


*This Great  
Contest Afloat*

THE CIVIL WAR ON THE SEAS, COASTLINE,  
RIVERS, AND OCEANS

by Neil P. Chatelain

EMERGING CIVIL WAR SERIES



**Footnotes and Bibliography**

**List of Abbreviation Used in Notes**

Area File	Area File of the Naval Records Collection, 1775-1910, M625, RG 45, US National Archives.
C.S. Subject File	Subject File of the Confederate States Navy (Records Group 45), National Archives Building, Washington, DC.
John E. Hart Letters	John E. Hart Letters, MS 392, Special Collections and Archives, United States Naval Academy.
John Horry Dent Jr. Letters	John Horry Dent Jr. Letters, The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections.
<i>OR</i>	<i>The War or the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies.</i>
<i>ORN</i>	<i>Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion.</i>
Mallory Diary	Stephen R. Mallory Diary and Reminiscences, #2229, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Robert Watson Diary	Robert Watson Civil War Diary, 1861-1865, MS76-139, State Archives of Florida, Tallahassee, Florida
SHC, UNC	Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
Squadron Letters	Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Commanding Officers of Squadrons, 1841-1886, Publication Number M89, Records Group 45, U.S. National Archives.
Tomb Memoirs	Memoirs of James H. Tomb, James Hamilton Tomb Papers, #723, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
USS X Logbook	Logbooks of U.S. Naval Ships, 1801-1940, Record Group 24: Records of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, 1798 - 2007. U.S. National Archives.

### Epigram

“If it be the design of Divine Providence to save the country, it must be done by a miracle or by the navy. I see no other move.”<sup>1</sup>

### Foreword

Nor must Uncle Sam's web-feet be forgotten,” wrote President Abraham Lincoln. “At all the watery margins they have been present. Not only on the deep sea, the broad bay, and the rapid river, but also up the narrow, muddy bayou, and wherever the ground was a little damp, they have been and made their tracks.”<sup>2</sup>

In his classic treatise, *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz discussed “different factors of space, mass, and time” related to battle, one being the “theater of operations,” which he defined as: “A sector of the total war area which has protected boundaries and so a certain degree of independence.”<sup>3</sup>

A theater is “a subordinate entity in itself—depending on the extent to which changes occurring elsewhere in the war area affect it not directly but only indirectly.”<sup>4</sup>

“The navy under Porter was all it could be, during the entire [Vicksburg] campaign,” Grant concluded. “Without its assistance the campaign could not have been successfully made. . . . The most perfect harmony reigned between the two arms of the service.”<sup>5</sup>

Commander James Bulloch, chief agent in Europe for the nascent navy of the rebellion, wrote in his memoir: “It is now well known that the Confederate Government made great efforts to organize a naval force abroad during the Civil War, and that a few armed cruisers were got afloat, which destroyed many American ships and well-nigh drove the American commercial flag from the high seas.”<sup>6</sup>

### Prologue

Also, that same April 12, Marine Pvt. John C. Applegate passed away from “inflammation of the bowels” on USS *Richmond* in the Mediterranean Sea, the first of hundreds-of-thousands of

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<sup>1</sup>Anthony to Fox, Oct. 27, 1862, Robert Means Thompson and Richard Wainwright, eds. *Confidential Correspondence of Gustavus Vasa Fox Assistant Secretary of the Navy 1861-1865* (New York: De Vinne Press, 1920), Vol. 2, 415.

<sup>2</sup>Lincoln to Conkling, Aug. 26, 1863, Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1953), Vol. 6, 409-410.

<sup>3</sup>Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton, NJ, 1976), 280.

<sup>4</sup>Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton, NJ, 1976), 280.

<sup>5</sup>U.S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant* (New York: Charles L. Webster & Company, 1886), Vol. 1, 574.

<sup>6</sup>James D. Bulloch, *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*, (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1883), Vol. 1, 2.

uniformed service members to succumb during the conflict, though he did so far from the Fort Sumter siege and from non-combat health issues.<sup>7</sup>

### **Chapter One: Conceptualizing a Blockade**

On April 19, 1861, Abraham Lincoln declared “a blockade of the ports” of rebelling states, ordering “a competent force . . . posted so as to prevent entrance and exit of vessels” from Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina.<sup>8</sup>

In January 1861, even before assuming his cabinet position, Seward spoke with British minister Lord Richard Lyons about whether British ships would “conform to the regulation of the de facto or the de jure government,” pressing the British to admit the seceding states were illegitimate.<sup>9</sup>

On April 1, 1861, Seward urged Lincoln to “have the Navy recalled from foreign stations to be prepared for a blockade.”<sup>10</sup>

Often called “Father Neptune” by Lincoln, Welles’s only modern biographer called him “an eminent journalist, politician, statesman, and administrator” who “observed his contemporaries with a keen eye.”<sup>11</sup>

A former naval officer and well-connected textile manufacturer, Fox influenced Lincoln’s early actions against the seceded states. Knowing most antebellum officers, Fox, whom Lincoln called “a live man, whose services we cannot well dispense with,” provided keen insights for senior appointments and ascertained qualities of Rebel officers.<sup>12</sup>

Showcasing the arguments, Welles complained in his diary about how the “State Department is sensitively apprehensive” because of “the old error, running back to the commencement of difficulties, when the Rebels were recognized as belligerents, and a blockade was ordered instead of closing the ports.”<sup>13</sup>

One of the declaration’s four provisions concerned blockades, noting that “Blockades, in order to be binding, must be effective, that is to say, maintained by a force sufficient really to prevent access to the coast of the enemy.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Apr. 13, 1861, Journal of a Cruise in the U.S. Steam Sloop *Richmond*, MSS 0097, Item 0041, University of Delaware Library, Museums and Press.

<sup>8</sup>A. Lincoln Blockade Proclamation, Apr. 19, 1861, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (Washington, D.C., 1894-1922), Ser. 1, vol. 4, 157. (hereafter *ORN*).

<sup>9</sup>Michael Brem Bonner and Peter McCord, *The Union Blockade in the American Civil War: A Reassessment* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2021), 17.

<sup>10</sup>Seward to Lincoln, Apr. 1, 1861, Abraham Lincoln papers: Series 1. General Correspondence. 1833-1916, MSS 30189, Library of Congress.

<sup>11</sup>John Niven, *Gideon Welles: Lincoln’s Secretary of the Navy* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1994 edition), xii.

<sup>12</sup>Lincoln to Welles, May 8, 1861, Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. 4, 363.

<sup>13</sup>Gideon Welles Diary, Aug. 11, 1862, Gideon Welles, *Diary of Gideon Welles* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), Vol. 1, 79.

<sup>14</sup>*Declaration Respecting Maritime Law, Signed by the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, Sardinia, and Turkey, Assembled in Congress at Paris, April 16, 1856* (London, 1856), 4.

Admiral Sir Alexander Milne, commanding British ships in North America, made his vessels patrol the coast, documenting whether “all Blockading Squadrons” were “adequate to maintain efficiently the Blockade.”<sup>15</sup>

As future admiral David Dixon Porter—just a lieutenant in early 1861—noted, “our Navy was not in a condition to render that assistance which the occasion demanded; the larger portion of it was employed on foreign stations” and “many of our vessels of war were, as a rule, too large, and drew too much water to enter the shoal Southern harbors, and a majority of them were sailing frigates.”<sup>16</sup>

Compounding the matter, officers serving abroad began submitting letters asking “to return to the United States for the purpose of resigning.”<sup>17</sup>

So many officers ultimately joined the Confederacy that amongst commissioned line officers in the rebel naval forces, the men who commanded ships and sailors in battle, “73% held antebellum US Government experience,” meaning “the Confederacy’s small navy was able to maintain professional leadership via career officers” at a higher rate than other organizations.<sup>18</sup>

Though it caused great angst amongst senior members of the officer corps, it also chipped away at the age-old policy of advancement through seniority; however, targeted officers “earnestly appealed” their dismissals and many eventually were reinstated, demonstrating limitations of reform when facing political connections.<sup>19</sup>

Many historians have considered him Davis’s best cabinet pick, including Dennis L. Peterson, whose comparative analysis of Confederate cabinet members called Mallory the Confederacy’s “most loyal, most consistent, and most successful cabinet member, considering what he had (or did not have) to work with.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>James P. Baxter, ed., “Papers Related to Belligerent and Neutral Rights, 1861-1865,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Oct. 1928), 78-80.

<sup>16</sup>David D. Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War* (New York: The Sherman Publishing Company, 1886), 17.

<sup>17</sup>Warley to Bell, Dec. 24, 1860, Mediterranean Squadron, Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Commanding Officers of Squadrons, M89, RG 45, U.S. National Archives. (hereafter Squadron Letters)

<sup>18</sup>Neil P. Chatelain, “Comparing US and CS Service Branch Antebellum Experience,” *Emerging Civil War*, May 9, 2023, <https://emergingcivilwar.com/2023/05/09/comparing-us-and-cs-service-branch-antebellum-experience/>, accessed May 9, 2023; Neil P. Chatelain, “Postwar Identity Crisis of the Confederate Navy’s Officer Corps,” *U.S. Military History Review*, Vol. 8, No. 1, Oct. 2022, 21.

<sup>19</sup>Charles Oscar Paullin, *Paullin’s History of Naval Administration, 1775-1911* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1968), 241.

<sup>20</sup>Dennis L. Peterson, *Confederate Cabinet Departments and Secretaries* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2016), 186.

On May 2, 1861, Scott put to paper a preference to subdue the rebelling states by “enveloping them all (nearly) at once by a cordon of posts on the Mississippi to its mouth from its junction with the Ohio, and by blockading ships of war on the sea board.”<sup>21</sup>

The next day, Scott told Maj. Gen. George McClellan his intentions, outlining how the army should “rely greatly on the sure operation of a complete blockade of the Atlantic and Gulf ports,” coupled with “a powerful movement down the Mississippi to the ocean . . . to envelop the insurgent States and bring them to terms.”<sup>22</sup>

The press chastised Scott’s plan for being a lengthy and drawn-out process, even though it would “inevitably crush the Rebels, as the Anaconda would its victim after it had coiled around it.”<sup>23</sup>

The officers drafted six reports addressing Confederate coastal areas “in the order of their importance,” which covered the Mississippi River, the Gulf, and Atlantic seaboard.<sup>24</sup>

### **Chapter Two: Implementing the Blockade**

Several ports, such as New Orleans, Mobile, and Wilmington, possessed “natural advantages” to Confederates in the form of multiple approaches Federals would have to guard.<sup>25</sup>

Herman Melville penned a poem about the whole affair, which aptly closed: “A failure, and complete, Was your Old Stone Fleet.”<sup>26</sup>

In August 1861, the Atlantic Blockading Squadron silenced a pair of forts at Hatteras Inlet, one of the few entry points that “furnished a convenient harbor for blockade runners and as the gate way to the large inland waters of the [North Carolina] Sounds.”<sup>27</sup>

USS *Wabash*’s Lt. Roswell Lamson boasted of how his sailors worked their guns “with their sleeves rolled up, their arms and faces blackened, and grimed with powder.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Indorsement of Winfield Scott, May 2, 1861, *The War of the Rebellion: The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series 1, vol. 51, pt. 1, 339 (hereafter *OR*).

<sup>22</sup>Scott to McClellan, May 3, 1861, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 51, pt. 1, 369.

<sup>23</sup>“Something is Going to Happen!” *Cincinnati Daily Press*, Cincinnati, OH, May 18, 1861.

<sup>24</sup>Du Pont, Bache, Barnard, & Davis to Welles, Aug 9, 1861, *ORN*, Ser. 1, Vol. 16, 619.

<sup>25</sup>John Wilkinson, *The Narrative of a Blockade Runner*, (New York, Sheldon & Company, 1877), 130.

<sup>26</sup>Herman Melville, “The Stone Fleet,” *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1866), 32.

<sup>27</sup>Alden R. Carter, ed. *The Sea Eagle: The Civil War Memoirs of Lt. Cdr. William B. Cushing, U.S.N.* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 20.

<sup>28</sup>Lamson to Flora Lamson, Aug. 29, 1861, James M. McPherson and Patricia R. McPherson, eds. *Lamson of the Gettysburg: The Civil War Letters of Lieutenant Roswell H. Lamson, U.S. Navy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 35-36.

“In the event of separation . . . you will make the best of your way to Port Royal, S.C.,” read USS *Gem of the Sea*’s sealed document.<sup>29</sup>

On November 1, 1861, Acting War Secretary Judah Benjamin telegraphed South Carolina’s governor “the enemy’s expedition is intended for Port Royal.”<sup>30</sup>

En route, the squadron steamed through a hurricane. Lieutenant Roswell Lamson remembered it as “one of the severest gales I have ever experienced.”<sup>31</sup>

Most ships were “utterly dispersed,” three supply vessels sank, and a transport carrying Marines foundered.<sup>32</sup>

Despite this, Du Pont attacked on November 7, mimicking Hatteras Inlet by steaming in circles, delivering “terrific and well directed volleys.”<sup>33</sup>

*Wabash*’s Lieutenant Lamson boasted the fleet “silenced their batteries and drove them out,” leaving Port Royal in United States control, where the navy established the war’s largest forward operating blockading station.<sup>34</sup>

With an incomplete coastal fortification and a deep-water anchorage near the Mississippi River, blockaders recognized Ship Island as “the most important point for us on this coast.”<sup>35</sup>

Many noted the island’s “shifting sands” blown around “like snow” that “dazzles and fatigues the eyes” by day and “glitters in the moonlight.”<sup>36</sup>

In addition to these bases, the war-steamers *Rhode Island* and *Connecticut* were specially designated to make regular runs from New York all the way to Texas “for the purpose of keeping the blockade squadrons supplied with fresh provisions, and for securing a means for transporting the sick, wounded, prisoners, arms, ammunition, and the mails.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Du Pont to Baxter, Oct. 26, 1861, *ORN*, Ser. 1 vol. 12, 230.

<sup>30</sup>Benjamin to Pickens, Nov. 1, 1861, *OR*, Ser. 1 vol. 6, 306.

<sup>31</sup>Lamson to Flora Lamson, Nov. 4, 1861, McPherson and McPherson, *Lamson of the Gettysburg*, 39.

<sup>32</sup>Du Pont to Welles Nov. 6, 1861, South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, Squadron Letters.

<sup>33</sup>Nov. 7, 1861, USS *Wabash* Logbook, Logbooks of U.S. Naval Ships, 1801-1940, Record Group 24: Records of the Bureau of Naval Personnel, 1798 - 2007. U.S. National Archives. (hereafter USS *Wabash* Logbook)

<sup>34</sup>Lamson to Flora Lamson, Nov. 8, 1861, McPherson and McPherson, *Lamson of the Gettysburg*, 42.

<sup>35</sup>Powell to McKean, Oct. 22, 1861, *ORN*, Ser. 1 vol. 16, 740-741.

<sup>36</sup>George G. Smith, *Leaves from a Soldier’s Diary: The Personal Record of Lieutenant George G. Smith, Co. C, 1st Louisiana Regiment Infantry Volunteers [White] During the War of the Rebellion* (Putnam, CT, George G. Smith, 1906), 10; Henry Warren Howe, *Passages from the Life of Henry Warren Howe* (Lowell, MA, Courier-Citizen Co. 1899), 31; John William De Forest to Wife, Mar. 10, 1862, James H. Croushore, ed., *A Volunteer’s Adventures: A Union Captain’s Records of the Civil War* (Baton Rouge LA: LSU Press, 1974 edition), 3.

<sup>37</sup>Edgar Stanton MaClay, ed., *Reminiscences of the Old Navy: From the Journals and Private Papers of Captain Edward Trenchard, and Rear-Admiral Stephen Trenchard* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1898), 106.

“I hold my rank dearer than life itself,” one antebellum line officer lamented, and on the thought of staff officers ranking alongside him, he blurted out “I could never suffer my rank to be outraged in that way; I would rather die.”<sup>38</sup>

Despite this, navy regulations were specific that “no Staff Officer is to exercise command.”<sup>39</sup>

Despite this, Rear Adm. David Dixon Porter proudly recalled that regarding engineers under his command, “I have never known them to shrink from any service.”<sup>40</sup>

Additionally, New York’s business elite demanded a stronger blockade of the Carolinas to ensure that gold being transshipped from California via the Panamá isthmus was not intercepted because of “exposure from depredations by Southern privateers.”<sup>41</sup>

According to the Paris Declaration, except for contraband of war, “the neutral flag covers enemy goods” and “neutral goods . . . are not liable to capture under enemy flag.”<sup>42</sup>

Commander Charles Poor immediately dispatched upriver to New Orleans “a notification of a rigid blockade, allowing fifteen days to neutrals to depart, with or without cargo.”<sup>43</sup>

The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war with Mexico, clarified that it “shall be free and common to the vessels and citizens of both countries; and neither shall, without the consent of the other, construct any work that may impede or interrupt, in whole or in part.”<sup>44</sup>

The court’s majority opinion, written by Associate Justice Robert Cooper Grier, affirmed that “the President had a right, *jure belli*, to institute a blockade of ports in possession of the States in rebellion which neutrals are bound to regard,” adding that “illegal traffic” passing through a declared blockade became subject to seizure.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Paullin, *Paullin’s History of Naval Administration*, 237

<sup>39</sup>*Regulations for the Government of the United States Navy. 1865* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1865), 4.

<sup>40</sup>Frank M. Bennett, *The Steam Navy of the United States: A History of the Growth of the Steam Vessels of War in the U.S. Navy, and of the Naval Engineering Corps* (Pittsburgh, PA: W.T. Nicholson, 1896), 198.

<sup>41</sup>Petition to Salmon P. Chase by 25 companies and influential businessmen, Apr. 17, 1861, *ORN*, Ser. 1 vol. 1, 8.

<sup>42</sup>*Declaration Respecting Maritime Law, Signed by the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, Sardinia, and Turkey, Assembled in Congress at Paris, April 16, 1856* (London, 1856), 4.

<sup>43</sup>Poor to Welles, May 29, 1861, *ORN*, Ser. 1, Vol. 4, 187.

<sup>44</sup>Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo [Exchange copy]; 2/2/1848; Perfected Treaties, 1778 - 1945; General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

<sup>45</sup>Prize Cases, 67 U.S. 635 (1862).

