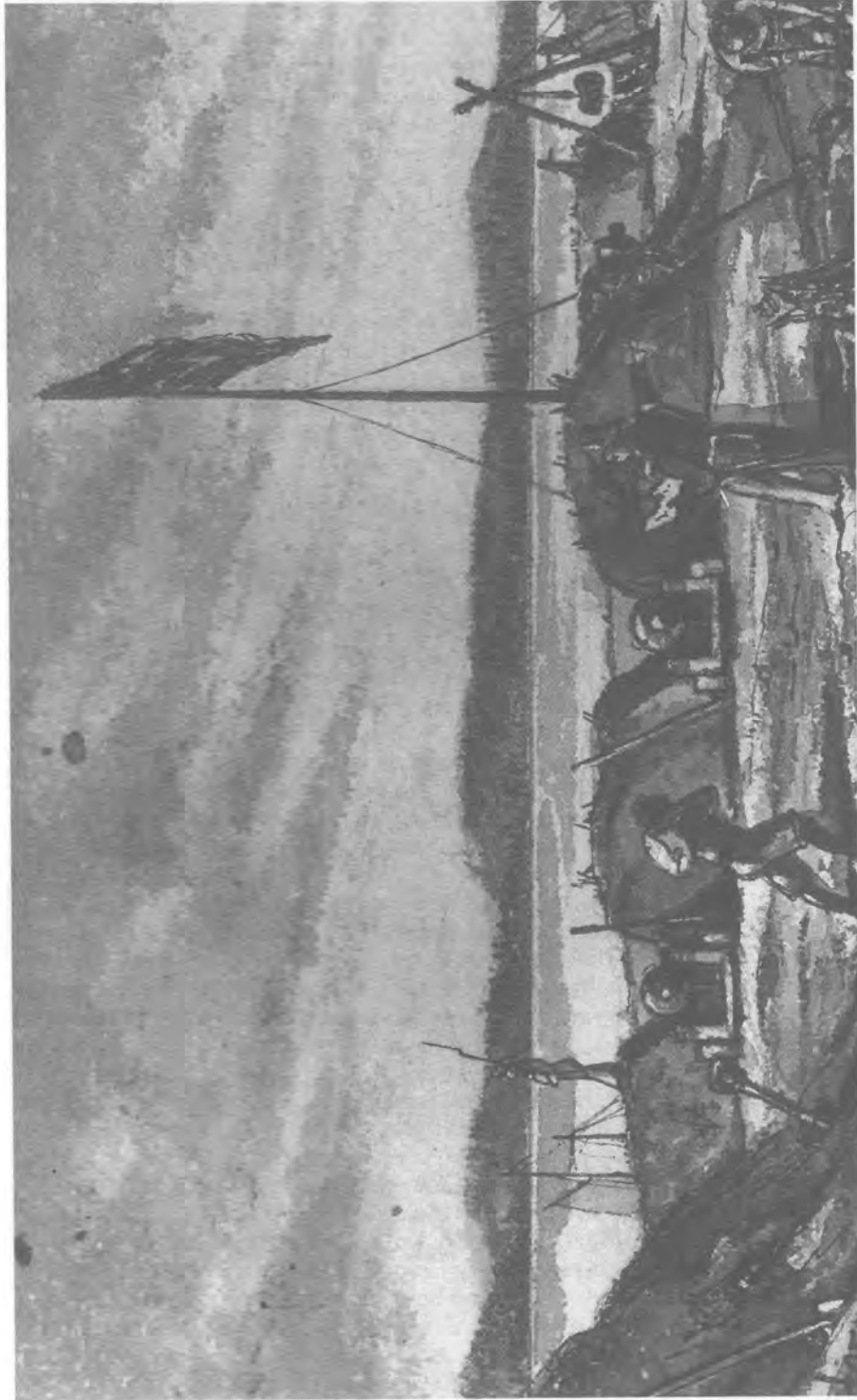
## CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Washington Sepr. 7th 1814

Sir/

Agreeable to your Orders of the 31st Ulto.<sup>1</sup> I proceeded with the Detachment of Sailors and marines under my command, to the white house on the West bank of the Potowmac there to erect batteries and attempt the distruction of the Enemys Ships on their passage down the river. Captain Creighton Lt. Clack<sup>2</sup> and several other Navy officers as well as Mr. Augustus Monroe Mr. Ferdinand Fairfax and several other citizens and officers of the Militia and Volunteer Companies hearing of my destination voluntered their services on the occasion and ably supported me throughout the arduous and fateguing Enterprize. By preceding my men I arrived in company with the Honble. Secretary of State and Generals Hungerford and Young on the Evening of the 1st. instant at the spot fixed on, where I found a few militia belonging to General Hungerfords army clearing away the trees to make room for mounting our Cannon which had not yet arrived, but which had been seen on their way down, consisting of three long eighteens and two twelves. Generals Hungerford and Young had received orders to cooperate with me to detach men on my requisition and make such disposition of their forces as would effectually protect me in the rear in the event of the Enemies landing. The positions they were to occupy were also alloted to them by mutual agreement when the Enemy should make his attempt to pass, as it was believed that concealed by the thick woods on the high bank they would be enabled to clear the Enemies decks with their Musquetry and in a great measure divert his fire from our battery— At the moment of my arrival one of the Enemies vessels of war, a Brig of Eighteen Guns<sup>3</sup> was seen coming up, General Hungerford and his men took their position in the woods, and two small four pounders that Instant arriving I caused them to be planted on the edge of the bank and on the Enemy arriving abreast of us we opened a brisk fire on him, having a fine breeze he was enabled to pass us but could fire only one broadside as he crossed the fire of our field peices and musquetry— The militia





*Potomac River Showing Earthworks Erected by David Porter against the British Squadron in September 1814*

continued following him up along the bank and greatly annoyed him by their well directed fire. In this affair we had only one man wounded and we believed our elevated position rendered breast works useless as it was remarked that none but the Enemies Grape passed over us, his round Shot went into the bank below. No men could have shown more zeal on the occasion than those composing the army and if they committed any errors which gave rise to confusion they proceeded from an over desire to injure the Enemy—of the conduct of the Sailors and marines I deem it unnecessary to say any thing. Their conduct on all such occasions has ever been uniform, The evening of our arrival two eighteen pounders reached our position and next morning one of the Enemies Bomb Ships<sup>4</sup> and two barges, one carrying a long two and thirty the other a mortar commenced their operations on us, the first throwing Shells in front beyond the reach of our Shot, the others flanking us on our right— several Shells fell near and burst over our battery and although the firing lasted all day without intermission it had no other effect than to accustom the militia to the danger— In the afternoon I took an Eighteen pounder to a more advanced point about a mile distance and commenced a fire on the Bomb Ship which did so much execution as to draw on me the fire of all their vessels including a Schooner and an Eighteen Gun Brig which had dropped down that day, on the 3d. the Enemy was reinforced from above by another bomb Ship<sup>5</sup> and a Sloop of War fitted up as a rocket Ship,<sup>6</sup> the latter anchoring within reach of our battery, we were enabled to play on her to great effect and compelled her to change her position. all this day and the succeeding night the Enemy kept up a brisk fire on us of Shot Shells and Rockets. In the course of the day their prizes from Alexandria anchored above them, and out of the reach of our cannon the work of our Battery went on, five light field pieces from four to Six pounders arrived and were planted and we had every hope of soon receiving some long thirty two pounders from Washington, We built a furnace for hot shot, and time only appeared necessary to make ourselves formidable— The whole of the 4th and 5th an incessant fire was kept up by the Enemy night and day, he had once attempted landing at night it is supposed with an intention of Spiking the Guns of our battery but was repulsed by the picket guard—my former plan of annoying him by advancing Guns was adopted to better effect than before, the Rocket Ship laying close in shore was much cut up by a twelve pounder and two Sixes carried to a point. Scarcely a shot missed his hull and for one hour we drew to this point the fire of all the Enemies force—the cool indifference of my Sailors to the danger to which they were exposed was very remarkable and the intrepidity of Captain Griffith of the Alexandria Artillery his officers and men, merit the highest eulogiums they fought their Six pounders until their amunition was expended and coolly retired with their Guns when ordered to do so under a shower of the Enemies Shot—

We now as if by mutual consent ceased all hostilities, some thirty two pounders arrived. Carpenters were employed to make Carriages, two mortars, a large quantity of amunition and an abundance of Shot and Shells reached us, two Barges were equipping and every thing promised that we should speedily be put in a proper state for annoying the Enemy, in the evening two frigates anchored alone above us making his whole force

	Guns
Two Frigates carrying	96
Three Bomb Ships "	30
One Sloop of War fitted as a rocket Ship	26
One Brig "	18
One Schooner "	1
Two Barges "	2
Total	173

The Guns mounted in the Battery were three Eighteen pounders two twelve pounders Six Six pounders and two fours, my two mortars were without carriages as were all my thirty twos for notwithstanding every effort was made by the Government at Washington to have them made there, as by myself on the spot they could not be completed in time

On the morning of the 6th. the Enemy shewed a disposition to move, I advised General Hungerford of the same and prepared to meet them with hot Shot, about twelve o'clock the two Frigates got underway with a fair wind and tide and stood down for us, the Rocket Sloop Bomb Vessels, Brig Schooner and prizes following in succession the Gun Boats endeavouring to flank us on our right, I immediately dispatched an officer to General Hungerford to request him to take the position agreed upon in the woods on the heights but from the distance of his camp and the quick approach of the Enemy he was unable to march before the firing commenced and after that period almost impossible as I have understood from the vast quantities of Shot Shells and Rockets which were showered over the hills and fell among his troops—

As the Enemy approached a well directed fire was kept up from the Battery with hot and cold shot and my brave officers and men stood the broadsides of the Ships with unparalleled firmness. I anxiously expected the militia would open their fire of musquetry, but was disappointed the cause was not explained until after the firing ceased— finding that the whole of the Enemies fire was directed at my force and that in a few minutes all his force would be brought to bear on me and (entertaining no hopes of preventing his passing) as some of my men had already been killed and wounded, I determined not to make a useless sacrifice. And when the Enemy was on the point of anchoring abreast the Battery, after sustaining his fire one hour and a quarter I directed the officers and men to retire behind a hill on our left and be in rediness to charge the Enemy if he should land to Spike our Guns. The two Frigates anchored abreast, the Bombs Sloops and smaller Vessels passed outside them, all pouring into the Battery and neighbouring woods a tremendous fire of every description of missile In the woods on the left a company of Riflemen from Jefferson County Virginia under Captain George W Humphreys greatly distinguished themselves by a well directed fire on the Enemies decks, as did a company of militia under the command of Captain Gena<sup>7</sup> who was posted by me on the right—the first lost one man killed and one Seargent and four privates wounded, the latter two privates killed— The Company of artillery which so much distinguished itself on a former occasion behaved with no less gallantry to day and it affords me much pleasure to observe that the militia who came under my immediate notice and were attached to my command voluntarily or otherwise conducted themselves in a manner which reflects on them and their Country the highest honor many before the battle requested to be posted near me, and there was

no instance where one offered to retire until I gave the order to retreat and it was not necessary to repeat the order to rally.— Captain Grayson<sup>8</sup> of the marines is a brave and zealous officer he had volunteered to come with his detachment under me at Baltimore those veterans who so much distinguished themselves under their Gallant though unfortunate commander<sup>9</sup> at Bladenburg were all willing to try another battle they have been again unsuccessful but no less courageous two of them have fallen—

Captain Spencer of the U S Artillery late second in command at Fort Washington and now in command of the officers and men stationed there were attached to my command by the War Department— they have given the most unquestionable proof that it was not want of courage on their part which caused the destruction of that Fort— Captain Spencer his officers and men merit the attention of their Country and have incurred my esteem three of them were killed— The remnant of the Crew of the *Essex* behaved as usual. Lieutenant Barnwall received on this day his third wound, Doctor Hoffman was also wounded in the head. To particularize the good conduct of each individual placed under my orders would swell too much the bulk of this letter, several Lieutenants and midshipmen of the navy as well as many young Gentlemen of the neighbourhood volunteered to serve under my orders and near my person, they all conducted themselves with great courage and made themselves of great utility before and during the battle, and I shall take an opportunity of making you more particularly acquainted with their names and merits— after the Bombs Gun vessels and prizes had all passed the Frigates<sup>10</sup> proceeded down and anchored abreast Indian Head where a constant firing was kept up until after Sun Set but I am fearful with but little success on our part—

The number we have had killed and wounded on this occasion I cannot ascertain exactly, I am induced to believe however it does not exceed thirty, and when we consider the constant fire which had been kept up by the enemy for the four days preceeding their passage by the fort we should esteem ourselves very fortunate, his damage can never be known by us, some of his Ships were much crippled and I should suppose his loss considerable.

I have understood that in order to bring their Guns to bear on our Battery they cut away the upper part of their ports and took the inner trucks from their Gun carriages When they had passed down I sent a torpedo after them, it was heard to explode about nine at night but I have not learnt the effect it produced— I have the Honor to be with much respect Your obt. & Humbl. Sevt.

D Porter

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 27 (M125, Roll No. 39).

1. See p. 245.
2. On 7 July 1814, Secretary Jones appointed John H. Clack an acting lieutenant and ordered him to report to *Argus*. His lieutenant's commission dated from 9 December 1814.
3. *Fairy*.
4. *Meteor*.
5. *Aetna*.
6. *Erebus*.
7. Probably Captain Joseph Janney, Sixth Regiment (Essex County), Virginia militia.
8. Alfred Grayson was brevetted a captain in the Marine Corps on 18 June 1814.
9. Captain Samuel Miller, U.S.M.C., was wounded at Bladenburg.
10. Bomb vessels *Aetna*, *Devastation*, and *Meteor*; frigates *Seahorse* and *Euryalus*.



CAPTAIN OLIVER H. PERRY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Georgetown, September 9. 1814.

Sir,

The Battery under my direction at the Indian Head was of too small calibre to make much impression on the Enemy as they descended the Potomac on the 5th instant. A single 18 pounder, which arrived only 30 minutes before the firing began, ill supplied with ammunition, was the only Gun that could be of much service. The Field pieces (6 pounders) under the direction of that excellent Officer Major Peter, of the Georgetown and Captain Birch<sup>1</sup> of the Washington Volunteers and Captain Lewis of General Stewards Brigade kept up a very spirited fire— Those officers, together with Captains Stull and Davidson, and their brave men behaved in the handsomest manner, and rendered all the assistance their limited means afforded—

The ammunition of the 18 pounder, and of several of the sixes, being expended; and the fire of the Enemy from two Frigates, two sloops of war, two Bombs, one Rocket ship, and several smaller vessels being very heavy; it was thought adviseable by General Stewart, Major Peter and myself to retire a short distance in the rear. This was done in good order, after sustaining their fire for more than an hour. General Stuart and Colonel Beall were much exposed during the whole time of the cannonading. It would be presumption in me to speak in commendation of these veterans— I cannot, however, avoid expressing my admiration of their conduct. The few seamen (of the *Guerriere*) under the immediate command of Lieut Read,<sup>2</sup> of the *Java*, exhibited their usual bravery. Indeed, in the whole of this affair, every officer and man did his duty. Major Stewart of the 36th Regt. of Infantry was constantly with me and rendered all the assistance in his power.

The advantageous situation we occupied prevented the Enemy from doing us much injury. Only one man was wounded. I have the honour to be, very respectfully, your obedt. servant

O. H. Perry

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 34 (M125, Roll No. 39).

1. Captain Benjamin Burch commanded a company of artillerymen from the Washington militia.

2. On 6 August 1814, while serving at Sackets Harbor, George C. Read was ordered by Secretary Jones to join Captain Perry at Baltimore as *Java's* first lieutenant.

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Balto Sept 9th. 1814

Sir

In pursuance of your instructions, I have to inform you, that on the 3rd. Inst. I proceeded down the Potomac with three small Fire Vessels under the protection of 4 Barges or Cutters, maned with about Sixty Seamen armed with muskets, destined against two of the Enemy's Frigates and a Bomb Ship,<sup>1</sup> which lay about 2½ miles below Alexandria—

At 9 A.M. in advance of the Fire Vessels in my Gig, finding no Colours displayed at Alexandria, but a Swedish Ensign onboard a Schooner—being near the wharves, I hailed and ordered the American Flag to be hoisted, ~~otherwise, that I would set Fire to the Town.~~ After seeing the Flag hoisted, I directed the Fire Vessels (which were conducted by Lt. Newcomb, Lt. Forrest and Sailing Master Ramage) to proceed on to the objects of attack, and I have no doubt, would have succeeded in destroying two at least of the Enemy's Ships, had not the Wind failed them some time before & particularly after they had reached the uppermost Ship, within the range of musket Shot. At this time perceiving the whole of the Enemy's Barges in motion, I directed Lt. Newcomb who, commanded the van vessel, after giving her a proper direction, to set Fire to her—and after Mr. Ramage came up, gave him the same orders— the vessel under charge of Lt Forrest, was Fired by the Pilot without orders, some distance above the others.—

Of the Enemy's Boats, some were employed in towing off the Fire Vessels, and the rest in pursuit of our four Cutters, my own Gig, and a small Boat with three Oars without a rudder; they did not however, venture to come within musket Shot, altho, their Force and Numbers were more than threble ours but continued at a distance, firing their Great Guns for 30 or 35 Minutes, and then retired to their Ships again.—

On the 4th Inst. I had another Fire Vessel prepared, but it being calm, I ordered Lt. Newcomb<sup>2</sup> and the Four Cutters, to proceed with one of the remaining Lighters of the Yard, having an 18 pounder in her, to attack the Bomb Ship, which in the anxiety of the Enemy to get below the temporary Forts erecting by my Gallant associates Capts. Porter and Perry, had been left exposed to attack. At sun set just as I was about to give orders to attack the Bomb,<sup>3</sup> I discovered one of the Enemy's Frigates behind [*beyond*] the point forming the entrance of Washington's reach, which necessarily obliged me to relinquish this determination, and give orders to proceed across to the Virginia Shore, to haul up the Boats and place the Lighter in a situation to be defended against the Enemy's Barges.—

Having reconnoitr'd the Enemy, on returning to the Lighter at 9 P.M. I seized a man under suspicious circumstances, on the Beach near to a small Boat, about a mile above the Enemy's uppermost Ship, that again induced me to change my position to the opposite side of the River, where, after getting the Cutters hauled up, placing the Lighter in an advantageous position, and my musket men upon the top of a Cliff overlooking the River, I was at 11 P.M. attacked by all the Enemy's Barges, but which, by the cool intrepidity of Lt. Newcomb, having charge of the Lighter, assisted by Lt. Forrest, S Master Ramage, M Mate Stockton & Midshn. Whitlock<sup>4</sup> and 45 Seamen with muskets, the Enemy was not only repulsed, but in less than 20 Minutes, thrown into the utmost confusion and driven back to his Ships, and I have sufficient reason to believe, with great Loss, altho' the only injury sustained on our part, was one man wounded onboard the Lighter.—

The Enemy thus repulsed, and no prospect of doing him further injury in this way, as his rearmost Ship was not more than a mile distant, I had the Lighter shifted further up, and at 7 A.M. a Fire Vessel brought down for the purpose of assailing him in conjunction with the Battery at the White House under the command of Capt Porter—but in this I was again disappointed, as that excellent Officer, after using every possible exertion, was not able in so

short a time as had been afforded him, to erect a Work sufficiently strong, to check the Enemy any length of time; otherwise, I conceive I should have found no difficulty in effecting his destruction

At the time the Enemy silenced the Battery, the Fire Ship, under full Sail, was about a mile above his uppermost vessels, when I found myself under the necessity of ordering her to be set on Fire, and at the same time, our Boats to retire to prevent their being taken possession of by his numerous Barges.—

Altho' I did not succeed in the destruction of any of the Enemy's Vessels, I am never-the-less convinced, that the expedition was in many points of view, attended with good effect, consequently I feel it a duty to recommend to your notice, the Officers and Seamen engaged in the same, as in two of the Fire Vessels, Lt. Newcomb and S. Master Ramage, manifested so much zeal, as to continue onboard steering them, until they were enveloped in the flames, and obliged to jump overboard to avoid sharing the fate of the vessels themselves. I am also indebted to the exertions of Lt. Forrest, who volunteered his Services, and altho' very much indisposed at the time, afforded all the assistance in his power—

Permit me at the same time to recommend to your attention, Mr. Stockton, Masters Mate who, not only rendered me essential Service as an acting Aide-de-Camp, but in every other situation, manifested a zeal and intrepidity not to be shaken: also, Midshn. Whitlock whose conduct in every part of the service I highly approve. Mr Thomas Herbert a young Gentleman of Alexandria & Mr. Parry, Pilot, who volunteered their services, also deserve well of their Country—

The conduct of the Seamen for energy and patriotism, was not even excelled by that of their Officers.—

At the time I took possession of Alexandria, there were 1500 pounds of fresh Beef lying on the Wharf ready to be delivered to the Boats of the Enemy's Ships, which were then only 2½ or 3 miles below the Town, & I mention this to shew the state, that place was in at the time.—

In justice to Major Kemper, commanding a Detachment of the militia of Genl. Hungerfords Brigade, it is but proper I mention, that on taking possession of Alexa. he immediately marched his detachment to my assistance and which at once secured the Town against any Force the Enemy could send back.—

The quantity of Flour the Enemy was enabled to take from Alexa., I found on enquiry to be not more than between 14 & 16,000 Barrels.—

As respects the manner of my reception by the citizens of Alexa. when I landed and took possession of that place, I shall inform you hereafter in a separate communication.—<sup>5</sup> With great Respect I have the Honor to be Sir, Yr Obt Servt

Jn<sup>o</sup> Rodgers

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 33 (M125, Roll No. 39).

1. Frigates *Seahorse* and *Euryalus* and bomb vessel *Devastation*.

2. For Newcomb's account of this action, see Newcomb to Rodgers, 5 Sept. 1814, pp. 250-51.

3. *Devastation*.

4. Ephraim Whitlock's midshipman's warrant dated from 1 January 1812.

5. Rodgers did not mention this subject in subsequent correspondence.

## Naval Preparations for the Defense of Baltimore

*Commodore Rodgers received Secretary Jones's orders of 19 and 23 August<sup>1</sup> too late to conduct reinforcements from the Delaware station to the aid of the capital. Instead, his naval contingent arrived in Baltimore on 25 August, where, encountering a city in near panic, Rodgers quickly organized all the naval forces to assist the military in defending that place against an anticipated attack by the British. When Secretary Jones ordered Rodgers and his men deployed against the British squadron plundering Alexandria, anxious Baltimoreans demanded his return. With the crisis in the Potomac over by 5 September, Rodgers left Virginia to establish a strong naval presence at Baltimore. Besides manning vessels in the harbor, Rodgers established batteries on the shoreline to the east and west of Fort McHenry, as well as a bastion of batteries and entrenchments on Hampstead Hill that was designed to protect the city from an attack from the east.*

1. See pp. 199 and 201-2.

### COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Balto Aug 27. 1814

Sir

Enclosed is a copy of my Letter of the 23d Inst.<sup>1</sup> which, if you did not receive, will apprise you when I left New Castle; and I now have to inform you that, altho' by forced marches—night & Day, I was only able to reach this place at 9 O'clock of the evening of the 25th Inst,— at a time, when the account had already reached here, that the Enemy was in possession of Bladensburg and the Capitol;— which disaster made it necessary to halt at least until I could gain information of Genl. Winder's position, to enable me to make the necessary arrangements to unite my Force with his in the least possible time—

Yesterday morning I gained the intelligence that, the Genl., with the remnant of his Forces, was at Montgomery Court House, and immediately sent an express to inform him where I was, to ascertain his dispositions, and to acquaint him that, I was in readiness to march to his assistance in whatever direction he might advise. In advance of the Army, Genl. Winder and suit, arrived here, early this morning, and already an understanding, relative to a cooperation of the Naval Forces under my command, with those of the Army, under his, has taken place.—

My uniting the Seamen & marines of my own Ship,<sup>2</sup> to those of the Flotilla and Capt Porter's, which are momentarily expected, constitute a Force of between 8 & 9 hundred effective men, and which, with the assistance of Capts. Porter and Perry and master Commdt. Spence who have volunteered their services to act under my orders I shall have organized on the principle of a Brigade to act either with the Army, or onboard the Flotilla at this place, as the pressure of the times may render necessary.—

Unfortunately a misunderstanding at present exists between Brigdr. Genl. Winder of the U States Army and Lieut Genl. Smith of the militia, relative to the command of the Land Forces—both claiming the right of priority;— this will not, I hope however, retard the service in any essential degree, as Genl. Winder has in a manner much to his honor I conceive, consented to waive his



pretensions to rank for the present and assist in the necessary preparations for the defence of this place, and annoyance of the Enemy, until the decision of the Government shall be made known.—<sup>3</sup>

We are yet ignorant of the dispositions of the Enemy further than, that he has bent his course either towards Annapolis, or his Ships on the Patuxent; from the information obtained however, the prevalent opinion is, that he intends to Embark.—<sup>4</sup>

I should have written earlier, had I known where to have addressed you.—<sup>5</sup>

I have only further to add that, I hope our little force on the principle already explained, will be able to render services of moment, and that you will approve of the arrangements I am at present about to make With great respect I have the honor to be Sir Yr Obt Servt

Jn<sup>o</sup> Rodgers

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 139 (M125, Roll No. 38).

1. See pp. 200–201.

2. *Guerriere*.

3. Brigadier General Winder was the commander of the Tenth Military District, which encompassed Baltimore, and because of this federal service, he outranked Major General Samuel Smith of the Maryland militia. After the debacle at Bladensburg and Washington, however, the Baltimoreans supported Smith. Acting Secretary of War James Monroe eventually confirmed Smith's command. For more on this controversy, see Sheads, *Rockets' Red Glare*, pp. 61–62.

4. The British troops reembarked at Benedict on 30 August.

5. Secretary Jones returned to Washington on 28 August.

#### COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS: GENERAL ORDERS

The pressure of the times calling for the Cooperation of the Naval Forces of our Country with thos of the Army; I have by authority of Instructions from the Hon. The Secty. of the Navy, assumed the command of the Naval Forces on this Station; and to render the same as useful as possible in the present eventful Crisis; do hereby direct, that a Brigade be formed of the whole, and divided into Two Regiments or Divisions the 1st. of which is to consist of the Officers, Seamen and Marines of the U States Frigate *Guerriere*, as well as those of the late U States Frigate *Essex*. And the 2nd. Division, of the Officers and Seamen of the Flotilla with the addition of such Volunteers as may tender their Services to either of said Divisions.—

The 1st. Regiment is to be commanded by Capt Porter and the 2nd. by Capt Perry.— Master Comdt. Spence to do the duties of Adjutant.— Purser Hamilton the duties of Commissary, and Purser's Halsey<sup>1</sup> and Skinner the duties of Assistant Commissaries.—

Signed John Rodgers Como. Comdg. Brigade

Baltimore Aug 28th. 1814

LB, DLC, Rodgers Family Papers, Series III-B, Container 64, Order Book.

1. Samuel Hambleton, whose rank as purser dated from 25 April 1812, was ordered to *Java* in August 1814. James M. Halsey's rank also dated from 25 April 1812. He had served as *Guerriere's* purser since October 1813.

MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Baltimore August 31. 1814

Sir,

The Oars were not to be procured in Baltimore, on the arrival of your order.— all the Carpenters which could be collected, have been at work; and the order has been executed as expeditiously, as under existing circumstances, was possible.

We deplore your absence, as you were looked upon the Bulwark of the City.

By a return made to me from the Lazaretto, I find there are but 25 men able to leave here for Washington: they will set out ~~tomorrow~~ immediately. I have the honor to remain yr vy obt st

R T Spence

LS, MdHi, War of 1812 Collection, MS 1846.

MAJOR GENERAL SAMUEL SMITH, MARYLAND MILITIA, TO  
COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Head Quarters 1 Sept: 1814

Sir

I have received your letter of yesterday<sup>1</sup>—your retrograde to Snowden's, is something, but unless you return to Baltimore immediately the injury done cannot be retrieved, inded I doubt whether it can be repaired— the preparations you had intended can (I presume) not be perfected, and this day all our 12s and 18s pounders depart for Washington as I informed you yesterday— I hope you will have had sufficient influence to cause them also to retrograde and have the honor to be— your obt.

S. Smith Major General

LS, MdHi, War of 1812 Collection, MS 1846. Addressed: "Commodore Rogers/at Snowdens/or Washington."

1. Rodgers apprised Smith that he had positioned his force closer to Washington but not far from Baltimore. He could thus protect both cities. Rodgers to Smith, 31 Aug. 1814, DLC, Samuel Smith Family Papers (Reel 2).

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO  
MAJOR GENERAL SAMUEL SMITH, MARYLAND MILITIA

Washington Sept. 1st. 1814 11 PM

Sir

Your letter of this date reached me at 6 PM— Would to God! it was in my power to return to Baltimore immediately as I am well assured that our seamen would be of more service there than they are likely to be here;— There are now however 500 Encamped at Snowdens ready to march to Baltimore— the rest

are here & in the Vicinity of Alexandria so that you may calculate on having the whole detachment, Except about 80 who are on the Virginia side with Capt. Porter, in 12 hours from the time it is ascertained that the Enemy manifests any thing like a determinate disposition to attack Baltm.— for the men who are here I have the promise of stages to conduct them back so that they may be conveyed there as soon those who are at present at Snowdens— I am now preparing three fire vessels at the Navy Yard, & if a favorable opportunity offers shall assail the Enemy in that way tomorrow night— his force is two Frigates, two Sloops of War, a Gun Brig, & a Rocket Schooner—<sup>1</sup> I can assure you that I feel a deep interest in the welfare of Baltm. & am Satisfied that I shall be with you with  $\frac{7}{8}$ ths of my force should the Enemy attack you; & this is an object on which I have set my heart, as I feel confident from what I have already seen that they will be made to curse the hour they undertook the expedition— From what I have witnessed here I cease to be surprised at any thing the Enemy was permitted to do:— altho he has received an additional force it is presumed his Effective Strength is not greater than that with which he attacked this place, oweing more particularly to desertion than any other cause— by all accounts he must have lost from 6 to 700 men by desertion (In haste) With great respect I am Sir Yr Ot. Sevt

Jn<sup>o</sup> Rodgers

The Secty of the Navy has informed me, this moment, that the Artillery you mention is ordered Back to Baltm.

ALS, DLC, Samuel Smith Family Papers (Reel 2).

1. Captain Gordon's squadron consisted of the frigates *Seahorse* and *Euryalus*, bomb vessels *Devastation*, *Aetna*, and *Meteor*, rocket ship *Erebus*, and dispatch boat *Anna Maria*.

MAJOR GENERAL SAMUEL SMITH, MARYLAND MILITIA, TO  
COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Head Quarters, Baltimore 2nd. Sept. 1814

Sir,

I have recd. yours & regret that the Idea of setting fire to two frigates<sup>1</sup> Should induce the Government to detain so large & so efficient a force as yours from our Aid, because Altho you come at the time the British are before us, your Station is not Assigned & in the Meantime the Sloops of War<sup>2</sup> intended to defend the Western Branch<sup>3</sup> are not prepared— if we are Attacked on that side we are not defended, it is our Weak Point, I am persuaded you can do no good where you are— you may cause the Burning of Alexandria— What has become of the Ammunition secured in the Chapel— in haste, yours

S. Smith Major General

LS, MdHi, War of 1812 Collection, MS 1846. Smith addressed this to Rodgers in Washington.

1. *Seahorse* and *Euryalus*.  
2. *Erie* and *Ontario*.  
3. Patapsco River.

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE

Balto. Sept 8th. 1814

Sir

You are requested to have one of the two Sloops of War (whichever can be most readily prepared for the objects intended) Moored on the southern side of the channel of the Patapsco as a Block Ship,<sup>1</sup> and in a line Southerd between her and the Shore, the Barges, so that the whole may act in conjunction with the several Forts (namely Forts McHenry and those above)<sup>2</sup> to the annoyance of the Enemy, without the risk of annoying each other, that is, the Flotilla the Forts.—

The Flotilla is supplied with the necessary requisites for Service, and you are requested to have the Block Ship supplied in like manner.— Respectfully &c

Signed Jno. Rodgers

LB, DLC, Rodgers Family Papers, Series III-B, Container 64, Order Book.

1. *Erie*.

2. Forts Babcock and Covington were situated on the Ferry Branch of the Patapsco River, to the west of Fort McHenry.

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO COMMODORE ALEXANDER MURRAY

Baltimore Sept 9. 1814

Dear Sir

I reached here the evening before last direct from Washington.—

There are now upwards of 15,000 Regulars and Militia exclusive of about 1,000 Seamen and Marines which I have formed into a Brigade consisting of Two Regiments, & now encamped in the environs of this Town. Forts, Redoubts and Entrenchments are thrown up all round the Town and the place now has nothing to fear, even should the Enemy make his appearance tomorrow.— It is understood however that he has descended the Bay and whatever might have been his intentions that he will not now attempt an Attack on this place with any such Force as he can Command at present.<sup>1</sup> I hope to leave here in two or three days for Phila., as I begin to feel tired of playing Soldier, and more particularly as there will not be any occasion for our Services.—

I recd. your Letter<sup>2</sup> just at the moment of commencing the Line of March from this place for Washington where, after my Arrival, I was constantly employed in that kind of way, as to deprive me the greater part of time, of Pen and Paper—

Please to present my respectful regards to Mrs. Murray and family, and believe me with great respect and regard Dr. Sir &c

Signed J Rodgers

LB, Rodgers Family Papers, Series III-B, Container 64, Letter Book. Rodgers addressed this to Murray in Philadelphia.



1. Concerned because Captain Gordon's squadron had not rejoined the main fleet in the Chesapeake, the British diverted their force to the Potomac to ascertain his circumstances. This activity around 9–10 September led many Americans to believe that Baltimore would be spared.

2. This letter was not found.

LIEUTENANT SOLOMON RUTTER, FLOTILLA SERVICE, TO  
COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Sir

I hereby report to you that the Battery with t[h]ree long eighteen pounders at the Lazaretto is fit for Service with one Hundred rounds and man'd agreeable to your orders Eight Barges up with long eight and four with long Twelves and all with gunades Eighteens man'd and ready for Service. Three small Barges the t[h]ree Large Barges are at the Point yet under the Directions of the navy agent<sup>1</sup>

Men Distributed as follows		
8 Barges	Each 34 Men	272
3 Small Barges	each 22, do	66
Men on Board <i>Erie</i> —		24
In the Battery—		45
Remaining at Lazaretto		<u>114</u>
	Total	521
Deserted unfit for Service & Sick—		<u>50</u>
		471

Lazaretto Sept. 11th 1814  
Sol<sup>n</sup>. Rutter Lieut. U S Flotilla

ALS, DLC, Rodgers Family Papers, Series III-B, Container 51, fols. 5562–63.

1. James Beatty.

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO  
MAJOR GENERAL SAMUEL SMITH, MARYLAND MILITIA

Fort McHenry 10 O'clock Sunday morg [11 September 1814]

Sir

I have Just ordered an officer<sup>1</sup> & 80 sailors to occupy fort Wadsworth<sup>2</sup> the Sea fencibles now there being all sick— The Six Gun Battery called fort Covington<sup>3</sup> I shall have manned if possible by a dectmt. [*detachment*] from the flotilla I am now making my distributions & shall inform you of the same as they are made

I shall sink obstructions if possible

J Rodgers

ALS, DLC, Samuel Smith Family Papers (Reel 2).

1. Lieutenant Henry S. Newcomb.
2. Fort Covington.
3. Fort Babcock.

## Who Commands the Chesapeake Bay Flotilla?

*Stymied by the rigorous British blockade of the Chesapeake, Master Commandant Robert T. Spence remained in Baltimore throughout 1814, a caretaker for the sloops of war Ontario and Erie and commander of the naval station there. Since its creation in 1813, Joshua Barney's flotilla, whose home base was Baltimore, enjoyed a special status within the Navy. Barney's chain of command led directly to the secretary of the navy. After the British invasion of Washington, Secretary Jones placed Commodore Rodgers in command of the naval contingent at Baltimore. In early September 1814, while Barney was recovering from a bullet wound suffered during the Battle of Bladensburg and Commodore Rodgers was in Washington preparing a rearguard attack on the British squadron, a dispute arose between Spence and Solomon Frazier, Barney's second in command.*

MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Baltimore September 1 1814

Sir,

Your Order requiring all officers of the Navy & Flotilla to report themselves to me, having been read to Lieutenant Frazure he has refused to obey it,<sup>1</sup>

This example of insubordination will have the most pernicious effect unless its author be in Some manner called to an account

I have not thought it expedient to arrest him, until I consulted you on the Subject—indeed the good of the Service requires; nay demands his punishment Respy. Sir your obt. Sev't.

R T Spence

P.S. I understand that he intends to know no officer but Commodore Barney,— I have been endeavouring to collect the men belon[g]ing to the flotilla but in consequence of Mr. Frazure's conduct, it is difficult to make the officers understand that they are bound to obey naval officers, I request to be honoured with your order on the Subject.—

LS, DLC, Rodgers Family Papers, Series II, Container 26.

1. Spence sent Jones a copy of Rodgers's order. Spence to Jones, 3 Sept. 1814, p. 266.

MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Naval Camp Baltimore Sept 2 1814

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you, that, to the small part of the Military Brigade, left here by Commod. Rodgers, others, who have arrived here since his departure, have been added; and that I have at present encamped, about One Hundred men, together with eight travelling 12 pounders, completely equip'd for movement.

The Camp is in a salubrious, and commanding situation calculated, from its elevated site, to hold a large range of country in check.

