

The Naval War of 1812: A Documentary History

**Volume I
1812
Part 3 of 7**

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Chapter Two

Naval Operations in the Atlantic Theater: January–August 1812

From 4 April, when President Madison approved the 90-day embargo, until 18 June, when Congress declared war against Great Britain, American naval officers prepared their ships and stations for war as best they could. It was no secret that the embargo was a measure preparatory to a possible outbreak of war. Likewise, Royal Navy ships on the North Atlantic station were put on alert. After Congress passed legislation in February intending to strengthen the armed forces, Wasp carried that news to England. On 9 May, the British Foreign Office passed a war warning to the Admiralty which in turn advised Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer at Halifax that war with the United States was a distinct possibility. He was instructed to await notification from the British minister in Washington before commencing hostilities.¹

At the outset of the war, the United States Navy had 16 ships in commission, excluding gunboats. These ostensibly faced a huge British Navy that included 600 warships of all types, actively employed, not counting 250 ships under construction and refitting. Yet the Admiralty had only stationed a handful of warships along the North American coast because of worldwide demands on her naval resources. The ongoing war against Napoleonic France and her allies required deployment of British ships to protect communications in the English Channel and the North Sea, at Gibraltar and off French ports in the Mediterranean, and on convoy to the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean. The North American station was defended by one ship of the line, H.M.S. Africa, 64 guns, and two dozen smaller ships, mainly frigates and ships of less force. These were scattered between Halifax and Bermuda.

Navy Secretary Paul Hamilton and the four clerks who were his administrative staff in Washington, suddenly faced a crushing burden of work, issuing orders, authorizing expenditures, and providing

logistical support to ship commanders and navy yards all along the Atlantic coast. As increased demands were placed upon senior officers in various stations, they in turn responded, indicating desperate shortages of men and materiel and incomplete states of readiness for most of the ships and gunboats under their command. To complicate matters further, in March U.S. naval gunboats had become involved in clandestine invasion of Spanish territory in East Florida.

The new navy was only partially prepared for war by mid-June 1812, especially at southern stations such as Wilmington and Charleston, but the cruising squadrons were at sea and ready to meet ships of at least equal strength. The first months of the war for the U.S. Navy were marked by many more successes than defeats in the Atlantic Theater. These events provided the public with a welcome antidote to the bitter disappointments resulting from reversals of American military forces in the northwest from Detroit to Niagara.

1. See Reginald Horsman, *The War of 1812* (New York, 1969), p. 56, and Perkins, *Prologue to War*, p. 321.

The St. Marys Station

The deployment of U.S. naval vessels at the commencement of the War of 1812 was complicated in some degree by American foreign policy commitments on the Georgia-Spanish East Florida border. From 18 November 1811, the officer in charge of naval forces in Georgia was Captain Hugh G. Campbell.¹ He was stationed on the St. Marys River which divided the United States from East Florida. The rivers, shallow bays, and sounds of the Georgia-Florida coast were well-suited to gunboats sent there to enforce the embargo laws. Florida was a popular haven for all kinds of smugglers, including the outlawed slave traders. Ships from Great Britain and Spain frequently put in at Fernandina on Amelia Island and at St. Augustine farther down the coast. Their presence created a delicate situation.

Captain Campbell's responsibilities suddenly increased in February 1812, when some American residents of St. Marys, supported by volunteers from the Georgia Militia, raised rebellion against Spanish rule. The uprising had been brewing for some time, tacitly supported by Congress and the Madison administration. A portion of West Florida had been acquired by a bloodless coup in 1810, and it was hoped that East Florida might fall to the United States in the same

manner. The rebellion was planned by George Mathews, a former governor of Georgia and brigadier general in the Georgia State Militia. Mathews had consulted with President Madison on the matter and he was authorized to call upon U.S. military and naval forces, if necessary, to attain his objective.²

The Navy Department had not sent Captain Campbell explicit orders to cooperate with General Mathews. As a result, he was not comfortable with Mathews's requests for naval support, as demonstrated in the following and several subsequent documents. Campbell's primary concern during the early days of his assignment had been the shortage of schooners and brigs to reinforce the gunboats under his command. His predicament in this regard was similar to that of commanders on the New Orleans station.³ The need for additional vessels, men, and equipment at St. Marys strained the meager resources of the navy at Charleston and Wilmington. The reports of Captain John Dent and Sailing Master Thomas Gautier reflect the situation.⁴

1. Hamilton to Campbell, 18 Nov. 1811, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 9, No. 507.

2. James Cooper, *Secret Acts, resolutions and instructions under which East Florida was invaded by the United States troops, naval forces, and volunteers, in 1812 and 1813: together with the official correspondence of the agents and officers of the government* (Washington, D.C., 1860). See also Julius Pratt, *Expansionists of 1812* (New York, 1925; reprinted 1949 and 1957), pp. 60-125, 189-274; and Patrick, *Florida Fiasco*.

3. Shaw to Hamilton, 17 Feb. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 43.

4. See pp. 98-103.

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St. Marys Jan'y 11. 1812

Sir

My last respects to you suggested the propriety of ordering three more Gun Boats to this Station, likewise an additional small vessel to act along the coast and Correct abuses that may take Place beyond the reach of Gun Boats, for instance Vessels sailing from Amelia and taking Advantage of Spanish Waters and a fresh breeze untill over the Bar, when it would be Dangerous for Gun Boats to follow them.

Mr [Abraham] Bessent Collector of this Port has Given me a discription of two vessels now lading in the spanish waters. his information is so Correct, that I feel myself Justified in ordering their seizure should opportunity bring Them in our way. I intend with the Assistance of Lieut Gadsden or others, to take a sketch of this river from the North

Breaker to St Mary's and make such Remarks as may prove useful To the service. I beg Sir, that a few signal Books may be sent on likewise the Six additional Midshipmen. since my last respects Doctor Daindridge [William A. Dandridge] has appeared as Surgeon In the Navy. I believe Sir, I have given all The Particulars of our Situation here-and shall In future confine myself to a monthly report, Unless Circumstances require it otherwise. I have the Honour to be [&c.]

Hugh G Campbell

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 7.

The Capture of Fernandina

At the end of February 1812, Captain Campbell was drawn into a planned rebellion of United States citizens who lived in East Florida. General Mathews had worked openly to obtain cooperation of military and naval commanders on the scene. Campbell's gunboats and their crews became an element crucial to the project, but he was uncertain whether the Navy Department would approve of his participation. Lacking specific orders, Campbell reluctantly decided to support Mathews's uprising. Aided by navy gunboats, the rebels successfully forced the surrender of the Spanish-controlled town of Fernandina on Amelia Island. According to the testimony of Winslow Foster, former Sailing Master, USN, and commander of Gunboat No. 62, Captain Campbell later requested the return of the written orders he had issued.¹ No copies of these orders have survived.

1. U.S. Senate, 36th Congress, 1st Session, Miscellaneous Documents, No. 55, Supreme Court of the United States vs. Francis P. Ferreira, Administrator of Francis Pass, Deceased, "Testimony of Captain Winslow Foster" (a deposition taken in November 1846).

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St. Marys Feb 29th 1812

Sir,

I beg leave to observe that General Mathews called on me yesterday and inquired if I had received any orders from you, to cooperate with

the Military in case their service should be required in East Florida. I answered in the Negative. He then informed me confidentially, That Circumstances justified the Expectation of a Speedy change in the political affairs of that country and suggested the Expediency of holding the Naval Force on this station in readiness to act as occasion May require. Although the Naval force at this Place are always held in readiness, and should consider it my duty to cooperate with the Army in any measures required for the public Good, I should feel much more Gratified in Being Honoured with Instructions from you On that head. I have the Honour to be [&c.]

Hugh G Campbell

An Embargo breaker made his Escape this Morning from Amelia. he was persued by Gun Boat 62. but by superior sailing Evaded the Pursuit which proved Unavoidable. the *Vixen* being absent on duty. The services of the *Enterprise* is much Required.

H G C

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 60.

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St. Marys March 21. 1812

Sir

My respects to you of the 29th Febr mentioned that General Mathews had called on me and inquired if I had any order to Cooperate with him in his operations against E Florida and requested the favor of Orders on that head. Since that period General Mathews has made several requisitions on me which Are herewith Enclosed by which you will perceive How far I have acted in doubt and fears. I at First refused to comply with General Mathews requisitions but on his producing Instructions from the President of the United States, Likewise your orders To all Naval Commanders on the New Orleans Station And your letter to himself relative to the Naval force Intended to this station. With my not having orders To the contrary, and considering the orders of the President paramount to all others in this Country I did consent to go certain lengths with General Mathews, impressed with a belief that the Troops of point

peter were likewise to act—but In this I was at too late an hour disappointed.

Agreeable to General Mathews' requisition of the 15th the boats proceeded, and on the Morning of the 17th Inst took their station near the town of Fernandino, in a quite and Friendly Manner, the commanders of those Boats having orders not to fire a shot Unless first fired upon, and previous to The approach of the patriots I gave a positive order not to fire a shot on any patriot whatever. This measure had the desirous Effect of preventing blood blood which would inevitably have been the case with the loss of this town.

Permit me to intreat you Sir to forward me some orders on that head, and be pleased to say if my conduct Is approved, while I console myself that I have acted from the best of Motives. I have the Honour to be [&c.]

Hugh G Campbell

N.B. Although your orders to Naval Commanders did mention E Florida, I took in view that part of G. Mathews Instructions when he is authorised to act by that provision in similar manner to that of West Florida.

H G C

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 82.