The court even declared that “to make a capture lawful, it is not necessary that a warning of the blockade should have been previously endorsed on the register of the captured vessel,” meaning any vessel crossing the blockade was subject to immediate seizure.<sup>46</sup>

### **Chapter Three: Implementing the Blockade**

In 1862, one runner into Texas brought “salt pork, crates of earthenware, nails, and ironmongery.”<sup>47</sup>

On an 1863 trip into Wilmington, North Carolina, *Don* landed “one thousand pairs of stays” which Hobart sold for “a profit of nearly 1100 per cent” in addition to “blankets, shoes, Manchester goods of all sorts, and some mysterious boxes marked ‘hardware’ . . . which the military authorities took.”<sup>48</sup>

They were constructed for speed, with low silhouettes, painted to blend with the horizon, and used high-quality anthracite coal to limit smoke exhaust. Runners generally loaded cargo from three ports: Bermuda; Nassau in the Bahamas; and Havana, Cuba, where merchants stockpiled goods in warehouses. One Nassau resident called the Civil War its “Golden Age” because trade grew 25-fold.<sup>49</sup>

For example, in a State Department letter written April 18, 1863, U.S. Consul Charles M. Allen reported *General Beauregard* as departing Bermuda; its cargo manifest logged with Bermuda’s custom house noted significant “hardware,” alcohol, boots, clothes, foodstuffs, and “310 boxes ammunition.”<sup>50</sup>

But this was a flea-bite compared to the profit on the 500 odd bales of cotton . . . which was at least £50 per bale.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Prize Cases, 67 U.S. 635 (1862).

<sup>47</sup>William Watson, *The Adventures of a Blockade Runner: Trade in Time of War*, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1893), 48.

<sup>48</sup>Captain Roberts, *Never Caught: Personal Adventures Connected with Twelve Successful Trips in Blockade-Running During the American Civil War, 1863-4*, (London: John Camden Hotton, 1867), 22-23, 27.

<sup>49</sup>George G.H. Northcroft, *Sketches of Summerland: Giving Some Account of Nassau and the Bahama Islands* (Nassau: Nassau Guardian, 1902), 298, 303

<sup>50</sup>Frank E. Vandiver, *Confederate Blockade Running Through Bermuda 1861-1865* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1947), 111; Allen to Seward, Apr. 18, 1863, Glen W. Wiche, ed. *Dispatches from Bermuda: The Civil War Letters of Charles Maxwell Allen, United States Consul at Bermuda, 1861-1888* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2008), 84.

<sup>51</sup>Thomas E. Taylor, *Running the Blockade: A Personal Narrative of Adventures, Risks, and Escapes During the American Civil War* (London: John Murray, 1896), 69.

According to one “summary of cargoes received at Charleston,” 1862 saw runners import 46,000 rifles, 3,500 barrels of gunpowder, eleven artillery batteries, and 250,000 pre-fabricated cartridges—enough to arm a field army.<sup>52</sup>

The best-known was *Robert E. Lee*, captained by Lt. John Wilkinson, who remembered how, in the war’s latter half, private runners were required by law to “carry out, as portion of their cargo, cotton on government account, and to bring in [military] supplies.”<sup>53</sup>

Built in 1860 as a British merchant possessing “superb qualities as a sea boat,” it was purchased by the Confederacy.<sup>54</sup>

It successfully completed 21 voyages past the blockade, but its luck ran out in late 1863. *Robert E. Lee* departed Bermuda that November 4, packed with pork, “145 cases arms,” and “160 sacks saltpeter.”<sup>55</sup>

On November 9, while approaching North Carolina’s coast, USS *James Adger*’s crew sighted *Lee*.<sup>56</sup>

The Federal warship, which had captured another blockade-runner the previous day, “started in chase,” and with the crew keen for action, closed and “opened fire.”<sup>57</sup>

Captured runners were “sent into port for condemnation” by a prize court, which reviewed and certified captures, and ordered auctions of ships and cargo.<sup>58</sup>

Any blockading vessel “within signal distance” of one “making a prize” became entitled to “share in the prize.”<sup>59</sup>

“Great watchfulness was kept up on every side of each vessel,” especially at night when blockade-runners dashed into and out of port.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>52</sup>C.L. Webster III, *Entrepôt: Government Imports into the Confederate States* (Roseville, MN: Edinborough Press, 2019), 148-151.

<sup>53</sup>Wilkinson, *The Narrative of a Blockade Runner*, 124-125.

<sup>54</sup>Wilkinson, *The Narrative of a Blockade Runner*, 117.

<sup>55</sup>Vandiver, *Confederate Blockade Running Through Bermuda 1861-1865*, 121-122.

<sup>56</sup>Patterson to Welles, Nov. 9, 1863, *ORN*, Ser. 1 vol. 9, 288.

<sup>57</sup>Patterson to Welles, Nov. 9, 1863, *ORN*, Ser. 1 vol. 9, 288.

<sup>58</sup>Benjamin F. Sands, *From Reefer to Rear-Admiral: Reminiscences and Journal Jottings of Nearly Half a Century of Naval Life* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1899), 246.

<sup>59</sup>An Act for the better Government of the Navy of the United States, July 17, 1862, George P. Sanger, ed. *The Statutes at Large, Treaties, and Proclamations of the United States of America from December 5, 1859 to March 3, 1863* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1863), Vol. 12, 606.

<sup>60</sup>Sands, *From Reefer to Rear-Admiral*, 247.

It was [only] with difficulty that I could keep warm.”<sup>61</sup>

Two days later, he lamented that “nothing has occurred to destroy its monotony,” adding that *Adger* spent March 17 “Uninterruptedly all day doing nothing.”<sup>62</sup>

On October 9, 1861, Seaman John Haggerty was court-martialed for insubordination on USS *Vincennes* and sentenced to “loss of pay for one month and to police duty for that time.”<sup>63</sup>

“This has caused a great volume of talk among some of the old sailors” who “declare that it will be the death of the Navy.”<sup>64</sup>

The navy also turned to African Americans, who served on integrated ships. By war’s end, Black sailors represented one in five men on the navy’s muster rolls. Soldiers from the army were also “allowed to volunteer for the navy if they were seamen.”<sup>65</sup>

“I and many more have been trying to get transferred for over two years and thank God have at last succeeded,” Pvt. Robert Watson of the 7th Florida Regiment penned in his journal on March 3, 1864, the day he learned his transfer was approved.<sup>66</sup>

As Capt. Raphael Semmes noted, once the New Orleans blockade began, “the levée in front of the city was no longer a great mart of commerce,” and “desolation hung over the river front.”<sup>67</sup>

C. L. Webster, who researched Confederate government imports, estimated “as many as 500,000 foreign small arms were purchased over the course of the war” by Rebel forces.<sup>68</sup>

He noted that in the Gulf, there was “a daily average of 2 attempted violations” while “the average for the Carolina ports was 1.5”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Mar. 12, 1862 Journal Entry, Craig L. Symonds, ed. *Charleston Blockade: The Journal of John B. Marchand, U.S. Navy 1861-1862* (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1976), 136.

<sup>62</sup>Mar. 14 and 17, 1862 Journal Entry, Symonds, *Charleston Blockade*, 136.

<sup>63</sup>Oct. 10, 1861, USS *Vincennes* Logbook.

<sup>64</sup>Sept. 1, 1862, Lawrence J. Bopp and Stephen R. Bockmiller, eds. *Showing the Flag: The Civil War Naval Diary of Moses Safford, USS Constellation* (Charleston SC: History Press, 2004), 61.

<sup>65</sup>Daniel Ammen, *Old Navy and the New* (Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott Company, 1891), 386.

<sup>66</sup>Mar. 3, 1864, Robert Watson Civil War Diary, 1861-1865, MS76-139, State Archives of Florida, Tallahassee, Florida.

<sup>67</sup>Raphael Semmes, *Memoirs of Service Afloat: During the War Between the States* (Baltimore: Kelly, Piet, and Co, 1869), 97.

<sup>68</sup>Webster, *Entrepôt*, 318-320.

<sup>69</sup>Marcus W. Price, “Ships that Tested the Blockade of the Gulf Ports, 1861-1865,” *The American Neptune*, Vol. 11, No. 4, Oct. 1951, 262. For the rest of Price’s analyses, see Marcus W. Price, “Ships That Tested The Blockade of the Carolina Ports,” *The American Neptune*, Vol. 8, No. 3, July 1948, 196-241; Marcus W. Price, “Blockade Running as a Business in South Carolina During the War Between the States, 1861-1865,” *The American Neptune*, Vol. 9, No. 1, Jan. 1949, 31-62; Marcus W. Price, “Ships that Tested the Blockade of the Gulf Ports, 1861-1865, Part II, III, and IV” *The American Neptune*, Vol. 12, No. 1-3, Jan., Apr., and July, 1952, 52-59, 154-161, 229-

40 years later, Stephen R. Wise released his own analysis of this “vital wartime operation,” including his own statistics about runners.<sup>70</sup>

The most recent appraisal of the blockade by Michael Bonner and Peter McCord declared the “blockade’s effectiveness remains ambiguous, and historians may never agree on the subject.”<sup>71</sup>

#### Chapter Four: Breaking the Blockade

The Confederacy immediately recognized the 1856 Paris Declaration’s requirements that any blockade “must be effective” by stationing ships “to prevent access” to ports.<sup>72</sup>

For example, the West India Squadron was charged with hunting Caribbean raiders and, since it was presumed Confederate ships would “endeavor to capture the treasure ships,” with protecting bullion transportation from Panamá to New York.<sup>73</sup>

Among the West India Squadron’s vessels was USS *Santiago de Cuba*, purported as “the fastest on the blockade.”<sup>74</sup>

When squadron commanders pleaded for reinforcements, Gideon Welles replied that “our best wooden vessels, necessary for the blockade ... are unfortunately required in the West Indies.”<sup>75</sup>

“I feel of having done my whole duty, of having done all that any man could have done with the means at hand,” Confederate Navy Secretary Stephen Mallory boasted after these programs began.”<sup>76</sup>

Outfitted with a ram “made of the best cast iron,” Hollins seized *Manassas* from owner John Stevenson and his “loud-mouthed set of toughs,” making it the first ironclad in either navy.<sup>77</sup>

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238; Marcus W. Price, “Ships that Tested the Blockade of Georgia and East Florida Ports, 1861-1865,” *The American Neptune*, Vol. 15, No. 2, Apr. 1955, 97-132.

<sup>70</sup>Stephen R. Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running During the Civil War* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 3.

<sup>71</sup>Bonner and McCord, *The Union Blockade in the American Civil War*, 162.

<sup>72</sup>*Declaration Respecting Maritime Law, Signed by the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, Sardinia, and Turkey, Assembled in Congress at Paris, April 16, 1856* (London, 1856), 4.

<sup>73</sup>Welles to Wilkes, Sept. 9, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 1, 472; For more detail on the back and forth along the Panamá route see Neil P. Chatelain, “Controlling the California Gold Steamers: The Panama Route in the United States Civil War,” *UCLA Historical*, (2017), vol. 28, no. 1.

<sup>74</sup>Glisson to Lee, June 27, 1864, *ORN*, Series 1 vol. 10, 212.

<sup>75</sup>Welles to Du Pont, Jan. 31, 1863, *ORN*, Series 1 vol. 13, 571.

<sup>76</sup>Stephen Mallory Diary, June 24, 1862, Stephen R. Mallory Diary and Reminiscences, #2229, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>77</sup>“The Wrought Iron Prow,” *Charleston Mercury*, Charleston, SC, Apr. 9, 1862; James M. Morgan, “The Pioneer Ironclad,” *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*. vol. 43, no. 10, 2277.

“We are going on a grand expedition tonight to attack Lincolns [sic] men-of-war,” boasted one engineer.<sup>78</sup>

Before dawn on October 12, *Manassas* gained speed, belched “clouds of the densest, blackest smoke,” and rammed USS *Richmond* in the Mississippi River’s Head of Passes, where several deltas merged into one navigable channel.<sup>79</sup>

On USS *Richmond*, Acting Master Frederic Hill “was rudely awakened by a tremendous shock,” rushing on deck to see *Manassas* “slowly dropping astern, scraping our side, and at that moment she threw up a rocket, doubtless as a signal that she had accomplished her work!”<sup>80</sup>

Seeing the rocket, Hollins released three fire rafts designed to smash into an enemy and “set her on fire & completely destroy her”<sup>81</sup>

CSS *Jackson* engineer James Tomb believed the rafts “a most magnificent sight,” hoping “to the Yankees it must have been the reverse.”<sup>82</sup>

“The ‘devil’ was raised,” Sailmaker Robert Oxley on USS *Vincennes* recalled upon sighting them “approaching in full blaze.”<sup>83</sup>

In the darkness and mayhem, *Richmond* and *Vincennes* grounded on the Southwest Pass bar. “It was a beautiful sight to see” one Confederate gleefully noted.<sup>84</sup>

Running adrift, the fire rafts “consumed themselves without having done the slightest damage,” but Hollins’s squadron closed.<sup>85</sup>

Two ships approached the “crippled” *Manassas*, towing her upriver to safety.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>John H. Dent, Jr. to John H. Dent, Oct. 10, 1861, John Horry Dent, Jr., Letters, University Libraries Division of Special Collections, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL.

<sup>79</sup>French to McKean, Oct. 22, 1861, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 16, 712.

<sup>80</sup>Frederic Stanhope Hill, *Twenty Years at Sea: Leaves from My Old Log-Books*, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Company, 1893), 154.

<sup>81</sup>George N. Hollins, “Autobiography of Commodore George Nicholas Hollins, C.S.A.,” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, (1939), vol. 34, no. 3, 240.

<sup>82</sup>Memoirs of James H. Tomb, James Hamilton Tomb Papers, #723, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereafter Tomb Memoirs.

<sup>83</sup>Robert M. Oxley, “The Civil War Gulf Blockade: The Unpublished Journal of a U.S. Navy Warrant Officer Aboard the USS *Vincennes*, 1861-1864,” *International Journal of Naval History*, (Apr. 2002), vol. 1, no. 1, 3.

<sup>84</sup>John H. Dent, Jr. to John H. Dent, Oct. 27, 1861, John Horry Dent, Jr., Letters.

<sup>85</sup>Morgan, “The Pioneer Ironclad,” 2280.

<sup>86</sup>Jeanie Mort Walker, *Life of Captain Fry: The Cuban Martyr*, (Hartford, CT: J.B. Burr’s Publishing Company, 1875), 146.

CSS *McRae* fired into *Richmond* “from a very respectable distance” and CSS *Ivy* “made a dash for the helpless *Vincennes*,” lobbing shells “into the sloop-of-war’s cabin windows.”<sup>87</sup>

Confederates manning forts upriver claimed “the broadsides are almost incessant.”<sup>88</sup>

The exchange created “a regular panic” on USS *Vincennes*, whose captain misinterpreted a signal to withdraw, “hove overboard ... her armament,” and began abandoning ship.<sup>89</sup>

“Hollins of the navy has broken the blockade,” one New Orleans woman declared, while another celebrated the “signal rebuke” of “the insolent blockaders.”<sup>90</sup>

Both Captain Pope and *Vincennes*’s skipper were relieved. Morale plummeted with blockaders “low in spirit.”<sup>91</sup>

David Dixon Porter called it “the most ridiculous affair that ever took place in the American Navy.”<sup>92</sup>

By day’s end, *Cumberland* “went down with her Colors Flying,” *Congress* “struck her Colors and hoisted a white flag,” and *Minnesota* lay aground.<sup>93</sup>

Such would not be. The experimental turreted ironclad *Monitor* reached Hampton Roads that night after an arduous journey from New York through storms that made sailors believe they lived “ten good years” in a matter of days.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>87</sup>James Morris Morgan, *Recollections of a Rebel Reefer*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1917), 57.

<sup>88</sup>“A Naval Brush with the Enemy at the Head of the Passes,” *Daily Picayune*, New Orleans, LA, Oct. 12, 1861.

<sup>89</sup>Devens to Fox, Oct. 28, 1861, USS *Vincennes*, At Anchor NE Pass, in Robert Means Thompson and Richard Wainwright, eds., *Confidential Correspondence of Gustavus Vasa Fox: Assistant Secretary of the Navy 1861-1865*, (New York: De Vinne Press, 1918), vol. 1, 393; “The Attack on Our Squadron at the Mouth of the Mississippi,” *Harper’s Weekly*, Nov. 9, 1861.

<sup>90</sup>Judith W. McGuire, *Diary of a Southern Refugee, During the War* (New York: E.G. Hale and Son, 1868), 68-69; Elliott Ashkenazi, ed., *The Civil War Diary of Clara Solomon: Growing Up In New Orleans 1861-1862* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1995), 194.

<sup>91</sup>John E. Hart to Mrs. John E. Hart, Nov. 26, 1861, John E. Hart Letters, Special Collections and Archives, U.S. Naval Academy.

<sup>92</sup>Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War*, 91.

<sup>93</sup>Mar. 8, 1862, USS *Minnesota* Logbook.

<sup>94</sup>Greene to parents, Mar. 14, 1862, “Voyage to Destiny,” *Naval History*, (Apr. 2007), vol. 21, no. 2, 2.

“Our decks are constantly covered with a sea of foam pouring from one side to the other,” remembered Acting Paymaster William Keeler, “while at short intervals a dense green sea rolls across with terrible force.”<sup>95</sup>

Encountering “heavy weather” with “the sea making a clear breach over the vessel,” *Monitor* nearly flooded while officers debated whether they might “give up the ship.”<sup>96</sup>

“We had a friend that would stand by us in our hour of trial.”<sup>97</sup>

*Virginia* reappeared on March 9. The ironclads “constantly engaged” one another “at close quarters.”<sup>98</sup>

“Ironclad against ironclad,” *Monitor*’s Chief Engineer Alban Stimers reported. “We maneuvered about the bay here and went at each other with mutual fierceness.”<sup>99</sup>

After the battle his officers informed Worden *Monitor* saved USS *Minnesota* and preserved the blockade. Worden curtly claimed “Then I can die happy.”<sup>100</sup>

A third “attack on the blockading fleet” occurred on January 31, 1863, by Capt. Duncan Ingraham’s Charleston ironclads *Chicora* and *Palmetto State*.<sup>101</sup>

Ingraham possessed the technological advantage, as U.S. ironclads had not yet reached Charleston. “The men stood silently at their guns,” *Palmetto State*’s Lt. William Parker recalled. “The port-shutters were closed, not a light could be seen from the outside, and the few battle-lanterns lit cast a pale, weird light on the gun-deck.”<sup>102</sup>

The ship approached USS *Mercidita*, which “did not see us until we were very near. ... Just then we struck him on the starboard quarter, and dropping the forward port-shutter, fired the bow gun.”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>Robert W. Daly, ed., *Aboard the USS Monitor: 1862: The Letters of Acting Paymaster William Frederick Keeler, U. S. Navy to His Wife, Anna* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1964), 28.

<sup>96</sup>Mar. 8, 1862, USS *Monitor* Logbook; Daly, *Aboard the USS Monitor*, 30.

<sup>97</sup>Van Brunt to Welles, Mar. 10, 1862, “Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Commanding Officers of Squadrons, 1841-1886”, North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, M89, RG 45, U.S. National Archives.

<sup>98</sup>Mar. 9, 1862, USS *Monitor* Logbook; Mar. 9, 1862, USS *Minnesota* Logbook.