As fast as the Flotilla men arrive, I shall dispose of them to the best possible advantage:—keeping in view the security of our Ships and Barges, in every arrangement.

Hoping my exertions will be rewarded with your approbation, I have the honor to remain with great respect, your most obt st,

R. T. Spence

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 34½ (M147, Roll No. 5).

MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Naval Camp Baltimore Sept 3d 1814

Sir

I did myself the honor of addressing you yesterday, stating the arrangements made by me under the orders of Comd. Rodgers. After much difficulty in getting the men picked up, and sent to the Lazaretto, with the view of taking them immediately to Camp, where I have every thing prepared to carry into full execution, the Comd's. orders;— Lieut Frazier of the Flotilla arrives at the Lazaretto, countermands my orders; and prevents the men leaving there with an officer sent to receive them: declaring, that he neither knew "Capt Spence, or Comd. Rodgers."

At a time like the present, when subordination is so essential, such conduct if not punished, will lead to the most baleful consequences. I have foreborn to arrest him, untill I receive your order, or the order of Comd. Rodgers;— in the meantime, nearly 200 Seaman must remain idle at the Lazto.;— and the Batteries under my command destitute of men. I have the honor to remain, with great respect yr obt st

R. T. Spence

Copy of a general order signd

All Officers of the Flotilla and Navy, are directed in my absence, to report themselves immediately to Capt Spence.

(Signd) John Rodgers

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 36 (M147, Roll No. 5).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE

R. T. Spence Esqr.  
M.C. U.S. Navy Commanding  
at Baltimore

Navy Department  
Sept. 3d. 1814  
½ past 11 P.M.

Sir,

The enclosed order to Lieut. Frazier will sufficiently explain the principles upon which the respective Services of the Navy proper and of the flotilla rest, when distinct, and when combined.—

Lieut. F. is a brave and meritorious officer, and as there may be some feeling on the occasion among the gallant officers of the flotilla under the idea of the distinct nature of the service, it will be well by a conciliatory conduct to remove any scruples which may exist.—

The times call for harmony and mutual exertion and I am well assured you will do what is proper upon the occasion.— I am respectfully &c.

W: Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 412 (M149, Roll No. 11).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO  
LIEUTENANT SOLOMON FRAZIER, FLOTILLA SERVICE

Lieut. Frazier  
Com'dg. Officer of the  
U.S. Flotilla, Baltimore

Navy Department  
Sept. 3d. 1814.  
½ past 11. P.M.

Sir,

Commodore Rodgers having been ordered on to Baltimore for the defence of that place, and being the Senior Naval officer, will of course command all the naval forces there whether of the Flotilla, or of the Navy proper, whenever it shall be necessary to combine those forces for a common object, Commodore R on his departure from Baltimore with a part of his force for the temporary aid of this district, left Captain Spence of the Navy in command with orders for all officers of the Flotilla and Navy to report themselves to him.—

Captain Spence has informed me that you have declined to recognise the authority of Com: R. This I am persuaded has arisen from a mistaken sense of duty on your part, and not from a spirit of insubordination.—

In ordinary cases the Commodore would not have interfered with the command of the flotilla, which being a Special Service was under the command of a flotilla Officer Specially appointed and under the distinct order of the Navy Department.—

It is however self evident that whenever it shall be necessary to combine these forces, the Senior Officer, whether of the Navy proper or of the flotilla, will command.—

Having done justice to your motive and explained the principles upon which your duty rests, you will report yourself and the force under you to capt. Spence, agreeably to the order of Commodore Rodgers.—

When the occasion which has called for the concentration of the forces of the Navy proper and of the flotilla shall cease the latter will again be placed under the distinct command of its own officers.— I am respectfully &c.

W: Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, pp. 411–12 (M149, Roll No. 11).



MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Naval Camp Baltimore Sept 4, 1814

Sir,

Your letter to me inclosing one to Lieut Frazier, I have been honoured with. Lieut Frazier is at present absent from town, but will return tomorrow, when I shall send for him, deliver it, and pursue that conciliatory deportment, you have recommended;—which I [*have*] not fail'd to display on the occasion.

Harmony at this period, is so important to a union of effort, that a trifling sacrifice of feeling will be readily made to patriotism; and the desire all must feel in so troublous a time, to combine every exertion for the general good: with these sentiments, I hope you will rest assured, of my wish to pacify, unite, and exert myself for honor, and my Country. With great respect yr, vy, obt, st—

R. T. Spence

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 37 (M147, Roll No. 5).

MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Naval Camp Baltimore Sept 19, 1814

Sir,

Annex'd, is a copy of a letter from Comd. Rodgers. My appointment to Fort McHenry, is with the concurrence of Genl. Smith.<sup>1</sup>

Commod. Barney I understand, is to be exchange'd in a few days; and it being unpleasant to the Flotilla Officers, to act under the orders of Naval Commanders; (there being no necessity at present for their doing so) I shall resign the direction of that Force to its commanding Officer.

Fort Covington having become evacuated by the departure of Comd. Rodgers, I shall endeavour to beat up volunteers to reoccupy it. The Commodore's departure with so efficient a force, creates a deep gloom— indeed Sir: we have much to dread—our force is diminishing, and the hour of trial, I fear, is not yet past.— I have the honor to remain with high respect yr Obt st

R T Spence

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 45 (M147, Roll No. 5).

1. Major General Samuel Smith commanded the Third Division of the Maryland militia during the War of 1812 and after the debacle at Bladensburg was chosen to superintend the defense of Baltimore. After the British bombardment of Fort McHenry, Smith appointed Rodgers to the temporary command there when its commander, Lieutenant Colonel George Armistead, fell ill. On 19 September 1814, Jones ordered Rodgers to return to Philadelphia where he had been overseeing the construction of *Guerriere*, and so the command of the naval forces at Baltimore devolved to Spence. Jones to Rodgers, 19 Sept. 1814, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, pp. 418–19 (M149, Roll No. 11). On his departure, Rodgers placed Spence in temporary command at the fort until Armistead's recovery. Rodgers to Spence, 20 Sept. 1814, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 45, enclosure (M147, Roll No. 5). The copyist made an error in the date as the enclosure is dated after the cover letter.

## British Strategy after Washington

*After the British landing force had reembarked at Benedict, Admiral Cochrane decided to leave the Chesapeake and proceed north to Rhode Island for further military operations. He reversed his plans after Major General Robert Ross and Rear Admiral George Cockburn persuaded him to attack Baltimore before leaving the bay. The British had long held that city, the home of many American privateers, in opprobrium. Suspecting that Captain Gordon's squadron may have encountered resistance in the Potomac, Cochrane delayed the assault on Baltimore and ordered the fleet to his assistance. After sighting the squadron on 9 September, the entire fleet sailed northward up the bay.*

VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N., TO  
FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY VISCOUNT ROBERT SAUNDERS DUNDAS MELVILLE

Tonnant, Patuxent River 3rd. Sepr. 1814

My dear Lord,

The brilliant success that has attended our efforts upon the Continent has roused me a little from the most severe depression of Spirits I ever suffered. the recent occurances at home of the shameful conduct of some of my near relations has hurt me beyond what I can possibly describe<sup>1</sup> having brought up Lord Cochrane I had hopes of his rising to distinction & I yet see a chance of his innocence being established. but as for others I must remain mute— To bear with such evils is no easy task, the loss of Property is nothing but the odium attending such proceedings leaves a Sting behind felt by the whole of their connections. Through life I have Steered by my own Compass & I have too high an opinion of H.M's. Ministers for a moment to suppose that I shall suffer in their opinion by what has happened to others with neither of whom I Either agreed in Politics or opinions. Let me now congratulate your Lordship upon the destruction of all the Public property at Washington. The previous defeat of their Army at Bladensburg & the conflagration of their flotilla fleet at the head of this River it will take some millions Sterling to replace the injury they have sustained the short space of 8 days has accomplished all those objects & so much has been done with such a limited force I trust H. Maj's Ministers will place a further reliance on my recommendation & at least double our force so as we may be able to act with vigour the moment the sickly season is over, say the 5th. of Novr. the reinforcements should come out direct to the Chesapeake if Soldiers are not to be had pray send Marines but let them be selected as many of the Battalion here are slight lads unfit for the fatigues of the Field. I beg leave to recommend that a few troops of dismounted Cavalry be sent out with spare accoutrements also a Rifle Corps with spare Rifles. We must be upon a par to meet the Enemy with their own weapons. hitherto what I promised has been effected & if Peace makers will only stay their proceedings until Jonathan is brought to the feet of Gt. Britain, future Wars will be prevented. As Sepr. is a fatal month even for the Inhabitants of Virginia & more so for Strangers As soon as the Army is all reembarked I mean to proceed to the Northward & if possible try to surprize Rhode Island where we will quarter upon the Enemy & the Troops as well as the Ships meet with every refreshment About the close of

October we will move to the Southward & act agreeably to the information we may receive, if the reinforcements arrive I propose an attack upon Baltimore the most democratic town & I believe the richest in the Country. As this Town ought to be laid in Ashes, if the same opinion holds with H. Maj's. Ministers some hint ought to be given to Genl. Ross as he does not seem inclined to visit the Sins committed upon H. Maj's. Canadian Subjects upon the Inhabitants of this state. I do not mean this as any complaint for a better man nor a more zealous Officer does not exist. He is just what he ought to be & when he is better acquainted with the American Character he will possibly see as I do that like Spaniels they must be treated with great severity before you ever make them tractable. I believe his fear is that the discipline of his Army may suffer by a System to which they have not been accustomed but an arrangement may be made to obviate this evil. I am not of so savage a disposition as to conceive that measures of this sort ought to be resorted to except upon the most urgent occasions, but if you suffer their Troops to ruin your subjects in the Canadas & do not bring home your vengeance upon those the nearest to the seat of Govt. the Enemy will continue their conduct until Your North American Settlements are no longer worth holding. As the Season advances I propose going to the Carolinas Georgia &ca. & ending at N Orleans which I have not a doubt of being able to Subdue & thereby hold the Key of the Mississippi. Your Lordship will See by my public despatches that the Indians are coming forward in force<sup>2</sup> I have supplied them with 4,000 stand of arms, & 2000 more are going with the Vessel having Presents on bd. Capt. Gordon of the *Seahorse* is to have the comd. in the Glf of Mexico I hope for much from his activity & zeal. Let me close this Letter by soliciting Your Lships influence that this floating Army may be supplied with a liberal & not a sparing hand Send me flat bottomed Vessels that will act as Gun Vessels to cover landings & carry at least 100 Soldiers for a short distance this Coast requires them. abt. 25 or 30 such vessels wd. enable me to move with celerity & go up to the sources of the Enemies Rivers which cannot be done in the Ships of War or Transports. each Vessel shod. bring out a boat built flat but not what is called a Flat Boat Rather similar to a Ships launch. She is wanted to land Troops & Horses in shallow Water, the Gun Brigs & Gun Vessels will answer any purpose if a sufficient number are sent out & each Ship coming out ought to bring Supernumeraries. the Fleet is at least 1200 short I want 2000 to make up for occasional losses, this Service is different from all others & therefore requires a different treatment I ought to have at least 300 men disposeable as occasion may require. We often Acquire the Boats of the Country if they are manned by the cruising ships I can't send them on such Services as may be at the moment required I therefore beg that the No. of men I have mentioned may be sent out without a moment's delay. there are many other demands of mine which I pray your Lordship to cast an eye over— I am much at a loss for want of a Printing Press & a devil to work it with all his imps. I will now conclude & trust &ca—

(signed A. Cochrane—

LB, UkENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2345, fols. 11–12.

1. For more on the scandal surrounding Admiral Cochrane's nephew, Captain Sir Thomas Cochrane, see p. 135, note 4.

2. In an earlier letter to the Admiralty, Cochrane found that supplying the southern Indians with arms emboldened them against the Americans. Cochrane to Croker, 27 July 1814, UKLPR, Adm. 1/506, fols. 505–6.

[Extract]

REAR ADMIRAL EDWARD CODRINGTON, R.N., TO JANE CODRINGTON

No. 5)— 5th. Sepr. 1814. . . . We are going down this oven of a river<sup>1</sup> with a fine breeze, & after visiting the islands of Tangier where under the direction of Adl. Cockburn we have gone to a great expence, we shall quit it entirely for the present at least, & I hope with the troops in good health & ready for another dash. The sickly season here is about at its height, and from the uncommonly cadaverous appearance of the natives who are in health, the country with all its beauty of scenery is not fit for the habitation of social man. . . . 10th. Sepr. We could not get a communication with them in time to send it by the *Iphigenia*, but we now have to detail the proceedings of our ships in the Potomac, which will make a glorious addition to the business of Washington. They were commanded by Capt. Gordon of the *Seahorse* who lost a leg in Hoste's battle in the Adriatic: and his conduct on this occasion best describes his character.<sup>2</sup> Napier of the *Euryalus* (although not a son of Lady Sarah)<sup>3</sup> was wounded by a musket ball in the back of the neck; but he will do very well. They overcame difficulties which would have dismayed many men in either of the two professions, and they have brought out 21. prizes many of which they weighed caulked & masted as well as loaded; and then forced their way through the most difficult shoal navigation in spite of batteries erected to stop them & a vast number of troops firing down on their decks in the narrow parts. The frigates<sup>4</sup> were even obliged to take their guns out on account of getting aground & put them in again. In short it is nothing less brilliant than the capture of Washington, and those employed deserve laurel crowns.— We were bent on other plans; but hearing reports of vessels being sunk & batteries formed to prevent their return, we decided on making the safety of these ships our first consideration. We are relieved from a great load by their rejoining us with so little injury, because we had pushed twenty miles up the Potomac with our whole force in order to effect their recovery if necessary. Jonathan must I think be somewhat surprized to find a ship like the *Tonnant* accompanied by so large a fleet going up and down these rivers by night as well as by day without pilots, each taking care of the other as the colliers do going up the Sevin.—<sup>5</sup> We were going out of the Chesapeake directly: but the Chief<sup>6</sup> has assented to another operation here at the wish of the General<sup>7</sup> & Cockburn, which I think would have been much better deferred until our return from the Northward, according to the Admiral's own plan. I hope & think it will equally succeed, because we are determined it shall; but it would have been better insured by postponement I think, & without danger of illness: and I am decidedly of opinion that our operations elsewhere would have been more favorable to the army in Canada. . . .

E.C.—

ALS, UKLNMM, Papers of Sir Edward Codrington, COD/7/1, No. 5, letters from 5–10 Sept. 1814. Codrington wrote a series of letters to his wife marked No. 5 and dated from 5–21 September 1814. The fourteen sentences from the 5 September letter that are not printed here contain personal matters and derogatory references about the American character. Codrington did not write on 6 and 7 September. The 8 September entry is not printed here; it contains personal comments. There is no 9 September letter.



1. The invasion force descended the Patuxent River and sailed southward down the Chesapeake Bay.

2. Codrington has confused two battles against the French in the Adriatic in 1811. In March 1811 Captain Gordon served in a squadron under Captain William Hoste, R.N., at the Battle of Lissa. Gordon lost his leg in November 1811 at another Anglo-French engagement in the Adriatic but this time his squadron commander was Captain Murray Maxwell. For more on Gordon's earlier exploits, see Perrett, *Real Hornblower*, pp. 68–84.

3. Captain Charles Napier, R.N., (1786–1860) was a cousin of Lieutenant Colonel Charles James Napier, British Army, (1782–1853). The latter's mother was Lady Sarah Lennox.

4. *Seahorse* and *Euryalus*.

5. Phonetic for Severn River in western England.

6. Vice Admiral Sir Alexander F. I. Cochrane.

7. Major General Robert Ross.

## British Accounts of the Attack on Baltimore

For almost two weeks after the invasion of Washington, Cochrane was undecided where to strike next. He preferred to venture northward along the Atlantic coast, but, instead, allowed the urgings of Major General Ross and Rear Admiral Cockburn, and the approaching period of dangerous tidal currents in the Chesapeake Bay determine his next course of action. Baltimore had almost three weeks to prepare for the British. The latter's overconfidence, however, stemming from their rout of the American forces at Bladensburg, blinded them to their deficiencies.

In a joint operation that began in the predawn hours of 12 September 1814, Major General Ross led a contingent of forces that had disembarked at North Point, Maryland, and Admiral Cochrane commanded a bombardment flotilla off Fort McHenry. While proceeding along the road to Baltimore, Ross encountered American skirmishers and was mortally wounded, leaving his second, Colonel Arthur Brooke, Forty-fourth Regiment of Foot, in charge. Meanwhile, Cochrane left his larger ships off North Point and sailed up the Patapsco River with his shallower draft vessels, anchoring about four miles from the fort. While Brooke advanced toward Baltimore on the morning of 13 September, British ships bombarded the fort. Scuttled vessels at the entrance of Baltimore harbor near Fort McHenry, however, denied the British easy access to the city. Discouraged by this and the ineffectiveness of the bombardment, Cochrane decided that the Royal Navy could not assist Brooke.

The following letters depict the cooperation between the British services but also the problems. War Office instructions in the spring of 1814 detailed the command structure in joint operations. While the naval commander chose the targets and oversaw the landings, the army commander ruled on land and could reject an operation.<sup>1</sup> Brooke was prepared to assault Baltimore and asked Cochrane for a naval diversion. Cochrane expressed his misgivings about pressing on to Cockburn who relayed them to Brooke. Deprived of naval support, Brooke decided to forego the assault on Baltimore.

1. See Bathurst to Barnes, 20 May 1814, pp. 72–74. The Admiralty had passed this letter on to Cochrane.

REAR ADMIRAL EDWARD CODRINGTON, R.N., TO RESPECTIVE CAPTAINS

Memo. Tonnant 11th Sept. 1814  
The Royal Marines belonging to the Fleet are to be disposed of as follows.

<i>Surprize</i> — 38	<i>Diadem</i> — 12	<i>Dictator</i> — 14
<i>Diomede</i> — 17	<i>Regulus</i> — 14	<i>Trave</i> — 10
<i>Weser</i> — 9	<i>Melpomene</i> — 14	<i>Brune</i> — 17
<i>Thames</i> — 11	<i>Volcano</i> — 8	<i>Wolverine</i> — 18
<i>Madagascar</i> — 35	<i>Rover</i> — 20	<i>Severn</i> — 46

To be under the command of Lt. Col. Malcolm

<i>Seahorse</i> — 59	} To be under the command of Major Lewis.
<i>Havannah</i> — 48	

<i>Tonnant</i> — 110	<i>Albion</i> 80	} To be under the command of Capt Robyns.
<i>Royal Oak</i> — 45	<i>Ramillies</i> 100	

E.C.

Rear Adml. & Capt. of the Fleet.

The Marine Officers of the respective Ships will land with their Men; The Marines are not to take their Knapsacks but to land with only a Blanket each.— To be ready to land at the shortest notice.—

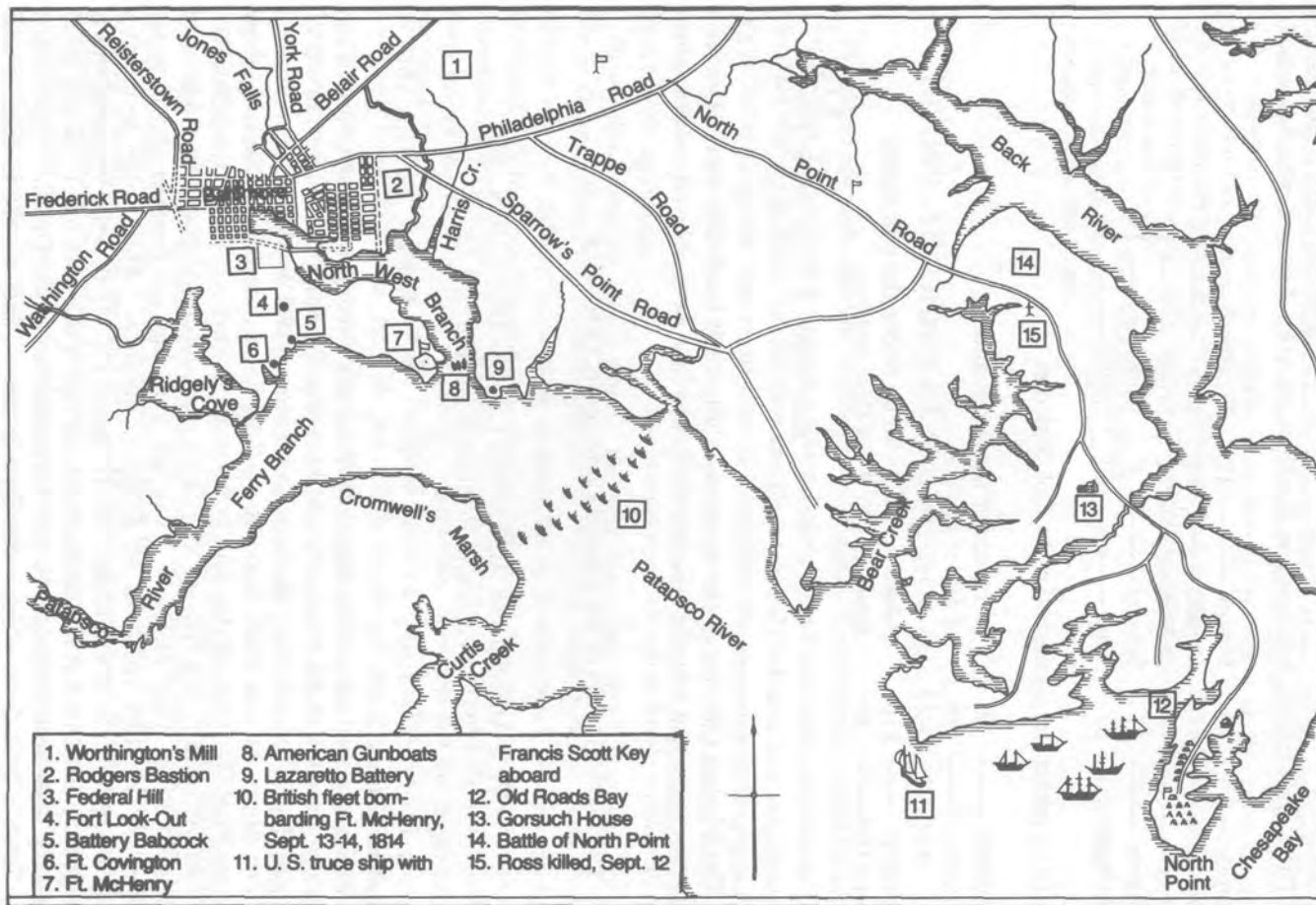
LB, UkLNMM, Papers of Sir Edward Codrington, COD/6/4.

VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N., TO  
MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT ROSS, BRITISH ARMY

*Surprize* 12. Sept. 1814

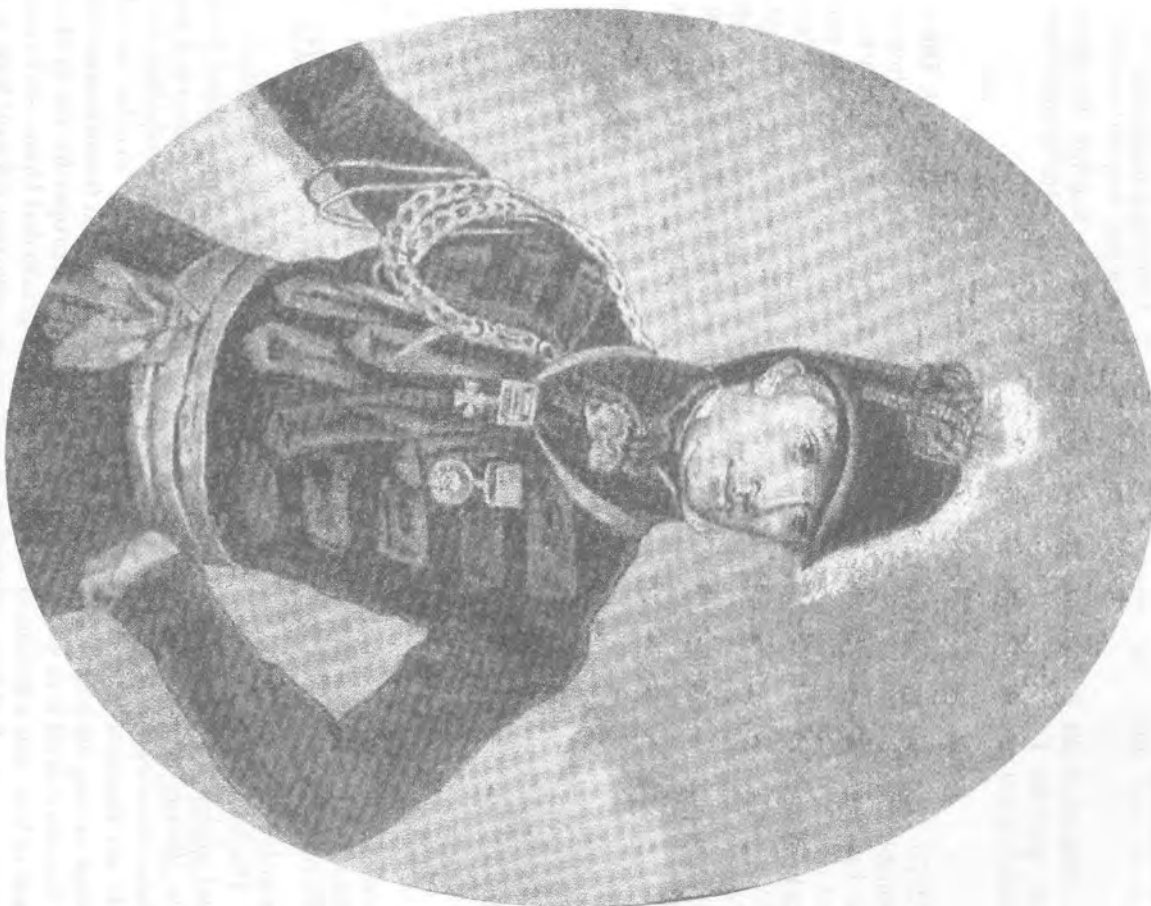
My dear General

We have moved up to Abt. four miles from the Fort<sup>1</sup> to wait the Arrival of the Bombs—which will All five in No. be here this Evening<sup>2</sup> *Asia* and the Three Frigates<sup>3</sup> are Arrived their Marines and Seamen Will be Made to Join some where Above as you Shall Appoint— The Enemy have been Sinking Ships across their Harbour All day, and in front of the Fort— They have A Number of Men At Work to the NE—of The Town upon Ground which forms a kind of Irregular Ridge (vid<sup>4</sup> plan)— I can see that they are ~~forming~~ throwing up breast Works with redoubts at different distances This Ridge terminates North—at the Eastern extremity—but it Appears to Me ~~that the Whole of this it Ridge~~ may be turned as the Backland Shews that it does not extend to any great distance ~~back and~~ it Seems to be a Continuation of the Ground Upon which the Town is built from ~~which~~ this Circumstance I inclines me to think it may be completely Turned—without the necessity taking it in front. The Numbers of persons employd I cannot ~~Speak~~ Ascertain of, of Course they have all at Work



Map 9. Battle of North Point and Baltimore, 12-14 September 1814

Robert Ross





they Can lay hold of—but I have seen Several divisions of Armed Men— I hope you will be Able to Understand what I now Send

Their frigate is not burned On Way— I trust you will get her—at daylight we begin God Bless You and Success to Bombard the fort Attend You— Yours Ever Sincerely

Alex<sup>r</sup> Cochrane

we Shall place the Bombs and begin to Bombard the Fort. You will find them over upon the Eastern Shore as the Enemy have forts upon the Western Side which it is not necessary to encounter

AC

ALS (?), UKENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2329, fols. 43–44. This is probably the autograph letter signed that was returned, unopened, and then revised and retained. The creases, folds, and seal indicate that it was sent to Ross and returned after his death. The address written by Cochrane reads, "On particular Service Majr. General Ross/&c/A Cochrane." The phrase "To be Sent With Expedition" is also possibly in Cochrane's hand. The docketing reads, "Copy of Letter to MG. Ross." Other notations: "Originals Copies &ca written while operations were carrying on against Baltimore" and "to be copied in Book." A copy was then sent to Brooke along with the following letter addressed to Brooke.

1. Fort McHenry.

2. *Aetna, Devastation, Meteor, Terror, Volcano.*

3. *Seahorse, Severn, and Surprise.*

4. Abbreviation for *vide*, Latin for *see*; no plan is now filed with the letter.

VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N., TO  
COLONEL ARTHUR BROOKE, BRITISH ARMY

½ past Seven Monday Evening [12 September 1814]

Dear Sir

The Sad Accounts of the death of General Ross has Just reached Me— I had written him a few Minutes before by the boats in Bear Creek with a Birds Eye View of the fortifications of Baltimore and the New entrenchments I saw them throwing up to the NNE.—of the Town, upon Which a Good Many people are Engaged— It Struck Me that this entrenched Camp may be turned. Since writing the before going My letter to My poor departed friend is returned I therefore Send it to you in its Original form—<sup>1</sup> It is proper for me to Mention to You, that a System of Retaliation was to be proceeded Upon—in Consequence of the Barbarities Committed in Canada—and that if Genl. Ross had Seen the Second letter from Sir George Prevost—he would have destroyed—Washington and George Town— Their Nature are perfectly known to Rear Adl. Cockburn and I believe Mr. Evans— In them a kind of Latitude is given for raising Contribution instead of destruction but in this public property Cannot be Compromised

You will best be able to Judge what can be attempted—but let me know your determination as Soon as possible that I may Act Accordingly Ever my dear Sir Yours Sincerely

Alex<sup>r</sup> Cochrane

ADfS, UKENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2329, fols. 89–90. Cochrane retained this autograph copy for his files.

1. Cochrane sent a copy, not the original letter.

COLONEL ARTHUR BROOKE, BRITISH ARMY, TO  
VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N.

Meeting House near Batimore Septmber 13th—12—in the Mrng—  
Dear Sir

half past 12 this Moment have the Honr of yours and Much obligd for the Information ther in contained. from what little information we could obtain it had appeard to Admiral Cockburn Mr. Evans &c that there Works might be turnd.

In the Morng. we hope to proceed and at about thelve or one to work our destruction and have comunication with you about ten or Eleven when we shall have looked about three miles of the entrenchments. as your fire I should think on the Town would of infinite Service to us.

As to enter upon the loss of our Departd Frnd I shall leave to future oportunity but am happy to say that from the very heavy oposition givn by the Enemy in forcing this Position of the Meeting House our Loss has not been that which might be Expected but at present imposible to exactly assertain. the Enemys I pray fully equal to ours.

Lasseto Point<sup>1</sup> is most likely the place we shall be able to hold communication with you. from the fortunate success of this day have any hope in succeeding in our last and final attack to Morrow I shall be in hopes of meeting before Evening Admiral Cockburn. I have shown your latter note to Mr. Evans who joins me My Dear Sir in my hope for our mutual Success Belev. most Truly yours

Arthur Brooke Colonel &c &c—

ALS, UKENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2329, fols. 41–42. Cochrane's secretary, William Balhatchet, wrote the following after the signature line: "Recd. by Captain McDougall and Mr. Nin—abt. ½ past 3 PM 13 Sept W. B."

1. Lazaretto Point.

VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N., TO  
REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N.

My dear Admiral

It is impossible for the Ships to render you any assistance—the Town is so far retired within the Forts. It is for Colonel Brook to consider under such circum-

stances whether he has Force sufficient to defeat so large a number as it [is] said the Enemy has collected; say 20,000 strong or even a less number & to take the Town: without this can be done it will be only throwing the Mens lives away and prevent us from going upon other services— At any rate a very considerable loss must ensue and as the Enemy is daily gaining strength his loss let it be ever so great cannot be equally felt—

The Enemy has a Battery on the opposite point to the Fort from which he last night fired upon the Guard Boats and is now firing at the Bombs our Shells seem to go into the Fort— The Battery on the Eastern point does not appear to be a regular Fort but it is commanded by the other— Ever yours sincerely

Alexr. Cochrane

off Baltimore  
½ past 9 AM  
13 Sepr. 1814

W. Balhatchet Esqr.  
H.M.S. *Tonnant*.

Copy, UKENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2329, fols. 39–40. Notation at the foot: "*Nymphé*."

VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N., TO  
CAPTAIN CHARLES NAPIER, R.N.

You are to proceed with the Boats placed under Your command and execute the following Services<sup>1</sup>

The Boats to proceed up the patapsco [*River*] (to be Supplied with An additional Quantity of Blank Cartridges) to fire ~~more~~ for the intention of drawing the Notice of the Enemy—. When the Boats leave this Ship Their Oars must be Muffled— They will in the first place proceed dired [*directed*] for the Shore Abreast *Meteor* Bomb—then row up Close to the Shore until they round the point of the patapsco, and proceed up that river About One or One and a half Miles—then let Them drop Their Grapnels and remain perfectly Quiet Until One Oclock.—<sup>2</sup> at which Hour the Bombs will open upon the Fort and Sky Rockets will be Thrown up when You will begin a Regular fire directed upon the Opposite Side of the River Occasionally using blank Cartridges only—~~This is Intended to take off the Attention of the Enemy Opposite to Where our Army, as an Attack is to be Made Upon their Lines directly at Two OClock— The Boats will leave the patapsco before Three OClock and Rendezvous Along Side of the Ship~~ After you find that the Army is seriously engaged you will return to this Ship for further Order

Surprize 13th Sepr.  
Sgd—A Cochrane

ADfS, UKENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2329, fol. 91. This was addressed to Captain Napier who commanded H.M.S. *Euryalus*. A notation regarding an unrelated matter appears below the close.

1. Not knowing if Colonel Brooke would continue with the attack on Baltimore, Admiral Cochrane sent Captain Napier on a previously planned diversionary feint up the Ferry Branch of the Patapsco River that was scheduled for the night of 13–14 September.

2. 14 September.

COLONEL ARTHUR BROOKE, BRITISH ARMY, TO  
VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N.

Dear Sir—

from your letter to Admiral Cockburn this Evening, I calld a Councill of War, though I had made all my arrangements for attacking the Enemy at three in the Morng the result of which was that from the situation I was placd in they advisd I should Retire, I have therefore orderd the Retreat to take place to Morrow morning, and hope to be at my destination the day after to Morrow that is the place we disembarkd from. I have the Honor to be Dear Sir your most obdent Sert.

Arthur Brooke Colonl.  
Commdg. his Mastys Troops before Baltimore

Tuesday Night 12 OClock.<sup>1</sup>

ALS, UKENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2329, fol. 45. Cochrane's secretary, William Balhatchet probably wrote the following after the dateline: "13 Sepr WB recd by ~~th~~ gc Capt. Gordon at/ 7 Bells A.M. 14th Sepr." Beginning at 12:30 A.M., one bell is struck for each half-hour until 4:00 A.M. (eight bells) and then the sequence is repeated. Thus, this letter could have been received at 3:30, 7:30, or 11:30 A.M. Judging from the arrival times of earlier letters, a 7:30 or 11:30 A.M. delivery was more likely.

1. Brooke meant Wednesday morning, 12 A.M., 14 September 1814.

REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N., TO  
VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N.

No. 45. His Majesty's Ship *Severn* in the Patapsco 15 Sepr. 1814.  
Sir/

In furtherance of the Instructions I had the Honor to receive from you on the 11th. Instt.<sup>1</sup> I landed at Daylight of the 12th. with Major General Ross and the Forces under his Command at a Place the General and myself had previously fixed upon near to North Point at the Entrance of the Patapsco, and in conformity with his Wishes I determined on remaining ashore and accompanying the Army, to render him every assistance within my Power during the contemplated movements and operations, therefore, so soon as our landing was completed, I directed Captain Nourse of this Ship to advance up the Patapsco with the Frigates Sloops and Bomb Ships to bombard the Fort and threaten the Water approach to Baltimore, and I moved on with the Army and Seamen (under Captain Edward Crofton) attached to it, on the direct Road leading to the abovementioned Town.

We had advanced about Five Miles (without other occurrence than taking Prisoners a few Light Horse Men) when the General and myself being with the advanced Guard observed a Division of the Enemy Posted at a turning of the Road, extending into a Wood on our Left, A sharp Fire was almost immediately opened upon us from it, and as quickly returned with considerable Effect



by our advanced Guard which pressing steadily forward soon obliged the Enemy to run off with the utmost precipitation leaving behind him several Men Killed and Wounded; but it is with the most heartfelt sorrow I have to add that in this Short and desultory Skirmish my gallant and highly valued Friend the Major General received a Musquet Ball through his arm into his Breast, which proved fatal to him on his way to the Water Side for reembarkation— Our Country Sir has lost in him one of its best and bravest Soldiers and those who knew him as I did, a Friend most honored and beloved; and I trust Sir I may be forgiven for considering it a Sacred Duty I owe to him to mention here, that whilst his Wounds were binding up and we were placing him on the Bearer which was to carry him off the Field, he assured me the Wounds he had received in the performance of his Duty to his Country caused him not a Pang, but he felt a lone anxiety for a Wife<sup>2</sup> and Family dearer to him than his Life, whom in the event of the Fatal termination he foresaw, he recommended to the Protection and Notice of his Majesty's Government and the Country. Colonel Brook on whom the Command of the Army now devolved having come up and the body of our Troops having closed with the Advance, the whole proceeded Forward about Two Miles further, when we observed the Enemy in Force drawn up before us (apparently about Six or Seven thousand Strong) on perceiving our Army he filed off into a large and extensive Wood on his Right, from which he commenced a Cannonade on us from his Field Pieces and drew up his Men behind a thick Paling where he appeared determined to make his stand— Our Field Guns answered his, with evident advantage, and so soon as Colonel Brook had made the necessary Dispositions, the Attack was ordered, and executed in the highest style possible; The Enemy opened his Musquetry on us from his whole Line immediately we approached within Reach of it, and kept up his Fire 'till we reached and entered the Wood, when he gave way in every Direction, and was chased by us a considerable distance with great Slaughter, abandoning his Post of the Meeting House situated in this Wood, and leaving all his Wounded and Two of his Field Guns in our Possession— An Advance of this description against Superior Numbers of an Enemy so posted, could not be effected without loss— I have the Honor enclose a return of what has been suffered by those of the Naval Department acting with the army on this occasion, and it is Sir with the greatest Pride and Pleasure I report to you, that the Brigade of Seamen with Small Arms Commanded by Captain Edward Crofton, assisted by Captains Sullivan, Money, and Ramsay, (the three Senior Commanders with the Fleet) who Commanded Divisions under him, behaved with a Gallantry and Steadiness which would have done honor to the oldest Troops, and which attracted the admiration of the Army— The Seamen under Mr. Jackson Master's Mate of the *Tonnant* attached to the Rocket Brigade, Commanded by 1st. Lieutenant Lawrence of the Marines, behaved also with equal Skill and Bravery; The Marines landed from the Ships under the Command of Captain Robyns, the Senior Officer of that Corps belonging to the Fleet, behaved with their usual Gallantry.