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO SAILING MASTER BARTRAN G. HIPKINS

[St. Marys]
[29 March 1812]

Orders

The Patriots of east Florida having ceded to the United States the whole of that Province, with the exception of the town and Fortress of St Augustine, which Province is now occupied by the Troops of the United States under the command of Col. [Thomas A.] Smith—I do hereby order and direct that you proceed with all possible dispatch to St Augustine, with Gun Boats Nos 63, 62, and 10, and anchor within the the Bar, and as near the fort as prudence may direct, taking care not to offend the town or garrison of that place, nor any inhabitant of

the same, unless an insult should be offered to the flag of the United States, in such a case you will repel that insult by every means in your power, at the same time assure the spanish subjects, of your friendly intentions to render them that aid their present situation so much require. The United States Troops, near St Augustine, may require some assistance from you, in that case you will communicate with them through the north River, should this be objected by the Governor, it will be your duty to resist such objection, by demanding the privilege of that Navigation, as a part of the Province ceded to the United States. Be on the alert, guard against surprize, Moore your Boats in the most advantageous situation to support each other in case of necessity. You will likewise render such services as General Mathews may require, make me acquainted with their nature, and of your arrival by the earliest opportunity.

Hugh G Campbell

Mr. B. G Hipkins Comg Gun Boat No. 63

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 127c.

The East Florida Uprising Restrained

Even as the insurgents moved from Fernandina toward St. Augustine, the United States Government began to reassess its East Florida policy. Fearful of embarrassment, if U.S. involvement were unmasked, President Madison and Secretary of State James Monroe withdrew support for the expedition and disavowed General Mathews as a government agent. This was intended to defuse a volatile situation, avoiding a confrontation with either Spain or England on the disposition of East Florida. U.S. military and naval commanders were ordered to withdraw. Of the two documents that follow, the first contains orders to Captain Campbell in this vein; the second is his reply showing evident relief.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL

H. G. Campbell Esqr
Comg Naval Officer
St Mary's, Ga.

Nav. Depmt 8. April 1812.

Your letter of the 21 ulto with the accompanying papers have been received.

Altho I am persuaded that you cooperated with Genl Matthews, from a conviction in your own mind, that you were acting correctly: Yet the proceedings of Genl Matthews being unauthorised by the President of the United States, are of course disapproved by him. I have it therefore in charge from the President to require of you to withdraw all the forces under your command, from the spanish waters, & you will not in future, cooperate with Genl Matthews.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 12.

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St Marys April 25th 1812

Sir

By this days mail I am honored with your instructions of the 8th Inst which renders me the happiest of mortals, and relieved me from a state of anxiety that no language of mine can express.

I shall immediately with pride and pleasure carry into effect the orders of our much beloved President by with drawing Myself from General Mathews, and ordering the Gun Boats from the spanish waters. I have the Honor to Be [&c.]

Hugh G Campbell

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 147.

Conditions at the Charlestown Navy Yard

In 1801, the Navy Department purchased land at six different locations along the Atlantic coast to serve as places where navy yards could be established: Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and Norfolk.¹ Provision had also been made for the building of six 74-gun ships at these yards, but these plans were dropped during the administration of President Jefferson. Of all the navy yards, that at Washington was the most developed, nurtured by the attentive hand of Commodore Thomas Tingey; New York Navy Yard at Brooklyn, the Philadelphia Navy Yard, and the Boston Navy Yard at Charlestown were in a somewhat more primitive state, as was Norfolk's Gosport Navy Yard. The least well-equipped was the navy yard at Portsmouth. Navy yard commandants were responsible for the building, fitting out, and repair of warships and they were also in charge of the gunboat flotillas based on those yards.

In early 1812, Captain William Bainbridge was commandant at the Boston Navy Yard, and he held this position until September when he succeeded Captain Isaac Hull as commanding officer of Constitution. One of the problems Bainbridge faced was that of readying the frigate Chesapeake for war service. The following letter illustrates his predicament.

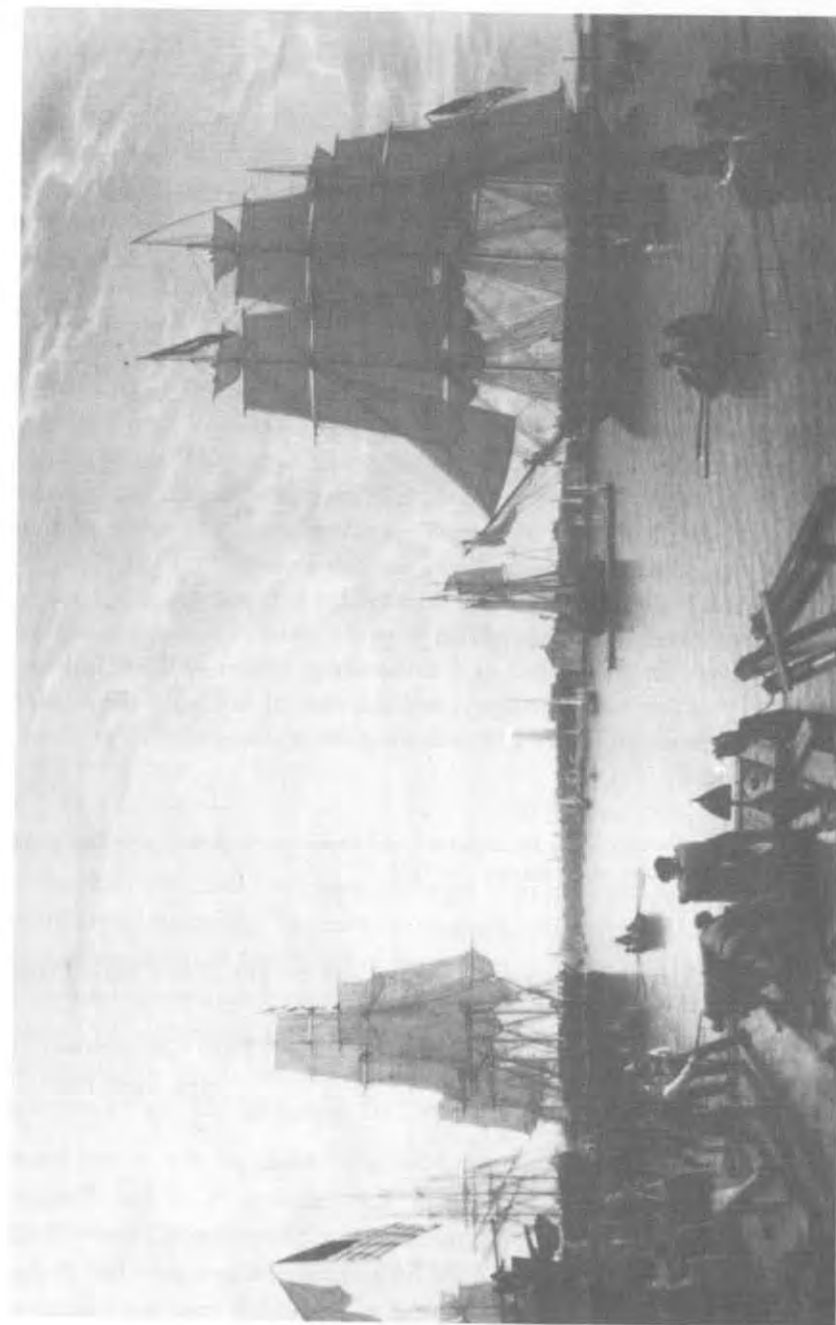
1. For documentation concerning the acquisition and improvement of navy yards during the period 1801-1805, see ASP, Naval Affairs, I: 84-103.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Charlestown
14th April 1812

Sir,

The Navy Yard here (by the Abstract report of the Navy Store Keeper) is very deficient in Timber for the repairs of the Frigate *Chesapeake*; except what belongs to the frame of the Seventy four¹-And even the State of that timber cannot be ascertained as it now lies in the mud-I have been informed that several pieces which have been hauled out have proven quite decayed; to know the true state of it-I shall have it removed from its present situation & thoroughly examined-it will be attended with some expence-but in my opinion indispensably necessary.



Boston Harbor from Constitution Wharf

The Agents of the War Department (as I am informed) have made destructive work with some of the best wale pieces, plank, & Timber of the 74s-I presume the War Department, has been accommodated in this manner by the Navy Department, on the express condition of having equal quantity & quality returned; but not a particle of which has yet been furnished. Permit me Sir, to suggest, the propriety of desiring the Secretary of War, to have the quantity returned with as little delay as possible-as the want of it may subject the Naval operations here to inconvenience and extra expences, which might be attributed to neglect, and extravagance in the Navy, when in fact it would be the fault of the War Department.

Be pleased to inform me whether I am authorised to use the timber &c provided for the 74 at this yard in the Repairs of the *Cheseapeake*. I have the honor [&c.]

W^m Bainbridge

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 122.

1. In 1805, Secretary of the Navy Robert Smith presented a report to the House of Representatives containing an accounting of the materials on hand to build the 74-gun ships. As nothing more was done on these ships until 1813, one may assume that the timbers to which Captain Bainbridge refers are those mentioned in Secretary Smith's report. See *ASP, Naval Affairs*, I: 140-42.

Marines in the War of 1812

On 1 July 1797, Congress passed "An Act Providing a Naval Armament" which authorized the stationing of marines on board U.S. Navy ships, and one year later, the "Act for the Establishing and Organizing a Marine Corps" called for marines to be placed on duty "in the forts and garrisons of the United States, on the sea coast, or any other duty on shore as the President, at his discretion, shall direct."¹ From that time, marines served at naval stations, navy yards, and in ships. Their main duty in peacetime was to preserve security and to maintain discipline. During war at sea, marines helped to man the fighting tops, and with sailors, boarded or repelled boarders when their ship grappled the enemy. The following document contains orders

representative of those issued to marine officers in charge of detachments or "guards" as they were sometimes called, on board ships of the U.S. Navy.