<sup>99</sup>Stimers to Ericsson, Mar. 9, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 7, 26; See also Dwight Sturtevant Hughes, *Unlike Anything that Ever Floated: The Monitor and Virginia and the Battle of Hampton Roads, March 8-9, 1862*, (El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2021).

<sup>100</sup>S. Dana Greene, “In the ‘Monitor’ Turret,” *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, (New York, The Century Co., 1887), vol. 1, 727.

<sup>101</sup>Tomb Memoirs.

<sup>102</sup>William H. Parker, *Recollections of a Naval Officer 1841-1865*, (New York: Charles Scribners’ Sons, 1883), 295

<sup>103</sup>Parker, *Recollections of a Naval Officer*, 295.

*Palmetto State's* shell “passed through her condenser, the steam drum of her port boiler, and exploded against the port side, blowing a hole in its exit.”<sup>104</sup>

Meanwhile, CSS *Chicora* targeted USS *Keystone State*. Engineer James Tomb remembered *Chicora* fired “the forward gun;” ten shots struck the blockader, one piercing *Keystone State's* steam drum and “she hauled down her flag.”<sup>105</sup>

The “six month back and forth operation where both the Confederate ships and blockaders vied for control of the Mississippi Sound” continued until Confederate steamers were bottled into Lake Pontchartrain during 1862's New Orleans campaign.<sup>106</sup>

“Expecting daily an attack upon this Post from the Mobile forces,” Col. Nathan Daniels of the 2nd Louisiana Native Guards penned from Ship Island.<sup>107</sup>

On a July, 1863, inspection, Farragut found Mobile's blockaders “in a very high state of exercise and drill.”<sup>108</sup>

Weeks later, naval officers believed “an immediate attack is contemplated by the rebels on Ship Island.”<sup>109</sup>

“If the enemy has rams, ram them in turn,” Capt. John Gillis told fellow blockading captains.<sup>110</sup>

Rumors recirculated in December, 1863, that Mobile's “ram fleet” might “come out on Christmas eve to attack the blockading fleet.”<sup>111</sup>

In 1861, Mallory dispatched Cmdr. James Bulloch and Lt. James North to England to acquire commerce raiders and build “ironclad ships” capable of destroying Lincoln's “wooden navy.”<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>104</sup>Du Pont to Welles, Feb. 2, 1863, S.F. Du Pont, *Official Dispatches and Letters of Rear Admiral Du Pont, U.S. Navy, 1846-48, 1861-63*, (Wilmington, DE: Ferris Brothers, 1883), 398.

<sup>105</sup>Tomb Memoirs.

<sup>106</sup>Neil P. Chatelain, “The Confederacy's Lake Pontchartrain Naval Squadron: A Cooperative Defense of the Coastal Approaches to New Orleans, 1861-1862,” *Louisiana History*, vol. 59, no. 2, (Spring 2018), 179. For details on activity at Ship Island see Neil P. Chatelain, “Ship Island, Mississippi: Versatile Key to the Gulf,” *Civil War Navy – The Magazine*, vol. 10, no. 3, (Winter 2023).

<sup>107</sup>Mar. 14, 1863, Nathan W. Daniels Diary; vol. I, 1861, Dec.-1864, May, MSS 84934, box 1, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

<sup>108</sup>Farragut to Bell, July 23, 1863, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 20, 423.

<sup>109</sup>Gillis to Commanding Officer, Ship Island, Aug. 6, 1863, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 20, 438.

<sup>110</sup>Gillis to Commanding Officer, Ship Island, Aug. 6, 1863, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 20, 438.

<sup>111</sup>Greene to Bell, Dec. 23, 1863, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 20, 732.

<sup>112</sup>Mallory to North, May 17, 1861, *ORN*, Series 2, vol. 2, 70.

Mallory designated the “elegant and accomplished” Capt. Samuel Barron this squadron’s commander.<sup>113</sup>

With “verbal assurance” from Napoleon III that French-built ironclads could “proceed to sea under the Confederate flag,” in July, 1863, contracts were signed with French shipbuilder Lucien Arman for two ironclads mounting single stationary armored turrets and four wooden corvettes.<sup>114</sup>

There was even talk of purchasing “a long list” of Austrian warships.<sup>115</sup>

Europeans believed they would “make terrible havoc among the blockading squadrons” and “see the Southern ports opened.”<sup>116</sup>

One U.S. sailor described the French-built ironclad he witnessed as “an ugly customer” while Rear Adm. John Dahlgren expressed “serious apprehensions” regarding them.<sup>117</sup>

Austrian negotiations collapsed. U.S. minister to Great Britain Charles Francis Adams demanded Queen Victoria seize the ironclads while minister to France John Bigelow declared Arman’s warships a “distinct and deliberate violation” of Napoleon III’s neutrality.<sup>118</sup>

“All our exertions to procure war vessels from foreign ports” Jefferson Davis lamented, had “been rendered fruitless.”<sup>119</sup>

Patrolling Federal warships failed to challenge *Stonewall* as their captains believed it “a much more formidable vessel than any of our monitors.”<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>113</sup>Thomas Sparrow Diary, Oct. 4, 1861, *Thomas Sparrow Papers*, #1878, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>114</sup>Slidell to Benjamin, June 21, 1863, *Messages and Papers of the Confederacy* (Nashville, TN, 1906), vol. 2, 516.

<sup>115</sup>Lawrence Sondhaus, *The Habsburg Empire at Sea: Austrian Naval Policy, 1797-1866* (West Lafayette, IN, 1989), 224.

<sup>116</sup>John Bigelow, *France and the Confederate Navy, 1862-1868* (New York, 1888), 60; “Correspondence Respecting the Two-Ironclad Vessels Building at Messrs. Laird’s Yard, Birkenhead, Feb. to Oct., 1863,” FO 412/11, National Archives, Kew, London, United Kingdom.

<sup>117</sup>William Gould IV, ed., *Diary of a Contraband: The Civil War Passage of a Black Sailor* (Stanford, CA, 2002), 222; Welles, *Diary of Gideon Welles*, vol. 1, 406.

<sup>118</sup>Bigelow, *France and the Confederate Navy*, 10.

<sup>119</sup>Davis to Person, Dec. 15, 1864, *The Papers of Jefferson Davis* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 2003), vol. 11, 227.

<sup>120</sup>Craven to Welles, Feb. 28, 1865, *ORN Series 1*, vol. 3, 435.

Crossing the Atlantic, in May, 1865, *Stonewall* endured the “unpleasant indication” of re-coaling outside Nassau before steaming for Cuba.<sup>121</sup> There

Blockade-runners generally succeeded in passing interposed warships, with Confederate leaders exerting efforts “to proclaim the blockade ineffectual.”<sup>122</sup>

Over time however, major Southern ports were seized (New Orleans and Norfolk in 1862, Savannah and Mobile Bay in 1864, Charleston and Wilmington in 1865), solidifying the blockade’s ultimate success in “preventing large cargo ships from entering the Confederacy,” and realizing the Anaconda Plan.<sup>123</sup>

### **Chapter Five: Initial Littoral Activity**

The Potomac Flotilla—smaller ships patrolling the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay—was first proposed by Cmdr. James H. Ward to protect Washington D.C. and operate “in the Chesapeake and its tributaries; to interrupt the enemy’s communications; . . . drive from those waters every hostile bottom . . . transport troops or intelligence . . . and to attack at any desired or important” site.<sup>124</sup>

As retired navy museum system director James H. Bruns asserted, enslaved persons “left the moment they saw a Federal vessel in the distance,” with naval coastal forces often becoming a “ticket to freedom.”<sup>125</sup>

Rear Admiral David Dixon Porter agreed with this, commending “the usefulness of naval vessels in assisting the Army to carry out plans of conquest that it could never have achieved alone.”<sup>126</sup>

At Savannah, Charleston, Mobile, and Wilmington, sailors and Marines went ashore “to share in the good work” of manning artillery positions or participating in amphibious assaults.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>121</sup>Thomas J. Page, “The Career of the Confederate Cruiser ‘Stonewall,’” *Southern Historical Society Papers*, (Richmond, VA, 1879), vol. 7, 278.

<sup>122</sup>Bonner and McCord, *The Union Blockade in the American Civil War*, 148. This is the most recent secondary assessment of the U.S. blockade and its effectiveness. The authors conclude through statistical analysis that the United States blockade of the Confederacy was largely effective at halting large cargo ships and sailing craft from breeching the blockade, but that the blockade also struggled to halt smaller European fast steamers that were purpose built specifically for running past U.S. warships.

<sup>123</sup>Bonner and McCord, *The Union Blockade in the American Civil War*, 162.

<sup>124</sup>Ward to Welles, Apr. 22, 1861, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 4, 420.

<sup>125</sup>James H. Bruns, *Black Sailors in the Civil War: A History of Fugitives, Freeman and Freedmen Aboard Union Vessels*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2023), 34.

<sup>126</sup>Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War*, 829.

<sup>127</sup>Rodgers to Du Pont, Apr. 13, 1862, Squadron Letters, South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

These were constructed as part of the third system of U.S. coastal fortifications envisioned after the War of 1812 to facilitate “a permanent system of coast defense.”<sup>128</sup>

Confederate naval forces were gracious to have support from local military garrisons and army gunboats in their defense, with one officer praising how the army “was always willing and anxious to assist in every way.”<sup>129</sup>

This early accommodating spirit demonstrated that “the limited resources of the Confederacy could be cooperatively used by both the Army and Navy to provide for a measured defense.”<sup>130</sup>

Inside the forts, Rebel soldiers observed the “tall masts and upperyards of the heavy sloops of war” as they prepared a bombardment.<sup>131</sup>

On April 24, 1862, 13 of Farragut’s steamers passed them and engaged several Confederate gunboats, the tiny ironclad *Manassas*, the incomplete ironclad *Louisiana*, six River Defense Fleet steamers, two Louisiana gunboats, and miscellaneous tugs towing fire rafts.<sup>132</sup>

The engines of some were still going and the large side wheels revolving with lightning rapidity, as if the vessels were making a wild effort to follow their crews through the woods.”<sup>133</sup>

Farragut only lost one mortar schooner and one gunboat in the campaign, thanks in part to an innovative tactic of uncoupling his ships’ anchor chains and arranging them “up and down on the sides” of each vessel “in the line of the engines” as a makeshift chainmail armor.<sup>134</sup>

Summing up the situation, Confederate Navy Secretary Stephen Mallory called New Orleans’s capitulation a “sad, sad blow,” while noted diarist Mary Chesnut admitted, “New Orleans gone—and with it the Confederacy.”<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>128</sup>*Permanent Fortifications and Sea-Coast Defenses*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1862), 2.

<sup>129</sup>*Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry Relative to the Fall of New Orleans*, (Richmond, VA: R.M. Smith, 1864), 80.

<sup>130</sup>Neil P. Chatelain, “The Confederacy’s Lake Pontchartrain Naval Squadron: A Cooperative Defense of the Coastal Approaches to New Orleans, 1861-1862,” *Louisiana History*, vol. 59, no. 2, (Spring 2018), 194.

<sup>131</sup>Terry L. Jones ed. *The Civil War Memoirs of Captain William J. Seymour: Reminiscences of a Louisiana Tiger* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1991), 15.

<sup>132</sup>Apr. 21, 1862, John Hart Diary, MSS 134, Williams Research Center, The Historic New Orleans Collection.

<sup>133</sup>George S. Burkhardt, ed., *Sailing with Farragut: The Civil War Recollections of Bartholomew Diggins*, (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press), 2016), 22.

<sup>134</sup>W.J. Tenney, *The Military and Naval History of the Rebellion in the United States* (New York: Appleton and Co., 1866), 194.

<sup>135</sup>Stephen Mallory Diary, May 15, 1862, Stephen R. Mallory Diary and Reminiscences, #2229, SHC UNC; C. Van Woodward, ed. *Mary Chesnut’s Civil War*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), 330.

This was a major target for the U.S. forces that had seized Port Royal Sound, and within a month of securing that base, soldiers shifted to the Savannah River's mouth where they proudly reported "the flag of the United States is flying over the territory of the State of Georgia."<sup>136</sup>

It also demonstrated "the power and effectiveness of rifled cannon, for breaching at long distances" which opened "a new era" shifting away from standard brick fortifications.<sup>137</sup>

Commander Stephen Rowan, the flotilla's senior officer, happily reported the results of the "very sharp engagement" as "destroying or capturing" the Confederacy's "entire naval force."<sup>138</sup>

"New Berne is ours, and a splendid thing it is," Commander Rowan reported of the affair, adding "the army deserves all praise, and then navy, you know, is always right side up."<sup>139</sup>

As Flag Officer Goldsborough boasted, Burnside's North Carolina expedition demonstrated that "combined forces of the Army & Navy of the United States" could seize significant swaths of Confederate geography.<sup>140</sup>

### **Chapter Six: Expanded Littoral Assaults**

Also in 1861, engineers refloated the sunken hulk of USS *Merrimack* at the Gosport Navy Yard in Virginia, bringing it into dry-dock and rebuilding it as the casemated ironclad *Virginia* that failed to break the blockade in March, 1862. In fact, "secret work" on *Virginia* commenced as early as June, 1861.<sup>141</sup>

Designed by Swedish engineer John Ericsson, who Rear Adm. David Dixon Porter called "a man with a genius not equaled in the country," *Monitor* was small and lightly armed, but maneuverable in confined waters, with low freeboard, minimal crew, and a rotating iron turret protecting two cannon.<sup>142</sup>

Naval officers demanded "that the ironclad vessels preparing ... should be got ready for service at the earliest possible moment."<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>136</sup>Du Pont to Welles, Nov. 25, 1861, Du Pont, *Official Dispatches and Letters of Rear Admiral Du Pont*, 73.

<sup>137</sup>Quincy A. Gillmore, *Official Report to the United States Engineering Department, on the Siege and Reduction of Fort Pulaski, Georgia, February, March, and April, 1862*, (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1862), 7.

<sup>138</sup>Rowan to Goldsborough, Feb. 10, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 6, 605.

<sup>139</sup>Rowan to Goldsborough, Mar. 15, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 7, 117.

<sup>140</sup>Goldsborough to Welles, Mar. 16, 1862, Squadron Letters, North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

<sup>141</sup>June 23, 1861, George M. Brooke, Jr., ed. *Ironclads and Big Guns of the Confederacy: The Journal and Letters of John M. Brooke*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 22.

<sup>142</sup>Porter to Fox, Mar. 28, 1862, Thompson and Wainwright, *Confidential Correspondence of Gustavus Vasa Fox*, vol. 2, 94.

<sup>143</sup>Goldsborough to Welles, Mar. 14, 1862, Squadron Letters, North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

After this clash, *Virginia's* sailors loaded specially-built “wrought iron shot,” as armored-piercing shells, and unsuccessfully taunted *Monitor* for a rematch.<sup>144</sup>

Lacking a supply base, CSS *Virginia* was deliberately beached and “after burning fiercely ... blew up,” leaving Hampton Roads in Federal control.<sup>145</sup>

When Gen. Robert E. Lee countered in what became the Seven Days battles, Federal ships supported McClellan, even participating in the July 1 battle of Malvern Hill and “protecting the Army of the Potomac” at Harrison’s Landing.<sup>146</sup>

Other ironclad programs commenced along the Federal coastline and heartland rivers, with Navy Secretary Gideon Welles constantly meeting with constructors and naval architects, where he “enjoined ... to have them completed” quickly.<sup>147</sup>

The United States fast became the world’s premiere ironclad-building center. When asked about the importance of these programs, Gustavus Fox simply commented “we are pushing the iron clads”<sup>148</sup>

“Cooperation with the army shall be harmonious, rendering its forces all assistance in your power,” Du Pont told his officers.<sup>149</sup>

Farragut initially focused on Alabama, writing Gideon Welles “As soon as I see Genl. Butler safely in possession” of New Orleans, “I will sail for Mobile with the Fleet.”<sup>150</sup>

There, they linked up with Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Buchanan’s blockaders, which held orders to “cooperate with General Weitzel,” securing the town.<sup>151</sup>

They then attacked a Confederate fort, but were repulsed “after several hours of incessant fire.”<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>144</sup>Mar. 10, 1862, Brooke, *Ironclads and Big Guns of the Confederacy*, 74.

<sup>145</sup>Tattnall to Mallory, May 14, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 7, 337.

<sup>146</sup>Fox to Du Pont, Aug. 5, 1862, Thompson and Wainwright, *Confidential Correspondence of Gustavus Vasa Fox*, vol. 1, 144.

<sup>147</sup>Welles, *Diary of Gideon Welles*, vol. 1, 153.

<sup>148</sup>Fox to Porter, Oct. 14, 1862, Thompson and Wainwright, *Confidential Correspondence of Gustavus Vasa Fox*, vol. 2, 140.

<sup>149</sup>Du Pont to Drayton, June 4 1862, *Official Dispatches and Letters of Rear Admiral Du Pont*, 185.

<sup>150</sup>Farragut to Welles, Apr. 29, 1862, Squadron Letters, Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.

<sup>151</sup>Buchanan to Farragut, Nov. 9, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 19, 326.

<sup>152</sup>Bee to Mason, Aug. 26, 1862, *OR*, Series 1, Vol. 9, 620.

Renshaw fully believed “an attempt will be made to drive us from the harbor, so he sent a note to New Orleans asking for infantry support.”<sup>153</sup>

Civilian steamboat captain Leon Smith, believed by many as “undoubtedly the ablest Confederate naval commander in the Gulf waters,” commanded the pair.<sup>154</sup>

Renshaw died while destroying his own ship to prevent its capture and the remaining blockaders retreated in what USS *Westfield* Marine Henry Gusley called “a disgraceful defeat.”<sup>155</sup>

Federal embarrassments in Texas quickly compounded, with Farragut admitting to Gideon Welles that “our disasters on that coast are not yet ended.”<sup>156</sup>

“Heaven favored us and frowned on them,” one Confederate boasted.<sup>157</sup>

Despite the setbacks, Federal leadership demanded the U.S. flag “be restored in some point of Texas with the least possible delay.”<sup>158</sup>

“Instead of finding the Texans asleep, as we half suspected we should,” Pvt. Gusley recorded, “we found them ready at their guns to receive us.”<sup>159</sup>

It resulted in his emancipation, as well as that of seven other men, four women, and three children, as well as the awarding of prize money equal to half *Planter’s* value. Smalls “performed this feat so skillfully” that Admiral Du Pont appointed him a coastal pilot.<sup>160</sup>

The feat was repeated on a smaller scale by enslaved men Richard Bell and Gabriel Pinkney, who were “formerly boat keepers of Charleston Pilot boats, who escaped” to blockading ships and were also “taken into service in the squadron” as “contraband pilots.”<sup>161</sup>

In that capacity, Bell and Pinckney “showed knowledge of the locality, skill, courage, and intelligence” and were both recommended for promotions.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>153</sup>Nov. 16, 1862, Edward T. Cotham Jr., *The Southern Journey of a Civil War Marine: The Illustrated Note-Book of Henry O. Gusley* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2006), 118.