Although Sir in making to you my Report of this Action I know it is right I should confine myself to mentioning only the Conduct of those belonging to the Naval Department, yet I may be excused for venturing further to state to you generally the high admiration with which I viewed the Conduct of the whole Army, and the ability and Gallantry with which it was managed and headed by its brave Colonel which insured to it, the Success it met with.

The Night being fast approaching, and the Troops much fatigued, Colonel Brook determined on remaining for the Night on the Field of Battle, and on the morning of the 13th. leaving a small guard at the Meeting House to collect and protect the Wounded—We again moved forward towards Baltimore, on approaching which, it was found to be defended by extremely Strong Works on every Side, and immediately in front of us by an extensive Hill on which was an entrenched Camp and great quantities of artillery, and the Information we collected added to what we observed, gave us to believe there were at least within their Works from 15 to 20,000 Men— Colonel Brook lost no time in reconnoitring these Defences, after which he made his Arrangements for Storming during the ensuing Night, with his gallant little Army, the entrenched Camp in our Front, notwithstanding all the Difficulties which it presented; The Subsequent Communications which we opened with you, however induced him to relinquish again this Idea, and therefore yesterday Morning the Army retired leisurely to the Meeting House, where it halted for some Hours to make the necessary Arrangements respecting the Wounded and the Prisoners taken on the 12th., which being completed, it made a further short movement in the Evening towards the Place where it had disembarked, and where it arrived this Morning for reembarkation without suffering the slightest molestation from the Enemy, who in spite of his Superiority of Numbers did not even venture to look at us during this slow and deliberate Retreat.

As you Sir were in Person with the Advanced Frigates, Sloops, and Bomb Ships, and as from the Road the Army took I did not see them after quitting the Beach, it would be superfluous for me to make any Report to you respecting them— I have therefore now only to assure you of my entire Satisfaction and approbation of the Conduct of Every Officer and Man employed under me during the operations above detailed, and to express to you how particularly I consider myself indebted to Captain Edward Crofton (Acting Captain of the *Royal Oak*) for the Gallantry Ability and Zeal with which he led on the Brigade of Seamen in the Action of the 12th., and executed all the other Services with which he has been entrusted since our Landing— To Captain White (Acting Captain of the *Albion*) who attended me as my Aid-de-Camp the whole Time and rendered me every possible assistance.— To Captains Sullivan, Money and Ramsay who Commanded Divisions of the Brigade of Seamen—to Lieutenant James Scott of the *Albion* whom I have had such frequent Cause to mention to you on former occasions and who in the Battle of the 12th. Commanded a Division of Seamen and behaved most Gallantly, occasionally also acting as an extra Aid-de-Camp to myself—Captain Robyns who Commanded the Marines of the Fleet, and who was severely Wounded during the Engagement I also beg to recommend to your favorable Notice and Consideration, as well as Lieutenant George C. Urmston of the *Albion*, whom I placed in Command of the smaller Boats to endeavor to Keep up a Communication between the Army and Navy, which he effected by great perseverance and thereby rendered us most essential Service— In short Sir every Individual seemed animated with equal anxiety to distinguish himself by good Conduct on this occasion, and I trust therefore the whole will be deemed worthy of your Approbation.

Captain Nourse of the *Severn* was good enough to receive my Flag for this Service, he rendered me the greatest assistance in getting the Ships to the different Stations within the River, and when the Storming of the fortified Hill was contemplated he hastened to my assistance with a Reinforcement of Seamen

and Marines, and I should consider myself wanting in Candor and Justice, did I not particularly point out Sir to you the high Opinion I entertain of the enterprize and ability of this Valuable Officer, not only for his Conduct on this occasion, but on the very many others on which I have employed him since with me in the Chesapeake. I have the Honor to be Sir Your very faithful and Most obedt. humble Servant

G: Cockburn Rear Admiral

LS, UKENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2334, fols. 20–27. The naval casualties suffered during the land operation discussed in this letter were 7 killed and 44 wounded. *Ibid.*, fol. 28.

1. This letter was not found.
2. Elizabeth Ross.

COLONEL ARTHUR BROOKE, BRITISH ARMY, TO  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR AND THE COLONIES EARL BATHURST

On board H.M.S. *Tonnant*  
Chesapeake Sept. 17 1814

My Lord

I have the honor to inform your Lordship, that the division of troops under the command of Major General Ross effected a disembarkation on the morning of the 12th. September near North point on the left bank of the Paptasco river, distant from Baltimore about 13 miles, with the view, as I have been subsequently informed, of pushing a reconnoissance in cooperation with the naval forces to that town, and acting thereon as the enemy's strength and positions might be found to dictate—

The approach on this side to Baltimore lays through a small peninsula, formed by the Patapsco and Back river, and generally from two to three miles broad, which it narrows in some places to less than half a mile.

Three miles from North point the enemy had entrenched himself quite across this neck of land.— towards which (the disembarkation having been completed at an early hour) the troops advanced.

The enemy was actively employed in the completion of this work, deepening the ditch and strengthening it in front by a low Abbatis,— both which, however, he precipitately abandoned on the approach of our skirmishers, leaving in our hands some few dragoons, being part of his rear guard.

About two miles beyond this Post our advance became engaged.— The country was here closely wooded and the enemy's riflemen were enabled to conceal themselves.— At this moment the gallant General Ross received a wound in his breast which proved mortal.— He only survived to recommend a young and unprovided family to the protection of his King and Country.

Thus fell at an early age, one of the brightest ornaments of his profession,— one, who whether at the head of a regiment, a brigade, or a corps, had alike displayed the talents of command,— who was not less beloved in his private than enthusiastically admired in his public character, and whose only fault, if it may be deemed so, was an excess of gallantry, enterprize & devotion to the service.

If ever it were permitted to a soldier to lament those who fall in battle, we may indeed in this instance claim that melancholy privilege.

Thus it is, Sir, that the honor of addressing your Lordship, and the command of this army have devolved upon me, duties which under any other circumstances might have been embraced as the most enviable gifts of fortune; and here I venture to solicit through your Lordship, His Royal Highness the Prince Regent's consideration to the circumstances of my succeeding during operations of so much moment, to an officer of such high and established merit.

Our advance continuing to press forward, the enemy's light troops were pushed to within five miles of Baltimore, where a corps of about six thousand men,<sup>1</sup> six pieces of artillery & some hundred cavalry were discovered posted under cover of a wood, drawn up in a very dense order and lining a strong paling which crossed the main road nearly at right angles.— The creeks and inlets of the Patapsco and Back rivers, which approach each other at this point, will in some measure account for the contracted nature of the enemy's position.

I immediately ordered the necessary dispositions for a general attack.— The Light Brigade under the command of Major Jones of the 4th. consisting of the 85th. Lt. Infantry under Major Gubbins and the Light companies of the army under Major Pringle of the 21st., covered the whole of the front—driving in the enemy's Skirmishers with great loss on his main body.— The 4th. Regt. under Major Faunce, by a detour through some hollow ways, gained unperceived, a lodgement close upon the enemy's left. The remainder of the right brigade under the command of the Honl. Lt. Colonel Mullins consisting of the 44th. Regt. under Major Johnson, the Marines of the fleet under Capt. Robbins, and a detachment of seamen under Captain Money of the *Trave*, formed line along the enemy's front.— While the left Brigade under Colonel Paterson, consisting of the 21st. Regt. commanded by Major Whitaker, the 2d. Battalion Marines by Lt. Colonel Malcolm, & detachment of Marines by Major Lewis, remained in column on the road, with orders to deploy to his left & press the enemy's right, the moment the ground became sufficiently open to admit of that movement.

In this order, the signal being given, the whole of the troops advanced rapidly to the charge.— In less than fifteen minutes the enemy's force being utterly broken & dispersed, fled in every direction over the country, leaving on the field, 2 pieces of cannon with a considerable number of Killed wounded & prisoners.

The enemy lost in this short but brilliant affair, from five to six hundred in Killed & wounded, while at the most moderate computation he is at least one thousand Hors de combat.—<sup>2</sup> The 5th. Regt. of Militia, in particular, has been represented as nearly annihilated.— Had we but 300 hundred cavalry, scarcely a man should have escaped.

The day being now far advanced, and the troops (as is always the case on the first march after disembarkation) much fatigued we halted for the night on the ground of which the enemy had been dispossessed.— Then I received a communication<sup>3</sup> from Vice Admiral The Honbl. Sir Alexr. Cochrane informing me that the frigates, Bomb ships & flotilla of the fleet would on the ensuing morning take their stations as previously proposed.— At day break on the 13th. the army again advanced, and at ten o'clock I occupied a favorable position, eastward of Baltimore, distant about a mile and a half, & from whence I could reconnoitre at my leisure the defences of that town. Baltimore is completely surrounded by strong but detached hills, on which the enemy had constructed a



chain of Pallisaded redoubts connected by a small breast work.— I have however reason to think that the defences to the northward and westward of the place, were in a very unfinished state.—Chinkopin hill,<sup>1</sup> which lay in front of our position, completely commands the town;— this was the strongest part of the line, and here the enemy seemed most apprehensive of attack.— These works were defended, according to the best information which we could obtain, by about Fifteen thousand men, with a large train of artillery.

Judging it perfectly feasible, with the description of forces under my command, I made arrangements for a night attack, during which the superiority of the enemy's artillery would not have been so much felt, & Captain McDougall, the bearer of these despatches, will have the honor to point out to your Lordship, those particular parts of the line which I had proposed to act on.

During the evening, however, I received a communication<sup>5</sup> from the Commander in Chief of the Naval Forces, by which I was informed, that in consequence of the entrance to the harbour being closed up by vessels sunk for that purpose by the enemy, a naval co-operation against the town and camp was found impracticable.

Under these circumstances, and Keeping in view your Lordships instructions, it was agreed between the Vice Admiral & myself that the capture of the town would not have been a sufficient equivalent to the loss which might probably be sustained in storming the heights.

Having formed this resolution, after compelling the enemy to sink upwards of 20 vessels in different parts of the harbour, causing the citizens to remove almost the whole of their property to places of more security inland, obliging the government to concentrate all the military force of the surrounding States, harassing the militia and forcing them to collect from very remote districts, causing the enemy to burn a valuable rope walk with other public buildings, in order to clear the Glacis in front of their Redoubts, besides having beaten & routed them in a general action,— I retired on the 14th. three miles from the position which I had occupied, when I halted during some hours.

This tardy movement was partly caused by an expectation that the enemy might possibly be induced to move out of his entrenchments & follow us, but he profited by the lesson which he had received on the 12th. and towards the evening I retired the troops about 3 miles & a half farther, where I took up my ground for the night.

Having ascertained at a late hour on the morning of the 15th. that the enemy had no disposition to quit his entrenchments, I moved down and reembarked the army at North point, not leaving a wounded man behind, and carrying with me about Two Hundred prisoners, being persons of the best families in the city, and which number might have been very considerably increased, was not the fatigue of the troops an object principally to be avoided.

I have now to remark to your Lordship that nothing could surpass the zeal, unanimity and ardor displayed by every description of force, whether Naval Military or Marine during the whole of these operations.

I am highly indebted to Vice Admiral Sir Alexr. Cochrane Commander in Chief of the Naval forces, for the active assistance and zealous co-operation which he was ready upon every occasion to afford me.— A disposition conspicuous in every branch of the Naval service, and which cannot fail to ensure success to every combined operation of this armament.

Captain Edward Crofton Commanding the brigade of Seamen, appointed to the small arms, for the animated and enthusiastic example which he held forth to his men, deserves every approbation. As do also Captains Nourse, Money, Sullivan & Ramsay R.N. for the steadiness and good order which they maintained in their several divisions.

I feel every obligation to Rear Admiral Cockburn for the council & assistance which he afforded me, and from which I derived the most signal benefit

To Colonel Paterson for the steady manner which he brought his column into action, I owe my best thanks.

The Honbl. Lt. Colonel Mullins deserved every approbation for the excellent order in which he led that part of the Right brigade under his immediate command while charging the enemy in line.

Major Jones commanding the Light brigade, merits my best acknowledgements for the active & skilful dispositions by which he covered all the movements of the army.

The distinguished gallantry of Capt. De Bathe 85th. Lt. Infantry has been particularly reported to me, & I beg to record my own Knowledge of similar conduct on former occasions.

To Major Faunce 4th. Regt. for the manner in which he gained & turned the enemy's left, as well as for the excellent discipline maintained in that Regiment, every praise is due.

The exertions of Major Gubbins commanding the 85th. Lt. infantry, & of Major Renney commanding the Light companies, were highly commendable.

Capt. Mitchel Comdg. Royal Artillery, Captn. Carmichel a meritorious officer of that corps, and Lt. Lawrence of the Marine Artillery, are entitled to my best thanks.— as is Capt. Blanchard Commanding Royal Engineers for the abilities he displayed in his particular branch of the service.

To Lieutenant Evans, 3d. Dragoons Ag. Dy. Q M Genl. to this army, for the unremitting zeal activity and perfect intelligence which he evinced in the discharge of the various and difficult duties of his department, I feel warmly indebted;— and I beg to solicit through your Lordship, a promotion suitable to the high professional merits of this officer.

Captain Mc.Dougall A.D.C. to the late General Ross (& who acted as Asst. Adjutant General, in the absence of Major Debbieg through indisposition) is the bearer of these despatches, and having been in the confidence of General Ross as well as in mine, will be found perfectly capable of giving your Lordship any farther information, relative to the operations of this army, which you may require.— He is an officer of great merit & promise, and I beg to recommend him to your Lordships protection. I have the honor to be My Lord Your Lordships Most Obedient And Most Humble Servant

Arthur Brooke  
Colonel Commanding

LS, UKLPR, WO 1/141, pp. 75–89. See pp. 91–96 for the casualty returns. Brooke reported 39 killed and 251 wounded.

1. For a detailed study of the attack on Baltimore, see Whitehorne, *Battle for Baltimore*, chapter twelve. According to Whitehorne, the Americans had about 3,000 men on the field.

2. The Americans reported 24 killed, 139 wounded, and 50 captured. See Whitehorne, *Battle for Baltimore*, p. 183.

3. This is probably a reference to the letter Cochrane originally sent to Ross on 12 September but was forwarded to Brooke upon the death of Ross. See pp. 273–76 above.

4. Hampstead Hill.

5. See Cochrane to Cockburn, 13 September 1814, pp. 277–78 above.

VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N., TO  
FIRST SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

No. 116

His Maj's. Ship *Tonnant* Chesapeake,  
17th Sept. 1814

Sir,

I request that you will be pleased to inform my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that the approaching Equinoxial new Moon rendering it unsafe to proceed immediately out of the Chesapeake with the combined Expedition,<sup>1</sup> to act upon the plans which had been concerted previous to the departure of the *Iphigenia*,<sup>2</sup> Major General Ross and myself resolved to occupy the intermediate time to advantage, by making a demonstration upon the City of Baltimore; which might be converted into a real attack should circumstances appear to justify it; and as our arrangements were Soon made I proceeded up this River and anchored off the mouth of the Patapsco on the 11th. ins[tant] when the Frigates and Smaller Vessels entered to a convenient distance for landing the Troops.

At an early hour the next morning the disembarkation of the Army was effected, without opposit[ion] having attached to it a Brigade of Six hundred Seamen, under Captain Edward Crofton (late of the *Leopard*) the Second Battalion of Marines, the Marines of the Squadron and the Colonial Black Marines: Rear Admiral Cockburn accompanied the General to advise and arrange as might be deemed necessary for our combined efforts. So Soon as the Army moved forward I hoisted my Flag in the *Surprize* and with the remainder of the Friga[tes,] Bombs, Sloops, and the Rocket Ship passed further up the River to render what co-operation could be fou[nd] practicable. While the Bomb Vessels were working up in order that we might open our Fire upon the Enemy[']s Fort<sup>3</sup> at day break the next morning, an account was brought to me that Major General Ross when reconnoitering the Enemy had received a mortal Wound by a Musket Ball which closed his glorious career before he could be brought off to the Ship—

It is a tribute due to the memory of this gallant and respected Officer to pause in my relation while I lament the loss that His Majesty's Service and the Army, of which he was one of the brightest Ornaments, have Sustained by his death; the unanimity, the zeal which he manifested on every occasion while I had the honor of Serving with him gave life and ease to the most arduous undertakings: too heedless of his personal Security when in the Field, his devotion to the care and honor of his Army has caused the termination of his valuable life. The Major General has left a Wife<sup>4</sup> and Family for whom I am confident his grateful Country will provide.

The Skirmish which had deprived the Army of its brave General was a prelude to a most decisive Victory over the flower of the Enemy's Troops. Colonel Brook on whom the Command devolved having pushed forward our Force to within five Miles of Baltimore, where the Enemy, about Six or Seven thousand, had taken up an advanced position Strengthened by Field Pieces, and where he had disposed himself apparently with the intention of making a determined resistance, fell upon the Enemy with Such impetuosity that he was obliged Soon to give way and fly in every direction, leaving on the field of Battle a considerable number of Killed and wounded and two pieces of Cannon. For the particu-

lars of this brilliant affair I beg leave to refer their Lordships to Rear Admiral Cockburn's dispatch transmitted herewith.—<sup>5</sup>

At day break the next morning the Bombs having taken their Stations within Shell range Supported by the *Surprize* with the other Frigates and Sloops, opened their Fire upon the Fort that protected the entrance of the Harbor;<sup>6</sup> and I had now an opportunity of observing the strength and the preparations of the Enemy—

The approach to the Town on the Land Side was defended by commanding heights upon which was constructed a chain of Redoubts connected by a Breast Work, with a Ditch in front, an extensive train of Artillery and a Show of Force that was reported to be from fifteen to twenty thousand Men. The entrance by Sea, within which the Town is retired nearly three Miles, was entirely obstructed by a barrier of Vessels Sunk at the mouth of the Harbor, defended inside by Gun Boats, flanked on the right by a strong and regular fortification and on the left by a Battery of Several heavy Guns—

These preparations rendering it impracticable to afford any essential co-operation by Sea I considered that an attack on the Enemy's strong position by the Army only, with such disparity of Force, tho confident of success, might risk a greater loss than the possession of the Town would compensate for, while holding in view the ulterior operations of this force in the contemplation of His Majesty's Government.<sup>7</sup> And therefore, as the primary object of our movement had been already fully accomplished I communicated my observations to Colonel Brook,<sup>8</sup> who coinciding with me in opinion, it was mutually agreed that we Should withdraw.

The following morning the Army began leisurely to Retire; and so Salutary was the affect produced on the Enemy by the defeat he had experienced, that notwithstanding every opportunity was offered for his repeating the Conflict with an infinite Superiority, our Troops reembarked without mol[es]tation, the Ships of War having dropped down as the Army reti[red—]

The result of this demonstration had been the defeat of the Army of the Enemy: the destruction by themselves of a quantity of Shipping, the burning of an extensive Rope Walk and other public Erections, the causing of them to remove their Property from the City, and above all—the collecting and harrassing of his armed Inhabitants from the Surrounding country, producing a total Stagnation of their Commerce and heaping upon them considerable expenses, at the same time effectually drawing off their attention and Support from other important quarters—

It has been a Source of the greatest gratification to me the continuance of that unanimity existing between the two Services, which I have before noticed to their Lordships, and I have reason to assure them that the command of the Army has fallen upon a most zealous and able Officer in Colonel Brook, who had followed up the system of cordiality that had been so beneficially adopted by his much lamented Chief

Rear Admiral Cockburn, to whom I had confided that part of the Naval Service which was connected with the Army, evinced his usual zeal and ability and executed his important trust to my entire Satisfaction. Rear Admiral Malcolm who regulat[ed] the collection, debarkation and reembarkation of the Troops, and the Supplies they required has merited my best thanks for his indefatigable exertion and I have to express my acknowledgements for the counsel



and assistance which in all our operatio[ns] I have received from Rear Admiral Codrington the Captain of the Fleet.—

The Captains of the Squadron who were employed in the various duties afloat were all emulous to promote the Service in which they were engaged and with the Officers acting under them are entitled to my fullest approbation—

I beg leave to call the attention of their Lordships to the Report Rear Admiral Cockburn has made of the meritorious and gallant Conduct of the Naval Brigade<sup>9</sup> as well as to the accompanying Letter from Colonel Brook<sup>10</sup> expressing his obligations to Captain Edward Crofton who commanded, and Captains T. B. Sullivan, Rowland and Money & Robert Ramsay who had charge of Divisions, and I have to recommend these officers, together with those who are particularly noticed by the Rear Admiral, to their Lordship's favorable consideration.

Captain Robyns of the Royal Marines who commanded the Marines of the Squadron on this occasion and in the operations against Washington being Severely wounded, I beg leave to bring him to their Lordship's recollection as having been frequently noticed for his gallant Conduct during the services in the Chesapeake, and to recommend him, with Lieutenant Sampson Marshall of the *Diadem* who is dangerously wounded, to their Lordship's favor and protection.

First Lieutenant John Lawrence of the Royal Marine Artillery who commanded the Rocket Brigade has again rendered essential Service and is highly Spoken of by Colonel Brook.

Captain Edward Crofton who will have the honor of delivering this Dispatch is compe[tent] to explain any further particulars and I beg leave to recommend him to their Lordship's protection as a most zealous and intelligent officer— I have the honor to be Sir Your most obedient humble Servant

Alex<sup>r</sup> Cochrane

Vice Admiral and Commander in Chief

LS, UKLPR, Adm. 1/507, fols. 171–75; Cochrane's letter book copy is in UKENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2348, pp. 74–79. Letters obscured in the gutter in the signed version were supplied in brackets using the letter book copy.

1. The concurrence of a new moon and the equinox creates the highest tides of the year; those high tides produce the strongest tidal currents; and the confining shores of the Chesapeake Bay multiply the strength of those currents. As a result, a new moon during the equinox is the most difficult and dangerous time to navigate the Chesapeake Bay.

2. Cochrane is referring to his plans to go to Rhode Island after the attack on Washington. Cochrane to Melville, 3 Sept. 1814, pp. 269–71.

3. Fort McHenry.

4. Elizabeth Ross.

5. Cockburn to Cochrane, 15 Sept. 1814, pp. 279–82.

6. The bombardment squadron consisted of: bomb ships *Aetna*, *Devastation*, *Meteor*, *Terror*, *Volcano*; rocket ship *Erebus*; schooner *Cockchafer*; brig-sloops *Fairy*, *Rover*, and *Wolverine*; and frigates *Euryalus*, *Havannah*, *Hebrus*, *Madagascar*, *Seahorse*, *Severn*, and *Surprise*.

7. Cochrane is referring to the proposed operations against New Orleans.

8. This is probably a reference to Cochrane's 13 September 1814 letter to Cockburn. See pp. 277–78 above.

9. Cockburn to Cochrane, 15 Sept. 1814, pp. 279–82.

10. Brooke to Cochrane, 15 Sept. 1814, UKLPR, Adm. 1/507, fol. 176.

VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N., TO  
FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY VISCOUNT ROBERT SAUNDERS DUNDAS MELVILLE

private

*Tonnant* off Baltimore

17 Sept 1814

My dear Lord

Your Lordship will see by My public letter<sup>1</sup> that we have made an Essay at Baltimore, an attempt Contrary to My Opinion, but extremely urged by the General<sup>2</sup> to which I reluctantly consented, but to preserve Unanimity between the two services; I have not stated My Objections to the measure in My letter to the Admiralty I now exceedingly regret My deviation from My Original plan, Although the events that took place have been highly creditable to his Majestys Arms which in My Opinion could have been employ'd with greater Advantage Against Rhode Island, by Attracting the Attention of the Northern States from the Canadas The Valuable life of the General would have been preserved; and his services continued to his Country, there never fell a More Gallant Man nor a better Officer The only Fault was that of exposing his own Person more than was necessary for a General to do, it was in reconnoitering the Enemys Army that he received his Mortal Wound, by a Rifle Ball, Just before he expired he Lamented the distressed state his Family would be left in. I trust his Country will consider this as placing Them under its protection and I pray Your Lordship to let this Circumstance be known to His Majestys Ministers

Colonel Brook his Successor is a Steady Good officer—but from his Rank I conclude that a general officer will be sent out— in a proper Selection will depend the Success or failure of our future Enterprises against the Enemy. If I was allowed to Speak My Wishes Sir Thomas Picton would be the Man, whoever he may be he must not expect to repose upon a bed of Roses, I therefore trust that the Choice may fall upon one who has seen Much Active Service under Lord Wellington

I need not recapitulate what Your Lordship will find in My public letter I have no doubt that we might have had the Command of the City of Baltimore but not without a loss beyond what our little Army could bear and be in a state to preserve its Superiority over the Enemy.— With Two Thousand Additional Troops the Enemys Works might have been Turned but with the force we had this measure could not have been attempted without risking the retreat of the Army being Cut off which from the Numerous Militia the Enemy had Assembled they could have done, and still keep Their Lines in a state of defence, The two Regiments that went to Halifax, when we left Bermuda would have fully Answered this purpose and Baltimore either laid in Ashes or Under a heavy Contribution

From the Side the Town was attacked the Fort<sup>3</sup> Could not be assailed nor could we without that Secure the Command of the Harbour.— If Attacked Again, I have seen sufficient of the harbour and Adjoining Country to make me prefer the Opposite or Western Side by it You have immediate Access to the City and to a hill that Commands the fort at a distance Not in my Opinion beyond point Blank range and I am told that the side of the Fort towards the Land is only defended by a Brick Wall fourteen feet high.

We labour and<sup>4</sup> the Want of Many essentials, to place us upon a par with the Enemy in the stile of Warfare they pursue

We have neither Cavalry nor rifle Men while they have Abundance of both

The Enemy we have seen will never stand a charge, when Closed in upon they Fly and take up New Ground. then would be the time for Cavalry to Act, the Other day with 300 Horse, hardly A Man would have returned to Baltimore, and the Same at Bladensburg, Rifles we have none and for want of Troops I am obliged to bring My Seamen into the Line, The Enemy Use Three Buck Shot in Addition to the Ball in each Cartridge, we ought to do the Same but I am for adding a fourth placed on the top of the Three—and these Never to be Used until Close to the Enemy Each Soldier having about Twenty in his pouch to load with when at the proper distance I send your Lordship two (by Capt. Crofton.) that used by the Americans is Marked N 1—that I prepare N 2.— and I beg that A Quantity May be sent out without delay; Also the Necessaries demanded for the Troops by frigates so as they may be here early in December— There is no carrying on any war without the Necessary Means and Government must not expect more from Us than they enable Us to Accomplish, from what I can see the Ball is at Our feet,— and give me but Six thousand Men—Including a Rifle and Cavalry Regt., and I will engage to master every Town South of Philadelphia and keep the Whole Coast in such a State of Alarm, as soon to bring the Most Obstinate, upon their Marrow bones

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MAJOR GENERAL SAMUEL SMITH, MARYLAND MILITIA, TO  
ACTING SECRETARY OF WAR MONROE

Head Quarters Baltimore  
19. September, 1814—

Sir

In compliance with the promise contained in my letter of the 15th.<sup>1</sup> Instant, I have now the honor of stating—that the Enemy landed between 7 and 8000

The Enemy we have seen will never stand a charge, when Closed in upon they Fly and take up New Ground. then would be the time for Cavalry to Act, the Other day with 300 Horse, hardly A Man would have returned to Baltimore, and the Same at Bladensburg, Rifles we have none and for want of Troops I am obliged to bring My Seamen into the Line, The Enemy Use Three Buck Shot in Addition to the Ball in each Cartridge, we ought to do the Same but I am for adding a fourth placed on the top of the Three—and these Never to be Used until Close to the Enemy Each Soldier having about Twenty in his pouch to load with when at the proper distance I send your Lordship two (by Capt. Crofton.) that used by the Americans is Marked N 1—that I prepare N 2.— and I beg that A Quantity May be sent out without delay; Also the Necessaries demanded for the Troops by frigates so as they may be here early in December— There is no carrying on any war without the Necessary Means and Government must not expect more from Us than they enable Us to Accomplish, from what I can see the Ball is at Our feet,— and give me but Six thousand Men—Including a Rifle and Cavalry Regt., and I will engage to master every Town South of Philadelphia and keep the Whole Coast in such a State of Alarm, as soon to bring the Most Obstinate, upon their Marrow bones

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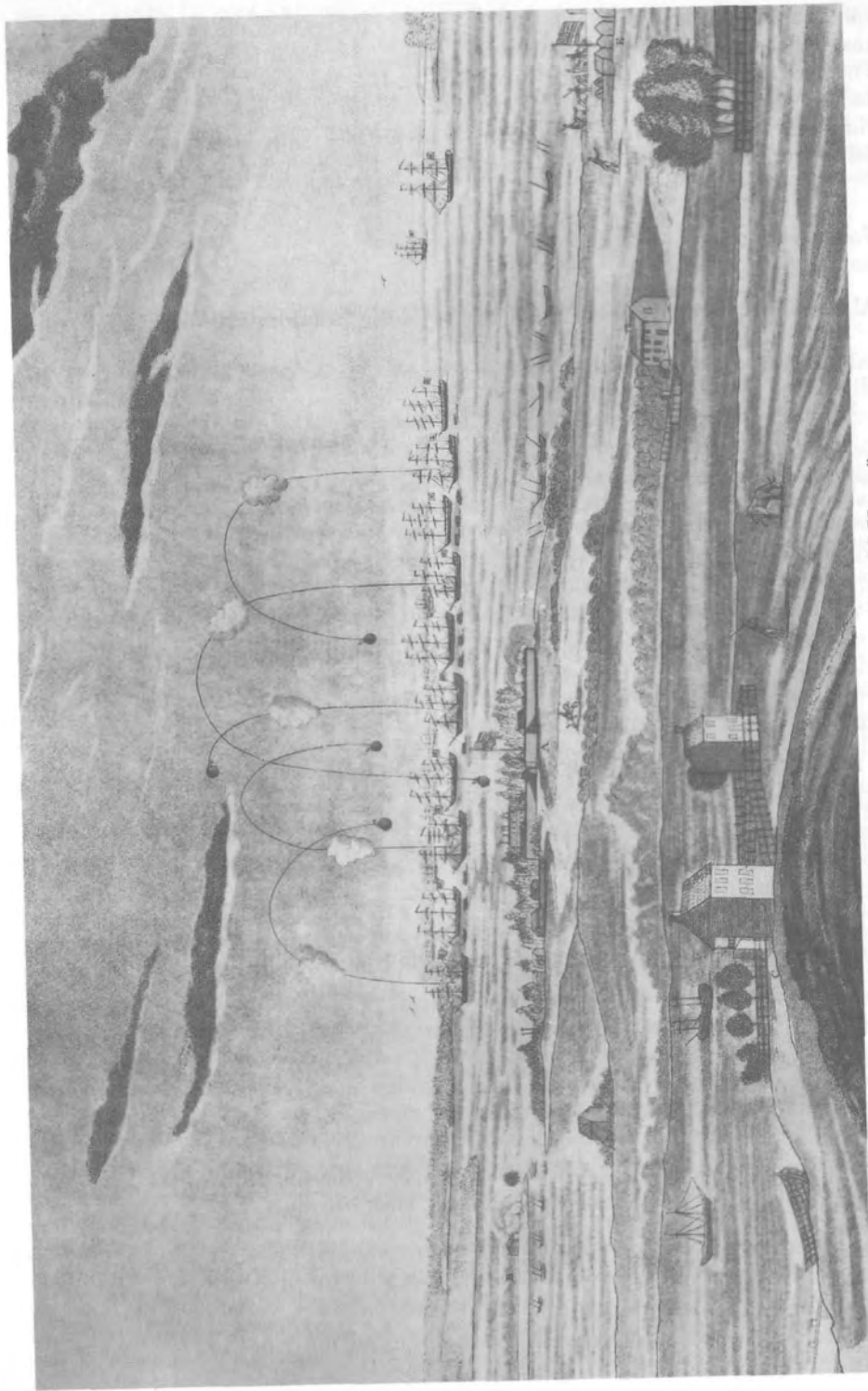
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MAJOR GENERAL SAMUEL SMITH, MARYLAND MILITIA, TO  
ACTING SECRETARY OF WAR MONROE

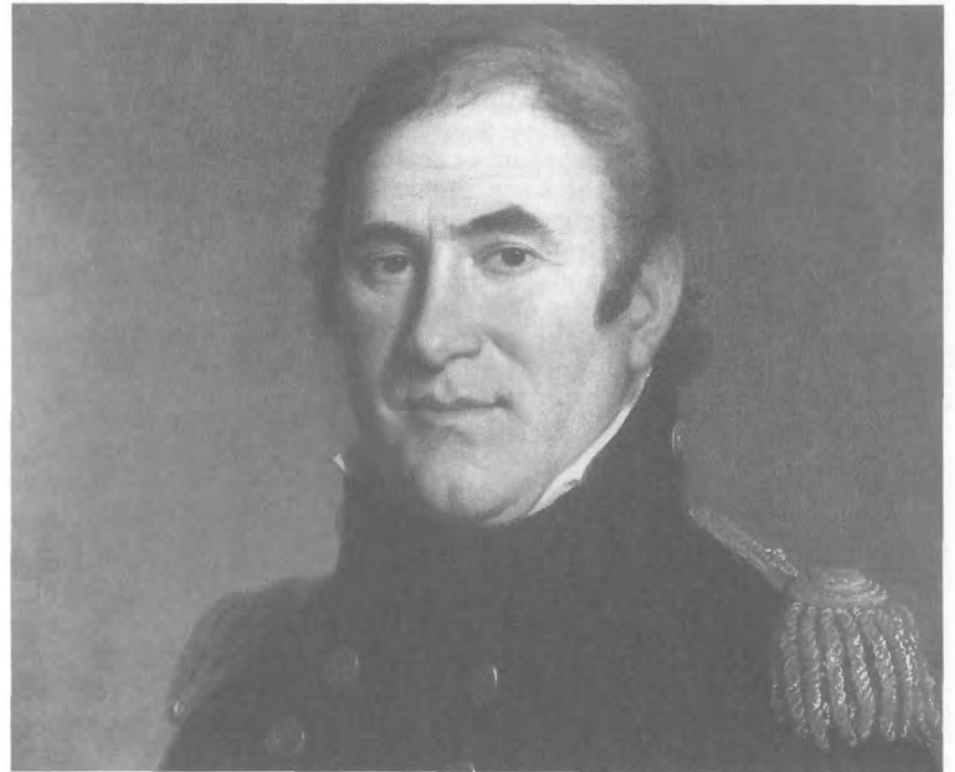
Head Quarters Baltimore  
19. September, 1814—

Sir

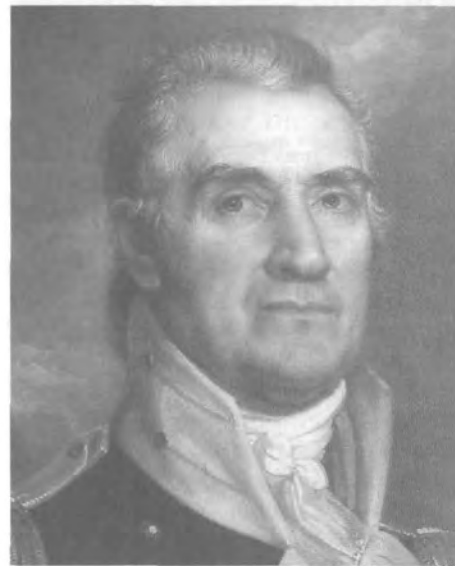
In compliance with the promise contained in my letter of the 15th.<sup>1</sup> Instant, I have now the honor of stating—that the Enemy landed between 7 and 8000



*"A View of the Bombardment of Fort McHenry"*



*John Rodgers*



*Samuel Smith*



*George Armistead*



men<sup>2</sup> on monday the 12th. Inst. at North Point, fourteen miles distant from this town. Anticipating this debarkation General Stricker had been detached on sunday evening, with a portion of his Brigade on the North Point road. Major Randal of the Balt. County Militia having under his command a light corps of riflemen & musquetry taken from Gen: Stansbury's Brigade and the Pennsylvania volunteers, was detached to the mouth of Bear Creek, with orders to cooperate with General Stricker and to check any landing which the Enemy might attempt in that quarter. On monday Brigadier General Stricker took a good position at the junction of the two roads leading from this place to North Point, having his right flanked by Bear Creek and his left by a marsh. He here awaited the approach of the Enemy, having sent on an advance corps under the command of Major Heath of the 5th. Regt. This advance was met by that of the Enemy and after some skirmishing it returned to the line, the main body of the Enemy being at a short distance in the rear of their advance. Between two & three o'clock the Enemy's whole force came up and commenced the battle by some discharges of rockets which were succeeded by the cannon from both sides and soon after the action became general along the line. General Stricker gallantly maintained his ground against a great superiority of numbers, during the space of an hour & twenty minutes, when the regiment on his left, (the 51st.) giving way, he was under the necessity of retiring to the ground in his rear where he had stationed one Regiment as a reserve. He here formed his Brigade—but the Enemy not thinking it adviseable to pursue, he in compliance with previous arrangements fell back and took post on the left of my entrenchments and a half mile in advance of them. In this affair the citizen soldiers of Baltimore with the exception of the 51. Regt., have maintained the reputation they so deservedly acquired at Bladensburg, and their brave & skilful leader has confirmed the confidence which we had all so justly placed in him. I take the liberty of referring you to his letter<sup>3</sup> for the more particular mention of the individuals who, new to warfare, have shown the coolness & valour of veterans, and who by their conduct on this occasion have given their country & their City an assurance of what may be expected from them when their services are again required. I cannot dismiss this subject without expressing the heartfelt satisfaction & experience in thus bearing testimony to the courage & good conduct of my fellow townsmen. About the time General Stricker had taken the ground just mentioned, he was joined by Brig: Gen: Winder who had been stationed on the west side of the City, but was now ordered to march with Gen: Douglass Brigade of Virginia militia and the U.S. Dragoons under Capt. Bird,<sup>4</sup> and take post on the left of Gen: Stricker, during these movements the Brigades of Generals Stansbury & Foreman the seamen & marines under Commodore Rodgers—the Pennsylvania volunteers under Cols: Cobean & Findley, the Baltimore Artillery under Col. Harris and the marine Artillery under Capt. Stiles manned the trenches and the batteries— all prepared to receive the Enemy. We remained in this situation during the night.