1. Richard Peters, ed., *Public Statutes at Large (Boston, 1861)*, I: 523-25, 594-96.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT FRANKLIN WHARTON, U.S.M.C.,
TO SECOND LIEUTENANT ALFRED GRAYSON, U.S.M.C.

H.Q. of the Marine Corps.
Washington, April 8th 1812

Sir!

You will as soon as possible repair to Norfolk-Virginia-and from thence proceed on board the Frigate *Congress*, commanded by Capt John Smith & report yourself to him, or in his Absence, the commanding officer, as prepared to receive the Guard of Marines attached to said Frigate¹-the Command being received, with all the Clothing, Arms, & Accoutrements belonging to it, you must particularly attend to the preservation of Desipline among the Men, to ensure a Military Conduct from them; as I presume no duty will be exacted which could be unpleasant to you as the Officer of the Guard, or which would counteract it.

You are too well acquainted with the application of the Clothing to the Soldier, to make necessary any remarks in regard to issues of it, by me, & in the pay Department I expect you equally informend-from the different Staff officers you will however receive Instructions, or regulation of their offices, to which you must attend to prevent Embarrasment to yourself or them. I must here request you to Keep me informed of the state of your command, whenever your return to port will permit it.

On receiving the Clothing, & such Returns as will ascertain the Accounts of the Men, as to the articles due, & shortly to become due to them, & a calculation made how far you can by that in store relieve their wants, you will report to me what you may consider as immediately essential for their Comfort (Fatigues excepted) that I may take proper steps to meet your requisition, whenever made on the Q. Master.

Health & Happiness attend you, & believe me to be very Respectfully Your obt. Servt.

Franklin Wharton

Lieut. Alfred Grayson, of Marines.

Copy, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Sent.

1. *Congress*, a 36-gun frigate, was authorized a marine detachment comprised of one lieutenant, two sergeants, two corporals, one drummer, one fifer, and forty privates. The 44-gun frigates carried an additional lieutenant, sergeant, corporal, and ten more privates. See Callan & Russell, *Laws... of the Navy*, pp. 88-90.

Nautilus on Embargo Patrol

President Madison's embargo went into effect on 4 April 1812 but was limited to a period of 90 days.¹ According to its terms, no ships belonging to citizens of the United States were to be allowed clearance for any foreign port unless departing in ballast. Naval and revenue officers were to enforce this law, and stiff penalties of up to a \$20,000 fine were to be inflicted on scofflaws.

There were several reasons for the passage of this legislation. Since war was considered to be imminent, an embargo would give most American ships then at sea a reasonable period to return from their trading voyages before risking capture by hostile warships. Secondly, it was assumed that if war were declared, it would not take place until the expiration of the embargo, and every minute of that time would be needed for war preparations. Thirdly, congressmen opposed to the war supported the measure as a delaying tactic allowing the British more time to consider concessions. Finally, as many merchants and seamen were engaged in shipping grain to British armies in Spain, it was hoped that this measure would sever trade with a potential enemy.²

Secretary of the Navy Hamilton shouldered the major burden of enforcing the embargo law at sea. He ordered his senior officers to dispatch patrols to seize illegal shipping all along the coast. Commodore John Rodgers, at New York, ordered Lieutenant William Crane, commander of the brig Nautilus, 14 guns, to patrol the entrance to Boston Bay and occasionally cruise northward along the Maine coast.

1. *Peters*, Public Statutes at Large, II: 700-701.

2. *The law failed to choke off trade with Spain. News of the impending embargo spread rapidly and spurred merchants, owners, and masters to hasten their ships' departures. Several hundred ships cleared with cargos of corn and flour and were on the high seas by the time the embargo became official. See Perkins, Prologue to War, p. 386.*

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO LIEUTENANT WILLIAM M. CRANE

(Copy)

U.S. Frigate *President*
New York 13th April 1812

Sir

As soon as the *Nautilus* is ready for service, I have to direct that you proceed to Boston for the purpose of enforcing the enclosed Embargo Law. You are to consider Boston Bay as the general limits of your Station—say from Cape-Cod to Cape-Ann: you may nevertheless occasionally stretch as far north as Passamaquoddy, in the event of your believing that by doing so you will be better enabled to enforce the Law.

Agreeably to the orders of the Honble the Secretary of the Navy, you are to consider as proper objects of seizure, all Vessels acting or found under such circumstances as may justify a strong suspicion of their intention to act in violation of any of the provisions of this Law: also to consider that your authority extends to the seizure of all Vessels acting contrary to said Law within the jurisdiction of the United States or elsewhere, not within the Teretorial jurisdiction of another State, which of course under no pretence whatever is to be violated.

All Vessels seized under this Law, are to be sent into the nearest & most convenient Port, for adjudication, & all the papers accompanying them are to be placed in the hands of the District Attorney to be proceeded upon according to law.

In addition to your enforcing the Embargo Law to the utmost of your power, it is expected that you will in like manner afford protection to our neutral rights as an independant nation, & to our Commerce, agreeably to the following extract of an order to me from the Honble the Secretary of the Navy, bearing date 5th of June 1810.

"1st If within a marine league of the Coast of the United States, any British or French armed Vessel should molest any of our merchant Vessels, you will use all the means in your power to defend &

protect such merchant Vessel: & within the harbours: & within the waters of the United States, above low water mark, you will extend the defence & protection to merchant vessels to whatever nation belonging—and in all cases where defence & protection are hereby authorised you will take possession of the offending private armed vessel, if found or overtaken within the jurisdictional limits of the United States, & give notice thereof to the District Attorney, that such proceedings may be had as the case may require"

"2nd If any private armed vessel be found within our waters or hovering on our Coast, within the marine league, & there be ground to suspect, the same of a piratical character, or that she has been illegally fitted out, or augmented in her force, within the United States, or has proceeded therefrom in pursuance of any military expedition or enterprize contrary to Law, you will seize the same, & give like notice for the like purpose, to the District Attorney of the United States."

"3d If within our harbours & waters you should discover any of our citizens affording (contrary to Law) any Aid to any foreign armed vessel, either in repairing her, or in furnishing her, her officers or Crew, with supplies of any kind, or if you should discover any Pilot assisting in navigating such armed vessel, unless for the purpose of carrying her beyond the limits and jurisdiction of the United States, you will require two or more of your Crew, to observe particularly, such citizen or pilot & the name of the Witnesses, to the Attorney of the district in which the offence shall be committed, in order that such proceedings may be had against such offenders as the Law directs."

"4th You are not to construe these orders as requiring you to use force, beyond your ports or harbours, altho within a marine league of our Coast, in any case where there is not a prospect of success."

You are to keep me informed of all your movements and transactions relative to the Public Service—also to transmit to me a report of all seizures which you may make under the Embargo Law, copies of which you are desired to forward to the Navy Department. At the expiration of the present Embargo Law, you are to return to this port to receive my further instructions.

You will be pleased to address your letters to this place & to send duplicates of them to New Port Respectfully [&c.]

(Signed) Jno Rodgers

Lieut. Comdt Wm M. Crane
Comdg U.S. Brig *Nautilus*

P.S. You are to advise & co-operate with the Collectors of Customs in the enforcement of the Embargo Law.

(Sigd) J.R.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 118c.

The Navy at Wilmington, North Carolina

Sailing Master Thomas N. Gautier was the senior officer in charge of gunboats at Wilmington. His nominal superior was Captain John Dent, commander of U.S. naval forces at Charleston. In the months prior to the declaration of war, Gautier's plight was not unlike that of other junior officers who were placed in charge of small detachments of men and gunboats and were short on equipment. While he was engaged in strengthening his forces to enforce the embargo and to defend Wilmington and the Cape Fear River, he received an order from Captain Hugh Campbell, who was in charge of gunboats on the St. Marys River on the Georgia-Florida border. Brigadier General George Mathews of the Georgia Militia requested Campbell's support in blockading Fort St. Augustine. Lacking a sufficient number of vessels, Campbell called upon Gautier to send available gunboats to supplement those at St. Marys and St. Augustine. Gautier's subsequent report to Captain Dent describes the dilemma and requested advice.¹

1. *Sailing Master Gautier had seen earlier service in the U.S. Navy. Gautier entered the navy on 22 Feb. 1800, from North Carolina and served for approximately one year as a lieutenant in the frigate Congress during the Quasi-War. He left the navy on 22 June 1801, one of many officers who were discharged because of the Naval Peace Establishment Act. On 4 Aug. 1807, however, Gautier rejoined the Navy and served as sailing master until 25 Aug. 1814. See "Extracts from Muster Roll of U.S. Frigate Congress. . .," Dudley W. Knox, ed., Naval Documents Related to the Quasi-War Between the United States and France, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1935-1938) V: 19 and VII: 329.*

SAILING MASTER THOMAS N. GAUTIER TO CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT

(Copy)

Wilmington (N C) 22d April 1812

Sir,

Having had lately much attention to pay, to what was passing in the River Cape Fear on the Embargo's taking place, is the reason why I have not had it in my power to execute your orders to me of 3rd inst from Washington in making you the report required, I shall confine myself to the Actual State of the Gun Vessels with their military equipments.

I have greatly to lament my not receiving your orders eight days earlier, as I should not now have to regret the loss of my best Gun Vessel *No 168* Schooner rigged, and my confidential Officer Mr John Hulburd S. M. a valuable man, *No 168* was ordered by Captain Campbell to join the *St Mary's* Flotilla, She was built here at the entreaty of the Citizens, and it was never imagined She would be ordered away (two others *166* & *167* were built at the same time) and as she belongs to this Station, I with deference submit to you the propriety of obtaining a release.