<sup>154</sup>C.W. Raines, ed. *Six Decades in Texas: Memoirs of Francis Richard Lubbock* (Austin, TX: Ben C. Jones & Co., 1900), 432.

<sup>155</sup>Jan. 10, 1863, Cotham, *The Southern Journey of a Civil War Marine*, 130.

<sup>156</sup>Farragut to Welles, Jan. 29, 1863, Squadron Letters, Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.

<sup>157</sup>Junius to the Houston Telegraph, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 19, 570.

<sup>158</sup>Halleck to Banks, Aug. 6, 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Vol. 26, Part 1, 672.

<sup>159</sup>Sept. 9, 1863, Cotham, *The Southern Journey of a Civil War Marine*, 173.

<sup>160</sup>Du Pont to Welles, May 14, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 12, 821.

<sup>161</sup>Rodgers to Dahlgren, Aug. 14, 1863, Squadron Letters, South Atlantic Blockading Squadron; Du Pont to Welles, June 10, 1863, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol 14, 251.

<sup>162</sup>Rodgers to Dahlgren, Aug. 14, 1863, Squadron Letters, South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

Along the Atlantic coastline, several enclaves of freemen, liberated by naval officers after “a stampede of slaves” rushed to Federal warships, were established.<sup>163</sup>

“I must colonize them,” Cmdr. John B. Marchand decided after discovering “that the number of Contrabands seeking shelter amounted to about 300” in that case.<sup>164</sup>

Three army gunboats transported the 2nd South Carolina Regiment to Combahee Ferry, where on June 2, 1863, they raided plantations, destroying “a vast amount of rice, corn, and cotton.”<sup>165</sup>

Meanwhile, those plantations enslaved workers realized that “Lincoln's gun-boats come to set them free,” with 750 making “full speed” for the boats.<sup>166</sup>

These men included many well-to-do within New Orleans's Afro-Creole community, but also enslaved men who liberated themselves from other parts of Louisiana. Captain Arnold Bertonneau, one of the Native Guards's Black and mixed-race line officers, volunteered hoping that “the success of my country would suffice to alter a prejudice which had long existed.”<sup>167</sup>

### **Chapter Seven: Hitting Charleston's Beach in 1863**

Throughout 1862, dozens of blockade-runners entered the “Cradle of the Confederacy,” bringing tens-of-thousands of arms to equip Confederate field armies.<sup>168</sup>

General Pierre G. T. Beauregard turned his engineer's eye on commanding its defenses. Charleston's naval squadron, under Capt. Duncan Ingraham, including the casemate ironclads *Chicora* and *Palmetto State*, became “an important auxiliary” when Federals appeared, backed by a handful of wooden gunboats.<sup>169</sup>

Beauregard expected the building *Passaic*-class monitors to “dash . . . past the batteries and forts.”<sup>170</sup>

<sup>163</sup>May 21, 1862, Journal Entry, Symonds, *Charleston Blockade*, 176.

<sup>164</sup>May 22, 1862, Journal Entry, Symonds, *Charleston Blockade*, 181.

<sup>165</sup>“A Raid Among the Rice Plantations,” *Harper's Weekly*, July 4, 1863.

<sup>166</sup>Sarah H. Bradford, *Scenes in the Life of Harriet Tubman*, (Auburn, NY: W.J. Moses, 1869), 40.

<sup>167</sup>Arnold Bertonneau to Wickham Hoffman, Mar. 2, 1863, Bertonneau Arnold, Compiled Military Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served the United States Colored Troops: 56th-138th USCT Infantry, 1864-1866, RG 109, U.S. National Archives.

<sup>168</sup>David P. Werlich, *Admiral of the Amazon: John Randolph Tucker, His Confederate Colleagues, and Peru*, (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 38.

<sup>169</sup>Minutes of conference between Beauregard and Ingraham, Sept. 29, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 13, 810.

<sup>170</sup>Minutes of conference between Beauregard and Ingraham, Sept. 29, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 13, 809.

On *Palmetto State*, Lt. William H. Parker believed his sailors unequalled, boasting “their drill at both great guns and small arms was excellent.”<sup>171</sup>

Lieutenant William A. Webb trained handpicked sailors in jamming monitor turrets and operating spar torpedo-rowboats, even though Captain Ingraham lacked faith in such “new-fangled notions.”<sup>172</sup>

Du Pont’s squadron weighed anchor the afternoon of April 6, 1863, the monitor *Weehawken* taking the lead, fitted with “a big wooden raft” to clear obstructions.<sup>173</sup>

Tucker’s flotilla took stations steaming “slowly around in a circle” while Sumter’s garrison “hoisted the Confederate and Palmetto flags.”<sup>174</sup>

A sailor remembered seeing buoys, “which gave a suspicion of torpedoes.”<sup>175</sup>

Torpedoes were so packed they “appeared almost to touch one another, with one exploding near USS *Weehawken*, which “lifted the vessel a little,” damaging the minesweeping device.”<sup>176</sup>

Captain Percival Drayton reported damage to USS *Passaic*: “The turret jammed, the XI inch gun carriage disabled, the side armor in one place nearly knocked off.”<sup>177</sup>

USS *Keokuk*, “was struck ninety times . . . most of the shot piercing her,” and it soon sank.<sup>178</sup>

“I attempted to take the bull by the horns, but he was too much for us,” the admiral admitted, concluding Charleston “can not be taken by a purely naval attack.”<sup>179</sup>

Captain Tucker assembled “skiffs and canoes with a few serviceable cutters” fitted with “poles . . . with 60-pound torpedoes” for a counterattack,” but U.S. ironclads withdrew before they could strike.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>171</sup>Parker, *Recollections of a Naval Officer*, 289.

<sup>172</sup>W.T. Glassell, *W.T. Glassell and the little Torpedo Boat “David,”* (Los Angeles, CA: Adcraft Press, 1937), 10.

<sup>173</sup>George E. Belknap, “Reminiscent of the Siege of Charleston,” *Papers of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts*, (Boston, Griffith-Stillings Press, 1902) Vol. 12, 165.

<sup>174</sup>Parker, *Recollections of a Naval Officer*, 309.

<sup>175</sup>I.E. Vail, *Three Years on the Blockade: A Naval Service*, (New York, Abbey Press, 1902), 123.

<sup>176</sup>Rodgers to Dahlgren, Apr 8, 1863, Squadron Letters, South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

<sup>177</sup>Drayton to Hamilton, Apr. 15, 1863, Percival Drayton, *Naval Letters of Captain Percival Drayton 1861-1865*, (New York: New York Public Library, 1906), 34.

<sup>178</sup>USS *Keokuk* log, Apr. 7, 1863, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol 14, 24.

<sup>179</sup>Du Pont to Hunter, Apr. 8, 1863, *Official Dispatches and Letters of Rear Admiral Du Pont*, 440.

<sup>180</sup>Parker, *Recollections of a Naval Officer*, 312.

On June 17, monitors captured the ironclad *Atlanta* after it grounded while attempting to shift through inland waters from Savannah to strike the blockade.<sup>181</sup>

His diary was telling: “Farragut, if not employed elsewhere, would be the man. . . . The age and standing of D. D. Porter would be deemed objectionable by many, yet he has some good points for that duty. Foote would be a good man for the place. . . . Dahlgren earnestly wants the position, and is the choice of the President.”<sup>182</sup>

Things shifted when Foote suddenly died of nephritis, a kidney disorder. Fellow sailors described his death as a “national calamity.”<sup>183</sup>

On July 10, boats transferred Brig. Gen. George Strong’s brigade and a battery of naval howitzers to Morris Island as monitors provided a “perfect ‘rain’ of shells” that left many soldiers “spattered with water.”<sup>184</sup>

All day July 18, field artillery and ironclads bombarded Wagner, and sailors remembered “regiments of troops could be seen formed on and near the beach.”<sup>185</sup>

“Jets of flame darted forth from every corner and embrasure,” Pvt. George Stephens recalled, “and even Fort Sumter poured solid shot and shell on our heads” as the 54th “ascended the parapet” where Colonel Shaw was killed.<sup>186</sup>

“The rapid flashes of musketry could be clearly seen,” but “we could do nothing,” Dahlgren lamented, “to fire, might cut down our own men by hundreds.”<sup>187</sup>

Division commander Truman Seymour fell wounded. After several hours, Federals withdrew, leaving a “scene of carnage” behind.”<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>181</sup>Du Pont to Welles, June 17, 1863, Du Pont, *Official Dispatches*, 513-514.

<sup>182</sup>Welles, *Diary of Gideon Welles*, Vol. 1, 312.

<sup>183</sup>Belknap, “Reminiscent of the Siege of Charleston,” 174.

<sup>184</sup>Craig L. Symonds, ed, *A Year on a Monitor and the Destruction of Fort Sumter*, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 99; Edwards to Annie, July 11, 1863, Robert S. Edwards Papers, University of Notre Dame Rare Books and Special Collections.

<sup>185</sup>Symonds, *A Year on a Monitor and the Destruction of Fort Sumter*, 106-107.

<sup>186</sup>Donald Yacovone, ed., *A Voice of Thunder: The Civil War Letters of George E. Stephens*, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 245.

<sup>187</sup>Symonds, *A Year on a Monitor and the Destruction of Fort Sumter*, 107; Peter C. Luebke, ed., *The Autobiography of Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren* (Washington DC: Naval History and Heritage Command, 2018), 77.

<sup>188</sup>Taliaferro to Nance, July 21, 1863, *OR*, Series 1, vol. 28, Part 1, 419.

“Yesterday I went up with the Iron Clads and opened a heavy fire,” Dahlgren documented in a typical report on July 25. “The firing of Fort Wagner was soon silenced, and the garrison driven to shelter; so that in the course of the morning, our new Batteries were partially armed.”<sup>189</sup>

Ironclad sailors drilled with it, though it took months of practice, several disasters, and three crews before becoming operational. Worried about torpedoes, many monitor sailors began “sleeping on deck.”<sup>190</sup>

Compounding everything, news arrived that Dahlgren’s son Ulric was wounded in Pennsylvania, leaving the admiral “much afflicted.”<sup>191</sup>

The garrison replied: “Inform Admiral Dahlgren that he may have Fort Sumter when he can take and hold it.”<sup>192</sup>

Dahlgren immediately bombarded Sumter while organizing a 400-volunteer amphibious assault against the “noble mass of ruins.”<sup>193</sup>

A distraught Gillmore pleaded: “No matter who gets the fort, if we place our flag over it.”<sup>194</sup>

As Sumter’s garrison mustered, Dahlgren closed on USS *Philadelphia* before getting into a rowboat himself. At that moment, Confederates “threw up a rocket and burned a red light and . . . opened a heavy fire.”<sup>195</sup>

CSS *Chicora* “had a good chance to work her guns” on the landing party.<sup>196</sup>

Confederates were unscathed. An astute sailor observed: “Lack of harmony seems to have characterized the efforts of the two branches of the service when a joint-attack . . . might have scored a brilliant success.”<sup>197</sup>

### **Chapter Eight: Closing the Confederacy’s Door**

In late 1863, the American flag was again “flying on the Texan bank of the Rio Grande.”<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>189</sup>Dahlgren to Welles, July 25, 1863, Squadron Letters, South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

<sup>190</sup>Symonds, *A Year on a Monitor and the Destruction of Fort Sumter*, 124.

<sup>191</sup>Luebke, *The Autobiography of Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren*, 78.

<sup>192</sup>Gillmore to Dahlgren, Sept. 7, 1863, and Jordan to Elliott, Sept. 7, 1863, *OR*, Series 1, vol. 28, Part 2, 86, 344.

<sup>193</sup>Beauregard to Cooper, Sept. 6, 1863, *OR*, Series 1, vol. 28, Part 2, 342.

<sup>194</sup>Gillmore to Dahlgren, Sept. 8, 1863, *OR*, Series 1, vol. 28, Part 2, 88.

<sup>195</sup>Luebke, *The Autobiography of Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren*, 93-94.

<sup>196</sup>Tomb Memoirs.

<sup>197</sup>Symonds, *A Year on a Monitor and the Destruction of Fort Sumter*, 132.

<sup>198</sup>Strong to Bell, Nov. 4, 1863, Squadron Letters, Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.

Amphibious landings on Brazos Island, with warships providing “essential service with their boats and their guns” covering troops, closed the Rio Grande to blockade-runners.<sup>199</sup>

Federals were cognizant of Rebel efforts, with Lt. Cmdr. Charles Flusser believing “if we whip the ram” *Albemarle*, Confederate troops “may retire.”<sup>200</sup>

Amidst the melee, a shell ricocheted off *Albemarle*’s iron plating and exploded, killing the “brave and daring” Flusser.<sup>201</sup>

The remaining Federal warships, which became “more or less demoralized,” retreated, leaving Plymouth’s garrison cut off.<sup>202</sup>

Captain Melancton Smith stationed eight Federal wooden gunboats at the Roanoke River’s mouth to stop them, with both sides engaging on May 5, 1864. In the chaos, Federal shells bounced off *Albemarle*’s hull, with the iron armor holding strong even as wooden “splinters flew about” within.<sup>203</sup>

*Albemarle*’s “smokestack was riddled to such an extent as to render it useless,” and Cooke needed to “tear down the bulkheads, throw in all my bacon, lard, and other combustible matter, to produce steam sufficient” to reach Plymouth for repairs.<sup>204</sup>

“The explosion took place,” Cushing remembered, “and the dense mass of water thrown out by the torpedo came down with choking weight upon us.”<sup>205</sup>

Among them was Lt. Roswell Lamson, commanding USS *Gettysburg*, who acknowledged “we have four monitors, and a number of other vessels” on the James River, “but what we do must depend on the army.”<sup>206</sup>

One academy midshipman complemented it for helping him in “getting a good education & at the same time serving my country.”<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>199</sup>Bell to Welles, Oct. 23, 1863, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 20, 643.

<sup>200</sup>Flusser to Lee, Apr. 18, 1864, Squadron Letters, North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

<sup>201</sup>John M. Batten, *Reminiscences of Two Years in the United States Navy* (Lancaster, PA: Inquirer Printing and Publishing Co, 1881), 17.

<sup>202</sup>Batten, *Reminiscences of Two Years in the United States Navy*, 17.

<sup>203</sup>Seaman John B. Patrick Statement, June 27, 1864, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 9, 769.

<sup>204</sup>Cooke to Pinckney, May 7, 1864, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 9, 771.

<sup>205</sup>Carter, *The Sea Eagle*, 56-57.

<sup>206</sup>Lamson to Kate, May 11, 1864, McPherson and McPherson, *Lamson of the Gettysburg*, 158.

<sup>207</sup>R. Thomas Campbell, ed. *Confederate Naval Cadet: The Diary and Letters of Midshipman Hubbard T. Minor, with a History of the Confederate Naval Academy* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2007), 53.

“Supplies moved around by water,” Grant noted, “guarded by the navy,” which kept avenues open for transport of reinforcements and logistics, especially at Grant’s headquarters at City Point.<sup>208</sup>

As Virginia sieges developed and battles raged for control over Atlanta, the United States prepared a “joint demonstration” against Mobile Bay.<sup>209</sup>

In the chaos, the ironclad *Tecumseh* maneuvered into a minefield where “a torpedo was exploded directly under the turret, blowing a large hole through the bottom of the vessel.”<sup>210</sup>

Farragut’s captains slowed their ships, but he famously ordered *Hartford* to steam into Mobile Bay, with the admiral proclaiming, according to Seaman Bartholomew Diggins, to “Go ahead, damn the torpedoes, go ahead.”<sup>211</sup>

“[T]he overwhelming superiority of force” quickly silenced the Confederacy’s wooden gunboats or forced them to retreat.<sup>212</sup>

A shell fragment struck Admiral Buchanan’s leg in the “pretty sharp scrimmage,” landing him in a hospital for the rest of the war.<sup>213</sup>

*Tennessee*’s captain soon after acknowledged “our helpless condition” and surrendered.<sup>214</sup>

Major General E. R. S. Canby in New Orleans told Farragut “this army will always rejoice in your successes,” while simultaneously admitting “I have not at present the means of cooperation, that would give the most perfect results to your glorious operations.”<sup>215</sup>

In December 1864, Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman’s army group completed its march to the sea and invested Savannah. Federal warships cooperated by “carrying about army officers for reconnaissances.”<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>208</sup>Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*, Vol. 2, 253.

<sup>209</sup>Gideon Welles Diary, Aug. 9, 1864, Welles, *Diary of Gideon Welles*, Vol. 2, 100.

<sup>210</sup>Obell, Langley, and Cottrell to Farragut, Aug. 6, 1864, Area 6, Gulf of Mexico, Area File of the Naval Records Collection, 1775-1910, M625, RG 45, U.S. National Archives. Hereafter Area File.

<sup>211</sup>Burkhardt, *Sailing With Farragut*, 125.

<sup>212</sup>Buchanan to Mallory, Aug. 25, 1864, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 21, 577.

<sup>213</sup>Drayton to Hamilton, Aug. 5, 1864, *Naval Letters from Captain Percival Drayton*, 66.

<sup>214</sup>Johnston to Buchanan, Aug. 13, 1864, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 21, 580.

<sup>215</sup>Canby to Farragut, Aug. 6, 1864, Area 6, Gulf of Mexico, Area File.

<sup>216</sup>A.T. Mahan, *From Sail to Steam: Recollections of Naval Life* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1907), 193.

Rear Admiral John Dahlgren pushed ashore a “Fleet Brigade”—three battalions of sailors and Marines—to support. Before being cut off, Confederate sailors determined “to burn the [ironclad] Ram” *Savannah* and their other ships “and march to Charleston.”<sup>217</sup>

“The gun-boat blew up, and that the fort did not,” Carpenter’s Mate Stephen Blanding sarcastically recalled.<sup>218</sup>

Afterwards, a multi-day naval bombardment resulted in little Confederate damage and many Federal casualties from their own guns bursting, leaving each affected vessel “a complete wreck” and creating a “depressing effect upon the minds of all on board.”<sup>219</sup>

Compounding things, Butler and Porter did not cooperate, something Lt. William Cushing called “inexcusable conduct.”<sup>220</sup>

Lieutenant Roswell Lamson said as much in a letter home, claiming “we can silence the forts, but cannot take them without a *soldier* to command the troops.”<sup>221</sup>

Porter insisted Grant “send me the same soldiers with another General and we will have the fort.”<sup>222</sup>

Then “the whole fire of the navy” targeted Fisher in a 60-ship bombardment, as Confederates made largely ineffective efforts at reinforcing the fort.<sup>223</sup>

“Such a hail of noise I never expected to hear again,” Lieutenant Cushing recalled. The bluejackets and Marines struck in an uncoordinated fashion, and, as Cushing remembered, “the rebels . . . massed against us and sent a staggering fire into our ranks that ploughed through with deadly effect.”<sup>224</sup>

The landing party “assaulted the sea face” but was “driven back with heavy loss,” Lieutenant Lamson noted.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>217</sup>Dec. 20, 1864, Robert Watson Diary.