On Tuesday the Enemy appeared in front of my entrenchments at the distance of two miles, on the Philadelphia road—from whence he had a full view of our position. He manoeuvred during the morning towards our left, as if with the intention of making a circuitous march and coming down on the Harford or York roads. Generals Winder & Stricker were ordered to adapt their movements to those of the Enemy so as to baffle this supposed intention. They executed this order with great skill & judgement by taking an advantageous po-

sition, stretching from my left across the country where the Enemy was likely to approach this quarter he seemed to threaten. This movement induced the Enemy to concentrate his forces (between one & two o'clock) in my front, pushing his advance to within a mile of us, driving in our videttes and showing an intention of attacking us that evening. I immediately drew Generals Winder & Stricker nearer to the left of my entrenchments and to the right of the Enemy, with the intention of their falling on his right or rear should he attack me, or if he declined it, of attacking him in the morning. To this movement and to the strength of my defences which the Enemy had the fairest opportunity of observing, I am induced to attribute his retreat, which was commenced at half past one o'clock on wednesday morning. In this, he was so favored by the extreme darkness and a continued rain, that we did not discover it until day light I consented to General Winder's pursuing with the Virginia Brigade and the U.S. Dragoons—at the same time Major Randal was despatched with his light corps in pursuit on the Enemy's right, whilst the whole of the militia cavalry was put in motion for the same object. All the troops were however so worn out with a continued watching and with being under arms during three days & nights exposed the greater part of the time to very inclement weather, that it was found impracticable to do any thing more than pick up a few stragglers. The Enemy commenced his embarkation that evening & completed it the next day at 1. o'clock. It would have been impossible, even had our troops been in a condition to act offensively, to have cut off any part of the Enemy's rear guard during the embarkation, as the Point where it was effected, was defended from our approach by a line of defences extending from Back river to Humphry's Creek on the Patapsco, thrown up by ourselves previously to their arrival.

I have now the pleasure of calling your attention to the brave commander of Fort McHenry Major Armistead—and to the operations in that quarter. The Enemy made his approach by water at the same time that his army was advancing on the land, and commenced a discharge of bombs and rockets at the Fort as soon as he got within range of it. The situation of Major Amistead was peculiarly trying, the enemy having taken his position at such a distance as to render offensive operations on the part of the Fort entirely fruitless—whilst their bombs & rockets were every moment falling in and about it—the officers and men being at the same time entirely exposed. Two vessels however had the temerity to approach somewhat nearer—they were as soon compelled to withdraw. During the night whilst the enemy on land was retreating and whilst the bombardment was the most severe—two or three rocket vessels & barges succeeded in getting up the Ferry Branch—but they were soon compelled to retire, by the forts in that quarter commanded by Lieut. Newcomb of the Navy and Lieut. Webster of the Flotilla—<sup>5</sup> the forts also destroyed, one of the barges, with all on board. The Barges and Battery at the Lazzaretto under the command of Lieut. Rutter of the Flotilla kept up a brisk and it is believed, a successful fire during the hottest period of the bombardment. Major Amistead being severely ill in consequence of his continued exposure to the weather, has rendered it impossible for him to send in his report—it is not therefore in my power to do justice to those gallant individuals who partook with him the danger of a tremendous bombardment, without the ability of retorting and without that security, which in more regular fortifications is provided for such occasions. The loss in the Fort is I understand, about 27 Killed and Wounded—amongst

the former I have to lament the fall of Lieutenants Claggett & Clemm—who were both estimable citizens and useful officers.

From General Stricker's Brigade, the return of the killed and wounded has not yet come in, it is supposed however to amount to about 150 among the former, this city has to regret the loss of its Representative in the State Legislature, James Lowry Donaldson Esqr. adjutant of the 27th Regt. This Gentleman will ever be remembered by his constituents for his zeal & talents & by his corps, for his bravery & military knowledge.

I cannot conclude this report without informing you of the great aid I have derived from Comr. Rodgers. He was ever present & ever ready to afford his useful counsel and to render his important services. His presence with that of his gallant officers & seamen gave confidence to every one

The Enemy's loss in his attempt on Baltimore amounts as near as we can ascertain it to between 6 & 700 killed wounded & missing.<sup>6</sup> General Ross was certainly killed. I have the honor to be with great respect Sir Your Obt Servt.

S. Smith  
Major General Commanding

LS, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, S-141 (8) (M221, Roll No. 66). Animosity toward Secretary of War Armstrong, on whom many blamed the fall of Washington, forced his resignation in early September 1814. James Monroe served as acting secretary until his confirmation by the Senate in late September.

1. Smith to Monroe, 15 Sept. 1814, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, S-141 (8), enclosure (M221, Roll No. 66). Smith reported that most of the British ships had sailed from the Patapsco River; their destination was unknown.

2. For Cochrane's much lower estimate, see Cochrane to Melville, 17 Sept. 1814, p. 290.

3. Stricker to Smith, 13 Sept. 1814, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, S-141 (8), enclosure (M221, Roll No. 66).

4. Captain John A. Burd, U.S. Light Dragoons (U.S.A.).

5. Lieutenant Newcomb commanded at Fort Covington; Sailing Master Webster at the six-gun battery called Fort Babcock. Webster joined the Chesapeake Bay flotilla as a sailing master; his warrant was dated from 1 March 1814. He was discharged on 15 April 1815.

6. Colonel Brooke reported 39 killed and 251 wounded. See source note, p. 285 above.

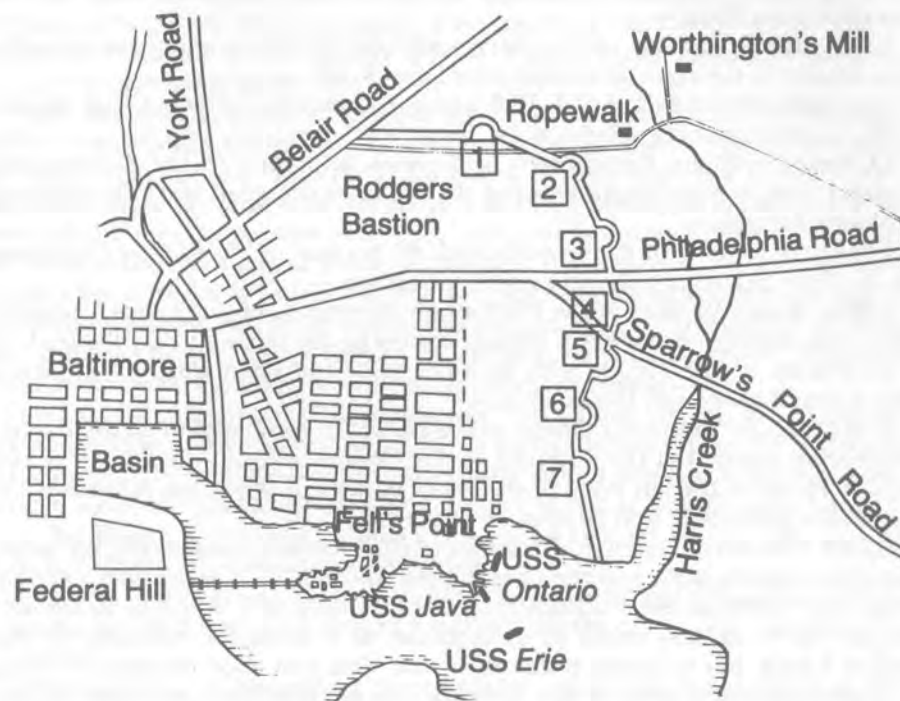
#### COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

New Castle Sept. 23d—1814

Sir

From the time of my Arrival at Baltimore until my departure, the various duties I had to perform and the different situations in which I was placed, must plead my apology for not furnishing a Report of the Services of the Naval Force employ'd there under my command at an earlier period; and more particularly as my situation a large portion of the time was such as to deny me the use of Pen Ink or Paper.—

The advance and retreat of the Enemy, you have been made acquainted with from other sources and it now only remains for me to make known to you the dispositions made of, and the services rendered by the Force under my com-



Map 10. Rodgers's Bastion, 12-14 September 1814

This depicts the distribution of naval shore batteries and field artillery on the heights of Hampstead Hill. The entrenchments between the batteries were occupied by the U.S. Marines and companies of the Maryland and Pennsylvania militia.

Key: 1-2. First Regiment of Artillery, Maryland militia; 3. Captain George Stiles's Marine Artillery, Maryland militia; 4. Lieutenant Thomas Gamble; 5. Sailing Master George F. De La Roche and Midshipman Robert Field; 6. Sailing Master James Ramage; 7. Midshipman William D. Salter.



mand, and which I feel a pleasure in doing, as the conduct of all was such as to merit my entire approbation.—

In the general distribution of the Forces employ'd in the defence of Baltimore, with the concurrence of the Comdg. General,<sup>1</sup> I stationed Lt Gamble first of the *Guerriere*, with about 100 Seamen in command of a Seven Gun Battery on the Line between the Roads leading from Phila. and Sparrows Point.—

Sailing Master De La Roach of the *Erie* and Midshn. Field of the *Guerriere*<sup>2</sup> with 20 Seamen in command of a Two Gun Battery fronting the Road leading from Sparrows Point.—

Sailing Master Ramage of the *Guerriere* with 80 Seamen in command of a Five Gun Battery to the right of the Sparrows Point Road.

And Midshipman Salter<sup>3</sup> with 12 Seamen in command of a One Gun Battery a little to the right of Mr. Ramage.—

Lt Kuhn<sup>4</sup> with the Detachment of Marines belonging to the *Guerriere* was posted in the Entrenchment between the Batteries occupied by Lt Gamble and S. Master Ramage.—

Lt Newcomb third of the *Guerriere*, with 80 Seamen occupied Fort Covington on the Ferry Branch a little below Spring Gardens.—

Sailing Master Webster of the Flotilla with 50 Seamen of that Corps, occupied a Six Gun Battery on the Ferry Branch known by the name of Fort Babcock.—

Lt. Frazier of the Flotilla with 45 Seamen of the same Corps, occupied a Three Gun Battery near the Lazaretto—

And Lt. Rutter the senior Officer of the Flotilla in command of all the Barges, which were moored at the entrance of the Passage between the Lazaretto and Fort McHenry in the left Wing of the Water Battery, of which was stationed Sailing Master Rodmond<sup>5</sup> and 50 Seamen of the Flotilla.—

To the Officers, Seamen and Marines of the *Guerriere*, considering the privations they experienced and the cheerfulness and zeal with which they encountered every obstacle, every acknowledgement is due, and it would be as impossible for me to say too much in their praise, as it would be unworthy of the Station I hold, not to mention that their discipline and good conduct, is owing in a preeminent degree, to the indefatigable attention and exertions of that highly estimable Officer Lt Gamble.—

The Enemy's repulsion from the Ferry Branch on the Night of the 13th: Inst after he had passed Fort McHenry with his Barges and some light Vessels was owing to the warm reception he met from Forts Covington and Babcock commanded by Lt Newcomb and S. Master Webster, whom with all under their command performed the duty assigned them, to admiration.—

To Lt. Frazier commanding the Three Gun Battery at the Lazaretto, great praise is due for the constant and animated Fire with which he at times assailed the Enemy during the whole Bombardment, altho' placed in a very exposed situation to Rockets and Shells.—

Great praise is justly due Lt Rutter for his prompt execution of my orders, as well as the zeal and coolness with which he performed all the duties of his Station, altho' continually exposed for near 24 Hours to the Enemy's Rockets and Shells.—

Similar praise is due to the Officers and Men in the several Barges of the Flotilla which were immediately under his command, who without regard to the Enemy's Rockets and Shells maintained their position with firmness in the Passage between Fort McHenry and the Lazaretto.—

Sailing Master Rodmond Stationed in the Water Battery of Fort McHenry with 60 Seamen of the Flotilla, did his duty in a manner worthy of the Service to which he belongs.—

To Masters Mate Stockton my Aid, I am greatly indebted for the zeal and promptitude with which he conveyed my orders from Post to Post and wherever I had occasion to communicate, altho' in some instances he had to pass through showers of Shells and Rockets.—

To Mr. Allen (brother of the late gallant Capt Allen of the Navy) who acted as my Aid and remained near my person, I am much indebted for the essential assistance he rendered in the capacity of Secty. and conveying my orders wherever I found the same necessary.—<sup>6</sup>

It now becomes a duty to notice the Services of that gallant and meritorious Officer Capt Spence of the Navy by whose exertions, assisted by Lt Rutter with the Barges, the entrance into the Basin was so obstructed in the Enemy's presence and that too in a very short time, as to bid defiance to his Ships, had he attempted to force that passage.— In fine, owing to the emergency of the Service, altho' no definite command could be assigned Capt Spence, his services were nevertheless of the first order, and where danger was expected there he was to be found animating with his presence and encouraging by his conduct, all to do their duty.— On my leaving Balto. Commodore Perry being absent, the command of the Naval Forces devolved on this excellent Officer.—

That justly distinguished Officer Commo. Perry, I am sorry to say, was so Indisposed and worn out with the fatigue he had experienced on the Potomac, and having arrived at Balto. but a short time before the Bombardment commenced excluded his taking an active command— at the moment however when the Enemy threatened to attack our Lines, I found he was with us, and ready to render every assistance in his power.—

In a word, every Officer, Seaman and Marine belonging as well to the Navy as to the Flotilla performed his duty in a manner worthy of the corps to which he belonged.—

I feel a delicacy in attempting to express an opinion of the conduct of any other corps than those particularly placed under my command by the Navy Department, and the more so, as my object is to avoid every cause of being thought presuming.— I must in justice however be permitted to say that the conduct of Col Stephen Stoner commdg. the 1st. Regiment of Maryland Militia which was formed in colum in my rear for the defence of the Lines, and whom I considered attached to my Command by order of the Comdg. General, conducted in a manner not only to give me satisfaction, but the most incontestible proff that, that corps would have done its duty had the Enemy attempted to force the Entrenchment in its vicinity.—

Much praise is also due to Maj Randall commdg. a Battalion of Pennsylvania Riflemen who was also placed under my command, and whom I dispatched with my Aid Mr. Stockton to dislodge a party of men in the Enemy's Boats, which it was supposed intended landing near the Lazaretto to take possession of our little Three Gun Battery.— Mr Stockton on his return reported to me in very high terms, the zeal and gallantry displayed by the Major and his Corps on the occasion.— Indeed it is but justice to say that I have the best reason to believe, that all the Corps' Stationed in the Entrenchments, so far as came under my immediate observation would have performed their respective duties in a

manner honorable to themselves and to their country.— With great respect I have the honor to be Sir, Yr Obt Servt

Jn<sup>o</sup> Rodgers

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 89 (M125, Roll No. 39).

1. Major General Samuel Smith, Maryland militia.

2. Sailing Master George F. De La Roche. The midshipman's warrant for Robert Field dated from 1 September 1811.

3. William D. Salter's midshipman's warrant was dated 15 November 1809; his lieutenant's commission dated from 9 December 1814.

4. Joseph L. Kuhne's commission as a first lieutenant in the Marine Corps was dated 18 June 1814.

5. Solomon Rodmon joined the Chesapeake Bay flotilla as a sailing master on 22 June 1814. He was discharged 15 April 1815.

6. For more on the final cruise of *Argus* and the death of William Henry Allen, see Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, pp. 217–24. Thomas Allen, William Henry's younger brother, had moved to Baltimore in 1813.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GEORGE ARMISTEAD, U.S.A., TO  
ACTING SECRETARY OF WAR MONROE

Fort McHenry 24th. September 1814

Sir

A severe indisposition, the effect of great fatigue and exposure, has prevented me heretofore from presenting You with an account of the Attack on this Post— On the night of Saturday the 10th. inst. the British Fleet consisting of Ships of the line, heavy Frigates, and Bomb vessels, amounting in the whole to 30 Sail, appear'd at the mouth of the River Patapsco, with every indication of an attempt on the City of Baltimore, My own Force consisted of one Company of U.S. Artillery under Capt. Evans, and two Companies of Sea Fencibles under Captains Bunbury and Addison, of these three Companies 35 men were unfortunately on the Sick list and unfit for duty— I had been furnished with two Companies of Volunteer Artillery from the City of Baltimore under Capt. Berry and Lieut Commandt. Pennington,— to these I must add another very fine Company of Volunteer Artillerists under Judge Nicholson, who had proffered their Services to aid in the defence of this Post whenever an attack might be apprehended, and also a Detachment from Commodore Barneys flotilla under Lt. Rodman: Brigadier Genl. Winder had also furnished me with about Six hundred Infantry under the Command of Lt. Col. Steuart & Major Lane, consisting of detachments from the 12th. 14th. 36th. & 38th. Regts. of U.S. troops, the total amounting to about one thousand Effective men— On Monday Morning very early, it was perceived that the Enemy was landing troops on the East side of the Patapsco, distant about ten Miles— During that day and the ensuing night He had brought Sixteen Ships (including five Bomb Ships) within about two Miles and an half of this Fort— I had arranged my force as follows—The Regular Artillerists under Capt. Evans and the Volunteers under Capt. Nicholson, manned the Bastions in the Star fort, Captains Bunburys, Addisons, Rodmans, Berrys and Lt. Comdt. Penningtons Commands were stationed on the lower works, and the Infantry under Lt. Col. Steuart & Major

Lane were in the outer Ditch, to meet the Enemy at his landing if He should attempt one— On Tuesday Morning about Sun rise, the Enemy commenced the Attack from his five Bomb Vessels,<sup>1</sup> at the distance of about two Miles, when finding that his Shells reached Us. He anchored and Kept up an incessant and well directed Bombardment— We immediately opened Our Batteries and Kept up a brisk fire from Our Guns and Mortars, but unfortunately our Shot and Shells all fell considerably Short of him; this was to me a most distressing circumstance as it left Us exposed to a constant and tremendous Shower of Shells without the most remote possibility of our doing him the slightest injury. It affords me the highest gratification to State, that although We were left thus exposed, and thus inactive, not a Man Shrunk from the conflict— About 2 OClock P.M. one of the 24 pounders on the South West Bastion under the immediate command of Capt. Nicholson, was dismounted by a Shell, the explosion from which Killed his 2d Lieut and wounded several of his Men; the bustle necessarily produced in removing the Wounded and remounting the Gun, probably induced the Enemy to suspect that We were in a state of confusion, as He brought in three of his Bomb Ships to what I believed to be good striking distance; I immediately orderd a fire to be opened, which was obeyed with alacrity through the whole Garrison, and in half an hour those intruders again sheltered themselves by withdrawing beyond our reach, We gave three Cheers and again ceased firing— The Enemy continued throwing Shells with one or two Slight intermissions, till one OClock in the Morning of Wednesday, when it was discovered that He had availed himself of the darkness of the Night, and had thrown a considerable force above to our right; they had approached very near to Fort Covington, when they began to throw Rocketts, intended I presume to give them an opportunity of examining the Shores, as I have since understood they had detached 1250 picked Men with Scaling ladders for the purpose of Storming this Fort— We once more had an opportunity of opening our Batteries and Kept up a continued blaze for nearly two Hours, which had the effect again to drive them off— In justice to Lieut. Newcomb of the U.S. Navy, who commanded at Fort Covington with a Detachment of Sailors and Lieut Webster of the Flotilla who commanded the 6 Gun Battery near that Fort, I ought to State that during this time they Kept up an animated and I believe a very destructive fire, to which I am persuaded We are much indebted in repulsing the Enemy— One of their sunken Barges has since been found with two dead men in it, others have been seen floating in the River. The only means We had of directing Our Guns was by the blaze of their Rocketts and the flashes of their Guns, had they ventured to the same situation in the day time, not a Man would have escaped— The Bombardment continued on the part of the Enemy until Seven OClock on Wednesday Morning, when it ceased and about Nine they [*their*] Ships got under weigh and Stood down the River— During the Bombardment which continued 25 Hours, (with two slight intermissions) from the best calculation I can make, from fifteen to Eighteen hundred Shells were [*thrown*] by the Enemy, a few of these fell Short, a large proportion burst over Us, throwing their fragments among us and threatning destruction, many passed over, and about four hundred fell within the Works—two of the Public Buildings are materially injured, the others but slightly— I am happy to inform You (wonderful as it may appear) that our loss amounts only to four Men Killed and twenty four Wounded, the latter will all recover— Among the Killed I have to lament the loss of Lieut. Clagett and Sergeant Clemm, both of



Capt. Nicholsons Volunteers, two Men whose fate is to be deplored, not only for their personal bravery, but for their high Standing, amiable Demeanour, and spotless integrity in private life— Lieut Russel of the Company under Lt. Pennington received early in the attack a severe contusion in the Heel, notwithstanding which He remained at his post during the whole Bombardment— Was I to name any individuals who signalized themselves, it would be doing injustice to others, suffice it to say, that every Officer and Soldier under my Command did their duty to my entire satisfaction— I have the honor to remain respectfully Your Ob Servt

G Armistead Lieut. Col<sup>1</sup> U.S.A.

ALS, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, A-48 (8) (M221, Roll No. 59).

1. *Aetna, Devastation, Meteor, Terror, and Volcano.*

## Gosport Navy Yard Mobilizes for Attack

*Captain Charles Gordon languished in Norfolk for almost a year, awaiting the chance for a blue water cruise and the sea glory it would bring. The British blockade of the Chesapeake Bay dashed his hopes of escape. Instead, as that station's commanding officer, he occupied himself with strengthening its flotilla. Not knowing where the British fleet would appear after the incursion at Washington, Gordon, along with Captain John Cassin, commandant of the Gosport Navy Yard, established works to protect the yard from a British assault. As the American army was preoccupied with defending Norfolk, these naval officers organized their own batteries.*

*Meanwhile, Gordon saw an opportunity to free Constellation from her prison in the bay. The massive British concentration of ship strength in the upper bay in early September left the entrance to the capes patrolled by only one ship of the line. Secretary Jones, however, rejected Gordon's plea and consigned his ship to mundane harbor duty. After the British retreat from Baltimore, Jones accorded the station little attention. By November, with the bulk of the British fleet having left the bay and Jones's tenure as secretary coming to a close, it is little wonder that Jones stopped responding to Gordon's entreaties for more men.*

CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO CAPTAIN JOHN CASSIN

*Constellation* Saturday evening Sept. 3rd. 1814

Sir,

Many occurrences of late has thrown information in my way to justify the belief, that the Navy yard at Gosport, will be the principal object of the Enemy, and will be their first point of approach, leaving all the Forts<sup>1</sup> unmolested Untill the destruction of the yard is effected. And the Powder and the provisions (which they contemplate finding their) is in their possession— They certainly expect to possess themselves of every barrel and more than probable may be induced to proceed up the Canal in persuit of it.

As the Genl.<sup>2</sup> has not force to spare sufficient to throw up his contemplated breast work for the protection of the yard; I will undertake to do it in due time if you and Capt. Swift<sup>3</sup> will assist me with such force as you may have— And in the event of the advance of the enemy on that point alone, part of my force would of course be unoccupied, which would enable me to man any Guns planted their— The express of yesterday from Mr Munroe, officially announced the Departure of the British Army from Maryland, supposing, Baltimore Richmond, or Norfolk to be their next object, consequently we have no time to loose; If therefore you approve my proposition, I will commence tomorrow with all the force I can conveniently spare— Very respectfully Sir yr. obdt. Servt.

Cha<sup>s</sup> Gordon

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 11 (M125, Roll No. 39). Cassin enclosed this letter in his 16 September 1814 letter to Jones. See p. 307.

1. Forts Nelson and Norfolk were constructed in 1794 opposite each other on the Elizabeth River to defend Norfolk, Portsmouth, and the Gosport Navy Yard.

2. Brigadier General Robert B. Taylor, Virginia militia.

3. Thomas R. Swift was commissioned a captain in the Marine Corps on 18 June 1814.

CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

*Constelln.* Norfolk 7th. Sepr. 1814

Sir,

I am sorry to have to report to you the death of Lieutt. Drayton— He has linger'd since last Jany. & died on Sunday last—<sup>1</sup> He was buried in the Church yard at Norfolk with the honors due his rank; The purser<sup>2</sup> is settling his accts. & collecting his effects, a statement of which will be forward'd to his friends in South Carolina—

While the numerous fleet of the Enemy are engaged in there war of destruction up the Bay, but one (ship of the line)<sup>3</sup> is kept on the blockade at the Capes, It would therefore be gratifying to know if it is yr. intention I should embrace the first opportunity to proceede to sea— My Ship is again Victual'd for 5 months with a Crew of near 300 new recruits or, reenlistments, & the remainder of old hands who have 6, 8 & 12 months to serve— I have but 3 Commission'd Lieutts. with 3 other officers (of the next grade) in whom I can have confidence— All the others being very young & totally inexperienced, tho very promising officers—

In consequence of the long indisposition of Capt- Tarbell, & the probability of a formidable attack upon this place before his recovery, I have been under the necessity of placing Lieutt. Neale (my 1st. in the Command of the *Hornet*) with one half of the Gun Boats under him and station'd off Crany Island— This leaves me with Lieutts. Saunders & Cassin (both young in Commission, & Mr. Stallings actg.) Midn. Davis my next eldest has charge of one division of Guns, And Mr. Hammersly has the Command of the *Franklin* (Tender) & is to join the Ship or the *Hornet* in the event of an Attack—<sup>4</sup>

My Muster rolls & report of the state & condition of the Force upon this station has been duly prepared agreeable to Yr. orders on that subject;<sup>5</sup> But I have

thought proper to detain them until I can be inform'd or, officially notified of the reestablishment or situation of the office of the Department— The Comdg. Genl.<sup>6</sup> having express'd much concern on the defenceless state of our Navy yard here, stating that he was too much occupied to give it his attention (And Captn. Cassin conceiving his force in the yard inadequate to the task) I have this day detail'd 50 or 60 men from this Ship & commenced throwing up a redoubt which I shall hope to compleat in 10 or 12 days; And which the principal Engineer<sup>7</sup> conceives adequate to the defence of the yard. I have the honor to be with much respect Sir, yr. obt. servt.

Cha<sup>s</sup> Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 28 (M125, Roll No. 39).

1. 4 September 1814.

2. Isaac Garretson.

3. *Asia*.

4. Benjamin I. Neale's lieutenant's commission dated from 4 June 1810. James Sanders's and Joseph Cassin, Jr.'s, lieutenant's commissions dated from 24 July 1813.

5. Circular letter, Jones to Gordon, 16 Aug. 1814, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, pp. 406-7 (M149, Roll No. 11).

6. Brigadier General Robert B. Taylor, Virginia militia.

7. Captain Sylvanus Thayer, Corps of Engineers, U.S.A.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON

Capt. Charles Gordon  
U.S. Navy. Norfolk Va.

Navy Department Sept. 10th. 1814

Sir,

I have received yours of the 7th. instant.— The orders from this Department, now in your possession, answer your Enquiry.— The *Constellation* cannot proceed to sea, until special orders for that purpose shall be issued from this Department.— The powerful force of the enemy being now exclusively directed against our territory and particularly against the Harbors and cities on the waters of the Chesapeake, there is no comparison between any service the *constellation* could possibly render at Sea, and the importance of her force for the defence of Norfolk.—

The loss of Lieutenant Drayton to the service is much to be regretted.—

Two or three Lieutenants will be ordered to report themselves to you.— I approve of the steps you have taken for the defence of the Navy Yard.—

What object the Enemy has next in view, is yet uncertain but he will not be inactive long, and it is only by the utmost vigilance, and the highest state of preparation that you can hope to repel him, should he attempt Norfolk in force.— I am respectfully &c.

W: Jones

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 415 (M149, Roll No. 11).

CAPTAIN JOHN CASSIN TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Navy Yard Gosport September 16th. 1814

Sir,

I have taken the liberty of giving you a sketch of the situation of this place, and presuming the enemys first object in attack would be the Navy Yard; sometime back I induced the Commanding General,<sup>1</sup> to visit the head of the western branch, called or known by the name of Hall's Mill, which is the only rout the enemy could make without much difficulty, from where its generally believed they would land to attack, which is old town point, Nansimond Creek; in order to get some intrenchments thrown up at the Mill, which in my opinion would annoy the enemy much, there being many ravines very difficult from the road to the river, from Hodges ferry up to the Mill.—

But not having any assurance from the General, of any works thrown up, or any aid from his forces for the protection of this Yard, and every man who arrives to join the Army is marched to the rear of Norfolk, even the portsmouth Militia, I was resolved to erect a battery inside of the yard, which is finished with Six eighteen pounders, pointing from West to SW and two thirty two pounders from SW to South, long Guns, the battery is made of timber sufficient for Sailors to work on, without any injury to the timber, also four twelve pounders at the gate way, ready to secure the Cossway, from portsmouth to Gosport, and contemplated to have taken the Marines, with what little force I have in the Yard, to have defended it, after moving all the Stores on board the Gun boats, laid up for want of men, and moved them up the river to some point where they could be Sunk provided the enemy persued them, being Satisfied Captain Gordon, could not render me much assistance from his weak force, afloat, which does not amount to more than five hundred & thirty, for Frigate Gun Boats &c.—

Since fixing my battery, Captain Gordon, wrote me the enclosed,<sup>2</sup> which I have assented to, and procured more volunteers from Portsmouth to assist; the breast work is commenced about two hundred yards in the rear of the yard, and in front of my works, under the direction of Captain Thayer Engineer, with about one hundred and twenty or thirty men, Marines, bla[cks] and Captain Tabb's Company, the work being extensive in my opinion will not be finished in four weeks, every thing requisite for this breast work, is required from the yard, such as timber for platforms, Guns and every thing appertaining to them, by requisition of Captain Gordon, and the Engineer, the timber I shall procure of the inferior kind, when finish'd I know not how it's to be man'd.—

I do not know what the War department would do without the assistance of the Navy, enclosed you will receive a statement of Articles<sup>3</sup> furnished them. I have been compel'd to refuse them any more of the prime timber, without your authority.— but a few pieces of plank, for Gun Carriages, which I delivered to day. I have the honor to be Sir, Your obt. Servt.

John Cassin

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 57 (M125, Roll No. 39).

1. Brigadier General Robert B. Taylor, Virginia militia.

2. Cassin is probably referring to Gordon's 3 September 1814 letter that was filed among the captains' letters to the secretary of the navy. See pp. 304-5.

3. This list was not found. Apparently it contained an extensive amount of material and munitions because Secretary Jones strongly reproved Cassin for distributing so many supplies to the army without the Navy Department's express approval. Jones to Cassin, 20 Sept. 1814, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 2, p. 186 (M441, Roll No. 1).



## CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

*Constellation* 20th. Sept. 1814

Sir

In compliance with your orders of the 16th. ulto.<sup>1</sup> I have the Honor to forward herewith a report of the State and condition of the whole of the force on this Station, And a muster-roll of the Officers, Petty Officers, Seamen, marines and Boys under my Command designating those of the *Constellation* from those of the Flotilla, By which you will perceive the *Constellation* has a crew of 380 all told; and the Flotilla 283 A large proportion of the latter are officers and Boys and two thirds of the rest, blacks,— I have determined notwithstanding to keep seventeen Gun Boats in Commission, Six of which I have moored permanently to protect the rear of Fort Nelson, and the Town of Portsmouth, allowing them as many men as will work their Long Guns, to serve as a fix'd Battery, and under cover of the Guns of the *Constellation*, which also commands the plain in the rear of Fort Nelson and Portsmouth; The rest of the Gun Boats, (eleven in number,) I have detaild men from this Ship, to make a Crew of twenty five each. And Shall keep them in the advance at Crany Island, where I have a range of heavy Booms, well chaind & Anchor'd in the Narrows, And where I also contemplate experimenting with eight Torpedoes—

I have also three Launches and the *Centipede* barge with a small carriage Gun in each, And two Scows one mounting two Long 18s. and the Other two Long 12s. to operate with, should they be thrown in confusion or run upon the Flatts by the Booms in attempting to advance upon the Gun Boats, which I strongly apprehend, and will be prepared for—

The Six Boats out of Commission for want of men, I have put in charge of Capt. Cassin, by his request, to remove the powder, provisions &c, up towards the Canal in the event of an attack—

Every Seaman of the place, and those discharged from my Force who did not reenter, have join'd the army either as Regulars or substitutes—

The Battery for the defence of the Navy Yard will evidently be formidable, as it will Command the only pass to the Yard, about 300 yards spaced between the heads of two Creeks or Branches which lead up on either side of Gosport and effectually enclose both, But Capt. Swift of the marines not having more than 30 Effective men, and Capt. Cassin none we must depend upon the Army throwing in Artillerests when wanting, unless I should be unoccupied afloat, my Officers and men being prepared to meet them at any point, And I have full Confidence in all— I have the Honor to be very respectfully Sir yr ob Sevt.

Cha<sup>s</sup> Gordon

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 77 (M125, Roll No. 39).

1. Circular letter, Jones to Gordon, 16 Aug. 1814, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, pp. 406-7 (M149, Roll No. 11).

## CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

*Constellation* 21st. Octr. 1814

Sir,

Since my communication on the subject, I have been constantly engaged at the Fort intended for the defence of the Navy Yard, And do now contemplate

making it adequate to its compleat defence, provided the Commander of the land forces<sup>1</sup> does not take from me, the Malitia labourers he has been so good as to assist me with since its commencement— Had he furnish'd me with the Mechanics & tools promised, it would have been compleat long ere this, And with such as I could muster from my Ship, I have only been able to mount four long Eighteens as yet, But shall hope to mount five more this week.

The Battery is constructed to mount 15 long Eighteens or twenty four's and 2 forty two pound Carronades to rake the Ditches— I shall soon compleat it for 11 Long Eighteens and one thirty two pound Carronade, which is all that we have upon the Station; But with those, I will promise with two hundred of my crew to defend it against thousands of the Enemy As I intend it shall be impene-trable on all sides—

I have had a survey taken of all the Creeks and Country in the vicinity of the Navy Yard, Portsmouth & Fort Nelson, from which it is very evident that the Navy Yard & Gosport may with a little more labour and trifling expence be made perfectly secure from any Force, Our Fort commands a plane of one miles extent in every direction, and the heads of the two Creeks, within close musket shot, which compleatly embrace the Yard & Gosport— A redoubt of two or three Guns upon each of those Creeks, with the Ditches already contemplated is all I concieve necessary for its defence, provided the officer of the Yard will take care always to be prepared to line his Wharves well with Guns to oppose any force in front of the Yard on the opposite side of the river, which is narrow and would enable them to take a position to throw Rockets across. A Survey of the whole with the position of the fort shall be forwarded for your Satisfaction—

As the Flotilla is now nearly destitute of men & no Marines to man the Fort, except a small Guard of 25 men detail'd from the *Constellation* I have Offered to enlist any number of the Carolina Malitia who will enter as Flotilla men for two Years, And drill them as marines for the Fort, or, to act in Gun Boats as circumstances may require— Should I Succeed in procuring two hundred able bodied men on those terms, I contemplate dressing them in Marines fatigue uniform, it being the cheapest, in lieu of the sailors dress, which they will pay for as the Seamen do, And drill them to the heavy Guns in our own way, With such a force, and my present command upon this Station, well mann'd, I think while I remain in port, I may venture to pledge myself to you, to protect and defend this Yard with the whole of its contents against any force the Enemy may send against us—

I presume you are aware of the total stop to the recruiting service for some time p[ast] owing to our want of funds— Those men [whom] we have been obliged to discharge we have given due bills to, And all those of my crew 200 & odd, who reentered under my pledge, that they should recieve the amount of their last two years services, & liberty to Spend it, I am happy to say have not evan mentioned the subject, knowing my inability to comply at this moment I have the Honor to be very respectfully Sir Yr. obt. Servt.

Cha<sup>s</sup> Gordon

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 81 (M125, Roll No. 39). The seal obscures several words.