This Harbour requires five gun vessels and a heavy Brig. the Main Bar has 17 feet and the new inlet 13 feet water. I do not know of a place where gun vessels can be of more utility than in Cape Fear Waters, and would be much required in case of War. [Cape Fear Harbor] can be made a rendezvous for any enemy, and out of reach of the Fort Guns, as it was during the revolution and previous to the attack on Charleston.¹

Our Force at present consists of Only Three Gun Boats *Nos 7, 166, & 167*. *No 7* is an old boat mounted with one 32 pounder, and must have immediately New Sails, Awnings, Waist-Cloths and Wind Sails, her present Suit was bent in February, 1808. On board R G. Edwards Acting S.M. Mr [William] Mayo Midshipman 17 petty Officers & Men 1 Corporal and four Marines She is Schooner rigged.

No 166 a new vessel mounted with two 6 pounders, & the Carpenters are making the Carriage Slide & ca for the 32 pounder which will not be ready untill the middle of May. I have some time back indented for a long 18 or 24 with Slide and carriage complete as I conceive a 32 unequal to her Powers. She is Galliot rigged Mr Nehemiah Drew S.M. Messrs Hammersly [George Hamersley] & [William J.] Belt Midshipman. 21 petty officers & men 1 Corporal and 4 marines.

No 167 a new vessel rigged same as *No 166* mounts a 32 pr., Slides and Carriage Complete, and two Sixes. T.N. Gautier Senior Officer, 30 petty Officers & men 1 Corporal and 4 Marines, our Military equipments are trifling, of Muskets 29, Pistols 21, Battle axes 18, Cutlasses none, Boarding Pikes 20, Cordage 18 Coils, Duck 16 Bolts, 2000 Rotten junk 3/4 Cask of paint oil, 10 Kegs Paints: 203 Copper Sheets. 1 Spare Cable 2 tow lines, Casks, Breakers, Kids, Cans & Harness Casks Complete. Powder none but damaged. Powder &ca, Indented for, but not received.

Provisions.

162 bbls pork, 3 bbls beef 19 bbls bread 3 1/8 bbls vinegar
4 bbls flour 2 1/3 Hhds molasses 4 Tierces rice 1/2 tierce pease,
3 Kegs butter, 2 Casks & four cheeses, 6 Boxes Raisins & 6 boxes Candles.

I have received orders from Captain Campbell to place the boats in order for sea, and report them. I am thus Situated, I have always been led to believe they were only intended for river Service. and Should I comply with his orders, it may be contrary to your intentions, I only wish to know if, his orders are to be obeyed or yours exclusively, if so, I shall be happy to give the same Satisfaction to you, as I have every reason to believe I have given him, (H.G.C. Esqr) as my greatest pride is in complying with orders for my Country's Service, to execute them with that promptness and correctness becoming an officer.

Mr [Edwin W.] Turner has reported himself as Purser for this Station and any documents, or papers, required by you, he will soon be enabled to furnish, and any commands from you will be attended to with alacrity. I am Sir [&c.]

(Signed) T. N Gautier
Commanding Officer

Capt. John H. Dent. U.S. Navy, Charleston.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 165 [Enclosure].

1. The original version of this letter was sent to Captain Dent who had it copied and forwarded the copy to the secretary of the navy. The bracketed words "Cape Fear Harbor" replace a blank space and indicate the probable location of the "rendezvous." The "Fort" referred to was Fort Johnston, a relatively ill-equipped fortification located near the present town of Southport near the mouth of the Cape Fear River.

The Navy at Charleston, South Carolina

Less than one month after his appointment to command the naval stations at Charleston and Wilmington, Captain John H. Dent faced a bleak situation.¹ He was immediately responsible for the defense of both cities and for the enforcement of the embargo along the intricate coastlines of North and South Carolina. Having some months earlier recommended the establishment of a naval shipyard at Charleston, he found this placed under his charge as well. The vessels at Dent's disposal were limited to a few gunboats and the brig Vixen, 12 guns. It is clear, from the following report, that he felt crippled in his lack of ships, men, and useful equipment. He informed Secretary Hamilton that he was in dire need of fresh provisions, and that the cannon, ordnance stores, and gunpowder stored at the yard had been too neglected to be of much use. Apparently, even though Sailing Master Gautier at Wilmington was his subordinate, Dent was in no position to remonstrate with Captain Campbell at St. Marys for ordering away Gautier's gunboats. In writing to Secretary Hamilton, however, Dent made it clear that if some gunboats could be returned, there would be a good use for them in the Carolinas.

1. Dent was appointed to this command on 28 Mar. 1812. (See Hamilton to Dent, 28 Mar. 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 1.) Dent had seen several active years of naval service prior to this duty. He was appointed midshipman in 1798, served in Constellation and President, and was promoted lieutenant during the Quasi-War. He served in Essex, John Adams, and Constitution, and commanded Enterprise, Scourge, and Nautilus during the Tripolitan War, from which he emerged as master commandant. He twice commanded Hornet and then John Adams in the years 1806-1811.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston 27th April. 1812

Sir

I have not yet received any information from Mr Gautier, in charge of the Gun Boats at Wilmington. I understand one of the boats belonging to that Station, left this the day before I arrived, for St Marys with Stores. I feel the want of a few Gun Boats here, as I am informed from good Authority that a quantity of goods have been Smuggled into Port Royal Bay and shipped into boats and carried through the inland Navigation on to Augusta (Georgia) also the

vessels trading to & from those inlets, give no bonds or do they clear with the Custom House, it is easy to reship their rice &c in those Waters without detection, it was done during the last Embargo, and no doubt will be done again. The revenue cutter is undergoing repairs, and we have no vessel here. I understand there are fifteen Gun Boats at St. Marys. if Captain Campbell could spare three, I would place one immediately in George Town River to watch that and the Santee—the other at Beaufort to guard the Sound & inland navigation the *Vixen* is now on a Cruise to the Southward, and will Shortly return here as She is attached to this Station, it will be necessary that I should receive some instructions relative to her future operations. There are here a number of valuable Seamen unemployed, probably more than at any other port in the U.S. as our bar prevented the escape of vessels that were ready to sail when the first intelligence of the Embargo reached this—if not immediately engaged for the Service they will leave this, or in event of War, will engage in Privateers in preference to the Navy. I have commenced to day transporting the Guns, to the yard, there are about fifty of different Calibre's. I am sorry to add from exposure and the want of paint, they are very much injured from rust, and I fear many will be found unfit for Service, the Carriages from the same cause are rotten, and many destroyed. to get the iron by Negroes as they have been left at their disposal, I shall immediately have them repaired as far as practicable and replaced by new ones. I made a requisition on [First] Lieut [Robert D.] Wainwright for a guard of Marines to be placed at the yard for the protection of the Stores &ca, he informed me it was not in his power to comply with my requisition, having but four privates under his command, would it not be better that they should be removed to the yard where there is a proper room provided for their accommodation, and thereby be of some Service, and save the expence of renting an additional establishment. I wish Sir, you would take this into consideration, and authorize me to build such barracks as you think may be requisite for the Marines that may be attached to this Station, they will then be situated near the powder magazine, and thereby save the State the expence of a Guard, and in consideration thereof permit the powder of the U. S. to be placed there on a better footing than it is at present. I am informed our powder has been lying there many years without being turned or aired which is absolutely necessary for its preservation. I shall immediately have it examined, and ascertain its situation & quantity. I am

much afraid Sir from what little observation that I have been able to make on the few Stores we have here, that they are of little value, being principally composed of remnants, there are but two officers here. Sailing Masters [Charles] Grandison & [Joseph P.] Prince, I have just learnt that Midshipman [Joseph] Brailsford is in town. I have ordered him to report himself, and shall employ him until further orders. there being no money subject to my orders I have directed the Agent to make a requisition for Eight Thousand dollars to meet such contracts as shall be made, for recruiting service, advances to the purser on account of pay, & contingent expences. I am also informed by the agent, that a small vessel (coppered) and used as a Tender had been Sold by order of Capt Campbell some time since, and the purchaser not having complied with the terms of Sale (nor no probability of so doing) I have ordered him to take the necessary legal steps to recover her as she is greatly wanted. I shall as soon as possible make a return of all the Stores &c, belonging to the Department, with particular remarks, on their state & condition for service. I would in the mean time recommend that cordage, canvass twine, Iron, nails, spikes, a small forge, with Tools one hundred & fifty stand of arms, with accoutrements, one hundred sabres, Eighty pair of Pistols be sent here, as those articles will be immediately wanted. I have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 151.

A Shortage of Marines

Although the Marine Corps was authorized to have about 1,000 men and officers at the outbreak of the War of 1812, they had only about one-half that number. Consequently, the secretary of the navy was obliged to send most of the available marines to the frigates where they were badly needed. Along with shortages of men, however, there were insufficient supplies of uniforms and equipment. As can be seen in the following letter, the Marine Corps commandant, Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Franklin Wharton, was anxious to bring shipboard marine complements up to full strength before hostilities began.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT FRANKLIN WHARTON, U.S.M.C.,
TO CAPTAIN JOHN HALL, U.S.M.C.

H.Q. of the Marine Corps.
Washington, May 4th 1812,

Sir!

My last required you to compleat the Guard of the *President*, on her appearance off the Hook, which was expected in a short time.¹ The *Essex* is cruising with that Frigate, & has an incomplete Guard—I must now request you to furnish Lieut Gamble with one Sergeant, one Corporal, & Eight privates—the number of Men deficient, & that you also furnish him with the Clothing of his detachments, as far as you possibly can²—inform him Music shall be added very soon.³ I hope success attends your rendezvous, & that your next report will be able to shew that you want no aid from Philadelphia, to meet the requisition of Capt Chauncey.⁴ I shall be there I hope soon to make arrangements with Capt Gale, however, in case you must be supplied with Men by him.⁵ I am [&c.]