<sup>218</sup>Stephen F. Blanding, *Recollections of a Sailor Boy: The Cruise of the Gunboat Louisiana* (Providence, RI: E.A. Johnson & Co, 1886), 330.

<sup>219</sup>USS *Ticonderoga* Logbook; Steedman to Wife, Dec. 27, 1864, Amos Lawrence Mason, ed. *Memoir and Correspondence of Charles Steedman, Rear Admiral, United States Navy, With his Autobiography and Private Journals, 1811-1890* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1912), 394.

<sup>220</sup>Carter, *The Sea Eagle*, 61.

<sup>221</sup>Lamson to Kate, Dec. 27, 1864, McPherson and McPherson, *Lamson of the Gettysburg*, 217.

<sup>222</sup>David D. Porter, *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1885), 273

<sup>223</sup>Carter, *The Sea Eagle*, 62.

<sup>224</sup>Carter, *The Sea Eagle*, 62-63.

<sup>225</sup>Lamson to Kate, Jan. 15, 1865, McPherson and McPherson, *Lamson of the Gettysburg*, 224.

The casualties included most of the officers, including Lamson, who “was shot through the left arm and shoulder on the edge of the parapet.”<sup>226</sup>

“It has been a dreadful Sunday,” Lieutenant Lamson wrote after the victory at Fort Fisher, “but we have done something toward ending the war.”<sup>227</sup>

Things initially seemed cheerful for the Rebels, with Federal ships withdrawing, unwilling to give battle to the point that Ulysses Grant expected “little assistance . . . from the navy.”<sup>228</sup>

Grant’s concerns were so obstinate that Abraham Lincoln inquired whether David Farragut “should go down to the James River” to stabilize things.<sup>229</sup>

Commander John M. Kell, commanding the ironclad *Richmond*, recalled how Federal ships “pelted us for over six hours.”<sup>230</sup>

CSS *Drewry*, CSS *Scorpion*, and one torpedo boat became “nothing but a mass of ruins” and were lost.<sup>231</sup>

After refloating his ironclads, Mitchell acknowledged “the failure of our enterprise” and withdrew, ending the Confederacy’s last serious naval offensive.<sup>232</sup>

According to a CSS *Nashville* officer, a military liaison “visited the ship and directed us where he wished our shots placed.”<sup>233</sup>

### **Chapter Nine: Forging Riverine Forces**

Uncountable waterways connect with the 2,340-mile-long Mississippi River, ending at the “metropolis of the South,” New Orleans.<sup>234</sup>

<sup>226</sup>Lamson to Kate, Jan. 15, 1865, McPherson and McPherson, *Lamson of the Gettysburg*, 223.

<sup>227</sup>Lamson to Kate, Jan. 15, 1865, McPherson and McPherson, *Lamson of the Gettysburg*, 223.

<sup>228</sup>Grant to Fox, Jan. 24, 1865, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 11, 635.

<sup>229</sup>Fox to Grant, Jan. 24, 1865, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 11, 637.

<sup>230</sup>John McIntosh. Kell, *Recollections of a Naval Life: Including the Cruises of the Confederate States Steamers, “Sumter” and “Alabama”* (Washington: The Neale Company, 1900), 269.

<sup>231</sup>Wall to Mitchell, Jan. 25, 1865, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 11, 679.

<sup>232</sup>Mitchell to Mallory, Jan. 25, 1865, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 11, 668.

<sup>233</sup>Bennett to Farrand, Apr. 25, 1865, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 22, 100.

<sup>234</sup>Mary Polk Branch, *Memoirs of a Southern Woman ‘Within the Lines’ and A Genealogical Record* (Chicago: The Joseph G. Branch Publishing Company, 1912), 14.

Both sides identified the Mississippi River valley as vital. Jefferson Davis called the Mississippi the “great artery of the Confederacy,” Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman labeled it “the great artery of America,” and Abraham Lincoln called it the “father of waters.”<sup>235</sup>

Antebellum river pilot Mark Twain perhaps described it best: “No other river has so vast a drainage-basin: it draws its water supply from twenty-eight States and Territories” and “receives and carries to the Gulf water from fifty-four subordinate rivers that are navigable from steamboats, and from some hundreds that are navigable by flats and keels.”<sup>236</sup>

The United States Navy abandoned attempts at building a station at Memphis in the 1850s because officers could not “visualize the need for an inland navy yard.”<sup>237</sup>

Brevet Lieutenant General Winfield Scott’s Anaconda Plan called for “a powerful move down the Mississippi to the ocean” to “envelop the insurgent States.”<sup>238</sup>

Totten’s report also listed available “Building-yards for boats,” and a table “giving all the landing places for steamers” on the Ohio and Mississippi.<sup>239</sup>

Finally, Totten called for “a naval officer of some rank and experience” to oversee gunboat construction and operation.<sup>240</sup>

Totten added a note from his cousin and river businessman Edward Mansfield listing ships available as far as Wheeling, Virginia, and recommending Memphis, Tennessee, as “the most valuable military point on the Mississippi between New Orleans and Cairo” because of its port and railroad links.<sup>241</sup>

Winfield Scott “highly approve[d]” Totten’s report.<sup>242</sup>

Since the navy held no riverine experience, Gideon Welles advised that Rodgers’s ships would operate “under the direction and regulation of the Army.”<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>235</sup>“Address of President Davis,” *Memphis Daily Appeal*, Memphis, TN, Dec. 29, 1862; William T. Sherman to Ellen Sherman, June 10, 1862, William T. Sherman Family Papers, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN; Lincoln to Conkling, Aug. 26, 1863, Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. 6, 409.

<sup>236</sup>Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*, (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1883), 22.

<sup>237</sup>Walter Chandler, “The Memphis Navy Yard, An Adventure in Internal Improvement,” *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers*, Volume I, 1947, 70.

<sup>238</sup>Winfield Scott to George McClellan, May 3, 1861, *OR*, Series 1, vol. 51, part 1, section 1, 369.

<sup>239</sup>Totten to Scott, June 3, 1861, *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. 52, Part 1, 164-165.

<sup>240</sup>Totten to Scott, June 3, 1861, *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. 52, Part 1, 165.

<sup>241</sup>Mansfield to Totten, June 4, 1861, *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. 52, Part 1, 158.

<sup>242</sup>Scott to Cameron, June 10, 1861, *OR*, Ser. 1, Vol. 52, Part 1, 167.

<sup>243</sup>Welles to Rodgers, May 16, 1861, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 22, 280.

Among all urban centers, New Orleans and its numerous floating dry-docks was considered “the most important one in the Confederacy.”<sup>244</sup>

The tug *Yankee*, described by engineer James Tomb as “a large high-pressure steamer, with four boilers on the main deck,” was renamed *Jackson*, hastily armed, and commissioned in June.<sup>245</sup>

Treasury Secretary John Dix’s famous order to Revenue Marine officers that “if any one attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot,” two sail powered revenue cutters at New Orleans entered Confederate service.<sup>246</sup>

Many believed Captain Rousseau “was old, and not as active as he had been.”<sup>247</sup>

In August Capt. George Hollins, received orders from Stephen Mallory to “proceed to New Orleans and take charge” along the Mississippi, supplanting Rousseau.<sup>248</sup>

The tug-turned-screw steamer gained continental attention, bearing copious nicknames including “Turtle,” “Boomerang,” “nondescript,” “the cigar-shaped ram,” and a “whale in the water.”<sup>249</sup>

In September 1861, Stephen Mallory proudly noted in his diary about contracting with Asa and Nelson Tift in New Orleans for “a large ship” named *Mississippi*, determining to “push it.”<sup>250</sup>

Finally, to defend Tennessee, work began at Cerro Gordo on the Tennessee River to transform the paddlewheel river steamer *Eastport* into another ironclad while four “ordinary river boats” began conversion on the Cumberland to protect Nashville.<sup>251</sup>

The Tift brothers called for a “large force” of 200 enslaved men to augment work as a “night-gang, to handle iron plating and other labor.”<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>244</sup>May 9, 1862, Kate Mason Rowland and Morris L. Croxall, ed. *The Journal of Julia LeGrand, New Orleans 1862-1863*, (Richmond, VA: Everett Waddy Co., 1911), 40.

<sup>245</sup>Tomb Memoirs.

<sup>246</sup>Dix to Caldwell, Jan. 29, 1861, Morgan Dix, ed., *Memoirs of John Adams Dix* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1883), Vol. 1, 370.

<sup>247</sup>Walker, *Life of Capt. Joseph Fry*, 13.

<sup>248</sup>Mallory to Hollins, July 31, 1861, Confederate Navy – Area 4 & 5, Mississippi River, Area File.

<sup>249</sup>Hollins, “Autobiography of Commodore George Nicholas Hollins, C.S.A.,” 239; Charles S. Foltz, *Surgeon of the Seas: The Life of Surgeon General Jonathan M. Foltz*, (Indianapolis, IN, Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1931), 203; “Talk on Change,” *Daily Crescent*, New Orleans, LA, Oct. 10, 1861; “Col. Fister Explains Why He Fought For South After He Resigned from U.S. Service,” *Reading Eagle*, Reading, PA, July 26, 1912; French to McKean, Oct. 22, 1861, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 16, 712.

<sup>250</sup>Stephen R Mallory Diary, Sept. 1, 1861, Mallory Diary.

<sup>251</sup>Mallory to Brown, Dec. 25, 1861, *ORN*, Ser. 1, Vol. 22, 813.

<sup>252</sup>Testimony of Nelson Tift, June 12, 1863, *Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry, Relative to the Fall of New Orleans*, 115.

The ironclads, promised by 1862, “progressed very slowly.”<sup>253</sup>

Some of these commanders adamantly stated that “under no circumstances” would they “obey orders from any officer of the regular Confederate navy.”<sup>254</sup>

The navy discarded these 14 ships as too weak to support broadsides, but they were nonetheless taken to New Orleans dry-docks and “prepared with bar-iron casing around their bows.”<sup>255</sup>

Their commander, Beverly Kennon, remembered outfitting them in early 1862 with engineering machinery “protected by a bulkhead of cotton bales.”<sup>256</sup>

Finally, the Confederate Army operated the warship *Grampus* on the upper Mississippi. With field artillery rolled onto its deck, U.S. naval officers dubbed it “the Rebel Canoe.”<sup>257</sup>

“We have on board a lot of soldiers,” Charles Gunther penned in his diary as the transport *Rose Douglas* ferried troops from Little Rock, Arkansas, to Memphis.<sup>258</sup>

In early 1862, Captain Hollins brought his squadron to Columbus, Kentucky, to “cooperate with the military forces there.”<sup>259</sup>

Upriver, Cmdr. John Rodgers recommended, with naval architect Samuel Pook’s endorsement, that George McClellan purchase three paddle-steamers, *Lexington*, *Conestoga*, and *Tyler*, converting them into timberclads by installing “bulwarks of oak plank 5 inches thick” to protect engineering equipment.<sup>260</sup>

With reassurances from Gideon Welles that Rodgers was “subordinate to the general in charge,” by late 1861 timberclads patrolled near Cairo, Illinois, to maintain “a strict blockade in that vicinity” against smuggling into the Confederacy.<sup>261</sup>

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<sup>253</sup>Mallory to Davis, Jan. 15, 1862, Letters Received by the Confederate Secretary of War 1861-1865, M437, Records Group 109), National Archives Building, Washington DC

<sup>254</sup>Charles W. Read. “Reminiscences of the Confederate Navy,” *Southern Historical Society Papers*, Vol. 1, No. 5, (1876), 341.

<sup>255</sup>Wilkinson, *The Narrative of a Blockade Runner*, 31.

<sup>256</sup>Beverly Kennon, “Fighting Farragut Below New Orleans,” *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York: The Century Co., 1887), Vol. 2, 77.

<sup>257</sup>Porter to Miller, Feb. 16, 1862, Confederate Navy—Area 4 and 5, M625, Area File.

<sup>258</sup>Bruce S. Allardice and Wayne L. Wolf, eds., *Two Years Before the Paddlewheel: Charles F. Gunther, Mississippi River Confederate*, (Buffalo Gap, TX: State House Press, 2012,) 218.

<sup>259</sup>Mallory to Hollins, Feb. 19, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 22, 824.

<sup>260</sup>Rodgers to Welles, June 8, 1861, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 22, 283.

<sup>261</sup>Welles to Rodgers, June 12, 1861, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 22, 284; McClellan to Rodgers, May 19, 1861, Stephen W. Sears, ed., *The Civil War Papers of George B. McClellan: Selected Correspondence 1861-1865* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1989), 21.

Even though timberclad officer Lt. Seth Phelps believed them “sorry looking craft,” they proved invaluable.<sup>262</sup>

These city-class ironclads were named for riverine cities (*Cairo*, *Carondelet*, *Louisville*, *Mound City*, *Cincinnati*, *Pittsburgh*, and *St. Louis*) and were so identical that crews painted rings on their smokestacks to identify one ship from the other.<sup>263</sup>

The United States government “accepted the gunboats from Mr. Eads” in January 1862.<sup>264</sup>

In November 1861, the timberclad *New Era* began several conversions by shipyard workers “hard at work fixen her up” into a casemated ironclad renamed *Essex*.<sup>265</sup>

By February 1862, James Eads also converted a snagboat into *Benton*, reputed by Confederate sailors as “the largest Union ironclad on the river.”<sup>266</sup>

Mimicking the Confederacy’s River Defense Fleet, civil engineer-turned-colonel Charles Ellet organized the army-jurisdiction United States Ram Fleet: 10 unarmed steamers reinforced for ramming by, as ship commander George Currie noted, packing “the prows solid with scantlings [cross-sectioned lumber pieces]” and protecting engineering machinery “with a wall of heavy timber.”<sup>267</sup>

Commander Rodgers opened “rendezvous for enlisting men for gunboat service” across the Midwest, but recruiting faltered.<sup>268</sup>

The army recruited ironclad crewmen as “Marine Artillerists” and transferred “river or seafaring men” from organized regiments.<sup>269</sup>

His ships were “under the direction of the War Department.”<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>262</sup>Phelps to Whittlesey, July 13, 1861, Elisha Whittlesey Collection, MS1200, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.

<sup>263</sup>Foote to Welles, Nov. 13, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 22, 314.

<sup>264</sup>Foote Endorsement, Jan. 15, 1862, James Buchanan Eads Collection, 1776-1974, A0427, Missouri Historical Society Library and Research Center, St. Louis, MO.

<sup>265</sup>Dec. 3, 1861, Abstract Journal of William I. Park, Katherine Bentley Jeffrey, ed., *Two Civil Wars: The Curious Shared Journal of a Baton Rouge Schoolgirl and a Union Sailor on the USS Essex*, (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 2016), 72.

<sup>266</sup>Morgan, *Recollection of a Rebel Reefer*, 66.

<sup>267</sup>Currie to Sir, June 1, 1862, Norman E. Clarke Sr., ed., *Warfare Along the Mississippi: The Letters of Lieutenant Colonel George E. Currie*, (Mount Pleasant, MI: Central Michigan University, 1961), 39.

<sup>268</sup>Rodgers to Bishop, Aug. 5, 1861, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 22, 296.

<sup>269</sup>Howard to Welles, Sept. 5, 1861, Area 5, Mississippi River, Area File; Foote to Welles, Jan. 22, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 22, 515.

<sup>270</sup>Welles to Foote, Aug. 30, 1861, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 22, 307.

The Confederates fired on *Essex* and the ironclad *St. Louis*, but as Cmdr. William D. Porter on *Essex* recalled, the shell “struck the sand-bar between us.”<sup>271</sup>

After 20 minutes of artillery “filling the whole surrounding country with the roar,” as one news correspondent noted, the Confederates withdrew.<sup>272</sup>

Despite quick construction, Yeoman Josiah Higgins on USS *Kennebec* hoped his ship would “live in story long after her bones have rotted back to dust.”<sup>273</sup>

As Ulysses Grant remembered in his memoirs, the “long struggle” for the heartland rivers was at hand.<sup>274</sup>

### **Chapter Ten: Melee on the Mississippi**

“The scene on the Quarter deck was sickening,” *Essex* sailor William Park penned after a shell pierced a boiler, scalding dozens. “I shall not attempt to describe.”<sup>275</sup>

“I will never again go out and fight half prepared,” Foote admitted to his wife after witnessing the damage to *Essex*.<sup>276</sup>

Donelson held out for a week. In the process, Foote was wounded in “the hardest fight” sailor William Park ever saw.<sup>277</sup>

Seizing these forts shattered Confederate defenses. Rebel forces evacuated Tennessee’s capital, Nashville, and Columbus, Kentucky, a bastion so strong Confederate naval engineer John Dent had believed its “natural fortifications” could “never be taken.”<sup>278</sup>

Foote’s timberclads, under Lt. Seth Phelps, then raided the Tennessee River, damaging infrastructure, supporting Grant’s advance to the rail junction at Corinth, Mississippi, and capturing the “half finished” paddle-wheeler *Eastport*, whose armor plate was “lying on the bank and everything at hand to complete her conversion into an ironclad.”<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>271</sup>“The Campaign in Kentucky” *New York Times*, Jan. 20, 1862.

<sup>272</sup>“Western Military Correspondence” *Daily Crescent*, New Orleans, LA, Jan. 16, 1862.

<sup>273</sup>E.C. Herrmann, ed., *Yeoman in Farragut’s Fleet: The Civil War Diary of Josiah Parker Higgins*, (Monterey, CA: Guy Victor Publications, 1999), 19.

<sup>274</sup>U.S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*, Vol. 1, 284

<sup>275</sup>Feb. 6, 1862, Abstract Journal of William L. Park, Jeffrey, *Two Civil Wars*, 76.

<sup>276</sup>Foote to Wife, Feb. 6, 1862, Area 5, Mississippi River, Area File.

<sup>277</sup>Feb. 14, 1862, Abstract Journal of William L. Park, Jeffrey, *Two Civil Wars*, 78.

<sup>278</sup>Dent, Jr. to Dent, Dec. 4, 1861, John Horry Dent, Jr., Letters.

<sup>279</sup>Phelps to Foote, Feb. 10, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 22, 572.