1. Brigadier General Robert B. Taylor, Virginia militia.

## CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Norfolk 11th. Novr. 1814

Sir

I have much satisfaction in informing you that my Fort<sup>1</sup> may now be considered as sufficiently defencable to meet the Enemy, And it certainly is the most compact and most formidable looking work in the place. It would with 150 or 200 men, command respect and attention from the most formidable force the Enemy could oppose to it, so much so that I feel anxious to know if it is your wish or intention it should be retained by us as a Marine Battery or if it be expected of me to relinquish it to the Land forces; Some of the Malitia no doubt will enlist with me, when I can give them an advance, But for the present I have placed my Marine Officer<sup>2</sup> (who I am not in want of on board) and a detachment of my Marines to guard it untill I can know your wishes—

With due respect I would suggest that fifty Marines under a lieutenant, or Lt. Stern be detach'd to guard the Fort, and Capt. Swift & Lt. Breckenridge<sup>3</sup> with their Navy Yard marines to guard the Navy Yard, and man the Yard Guns. This arrangement would enable me at any moment while in port, to throw all my marines as well as Sailors into the Fort when Necessary provided the *Constellation* could be indulged with another Marine Officer Senior to my present one and more suited to a man of War—

I avail myself of this communication to inform you how harrassing it will be to my Officers and crew to keep the numerous Boats of the Enemy in check this fall, while we lay so distant from the Roads, and they have it in their power to select their times of Operations. And while we are compell'd to be always on the watch in Open Boats night & Day, too distant from the Ship to return to their meals or even for daily relief, and too cold to live upon the beach as we did in the summer—

The Gun Boats not having more than five or Six men on an average, I dare not trust them from under the Guns of the *Constellation* and Forts.<sup>4</sup> And to be constantly transferring from the Ship to the G. Boats, tends to make my whole force still weaker—

As Capt. Tarbell's services are at present unimportant on this Station I would respectfully Suggest that (when recruiting funds are allowd.) I might be permitted to order him with two or three of the Officers of the Flotilla Southerly or where you may deem most fit to procure men of some description for those Gun Boats. If in the mean time the *Constellation* should get to sea (as indeed I should not consider the *Madagascar* & *Havanna* any obstruction in a tolerable SW. Blow) I could leave the Flotilla in charge of capt. Cassin untill Capt. Tarbells returning—

Lt. Neale having visited the above Ships thro'out and seen them exercise, he can [*best*] judge their force. The *Madagascar* is equal to us in rate and the *Havanna* a Short two and thirty, tho' she mounts 18s. on her main Deck— I have the Honor to be Sir—very respectfully yr. obt. Servt.

Cha<sup>s</sup>. Gordon

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 120 (M125, Roll No. 40). The word supplied in brackets is a conjecture. The seal obscures it.

1. Gordon erected a breastwork defense outside of the Gosport Navy Yard.
2. Captain Thomas R. Swift, U.S.M.C.
3. Francis W. Sterne was commissioned a first lieutenant in the Marine Corps on 24 July 1813; he was promoted to captain on 10 December 1814. Henry B. Breckenridge's rank as a first lieutenant in the Marine Corps dated from 9 July 1812 and his captaincy from 10 December 1814.
4. Forts Nelson and Norfolk.

## Investigation into the Burning of Washington

*Congress reconvened on 19 September 1814, almost a month after the British burned the Capitol. The House of Representatives quickly established a committee to inquire into the "causes of the success of the enemy in his recent enterprises against this metropolis, and the neighboring town of Alexandria." Committee Chairman Richard M. Johnson requested that the department heads provide detailed reports of the enemy's incursion and in particular an accounting of the public buildings destroyed. Secretary Jones dutifully communicated the Navy Department's role in the events and Thomas Tingey enumerated the destruction incurred at the Washington Navy Yard. On 29 November Congress ordered that all the findings be printed, but chose not to issue any opinion regarding them.<sup>1</sup>*

1. For a printed version of the full report, see ASP: Military Affairs, Vol. 1, pp. 524–99.

## SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CONGRESSMAN RICHARD M. JOHNSON

Navy Department  
Octr. 3d. 1814.

Sir,

In compliance with your letter of the 26th. instant,<sup>1</sup> as Chairman of the Committee appointed by the Honorable House of Representatives, "to enquire into the causes of the success of the enemy in his enterprises against this Metropolis, and the neighbouring town of Alexandria, and into the manner in which the Public buildings and property were destroyed, and the amount thereof"; and with your request "for such information on the subject, as may be in my power, and more particularly in relation to the destruction of the Navy Yard; and the amount of Public property destroyed," I have the honour to present the following Report of the measures adopted by this Department, and of the facts, within my knowledge, in relation to the objects of the enquiry.

In obedience to the general instructions and early solicitude of the President, in anticipation of the probable designs of the enemy to harass the country in this vicinity, and to attempt the invasion of this Metropolis, I directed, in the month of May last, three 12 pounders to be mounted on field Carriages, by the Mechanics of the Navy Yard, and completely equipped and furnished for field Service. To these the marines at Head Quarters were trained, under the command of Captain Miller, and prepared to act, either as Artillerists or Infantry, as the Service might require. A short time previous to the reinforcement of the enemy in the Patuxent, I caused two long 18 pounders to be mounted on field Carriages, and prepared, in like manner, for field Service; ready to be attached to the command of Commodore Barney, should the enemy, at any time, compel



him to abandon the Flotilla, under his command, on the Patuxent, and the emergency call for the aid of his force, in defence of the Capital or of Baltimore.

For this eventual Service that Officer was instructed to prepare; and by his zeal and activity, his men acquired the expert use of their Muskets; and a capacity, as well as an ardent disposition, to be useful to their country on either element.

On the 26th. July, in consequence of the menacing movements of the enemy, near the Kettle Bottoms in the Potomac, which it was said they were sounding and buoying off, the letter A<sup>2</sup> was written; but, on account of information received on the same day, the letter B,<sup>3</sup> countermanding the former was written.

The enemy, in the Patuxent, was occupied in depredating upon its shores, until large reinforcements arrived at the Mouth of that River on the 18th. of August, the account of which was communicated on the 19th. to the Department by Commodore Barney, in the letter C,<sup>4</sup> with a list of the Naval Force of the Enemy annexed.

On the morning of the 19th. information was received at the Department from Captain Gordon, Commanding the U. S. Naval Force at Norfolk, that, on the morning of the 16th. came in from Sea, and proceeded up the Bay, 22 sail of enemy's vessels; viz. two 74's, one 64, one Razee, 7 Frigates, 7 Transports, and two or three Brigs or Schooners;<sup>5</sup> which, it appears by the letter C, joined the Force at the Mouth of the Patuxent on the 18th; the whole of which ascended the Patuxent, near to Benedict, on the 18th. and 19th. and commenced debarking the Troops. The letter marked D<sup>6</sup> was immediately written to Commodore Barney; the letter E<sup>7</sup> to Commodore Rodgers, and the letter F<sup>8</sup> to Captain Porter, urging the two latter to repair with their forces, towards this City, with the utmost expedition.

Commodore Rodgers had previously made the most judicious arrangements, to transport, with celerity, the Marines, and the principal part of the Seamen, under his command on the Delaware Station, to the Head waters of the Chesapeake, or to Baltimore, upon any sudden emergency, and had organized and disciplined his men with a view to such service. It appears, however, by his letters G<sup>9</sup> and H,<sup>10</sup> that, with every possible exertion, he did not reach Baltimore until the 25th. consequently too late to participate in the defence of the Metropolis, against a force, the greater part of which came in from Sea on the 16th. was first known to the Department to have arrived on the 19th. marched from Benedict on the 20th. and entered the Capital on the 24th.

Having sent to General Winder on the 19th. a copy of letter C, on the 20th, I called on him, at his Quarters at McKeowins,<sup>11</sup> to show him the letter I,<sup>12</sup> just received from Commodore Barney, and my order to that officer to join and cooperate with the force under his command, (see letter K,)<sup>13</sup> also to point out those Volunteer Corps, in his Army, that comprised the mechanicks of the Navy Yard, who, being excellent Axemen, would act with great effect as Pioneers. As it was understood that a strong Squadron of the Enemy's Ships, in cooperation with his land force had passed the principal obstacle in the Potomac, and was only retarded in its ascent by contrary winds, against which it was warping with great exertion;<sup>14</sup> I expressed to him my solicitude for the defence of Fort Washington, and proposed to throw the Marines, who had been trained to Artillery exercise, and a part of the Seamen into that Fort for its defence.

The General did not conceive the state of his force such as to warrant the abstraction of so efficient a part, as that of the Marines and Seamen, from the

main body, which was to oppose the direct advance of the enemy's Army, on the City, and indeed his objection appeared to have weight.— He did not, however, consider Fort Washington as tenable.

On the 21st. the letter L<sup>15</sup> was received from Commodore Barney, and a Detachment of about 110 Marines, with three 12's, and two 18 pounders, under the command of Captain Miller, marched from Head Quarters to join Commodore Barney, and reached the Wood Yard that evening.

In the course of this day and the following, I visited the Navy Yard, and enquired of the Commandant,<sup>16</sup> what were the means of transportation, and what assistance he had in the Yard? He stated that all the Mechanics of the Yard were, and had been with the Army from the first alarm; that no persons remained but the Officers of the Yard, three besides himself, and a very few of the Ordinary, chiefly Blacks; that two of the old Gun Boats were the only craft for transportation; that all the Waggons in the District had been hired or impressed for the Army; and that those Blacks, who were usually to be had for hire, were employed on the Works at Bladensburg.

I directed him to employ all the means he had or could procure; to load the Gun Boats with provisions and powder, and send them up to the Little Falls; employ as many Waggons as could be either hired or impressed, and convey as much of the Navy powder, as possible, from the Magazine on the Eastern Branch, to Mr. Dulany's Barn, on the Virginia side of the Potomac, about nine miles above the City; to direct Messrs. Grayson, Stull and Williams, to transport the Public powder from their Works to the same place; and to continue transporting the most valuable and portable articles, from the Yard to any place of safety, with all the means he could command.

The Public Vessels, afloat at the Navy Yard, were the New Sloop of War *Argus*, with her Guns mounted, her Topmasts launched, and her sails, and detached equipments, complete, on shore in store; the New Schooner *Lynx*, and three New Barges, one of the First, and two of the Second class, completely equipped; with the two Gun Boats before mentioned.

On the Slip was the New Frigate *Columbia*, of the largest Class; caulked, ready for coppering, and nearly so for Launching. Her masts, Spars, Tops, &c. almost finished in the Mast House;— Gun Carriages nearly completed;— her Sails, made and in the Loft; her rigging fitted;— Blocks all made; and her Equipments, generally, in great forwardness.

Besides the Buildings, Engines, Fixtures, and Shop Furniture of the several Mechanical branches in the Navy Yard, there were about 100 Tons of Cordage, some Canvas, a considerable quantity of Saltpetre, Copper, Iron, Lead, Block Tin, Blocks, Ship Chandlery, Naval and Ordnance Stores, implements and fixed ammunition, with a variety of manufactured articles in all the Branches; 1743 barrels of Beef and Pork, 279 barrels of Whiskey, and a moderate Stock of Plank and Timber.

Had there been a prospect of transporting the Sloop of War *Argus*, to a place of safety, the representations of the Commandant will show, that he had not the means of transporting her, and there appeared to be no situation in which she could be placed, in which she would not fall into the hands of the enemy, in the event of his getting possession of the City. It therefore only remained to endeavour to save all the Stores, that could be transported, and the smaller Vessels, particularly the Barges, if practicable, by running them up to the Little Falls.— This was directed to be done.

On the 22nd. the letter M<sup>17</sup> was received from Commodore Barney. In the evening of that day I accompanied the President to General Winder's Camp, at the Old Fields, and passed the night in Commodore Barney's tent;— the Army of the enemy at Upper Marlborough eight miles distant; On the morning of the 23d. reviewed the Seamen and Marines, whose appearance and preparation for battle, promised all that could be expected from cool intrepidity, and a high state of discipline.

In the hope that Commodore Rodgers might arrive, that evening, at Baltimore, and not doubting that the enemy would be retarded on his march, by obstacles and annoyance, until the Seamen from Baltimore could reach Bladensburg, I wrote to Commodore Rodgers the letter marked N,<sup>18</sup> and sent it by a Vidette.

About 2 O'clock P.M. I accompanied the President, on his return to the City, and, in the course of the evening, was informed of the sudden retreat of our Army, from the Old Fields to the City, over the Eastern Branch Bridge.

On the morning of the 24th. I proceeded to General Winder's Quarters, at Doctor Hunter's house, near the Eastern Branch Bridge, where the President, and Secretaries of War, State, and Treasury<sup>19</sup> soon after arrived.

I found Commodore Barney employed, by order of the General, in planting his Battery on the Hill, near the head of the Bridge. He was charged to defend that pass and to destroy the Bridge, on the appearance of the Enemy; for which purpose scows and Boats, with combustible materials, were placed under the Bridge ready to explode. At this time the enemy was apparently advancing on the road to the Bridge; but shortly after advice was received that he had turned off on the road towards Bladensburg, about six miles from that place;— General Winder set off for Bladensburg, leaving Commodore Barney, with his Seamen and Marines in charge of the Bridge.

It was soon observed that a very efficient part of the force had been left to destroy the Eastern Branch Bridge, which could as well be done by half a dozen men, as by five hundred. The subject was discussed by the President, Heads of Departments, and Com. Barney, which resulted in the order for his immediate and rapid march, to join the Army near Bladensburg, which he reached, just in time to form his men for Battle.— Captain Creighton was left in charge of the Bridge, to destroy it on the near approach of the enemy.

I here presented, for consideration, the subject of the Navy Yard, to the view of the President and Secretary of War, in the presence of the Secretaries of State and of the Treasury. I described the situation of the Public vessels, and the nature of the public property at that Establishment; the vast importance of the Supplies, and of the Shipping to the Enemy, particularly as there appeared to be no doubt of his Squadron forming a junction with his Army, should it succeed in the conquest of the Capital; (General Winder, having distinctly stated, on the same morning, that Fort Washington could not be defended;) and as, in this event, nothing could be more clear than that he would first plunder, and then destroy the Buildings and Improvements; or if unable to carry off the plunder, and the Shipping, he would destroy the whole. And if the junction should be formed, it would be a strong inducement to the enemy to remain, in order to launch the New Frigate, which the force at his command would accomplish in four or five days. He would then carry off the whole of the Public Stores and Shipping, and destroy the Establishment; and, in the mean time, greatly extend the field of his plunder and devastation.— Thus, in either case, whether

the junction was formed, or whether the Army alone entered the City, the loss or destruction of the whole of the public property at the Navy Yard was certain.

It was, therefore, distinctly agreed and determined, as the result of this consultation, that the Public Shipping and Naval and Military Stores and Provisions, at the navy yard should be destroyed, in the event of the Enemy's obtaining Possession of the City.— I went to the Navy Yard about 2 O'clock, and ordered the Commandant to prepare the necessary trains, for the destruction of the Public Shipping, and of the Naval and Military Stores and provisions in the Navy Yard; and to destroy the same, so soon as he should ascertain that the enemy had taken possession of the City; first removing such articles of most value, as might be found practicable, particularly the New Barges, if possible, and then to retire in his Gig.

Subsequent events prove the justness of these conclusions, if indeed further evidence had been at all wanting.

The only legitimate objects of the enterprise of the enemy, to this place, were the Public Shipping and the Naval and Military Establishments and none can believe, that these would have escaped the torch of the Destroyer of our Civil Edifices, of Private Rope Walks and of every thing, in the most remote degree, connected with Navigation; but above all with the American Navy.

The order for the destruction of the Public Shipping and property, at the Navy Yard, was not issued without serious deliberation, and great pain, by him, under whose auspices and direction those noble Ships had been constructed, and a degree of activity, usefulness, and reputation, imparted to the Establishment, which it had never known before. It was given under the strongest obligations of duty. It is conceived that no Military maxim is better established, nor duty better understood, than that which enjoins the destruction of Public Ships, Arsenal, Naval, and Military Stores, and provisions, when they can be no longer defended, or prevented from falling into the hands of the enemy; and that this duty becomes the more imperative, as the ratio of the value of the objects is enhanced to the enemy.— To defend the Shipping or Navy Yard was out of the question;— All the mechanics and labourers of the Yard, as well as all the Seamen and Marines in the District, were with the Army.

The Commandant of the Navy Yard is a Captain in the Navy; the vessels and property were under his charge and command; and if no special order from the Department had been issued, and he had suffered the Public Shipping and property to have fallen into the hands of the enemy, he would have committed a high Military crime, for which he would have been amenable before a Court Martial. The objects which it was proper to destroy, in order to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy, could not be separated from those which might have been left for his destruction. They were in Store, or in the midst of other combustible materials, and the fire from one would necessarily communicate to the other. Indeed the whole surface of the Yard was covered with Chips, Timber, Pitch, Tar, and other combustible matter, that to set fire to any one object, must produce the successive conflagration of the whole.

On returning from the Navy Yard, towards the Western part of the City I learned that our Army had retreated by the road to Tinley town, and that of the enemy was rapidly advancing towards the City. I soon after received a Message from the President, by Mr. Tench Ringgold, at Mr. Charles Carroll's, informing me that he had proceeded to cross the River, and requested that I would follow and meet him on the other side.



I returned to the City, on the morning of the 28th. immediately on hearing of the retreat of the enemy, and wrote the letter O,<sup>20</sup> to Commodore Rodgers.

The paper P,<sup>21</sup> is a copy of the detailed Report of the Commandant of the Navy Yard, of the manner in which he carried into execution the order I had given.

The Barge, he states to have been saved, was sent to Alexandria, and it appears remained there until the enemy took possession of her.

One Gun Boat was sunk near Foxall's, laden with Salted provisions, and has since been recovered. The other was laden with provisions and Gun powder, but ran aground in the Eastern Branch, in attempting to transport her to the Little Falls, and was plundered by the Inhabitants near the Navy Yard;—<sup>22</sup> the powder, and part of the provisions, have since been recovered.

The New Schooner *Lynx* escaped the flames, in an extraordinary manner, and remains entire.

The Metallic articles have nearly all been saved, including a vast quantity of Iron work, which, with little labour, will answer the original purpose. The Timber that was in Dock is saved; and a great deal of that which was partially consumed, will still be useful. Almost the whole of the Machinery of the Steam Engine, is reported to be in good condition;— the Boiler is perfect.

The Buildings, with the exception of the Houses of the Commandant and Lieutenant of the Yard,<sup>23</sup> the Guard Houses, and Gateway, and one other Building, have been destroyed. The Walls of some appear to be entire, and but little injured; of others they are destroyed. The Monument<sup>24</sup> was but slightly injured.

Paper Q<sup>25</sup> is a list of the Cannon remaining perfect in the yard, and of those which were injured by the Enemy.

The Issuing Store of the Yard, and its contents, which had escaped the original conflagration, were totally destroyed by the Enemy.

Orders have been issued to the Officers of the Yard to prepare their Statements and Estimates of the value of the public property destroyed, which shall be furnished as soon as possible.<sup>26</sup>

With the circumstances attending the abandonment and destruction of Fort Washington, and the fate of Alexandria, I am no otherwise acquainted, than by the accounts which have been published.<sup>27</sup>

After the Capitulation of Alexandria to the enemy's Squadron, a considerable force, in Seamen was ordered from Baltimore, (see letter R,) <sup>28</sup> under the command of Commodore Rodgers, with Captains Porter, Perry, and Creighton. The former attacked and annoyed the enemy in his rear, in Boats and with Fire Vessels, whilst the other Commanders planted their Batteries on White House Point, and Indian Head.

Those measures precipitated the departure of the enemy, and greatly annoyed him, in descending the River; but there was not time sufficient to prepare the means to render that annoyance effectual.— All that the limited means employed, could possibly effect, was accomplished, by the Gallantry, Skill, and Patriotism of those distinguished Officers, and the brave Seamen, Marines, and Volunteers, under their command.

The measures, pursued by this Department, in order to cooperate in the defence of the Metropolis, were not, in their nature, strictly sanctioned by the Regulations and usages of the naval service; but were adopted with an ardent desire that they might prove effectual; with a certain knowledge that the zeal and patriotism of the Naval Corps, would induce them to seek the enemy with

equal vigour and cheerfulness, in the field, as on the Main; and a conviction, that the emergency fully justified any step, which could contribute to the defence of the National Capital.

Whether more or less has been done, than duty required, is cheerfully and respectfully submitted. I have the honour to be very respectfully Sir your Obdt. Servt

W Jones

LS, DNA, RG233, Report of the Navy Department in Records of the Select Committee, HR13A-D15.3. All the enclosures A through R are found with this cover letter. All the enclosures except C, M, and Q are reproduced in this volume. Richard M. Johnson, a Democratic Republican from Kentucky, served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1807 to 1819 and in the U.S. Senate from 1819 to 1829, and, was vice president from 1837 to 1841. While a congressman, Johnson served as a colonel of a regiment of mounted Kentucky riflemen and was wounded at the Battle of the Thames (5 October 1813), during which he reputedly killed Tecumseh.

1. Jones meant ultimo. Johnson to Jones, 26 Sept. 1814, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 112 (M124, Roll No. 65). On 23 September 1814, the House of Representatives appointed a committee to inquire into the causes of the British attack on Washington and Alexandria.

2. Letter A, Jones to Barney, 26 July 1814, p. 149.

3. Letter B, Jones to Barney, 27 July 1814, p. 150.

4. Letter C, Barney to Jones, 19 Aug. 1814, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 30 (M124, Roll No. 65). This letter enclosed the following list of the British force that arrived at the mouth of the Patuxent on the 18th:

"1— 80 or 90 Gun Ship, Flag at the main.

4—74 Gun Ships one flag at the Mizzen

6 Frigates—

10 Ships about 32 Guns

5 Small Ships

2 Brigs

1 Large Schooner 16 Guns—

2 Smaller schooners about 10 Guns.—

13 Large Bay craft

A Large number of small boats now under way standing up the Patuxent, with a Number of men.— with a determination to go to the City of Washington as they said Yesterday.—

18 August 5 o'clock P.M.

They have taken all the horses in this part of the world, and one of the officers said yesterday they had about Seven hundred on board.—"

5. Joseph Middleton to Gordon, 16 Aug. 1814, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 104, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 38).

6. Letter D, Jones to Barney, 19 Aug. 1814, pp. 186–87.

7. Letter E, Jones to Rodgers, 19 Aug. 1814, p. 199.

8. Letter F, Jones to Porter, 19 Aug. 1814, p. 199.

9. Letter G, Rodgers to Jones, 23 Aug. 1814, pp. 200–201.

10. Letter H, Rodgers to Jones, 27 Aug. 1814, pp. 259–60.

11. McKeowin's Hotel, Washington, D.C.

12. Letter I, Barney to Jones, 20 Aug. 1814, p. 187.

13. Letter K, Jones to Barney, 20 Aug. 1814, p. 188.

14. For the British account of their diversionary expedition up the Potomac, see Gordon to Cochrane, 9 Sept. 1814, pp. 238–42.

15. Letter L, Barney to Jones, 21 Aug. 1814, p. 194.

16. Commodore Thomas Tingey.

17. Letter M, Barney to Jones, 22 Aug. 1814, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 39 (M124, Roll No. 65). Barney reported that on 21 August he landed 400 men and marched to Upper Marlborough. On the 22d he proceeded to join the marines who were reportedly at the Wood Yard.

18. Letter N, Jones to Rodgers, 23 Aug. 1814, pp. 201-2.
19. Secretary of War John Armstrong, Secretary of State James Monroe, and Secretary of the Treasury George W. Campbell.
20. Letter O, Jones to Rodgers, 28 Aug. 1814, pp. 242-43.
21. Letter P, Tingey to Jones, 27 Aug. 1814, pp. 215-20.
22. Gunboats *No. 70* and *71* were lost. Gunboat *No. 140* grounded but was later recovered. Tucker, *Jeffersonian Gunboat Navy*, p. 136.
23. Lieutenant Nathaniel Haraden.
24. The Tripoli Monument, a thirty-foot high marble column, on a pedestal, topped by the American eagle, erected in the Washington Navy Yard in 1808, in memory of U.S. naval officers who lost their lives in the war with Tripoli. The monument would be moved to the Capitol grounds in 1831, and in 1860 to the Naval Academy in Annapolis, where it remains today. Smith, "Tripoli Monument," pp. 72-73.
25. Letter Q, undated list of state of the ordnance at the Washington Navy Yard, Fort Washington, and the White House, DNA, RG233, Report of the Navy Department in Records of the Select Committee, HR13A-D15.3.
26. For Commodore Tingey's tables outlining the public property losses at the Washington Navy Yard, see pp. 321 and 323.
27. For more on the abandonment of Fort Washington and the capitulation of Alexandria, see *ASP: Military Affairs*, Vol. 1, pp. 587-96.
28. Letter R, Jones to Rodgers, 29 Aug. 1814, pp. 243-44.

#### COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Navy Yard Washtn: 18th Octr: 1814

Sir

On a review of the consequences which emanated from the retreat of our Army, and the entrance of that of the enemy into this city, on the 24th: of August last; so far as relates to this Establishment—I respectfully submit the following general statement.

After receiving repeated contradictory reports relative to the strength and position of the enemy, during the afternoon and evening of that day—at 20 minutes past 8 PM I received incontestible proof (by Captn. Creighton and Mr. M: Booth, my clerk, both of whom had been voluntarily active to obtain me positive information) that, the enemy was in complete possession of the city; having themselves been within the range of, and exposed to the fire of his musketry.<sup>1</sup>

The boats for our conveyance from the yard, being stationed according to order, we immediately repaired down the yard; applying fire to the trains leading to the storehouses—the principal of which were almost instantly in irresistible flame.

Advancing toward the boats, those to the new frigate *Essex*,<sup>2</sup> and to the Sloop of War *Argus* were touched, and they also immediately enveloped in a sheet of inextinguishable fire.

From a momentary impulse, and faint hope, of recovering the new schooner *Lynx*, I directed her not to be fired, and have the satisfaction to say that, by an almost miraculous escape she is still "ours."

The frigate *Essex's* hull, in the shipwright's department was very near complete, her bottom ready for coppering, and she could have been launched in ten days; her masts and spars were nearly finished—with timber sufficient on the wharf to complete them—all her blocks, dead-eyes, and the major part of her gun carriages ready— Two suits of her heavy sails, and nearly the same quantity of her others were finished in the sail-loft ready for bending her standing rigging &c; fitted in the rigging-loft, and sufficient running rigging in store,

for her complete equipment, her largest boats nearly ready for launching all her water casks and every material of cooper-work ready to go on board.

The Sloop of War *Argus*, lay at the wharf, with all her armament and equipment on board—except her sails which were in the sail-loft, and her provisions in the stores, and therein consumed—and except her powder which had not been shipped.

A large quantity of timber, plank, knees &c, were in different parts of the yard, and the seventy-four gun-ship timber, stored in the appropriate sheds, all fell a prey to the devouring element. Also, one large and one smaller row galley—both arm'd, rigged and prepared for service; and three heavy armed scows, with their guns &c, on board also ready.

The buildings destroyed, by the fire from the frigate &c were, the Mast-shed, and timber-shed, the joiners & boat-builders shops, and mould loft—all the Offices—the medical store—the plumbers and smiths shops, and block-makers shop—the saw-mill & block mill, with their whole apparatus, tools and machinery—the building for the steam engine, and all the combustible parts of it's machinery and materials; the rigging loft—the apartments for the master, and the boatswain of the yard, with all their furniture—the gun carriage makers and painters shops, with all the materials and tools therein at the time: also the hulls of the old frigates *Boston*, *New York* and *General Greene*.

The store-houses first fired were the Provision stores Gunners' & Ordnance store—Cordage store and sail [loft] which with all their perishable contents were cons[ume]d.

The Navy Storekeeper's<sup>3</sup> detail issuing store, containing in its different apartments, a large quantity of new canvas, twine, lines, bunting and colours—together with all our stocks of mathematical instruments, and nautical apparatus appertaining to navigation—ship chandlery tools, nails, oils, paints &c: had escaped through the night the effect of the fire but was fired by the Enemy on the succeeding morning the 25th: and entirely consumed with all it's contents—as were also the coopers shop, two small frame timber sheds—and that in which our tar, pitch, rozin &c, were deposited.

The general loss of our papers, prevents the possibility of forming a just estimate of the loss in the mechanical departments, heretofore enumerated. Of that, relative to the stores on hand, in the Navy store keepers peculiar charge, it is presumed a tolerably accurate estimate may be form'd; and will be the subject of a future communication, which shall be transmitted, as soon as it is possible to effect.

In my return to the yard on the 26th: I had the mortification to observe that, the provisions which had been laded on board the old gun-boat *No. 140* (and with which she had grounded, in endeavoring to get out of the branch on the 24th) had become a prey to numerous unauthorized persons, some of whom however instantly offered to deliver up all in their possession, which was subsequently done—but several barrels are yet to be accounted for.

A subject of still greater regret is, the loss of upward of 200 barrels of powder, which were wantonly & unauthorizedly taken out of the Magazine, and chiefly thrown into the water—the cause of which however, being under investigation, by a Court Martial on the Corporal of the Marine-guard<sup>4</sup> then there; I forbear to enlarge on the subject as my feelings would dictate. I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Your Obedt. Servt.

Tho: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 50 (M125, Roll No. 40). Tape and tears obscure parts of the document. Bracketed words were supplied from the printed version in *ASP: Military Affairs*, Vol. 1, pp. 577-78.



1. For Mordecai Booth's statement of his reconnaissance efforts with Master Commandant Creighton on 24 August, see Booth to Tingey, 24 Aug. 1814, pp. 208-14.

2. *Columbia*.

3. Buller Cocke.

4. The index to the Records of General Courts-Martial and Courts of Inquiry of the Navy Department (DNA, RG125, CM, Index 1799-1861 (M273, Roll No. 1) does not list such an inquiry.

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Navy Yard Washtn: 9th: Novr: 1814.

Sir

I have the honor to transmit you herewith, a general statement of the moveable articles at this Establishment on the 24th: of August last, previous to the entrance of the enemy into this city; together with the cost or estimated value of those materials at that time—the value of those recovered since the fire of the yard—and a statement of the real loss resulting therefrom.

This business has been much delayed, from the want of data, to ascertain all the particulars lost, and from the daily difference by accumulation, in collecting the incombustible articles from the ruins of the warehouses &c: from whence more is expected to be obtained yet, which will be instantly reported when ascertain'd, together with any omissions, which it is probable have been made; though it is believed, if any, only to an inconsiderable amount.

I am not yet in possession of the calculations of the Artist, who was referred to, for the value of the wood and interior work of the several buildings destroyed, and therefore defer any report on the damage of the brick or stone work, and of all other immoveable matter, until I have that most material information, as it respects the buildings. I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Yr. Obedt. Servt.

Tho<sup>s</sup>: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 118 (M125, Roll No. 40).

[Enclosure]

Recapitulation	Cost or Estimated value				Real loss	
	Loss		Recovery			
No. 1. Frigate <i>Columbia</i>	\$116,123.	05	\$ 10,432.	—	\$105,691.	05
" 2. Sloop of War <i>Argus</i>	75,000.	—	10,186.	55	64,813.	45
" 3. One large Row Galley	4,500.	—	1,477.	47	3,022.	53
" 4. Two smaller Ditto	6,000.	—	722.	80	5,277.	20
" 5. One armed Scow	1,610.	54	955.	87	654.	67
" 6. One ditto do.	1,096.	27	586.	67	509.	60
" 7. Gun Boats, row boats &c	6,553.	34	5,773.	34	780.	—
" 8. Boat-builders shop	2,962.	98	" "	"	2,962.	98
" 9. Blacksmiths & Plumbers do.	4,532.	80	1,969.	50	2,563.	30
" 10. Coopers shop &c	7,689.	75	2,854.	04	4,835.	71
" 11. Gun carriage makers do.	525.	—	" "	"	525.	—
" 12. Painters shop	869.	97	15.	—	854.	97
" 13. Blockmakers shop	1,610.	—	" "	"	1,610.	—
" 14. Medical store	2,679.	84	" "	"	2,679.	84
" 15. Ordnance stores &c	18,769.	90	" "	"	18,769.	90
" 16. Naval stores, cordage &c	78,262.	25	" "	"	78,262.	25
" 17. Copper, Iron, Lead &c	49,965.	27	42,522.	40	7,442.	87
" 18. Navy Storekeepers stores	20,431.	77	2,921.	89	17,509.	88
" 19. Ordnance, small arms &c	173,284.	97	162,926.	22	10,358.	75
" 20. Provisions & Contingencies	46,962.	04	4,071.	44	42,890.	60
" 21. Timber, Plank, Knees &c	45,000.	—	" "	"	45,000.	—
" 22. Anchors	12,400.	94	12,400.	94	" "	"
" 23. Miscellaneous articles	1,380.	03	648.	85	731.	18
	\$678,210.	71	\$260,464.	98	\$417,745.	73

Navy Yard Washington 9th. Novr. 1814

Tho<sup>s</sup>: Tingey

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 118, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 40). Of the fifteen pages detailing the loss and damage of the moveable articles at the Washington Navy Yard that Tingey enclosed with his letter to Jones, only the recapitulation page is reprinted here. Ditto marks indicate no entry.

## COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Navy Yard Washtn: 12th Novr: 1814

Sir

I have the honor to transmit you herewith, an estimate of the damage sustain'd in the buildings of this yard, by the fire of the 24th & 25th of August last with that of the materials and value of the parts saved— so an estimate of the cost of rebuilding such particulars, as in my judgement may be necessary for future operations; offering such observations thereon, as have appeared to me forcibly applicable—leaving to your better judgement, whether the whole may be necessary at this time, or which shall be first commenc'd on, in the event of the repairs being ordered: the whole is most respectfully submitted. I have the honor to be very respectfully Sir Your Obedt. Servt.

Tho<sup>s</sup>: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 127 (M125, Roll No. 40).

[Enclosure]

Recapitulation.	Estimated value				Real loss
	Loss		Recovery		
No. 1. Detail issuing store . . . . .	\$ 6,972.	80	\$ 252.	—	\$ 6,720. 80
" 2. Cordage store & sail loft .	12,780.	81	312.	—	12,468. 81
" 3. Ordnance Store &c. . . . .	16,664.	10	820.	—	15,844. 10
" 4. Timber shed, Mould loft &c. . . . .	23,776.	94	2000.	—	21,776. 94
" 5. Rigging loft, guncarriage shop &c . . . . .	15,279.	35	6480.	—	8,799. 35
" 6. Blacksmiths shop &c &c. .	16,210.	81	5102.	—	11,108. 81
" 7. Sawmill, Enginehouse &c.	17,850.	52	5010.	—	12,840. 52
" 8. Blockmakers shop . . . . .	2,091.	40	482.	—	1,609. 40
" 9. Coopers shop, and old buildings. . . . .	3,756.	80	" "	" "	3,756. 80
	\$115,383.	53	\$20,458.	—	\$94,925. 53

Thus the aggregate amount of damage to the buildings, by the fire, would appear to be . . . . . \$94,925. 53

From which, the amount of the following enumerated incombustible particulars being saved, may justly be deducted vizt.

Iron straps, and bolts to the <u>Girders</u> , and roofs, of the several buildings—not less than . . . . .	\$2000.	—		
Hinges &c: and sheet iron for roofing Ditto . . . . .	1500.	—	3,500.	—
Making the real loss, sustain'd in the buildings . . . . .			\$91,425.	53

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 127, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 40). Of the six pages detailing the damage to buildings at the yard, only the recapitulation page is printed here. In the other pages Tingey observed that some buildings were no longer required and that \$62,370.14 was all that he needed to rebuild in a "plain and substantial manner."



## Spence Prepares for Sea and Vies for the Steam Frigate

The correspondence of Robert T. Spence with the Navy Department and John Rodgers during the last six months of the war exhibited the frustrations of a blockaded commander and the insecurity of a junior officer. Manpower shortages plagued every station and Baltimore was no exception. Another season would pass with the new sloop of war *Ontario* confined to the harbor. Spence rationalized that if sea glory were impossible, he would prefer to remain at Baltimore. In spite of his suspicions that Joshua Barney also wanted the command of the steam frigate building there, Spence actively pursued obtaining its command.<sup>1</sup> In addition, Spence was concerned that many routine, administrative matters were not being addressed, as the Navy Department lacked strong leadership at this time. William Jones was a lame duck secretary from September when he announced his retirement until he left the department on 30 November. Benjamin W. Crowninshield, a Massachusetts sea captain, merchant, and politician, vacillated about accepting the proffered post, and then delayed assuming it until mid-January 1815. During the six-week interim, the department's chief clerk, Benjamin Homans, acted as secretary. Spence never achieved a sea command during the war but, soon after, Congress rewarded him for his shore duty with a captaincy.

1. For more on the steam battery being built at Baltimore at the end of the war, see Chapelle, *Steam Battery*, p. 144.

MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Baltimore Sept. 21st. 1814

Sir,

General Smith yesterday shew me a letter from the Secretary at War,<sup>1</sup> by which I find that you suppose Captain Perry to be in Baltimore— I design this to inform you, both Captains Perry & Creighton left this place for the Eastwd. the day after the fleet went down.—

As I have but few men remaining in the Flotilla, of those turned over from my ship<sup>2</sup> it is time I should be endeavouring to make up a Crew more especially as I wish to overhaul my rigging before cold weather, I solicit permission to open rendezvous for that purpose—<sup>3</sup> The want of men prevented my getting to Sea last winter I wish in time to avoid a Similar occurrence.— I have the honour to remain with great respect Yr. Obt. Sevt.

R. T. Spence

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 46 (M147, Roll No. 5).

1. Acting Secretary of War James Monroe.

2. *Ontario*.