F. Wharton

Capt John Hall,
Commandg Marines,
New York.

Copy, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Sent.

1. The "Hook" refers to Sandy Hook, New Jersey, located about 12 miles south of Manhattan Island. Sandy Hook Bay provided a safe anchorage and a convenient rendezvous point for Commodore Rodgers' squadron.

2. 1st Lieutenant John M. Gamble was currently in charge of *Essex*'s marine detachment.

3. Ships' marines customarily included one fifer and one drummer, commonly referred to as "Music."

4. Captain Isaac Chauncey, USN, was commandant of the New York Navy Yard at the outbreak of the War of 1812.

5. Captain Anthony Gale, was commanding officer of marines, Philadelphia, stationed at the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

The Preparation of Munitions

Six weeks before the declaration of war, Navy Secretary Hamilton ordered the officers in charge of navy yards and naval stations to test the powder held in the magazines of their installations. In some cases, the tests revealed a sad situation. When powder was held in barrels for great lengths of time without periodic inspections, testing, and drying, its potency declined. This is apparently what had occurred at the Gosport (now Norfolk) Navy Yard. In the following report, Master Commandant Samuel Evans describes the results of tests taken and compared these with similar tests taken of the powder carried on board the frigate United States.

MASTER COMMANDANT SAMUEL EVANS TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Gosport
8th May 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to subjoin as perfect a report of the Powder in the Magazine here, as is in my power. Agreeable to your Orders of the 21st ultimo.

Not being able to procure a provette¹ I was obliged to try the strength of what we have here by comparing it with some approved powder from the Frigate *U. States*.—The Numbers-1-2-& 3 is the powder belonging to the Frigate—and the other Numbers are that in our Magazine—It was all tried under the same circumstances with a Howitzer carrying a three pound Ball, elevated nine degrees, and charged with a half an ounce of each description of Powder. I have the honor [&c.]

Sam^l Evans

		Diste Thrown		Diste Thrown		Diste Thrown
Frigate <i>U. States</i>	No 1	452 feet	No 38	159 feet	No 76	287
	2	398	39	97	77	161
	3	268	40	136	78	156

[No] of Barrel [in the] Magazine	7	112	41	119	79	118
	8	286	43	96	80	136
	9	122	45	136	81	136
	13	81	48	143	82	166
	14	202	49	133	83	88
	15	102	50	172	84	177
	16	63	51	192	85	112
	17	164	56	153	86	301
	18	128	57	218	89	108
	19	154	58	374	90	210
	20	112	59	95	92	118
	21	177	60	410	93	90
	22	134	61	104	94	108
	23	123	64	104	97	178
	24	95	65	123	96	81
	25	293	66	77	101	95
	26	233	67	136	103	59
	27	188	68	98	104	71
	31	197	69	203	105	150
	32	124	70	111	106	136
	36	128	71	148	169	140
	37	129	75	89	102	130
Priming powder						
	No 6				328	
	9				172	
	10				144	
	11				208	
	28				116	
	100				362	
	107				95	

Note, Barrels No 1-2-95 & 74 are in a cake and entirely damaged.

Sam¹ Evans

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 38.

1. Provette (eprovette): a small iron mortar commonly used to test new lots of black powder.

The Weakening of Gunboat Crews

In order to provide marines for larger warships, the secretary of the navy had to remove them from gunboats on southern stations where there was less chance they might see action. While no such orders were sent to navy commandants at Gosport, New York, Newport, or Boston, these officers could provide men for the ships much more quickly when the need arose, than could the remote southern stations.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO SELECTED OFFICERS

Circular

Capt Shaw, N. Orleans	Nav: Dep'mt.
Capt Dent, Chaston, S.C.	6 May 1812
Capt Campbell, St. Marys, Ga.	

We find it impracticable to provide Marines for the Gunboats-it is indeed with difficulty we can procure a sufficient number for the frigates & other Vessels of War. We must therefore abandon the plan of having a detachment of Marines on board each Gunboat & all Marines now on board Gunboats must be withdrawn & deliverd over to the Commanding officer of Marines. You will accordingly have the arrangement carried into effect with respect to all the Gunboats prepared or preparing for service by You.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 33-34.

Logistical Support for the Marines

War preparations demanded anticipation of needs everywhere that ships and men of the navy and marines were stationed. If not already

available, uniform articles, blankets, arms, and ammunition would have to be ordered and shipped to points where they were likely to be needed. Officers responsible for procuring these supplies contacted the navy agent serving their command. He would, in turn, contact the manufacturers or suppliers of these goods and arrange for shipment and payment. The following letter illustrates these points and is also interesting for the attention paid to marine supplies ordered to Oneida, the only U.S. Navy warship stationed on Lake Ontario in May 1812.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT FRANKLIN WHARTON, U.S.M.C.,
TO CAPTAIN JOHN HALL, U.S.M.C.

[Extract]

H. Q. of the Marine Corps
Washington, May 10th 1812

Sir!

. . . A late decision of the Navy Department, in regard to Gun Boat Guards, will I know now much relieve you from the anxiety caused by the last heavy demands on you for them; the Guards for the Frigates must now be most particularly attended to, on their reaching the Hook.¹ You must through the Navy Agent forward supplies for the *Oneida*.² The Quarter Master has again been directed to ship Arms, &c., & Capt. [Anthony] Gale reports that the Articles with him only wait a Conveyance. remember the *Oneida* is near to the probable scene of action; She cannot remain longer without your attention. . . . I am
[&c.]

F: Wharton
Lt. Col. Commt.
M. Corps.

Capt. John Hall,
Commandg. Marines,
New York.

Copy, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Sent.

1. For an example of Secretary Hamilton's orders regarding withdrawal of marines from gun-boats, see p. 107. Circular to Captains Shaw, Dent and Campbell. 6 May 1812. DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 33-34.

2. *Oneida*, 16-gun brig, built at Oswego, New York, on Lake Ontario in 1808-1809. She became Commodore Isaac Chauncey's flagship.

The Pre-War Atmosphere at Charleston

Captain John Dent, the commanding officer of U.S. naval forces at Charleston, had many worrisome tasks to accomplish in preparation for the war he believed was approaching. One of these was supervision of the accounts of the navy's agents in Charleston, Nathaniel Ingraham & Son, about whom he had received complaints. At the same time, he found it difficult to convince citizens of Charleston of the seriousness of the threat of war, and in the letter to Secretary Hamilton which follows, he comments on their skepticism. The British had stationed warships off Charleston, and Dent's officers frequently had to run a gauntlet as they made their patrols, as did Lieutenant Gadsden in his close call with H.M. sloop Colibri.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston 14th May. 1812

(Private)

Sir,

I have advertised ten days in the papers of this City for all accounts against the Navy Department on this Station to be rendered in, to me, in order (as I informed you) to ascertain whether the reports in circulation injurious to the Navy, and the Character of the Navy Agents, were without foundation or not. I am happy to say none such as have been complained of have appeared. those gentlemen have been much injured from reports in circulation, that the Mechanic's Bills were unpaid altho' receipted for, and the monies transmitted by the Department had been applied to other purposes, and their notes substituted. from a clear and full investigation with Mr [Nathaniel] Ingraham, of

all the transactions relative to his official duty I believe him correct, which has brought about a perfect reconciliation between us.

I am also happy to inform you the appointment of Major Pinckney has given great satisfaction in this quarter.¹ He has not been in Town since my arrival, but I am informed by his Son, he is making his private arrangements expecting daily to be called into active Service. I am sorry to add the people here do not believe we are going to war, and are too much disposed to treat our National Councils with Contempt and consider their preparations as electioneering; the failure of the Loan has also afforded the English party here some triumph which I hope may be removed by some act of a hostile nature.

I observe Commodores Rogers & Decatur are on a Cruise, there are two English Frigates off this coast, with some smaller cruizers. I must observe that Lieut Gadsden in falling in with the *Colibri* Brig of 20 Guns during his last Cruise,² acted in my opinion with great firmness and propriety; they approached each other prepared for action, and remained in that situation within pistol Shot for half an hour, without Speaking, when they both Sheered off, had Gadsden hailed, he would have received no answer, [and] his great inferiority in force, would have placed him in a delicate Situation I have the honor [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 180.

1. Thomas Pinckney served in the Continental Army during the American Revolution, rising to the rank of major. Following the war, he held several public offices including governor of South Carolina and minister to Great Britain. In Jan. 1812, Congress authorized the creation of several general, field, and staff officers. Pinckney was appointed major general, second in command to Major General Henry Dearborn. Pinckney was given command of the military district extending from North Carolina to the Mississippi River.

2. Christopher Gadsden, Jr., commanded the U.S. brig *Vixen* at the time of his encounter with *Colibri*. He was promoted master commandant on 10 July 1812, but died on 28 Aug. 1812. The British "Ships in Sea Pay" identifies *Colibri* as a sloop; see p. 182, below.

Stalemate in East Florida

Following the dismissal of Brigadier General Mathews, President Madison appointed Georgia Governor David Mitchell a special agent

of the United States and charged him with the task of arranging an orderly withdrawal of insurgents from East Florida. Like Mathews, Mitchell was authorized to call on naval and military commanders for support. The chance that hostilities could break out with Spanish or even British forces was real. Mitchell would not withdraw forces without a guarantee from the Spanish that there would be no reprisals made against insurgents who lived in East Florida. As the Spanish would not negotiate, Mitchell requested Captain Campbell to leave his gunboats on duty on the St. Johns River. Lack of speedy communications and specific orders from Washington again left Campbell uncertain of the proper course. He requested instructions but complied with Mitchell's request, as can be seen in the next document.