Grant admitted “much is due to the presence of the gunboats *Tyler* and *Lexington*.”<sup>280</sup>

They even helped evacuate 3,500 men from New Madrid after Federals cut it off, with CSS *McRae*'s Lt. Charles Read remembering the “poor soldiers, covered with mud and drenched with rain” as they boarded his ship amidst a torrential downpour.<sup>281</sup>

Engineers opened a bypass channel through a flooded “wagon road” and “dense forest of heavy timber” to send small craft through.<sup>282</sup>

In a way, Farragut's operation supported Foote's drive downriver, as his initial orders from Gideon Welles were to stay apprised of “the Mississippi expedition from Cairo” and “take advantage of the panic to push a strong force up the river to take all their defenses in the rear.”<sup>283</sup>

He did this unauthorized move believing Foote's ships were “heavy iron gunboats” with “nothing that I can do against them in a fight.”<sup>284</sup>

“Every valve was opened to its uttermost,” Missouri Brig. Gen. M. Jeff Thompson remembered, “and we rushed like the wind at the Iron Clads before us,” ramming and temporarily sinking the city-class ironclads *Mound City* and *Cincinnati*.<sup>285</sup>

“I saw a large portion of the engagement from the river banks,” M. Jeff Thomson recalled, “and am sorry to say that, in my opinion, many of our boats were handled badly.”<sup>286</sup>

Ellet refused an amputation that might have saved his life, claiming “like his country, he preferred death to dismemberment.”<sup>287</sup>

In June, on the White River in Arkansas, Flag Officer Davis dispatched two ironclads, two timberclads, and transports carrying soldiers to capture “remaining rebel Gun Boats” and “open communications” with troops in northern Arkansas.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>280</sup>Grant to McLean, Apr. 9, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 22, 766.

<sup>281</sup>Read, “Reminiscences of the Confederate Navy,” 337.

<sup>282</sup>J.W. Bissell, “Sawing Out the Channel Above Island Number Ten,” *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, (New York, The Century Co., 1887), vol. 1, 460.

<sup>283</sup>Welles to Farragut, Jan. 20, 1862, Loyall Farragut, *The Life of David Glasow Farragut: First Admiral of the United States Navy, Embodying His Journals and Letters*, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1879), 209.

<sup>284</sup>Hollins to Mallory, Apr. 8, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 22, 839.

<sup>285</sup>Donald J. Stanton, Goodwin F. Berquist, and Paul C. Bowers, eds., *The Civil War Reminiscences of General M. Jeff Thompson*, (Dayton, OH: Morningside Press, 1988), 156.

<sup>286</sup>Thompson to Beauregard, June 7, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 23, 140.

<sup>287</sup>Currie to Sir, June 20, 1862, Clarke, *Warfare Along the Mississippi*, 52.

<sup>288</sup>Davis to Welles, June 10, 1862, Squadron Letters, Mississippi Squadron.

Quarter Gunner Alexander Miller on the ironclad *St. Louis* remembered a lucky hit against the Pook Turtle *Mound City* which “passed through her steam drum,” and “immediately enveloped with scalding steam, her men leaping from the port-holes into the water.”<sup>289</sup>

“Shot flew briskly all around us,” Captain’s Clerk Edward Bacon remembered as the screw sloop-of-war *Iroquois* steamed past, “cutting the rigging close above our heads.”<sup>290</sup>

*Arkansas*, towed downriver from Memphis before that city fell. *Arkansas* was a shamble, just “a mere hull, without armor,” observed Lt. Isaac N. Brown after assuming command, and “the engines were apart; guns without carriages were lying about the deck; a portion of the railroad iron intended as armor was at the bottom of the river, and the other and far greater part was to be sought for in the interior.”<sup>291</sup>

*Arkansas* continued into the Mississippi, completing a legendary run past Davis’s and Farragut’s combined fleet, which Brown described as “a forest of masts and smoke-stacks—ships, rams, iron-clads, and other gun-boats on the left side, and ordinary river steamers and bomb-vessels along the right.”<sup>292</sup>

“No one will do wrong who lays his vessel alongside of the enemy or tackles with the ram,” Farragut emphasized.<sup>293</sup>

Mortars, ramming attacks, and bombardments could not sink the Confederate ironclad, though Lt. George Gift remembered one shell penetrated near his gun “bringing with it a shower of iron and wooden splinters.”<sup>294</sup>

Farragut’s failure was “so complete that it was almost ridiculous,” Vicksburg’s commander reflected.<sup>295</sup>

The U.S. ironclad *Essex* and several steam-sloops provided fire support “with a fine effect, throwing their shells directly in the midst of the enemy, producing great dismay and confusion.”<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>289</sup>Alexander Miller, Diary Entry, June 17, 1862, *Alexander Miller Diary*, MSS 296, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Louisiana State University Libraries, Baton Rouge, LA; Walker, *Life of Capt. Joseph Fry*, 157.

<sup>290</sup>Bacon to Isham, June 30, 1862, Bacon, Edward Woolsey Papers, 1861-1865, American Antiquarian Society.

<sup>291</sup>Isaac N. Brown, “The Confederate Gun-Boat ‘Arkansas,’” *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York: The Century Co., 1887), Vol. 3, 572.

<sup>292</sup>Brown, “The Confederate Gun-Boat ‘Arkansas,’” 575.

<sup>293</sup>General Order of Flag Officer Farragut, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 19, 8.

<sup>294</sup>George W. Gift, “The Story of the Arkansas,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* (1887), Vol. 12, 117.

<sup>295</sup>Van Dorn to Davis, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 19, 74.

<sup>296</sup>Farragut to Welles, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 19, 116.

General John Pope freely admitted that “the river was very high and almost on a level with the banks” at New Madrid, with Captain Hollins deploying his ships so “the guns on the gunboats looked easily over the banks and completely command the country.”<sup>297</sup>

“The Miss river will soon be opened,” Lt. George Blodgett of the timberclad *Conestoga* predicted.<sup>298</sup>

### **Chapter Eleven: Unvexed to the Sea**

Porter lamented *Cairo*'s destruction, the first of many to come, as “a great loss to us.”<sup>299</sup>

McClelland happily admitted Porter's squadron “efficiently and brilliantly cooperated in accomplishing this complete success.”<sup>300</sup>

“The work was diligently pushed with about 4,000 men,” Grant noted in his memoirs, “until interrupted by a sudden rise in the river that broke a dam at the upper end, which had been put there to keep the water out until the excavation was completed.”<sup>301</sup>

It too was abandoned after “some of the vessels that tried this passage got entangled in the woods.”<sup>302</sup>

It also engaged a Confederate battery on February 14 and was disabled by a shell that caused “an explosion below and a rush of steam around the boat” because of a severed steam pipe.<sup>303</sup>

They chased *Indianola* down and rammed and sank the “splendid vessel” on February 24.<sup>304</sup>

After learning this, Porter dispatched a barge, ingeniously resembling an ironclad, down the Mississippi, complete with an American flag “hoisted aft” and “a banner emblazoned with skull and cross-bones” on its bow.<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>297</sup>Peter Cozzens and Robert I. Girardi, eds., *The Military Memoirs of General John Pope*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 49.

<sup>298</sup>George M. Blodgett to Aunt, June 15, 1862, Mark K. Christ, “‘The Awful Scenes That Met My Eyes:’ Union and Confederate Accounts of the Battle of St. Charles, June 17, 1862,” *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No. 4, (Winter 2012), 411.

<sup>299</sup>Porter to Welles, Dec. 17, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 23, 545.

<sup>300</sup>McClelland to Grant, Jan. 11, 1863, Area 5, Mississippi River, Area File.

<sup>301</sup>Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*, Vol. 1, 446-447.

<sup>302</sup>Porter, *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War*, 139.

<sup>303</sup>Ellet to Porter, Feb. 21, 1863, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 24, 384.

<sup>304</sup>Linn Tanner, “The Capture of the *Indianola*,” Feb. 2, 1906, 12, *Confederate States of America Records, 1856-1915*, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin.

<sup>305</sup>Porter, *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War*, 134.

Confederates spied the approaching “mock ram” and burned *Indianola*’s wreck.<sup>306</sup>

Their ultimate plan was to approach Fort Pemberton and “arrange for a short and brisk” naval bombardment “at close quarters, and, if successful in silencing their batteries, to make a descent upon the fort with infantry, loaded on the light-draught gunboats, and storm it.”<sup>307</sup>

They struggled through the bayou, which Sherman remembered was “obstructed by overhanging oaks, and filled with cypress and cotton-wood trees” to block passage.<sup>308</sup>

Porter claimed after the war that such setbacks “didn’t amount to much in effecting change in the condition of Vicksburg, but we gained a lot of experience which would serve us in the future.”<sup>309</sup>

On November 3, 1862, Fuller observed four U.S. gunboats mounting 27 cannon, *Diana*, *Estrella*, *Kinsman*, and the captured and repurposed privateer *Calhoun*, all commanded by Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Buchannan, which “came up in full confidence of overpowering numbers.”<sup>310</sup>

All four were disabled by *Cotton*, despite Confederate gunners improvising powder bags “by cutting off the legs from the pantaloons of some of our men.”<sup>311</sup>

In late March, Confederate artillery disabled and captured the converted paddle-wheeler USS *Diana* while several crew members escaped “through the plantation and the swamps.”<sup>312</sup>

After a two-day fight where “the terrible rattle of musketry & the deafening roar of artillery,” including gunners manning the captured *Diana*, Confederates retreated into central Louisiana.<sup>313</sup>

In the process, the “brave & gallant” Capt. Oliver J. Semmes of the Confederate Army, son of renowned Capt. Raphael Semmes who was then hunting U.S. commerce, scuttled *Diana*.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>306</sup>Porter, *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War*, 134.

<sup>307</sup>Ross to Prentiss, Mar. 17, 1863, *OR*, Series 1, vol. 24, part 1, 396.

<sup>308</sup>William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman*, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1875), Vol. 1, 307.

<sup>309</sup>Porter, *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War*, 171.

<sup>310</sup>Fuller to Mouton, Nov. 7, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 19, 335-336.

<sup>311</sup>Fuller to Mouton, Nov. 7, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 19, 336.

<sup>312</sup>Diary of Acting Third Assistant Engineer Baird, Mar. 28, 1863, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 20, 113.

<sup>313</sup>W. Randolph Howell, Diary Entry, Apr. 13, 1863, *W. Randolph Howell Papers, 1861-1879*, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

<sup>314</sup>Allen to Seddon, Dec. 12, 1863, Oliver J. Semmes, First Regular Battery Confederate Light Artillery, Combined Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations Raised Directly by the Confederate Government, M258, RG 109, U.S. National Archives.

The Bayou Teche ironclad that remained “in an unfinished condition and unfit for action” was likewise destroyed.<sup>315</sup>

Confederate Lt. Gen. Richard Taylor, commanding south Louisiana, became “much disturbed by the intelligence of these events” as General Banks followed him into central Louisiana.<sup>316</sup>

They opened fire on our ships at 11 p.m. and, in a moment after, large fires were started along the whole length of the bluffs and at point[s] on the opposite side of the river. . . . As we passed the first battery[sic], they opened a murderous fire upon us from the whole face of the bluffs, which owing [sic] to the bend in the river, formed a half circle around us, and thus raking us from all sides.<sup>317</sup>

One sailor wrote home that they were “cut off from almost everything—and we do not know how long we shall have to remain.”<sup>318</sup>

“We are waiting to have a terrible battle with their Rams,” the captain of USS *Albatross* told his wife, though no Confederate ships emerged.<sup>319</sup>

Farragut’s squadron remained, supporting the siege with “a constant bombardment” that ended on July 9, 1863, with Port Hudson’s surrender.<sup>320</sup>

In April, to facilitate Grant’s crossing of the river at Grand Gulf, Porter’s ships famously dashed down the Mississippi past Vicksburg as “every fort and hill-top” in the city “vomited forth shot and shell.”<sup>321</sup>

In May, Porter captured Yazoo City and destroyed its “fine navy yard, containing fine sawing and planing machines, an extensive machine shop, carpenter and blacksmith shops, and all necessary appliances for a large building and repair shop.”<sup>322</sup>

Their cooperative spirit ensured Abraham Lincoln could happily write that “the father of waters again goes unvexed to the sea.”<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>315</sup>Taylor to Boggs, Apr. 23, 1863, *OR*, Series 1, Vol. 15, 393.

<sup>316</sup>Richard Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction: Personal Experiences of the Late War*, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1879), 121.

<sup>317</sup>Burkhardt, *Sailing With Farragut*, 77.

<sup>318</sup>Hart to Wife, Apr. 16, 1863, John E. Hart Letters.

<sup>319</sup>Hart to Wife, Apr. 15, 1863, John E. Hart Letters.

<sup>320</sup>Burkhardt, *Sailing With Farragut*, 94.

<sup>321</sup>Porter, *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War*, 176.

<sup>322</sup>Porter to Welles, May 24, 1863, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 25, 8.

<sup>323</sup>Lincoln to Conkling, Aug. 26, 1863, Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. 6, 409.

### Chapter Twelve: A Split Confederacy

On July 16, 1863, the steamer *Imperial* reached New Orleans after “a pleasant, unmolested trip” from St. Louis.<sup>324</sup>

There remained a cost, though. USS *Baron de Kalb* sank after striking an underwater torpedo, “tearing her bow and stern all to pieces.”<sup>325</sup>

Confederate cavalry also raided the Yazoo River, disabling and destroying USS *Petrel* by firing field artillery and small arms “clean through the vessel” on April 22, 1864.<sup>326</sup>

Brigadier General Jo Shelby was “gratified by the sight” of the gunboat’s surrender.<sup>327</sup>

Besides battling cavalry, they served near Vicksburg, showing they were “eager for the fray,” helping halt a Confederate assault at the battle of Goodrich’s Landing in late June 1863.<sup>328</sup>

Furthermore, underwater torpedoes and log obstructions were “driven deep into the muddy bottom” and a steamer was sunk blocking the channel, a spectacle Porter called “the smartest thing I ever knew the rebels to do.”<sup>329</sup>

Porter then “worked the ironclads through the mud,” passing the fast and shallow falls at Alexandria.<sup>330</sup>

Army engineers oversaw thousands of soldiers “working with a vigor” Porter had “seldom seen equaled,” spending weeks constructing what became known as Bailey’s Dam, to raise water levels for Federal ships to escape.<sup>331</sup>

Setting up masked batteries, the next day they sank the supply steamer *Anna*, burned the transport *Cheesman*, and captured USS *Undine* and the transport *Venus* after both were “riddled by shells and musketry.”<sup>332</sup>

<sup>324</sup>“Opening of the Mississippi,” *Harper’s Weekly* (New York, NY), Aug. 8, 1863.

<sup>325</sup>Porter to Welles, Aug. 23, 1863,” *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 25, 285.

<sup>326</sup>Flanigan to Porter, Apr. 23, 1864, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 26, 252.

<sup>327</sup>Shelby to Belton, June 24, 1864,” *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 26, 431.

<sup>328</sup>Warren D. Crandall and Isaac D. Newell, *History of the Ram Fleet and the Mississippi Marine Brigade in the War for the Union on the Mississippi River and its Tributaries* (St. Louis, MO: Buschart Brothers, 1907), 310.

<sup>329</sup>Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War*, 496; Porter to Sherman, Apr. 16, 1864, *OR*, Series 1, Vol. 34, Part 3, 172.

<sup>330</sup>Porter, *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War*, 238.

<sup>331</sup>Porter, *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War*, 248.

<sup>332</sup>“Interesting from the Mississippi,” *Wyandot [OH] Pioneer*, Nov. 11, 1864.

Confederates destroyed *Undine* a few days later, but on November 4, the cavalry used *Venus* to help destroy the Johnsonville supply depot, packed with “most valuable supplies.”<sup>333</sup>

The aggressive Read passed the Red River blockade, then passed numerous Federal warships at the Crescent City’s wharves “so close that a rock could have been thrown from one boat to the other.”<sup>334</sup>

Naval engineer James Tomb believed Confederate gunboats fully protected New Madrid in March 1862, writing that General Pope “could have taken them at any time had our ships been away.”<sup>335</sup>

In March 1862, Foote received directions from Halleck to “not make an attack on Island number ten till further orders. I wish to wait till Gen. Pope gets his heavy guns in position to cut off the Enemies retreat,” a plan that ultimately worked.<sup>336</sup>

After sustaining personnel and equipment casualties, Andrew Foote was compelled to begin “transferring the men from the disabled to the other gunboats” to keep ships operational.<sup>337</sup>

### **Chapter Thirteen: Destroying Commerce**

Two out of every five merchants worldwide—5,298 ships—flew the stars and stripes, and “almost all of the nation’s ships remained in the hands of the North.”<sup>338</sup>

After the Crimean War, most European powers sought to discontinue privateering, so the Paris Declaration stated “Privateering is, and remains, abolished.”<sup>339</sup>

The United States was not party to the agreement, but once Davis announced the Confederacy would use privateers, Secretary of State William Seward offered “proposed accession” to the declaration, so long as the Confederacy would also have to prohibit privateering.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>333</sup>Forrest to Surget, Jan. 12, 1865, *OR*, Series 1, Vol. 39, Part 1, 871.

<sup>334</sup>Clarence Jeffries, “Running the Blockade on the Mississippi,” *Confederate Veteran* (1914), Vol. 22, 23.

<sup>335</sup>Tomb Memoirs.

<sup>336</sup>Halleck to Foote, Mar. 12, 1862, Area 5, Mississippi River, Area File.

<sup>337</sup>Foote to Welles, Nov. 13, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, vol. 22, 315.

<sup>338</sup>Alex Roland, W. Jeffrey Bolster, and Alexander Keyssar, *The Way of the Ship: America’s Maritime History Reenvisioned, 1600-2000* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2008), 195, 419.

<sup>339</sup>*Declaration Respecting Maritime Law, Signed by the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, Sardinia, and Turkey, Assembled in Congress at Paris, April 16, 1856* (London, 1856), 4.

<sup>340</sup>Charles Francis Adams, *Seward and the Declaration of Paris: A Forgotten Diplomatic Episode, April–August 1861* (Boston, 1912), 26.

Britain assented the United States could sign the declaration, but since hostilities had already commenced, the Confederacy could not be held to “the doctrine of no privateering.”<sup>341</sup>

The Confederate cabinet met in July 1861, where Jefferson Davis announced his government “would hold ourselves responsible . . . for the tortuous conduct of our privateers.”<sup>342</sup>

The privateer *Music* captured another, and *Ivy* bagged three more, all “in the name of Jefferson Davis.”<sup>343</sup>

The privateer *Jefferson Davis* cruised for seven weeks in mid-1861, becoming “a word of terror to the Yankees” by capturing nine ships, though several prize crews were captured in turn or destroyed their prizes under threat of capture.<sup>344</sup>

This old law forbade British subjects from “enlist[ing] in the military services of any foreign . . . state,” as well as prohibiting British shipyards from “equipping, and arming of ships for belligerents.”<sup>345</sup>

The Foreign Office also prohibited belligerent raiders and privateers “from carrying prizes” into British “ports, harbors, roadsteads, or waters.”<sup>346</sup>

The privateer *Savannah*'s crew, held in New York City, were charged they “piratically, feloniously, and violently set upon, board, break, and enter . . . a brig called the *Joseph*, . . . and violently make an assault.”<sup>347</sup>

Juries found the prize crew guilty of making “a piratical and felonious attack upon a ship belonging to the citizens of the United States,” sentencing them to hang.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>341</sup>Aug. 23, 1861, Diary of Charles Francis Adams, 1823-1880, Adams family papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

<sup>342</sup>July 26, 1861, Mallory Diary.