3. In his reply, Jones authorized Spence to open a rendezvous in Baltimore. He mentioned that Perry was away overseeing private matters and would return soon to superintend the outfitting of *Java*. Jones to Spence, 22 Sept. 1814, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 421 (M149, Roll No. 11).

MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Baltimore Octo 12 1814

Sir

When you ordered the crew of the *Ontario* to be turned over to the Flotilla, you were pleased to say, they should rejoin the Ship in the Fall; the few which remain of them, say about 50, are now doing nothing at the Lazaretto; as I stand in need of them to prepare my Ship for sea by the Winter, I hope that you will see fit to order them to be retransferred.<sup>1</sup> I remain with high respect Yr. Obt St

R. T. Spence

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 66 (M147, Roll No. 5).

1. In November, Jones ordered the *Ontario* crewmen who had transferred temporarily to the Chesapeake Bay flotilla to return to Spence's command. Jones to the Commanding Officer of the U.S. Flotilla, Baltimore, 26 Nov. 1814, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 406 (M149, Roll No. 11).

MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Baltimore Nov 27, 1814

Sir

My Ship being nearly ready for sea, it becomes my duty to state the impracticability of my obtaining a crew at this place; also to inform you, that unless I attempt going down before the Winter is well set in, the chance of getting to sea will be but small: such being the case, I am induced to suggest a completion of my crew, from the Flotilla, in the following manner, viz—by taking back the remaining few turned over by me in April, making up the residue, with such as are willing to volunteer.

There are about 530 men in the Flotilla, out of which, number, I could procure a very excellent crew,— who, should I get to sea, would be more actively employed than at present. With high respect I remain yr obt st

R. T. Spence

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 89 (M147, Roll No. 5). Jones's last day as secretary of the navy was 30 November 1814. He did not respond to this letter, nor did the Navy Department's chief clerk, Benjamin Homans, who was the acting secretary.

MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE TO  
ACTING SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HOMANS

Baltimore Dec 12, 1814

Sir

The *Ontario* being in a state to require a Guard, I take the liberty to request, that you will please to order the detachment of Marines, designed as her compliment, forthwith to repair on board.—

I have also to ask for a Gunner.— as it is improbable the Frigate will get to sea during the War, I should have no objection to the one at present attached to her, should you see fit to order him.—<sup>1</sup>

I deem it proper to mention for your information, that out of the 110 men turned over by me to the Flotilla, I have but about 40 returned: the residue having run— these 40 are such as I was compelled to take, for the sake of a compliment: Thus sir I shall again be disappointed in getting to sea, although I know of nothing that can prevent, but a want of men.— I present for your consideration, a letter intended for the late Secty.

I understand there are in Washington, some men entered for the *Argus*— they would be an acquisition.<sup>2</sup>

I beg leave to tender my high respect; and to express a wish, that you may permanently fill the office, which you at present occupy. With great consideration I remain y obt st—

R. T. Spence

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 95 (M147, Roll No. 5).

1. There is no indication from *Ontario's* muster roll that she received a gunner from the frigate *Java* at this time.

2. Homans promised to supply Spence with all the equipment he needed to get to sea in January and regretted that his complement was deficient. Homans to Spence, 28 Dec. 1814, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 494 (M149, Roll No. 11).

MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

Confidential

Baltimore January 16. 1815

Dear Sir,

Having had no opportunity to show you the Letter I mentiond, written by Commo. Rodgers to Judge Tait, I now inclose it for your perusal; also one to me, in which, he expresses a hope, that you will be induced to make up my compliment of men from the Flotilla. I request these letters may not go beyond your own eye; and that you will return them as soon as read.<sup>1</sup>

It is hinted, that an Officer, senior to myself, is applying to be ordered to this Station: I avail myself of this opportunity to observe, that there is no duty at this place, which will require my being superceded, in a command, to which I have some claim, from the active agency I have had in its recent defence: the marine operations of which, were wholly entrusted to me:—except for the few days Commd. Rodgers was here with his men: this, you will perceive from the inclosed orders.<sup>2</sup> Fort McHenry was placed under my direction, with the approbation of Genl. Smith, Coln. Armistead being sick: under these circumstances, unless it is your intention that I should go to Sea in the *Ontario*,<sup>3</sup> I earnestly entreat that I may remain in command of a post, my knowledge of which, would enable me to be more useful in its defence, than any other Officer— indeed, Sir, as a resident of Baltim., with an extensive family connection within its bosom, and a large Estate depending on its preservation, I should have stronger claims than any other Officer; but to be superceded, after having so long the command,

during such times of peril, would imply a want of confidence, which, I humbly hope is not felt.

Commod. Rodgers wishes I should have the command of the Steam Frigate; I refer you to his official Letter, respecting the defence of this place, for my claim: the building of it has been greatly advocated by me, with those who have afforded means; and I think I could make her very instrumental in defence of this place.<sup>4</sup> With great respect and regard, I remain truly yours

R T Spence

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1815, No. 14 (M147, Roll No. 6).

1. The correspondence to which Spence refers is not in the series of master commandant letters, Crowninshield probably returned it. Spence is probably referring to Charles Tait, who was chairman of the Senate committee on naval affairs in 1815.

2. These orders were not enclosed with this letter.

3. Apparently Crowninshield had not given up hope of getting *Ontario* to sea. On 19 January he ordered Lieutenant Frederick W. Smith to open a rendezvous in Alexandria for the sloop of war. Crowninshield to Smith, 19 Jan. 1815, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 12, p. 14 (M149, Roll No. 12).

4. Edward Johnson, the chairman of Baltimore's Committee of Vigilance and Safety, sent Acting Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Homans certificates for \$150,000 deposited to the credit of the U.S. Treasury. This was the city's contribution toward building a steam frigate that would defend Baltimore from British attack. Only the frames of a battery were erected before the ratification of the peace treaty ended further construction. Johnson to Homans, 22 Dec. 1814, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1814, Vol. 8, No. 105 (M124, Roll No. 67).

MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

confidential.—

Baltimore Jany. 17th 1815

My dear Commodore

Your several kind letters have been received, & read with pleasure: the last did not come to hand until after the Secretary<sup>1</sup> left this: I however had the satisfaction of seeing him; being good enough on his arrival to send for me— I prevailed on him to remain with us for two days, during which time he visited my Ship,<sup>2</sup> and every other place calculated to excite interest. His interrogatories respecting the Fortifications &c. gave me frequent occasion to speak of you, He was delighted with my account of your masterly management of the means afforded you for the defence of the City; appearing deeply impressed with the conviction of your having saved Baltimore.— Barney stuck close to him, taking every opportunity to discant on the important services of the Flotilla, associating it constantly with the Navy & &— He is endeavouring to acquire the same influence he had in so unbounded a degree over Mr. Jones.— His sending in his resignation is thought merely a sham, with a view to obtain the Steam Frigate: Indeed he sais, Jones offered the Command to him!— The appointment would not be pleasing to the City.—

The Secretary spent most of his time with me, he is certainly a very different man from Mr. Jones; there is a friendly affability, and a conciliatory manner about him, extremely pleasing; Yet, for all this, I could not for the Soul of me, ask him for the Steam Frigate— He did not hint that you had spoken to him



respecting my appointment to her, I therefore was silent on the Subject.— His opinion of you, is very exalted, which I did not fail to increase by a few Biographical Sketches, narrated under the influence of that Affection, I cannot otherwise than feel for you,— He was anxious to learn from me, who was considered the Candidate to head the list of Admirals:—Murray he had not seen when in Philadelphia; he said he had conversed with Officers who advocated Murrays appointment. I suppose he alluded to Evans; I spoke to him very freely on the subject.—

I do not believe he is of opinion that I can get to sea—to Mrs. Spence he expressed a belief that I could not; I therefore cannot calculate on any extraordinary aid— This being the case the command of the Steam Frigate would be highly gratifying, more especially as I am told that my appointment would be generally approved in Baltimore— I wish my dear Sir, you would take an opportunity of calling the subject again to the Secretarys mind before Barney goes on to Washington, which will be in a few days; if possible I shall visit the City about the same time.— The administration will readily do you a favour being deeply in your debt.—

Your brother in law, Mr. Pinkney, went on in the Stage with the Secretary; would it not be well for you to write him, to use his influence in expediting this law for the creation of admirals; I am afraid of Peace, lest it should come unexpectedly, & knock it all in the head!—<sup>3</sup>

I congratulate you upon the berth of another child,<sup>4</sup> Mrs. S joins me in good wishes for Mrs. Rodgers, be pleased to present my most respectful compliments, and to believe me most Sincerely yours,

R T Spence.

PS. excuse the haste in which I write—

ALS, DLC, Rodgers Family Papers, Series II, Container 26.

1. Benjamin W. Crowninshield.

2. *Ontario*.

3. William Pinkney, a Maryland lawyer, statesman, and diplomat, had married John Rodgers's sister, Ann Maria, in 1789. He was President Madison's attorney general from 1811 to 1814. At the time of the present letter, he was recuperating from a severe wound received in the Battle of Bladensburg, and was awaiting the commencement of the Fourteenth Congress on 4 March 1815, to which he had been elected. Within a month, news of the peace effectively killed interest in a law establishing the rank of admiral.

4. Elizabeth Rodgers was the fifth child of John and Minerva Rodgers.

MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

Baltimore Jany. 26. 1815

Sir,

The Steam Frigate intended for the protection of this City, which heretofore has had my tributary exertions for it's defence, together with the solicitations of my friends, awakens with me a wish to devote myself again to a service, which probably will be very important the ensuing summer.

I should be highly gratified to be appointed to this command: being persuaded, it would be a formidable barrier to the enemy's approach.

We have above an hundred men to work upon her; perhaps my immediate superintendance would accelerate her advancement. I have the honor to be respecty. yr obt. St.

R. T. Spence

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1815, No. 19 (M147, Roll No. 6). Crowninshield's next correspondence with Spence on 15 February did not mention the steam frigate, but ordered him to prepare *Ontario* for sea service. Crowninshield to Spence, 15 Feb. 1814, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 12, p. 35 (M149, Roll No. 12).

MASTER COMMANDANT ROBERT T. SPENCE TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

Baltimore Feby. 2d. 1815

Sir,

The Cannon mentioned in your order at the Cecil Foundry, will not be ready for proving these ten days: when they are, Mr. Hughes<sup>1</sup> has promised to advise me.—

I think it my duty to inform you, that those sanguine expectations entertained, when you honored the *Ontario* with a visit, of her getting to sea, I am compelled now to relinquish: not only from the want of Eighty men, but from the situation the unexampled cold weather has left the River and Bay, which are frozen up nearly as far as Annapolis:— 'tis said, such a spell of weather has not been known since the year 1780.— It has been so intensely cold, as to render it impossible to work on the Steam Frigate for these last two days:— we however, have got at it again to day.<sup>2</sup> I have the honor to remain Your vy obt. St.

R. T. Spence.

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1815, No. 25 (M147, Roll No. 6).

1. The most important of Samuel Hughes's several iron operations in Cecil County was his Cecil Furnace, formerly the Principio Ironworks. Since 1796, Hughes had produced cannon for the navy's frigates. After the British destroyed his foundry in 1813, Hughes rebuilt the works, selling it in 1820 because of financial reverses.

2. The city of Baltimore suspended work on its steam battery when peace was declared.

## British Blockading Squadron—Fall and Winter

On 17 September 1814, just moments after writing public and private letters to the Admiralty regarding the Baltimore expedition,<sup>1</sup> Vice Admiral Cochrane received Lord Melville's secret letter of 29 July, detailing the operations intended against New Orleans.<sup>2</sup> Cochrane immediately reversed his plans to attack the northern Atlantic coast and sailed for Halifax to prepare for the southern campaign.<sup>3</sup> He left Rear Admiral Malcolm in the Chesapeake to replenish his ships until Captain Barrie, who was refitting in Halifax, could resume blockading duty in the bay. Rear Admiral Cockburn sailed for Bermuda and outfitted his squadron before returning to the Chesapeake briefly in early December to rescue Captain Barrie from an

other winter in the bay. While Cochrane focused most of the British naval force against New Orleans, he left Cockburn in command of the Atlantic squadrons and, in particular, ordered his second in command to divert American attention in the southeast with an assault on Cumberland Island, Georgia. The Chesapeake blockading squadron, first under Malcolm and then Barrie, raided towns along the Potomac and the bay while the weather permitted in the fall of 1814. Winter curtailed the marauding expeditions and Captain John Clavell, the last commander of the squadron, resolutely maintained the blockade during the last two months of the war as the main theater of operations shifted southward to the Gulf of Mexico.

1. See pp. 286–91.

2. Melville to Cochrane, 29 July 1814, UkENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2574, fols. 146–48.

3. Cochrane to Melville, 17 Sept. 1814, InU, War of 1812 Manuscripts.

REAR ADMIRAL PULTENEY MALCOLM, R.N., TO CAPTAIN ROBERT BARRIE, R.N.

By Pulteney Malcolm Esq.  
Rear Admiral of the Blue &c.—&c.—&c.

Pursuant to an order from the Commander in Chief:

You are hereby required and directed to take under your Command the Ships and Vessels named on the Margin<sup>1</sup> and the 2nd. and 3rd. Battalions of Royal Marines; you will receive herewith the Commander in Chiefs Instructions to Captain Sir Thomas Hardy with various other documents for the Blockade of the Chesapeake and the several Services attached to that Station, to which you are to pay particular attention<sup>2</sup>

Rear Admiral Cockburn who is at present at Bermuda and may be expected in the end of the Month, has the direction of the Squadron in the Chesapeake and the neighbouring Coast; you will therefore communicate with him whenever opportunity offers— His last instructions to me is, that, should any Ship arrive in the Chesapeake more than necessary for the Services now conducting on the Coast those that have been longest out are to be relieved by them and ordered to Bermuda to refit and receive farther Orders from the Rear Admiral, but Should the *Carron* arrive she is to be ordered to join the Squadron off Charlestown—

If any Vessel arrives with Dispatches for the Commander in Chief you are to send her to Bermuda to receive from Rear Admiral Cockburn the Secret Rendezvous;<sup>3</sup> first opening the Dispatches and making extracts of such parts as you may think necessary.

Should any Vessel arrive with orders to join me you are to direct her Captain to put to Sea immediately, furnishing him with one of the Accompanying Sealed Rendezvous which are to be left on board the Ship stationed in Lynhaven Bay to prevent delay.—

In the event of a Frigate arriving by accident whose Captain is Senior to You, you are to inform him that it is my direction he cruize off Cape Henry 'till the arrival of Rear Admiral Cockburn.— Given on board the *Royal Oak* in the Potowmack the 6th. of October 1814

Pult<sup>y</sup> Malcolm Rear Admiral

By Command of the Rear Admiral Wm. Little Sec.

LS, NcD, Sir Robert Barrie Papers.

1. *Menelaus, Madagascar, Havannah, Melpomene, Brune, Devastation, Terror, and Regulus.*
2. These documents were not found.
3. Negril Bay, Jamaica, was the rendezvous place for the New Orleans expedition.

REAR ADMIRAL PULTENEY MALCOLM, R.N., TO  
VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N.

No. 9

*Royal Oak* in the Potowmack 7 October 1814

Sir

Having completed the refitment of the Squadron and Transports under my orders and assembled them at Georges Island in the Potowmack Colonel Brooke and myself were of opinion that a body of the Virginia Militia stationed near to the Northumberland Court House might be surprised for which purpose a detachment under Colonel Brooks immediate Command was landed half an hour before daylight on the morning of the 4th Instant at Black point Six Miles up the Coan River and one Mile from the Court House.—

They immediately advanced on the Enemy who after firing a few Rounds from the Woods, retreated, his Guns having been removed a short time before on the Sentinels discovering our Boats.

Colonel Brooke after pursuing them five Miles and finding very little probability of coming up with their Guns as they had left their Ammunition and every other encumbrance on the Road and dispersed by various intricate passages that lead through the thick woods of the Country returned to Black point where he was joined by Major Faunce with the First Regiment which had been landed at Mundy point three Miles up the Yocomico.

Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm with the 2nd. Battalion of Royal Marines was landed at Ragged point both his detachment and that of Major Faunce were near to parties of the Enemy who always escaped into the woods.

Captain Skene of His Majestys Ship *Asia* had charge of the Boats that were employed in the Coan River Captain Hamilton of the *Havannah* of those in the Yocomico and Captain Rowley of the *Melpomene* of the landing of the Marine Battalion at Ragged Point, as usual, every one exerted himself to the utmost.

I accompanied Colonel Brooke to be on the spot to give the necessary directions in the event of its being found adviseable to change the point of Re-embarkation which was the case with the detachment under Major Faunce.—

There was only two Soldiers wounded but I am very sorry to inform you that Captain Kenah of the *Aetna* Bomb was unfortunately killed by a chance shot from the wood, he is sincerely regretted by every one. You were well acquainted with his merits as an Officer. I found him on every occasion zealous and enterprising; He piloted the Boats up the Coan and having some knowledge of the Country went with the advance of the Army.

We found two Schooners in the River which had been Scuttled some days but as there was not time to weigh them I ordered them to be destroyed. I have the honor to be Sir, Your most obedient humble Servant.

Pult<sup>y</sup> Malcolm Rear Admiral

LS, UkENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2336, fols. 25–26.



## WILLIAM LAMBERT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

City of Washington, October 13th. 1814.

Sir,

By a letter just received from Mr. John Hall, postmaster at Kilmarnock, Virga. dated the 7th. of this month, I am enabled to communicate the following particulars relative to British movements and operations in that quarter: —

On Wednesday, the 5th. instant, at eight o'clock, A.M. one ship was seen from the mouth of Indian creek, passing up the bay: On Thursday, the 6th. at two o'clock, P.M. nine ships were seen from the same point, on their passage down: On Friday, the 7th. about two o'clock, P.M. fifteen ships and nine schooners anchored off the mouth of Dividing Creek, in Northumberland,—sent five barges filled with men, who were plundering the inhabitants of negroes, stock, &c. and had burned a valuable house, the property of a capt. Hughlett, about five o'clock, P.M. on the last mentioned day. Having no force to rely on but the militia, much injury to the people of Lancaster and Northumberland was apprehended at the time Mr. Hall's letter was written. He also states, that ten negroes had lately gone off to the enemy from the lower part of Northumberland, and fourteen from Richmond county, out of which last five number have been taken, and committed to gaol. That on or about the fourth of this month, from 900 to 1000 of the enemy landed at Black point,—marched from thence, and took possession of Northumberland courthouse,—stayed about two days, and pillaged the inhabitants of that place and its vicinity, of negroes, provisions, &c. It is farther stated, that the enemy had two men killed, and four were taken prisoners, and that only one man of our militia was wounded. I am, Sir, with great respect, Your most obedt. Servant,

William Lambert.

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 34 (M124, Roll No. 66).

REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N., TO  
VICE ADMIRAL SIR ALEXANDER F. I. COCHRANE, R.N.

No. 50

*Albion* Bermuda the 24th. October 1814

Sir

As the Information given to me by Captain Codd of the *Caliope* leaves me Reason to fear that the *Telegraph* Schooner (which I fell in with the 3d. Instant on my Way here) and the *Ratler* Sloop of War (which sailed from this Place with Convoy for Halifax on the 11th. Instant, and by which I wrote to You) have both missed you, I herewith have the Honor to enclose marked 1 and 2, the Heads of the more important Parts of the Dispatches brought from England by the former, and marked 3 a Duplicate of my Letter to you by the latter.<sup>1</sup>

Since the sailing of the *Ratler*, the *Whiting* has brought to me your three Letters dated Halifax 1st. October—One Marked Secret informing me of your intended Movements, and intimating your further Wishes regarding the Force to be employed in the Chesapeake, on the Coasts of Carolinas and Georgia.<sup>2</sup>

One with an Inclosure from Sir George Prevost and directing in Consequence strict Attention to your retaliatory Order of the 18th. July last.<sup>3</sup>

And one containing a List of the Ships you have been pleased to place under my immediate Orders, for the Purpose of carrying into Effect the Operations aluded to in Your above specified Secret Letter, in your Order to me of the 18th. Sepr., and in the several Letters I have received from You thereon,—<sup>4</sup> But on comparing these Documents it appears to me necessary that I should point out to You the Difficulties which seem to present themselves, against my being able fully to meet and act up to your Wishes and Instructions as therein contained,—I observe by the List of the Squadron you have destined to act under my Orders, that the only Ships I am to count upon for the present, in addition to that which carries my Flag,<sup>5</sup> are, the *Dragon*, three Frigates, and one Sloop of War, besides the Frigate and two Sloops of War now off Charleston, and in this Number the *Euryalus* is included, which Ship only arrived here the 21st. Instant, and besides her Foremast and Bowsprit requiring to be changed, is otherwise in Want of very considerable Repairs.

By your Letter of the 23d. September,<sup>6</sup> you desire me to dispose of Two Frigates, and eight Sloops for the Blockade of the Carolinas and Georgia, and by your last Letter by *Caliope*,<sup>7</sup> you recommend my placing four Frigates and two more Sloops in the Chesapeake, and taking with me the *Dragon* to assist in the Offensive Operations which you intimate your Wish that I should commence on the Georgian Coast early in the next Month.

The Impossibility therefore of my doing all this with the Ships mentioned in the List you transmitted, leads me to believe you have expected that several Sloops or Frigates would have arrived and joined me from England, but I am sorry to say none whatever have as yet made their Appearance, nor have I seen or learnt any thing of the *Carron*; Admiral Malcolm has however fortunately left me the *Menelaus*, which he said he did not want, and I trust it is unnecessary for me to add, that with such Force as I collect, I shall attend to the Instructions on the several Points specified by You as nearly as may prove to be practicable when I get on the Coast, making the Stations and Services which are of the minor Importance, give Way to the two greater ones of the Chesapeake, and the Georgian Operations, 'till the Reinforcements I receive may enable me to attend to the whole.

I shall not remain here a Minute after *Albion* is ready to proceed again to Sea, but her late Cruize of Twelve Months has render'd necessary for her a much more complete refit than you appear to have contemplated— The whole of her Rigging, excepting the standing Shrouds and Stays has been condemned, and they have had to make for her in the Dock Yard two Topsail Yards and a Jib Boom, besides minor Articles, and she is reported to be in such great Want of a general caulking, that I have felt it right to order its being done previous to her undertaking a Winter Cruize, and the Smallness of our Means here, (having but eight Shipwrights who are also the Caulkers) added to the constant Interruptions of bad Weather, occasion our getting on but slowly, in Consequence however of your last Communication, I shall now order the Officers of the Yard until *Albion* is ready, to authorize extra Work, and to work on Sundays, and 'tho: I may not succeed in getting to the Coast quite so soon as you seem to anticipate, yet I trust I shall not be very far behind it.

I am sorry to have also to inform You, that from the Severity of the Weather in this Neighbourhood, the *Cossack* and *Canso* have both come in from Sea in Distress, the former with her Bowsprit sprung, and otherwise much damaged in her Hull and Rigging, the latter with the Head of her Foremast gone, and as this is the third Foremast the *Canso* has carried away within a very short Space of

Time, I have been induced to authorize her being now fitted with a Brigs Masts forward, which are so much lighter and easier to be handled and reduced in bad Weather— The *Canso* was on her Way to join Captain Jackson when the Accident happend to her, and I have sent the *Whiting* to him in her Stead— The *Hebrus* which had a complete Refit here, sailed for the Chesapeake the Day after the Prizes arrived with her Men, but I cannot count upon this as an Increase to the present Chesapeake Squadron, (which now consists of *Dragon* and two Frigates without any Sloop whatever) for Admiral Malcolm in his last Letter to me from thence, states the *Madagascar* to be in so bad a State as to make it necessary that she should return to Port as soon as possible,<sup>8</sup> and I therefore think it likely that Captain Barrie will order her in when joined by the *Hebrus*— I hope however to have the *Menelaus* ready to return there in a few Days, which will make up three complete Frigates for the Chesapeake, And as you inform me that you have orderd two large Class Frigates to cruize off this Island during the Winter, and the *Cossack* and *Pandora* are already stationed here for similar Service, I feel that I may very well take with me the latter to assist in filling up some of the Stations on the Coast— The *Diadem* is arrived to take Home the Convoy, and is only waiting to be joined by the Convoy from New Providence to be brought up by the *Wolverine*, the non Arrival of which, when the Date of the *Wolverines* leaving the Chesapeake is considerd, gives Reason to fear that some accident may have happend to her, I trust however it will prove that she has only been delayed by some Requisition from Governor Cameron, which has induced Captain Burton to wait for Vessels which may not have been quite prepared to accompany him immediately.

Captain Napier, who as you will perceive, by the Date of the *Euryalus's* Arrival above specified, had a very Tedious Passage, succeeded nevertheless in bringing safe to this Place all the Prizes from the Chesapeake, though he experienced much bad Weather— The *Fairy* which accompanied him is taking in her Water and Provisions, and will, in Pursuance of your Directions to me respecting her, proceed to Barbadoes with Convoy on Thursday Morning next.<sup>9</sup>

Your Order to me of the 18th. September, left it optional with me to go from hence to Halifax, for the Purpose of shifting my Flag to the *Bulwark*, the subsequent Communications however which I have received from You, of Course place my so doing now quite out of the Question, but as I am anxious to move into a Ship so very far preferable for me on every Consideration to the *Albion*, (should you not have already done it, as I understood You to have intended) I beg you will permit me to order her joining me immediately for the Purpose.

Admiral Malcolm will of Course explain to you personally the Arrangements he agreed to, prior to his quitting the Chesapeake, for an Exchange of all Prisoners made on either Side during the Operations against Washington and the Reconnoissance of Baltimore, it is therefore only necessary for me to report to you, that in Compliance therewith, the American Prisoners included in that Agreement were sent from hence by the *Hebrus*, that no Delay might take Place on our Part in securing the Return of our People from America.

Enclosed I transmit an Abstract of the State and Condition of His Majestys Ships here.<sup>10</sup> I have the Honor to be Sir Your very faithful and Most obedient humble Servant

G: Cockburn Rear Admiral

1. In his 10 October 1814 letter to Cochrane, Cockburn mentioned that he arrived at Bermuda on 6 October after departing the Chesapeake on 26 September. Cockburn to Cochrane, 10 Oct. 1814, UkENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2334, fols. 30–34.

2. While the expeditionary forces were massing in Jamaica for the attack on New Orleans, Cochrane ordered Cockburn's squadron to divert attention by capturing Cumberland Island, Georgia, and conducting offensive operations off America's southern coast. Cochrane to Cockburn, 1 Oct. 1814, *ibid.*, MS 2346, fols. 13–14.

3. Cochrane sent Cockburn an extract of Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost's 3 August 1814 letter in which the latter expounded on the continued American outrages in the north. Cochrane to Cockburn, 1 Oct. 1814, *ibid.*, MS 2349, pp. 183–84. For Cochrane's retaliatory order, see Cochrane to the Commanding Officers of the North American Station, 18 July 1814, pp. 140–41, above.

4. For Cochrane's list of ships that were assigned to Cockburn, see Cochrane to Cockburn, 1 Oct. 1814, UkENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2349, p. 149. The order of 18 September was not found.

5. *Albion*.

6. In this secret letter, Cochrane informed Cockburn that New Orleans was the next target, that he expected to leave Halifax by 8 or 10 October, and that he would rendezvous with the military forces at Guadeloupe before 1 November. Cochrane to Cockburn, 23 Sept. 1814, *ibid.*, MS 2346, fols. 12–13.

7. This letter was not found.

8. This letter was not found.

9. 27 October 1814.

10. The following list was enclosed.



[Enclosure]

Copy of a List transmitted by Commander in Chief of His Majestys Ships and Vessels to be employed under the Orders of Rear Admiral Cockburn.

Notes respecting them

	<i>Albion</i> —	
	<i>Dragon</i> —	in the Chesapeake
Frigates	{	1 <i>Madagascar</i> in Want of returning into Port to refit—
		2 <i>Hebrus</i> — To Chesapeake 22d. Octr. 14
		3 <i>Euryalus</i> — At Bermuda in Want of considerable Repairs
Sloops Frigate	{	1 <i>Dotterel</i> { proceeds from Halifax for Castine with Convoy and from thence off Carolina (will probably be changed (by Rr. Adl. Cockburn) to Chesapeake)
		1 <i>Lacedemonian</i> Charleston
		—Do.—
		1 <i>Peacock</i> —Do.—
		2 <i>Primrose</i>
	<i>Nymphe</i> —	must previously go to Halifax to refit
	<i>Clinker</i> —	{ To the Gulf of St. Lawrence with Convoy and afterwards to Halifax
	<i>Sharpshooter</i>	first proceed to Quebec
	<i>Jaseur</i> —	To Commander in Chiefs secret Rendezvous
	<i>Devastation</i>	{ Bombs
	<i>Aetna</i> —	
	<i>Saracen</i> —	{ With Convoy to Commander in Chiefs secret Rendezvous
	<i>Morgiana</i> —	repairing at Halifax
	<i>Carron</i> —	not joined, nor anything known respecting her
	<i>St. Lawrence</i>	To Commander in Chiefs secret Rendezvous
	<i>Florida</i>	{ goes first to West Indies with Convoy— if there is no Return Convoy to proceed from thence to the Coast of South Carolina

Copy, UkENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2334, fol. 43. On 1 October, Cochrane sent Cockburn a list of the ships that were assigned to him. Cochrane to Cockburn, 1 Oct. 1814, *Ibid.*, MS 2349, p. 184. Cockburn annotated this list and returned a copy of it with his 24 October letter to Cochrane.

CAPTAIN THOMAS ALEXANDER, R.N., TO CAPTAIN ROBERT BARRIE, R.N.

His Majesty's Bomb Vessel *Devastation*,  
off Poplar Island in the Chesapeake.  
October 31st. 1814.

Sir,

In obedience to your Order of yesterday, I this Morning proceeded to Parkers Point, with the Boats, and detachment of Royal Marines you did me the honor to place under my Command; on finding the Houses deserted, I made dispositions for driving in Cattle. Lieut. Frazer of the R.M. and Lieut Alexander of the R.N. in advance with the Skirmishers.

On reconnoitring, I perceiv'd the Enemy to be in considerable Force in Cavalry, therefore directed Captain Cole (Royal Marines) to bring up the Main Body, to support the advance, and the favorable position we had taken up, induced me to throw the Skirmishers forward, to entice the Enemy to make a Charge, which I am happy to say had the effect, but the steady and gallant reception, which I felt confident they would meet with from the Royal Marines, who threw in a destructive volley, put them to flight, leaving two Killed, two Prisoners, and twenty Horses with their accoutrements &ca. &ca. in our possession, I only regret a body of Infantry (chiefly Militia) from eight Hundred, to one Thousand with field Pieces, supported this Squadron, in their attack, or I have not a doubt, from the gallant Intrepidity of the detachment, the whole destruction of this Squadron, consisting of one hundred & fourteen would have been effected.

Perceiving the Enemys intention to cut us from the Beach, his very superior Force, the difficulty I experienced in Landing, the Shoal water not admitting the Boats to approach sufficiently near to cover us from their field Pieces, I judged it prudent to embark, which I am happy to say was effected without the loss of a Man, under the judicious arrangement of Lieut. Fitzmorris of the *Dragon*.

To Captain Cole R.M. commanding the detachment, I feel particularly indebted for his support, and I cannot sufficiently express my admiration of the gallant example shewn by Lieut. Frazer, R.M. and Lieut. Alexander R.N. in Advancing with the Skirmishers, and a party of Seamen in drawing the Enemy within our reach: I am convinced Sir, you will feel equal pleasure [with] myself, when I inform you, the Conduct of [every] Officer, Seaman, & Marine, was such as to [entitle] them to all praise I can possibly bestow

Considering the Force we were opposed to, I feel great satisfaction [in] stating our loss to be trifling, three Seamen two Marines missing, and I only hope the Service performed by the detachment under [my] orders, will meet your approbation. I have the honor to be Sir, your Obedient humble Servt.

Tho<sup>s</sup> Alexander Commander

P S From the Prisoners I learn, their Cavalry consisted of the [First] Regt. United States Dragoons, the Infantry, of Regulars, and Militia, with several Field Pieces: the whole under the Command of General Maddison.<sup>1</sup> The Commanding Officer of the Ca[valry] was severely wounded.

ALS, UKLPR, Adm. 1/509, fol. 195. Words or letters obscured in the gutter have been added in brackets.

1. Brigadier General William Madison, First Virginia Regiment, Virginia militia.

#### THOMAS SWANN TO SECRETARY OF WAR MONROE

Point Lookout Monday noon 7 Nov. 1814

Sir,

In my letter of 3d Inst.<sup>1</sup> I omitted a sloop of war mounting twenty guns, which came up the Bay, with the squadron reported, and proceeded so far above St. Georges Island, during the preceding night, as to obscure her completely from my view at this place

On Friday<sup>2</sup> a Tender left the Island & stood down the Bay, and in the evening of yesterday two Tenders came up the Bay, and joined the fleet off the Island, which is now comprised of the following vessels vizt.

one Seventy four (the *Dragon*—Commr. Barry)  
 One frigate  
 One Bomb ship  
 Two sloops of war  
 One Brig  
 One Double Decker  
 Three ships . . . } Transports  
 Four Tenders—

The most wanton, and unprovoked destruction of private property, that has recently occurred in the lower end of this County, was committed at Priest Ransaw's in the neighborhood of St. Inigoes, on Tuesday last.<sup>3</sup> A marauding party of fifteen men belonging to a Brig off St. Georges Island, (supposed the *Jasseur* Capt. Watts) robbed him of all his household furniture, as well as his wearing apparel including his watch &c. &c. Such articles as they could not conveniently carry off, and by which they could not be benefitted, was destroyed in the most shameful manner: amongst which was an Alter, that after they completely pilaged of its ornaments, they also destroyed—

The enemy have been in the vicinity of St. Georges for the last four day's; the particulars of his movements, and the injury sustained by the inhabitants, I have not ascertained.

Colo. Minor left the Factory<sup>4</sup> Yesterday for St. Georges, with about 250 men, whom I hope will be enabled to give a good account of these Pirates

I understand by information from St. George's that Commr. Barry is the officer commanding the fleet at that place. A repetition of his conduct which has

lately been experienced by the inhabitants of Hampden, may consequently be expected.<sup>5</sup> I have the honor Sir, to be very Respectfully yrs.

Th<sup>s</sup>. Swann

ALS, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Unregistered Series, S-1814, (M222, Roll No. 14). Thomas Swann was a prominent Washington attorney, who volunteered as an observer for the U.S. Army at Point Lookout, Maryland.

1. This letter was not found.

2. 4 November 1814.

3. 1 November 1814.

4. This is possibly a reference to a small textile firm that had been established in St. Mary's County before the war.

5. Captain Robert Barrie, R.N., had left the Chesapeake for Halifax in July. Before returning to the bay in late September, the crew of his ship, *Dragon*, participated in a joint expedition up the Penobscot River. Captain Charles Morris had sailed the sloop of war *Adams* up that river to Hampden, Maine, (the district of Maine was attached politically to Massachusetts at this time) to repair her. When the British troops, transported by Barrie's vessels, routed the local militia on 3 September 1814, Morris was forced to set *Adams* ablaze to prevent her capture.

#### CAPTAIN ROBERT BARRIE, R.N., TO DOLLY GARDNER CLAYTON

*Dragon* off Tangier Isle  
 Chesapeake Bay Novr. 11th. 1814

My Dear Mother will perceive by the date of this that I am once more fixed in the Chesapeake where I fear I shall have to commodore it for the rest of the winter— I have two Battalions of the Royal Marines under my orders but they are such poor things naturally and are so very sick that I shall be able to do very little with them— I have now out of eight hundred soldiers three hundred and fifty sick, most of them I fear fitting foreign— You will perhaps see by the Papers that I contrive to annoy and tease the Yankée a good deal but to do any serious mischief is out of my power— We have no news indeed the Commander in Chief<sup>1</sup> seems to have forgotten us altogether— ten days since my whole squad was reduced to half a pound of Bread & no Grog— to borrow a Yankée phrase—"right hard usage this I know"— When Rear Admiral Malcolm left me in command of the Chesapeake he gave me to understand Adl. Cockburn would soon relieve me but six weeks are passd & no Cockburn— so I give him up & have layed my account to another winter within the Capes—and then I think they must send me home— I am now one hundred and eighteen short of my complement of seamen— I have lately landed and taken off a few Hgs. of Tobacco & when I can collect a good Cargo of this precious Herb I shall send a Vessel to Bermuda and by her I will write you all long letters that is if I have any thing to write about— tell Mr. & Mrs. Lion that I put off my Letters of congratulation till I can kill two Birds with one stone—

In a little affair with Nathan the other day against I [*east*] six times our numbers—we killed [*torn*] two of his Men, took two pounder [*torn*] several & killed twenty of his [*torn*] horses— we had not a man hurt but three deserted from the *Brune*—& two of the Skirmishers were taken prisoner— General Madison commanded— the Cavalry one hundred and fourteen—was commanded by a rascal who deserted from the *Victorious* last year— he was Sergt. of marines—



but had long before been trained in an English Dragoon regt. his Yankey name is Bond—his first name Grey this Rascal was wounded in the neck & very near being taken—

I have heard no more of the Penobscot affair but expect government will at least make my first lieut a Commander— The Prize money will not be much I would compromise for one hundred Pounds—but in good hands it would be worth as many thousands— There is no trade going on in the Chesapeake therefore all I pick up now is taken from the shore but this way I hope to pay my mess— my kindest love is ever with you all— I wish you a happy new year and merry Xmass— I am ever my dear mother your truly affectionate & dutiful son

Robt: Barrie—

Swainson & Hamer are still with me the first I hope soon to get made a lieut—he is very ill Hamer is not worth his salt—nor do I think he ever will be as a seaman or officer— you have no reason to tell his brother so.—

I some time since procured Mr. Ansell a Liuts acting commission—

ALS, MiU-C, Robert Barrie Papers. Addressed: "To/Mrs. Geo: Clayton/Lestock Hall/near Preston/Lancashire."