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St Marys May 16th 1812

Sir,

Herewith I have the honor to enclose a requisition of Governor Mitchell for a Gun Boat to be stationed on the St Johns River which has been complied with by ordering on that service *No 165*, Robert Cutchins Commander. The other Boats are in obedience to your orders of the 4th Ult Stationed in the most advantageous manner for enforcing the Embargo Law, from the entrance of Bell River near roses Bluff above this town, to St Catherines Sound. The two Boats on St Johns River by request of Governor Mitchell, *No 63* at Picolata, as my last respects informed you, and *No 165* about 7 miles above the entrance of that River, deprives the waters of Sapelo and St Simons of that protection the present state of affairs require. An addition of two more Gun Boats would compleatly guard the Rivers and Inlets of this state. Governor Mitchell Considers himself authorised to call on me for such aid as circumstances may require, and my not having orders to the Contrary, consider myself bound to Comply with his requisitions. Permit me to request the favour of some advice on that head. Nothing new has transpired since my last except a meeting of about 30 Indians of the lower Creeks with General Mathews at Picalata, they returned home appearantly satisfied having promised not to Interfere with the disputes of white People. I have the Honor to be [&c.]

Hugh G Campbell

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 187.

Gunboat No. 168 vs. H.M. Brig *Sappho*

The continued presence of U.S. naval gunboats at Amelia Island and near St. Augustine created the likelihood of hostile contact with British naval vessels. On 13 May 1812, there occurred an inconclusive but unusual engagement between a U.S. Navy gunboat and a British warship; it was unusual because of the great disparity of force existing between the two vessels. Attempting to enforce American embargo laws, Sailing Master John Hulburd challenged H.M. brig Sappho which was standing by to escort a ship whose master intended to evade the embargo. Both Hulburd and the British captain were aware that a conflict between them could have serious consequences. Brief though it was, this incident showed the zeal with which officers of these opposing navies followed their orders in a time of tense international relations.

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St Marys May 22d 1812

Sir,

My last respects of the 6th Inst made you acquainted with the British Brig of War *Sappho* having anchored near Amelia in spanish waters.

I have now the honor to enclose for your information some particulars touching the Conduct of her commander, towards the lawfull Authority of the United States, as appears by the report of Mr John Hulburd commanding Gun Vessel No 168, and my orders to that officer relative to the *Sappho* and a Merchant Vessel known to be an Embargo breaker, which vessel I had seized after the fall of *Fernandeno*, but restored her, to her former owner in consequence of a demand made by General Mathews, in compliance with that article of capitulation wherein Property and person are protected. I have the Honor [&c.]

Hugh G Campbell

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 195.

SAILING MASTER JOHN HULBURD TO CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL

U.S. Gun Vessel No 168
St Marys River May 16 1812

Sir,

In compliance with your order I proceeded with this vessel to the south point of Cumberland Island where I remained at Anchor untill the 15th Inst at 7 A.M. the British Brig *Sappho* of 18 Guns said to be 32 pounders fired and let fall her Fore Top Sail, which I understood to be a Signal to her Convoy The ship *Fernandeno* loosed sails at the same time. At 1/2 past 7 the ship weighed and stood towards the Bar, at 8 the *Sappho* followed immediately Reefed Top sails, 10 minutes past 8 I weighed and stood for the Bar under Short sail, the wind fresh from W,S,W, at 9 passed the Brig *sappho* at anchor, the north point of Amelia bearing S,W, by W, I then made sail crossed the Bar and hove to in 7 1/2 fathoms, the *Fernandeno* hove to a mile to the eastward of me, 25 minutes past nine the *sappho* fired a Gun, the ship filled and stood to the eastward, the Brig crossed the Bar. at 7 minutes past 10 passed athwart her stern when both vessel lay too, after hailing I asked the following questions and receivd these answers—Is that ship the *Fernandeno* formerly the *Amelia* under American Colours, now under spanish Colours under your protection—She is—That ship the *Fernandeno* is a proscribed Vessel under the denomination of an Embargo Breaker, having violated the late Embargo law, of which sufficient proof has been lodged with the proper authority, in consequence of which I have received from the senior officer commanding the United States Naval Force on the southern station, to take possession of that ship, this being the case sir, I hope that you will not protect or assist her in her attempt to escape from Justice—That ship sir, is under spanish Colours, I am bound to protect her—I shall protest, I do protest in the name of the United States, under orders from my superior officer, against your assisting her, I will take possession of her—I will send you a Copy of my Instructions—I do not wish to see them—I then ordered Mr Pentland to go on board with a Copy of my Instructions, which were presented to her Commander, after several questions being asked they were read, and the following answer received—Tell your commander that he has done his duty to his country, but that ship is under spanish Colours and I am bound to protect her—I then filled away and stood after the ship, the Brig wore and stood to the Northward and Eastward, at 34 minutes past 10 oclock Amelia Island

bearing west distant 10 miles. Fired a shot at the *Fernandeno*, to which she paid no attention, 46 past 10 fired a six pound shot and canister at the ship, several of the shot struck her quater and sails, she rounded too, I took possession of her and papers and ordered her to lie too untill there was a prize master sent on board. For three or four days past the sickly situation of my crew rendered it difficult to spare so many seamen to man so large a ship. The *sappho* by this time had spoken the ship, I then Tacked to the Northward, and passing the Brig was hailed from her with an order — Send that ships papers on board or I will fire into you — Your orders I shall disobey — Heave too or I shall fire into you — To which I made no reply — Heave too, I shall send my boat on board — ay, ay, but continued my course passing the ship ordered her to stand in for the Land with her Starboard tacks on board or I should fire into her. The Brig on passing the ship I presume ordered her to proceed, whilst the Brig attempted to manouvre so as to detain this vessel, and at one time it appeared their Intention to run foul, but finding her to work too quick gave it over. at 1/2 past 12 the other boat stood in for the Land while this vessel persued the ship. at one P.M. was hailed again schooner a hoi-Hollo—that ship is under spanish Colours, I am bound to protect her, as much so as though she was under English Colours, if you fire into her it may be attended with serious consequences in making a breach between the two nations which It will take a length of time to heal, —I shall be extremely sorry to do any thing to widen a breach which appears already to exist, but to orders I am in duty bound to and will obey—at 1/2 past one hailed again from the *sappho*; if you fire into that ship I will fire into you — If you do I shall most undoubtedly return the shot, I will carry that ship into Port unless prevented by a superior force. 5 minutes before two fired at the ship. 35 minutes after two fired again at the ship — one minute before three fired again at the ship. the shot struck along side of her. one minute after three the Brig *sappho* fired athwart the stern of this Vessel. at 7 or 8 Fathoms distance, the north point of Amelia bearing W,N,W, distant 24 miles. 2 minutes past three fired athwart the *sappho* stern at nearly the same distance and tacked to the southward, the Brig wore at the same time. 4 minutes past three the *sappho* fired a round shot and stand of Grape or Canister which passed between the Masts of this Vessel some of the small shot falling both sides of her. five minutes after three fired two round shot and a stand of Grape at the *sappho* which must have passed between her masts as some of her rigging was seen to fall abaft her foremast, at this time the

two Vessels were within less than one fourth of a mile of each other, I immediately hauled upon the wind followed by the Brig on my lee quater for half an hour manouvreing as though they intended to rake at times, I kept up on the wind untill he kept away from the *Fernandeno*. I arrived here this morning I am Sir [&c.]

John Hulburd, S Master

Hugh G. Campbell, Esqr.

A true Copy Loring Pepoon Clerk

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 195a.

Gunboats for Southern Waters

The only major effort in ship construction for the U.S. Navy during the administrations of Presidents Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, until 1813, was that of building gunboats. At the onset of the War of 1812, there were over 100 gunboats in service in several ports and in varying states of readiness. While suitable for cruising and patrols in shallow bays and estuaries along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, they had a reputation for being unseaworthy, relatively slow, and unstable as gun platforms. A product of defensive naval thinking, they were ill-suited to the type of offshore cruising and commerce raiding that most naval officers wished to pursue. Yet for harbor defense, the gunboats were the only weapons the navy had, and they were much utilized in southern waters. As many men served in them, and were involved in their supply and maintenance, the gunboat service of the War of 1812 was an important facet of naval life and was more closely related to life on the "home front" than was frigate service on the high seas. The following report of Master Commandant Samuel Evans, commandant of the Gosport Navy Yard, demonstrates some of the problems of preparing and manning gunboats.

MASTER COMMANDANT SAMUEL EVANS TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Gosport
22nd May 1812

Sir,

I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 15th Inst to day.

The last eight Gun Boats ordered to be fitted out are as it regards their equipment in readiness for Service, with the exception of Some Small articles with which I have not yet furnished *Nos 148, 149 & 150*, owing to their not having Commanders, and the ability to procure the articles at an hours notice, and with the exception of part of the compliment of men you have allowed them.

The best view I can give as it regards the manning of them will I believe be to furnish you with an abstract from the Books of each boat, including the Officers and Men borne on them respectively which is as follows-

- No 60* has a Sailing Master Commanding, one Midshipman, one Gunner, One Pursers Steward, One Cook, Five Seaman & Nine Ordinary Seamen.
- No 61* has a Sailing Master Commanding, One Gunner, One Boatswain, Two Midshipman, One Pursers Steward, One Cook, Six Seaman, Eight Ordinary Seaman, and one Boy.
- No 67* has a Sailing Master, One Midshipman, One Boatswain, One Gunner, one armourer, one Pursers Steward, One Cook, Six Seaman, Five Ordinary Seaman, and one Boy.
- No 146* has a Sailing Master Comdg, one Midshipman, One Gunner, One Boatswain, One Pursers Steward, One Cook, Eight seaman, Two Ordinary Seaman and One Boy.
- No 147* has a Sailing Master Comdg, Two Midshipman, One Gunner, One Boatswain, Three Seaman, & One Ordinary Seaman
- No 148* has Two Midshipman, One Pursers Steward, and one Boy
- No 149* has Two Midshipman.
- No 150* has One Midshipman.