<sup>343</sup>William Morrison Robinson Jr. *The Confederate Privateers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1928), 42.

<sup>344</sup>“The War on the Seas,” *Charleston Mercury*, Charleston, SC, Aug. 26, 1861.

<sup>345</sup>Nir Arielli, Gabriela A. Frei, and Inge Van Hulle, “The Foreign Enlistment Act, International Law, and British Politics, 1819-2014,” *The International History Review*, Vol. 38, No. 4, 2016, 638.

<sup>346</sup>Mountague Bernard, *A Historical Account of the Neutrality of Great Britain During the American Civil War* (London, 1870), 136.

<sup>347</sup>A.F. Waterburton, *Trial of the Officers and Crew of the Privateer Savannah on the Charge of Piracy in the United States Circuit Court for the Southern District of New York. Hon. Judges Nelson and Shipman, Presiding* (New York: Baker & Godwin, 1862), vi.

<sup>348</sup>“The Southern Privateers,” *New York Times*, Oct. 27, 1861.

Aghast, Jefferson Davis penned a personal letter to Abraham Lincoln promising the Confederacy “will deal out to the prisoners held by it the same treatment and the same fate as shall be experienced by those captured on the *Savannah*.”<sup>349</sup>

Davis even selected officers held as prisoners of war “to be hung as retribution” for any privateersman executed.<sup>350</sup>

Just like privateers, the first, CSS *Sumter*, organized at New Orleans. Built as a merchant, with limited coal bunkers and sidewheels, *Sumter* was ill-suited for open-ocean raiding. Nonetheless, Cmdr. Raphael Semmes thought *Sumter* “had a sort of saucy air about her.”<sup>351</sup>

“Give me that ship; I think I can make her answer the purpose,” he told Stephen Mallory before becoming its captain.<sup>352</sup>

Semmes “took my ship actively in hand and set gangs of mechanics at work,” turning it into something resembling a cruiser.<sup>353</sup>

“All was bustle and activity on board” as it escaped the Mississippi River blockade past USS *Brooklyn* on June 30, 1861.<sup>354</sup>

It quickly made its first capture, the U.S.-flagged *Golden Rocket*, “a fine bark, nearly new.”<sup>355</sup>

A boarding officer then inspected *Golden Rocket*'s documents, condemning it as a prize. Semmes directed his crew “to set fire to the ship.”<sup>356</sup>

*Sumter* gained a reputation as “the ‘hope of the Confederacy,’” capturing vessels in the Caribbean and Brazilian coast in the summer and fall of 1861.<sup>357</sup>

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<sup>349</sup>Davis to Lincoln, July 6, 1861, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Confederacy*, Vol. 1, 116.

<sup>350</sup>“The Proposed Execution of Privateersmen,” *Boston Evening Transcript*, Nov. 14, 1861.

<sup>351</sup>Semmes, *Memoirs of Service Afloat*, 96.

<sup>352</sup>Semmes, *Memoirs of Service Afloat*, 93-94.

<sup>353</sup>Semmes, *Memoirs of Service Afloat*, 98.

<sup>354</sup>Frank Drake to Andy, July 26, 1861, Confederate Navy – Area 6, Gulf of Mexico, Area File.

<sup>355</sup>Semmes, *Memoirs of Service Afloat*, 128.

<sup>356</sup>Kell, *Recollections of a Naval Life*, 149.

<sup>357</sup>R.F. Armstrong, Dec. 1898, “The First Confederate Man o’War and Pioneer Commerce Destroyer,” OM: Routine Operations, Subject File of the Confederate States Navy, 1861-1865, M1091, RG 45, U.S. National Archives, hereafter C.S. Subject File.

Historian Chester Hearn called *Sumter's* cruise “a harbinger of disaster.”<sup>358</sup>

It captured 17 ships, burning seven, bonding nine possessing neutral cargo on the promise they would pay the Confederacy a fee at the end of the war in exchange for being released, and sending one with a prize crew to the Confederate coast where it “fell into the hands of the blockading squadron.”<sup>359</sup>

In Europe, Confederates would purchase “10,000 good Enfield rifles,” 500 tons of gunpowder, and “woolens for clothing, shoes, and blankets,” as well as merchants to carry everything, all while *McRae* would “sail in company” to convoy everything to the Confederacy.<sup>360</sup>

*McRae* suffered from engine failures that kept it at New Orleans. Instead, the side-wheeler *Nashville* “caused quite a stir” by becoming the first Confederate warship to reach Europe.<sup>361</sup>

It docked in England in November, 1861, after “capturing and destroying during the voyage a fine American ship named *Harvey Birch*.”<sup>362</sup>

On its return, it “set on fire and burned” another Federal merchant named *Robert Gilfillan*, docked in North Carolina, and became repurposed as a blockade-runner.<sup>363</sup>

Wilkes found the diplomats, their secretaries, and Slidell’s family, but “no passports or papers” from the Confederate Government.<sup>364</sup>

British diplomats protested Wilkes’s actions as “illegal and unjustifiable,” violating British sovereignty, ironic since British sailors did much the same to precipitate the War of 1812.<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>358</sup>Chester G. Hearn, *Gray Raiders of the Sea: How Eight Confederate Warships Destroyed the Union's High Seas Commerce* (Camden, ME: International Marine Publishing, 1992), 42.

<sup>359</sup>R.F. Armstrong, Dec. 1898, “The First Confederate Man o’War and Pioneer Commerce Destroyer,” OM: Routine Operations, C.S. Subject File.

<sup>360</sup>Mallory to Bulloch, July 23 and 25, 1861, *ORN*, Series 2, Vol. 2, 82.

<sup>361</sup>Francis W. Dawson. *Reminiscences of Confederate Service, 1861-1865* (Charleston, SC: The News and Courier Book Presses, 1882), 4.

<sup>362</sup>Fauntleroy to Scharf, Jan. 22, 1887, OM: Routine Operations, C.S. Subject File; Dawson. *Reminiscences of Confederate Service*, 4.

<sup>363</sup>Pegram to Mallory, Mar. 10, 1862, OM: Routine Operations, C.S. Subject File.

<sup>364</sup>Wilkes to Welles, Nov. 15, 1861 and Fairfax to Wilkes, Nov. 11, 1861, Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from Captains, 1805-61, 1866-85, M125, RG 260, U.S. National Archives.

<sup>365</sup>The Law Offices of the Crown to Earl Russell, Nov. 28, 1861, James P. Baxter, ed., “Papers Relating to Belligerent and Neutral Rights, 1861-1865”, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Oct 1928), 86.

As British politicians debated whether they should “*iron the smile*” off the United States, they forwarded troops to Canada, whose militia roused, while Sir Alexander Milne, then observing the blockade, prepared the Royal Navy to guarantee “the safety of her Majesty’s possessions in North America.”<sup>366</sup>

Neither did Queen Victoria. Her husband, the ill Prince Albert, found compromise on his deathbed, demanding “the restoration” of Mason and Slidell, and “a suitable apology” for Wilkes’s actions, which were “not done by the authority of the [U.S.] government.”<sup>367</sup>

Seeing the British opening, Lincoln and Secretary of State William Seward quickly admitted that Wilkes acted “without any direction or instruction” and that Mason and Slidell would be “cheerfully liberated.”<sup>368</sup>

#### **Chapter Fourteen: The European Cruisers**

Bulloch interpreted this act loosely, believing “any shipbuilder may build any ship in her Majesty’s dominions, provided he does not equip her within her Majesty’s dominions,” meaning a warship could be built, so long as it was not armed in Britain.<sup>369</sup>

“Oh, if I only had the money,” an anxious Lieutenant North informed Stephen Mallory.<sup>370</sup>

In 1862, the Confederate Congress allocated \$2 million for European ship construction, but unstable funding streams gave Confederate agents “a great deal of anxiety.”<sup>371</sup>

Minister Charles Francis Adams led efforts in Britain, complaining in his diary of Britain’s “moral feebleness” for often permitting Confederate activity.<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>366</sup>Lewis to Twisleton, Dec. 5, 1861, Gilbert Frankland Lewis, ed., *Letters of the Right Hon. Sir George Cornwall Lewis, Bart. To Various Friends* (London: Longman’s, Green, and Co., 1870), 406; Earl Russell to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, Nov. 30, 1861, *ORN*, Series 1, Volume 1, 161.

<sup>367</sup>Queen Victoria to Earl Russell, Dec. 1, 1861, Arthur Christopher Benson and Viscount Esher, eds., *The Letters of Queen Victoria: A Selection of Her Majesty’s Correspondence Between the Years 1857 and 1861*, Vol. 3 (London: John Murray, 1911), 470.; Norman B. Ferris, “The Prince Consort, ‘The Times,’ and the ‘Trent’ Affair”, *Civil War History*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (June 1960), 153; Charles Francis Adams diary, Dec. 1, 1861, Adams family papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA.

<sup>368</sup>Seward to Lord Lyons, Dec. 26, 1861, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 1, 179, 187.

<sup>369</sup>Bulloch, *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*, Vol. 1, 67.

<sup>370</sup>North to Mallory, Aug. 16, 1861, *ORN*, Series 2, Vol. 2, 88.

<sup>371</sup>Forrest to Barron, Feb. 11, 1864, *William Conway Whittle Junior Papers*, Sargeant Memorial Collection, Norfolk Public Library, Norfolk, Virginia.

<sup>372</sup>Sept. 3, 1863, Diary of Charles Francis Adams, 1823-1880, *Adams family papers*, Massachusetts Historical Society.

He continuously demanded Britain seize Confederate-contracted vessels. Ministers William Dayton and John Bigelow monitored French operations, insisting Napoleon III “must bow” to Federal demands in halting Confederate shipbuilding.<sup>373</sup>

By August, it reached Brest, France, spending the rest of 1863 undergoing much-needed repairs. Maffitt was promoted to commander for his “brilliant success.”<sup>374</sup>

From May through June, 1863, Lt. Charles Read took the brig *Clarence* up the Atlantic coast with the goal of “burning the shipping in some exposed harbor [and] of cutting out a steamer.”<sup>375</sup>

Read’s 20 sailors transferred from *Clarence* to the captured *Tacony* to the captured *Archer* in the hopes of eluding the “armed vessels scouring the seas in every direction, making twenty-one captures.”<sup>376</sup>

It was “briskly” manned, armed, and outfitted “with no interruption” and commissioned as CSS *Alabama* in August, with now-Capt. Raphael Semmes commanding.<sup>377</sup>

Turning west, in October and November 1862 *Alabama* captured, burned, and bonded 13 ships off the Atlantic

Semmes received reports that a massive “expedition was expected to rendezvous at Galveston,” and he determined to intercept and sink troop transports.<sup>378</sup>

In a “sad disaster,” *Hatteras* sank in 45 minutes, marking the only time a raider defeated a Federal warship.<sup>379</sup>

Though Semmes hoped it would “prove a scourge to Yankee commerce,” *Tuscaloosa* accomplished little.<sup>380</sup>

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<sup>373</sup>Bigelow, *France and the Confederate Navy*, 10, 17.

<sup>374</sup>Mallory to Maffitt, Aug. 7, 1863, John Newland Maffitt Papers, #1761, SHC, UNC.

<sup>375</sup>Andrews to Stanton, June 27, 1863, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 2, 329.

<sup>376</sup>Robert H. Woods, “Cruise of the *Clarence*, *Tacony*-*Archer*,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* (Richmond, VA, 1895), Vol. 23, 278.

<sup>377</sup>Bulloch, *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*, Vol. 1, 255.

<sup>378</sup>Semmes, *Memoirs of Service Afloat*, 540.

<sup>379</sup>Blake to Welles, Jan. 21, 1863, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 2, 18.

<sup>380</sup>June 21, 1863, Logbook kept by Raphael Semmes while he served as commanding officer aboard the C.S.S. *Alabama*, Semmes Family Papers, LPR43, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

In December, British authorities seized *Tuscaloosa* in South Africa for “never having been properly adjudicated before any Admiralty Court,” ending its unsuccessful raid.<sup>381</sup>

From there, a “very apprehensive” Semmes concluded *Alabama* needed a significant overhaul.<sup>382</sup>

He turned west, steaming below Africa again before turning north to find “some friendly port” to “seek rest and refitment.”<sup>383</sup>

“A large number of vessels have changed their nationalities,” *New York’s Merchants’ Magazine* admitted in 1863, with these re-registrations under international flags meaning they paid taxes to their new host nation.<sup>384</sup>

Exacerbating the issue, merchant voyage insurance rates skyrocketed, with insurance agents demanding Lincoln’s government halt “depredations upon American commerce.”<sup>385</sup>

Acting Rear Admiral Charles Wilkes, famous for precipitating the *Trent* affair, commanded the squadron “at the instigation of” Secretary of State William Seward and President Lincoln.<sup>386</sup>

Wilkes received guiding directives to prioritize “pursuing the vessels of the rebels” and providing “protection” to U.S. commerce, though was warned his charge “to capture the piratical cruisers and vessels carrying contraband” was “secondary to the great object of the blockade.”<sup>387</sup>

The squadron intercepted no raiders. “We have been chased from point to point by Yankee Men of War,” John Maffitt documented from CSS *Florida’s* deck, “but eluded their vigilance.”<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>381</sup>Dec. 28, 1863, Logbook of CSS *Tuscaloosa*, William Stanley Hoole, *Four Years in the Confederate Navy: The Career of Captain John Low on the C.S.S. Fingal, Florida, Alabama, Tuscaloosa, and Ajax* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1964) 99.

<sup>382</sup>Semmes, *Memoirs of Service Afloat*, 746.

<sup>383</sup>Kell, *Recollections of a Naval Life*, 242.

<sup>384</sup>“Tonnage of New York,” *The Merchants’ Magazine and Commercial Review*, Vol. 48, No. 3, Mar., 1863, 263.

<sup>385</sup>Jones to Welles, Oct. 16, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 1, 508.

<sup>386</sup>Sept. 16, 1862, Welles, *Diary of Gideon Welles*, Vol. 1, 134.

<sup>387</sup>Welles to Wilkes, Sept. 9, 1862, *ORN*, Ser. 1, Vol. 1, 472; Welles to Wilkes, Dec. 15, 1862, Gideon Welles Papers, Letterbooks – 1862 – 1869, Oct. 4, 1862 – Feb. 2, 1863, Mixed Manuscript Material, Library of Congress.

<sup>388</sup>Maffitt to children, Mar. 13, 1863, John Newland Maffitt Papers, #1761, SHC, UNC.

Lord Richard Lyons, British minister to the United States, insisted Wilkes “treats with contempt” British territorial authority and was “resolved to try the patience” of British authorities.<sup>389</sup>

In July 1863, USS *Marion*, with a crew “entirely of Midshipmen” from the Naval Academy, patrolled for raiders, “an old fashioned sailing sloop after a modern steam sloop of war,” Midn. Robley Evans jested.<sup>390</sup>

*Alabama* “left Kingston two weeks before we went in. We learned some from Amer. sailors she had lain there five days repairing.”<sup>391</sup>

Confederate agents sensed this, believing Britain was “determined to stop any more *Alabamas* if it can.”<sup>392</sup>

Maury believed there could be “no end to the war, until the Yankees get themselves into trouble with some other nation.”<sup>393</sup>

“The officers hugged one another, each embracing a man,” *Georgia’s* Midn. James Morgan recalled upon seeing Semmes’s “pride of the Confederate Navy.”<sup>394</sup>

*Georgia* did “not cruise advantageously,” making few captures.<sup>395</sup>

Docking in Calais, France, there *Rappahannock* remained, permanently blockaded by two French warships and USS *Kearsarge*, derisively called “our gaolier” by one officer.<sup>396</sup>

“She was a poor miserable little tin kettle of a craft, but I loved her,” Midshipman Morgan fondly recalled.<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>389</sup>Lyons to Seward, Nov. 24, 1862 and Mar. 9, 1863, *Message of the President of the United States, and Accompanying Documents, to the Two Houses of Congress, at the Commencement of the First Session of the Thirty-Eighth Congress (1863)*, (Washington D.C., 1864), 1:462-463, 522.

<sup>390</sup>Robley D. Evans, *A Sailor’s Log* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1901), 55-56.

<sup>391</sup>Feb. 9, 1863, Mary P. Livingston, ed. *A Civil War Marine at Sea: The Diary of Medal of Honor Recipient Miles M. Oviatt* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Books, 1998), 31.

<sup>392</sup>Maury to Corbin, May 1, 1863, Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers, #0103, VMI Archives, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, VA.

<sup>393</sup>Maury to Corbin, May 1, 1863, Matthew Fontaine Maury Papers, #0103, VMI Archives, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, VA.

<sup>394</sup>Morgan, *Recollections of a Rebel Reefer*, 126-127.

<sup>395</sup>Maury to Barron, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 2, 809.

<sup>396</sup>Mar. 2, 1864, Douglas French Forrest Diary, William N. Still Jr. ed. *Odyssey in Gray: A Diary of Confederate Service 1863-1865* (Richmond, VA: Virginia State Library, 1979), 143.

<sup>397</sup>Morgan, *Recollections of a Rebel Reefer*, 182.

Semmes could either abandon his ship (like *Sumter*), keep it in Cherbourg permanently (like *Rappahannock*), or try escaping and, as one of the raider's officers put it, "exchange civilities."<sup>398</sup>

On June 19, 1864, *Alabama* departed Cherbourg, and both ships "beat to General Quarters and cleared for action," steaming for international waters.<sup>399</sup>

Winslow overlaid anchor chains on his hull as an improvised "concealed armor" of chainmail to "protect her machinery," while *Alabama's* powder and fuses were unreliable after so long at sea.<sup>400</sup>

*Kearsarge* took the rest of his crew prisoner, ending *Alabama's* cruising. U.S. minister to Britain Charles Francis Adams called *Kearsarge's* victory a "stirring" and "singular tale."<sup>401</sup>

During the night of October 7, while half of *Florida's* crew went ashore on liberty, Cmdr. Napoleon Collins steamed *Wachusett* close to the raider and attacked, sparking an international incident when Brazil's warships "fired in the direction of the *Wachusett*" and diplomats protested violations of its neutrality.<sup>402</sup>

Days later, its "auxiliary pump failed" and the ship sank.<sup>403</sup>

### **Chapter Fifteen: Fighting for Gold**

"Gold and silver have become articles of commerce like iron and lead," government leaders surmised.<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>398</sup>June 14, 1864, George G. Summersell, ed. *The Journal of George Townley Fullam: Boarding Officer of the Confederate Sea Raider Alabama* (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1973), 190.