1. Vice Admiral Sir Alexander F. I. Cochrane, R.N.

BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN H. COCKE, VIRGINIA MILITIA, TO  
GOVERNOR JAMES BARBOUR

Tappahannock Decr. 4. 6 O'Clock PM

Sir,

In two hours after my communication this morning the Enemy as suddenly & capriciously as the shift of wind which took place at that time turned about & made all Sail down the River.— His fleet consisting of fourteen craft including one large schooner & a Sloop heavily armed with all their Barges variously estimated from ten to twenty five all of which had ascended the River about 12 miles above this place, returned this morning about 10 'Clock and were out of sight standing down the River before 12 O'Clock.— We have intelligence of his passing Bowlers at an early hour this Evening and with the present wind unless he has anchored must have reached, nearly, the mouth of the River.— This rapid & unlooked for movement has baffled all my schemes— I had anticipated from his bold & rapid ascent that he wou'd have penetrated as high as the narrows of the River & there I had strong hopes of being able to make him feel us.—

I learn from an intelligent man of this place that the Expedition was commanded by Comdre. Barre & Coll. Malcomb— The number of troops landed here did not much, if any exceed 500 but it was evident they had other troops in Vessels from which they were not landed— Of the number landed here there were three companies, of about 50 each, of negroes in uniform and apparently well trained, commanded by white officers.— They were said to be Virginia & Maryland negroes, trained at Tangier Islands— The above accots. are

obtained from the only inhabitant of this place who remained while the Enemy had possession of the Town. He is an intelegent & observant man— He got his information from three several Sentinels who were posted to protect his property from pillage, they differed in the number of troops employed in the expedition from 1800 to 2400—but they all agreed that the whole force in our waters was here, and that there aggregate loss from desertion since their arrival in the Chesapeake was about three hundred— They further agreed in stating that the troops had been healthy & that but little loss had been sustained from sickness.—

Colo. Muse who has under his command below this about 600 men will give me the earliest information of the Enemies leaving the River or of their attempting to plunder below in which event I shall move down to his assistance—but if as I expect, they are really leaving the Rappahannock, as soon as I am informed of it, I shall take up the line of march for Camp Carters with my detachment and discharge Colo. Richie's Regt. and all the other local militia which has & are about to take the field— The Artillery & Ammunition Asked for by my communication this morning you will of course countermand I shall immediately do the same in regard to the additional force called from my Brigade—for even if the Enemy shou'd ascend the River again, as suddenly as he has descended it, we have every reason to believe, that we cou'd defeat any attempt on Fredericksburg if he dared to make it, by recalling to our aid the adjacent militia.

The plundering of the Enemy has been confined [to the] bay Shores ~~and on~~ of inconsiderable amount, & on a few plantations Indeed his whole course has been marked with the most circumspect caution & evident alarm. He has never trusted himself on land a single night.— An officer remarked here that their object was to harrass the Militia—that they shou'd beat about the Rivers for a week or two longer & then go into Winter Quarters— There has been much wanton destruction of private property here—in breaking windows & furniture—and one deed of damnation has been performed which out does all their former atrocities— The family Vault of the Ritchies was broken open and the Coffins searched— I have seen the shocking spectacle— I have the honor to be &c.

J. H. Cocke B.G. Comdg:

ALS, Vi, State Records, Governor's Office (RG3), Executive Papers, Governor James Barbour, 1812–1814.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BARRIE, R.N., TO REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N.

The Sloop *Messenger* Rappahanock 7th. Decr. 1814

Sir,

Understanding by Signal from the *Dotterel* that you are arrived in the Chesapeake, I lose no time in acquainting you that in consequence of information I had received from authority on which I could rely "that the Regiments of Virginia Militia, lately stationed on the Banks of the Rappahanock, had been for

several days passed disbanded for the Winter and that most of the Troops belonging to the distant parts of the State were already returned to their homes"

I determined to proceed with the Forces named in the Margin<sup>1</sup> up the Rappahanock, intending first to attack the Town of Tappahanock where I understood there was an Inspectors Tobacco Store, but my chief object in the Expedition, was, to annoy the Enemy by obliging him to reassemble his Militia, and by landing in different parts of the River, keep his Troops constantly on the alert, which in this Country at this advanced season of the year is most harrassing Service.

On the 29th. Ultimo I entered the river with the Schooners and Boats, the *Devastation*, *Terror*, and *Bream* having previously grounded; light Winds and our ignorance of the Navigation (some of the Schooners being constantly aground prevented our getting sight of Tappahanock before eight O'Clock on the 2nd. Instant, when we observed a considerable body of Troops drawn out with their Field Pieces; as the Schooners could not make any progress against the Tide, I anchored them and proceeded with the Boats abreast of the Town, and when within Grape Shot commenced our Fire, which the Enemy did not return and observing them abandoning the Town, I directed Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm to land with the *Dragon's Menelaus*, and *Havannah's* Marines; before this was effected, the Inhabitants with the exception of two had entirely deserted the Town, and removed all their effects, except about forty Hogsheads of Tobacco and some Flour.

The Enemy in his haste to abandon the Town left behind him a Stand of Colours, several Musquets, Bayonets, and a quantity of Ammunition and Camp Equipage.

When the Schooners got up, about one hundred and fifty of the Royal Marines were landed in consequence of the Enemy, being in sight drawn up on a Hill, about a Mile and a half above the Town, his Force appeared to consist of nine Companies of Foot, a few horse, and three Field Pieces. Lieutenant Moore of the Royal Marine Artillery was advanced with the Rockets and two of them being thrown with great judgment, fell among the Enemy who soon retreated into the Wood behind the Hill, wishing to entice him to attack us in the Town, I caused to be set on fire the Custom House and a Jail, but as he evinced no disposition to quit his fastness, I embarked the Troops at Sunset, and at daylight on the 3rd. I again landed and completed Shipping the Flour and Tobacco; in the course of the day, a second Jail and the Court House was consumed without molestation from the Enemy though he frequently shewed himself with increased Force.

On the 4th. Instant I dispatched Captain Hamilton (who had Volunteered his Services to command the Row Boats of the Expedition) in advance to reconnoitre the River in Seven Mile Reach, finding from his report that it would require more time to arrive at Frederickburg than I could spare, and having sufficiently alarmed this part of the State, I bore up for an Inspectors Store on the left entrance of the River near which it was reported the Militia were assembled in considerable force, we Anchored off this Place at 5 P.M. on the 5th. being joined by the *Devastation*, *Terror* and *Dotterel* at daybreak on the 6th. I landed with the *Dragon's*, *Manelaus*, and *Havannah's* Marines part of the 2nd. and 3rd. Battallions of Royal Marines and about 50 Soldiers belonging to the Fourth, Twenty-first, Forty-fourth, and Eighty-fifth Regiments of the Line (lately received in exchange from the American Commissary for Prisoners of War<sup>2</sup>) who volunteered their Services, with a Rocket Brigade, and some trained Seamen

the whole consisting of about three hundred and Sixty Bayonets.— On approaching the Shore, a party of the Enemy's Horsemen were observed reconnoitring our motions, from some Slaves who joined us, I was informed that the Enemy had a Force of Six hundred Militia with two Field Pieces assembled at Farnham Church distant near seven Miles from the place of landing, and that a few hours before daybreak a Party also consisting of about Six hundred had marched on our right, expecting we should land in Lancaster County: the Slaves volunteering to be our Guides I determined to attack the Party at Farnham before those Marched to Lancaster County could be apprized of our intentions.— I therefore directed Lieutt. Coll. Malcolm to leave a strong party within Grape Shot of the Boats to cover our retreat should such an evolution be necessary, and we immediately pushed forward with the Main Body towards the Church, on our March we had frequent views of the Enemy's reconnoitring parties, and when within a Mile and a half of Farnham the Skirmishers discovered part of his Force drawn up across the Road, which is narrow, and on each side closely Wooded; on a little Hill in the rear of his Troops he had stationed his Field Pieces, and from them he fired several ineffectual Shot.

The Enemy conceived himself so secure in his position, that he frequently hailed us to advance, saying, they were more than a match for our Numbers.

Captain Hamilton of the *Havannah* and Coll. Malcolm agreeing with me on the method of attack, the Light Division was directed to amuse the Enemy in front and on his right, while the Main Body penetrated the Wood on his left, with intent to gain the Rear so thick was the Wood that we were frequently obliged to crawl through it at length after much difficulty, we gained an open Field on the Enemy's left under a Hill, which partly obscured us till we were formed, when we advanced to Charge the Enemy, who on discovering this movement of the Main Body, called in his advance and altering his line formed on the cross road near the Church protected by some Houses; his Artillery was ill served, but his Troops appeared determined to defend their Post, as they allowed us to approach within Musquet range, without firing a Shot, in this situation we were stopped for a few Minutes by a deep Ditch and staked Hedge; meantime the Light Troops gallantly advanced on the Enemy's right, who finding himself outflanked on our charging over the hedge, gave us a volley and fled; the pursuit was continued with great zeal, but the Enemy's superior speed and knowledge of the Country enabled him to escape into the Wood, and the Light Troops could only secure one Field Piece, the Horses of which with five others had been Shot.

In this affair we fortunately had not a Man hurt; I can form no estimate of the Enemy's positive loss, one Captain of Artillery was Wounded and made Prisoner, and from some Negroes on the spot, I heard that thirteen of them were missing who, I suppose, lay killed or wounded in the Woods

While the Main Body of the Troops were halted at the Church, I dispatched Lieutenant Hawkins with part of the *Dragon's* Marines and Lieut. Moses with part of the new raised Colonial Corps to release a number of Slaves I understood were confined about two Miles from the Church. Lieutenant Hawkins fell in with several parties of the Enemy, but succeeding in releasing about Twenty Negroes, several of whom he found in the Woods handcuffed round the Trees.

A Store containing Spirits I directed to be burnt, the Inhabitants had previously abandoned the Town and removed most of their effects



Enclosed I have the Honor of forwarding you a letter I have received from Lieutt. Coll. Malcolm calling my attention to the meritorious conduct of the Troops under his Orders,<sup>3</sup> particularly recommending the Services of Captain [Ca?] first Lieutt. Pilcher, first Lieutt. Frazer of the Royal Marines and Lieutt. and Quartermaster Puddicombe who acted as Adjutant in the Field. I am happy in being able to add my testimony to the favorable report of the good conduct of the Officers on all occasions, and nothing could exceed the gallantry of the Troops when marching to attack the Enemy, but I am sorry to observe several of the Marines and Soldiers so far forgot themselves (as in spite of every exertion of the officers) to get beastly Drunk, twelve of them were in consequence lost in Wood and left behind.

I feel much obliged for the Able assistance I received from Captain Hamilton who accompanied me in this affair, and great praise is also due to Lieutenant Fitzmaurice of the *Dragon*, Lieutt. Reece of the *Havannah*, Lieutt. Moore of the Royal Marine Artillery, and the Seamen under their Orders for the indefatigable exertions used in dragging the Field Pieces from the Church to the Boats.

I am happy in this opportunity of expressing my obligation to Lieutt. Coll. Malcolm and the Officers of Royal Marines under my Orders, their gallantry and zeal have been uniformly conspicuous, but I am sensible no encomium of mine can add to the renommée already established for my gallant friend Coll. Malcolm.

While I landed with the Troops on the left bank of the River, I directed Captain Sheridan of the *Terror* to attack a party of the Enemy which were assembled on the opposite side of the River.

The Enclosed letter from Captain Sheridan will explain how well and effectually he performed this Service, and I cannot too strongly express my sense of the gallant and uniformly good conduct of this zealous Officer<sup>4</sup>. I have the honor to be Sir Your faithful and obedient Servant

(signed) Robt. Barrie Captain

Copy, UKLPR, Adm. 1/509, fols. 188-92. This copy, endorsed by Cockburn, was enclosed in Cockburn to Cochrane, 12 Dec. 1814, *ibid.*, fol. 187.

1. Bomb vessels *Devastation* and *Terror*; schooner *Bream*; advice boats *Gabriel*, *Messenger*, *Little John*, *Bachelor* and *Bachelor's Friend*; boats from *Dragon*, *Menelaus*, *Havannah*, *Brune*.

2. John Mason.

3. A marginal note says that this enclosure was sent with the original letter but not with this copy.

4. A marginal note says that this enclosure was sent with the original letter but not with this copy.

REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N., TO CAPTAIN JOHN CLAVELL, R.N.

By George Cockburn Esqr. Rear Admiral of the White Second Officer in the Command of His Majesty's Ships and Vessels employed on the North American Station, and Commanding a Detachment thereof &c &c &c

You are hereby required and directed to take under your Orders His Majesty's Ships and Vessels named in the margin,<sup>1</sup> and therewith to use every Effort and Exertion to maintain in the most strict and rigid manner possible the Blockade of the Chesapeake, and of all the Havens, Bays, Rivers, Creeks and Inlets therein situated; also to interrupt and to prevent (as far as may be possible.)

the Communications by Water which the Enemy by means of small Vessels occasionally endeavors to renew and keep up between different Towns and Places in the Upper Parts of the said Bay

You are to give your attention to our recent Establishment on Tangier Island, the Garrison of which is to be considered as under your immediate Orders and to which you are to afford whatever protection and Assistance Circumstances may render advisable, taking Care with this view, particularly whilst Prizes or other Vessels of ours are there, that that Anchorage is never left (except on any very urgent Occasion,) without one of His Majesty's Ships

You are likewise equally to make a point of having always at least two Frigates in Lynnhaven Bay, as well the more effectually to secure the Blockade of that General Entrance, as to prevent as far as may be possible the practicability of the Enemy's Frigate<sup>2</sup> now at Norfolk getting out to Sea unobserved, on which Account our Frigates on this duty should be directed to take up their Anchorages at considerable distance from each other, the one laying well in towards the Sandy Hills under the Light House, and the other laying as near as may be safe to the Shoal called the Middle Ground— And whenever a third Vessel can be spared for Lynnhaven Bay, she should be placed immediately between the other two— These Vessels should lay with Slip Buoys on their Cables, and every thing prepared for making Sail by night at a moments warning, they should likewise make a point of never continuing long in precisely the same positions, for though they should always be spread according to the principle before stated, it will tend to distract and possibly deceive the Enemy if advantage is taken in thick Weather, or sometimes in the Dark, to vary the situation of one or each of them.— Whilst three can be appropriated to this duty it may be also advantageous to place it at the discretion of the Senior Officer to send occasionally one of them to cruize off the Capes in the fair Way of the Entrance varying the distance from the Land, but making a point of coming within sight of Signals once in every forty eight Hours; and a Ship is invariably to be so stationed whenever (from the Upper parts of the Chesapeake being frozen in, or from the arrival of Reinforcements or other Circumstances,) four Vessels can be spared for the duty at the lower part of the Bay

It will be essential that a constant means of Communication be kept up between the Ships stationed in Lynnhaven Bay, and those taking the duties of Tangier, and the upper parts of the Chesapeake, for which purpose one of the Sloops under your Orders should be kept cruising between them, with directions to be constantly moving from being within Sight of Signals from the one, to similar distance from the other, being particularly vigilant whilst on this Service to intercept any of the Enemys Vessels attempting to run by night between our Squadrons, and this Sloop will of Course be prepared to make Signals to the Ships in Lynnhaven Bay, should she discover without being able to stop any of the Enemy's Vessels pushing for Sea.— This Sloop is likewise as well as the Ships stationed in Lynnhaven Bay to be directed to keep an Eye towards the Gun Boats and Flotilla at Norfolk, that should any of them attempt to get up the Chesapeake for the purpose of making an Attack on Tangier, or shew disposition to move in other directions, you may have notice thereof and be enabled to deal with them accordingly.—

In pursuance of the directions given on that Head by the Commander in Chief under date of the 27th. July last<sup>3</sup> to which you will refer, you are to understand that you are not to consider yourself at liberty to negotiate or carry into

effect any Exchange for Prisoners of War, but that all you may make are to be sent into Port by each opportunity as they offer, for the purpose of being forwarded from thence to Europe

On the arrival of the *Euryalus* with the *Rolla* Transport, you are to cause all the Vessels under your Orders to take as much of the different Species of Provisions from the *Rolla* (necessary to leave them with as near as practicable equal quantities of all) as they can respectively stow, and taking the *Euryalus* under your Command, you will send the *Rolla* on to me under Charge and Convoy of the *Pandora*, directing Captain White to take especial care not to part Company from her

On the arrival of any other Ship to join me, which may be preferable to any of those now placed under your Command, you will consider yourself at liberty to keep her forwarding to me by the Vessel you deem least adapted for the Services of the Bay such Dispatches bearing my address as the one you detain may have been charged with

You will likewise lose no opportunity of forwarding to me particular accounts of the various Occurrences within the Command hereby entrusted to you, and to enable you so to do I shall take care from time to time to keep you informed of my movements, and until you receive further Communications you will send to me according to the accompanying *Rendezvous*

Whenever the Transports which came here from Halifax are cleared and ready to return to Port, you will direct the *Saracen* to take charge of them, and all such Prizes as may by that time be collected here, and to see the whole in safety to Bermuda, where her Commander is to deliver to Commodore Evans the accompanying Letter<sup>1</sup> and to follow the Commodore's Orders for his further proceedings

Whenever the *Madagascar* returns to this Place agreeably to the Orders she is under from Captain Barrie, you will take her also under your Command, and after her arrival (should not the Enemy's Offensive means increase so as to render it absolutely necessary for you to act otherwise,) you are to keep a Frigate invariably cruising off Cape Henry for the purpose of securing more effectually the Blockade by preventing the approach of Enemy's Vessels to the Coast before Dark, and taking such positions during the night as most likely to intercept any which may succeed in slipping out to Sea past the Ships in Lynnhaven Bay

As it is not my Intention that more than five Frigates should at any time be employed on the Chesapeake Service, should others in addition to the *Madagascar* arrive, you are to understand that it is my positive directions more than the above specified number are never detained here on any pretence, although as before stated you will consider yourself at liberty to make any changes in the five retained which fresh arrivals may place within your power, and which you may deem likely from Circumstances to prove advantageous to His Majesty's Service

You are to cause the Ships which remain here under your Command during the Winter to have painted Canvas Covers made for the Sails which are kept bent and exposed to the Weather, to prevent as far possible their being frozen to the Yards by the sudden Changes so common here from heavy rain to Severe Frost.— These Covers should entirely encircle the Yard and Sail Jib boom and Sail &c

You will herewith receive numbered from 1 to 9 inclusive former Orders &c relative to this Blockade and the Duties here, which you will refer to and attend

to as far as they may apply to the Services you have now to conduct and the Force left at your disposal— Transmitted likewise herewith marked A—is a Copy of some of the General Orders which have been issued at different times to His Majesty's Ships and Vessels serving within the Chesapeake of which you are to take care that every Ship under your Orders has a Copy, and that they continue to be strictly enforced and acted up to

You are to open any Official Letters which may be sent from the Enemy's Shore directed for me, and you will send such immediate Answer to those which are not of consequence as they may seem to require, but should they contain requests or proposals of any Importance, or on Points which appear doubtful and on which you have not been Instructed, the Receipt of them is only to be acknowledged by you, with an Assurance of referring them to me with the least possible delay, which you will of Course do, when and in such manner as least inconvenient to the Service and the Importance of the Circumstance may require Given on board the *Albion* in the Chesapeak the 13th December 1814

(Sigd.) G Cockburn Rear Adml.

LB, DLC, Papers of George Cockburn, Container 16, Vol. 44, pp. 327–33, 338–40 (Reel 10).

1. *Menelaus, Havannah, Dauntless, Pandora, Saracen, and Dotterel.*

2. U.S.S. *Constellation.*

3. The British resented having exchanged more prisoners than the Americans had. Cochrane to respective flag officers, 27 July 1814, UKLNMM, Papers of Sir Edward Codrington, COD/6/3.

4. Cockburn ordered Commander Alexander Dixie, R.N., captain of *Saracen*, to return to Bermuda to assist in its defense. Cockburn to Andrew F. Evans, 12 Dec. 1814, DLC, Papers of George Cockburn, Container 10, Vol. 24, p. 370 (Reel 6).

#### THOMAS SWANN TO SECRETARY OF WAR MONROE

Point Lookout Monday noon 19 Decr. 1814.

Sir

I have to acquaint you with the daring & insolent conduct of the enemy. It is no less astonishing, than true, that two small Schooners came up the Bay & ascended Potomac, on the night of the 17th Inst. and left that River yesterday & returned down the Bay, having in tow two captured Craft. I am informed these Picaroons have been as high up the River as Britains Bay,<sup>1</sup> & captured and destroyed several other vessels, exclusive of those they carried off.

The Frigate and Brig to which I alluded in my communication dated at 12 o'Clock on 12th Inst. and which ascended the Bay, were followed in the evening of the same day, by a Schooner from below, in the capacity of a Flag of Truce— I have the honor Sir, to be with Respt. yr. Obt. St.

Th<sup>s</sup>. Swann

ALS, DNA, RG107, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Unregistered Series, S-1814 (M222, Roll No. 14).

1. Breton Bay.



CAPTAIN JOHN CLAVELL, R.N., TO REAR ADMIRAL SIR GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N.

His Majestys Ship *Orlando* at Georges Island  
in the Potowmac Jany: 16th: 1815

Sir

In obedience to your directions I send *Pandora* and Transport, and beg to assure you that no time has been lost in dispatching her— She parted from the *Telegraph* Schooner (whose convoy she came under from Bermuda) in a Gale of Wind and arrived in Lynhaven Bay on the 10th

The *Euryalus* joined me on the 8th: Instant having experienced a very severe Gale in which she suffered materially— The day she left Bermuda she drifted in light winds among the Rocks but got off unhurt with the loss of two Bower Anchors.— One has been supplied her from this Ship

We have had some very severe Weather here, Gales of Wind, Snow Storms and heavy Rains— It is now more settled and fine

*Havannah* and this Ship are getting very sickly having thirty each in the List— We are badly off for Fresh Beef, and there is no getting it without money, as they will not exchange it for Salt—

Enclosed, is a return of vessels taken and destroyed since you left the Chesapeake<sup>1</sup>

As it would require some time to collect Weekly Accounts and as I know you must be anxiously waiting for the arrival of *Pandora* and Transport, I shall delay sending them until another opportunity, but Sir, I beg leave to state that we shall be all complete to five months

On the arrival of the *Euryalus*, the *Menelaus* was ordered down to relieve *Havannah*, who with His Majesty's Ship under my command came up here to wood and water, after which I shall proceed to Tangier and deliver the Beds and Clothing brought in the *Euryalus* for the Marine Battalion

I have a Tender up this River *Havannah* has one up the Rapahannock and *Dauntless* (who is stationed from Point Lookout to Annapolis) has one up the Patuxent, and you may rely Sir that every exertion shall be used by myself and the Ships under my Orders for the Annoyance and Destruction of the Enemy's Trade in the Rivers within the Capes of the Chesapeake, or [*nor*] do I believe more than two has escaped Capture, both of which was discovered in the night and given chace to by *Pandora* and *Saracen*, The former chaced one nearly two hundred miles and could not come up with her

*Saracen* will sail in three or four days with the Transports and Prizes for Bermuda when I shall be quite at a loss for small vessels

Captain White, who is really a most active zealous Officer, will be a serious loss indeed, but he is too well known to you Sir, to require any encomiums from me

Every thing goes on well at Tangier— *Madagascar* has not yet joined

I have had no communication with the Enemy except a Flag of Truce from Captain Gordon of the *Constellation* requesting that four School Boys taken in the Norfolk Packet may be liberated to which I acceded

The Enemys Frigate at Norfolk is in the same state, quite ready for Sea, as is the *Ontario* at Baltimore, the other Frigate and Sloop at Baltimore<sup>2</sup> are in a state of Ordinary as before

Captain White who will have the honor of delivering this letter, will explain any further particulars relative to what is and has been doing in the Chesapeake during your absence I have &c

(Sigd.) John Clavell

LB, DLC, Papers of George Cockburn, Container 14, Vol. 38, pp. 502–4, (Reel 9).

1. No enclosure was found in this letter book collection.
2. *Java* and *Erie*.

CAPTAIN JOHN CLAVELL, R.N., TO REAR ADMIRAL SIR GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N.

His Majesty's Ship *Orlando*  
in the Patuxent Feby. 23d. 1815

Sir

I Have the honor of forwarding you Dispatches which I received late last Night from Mr. Baker British Minister at Washington together with a Copy of a letter from him, and another from the Secretary of the Admiralty,<sup>1</sup> and to State, that I have in consequence Dispatched the *Dauntless* to the Brazils, and Cape of Good Hope—*Euryalus* to Gibraltar—*Havannah* to Admiral Hotham and Bermuda, and *Menelaus* to you—which I hope and trust will meet your approbation—

I Have requested Admiral Hotham will forward those for Halifax in order that *Havannah* may not be delayed—

My intention is to remain in the Chesapeake untill I receive instructions from you Sir

There is a Quantity of Provisions at Tangier, and a Number of Black Women and Children, independent of the Garison—

Two Commissioners have come to me with proper Authority, to demand the private property and Slaves, agreeable to the first Article of the Treaty—<sup>2</sup> Private property I have none, or [*nor*], are there any Slaves on Tangier, except the Wives and Children belonging to the Black Batallion, which I have refused giving up, as well as those that have Entered on Board the different Ships— but I intend writing immediately to Mr. Baker for his opinion on the subject— mine is decidedly against it, or [*nor*] shall I consider myself at all Justifiable in giving them up, untill I receive directions from you—

That part of the first Article of the Treaty relative to Slaves, is a most Melancholy thing, as I am well Convinced, that the American Government, considers that the whole of the Black Batallion, comes within it, and will be given up

I hope you will be pleased to approve of what I have done—

I should write you more at large but am anxious that not a moment shall be lost in forwarding the different Dispatches. I Have the honor to be Sir Your most Obedient Humble Servant

John Clavell

LS, UKENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2334, fols. 123–24. Cockburn was knighted on 2 January 1815.

1. For the notification of the ratification of the peace treaty, see Anthony St. John Baker to the commanding officer in the Chesapeake, 17 Feb. 1815, UKENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2334, fol. 127. For the Admiralty's orders to notify stations of the peace, see Croker to the senior officer in the Chesapeake, 27 Dec. 1814, *ibid.*, fol. 125.

2. Article I of the Treaty of Ghent: "... All territory, places and possessions whatsoever, taken by either party from the other during the war, or which may be taken after the signing of this treaty, excepting only the islands hereinafter mentioned [*the Passamaquoddy Islands in Maine*], shall be restored without delay, and without causing any destruction or carrying away any of the artillery or other public property originally captured in the said forts or places, and which shall remain therein upon the exchange of the ratifications of this treaty, or any slaves or other private property. ..." *Treaties*, p. 400.

REAR ADMIRAL SIR GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N., TO CAPTAIN JOHN CLAVELL, R.N.

(Copy) Head Quarters Cumberland Island<sup>1</sup> the 10th. March 1815.

Sir,

Should this letter find you still in the Chesapeake, you are on the receipt hereof (notwithstanding the former Instructions conveyed to you by the *Madagascar*) to leave that Bay with all the Vessels remaining with you of those lately acting under your Orders, (excepting only the *Menelaus* which Ship conveys this, and whose Captain has Separate Instructions from me) you are however to understand that you are to bring with you all the Ordnance and Stores of every description from Tangier Island, as by the Treaty such things only as were captured thereon are to be left, and the Commander in Chief desires in particular that on no account a Single Negro be left, except by his own request, if he joined you prior to the Ratification of the Treaty which took place at 11 PM of the 17th. February, the Commander in Chief also wishes you to take down the Barracks &ca. erected by us on Tangier, and to bring the Materials with you if you can manage it, and whenever you have so evacuated this Place and brought every thing from it, you are to repair with the Ships under your Orders to Bermuda, where you will receive Instructions for your further Guidance; It may however be right I should add that in the event of your having formally given up our possessions within the Chesapeake prior to receiving this Letter, you cannot with propriety repossess them, for the purpose of making alterations. I am Sir Your Most Obedient Humble Servant

(Signed) G: Cockburn Rear Admiral

Copy, UKENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2334, fols. 81–82.

1. By mid-January 1815, Cockburn had arrived off the Georgia coast. British forces seized and fortified Cumberland Island, using it as a base to disrupt American communications in the Southeast.

## Denouement of Chesapeake Bay Flotilla

*Joshua Barney recuperated at his home in Elkridge, Maryland, during September 1814. The bullet wound received during the Battle of Bladensburg would bother him the rest of*

*his life but would never dampen his spirit to serve. On 5 October Barney sailed from the Washington Navy Yard in search of the British fleet to exchange prisoners. He encountered Rear Admiral Malcolm's fleet off the Piankatank River as it departed the bay and he effected the transfer on 7 October.<sup>1</sup> Returning to Baltimore by the 10th, Barney found his flotilla in disarray. The government's dire financial condition in the fall of 1814 resulted in no pay for the Chesapeake Bay flotillamen. Furthermore, Congress refused to compensate them for clothing and equipment lost during the British incursion. When the acting secretary of the navy ordered the flotillamen—unpaid and lacking winter clothing—to recover the merchants' vessels sunk in Baltimore's harbor, Barney resigned in disgust. Shortly thereafter, however, the new secretary, Benjamin W. Crownshield, persuaded him to return. After the peace treaty was ratified on 17 February, Barney presided over the disestablishment of the flotilla that he had created and so valiantly led.*

1. *Barney to Jones, 10 Oct. 1814, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 83 (M124, Roll No. 65).*

CAPTAIN JOSHUA BARNEY, FLOTILLA SERVICE, TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Baltimore Oct. 26th. 1814

Sir,

Since my return to Baltimore I find that the loss of men at Bladensburgh & since, amounts to upwards of 180, mostly by being shipped off, by the owners of privateers, in consequence of which, I wrote the inclosed letter to the Committee of Vigilance,<sup>1</sup> they appointed a Committee to confer with me, and have determined to discourage the sending men away, by waiting upon the Owners of the privateers, and forbidding Landlords to open any more Rendezvous; I have to complain of another means used, to take away my men, the Recruiting officers for the land service, enlist them for five years, under the Idea that any man who is engaged for One year, may enlist with them for five, I cannot suppose that this provision extends farther than the Soldiers engaged for one year; however, if you think it more for the Interest of the U S that the men so enlisted should remain, I will submit, otherwise I must beg that you will be pleased to have an order from the War department to release such as are enlisted and to prevent it in future. one great cause why the men leave us, is, their not being settled with, and paid off according to Articles, the time of One hundred have expired, they have no money, and the landlords are in fact selling them to the highest bidder. Mr. Skinner has not made out the accounts, nor has he time to do it, he is just returned from the fleet, goes to Washington in the morning, and from thence to Annapolis, and again to the fleet with prisoners, and so on; his being employed by the department of State, and Commissary General of prisoners,<sup>2</sup> prevents his doing justice to the flotilla, by a continual absence; these delays have already injured the service very much, and if continued will be of serious consequences; Mr. Skinner will give you the information from the fleet, I sent the Asst down with him— My own health is not good I feel serious inconvenience from my wound, the Ball affects my hip-joint, so as to injure my Walking. I am Sir with respect, your Obt. Servt.

Joshua Barney

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 75 (M124, Roll No. 66). There is no reply from Jones in the secretary's departmental letter book. Perhaps Barney met with Jones in Washington before the latter's departure on 1 December to discuss the commodore's complaints.



1. A copy of Barney's letter to the Baltimore Committee of Vigilance and Safety is bound in the middle of this letter. Barney chastised the owners of privateers who enticed Baltimore's seamen away from flotilla service with lucrative bounties. Barney to Committee of Vigilance and Safety, 21 Oct. 1814, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 76 (M124, Roll No. 66).

2. John Mason.

CAPTAIN JOSHUA BARNEY, FLOTILLA SERVICE, TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Baltimore Novr. 17. 1814

Sir,

I had the honour to address you on the 29th ulto.,<sup>1</sup> since then Mr. Beatty has furnished 4000\$ to pay off the men whose times have expired, but that sum went but a little way, and we are now left in a worse situation than before, those who remain to be paid and whose time has expired some weeks, are very clamorous, most of them having families are in the greatest distress, this, with the loss of cloathing &c at this season, has placed them in a most distressing situation, the delay in settling their accounts has caused much mischief, not a man will enter again, and those whose times are not expired, Desert, and say they are not to be paid when their time is up, so that I see no prospect of keeping them together unless funds are forwarded, not only to pay off punctually, but to make advances to those who may be disposed to re-ship. I have had an officer and twenty five men at Queen Anns on the patuxent for several weeks, they have been very successfull in getting up the guns of the late flotilla, with a very considerable quantity of other valuable articles; we have also been employed assisting the Committee of Vigilance of this place, in securing the harbour by placing and sinking vessels in the channels, and transporting timber &c to the fort; Also in Assisting the Navy Agent & a Mr. Anderson naval store keeper in loading Vessels & Waggons with guns destined for New York; we are also rigging & fitting the Ontario at the request of Capt. Spence.— I am respectfully your Ob Servt.

Joshua Barney

N B. since writing the above, a flag has arrived from Capt. Barrie announcing the arrival in the Bay of the Americans which were exchanged by me.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Skinner goes on with the letters.

JB

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1814, Vol. 8, No. 1 (M124, Roll No. 67).

1. In this letter Barney asked Navy Agent James Beatty to obtain advance money in order to entice the men of the flotilla to ship for another year. He also criticized John Skinner, the flotilla's purser, for poor performance of his duties. Barney to Jones, 29 Oct. 1814, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 76 (M125, Roll No. 40).

2. On 7 October Barney met the British fleet in the lower bay off the Piankatank River and exchanged British prisoners taken at Washington and North Point. The return of the American prisoners completed the exchange and freed Barney from his parole obligation. Barney to Jones, 10 Oct. 1814, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1814, Vol. 6, No. 83 (M124, Roll No. 65).

EDWARD JOHNSON TO ACTING SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HOMANS

Baltimore 9th. Decr. 1814

Sir,

On the approach to this place, by the British Fleet, and upon the requisition of the Major General<sup>1</sup> to this Committe, a number of Ships & other Vessels, were procured & delivered to Commodore Rogers, under whose Superintendance they were sunk, to prevent the passage, by the Enemy, of our Fort; The Vessels which have been thus used are of very considerable value; & as they will be destroyed, if they remain during the winter in their present situation, the Committe have deemed it their duty to apply to the Major General, who assents to the propriety of raising the Vessels; but who cannot command the services of the Flotilla men for that purpose. The Committe then made application to the Commanding officer of the Flotilla, & have recd. a reply from Lieutenant Rutter, in the absence of Commodore Barney, declining to comply with the request of the Committe; It may be intimated that the Value of the Vessels which have been sunk will amount to some hundred thousand dollars; and as the Committe believe it to be their duty to diminish, as much as possible, the expence of our City defence; I am directed, respectfully to make known to you the present situation of those Vessels; & to solicit that the Navy Department will give such directions as will raise the Ships & return them to their owners, whereby there will be a very considerable saving to the United States.<sup>2</sup> I have the honour to be Sir, with high consideration & respect, Your Very humble Servt.

Edw<sup>d</sup> Johnson chairman of committee of Vigilance & Safety

LS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1814, Vol. 8, No. 69 (M124, Roll No. 67).

1. Samuel Smith.

2. No reply to Johnson is extant. But on the same day as Johnson's letter, Homans ordered Master Commandant Spence to obtain the flotilla's aid in raising the hulks sunk at the entrance of Baltimore Harbor the previous summer. When the flotilla did not acquiesce, Homans ordered Barney to assist the War Department in raising the ships. Homans to the Commanding Naval Officer Baltimore, 9 Dec. 1814, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 475 (M149, Roll No. 11) and Homans to Barney, 27 Dec. 1814, *ibid.*, p. 493.

CAPTAIN JOSHUA BARNEY, FLOTILLA SERVICE, TO  
ACTING SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HOMANS

Baltimore Jany. 3d. 1815

Dear Sir

I received your note of the 27th. ulto.<sup>1</sup> and assure you that my feelings on the occasion cannot be described— It is true I did seriously intend to resign, but was advised to suspend it for a few weeks, by our mutual friend Mr. Jones but the orders of the 27th. from the Department has induced me to delay it no longer; could I have seen or supposed my situation would have been bettered, or a wider field given to me on the opening of the campaign in the Spring, and not embarrassed by contending for rank &c, I would not have quitted the service of my Country untill her Battles had all been fought, but finding my Non-

discript functions subject to continual misunderstandings, I concluded to put an end to it at once, by Resignation— The flotilla service in the spring will be no object, but few men will serve in it, if they can get other employment; the conduct of Congress to those under my command has been infamous, and I see no honour and (certainly no profit) to be gained by commanding a few Boats badly mann'd; much will [be] expected from us, and we must disapoint public expectation to our discredit—which is a situation I would not wish to be in. Congress I fear will do nothing good for the Navy or themselves, all seems to be going the wrong way— I inclose you a letter which I would fain wish to have treated with attention.<sup>2</sup> Wishing you every happiness and success, is sincerely my desire, and am yours

Joshua Barney

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1815, Vol. 1, No. 7 (M124, Roll No. 68).