There has Sailed from Norfolk during the last and present year the following Gun Boats *No 10* Commanded by Midshipman Jones Sailed for St Mary's in May 1811. *No 62* Commanded by Sailing Master Winslow Foster and *No 63* Commanded by Sailing Master Bartran G. Hipkins Sailed for St Mary's in June 1811-and *No 4* Commanded by Sailing Master [Lawrence W.] Stith Sailed for the same place in August 1811. one of the Six Boats fitted out for St Marys but ordered to be kept on this station left here in March last for Washington with the *Constitution* on the order I believe of Commodore Decatur. She has not yet returned. *No 68* is the other Boat fitted out for St Marys and ordered to be kept here *No 69* is still on this Station. She is Commanded by Sailing Master [Lewis B.] Page and has on board One Midshipman, One Master's Mate, One Boatswain, One Gunner, One Carpenter, One Pursers Steward, One Cook, Four Seaman, & eight Ordinary Seaman.

I think it probable that the Sloop Rigged Boats-that is *No 60, 61, 67 & 68* will want some repairs during the Summer, as when we caulked them last year we found a considerable number of their plank, decayed in places, and on taking the decayed pieces out, some of their timbers were also found defective.

Enclosed are Copies of Five letters relative to the equipment of the Gun Boats last ordered for Service, which are [torn] I had the honor to receive from you on the Subject, with the exception of those under date of the 10th and 20th Janry 1812 Respectfully I have the honor [&c.]

Sam^l Evans

Since the Frigates *U States* and *Congress* have closed their Rendezvous we got more men than we have heretofore. Now There are however very few Seaman at Norfolk. S. E.

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 42.

In Search of a Naval Strategy

Secretary of the Navy Paul Hamilton had done a competent job of running the Navy Department during three years of peacetime opera-

tions, when its size was such that naval officers had doubts about its continued existence. Only with much argument had the secretary managed to persuade Congress to refit ships laid up in ordinary. New construction before the commencement of the War of 1812 was out of the question.

The onset of war, however, brought a new dimension to the secretary's job. Whether the navy should be used if war came had been a question debated in the presence of President Madison in February 1812. Secretary Hamilton, perhaps playing devil's advocate, suggested that with such a small navy, the United States would risk losing it entirely in sending ships against the British fleet. According to Irving Brant, Madison's biographer, the president took the side of the navy's more aggressive captains and argued that victories would be needed and that if our ships were lost in seeking them, they could be replaced.¹

With this phase of the argument settled, the question of precisely how the navy would be used remained at issue. Secretary Hamilton was careful to solicit the opinions of two of the most experienced and successful of the navy's commanders, Commodores John Rodgers and Stephen Decatur. Letters containing their replies follow in the order in which they were received. Their opinions differ particularly in regard to the proper disposition of warships at sea. Commodore Rodgers saw great advantages to be gained from combining all ships in a cruising squadron that would search out British convoys and force the British to concentrate, drawing their warships away from American harbors. Commodore Decatur argued that navy ships would have better results if they were to operate either singly or in pairs.

1. Irving Brant, "Timid President? Futile War?" *American Heritage*, Vol. X, No. 6 (Oct. 1959), pp. 46-47, 85-89; Linda Maloney, "The War of 1812: What Role for Sea Power?" in Kenneth J. Hagan, ed., *In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History* (Westport, Conn., 1978), pp. 46-62.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Comre Rodgers
N York

Nav: Dep'mt
21 May 1812

As a war appears now inevitable, I request you to state to me, a plan of operations, which, in your judgment, will enable our little navy to annoy in the utmost extent, the Trade of Gt Britain while it least exposes it to the immense naval force of that Government. State also,

the Ports of the US which you think the safest as assylums for our navy, in time of war.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 41-42. On the same day, Secretary Hamilton sent an identical letter to Commodore Decatur; see Hamilton to Decatur, 21 May 1812, *ibid.*, p. 42.

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *President*
Staten Island June 3d, 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st ult, and in answer to your enquiries permit me to state, that in my humble opinion to annoy the trade of Great Britain with the greatest effect would be at the commencement of a War, to dispose our comparatively very small force, in such a way as to harrass her W India commerce by our lightest vessels: and her coasting trade, East India trade & other foreign trade by our Frigates & one or two of our fastest sailing sloops of war: our small vessels to be disposed in a way, according to circumstances, to annoy to the greatest extent all the avenues leading to & from her West India Islands, Surinam, Berbice, & Denamara: a small squadron of two, or three of our fastest sailing frigates & a single sloop of War, to cruise on the coasts of England, Ireland, & Scotland; & the residue of our frigates to to act seperately, or in squadron on our own coasts to harrass the enemy by cruising in the tracts of his ships trading between him & his colonies of Canada, Nova Scotia, & Newfoundland; and occasionally to unite all our Frigates & attack his East India convoys.

This, Sir, would in my opinion, be the most advisable disposition that could be made of our little navy, at least for the first six months, perhaps during the whole of the War: as it would be menacing them in the very teeth, & effecting the the distruction of their commerce in a manner the most perplexing to their government, & in a way the least expected by the nation generally, including those belonging to the Navy: the self styled Lords of the Ocean!!

Such a view as I have taken of the subject may, at first sight, appear chimerical; particularly if we reason arithmetically, & take into consideration that we have only a dozen vessels in commission, & they five hundred: but this is the very reason, I think, why such dispersion should be made, as by the like, it would require a comparatively much greater force to protect their own trade, even at the mouths of their own harbors, than it would to annihilate ours, & our little navy with it; was such a disposition to be exercised as to invite their whole disposable force to our coast, or even to any considerable distance from their own.

By this I am not to be understood, Sir, as saying that our vessels ought to remain stationary at any one point; but, on the contrary, that they ought to be kept moving from one part of the coast to another; particularly those stationed on the coast of England from one part of that coast to another, until the attention of a large portion of their most active force have been drawn to the protection of their own commerce, in their own waters: having effected this, our vessels ought then to leave the coast and not return to it again until they had drawn the enemy off to protect his trade in some other quarter.

It is very generally believed that the coasts of England, Ireland & Scotland are always swarming with British Men of War, and that their commerce would be found amply protected against any force as I have mentioned; this however I well know by experience in my voyages when a youth, to be incorrect and that, it has always been their policy, to keep their enemies as far distant from their shores as possible; by stationing their ships at the commencement of a War, on the enemies coasts, & in such other distant situations, as to render its effect nugatory, & thereby be enabled to protect their own commerce in a two fold degree—This however they have been enabled to do, owing as well to the inactivity of the enemy, as to the local advantages derived from their relative situations; and to support what I now say, I do assert, that in the event of a War, it will be found, that the largest force they will soon be able to send to our Coast, will not prevent the few vessels we have, from getting to sea, and annoying their Commerce to an extent not only to make them feel their effect most seriously, but at the same time in a manner to astonish all Europe—In fine they will soon find that we are neither Frenchmen, or Spaniards, Hollanders, or Danes.

Permit me, Sir, to say, that in the event of a war it would be particularly gratifying to me to command, on the coast of England, such a squadron as I have mentioned; as I conceive that, barring unforeseen accidents, such as ought not to be expected, I may with propriety pledge myself to make the commerce of that arrogant nation feel its effects to the very quick—They have already I perceive honored me with a place in their lying naval chronicle with the title of Buccaneer, and nothing on this side of the grave would afford me more real satisfaction, than to have such an opportunity, as I have mentioned, of affording them a more bitter subject for their still more bitter & illiberal animadversions.

In the event of a War with England, should our small vessels be employed in the W Indies: Charleston & Savannah would be found the most eligible places of rendezvous for them; as well because these places would be nearest to the enemy, as on account of the inaccessibility of the coast to strangers; & for the same reasons would be found the safest port, to send their prizes into: Charleston would I think be found the most suitable of the two, as the enemy could not calculate on Blockading it with any degree of effect.

Our Coast from Cape Hatteras to Passamaquoddy affords almost numberless good ports for our small vessels in time of War; any of which that are fortified, would answer perfectly well: New York I think however the most preferable, as on account of its easy access & egress, by way of the sound & Sandy Hook, they would find no difficulty in getting out or in at any time; neither any in equipping their vessels with the greatest dispatch.

There are no ports south of Cape Hatteras except it be Port Royal (S.C.) (and that is not fortified) capable of being made a suitable place of rendezvous for our frigates in time of War; neither are there many even north of that in the present state of our country, but what present some obstacles—no ports either in the Chesapeake or Delaware would be suitable, as the entrance of either might be blockaded with much effect by a superior force: and there is almost an equal objection to New York on account of its inaccessibility, there not being more than one hour in the twenty four that affords a sufficient depth of water to admit of our largest frigates crossing Sandy Hook Bar:—As a rendezvous for our frigates I must therefore say that, from any knowledge I possess of the several ports north of the Chesapeake, New Port & Boston are the most suitable; & of the two, New Port the most as it is most easy of access & egress at all seasons of the year;

and our revolutionary war furnishes proof that a superior force would find it very difficult, if not impossible to prevent, for any length of time, an inferior one from getting to sea: I should therefore recommend New Port as the most suitable rendezvous for our frigates in time of war. With the greatest respect [&c.]

Jn^o Rodgers

PS Sir

Previous to the commencement of war permit me to suggest whether it might not be advisable to remove our frigates from Norfolk, as the enemy might with a superior force, Blockade them from Hampton Road

J R

N.B. I have a lame finger which makes my writing even more unintelligible than it generally is; but owing to the subject of this scrawl I did not like to have it copied by any one else.