<sup>399</sup>June 19, 1864, USS *Kearsarge* Logbook.

<sup>400</sup>Semmes, *Memoirs of Service Afloat*, 762; Penhoat to Admiral, June 19, 1864, Jérôme-Hyacinthe Penhoat, "Kearsarge and Alabama: French Official Report, 1864," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 23, No. 1, Oct. 1917, 121 (translated from the original French).

<sup>401</sup>Adams to Son, June 24, 1864, Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed. *A Cycle of Adams Letters 1861-1865* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), Vol. 2, 157.

<sup>402</sup>Macebo to Gomes, Oct. 7, 1864, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 640.

<sup>403</sup>Stephen E. James Jr, Todd S. Hannahs, Joe J. Simmons, and James A. Duff, Documentation of the Civil War Vessels CSS Florida and USS Cumberland, Hampton Roads, VA (Tuscaloosa, AL: Panamerican Consultants, May 1994), CESAM/PDER-94/001, 76.

<sup>404</sup>Secretary of the Treasury. *Report of the Secretary of the Treasury* (Richmond, VA: Confederate States of America Treasury Department, 1863), 5.

For the United States, keeping Panamá route bullion flowing—which President Abraham Lincoln supposedly noted as “the life-blood of our financial credit”—facilitated financial stability and limited wartime inflation.<sup>405</sup>

In April 1861, businessmen informed Lincoln’s cabinet that “the capture of even one of these steamers . . . would stop shipments of gold.”<sup>406</sup>

Pacific Mail Steamship Company president Alan McLane wrote his Atlantic counterpart, Cornelius Vanderbilt, insisting the navy “should give us protection.”<sup>407</sup>

In the Caribbean, the lightly armed sailing vessels *Falmouth* and *Bainbridge* docked at Colón to protect “the California steamships with their passengers and treasure against piratical vessels, or sailing under pretended letters of marque issued by the insurrectionary state.”<sup>408</sup>

Jefferson Davis recognized “the importance of shutting off the great gold shipments to the East from California.”<sup>409</sup>

Raphael Semmes, commanding the Confederacy’s first commerce raider, CSS *Sumter*, penned in his diary a desire to intercept “homeward-bound California and Brazilian vessels” in 1861.<sup>410</sup>

Southerners insisted that capturing a treasure steamer would “have furnished something upon which to establish a currency much superior to that which we now enjoy, besides taking so much from the vaults of the Yankee banks.”<sup>411</sup>

Stephen Mallory advised officers to prioritize “the interception of the California steamers,” and all European-built raiders possessed orders to capture “one or two of the enemy’s treasure and passenger ships.”<sup>412</sup>

In December 1862, Capt. Raphael Semmes, now commanding CSS *Alabama*, determined to strike a blow by “waylaying . . . a California treasure-steamer.”<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>405</sup>William C. Whitford, *Colorado Volunteers in the Civil War: The New Mexico Campaign In 1862*, (Denver CO: The State Historical and Natural History Society, 1906), 12.

<sup>406</sup>Petition to Salmon P. Chase, Apr. 17, 1861, *ORN*, Series 1, 1:8.

<sup>407</sup>McLane to Welles, Apr. 24, 1861, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 1, 14.

<sup>408</sup>Welles to Brasher, May 15, 1861, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 1, 22.

<sup>409</sup>James H. Wilkins, ed., *The Great Diamond Hoax and other Stirring Incidents in the Life of Asbury Harpending* (San Francisco, CA: James H. Barry Co., 1913), 47.

<sup>410</sup>Abstract of the Journal of Commander Semmes, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 1, 710.

<sup>411</sup>“Privateering,” *Edgefield Advertiser* (Edgefield, SC), Aug. 19, 1863.

<sup>412</sup>Mallory to Barron, Feb. 22, 1864, *ORN*, Series 2, Vol. 2, 593; Mallory to Maffitt, Oct. 25, 1862, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 1, 762.

<sup>413</sup>Semmes, *Memoirs of Service Afloat*, 520.

*Alabama* entered the Windward Passage between Haiti and Cuba, “waiting for our California friend,” and captured the Vanderbilt steamer *Ariel* on December 7, 1862, on its way to Colón to pick up gold.<sup>414</sup>

Confederate sympathizers quietly purchased the sailing vessel *J. M. Chapman*, planning to cripple the “outward flow of gold, on which the Union cause depended in a large measure.”<sup>415</sup>

Its commander, John Maffitt, was eager to capture treasure-laden vessels “pretty quick, when we get them.”<sup>416</sup>

Rear Admiral Charles Wilkes, commanding the West India Squadron responsible for hunting Confederate raiders, knew of “*Florida’s* intention to await the California steamers.”<sup>417</sup>

Maffitt dismissed the *Benjamin F. Hoxie* master’s “very irregular” explanations of being Connecticut owned.<sup>418</sup>

The navy also began direct protection of treasure ships, when Gideon Welles dispatched ships “on special service convoying the treasure steamers” through the Windward Passage.<sup>419</sup>

“We took our convoy and were much relieved from the feeling of solitude on the wide waters,” a passenger lamented in January 1864.<sup>420</sup>

Cornelius Vanderbilt happily accepted, believing full convoys would boost “confidence of travelling public, as well as to the shippers of treasure.”<sup>421</sup>

Full convoy escorts were often not up to the task, with escorts often “unable to keep up” with speedy treasure steamers.<sup>422</sup>

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<sup>414</sup>Journal Entry, Dec. 4, 1862, Journal Kept by Raphael Semmes While He Served as Commanding Officer Aboard the C.S.S. *Alabama*. Semmes Family Papers, LPR43, Box 2, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

<sup>415</sup>Wilkins, *The Great Diamond Hoax*, 25.

<sup>416</sup>An English Visit to the Florida, “Scrapbook of Civil War Clippings, chiefly related to the *Florida*”, in the John Newland Maffitt Papers #1761, SHC, UNC.

<sup>417</sup>Wilkes to Welles, Feb. 2, 1863, Squadron Letters, West India Squadron.

<sup>418</sup>Maffitt to Mallory, July, 27, 1863, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 2, 653.

<sup>419</sup>Welles to Wilkes, Jan. 20, 1863, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 2, 45.

<sup>420</sup>Diary Entry, Jan., 1864, “The Diary of Lucy C. Whitwell Parker”, Scollay Family History, Scollay Square, <http://www.bambinomusical.com/Scollay/Diary.html>, Accessed Jan. 12, 2020.

<sup>421</sup>Welles to Vanderbilt, Aug. 31, 1864, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 179.

<sup>422</sup>Howell to Welles, Sept. 26, 1864, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 225.

A final threat to Vanderbilt's treasure ships came at the end of the conflict, when the French-built Confederate ironclad *Stonewall* crossed the Atlantic with orders advising "the interception of the California steamers."<sup>423</sup>

### **Chapter Sixteen: The War's Conclusion at Sea**

*Shenandoah* possessed orders to "thoroughly disperse, and in great part destroy, the American whaling fleet."<sup>424</sup>

The sailors and Marines at Drewry's Bluff formed an improvised infantry battalion under Capt. John R. Tucker, surrendering only after fighting "with peculiar obstinacy" at the battle of Sailor's Creek.<sup>425</sup>

They surrendered with Gen. Joseph Johnston's army in May, a "sad spectacle" according to Semmes.<sup>426</sup>

Porter remembered how Richmond's "river-front was as deserted as if this had been a city of the dead," except for a dozen Black men at a nearby house who rejoiced at Lincoln's approach, men who "had looked up to him for four years as the one who was to lead them out of captivity."<sup>427</sup>

Though Lieutenant Waddell claimed he "matured plans for entering the harbor of San Francisco," the captain never truly contemplated this.<sup>428</sup>

In August 1865, while off Mexico's Pacific coast, Waddell suffered "the bitterest blow," learning definitively that the Confederacy's government had collapsed.<sup>429</sup>

"Its dissolution was even more rapid than its creation," Adm. David Dixon Porter lamented. "It was allowed to dwindle away without an effort to replace those ships, that had fallen victims to decay, with others of a suitable character."<sup>430</sup>

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<sup>423</sup>Barron to Page, Dec. 17, 1864, *ORN*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 720.

<sup>424</sup>Bulloch, *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*, Vol. 2, 153.

<sup>425</sup>Wright to Ruggles, Apr. 29, 1865, *OR*, Series 1, Vol. 46, Pt. 1, Section 2, 980.

<sup>426</sup>Semmes Diary, May 1, 1865, Raphael Semmes papers, 1861-1872, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

<sup>427</sup>Porter, *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War*, 295.

<sup>428</sup>James D. Horan, ed. *C.S.S. Shenandoah: The Memoirs of Lieutenant Commanding James I. Waddell* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1960), 175.

<sup>429</sup>Horan, *C.S.S. Shenandoah*, 176.

<sup>430</sup>Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War*, 830.

Engineering also shifted to the wayside as a cost-saving measure, with postwar captains ordered to ensure “strict economy in the use of coal” and to conduct “all their cruising under sail alone.”<sup>431</sup>

Abraham Lincoln extolled the war’s naval forces, writing in December 1863: “Satisfactory and important as have been the performances of the heroic men of the navy at this interesting period, they are scarcely more wonderful than the success of our mechanics and artisans in the production of war vessels which has created a new form of naval power.”<sup>432</sup>

In the years after the war, one-third of Confederate Navy commissioned line officers “refused to admit defeat, move on, or deal with their wartime loss,” which “led to a postwar crisis of purpose, place, and memory.”<sup>433</sup>

Writing in 1886, David Dixon Porter demanded “a Navy that will help put down rebellion at home at its first inception, and bid defiance to those abroad who would commit aggressions upon our commerce, or treat our citizens unjustly in any part of the world.”<sup>434</sup>

Ulysses Grant agreed. His memoirs concluded the United States “should have a good navy” which “not only adds to our security and tends to prevent war in the future, but is very material aid to our commerce with foreign nations.”<sup>435</sup>

As maritime historian Kenneth J. Blume documented, “from the beginning of the war to the beginning of 1865, some 715 American vessels transferred to British registry” in the flight from the flag to avoid destruction.<sup>436</sup>

Though Confederate raiding, as Alfred Thayer Mahan put it, “did not in the least influence or retard the event of the war,” there were far-ranging implications.<sup>437</sup>

The U.S. merchant marine did not recover to its 1860 strength until World War One, and it has never recovered proportionally, demonstrating how the Civil War shattered “the economic well-being of American-flagged shipping.”<sup>438</sup>

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<sup>431</sup>Bennett, *The Steam Navy of the United States*, 615.

<sup>432</sup>Abraham Lincoln, Annual Message to Congress, Dec. 8, 1863, Basler, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. 7, 44.

<sup>433</sup>Neil P. Chatelain, “Postwar Identity Crisis of the Confederate Navy’s Officer Corps,” *U.S. Military History Review*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Oct. 2022), 18-19.

<sup>434</sup>Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War*, 1886), 831.

<sup>435</sup>U.S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*, 548.

<sup>436</sup>Kenneth J. Blume, “The Flight from the Flag: The American Government, the British Caribbean, and the American Merchant Marine, 1861-1865,” *Civil War History*, Vol. 32, No. 1, (Mar. 1986), 46.

<sup>437</sup>A.T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History 1660-1783* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1890), 138.

<sup>438</sup>Roland, Bolster, and Keyssar, *The Way of the Ship*, 196, 419.

These examples, several he had personally participated in, helped Mahan develop his concept of “stations along the road” established “not primarily for trade, but for defense and war” by providing a forward-deployed base to maintain United States’s Caribbean interests.<sup>439</sup>

In 1869, the United States filed suit against the United Kingdom, contending the British government violated its own neutrality by helping build and outfit Confederate blockade-runners and commerce raiders and thus caused a “prolongation of the war” that was “traceable directly to England.”<sup>440</sup>

They awarded damages of \$15.5 million to the United States, a sum agreed upon as the value merchant ships lost to raiding and “money which had been expended by the Government in fitting-out and maintaining ships of the Navy, engaged in hunting over the ocean for the Confederate cruisers.”<sup>441</sup>

The kaiser called Raphael Semmes “the greatest Admiral of the nineteenth century,” adding “at every conference with my Admirals, I counsel them to closely read and study Semmes’ *‘Memoirs of Service Afloat.’*”<sup>442</sup>

### **Appendix A: African American Sailors**

The 1792 Militia Act authorized “every free able-bodied white male citizen” to serve in the army or militia, excluding African Americans.<sup>443</sup>

Regulations also limited Black sailors to no more than five percent of a ship’s crew, further requiring special permission “of the commander of the station.”<sup>444</sup>

When he left the navy in 1863, joining the famed 54th Massachusetts Regiment, he did so as “a well-tested veteran . . . who was likely the member of the 54th Massachusetts with the most combat experience.”<sup>445</sup>

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<sup>439</sup>Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History*, 27-28.

<sup>440</sup>Charles Sumner’s Argument, John W. Dwinelle, ed. *American Opinions on the ‘Alabama’ and Other Political Questions* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1870), 37.

<sup>441</sup>Frank Warren Hackett, *Reminiscences of the Geneva Tribunal of Arbitration 1872: The Alabama Claims* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), 314.

<sup>442</sup>Henry E. Shepherd, “Centennial of Birth of Admiral Raphael Semmes, Born in Charles County, Md., September 27, 1809,” Sept. 27, 1909, *Southern Historical Society Papers*, Vol. 38, 1910, 24.

<sup>443</sup>An act more effectually to provide for the national defence by establishing an uniform militia through the United States. Philadelphia, PA, May 8, 1792, <http://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.2180120a>, Accessed July 1, 2024.

<sup>444</sup>*General Regulations for the Navy and Marine Corps of the United States 1841*, (Washington: J. and G.S. Gideon, 1841), 165.

<sup>445</sup>Neil P. Chatelain, “Evans Covington: Freeman, Husband, Sailor, Soldier,” *The Hellfighter: The Online Journal of African American Military History*, Vol. 2, No. 3, Fall 2024, 11.

Mixed-race Yale University graduate Richard Henry Greene was appointed acting assistant surgeon on USS *State of Georgia*, the only Black wartime naval officer, though “his race may have been concealed at the time.”<sup>446</sup>

“We picked [up] many negroe slaves who would come out to the ships in small boats at every place we anchored,” Seaman Bartholomew Diggins remembered.<sup>447</sup>

Smalls, and several other enslaved men then acted as ironclad pilots, where they “showed knowledge of the locality, skill, courage, and intelligence” during combat operations, earning “the confidence of the commanders” of these vessels.<sup>448</sup>

From the war’s start, its regulations allowed “free colored persons” to enlist “with the approbation of the commander of the station, or by special order from the department.”<sup>449</sup>

The “Slave man Jackson Davis” was hired out as CSS *Ivy*’s cook for at least three months in 1861 at the rate of \$24 monthly.<sup>450</sup>

Billy Bugg and Moses Dallas were pilots in Savannah. Paperwork mentioning them notes that Bugg’s “pay proper, as well as that of all slaves on board, is to be paid to his master.”<sup>451</sup>

Lieutenant Jonathan Carter penned Stephen Mallory from Shreveport, Louisiana, that because of manpower shortages, he believed it “necessary to employ negroes as firemen and deck hands” on his vessels.<sup>452</sup>

A “valuable slave” named Ned was hired out to work on CSS *Sumter*, though he deserted in August 1861 in Suriname.<sup>453</sup>

David Henry White, a freeman merchant mariner, was forcibly taken to CSS *Alabama* from the prize *Tonawanda* and “enlisted as one of the crew” because Raphael Semmes declared him “a slave, from Delaware.”<sup>454</sup>

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<sup>446</sup>Jill L. Newmark, *Without Concealment, Without Compromise: The Courageous Lives of Black Civil War Surgeons* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2023), 131.

<sup>447</sup>Burkhardt, ed. *Sailing with Farragut*, 55.

<sup>448</sup>Rodgers to Dahlgren, Aug. 14, 1863, Squadron Letters, South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

<sup>449</sup>*Regulations for the Navy of the Confederate States*. 1862 (Richmond, VA: MacFarlane & Fergusson, 1862), 163.

<sup>450</sup>Hollins to Davis, Oct. 23, 1861, AC: Construction, C.S. Subject File.

<sup>451</sup>Kennard to Seymour, Nov. 3, 1863, NP: Pilots, C.S. Subject File.

<sup>452</sup>Carter to Mallory, Nov. 4, 1863, Jonathan H. Carter Letterbook. RG 45. Library of Congress.

<sup>453</sup>Semmes, *Memoirs of Service Afloat*, 210.

<sup>454</sup>Oct. 9, 1862, Logbook kept by Raphael Semmes while he served as commanding officer aboard the C.S.S. *Alabama*, Semmes Family Papers, LPR43, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

By mid-war, Joseph R. Anderson employed more than 750 Black men, both freemen and enslaved, “in all his operations” at Tredegar.<sup>455</sup>

In New Orleans, John Hughes’s shipyards used enslaved men “in construction” of Confederate gunboats.<sup>456</sup>

While plating the ironclad *Louisiana* at the Crescent City, shipyard superintendents “procured . . . from neighboring plantations, between two and three hundred” enslaved men “who were worked as a night gang” to speed the project.<sup>457</sup>

In mid-1863, at Little Rock, Arkansas, advertisements were made to local plantations for “50 negro men” to augment CSS *Pontchartrain*’s crew.<sup>458</sup>

“Competent servants,” both men and women, also worked in naval hospitals.<sup>459</sup>

### **Appendix B: Naval Organizations**

No Notes

### **Appendix C: Visiting Civil War Naval Sites**

As fellow historian Dwight Hughes aptly put it, “there are no monuments on the ocean.”<sup>460</sup>

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<sup>455</sup>Kathleen Bruce, *Virginia Iron Manufacturing in the Slave Era* (New York: The Century Company, 1930), 247-248.

<sup>456</sup>Carter to Shaw, Nov. 7, 1861, AC: Construction, C.S. Subject File.

<sup>457</sup>Nelson Tift Testimony, June 12, 1863, *Proceedings of the Court of Inquiry Relative to the Fall of New Orleans*, 111.

<sup>458</sup>Holtzman to Holtzman, Aug. 8, 1863, AR: Repairs, C.S. Subject File.

<sup>459</sup>“Notice,” *Daily Dispatch*, Richmond, VA, May 19, 1862.

<sup>460</sup>Dwight Hughes, “Modern Photography: No Monuments on the Ocean,” *Emerging Civil War*, <https://emergingcivilwar.com/2017/03/03/modern-photography-no-monuments-on-the-ocean/>, accessed Jan. 7, 2025.

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