1. See note 2, p. 353.

2. In this twelve-page letter, also dated 3 January 1815, Barney expressed his deep-seated disenchantment with the navy's treatment of the flotilla. He believed his men had suffered great privations defending the Chesapeake Bay, while an ungrateful Congress refused to compensate them for the loss of clothing and equipment. Barney considered the order to raise the vessels during the winter, merely for the pecuniary benefit of a few Baltimore merchants, to be demeaning, and he resigned his commission in disgust. Barney to Homans, 3 Jan. 1815, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 1, unnumbered; follows No. 29 (M125, Roll No. 42). Additionally, Barney resented taking orders from the Baltimore merchants, the War Department, and Master Commandant Spence. He had accepted the command of the flotilla in 1813 with the understanding that he was to report directly to the secretary of the navy. The Navy Department never resolved the issue of this independent command. Barney to Homans, 9 Jan. 1815, *ibid.*, No. 29.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD TO  
CAPTAIN JOSHUA BARNEY, FLOTILLA SERVICE

Capt. Joshua Barney  
Comm'g U.S. Flotilla Baltimore

Navy Department  
Feb'y 14th. 1815.

Sir,

I have the pleasure to transmit to you by the hands of Lieutenant Rutter, Your Commission as a Captain in the Flotilla service of the United States approved by the Senate,<sup>1</sup> in doing which I participate in the wishes of the President, that your talents and bravery as an Officer may be exerted in the service of our Country, and continue to merit, as they have done, the applause of the friends of our Government.—

In offering you my best wishes for your honor and fame, I assure you that nothing shall be wanting on my part to render your Command acceptable, pleasant, and respectable.— I am, very respectfully &c.

B. W. Crowinshield.—

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 12, p. 35 (M149, Roll No. 12).

1. There is no indication how the secretary of the navy reacted to Barney's resignation of 3 January. The Navy Department was in transition in January 1815. Although appointed secretary of the navy on 19 December 1814, Crowninshield apparently was not in charge until 16 January 1815. In his first communication recorded in his letter book, dated 18 January 1815, Crowninshield wrote Robert Spence about the "difficulty to settle respecting the Flotilla" and his inability to order flotillamen to *Ontario* at that time. Crowninshield to Spence, 18 Jan. 1815, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 12, p. 11 (M149, Roll No. 12). Secretary Jones had sent Barney the first commission in April 1814. See pp. 53, 55, and 57*n*. The Senate had delayed approving it until October. Perhaps this second commission was meant to placate Barney.

CAPTAIN JOSHUA BARNEY, FLOTILLA SERVICE, TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

Farm, Elk-ridge. Feby. 18th. 1815

Sir,

Your letter of the 14th Inst. accompanying my Commission "Approved by the Senate," I have the honor to Acknowledge, and to Express to you my gratefull sense of your good wishes for my "honor & fame," as also that of the President of the US. The news of Peace bursting upon us at a period sooner than was expected, will supercede all warlike operations, unless the treaty should not be honorable to our Country, in which case, I am convinced it will be rejected by the President; should that be the case I do most Solemnly pledge myself not to quit the service, or lay down my sword, untill death, or a peace such as our Country ought to Obtain; External Enemies and Internal Traitors, notwithstanding; Having been confined to the house for the last ten days will prevent my going to Baltimore for three or four days, where I shall be happy to receive your orders, And am respectfully Your Obt. Servt.

Joshua Barney

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1815, Vol. 2, No. 72 (M124, Roll No. 69).

CAPTAIN JOSHUA BARNEY, FLOTILLA SERVICE, TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

Elk ridge near MCoys. April 17th. 1815

Sir,

I had the honour to receive your letter of the 11th Inst. yesterday, ordering the Asp to washington with Gun powder;<sup>1</sup> I should have made my report to you before this period respecting the flotilla lately under my Command, had I not been prevented by ill health—<sup>2</sup> On the 1st Apl. according to your verbal instructions, I began to pay off, and on the 8th. finished with the petty officers & men; during that period, I had sent the Asp, look-out-boat, & the Gun boat to Patuxent, to bring away the Materials of the late flotilla, the look-out-boat, returned on the 4th. with Iron ballast, & I again sent her for a second load; on the 5th. the Asp & Gunboat returned, having brought every thing except the Guns & a few shot, On the return of the Asp, Captain Spence put her into requisition, & the Gun-boat was sent down the Bay, with British prisoners; I was obliged then to leave town on account of my health; I had previously got the



Barges hauled up and an Inventory taken of every Article belonging to them, which were delivered to Mr. Beatty the Navy Agent, his receipt will be sent to the Department, or delivered by me, the moment I can venture out— The Sailing Masters yet remain to be settled with, there appears a difficulty among them, they are desirous of retaining their warrants, & yet expect to receive the four months gratification, one or the other, I conceive they are entitled to, but not both, you will please to instruct me on that head.<sup>3</sup> As the *Asp* was left under the directions of Capt. Spence, and I having no officers or men under my Command, I found it impossible to comply with your orders respecting her, but have inclosed your letter to Mr. Beatty, and advised him to apply to Captain Spence for the vessel, officers & men, to take the Gunpowder to Washington; I am informed that the object in taking the *Asp*, was to make a receiving vessel of her, for the men belonging to the *Java*, if that is the case, could not these men, be employed with her, in bringing up the Guns &c left at Patuxent, after they return from Washington, I merely submit the Idea for your Information, previous to my leaving Baltimore, I engaged men to build the Sheds, or Covering for the Barges, which is progressing, and I hope will be finished by the time I get to Baltimore, I shall then do myself the honour to see you, and deliver up all that remains of my duty, to my late Command. I am respectfully Sir your Obt. Servt.

Joshua Barney

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1815, Vol. 4, No. 43 (M124, Roll No. 71).

1. Crowninshield cautioned Barney to choose responsible officers for this delicate mission. Crowninshield to Barney, 11 Apr. 1815, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 12, p. 98 (M149, Roll No. 12).

2. Crowninshield on 9 March had ordered Barney to dismantle and cover his barges, deliver all armament and stores to the navy agent, and furnish a descriptive list of all the flotilla's small vessels. Crowninshield to Barney, 9 Mar. 1815, *ibid.*, p. 55.

3. A congressional act of 27 February 1815 stated that all commissioned and warrant officers and privates of the flotilla service who were discharged as a result of the disestablishment of that service were to receive four months' pay in addition to what was owed to them at the time of their discharge. *Statutes at Large*, Vol. 3, pp. 217–18.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD TO JOSHUA BARNEY

Joshua Barney Esqr.,  
late commander of the  
U.S. Flotilla in the Chesapeake, Present.

Navy Department  
May 2d. 1815.

Sir,

I have received your Official communication of the 29th. Ultimo, with a return of the U.S. Flotilla late under your command, and the disposition made thereof,<sup>1</sup> conformably to the Act of Congress passed the 27th. Feby. last,<sup>2</sup> and the subsequent orders of this Department, all which are satisfactory, and approved.—

In the discharge of your duty as an officer, commanding the U.S. Flotilla on the Chesapeake, and Waters adjacent, I recognize with pleasure the character you had previously sustained, as a vigilant, active and brave commander, to whom your Country, and your Government, have unequivocally bestowed the

Meed of praise, and the well earned tribute of thanks; to these I cordially add my testimony and approbation.—

In compliance with the Act before mentioned, the term of your services has expired, and having honorably discharged your duty, settled up your accounts, and given evidence of your integrity, and fidelity in your prompt compliance with the Law; and orders of this Department, you will receive the pay and emoluments of a Commander of the Flotilla, to the 30th. of April last past.— and accept my best wishes for your good health and happiness.— I am, very respectfully &c.

B. W. Crowninshield.—

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 12, p. 116 (M149, Roll No. 12).

1. The 29 April 1815 letter was not found. The muster roll is found in the Joshua Barney Papers at the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

2. This act disestablished the flotilla service. *Statutes at Large*, Vol. 3, pp. 217–18.

## Blockaders Capture *Franklin*

*On 6 November 1814 off Hampton, Virginia, a flotilla of thirteen barges from the British blockading squadron overwhelmed U.S. schooner Franklin, Sailing Master Thomas S. Hamersley commanding. The civil treatment of the American prisoners, the quickness of their exchange, and the interchange of materials exemplified a less intense mode of warfare in the Chesapeake than that experienced just a few months earlier.*

### SAILING MASTER THOMAS S. HAMERSLEY TO CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON

On board his B M Ship *Havanna*: 8th. Novr. 1814

Sir

It is with extreme regret that I have to report to you the Capture of the U.S. Schooner *Franklin* late under my command, on the 6th Inst by the Enemy's Boats thirteen in number together with a tender mounting an 18 pounder, and many of the Barges with much heavier metal than the *Franklin*, the particulars are as follows; At day light when about 8 or 10 miles N. E. of old Point discovered some small craft and Boats off Back river point, made Sail and steared for that place with light breeces from the East'd, about 8 O'clock discovered a small Schooner off Willoughbys on the star board tack heading for Old point, I then bore away, Soon after discovered two Boats with Sails & oars coming from under the Western land heading for me, and a Schooner close in with the Land, apparently with a view to cut me off, continued my course, the two Barges, coming up very fast, and about 9 o'clock engaged me to windward, their first fire I returned immediately, they bearing down upon me keeping up a brisk fire with their Musketry and one of them with a brass eighteen in her bow, but finding their situation rather warm, took in their sails and row'd round my Stern where I had a Carronade for their reception, and after a desperate attempt to board me, one on my Stern the Other on my Quarter were compell'd

to Sheer off, and observing they pull'd along side of each other which I judged was in consequence of the injury they had sustaind, I tack'd and Stood for them to avail myself of this advantage, they however made Sail and retreated under a warm fire untill out of grape distance, during which time there were several guns fired in Hampton roads, wore Ship, the Tender firing as She came up, the two first Boats finding they had reinforcements from every direction renew'd the attack finding my retreat cut off, I accordingly hauled my wind for them but could not bring them to close action, by this manoevre I was in hopes of drawing their Boats from the mouth of the Roads trusting as there was every appearance of a Breeze that I would be enabled to weather them on the next tack, I then made a feint to go on Shore, tacked and stood on a wind off the land; The breeze at this time favouring me a little squeased away to force my way through them, the wind dying away enabled them to wear me in every direction and three large Boats athawt my hauze, finding myself compleatly surrounded, opposed to a force nearly nine times my own and no possibility of escape, I thought further resistance would be a wanton sacrifice of the lives of the men under my Command— I gave the painful order for the Ensign to be haul'd down— I am happy however to say, that notwithstanding we were in Musket Shot of nearly two hundred men, we had not a man hurt There were upwards of two hundred men & Officers on the Expedition against me—

(Signed) Ths. S. Hamersley

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 7, No. 117, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 40). Hamersley addressed this to Gordon on *Constellation* in Norfolk harbor.

CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Norfolk 3d, Decr. 1814

Sir

I have the Honor to report the arrival of the last of the Officers and Crew of the late Tender *Franklin* in a flag granted by Capt. Barrie for the express purpose—

Fourteen had been previously exchanged by a Capt. Wise of the Eastern Shore Malitia and sent up by Capt. Barrie's Tender, and the remaining fifteen arrived last night Very respectfully Sir Your Obt. Servt.

Cha<sup>s</sup> Gordon

Postscript

Sir,

From the report of Mr. Hamersley I am happy to learn that an interchange of a little ceremonious civility (which I have thought it advisable to adopt since the Capture of the *Franklin*) has the desired effect—

Mr. Hamersley & all his crew have been treated with the utmost respect & civility— They were transfered to a Ship destined for Bermuda, & afterward recall'd to enable them to favor us with the first exchange;<sup>1</sup> And the communication (a copy of which is herewith enclosed) from Capt. Barrie, who invariably

acknowledges himself our most inveterate opponent, is a further testimony of their respect—<sup>2</sup>

A Steels list<sup>3</sup> of the 1st. of Augt. & a few old English papers have been sent me in exchange for one of our Alman[acs] of 1814 & a few late papers, selected from several National Intelligencers & Baltimore Patriots for the purpose—

Much conversation pass'd between Capt. Palmer of the *Hebrus* & Mr. Hamersley, on the subject of the *Constelln.* observing that he expected me down after the late blow; But that as he expected to be kept in his present station with only the *Dauntless* sloop of war, we might per chance have an interview— I have the honor to be respectfully. Sir, Yr. Obt. servt.

Cha<sup>s</sup> Gordon

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 8, No. 77 (M125, Roll No. 41). Gordon signed but did not write the main letter. The postscript is in his hand. Gordon had not yet learned of Jones's resignation on 1 December 1814.

1. Acting Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Homans informed Gordon on 6 December that all of the officers and crew of the *Franklin* had been exchanged and that they were "free to act as if they had not been made Prisoners." DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 473 (M149, Roll No. 11).

2. Captain Barrie spared the American prisoners a long, overland journey from Baltimore by returning them directly to *Constellation*. Barrie to Gordon, 29 Nov. 1814, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 8, No. 77, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 41).

3. *Steel's Original and Correct List of the Royal Navy of Great Britain.*

## *Constellation* Prepares for Sea

*Idleness characterized the Norfolk station in December 1814. Many of the gunboats were unmanned. Recruiting was negligible. Meanwhile, the British blockade of the Chesapeake Bay was minimal, as Admiral Cochrane diverted much of his fleet southward to support the New Orleans expedition. Captain Gordon recognized this opportunity and repeatedly requested experienced officers for Constellation so he could get to sea. The transition in leadership at the Navy Department left the station adrift. No strategic planning for the spring occurred, but Acting Secretary Homans did grant Gordon permission to cruise.*

CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

*Constelln.* Norfolk 8th. Decr. 1814

Sir,

I have for the last two months kept the *Constelln.* constantly Victual'd & stored for a Cruise in expectation of receiving yr. instructions to authorise my availing myself of the first opportunity to proceed. Feeling also anxious that, agreeable to your promise some time since, you would order on an additional number of officers to fill my present vacancies— The return of the whole of the *Franklins* crew has again reinstated my compliment of men sufficiently for sea service; But, as I stated to you in a former communication, I am several thousand dollars in arrears to my Crew, they having re-enter'd with me for 2 years (a short time previous to the expiration of there old enlistment) under a pledge from



me that they should be paid up the ballance due on there old enlistment—<sup>1</sup> But if it is not contemplated placing the *Constelln.* under immediate sailing orders it would be extremely gratifying to me to be permitted to visit head quarters (while thus inactive)<sup>2</sup> as it would enable me to explain to you more fully the state and situation of the whole of the force upon this station (under my command) as well as the nature of the service to be perform'd— But should there be the least prospect of my receiving instructions before I could go & return, I wish it to be understood that I have not the most distant wish to quit my post; As it is alone the good of the service (I have in view) in wishing to visit washington at this moment— The Gun Boats 20 or odd in number being nearly totally unmann'd could not now be made use of, consequently my presence on the station is not entirely indispensible except, in case of the *Constelln.* proceeding to Sea— There is a Post Captn.<sup>3</sup> & a sufficiency of Lieutts. on the station to take care of my Ship, And to keep the Gun Boats out of the reach of the Enemy during my absence— I have the honor to be with high respect Sir, yr. obt. servt.

Cha<sup>s</sup> Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 8, No. 88 (M125, Roll No. 41). Gordon was still addressing his letters to Jones. He had not yet received notice that Benjamin Homans was the acting secretary of the navy.

1. See Gordon to Jones, 21 Oct. 1814, pp. 308–9.

2. Gordon reiterated the same themes in his 18 December 1814 letter to the new acting secretary, Benjamin Homans. *Constellation* had stores for a five and one-half month cruise and lacked only a few officers and twenty men. Additionally, Gordon continued to complain of his "peculiar state of inactivity." Gordon to Homans, 18 Dec. 1814, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 8, No. 122 (M125, Roll No. 41). It is not known if Gordon went to Washington.

3. Joseph Tarbell.

#### CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO ACTING SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HOMANS

*Constelln.* Norfolk 28th. Decr. 1814

Sir,

yr. two communications of the 24th. Inst.<sup>1</sup> is this moment received, And I am much gratified with the idea (once more) of getting to Sea— My requisitions upon the Agent<sup>2</sup> for the money necessary to settle with my Crew, as well as for all other purposes have been long since sent in— The Agent the other day effected some temporary accommodation with one of the Banks for \$30,000 in Treasury notes, And I think it probable I could obtain a similar accommodation—<sup>3</sup>

As I am inform'd by the Agent that the whole of his requisitions to cover those made by me have just gone on, I would suggest that Ten or Fifteen thousand dollars of that requisition be forwarded by the earliest opportunity in treasury note, And the Agent directed to apply it exclusively to the *Constelln.*

Permit me now Sir, to sollicite yr. attention to my former communications on the subject of my deficiency of officers— Some time since, our late Secretary promised to order 2 or 3 Lieutts. to join me, And since then, one of my Surgeons mates have been kill'd in a duel & the other, furlough'd & promoted by

the Departmt.—<sup>4</sup> I have now only a temporary Surgeons mate of my own appointment,<sup>5</sup> when the Ship requires at least two— Midsn. Chas. T. Stallings has been doing the duty of a Lieutt. since Lt. Kennedy left me in April last, & is a very deserving officer, who I had hoped would have had his Commission before the late Secretary left the office, as younger & certainly less deserving officers have been confirm'd by him—

If Mr. Stallings can be confirm'd And one, tolerably experienced Lieutt. with one or two good Surgeons mates can be immediately ordered on, my Ship will be compleat— In the event of an immediate opening or, opportunity for me (which I do not at this moment apprehend) I could make Mr. T. S. Hamersley an Actg. Lieutt. also; And could very easy obtain Volunteer Surgeons mates, so that the Ship cannot possibly be delay'd, tho I would suggest the hurrying of any officers that may be order'd on— As my Midshipmen are all new appointments, 2 or 3 experienced young men who have been to sea (if there are any such idle) would be very acceptable tho not materially necessary— I have the honor to be with much respect Sir, yr. obt. servt.

Cha<sup>s</sup> Gordon

Private

P.S. Mr. Stallings is certainly deserving of a Commission since April last—<sup>6</sup>

Cha<sup>s</sup> Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 8, No. 143 (M125, Roll No. 41).

1. Homans ordered Gordon to prepare *Constellation* for a cruise as outlined to him in the department's January 1814 cruising orders. In the second communication, Homans gave Gordon permission to obtain a requisition from Navy Agent John H. Fawn for the amount to pay his men. Both letters are in DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 490 (M149, Roll No. 11). The 5 January 1814 cruising instructions from Jones are found on pp. 6–7.

2. John H. Fawn.

3. After taking charge of the Navy Department in mid-January 1815, Crowninshield remitted \$93,500 in Treasury notes to Navy Agent John H. Fawn. Crowninshield to Fawn, 19 Jan. 1815, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 2, p. 271 (M441, Roll No. 1).

4. Surgeon's Mate Richard C. Gregory died on 13 November from a wound received in a duel. Surgeon's Mate John Young, Jr., who had served in *Constellation* since 29 July 1812, was granted a furlough on 22 October 1814 and on 23 November was ordered to join Captain David Porter in New York.

5. On 31 January 1814, the Navy Department confirmed the appointment of James R. Boyce as an acting surgeon's mate.

6. Charles T. Stallings was commissioned a lieutenant on 9 December 1814.

#### CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO ACTING SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HOMANS

Private

Norfolk 5th. Jany. 1815

Dear Sir,

My letter of yesterdays date was written in great haste, As yrs. of the 31st. (to which it was an answer) was not received by me untill just as the Northn. mail was about to close,<sup>1</sup> And I was anxious that no time should be lost, as I am now

determined to avail myself of the first fair wind & dark night so long as only a Frigate & a Sloop of war keep up the Blockade— I had occasion to send down a Flag yesterday by the request of the Citizens of this place to get released 4 or 5 boys who had been taken in the Hampton Packet— It will enable my officer to give me a full description of the two Ships with there names rate & force— Permit me now to explain more fully the subject of my letter of yesterday—

As respects the one Lieutt. requested, I could make Mr. Hamersley Acting, as he is highly deserving & very capable; But my object is to procure a Lieutt. calculated to fill the situation of a 1st. Lt. in case of accident; As you must be aware that after leaving this I have no other resource than my own Ship, And Lieutt. Saunders, who is my second at present tho. a fine smart young man was only promoted a few months previous to my joining the Ship & was only an acting Lt. while under the Command of Capt. Stewart; I am also apprehensive that if I do not get to sea immediately I may loose my present 1st. Lieutt.<sup>2</sup> by promotion as he is high on the lists—

The Surgeons mates I am much in need of, & hope they will be young men of some experience

My motive for requesting two Midshipmen of some experience who had been to sea, is in consequence of having none but young men just appointed (except Mr. Forrest<sup>3</sup>) all of whom you must well know can be of little or no use to me or the Ship for the greater part of my cruise untill they can learn something, & my having lost 2 or 3 lately leaves room for 2 more provided I could get such as I have solicited otherways I would prefer having no more—

The small quantity of Cloathing required for my Marines I presume could come down by land in a small bale nearly as quick as the mail; But nothing of this kind (I assure you) will delay me, when the moment shall arrive which my judgement may dictate to me to proceede to Sea—

There being never more than two Ships on the Blockade here, what a great opportunity it would be & no doubt will be for some time to come (for the *President*, *Peacock* & *Hornet* to run into the Capes where I could join them almost instantaneously) deside the business with the two Ships in Lynhaven & then proceede up the Bay where (I feel assured) there is not more than two Ships or, at any rate by the time they could meet me at the capes I could have correct information as to the force up the Bay, for I mean to send up immediately on that business.<sup>4</sup>

Should you deem this sufficiently important to communicate it to Commodore Decatur (provided he has not gone to sea already) you can also inform him that the moment any change of the force at the Capes does occur I will loose no time in communicating it—

My lookouts are down upon the shores & would be able to see him in the offing so that should he approve my plan he would only have to hoist a Signal say the try colour'd French flag (Blue white red) that can be seen a great distance, And I could get the information in time to meet him in Lynhaven bay—

My Fort, which I mention'd yesterday you may assure our new Secretary or (indeed the President) will effectually protect & defend the Navy yard against any force in its rear— And the Fort may only require of the Dock yard officer to have a plenty of heavy Guns planted upon his wharves together with the Flotilla for an effectual defence— The Fort alluded to I am getting a drawing of, to forward to the Department with its position— It Mounts 13 long 18 pounders such as the *Constellations* main Battery (And Two, Fifty pounders)

Columbiad's— They are mounted 9 or 10 feet above the earth, And the Fort parapit or breast work has a rise of 12 or 15 feet beside a 2 or 3 feet ditch—

It is also enclosed in its rear & flank'd with a parapit or bank for infantry 6 feet high & reaching to the head of a Creek on each side of the Fort; Which Creeks effectually enclose the Navy yard & the little Town of Gosport—

This Fort, Captn. Swift (of the Marines in the Navy yard) has not men sufficient even to Guard; And I should be very sorry to relinquish it to the Army).

I have built a Hut to contain 50 men which would be a very good Guard for if it were possible for the Coll.<sup>5</sup> to interest himself sufficiently for the fate of this Navy yard to apply 50 of his Marines with a smart officer to take charge of the Fort—

In the event of my moving I shall, diliver the Fort in charge of the Navy yard, so that Captn. Swift can keep at least one of his Sentinels on the works which is only 2 or 3 hundred yards from the Navy yard— with much respect Sir, yr. obt. servt.

Chas<sup>r</sup>. Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 1, No. 14 (M125, Roll No. 42).

1. Gordon's letter of 5 January expanded on the points he outlined in that of the 4th. Gordon to Homans, 4 Jan. 1815, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 1, No. 12 (M125, Roll No. 42). Homans attempted to accommodate Gordon's manpower requests. Homans to Gordon, 31 Dec. 1814, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 496 (M149, Roll No. 11).

2. Benjamin I. Neale.

3. French Forrest, warranted a midshipman on 9 June 1811, was ordered from Washington to Norfolk on 12 September 1814.

4. In early January 1815, a British squadron off New York was blockading *President*, Commodore Stephen Decatur, *Hornet*, Captain James Biddle, and *Peacock*, Captain Lewis Warrington. Gordon's scheme to join Decatur's squadron fizzled, for *Constellation* never breached the blockade in the Chesapeake Bay and the British squadron off New York captured *President* as she attempted an escape on 14 January.

5. Colonel Franklin Wharton, commandant of marines.

CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO ACTING SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HOMANS

*Constelln.* Norfolk 15th. Jany. 1815

Sir,

My Sailg. Master, Squire Fisk, has repeatedly solicited of me permission to go on to Washington, for the purpose of getting ordered to some other station— His having suffer'd from indisposition for the last 3 or 4 months, And one half of the Gun Boats on this station being now laid up for want of men, induces me to refer his present application to you— He requests permission to report himself at Headquarters; And if it is not contemplated to send Seamen here in the Spring to man the Gun Boats (as it is very certain but few can be had here) the services of Mr. Fisk & many others who are now totally idle might be dispensed with upon this station—<sup>1</sup>

We originally had 20 odd Gun Boats in Commission & a Master in each— Now, we have only 8 Boats in Commission, with a Guard Ship & a Transport Vessel; The other Masters (except what few has resign'd) of course remain idle—



From the appearance of the weather, a few days since I was induced to make my arrangements to depart; But had not so far progress'd in my arrangements as to shew my intention of going down, before the weather broak away; So that my intention of going to Sea is as yet unknown to the Town or to my officers; tho. all suspect I am waiting orders— Mr. B. Cocke, who perhaps may have received it from some of the Clerks in the office, wrote down some time since either that I had my orders or, was about to receive them— I regreted extremely that he should have mention'd it, as it required some time for me to do away the report

In consequence of my preparation for a move as above stated, & Lieutt. Smith not having arrived, I was induced to make Mr. Hamersly a temporary Actg. Lieutt. And have ordered Dr. E. Jones an Actg. Surgeons mate from the Flotilla to compleat my Medical Departmt.— Dr. Jones appears to have given great satisfaction & has obtain'd a letter from Dr. Hermon the Surgeon which I have enclosed herewith, by his request— I have full confidence in the superior skill & judgement of Dr. Hermon<sup>2</sup> I have the honor to be Sir, yr. obt. Servt.

Cha<sup>s</sup> Gordon

P.S. The Enemys force in the Bay is still weak & admirably situated for the purpose suggested by me—

viz—The *Orlando* 36, Captn. Clavell  
And *Havanna* 36, Captn. Hamilton } In Potomack

The *Euryalus* 36, Captn. Napier  
And, *Menelaus* 36, Captn. Dix } In Lynhaven

The Brigs *Dotterell* 18 And *Saracen* 18 are generally moving about the lower part of the Bay; And the Tender *Franklin* is kept up the bay with the two Ships in the Potomac—

Cha<sup>s</sup> Gordon

15th. Jany. 1815

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 4, No. 28 (M125, Roll No. 45). This document was misfiled with the June 1815 correspondence.

1. Sailing Master Squire Fisk, whose warrant dated from 7 May 1812, had served at Norfolk since September 1813. There is no indication in the departmental correspondence that he left the station until the end of the war.

2. Joseph Smith's lieutenant's commission dated from 24 July 1813. On 4 January 1815 the Navy Department ordered Smith, who had served on Lake Champlain in 1813-14, to join *Constellation*. Enoch Jones's appointment as a surgeon's mate dated from 10 December 1814; his resignation from the navy was effective 2 March 1815. Lewis Heermann, a surgeon since 27 November 1804, had served on the New Orleans station since August 1810. His letter of reference was not found.

## Demobilization on the Norfolk Station

*Constellation's stay at the Norfolk station in 1813 was intended to be temporary. The Navy Department anticipated a commerce-raiding cruise for the ship, but the British blockaders successfully penned her in for the duration of the war. Captains Cassin (Gosport*

*Navy Yard) and Tarbell (gunboat flotilla) resented Captain Gordon's overall command at Norfolk. Confined to shore duty for more than a year, Gordon eagerly left the station a month after the declaration of peace still seeking sea glory in the next war in the Mediterranean. Captain Cassin took charge of reducing the naval presence there, placing some vessels in ordinary and redistributing some to other stations. The transition to a peacetime navy began immediately.*

CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

*Constelln.* Norfolk 15th. Feby. 1815

Sir,

By a short arrival from New York (coast ways) we last evening received the news of a Treaty of Peace between England & the United States— Under the presumption that it will be officially announced in a few days, I am induced to solicit of you permission to run the *Constelln.* up to Annapolis roads, where I can be in a more convenient situation to receive yr. immediate instructions either for the Mediterranean or, any other service required—

During this war it has been my misfortune to be deprived all opportunity of performing my part in common with my Brother officers; And when the Field for Fame is to be again open, must depend upon the next British war, as I cannot conceive any other Victory so Brilliant as those obtain'd over a proud Britton—

However trifling the prospects which an Algerine war may present, still, do I feel extremely desirous (after being so long under a rigid Blockade) to be among the first to partake in it, particularly as I have been much upon that station & well acquainted with the Mediterranean generally—<sup>1</sup>

By running up to Annapolis I could cross over to Washington & receive yr. instructions in person— with great respect I have the honor to be Sir, yr. obt. servt.

Cha<sup>s</sup> Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 1, No. 127 (M125, Roll No. 42).

1. Gordon and *Constellation* joined Stephen Decatur's squadron that sailed from New York on 20 May 1814 to engage the Algerines.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD TO CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON

Capt. Charles Gordon.  
U.S.S. *Constellation* Norfolk.

Navy Department  
Feb'y 28th. 1815.

Sir

You will proceed with the U.S. Frigate *Constellation* to New York, and there await the further orders of this Department.—

You will take on board 50 or 60 of the Seamen on the Norfolk Station, whose times will not expire soon, and transfer them to the Commanding officer at New York,<sup>1</sup> to be sent to the Frigate *U States* at New London—provided the

terms upon which those men were Shipped, will admit of such a transfer.— I am, respectfully &c.

B. W Crowninshield.

P.S. You will please to be governed in your departure from Norfolk, by the stipulations in the Treaty of Peace.—

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 12, p. 43 (M149, Roll No. 12).

1. Captain Samuel Evans.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD TO CAPTAIN JOHN CASSIN

John Cassin Esqr:  
Comm'dt. U.S. Navy Yard Gosport, Va.

Navy Department  
March 9th: 1815

Sir,

You will immediately proceed to dismantle all the Gun Boats and Barges on the Norfolk Station, except two of the best Gun Boats, that you will retain for occasional service, with crews sufficient to navigate them. The armament, equipments, and Stores of every kind, will be carefully deposited in the naval Stores, and an exact inventory of all transmitted to this Department. The Gun Boats will be laid up in ordinary, at the Navy Yard, in the most convenient and suitable place for their preservation; and the Barges be placed under cover to preserve them from the effects of the Sun & weather.— You will also furnish a List of all the other small Vessels, such as Schooners, Sloops, Ketches, Lighters &c., on the Station, accompanied by a particular description of their Rig, Qualities, Dimensions, and Tonnage, and the State of their Hulls, Rigging, Sails and Equipments, in order that those may be kept in Service, which are best calculated for Despatch Vessels, Transportation &c:— Please to make a Report of the whole, to this Department, as soon as practicable.— I am, very respectfully &c.

B W Crowninshield

LB, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 2, p. 307 (M441, Roll No. 1).

CAPTAIN JOHN CASSIN TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

Navy Yard Gosport March 16th. 1815.

Sir,

In conformity with your instructions of the 9th. & 10th. Current,<sup>1</sup> I have directed the dismantling of the Gun Boats, and shall proceed to laying them up in some convenient place, but not being able to procure laborers at this time, their being such demand for that class of Men, along shore, we progress slowly. As soon as practicable the returns shall be forwarded, in the mean time, I take the liberty of stating to you the Gun boats on this Station, in general will want

very considerable repairs. *No. 67*, the best boat on the station Captain Gordon, directed to Baltimore, before he sail'd, with a part of the *Argus's* crew,<sup>2</sup> the Schooner *Despatch*, he has taken with himself. Seven Sloop boats built at Baltimore, and five sloop boats built at Norfolk, will all want considerable repairs (and new Sails for the whole of them) the seven Felucca rigged boats, built at Washington, are all sound and in good order, and fit for service, with the exception of sails; the four schooner boats built at Norfolk, will with very little repairs answer for New Orleans but will require new sails, taking off their heavy thirty two pounder, and placing a long eighteen & two eighteen pound Carronades. *No. 69*, was condemned in Washington, and I was allowed to take her to help remove my family to this place in 1812, patched her up and fitted her out afterwards, I fear several of them are not much better which I have the honor to submit for your consideration.— Since writing the above, hearing of the *despatch* being in Hampton roads for the purpose of taking their Stream anchor, and a hawser, which the Frigate<sup>3</sup> left off Sewels point, I have directed her up to the yard, having 12 or 15 Men, belonging to the Flotilla, which is very much wanting at this place, the Anchor and hawser I have directed to be taken up & brought to the yard, and shall forward them by the first opportunity, several of the Masters have been permitted to withdraw from the public service by Captain Gordon. I have the honor to be Your obt. Servt.

John Cassin

LS, DNA, RG45, AF 7 (M625, Roll No. 77).

1. In his letter of 10 March, Crowninshield asked Cassin to identify four or five serviceable gunboats that the secretary could send to the New Orleans Station. Crowninshield to Cassin, 10 Mar. 1815, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 2, pp. 310–11 (M441, Roll No. 1).

2. After H.M.S. *Pelican* captured U.S.S. *Argus* on 14 August 1813, the British imprisoned the American crew in England. Having endured over a year of confinement, the last of the prisoners sailed for home on 8 November 1814 in the cartel ship *St. Philip*, arriving in Hampton Roads on 25 February 1815. Shortly thereafter, Gordon sent some of *Argus's* crew on to Baltimore to join *Ontario*. For more about the capture, see Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, pp. 217–24 and 274–76. For the subsequent exchange, see Dye, *Argus*, pp. 294–96.

3. *Constellation*.

CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

*Constellation* [22 March 1815]<sup>1</sup>

Sir

After much trouble with the different crews, in distributing, paying off, & transferring together with the voluminous accounts to be closed upon this Station, I am happy to inform you I am now standing out to sea with a light breeze from the S.W. And the Pilot about to leave us—

Agreeable to your orders Mr. Dennison<sup>2</sup> the Purser of the late *Argus*, is now settling with such of the late prisoners, as have served their time out, And Gun Boat *No. 67* sails this day for Baltimore, with forty of those of the late *Argus's* crew, whose term of service has not expired; The rest twenty or thirty in number with the Officers (late Prisoners) will also proceed to Baltimore in the Schr. *Hornet*, so soon as she can be provision'd, and the men collected on board,—<sup>3</sup> The Officers commanding the *Hornet* & Gun Boat *No. 67* are directed to report



themselves to you for further orders— The rest of the Gun Boats on this station, being so entirely destitute of men the few that remained in Commission, with the exception of one as Guard Ship, I have ordered to be delivered up to Capt. Cassin of the Dock Yard and made smug [*snug*] by the *Argus's* men before they leave the Station—

The Masters being all idle, & pressing applications for the Merchants, I was induced to recommend to them not to reject a good offer, as it was more than probable, an order for their discharge, or furlough, would soon arrive—

So many of my men have deserted since we have been under sailing orders, that I have deem'd it proper to leave two Officers to apprehend them when we disappear, and I have ordered the Tender *Despatch* to be kept in readiness to receive them and bring them on to me at New York,— should you have any particular service for the Tender in that quarter I will detain her, otherwise I contemplate sending her back immediately— I have the Honor to be Sir Very respectfully Your Obt. Servt.

Cha<sup>s</sup> Gordon

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 2, No. 99 (M125, Roll No. 43).

1. No date appears on this letter but it was postmarked 22 March. The phrase "24 Mch" was added in another hand in the dateline area and the letter was bound in the letter book between letters dated 23 and 24 March.

2. Purser Henry Denison's commission was dated 25 April 1812.

3. *Hornet* sailed for Washington on 24 March. Cassin to Crowninshield, 24 Mar. 1815, DNA, RG45, CL, 1815, Vol. 2, No. 100 (M125, Roll No. 43).

## Chapter Two

### The Northern Lakes Theater: January 1814–June 1815

*The successes and failures of United States forces along the border with Canada in 1813 set the context of American operations in the northern lakes theater for 1814. The year 1814 opened with Tecumseh's Indian confederacy crushed and the United States in control of Lake Erie. The U.S. Army's plan to choke off the British lifeline to the lakes at the Saint Lawrence River, however, had failed during the 1813 campaigning season and could not be successfully prosecuted in 1814 without the infusion of many additional soldiers and the winning of naval mastery of Lake Ontario.*

*Napoleon's defeat in the spring of 1814 opened up wider possibilities for British operations in the northern lakes theater. The availability of thousands of British veterans of the wars in Europe for service in Canada emboldened Lord Bathurst, British secretary of state for war and the colonies, to order Sir George Prevost, governor-general of British North America, to go on the offensive and to invade the United States.*

*British objectives for the lakes theater in 1814 included retaining control of the forts along the trade routes to the west of Lake Michigan and thus the support of the western Indians, recapturing Detroit, destroying the American base at Sackets Harbor, and occupying a piece of United States territory. If successful, the British believed they could gain territorial concessions along the United States-Canadian border and establish an Indian state in the northwest that would serve as a permanent barrier to American northern expansion.<sup>1</sup>*

*The Americans planned in 1814 to use mastery of Lake Erie to control Lake Huron, recapture Mackinac, and cut off British contact with the western tribes. In the meantime, the army projected conquering the Niagara frontier and then systematically taking the British settlements along Lake Ontario, from west to east, in preparation for moving against Kingston and Montreal.<sup>2</sup>*

*The American offensive on Lake Huron failed owing to a mixture of reasons, including bad weather, poor geographical knowledge, and carelessness, as well as pluck and enterprise on the part of the British. Further to the west, Prairie du Chien, a British trading post on the Mississippi River in Indiana Territory (now in Wisconsin), fell to an American expedition dispatched from St. Louis, but was soon retaken by the British.*