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 56.

COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Norfolk June 8th 1812

Sir

I arrived in Hampton Roads in company with the *Congress* on the 6th too late for the mail, yesterday being Sunday, there was no mail, hence the cause of your not being sooner informed of my arrival—My coming into port prior to the time specified by your instructions was for the purpose of obtaining two main topsail yards for the *Congress*, in the place of two which she lost during the cruise. During our cruise we have not seen, or heard of any cruisers.

In answer to your letter of the 14th Inst I have to state, that the plan which appears to me to be the best calculated, for our little Navy to annoy the Trade of Great Britain, in the greatest extent, & at the same time expose it least, to the immense naval force of that Government, would be to send them out with as large a supply of provision

as they can carry, distant from our coast, & singly, or not more than two Frigates in company, without giving them any specific instructions as to place of cruising, but to rely on the enterprise of the officers. This mode has been recently adopted by the French, & with the greatest success.

Two Frigates cruising together would not be so easily traced by an enemy as a greater number, their movements would be infinitely more rapid, they would be sufficiently strong in most instances to attack a convoy, & the probability is that they would not meet with a superior cruising force; If however, they should meet with a superior force & cannot avoid it, we would not have to regret the whole of our marine crushed at one blow. As by far the greater risque will be encountered in going out & coming into port, I think we ought to remain out as long as possible; the advantage of distant cruising would be to relieve our own coast by withdrawing from it a number of the hostile ships, or compelling the enemy to detach from Europe another force in search of us. Most of our ports I consider safe for our ships when in, unless we were sufficiently numerous in any one Port, to make it an object for the enemy to employ great force against us, in which case I should give the preference to Boston, New London, & Norfolk, which places from the narrowness of their waters might be defended with much less force than either of our other ports. It is my opinion that many vessels in any one port would invite attack & might place it in the power of the Enemy by one attack, to destroy the whole.

The ports of Boston, Portsmouth. N.H., & Portland will be the safest Harbours for our return to from cruising, particularly in the winter season. The impracticability of blockading our Eastern coast during that season, has been proven by the British themselves during our revolution.

If war takes place, It will I think be of great importance to the country, that we should receive our instruction & be sent out before the declaration shall be known by the enemy—it would no doubt draw from our coast in search of us, the greater part of their cruisers, that are now lying in Burmuda, perfectly prepared & waiting events. I am in want of two cables which are now making for me—those & the spars requisite for the *Congress* will not be ready in less than six or seven days, in the mean time we are filling up our water & provisions.

I left Commo Rodgers on Monday last off sandy Hook.—I beg to be informed whether I am again to proceed to New York. I have the honor to be [&c.]

Stephen Decatur

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 18.

The Frigate *Essex*

Commodore Rodgers planned a sortie from New York immediately after the United States declared war on Great Britain. During late May and most of June, all efforts were made to prepare the ships of his squadron for a long cruise. There was a disappointment, however. Master Commandant David Porter's *Essex* had developed a reputation of sailing poorly, and Porter himself was most concerned.¹ He was handicapped as it was by his ship having guns of only one major caliber and type, 32-pound carronades, which were only effective at short range. As *Essex* had lost some of her speed, she might have been an easy catch for a fast sailing British frigate with long-range cannon. Porter wrote to Commodore Rodgers on 31 May, bringing the problem to his attention and officially requesting that *Essex*'s spars and masts be altered. In another letter, Rodgers addressed Secretary of the Navy Hamilton, recommending that Porter's suggestions be carried out. For Porter, the delay was to prove fruitful, for he finally went on a highly successful independent cruise, while Rodgers' squadron had disappointing luck.

1. In 1812, *Essex* was thirteen years old and had been refitted and to some extent rebuilt several times. She had at one time been considered the most beautiful and fastest frigate of her size. For fascinating background on the building of the ship, see P. C. F. Smith, *The Frigate Essex Papers: Building the Salem Frigate, 1798-1799* (Salem, 1974).

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U. S. Frigate *President*
Staten Island
4th June 1812

Sir

I am sorry to state to you that the *Essex*, from some cause, or other; at present sails very badly, so much so that I am sure the *President* not only out sails her very much in every way, but I am certain that a little off the wind she would run her out of sight in 12 or 14 hours. The *Essex* is no doubt badly sparred; as Capt'n Porter represents in the enclosed letter, also that her bottom is either very foul, or the Copper defective: perhaps both. I should therefore recommend that she be hove out, and that, if no change of her present yards should be deemed necessary, she be furnished at least with a new fore mast of longer dimensions than the one she has at present: also that her present old yards may be altered so as to correspond with the proportions of her masts.

Sailing as the *Essex* does at present, altho' she is in other respects in complete order, her services could not be calculated on, in the event of a War.

I presume, with exertion, that the alterations, proposed by Capt'n Porter, could be made in twenty days at furthest, and that they would not be attended with much expence, as they might principally be done by her own Crew. With the greatest respect [&c.]

Jn^o Rodgers

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 10.

[Enclosure]¹

U. S. Frigate *Essex*
31st May 1812

Sir,

The great disproportion between the Masts, Spars, Rigging and Hull of the *Essex* constitute in the opinion of the most experienced commanders in the Navy, her greatest defect and it is the belief of those who are best acquainted with her that an additional length of lower

masts with some alterations in her spars would greatly improve her sailing, fully persuaded of the correctness of those opinions and believing them to coincide with your own, I take the liberty to address you on the subject and enclose to you such dimensions as will enable you to calculate the alterations necessary to be made.

In my opinion it would not be necessary to incur much expence, nor would much [*much*] time be required; as the Main Mast could be shifted forward for a Fore Mast, and the same Yards, Top Masts, and sails, would answer with a little alteration.

I shall not urge any further reasons for soliciting permission to make the above stated alterations persuaded as I am that you are already convinced of their necessity. I have the honor

D Porter

PS I beg leave to observe that the fore mast of the *Essex* has for some time been considered defective on account of its twisting occasioned from weakness and that it would be necessary that she should be creened before she proceeded on a cruize of any length.

Commre John Rodgers
Comdg
U S Frigate *President*

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 10.

1. In addition to the letter which Rodgers enclosed with his own correspondence, Porter wrote a separate letter to the secretary of the navy emphasizing the necessity of the repairs. See Porter to Hamilton, 3 June 1812, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 55.

Lieutenant Perry Requests an Assignment

Oliver Hazard Perry was stationed at Newport, Rhode Island, in charge of gunboats when the war broke out. He had suffered the misfortune of losing a vessel, due to a pilot's misjudgment, in Long Island Sound in January 1811. The following letter indicates that reassignment to a more active command was uppermost in his mind.

Reassignment would show that the Navy Department still had faith in his potential. Perry was not named to command the ships in Lake Erie for several months. Events in the following year were to prove that Perry did indeed have the qualities he was so anxious to demonstrate.

LIEUTENANT OLIVER H. PERRY TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New Port June 6th 1812

Sir

As War appears now to be enivitable and not far distant, I hope and earnestly entreat that I may in that event be called immediately into actual service. I am highly sensible Sir, of the very great favor which you have shown in suffering me to remain the last twelve months with my family—although this indulgence has been the source of much happiness: in case of war it would cease to be so, on the contrary I should consider it the greatest mortification and misfortune.

Pardon me for troubling you Sir, on this subject, as I solicited this station some time since when there was no prospect of war, I am desirous should such a thing take place to prevent the possibility of a thought entering your mind that it would be agreeable to continue at home. The time appears to be near when I shall have it in my power to convince you Sir, that the observation in your letter to Comr Rodgers relative to the loss of the *Revenge* viz. "an officer just to himself, and to his country will not be depressed by defeat, or misfortune, but will be stimulated by either cause, to greater exertions" has made a proper impression on my mind.¹ I have the honor [&c.]

O. H. Perry

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 14.

1. Hamilton to Rodgers, 7 Feb. 1811, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 9, pp. 280-81. Rodgers reported the loss of *Revenge* to Hamilton in Rodgers to Hamilton, 9 Jan. and 10 Jan. 1811, DNA, RG45, CL, 1811, Vol. 1, Nos. 22 and 23.

Ordnance Requirements at Charleston,
Wilmington, and Boston

At the beginning of the war, almost all naval stations were desperately short of supplies. Letters from station commanders reporting deficiencies are important historical documents because they catalog the myriad necessities of naval warfare. Upon receipt of such requisitions, the secretary of the navy would frequently pass the request to Commodore Tingey at the Washington Navy Yard, which usually had large stocks of most necessities. If this resource failed, orders were sent out to navy agents in the appropriate regions, instructing them to contract with commercial or industrial firms to supply the navy's needs. In the two letters which follow, Captain John Dent of Charleston and Wilmington, and Captain William Bainbridge of the Boston Navy Yard reported their urgent need for ordnance stores and other items.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston 4 June. 1812

Sir,

I had the honor to receive your letter of the 25th ult. and herewith enclose a requisition for Such Stores as are immediately wanted on this and Wilmington Stations.

No 9 Will be so far ready on Sunday as to take her Station in the roads, and receive the men recruited for the barges, four of which will be ready this week for Service. I think it necessary that No 9 Should have a few Marines on board to prevent desertion. She has mounted Six 6 long 32 and 2 Nine pounders, and will fight them to great advantage, having more room than the *Vixen*. I Have the honor [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 9.

[Enclosure]

Required for the use of the Charleston and Wilmington Stations, the following Stores.

Gunners Department.

- 400 Barrels Powder
- 50 Ditto Priming do
- 300 Wt Match Rope
- 36 powder horns with priming Wires
- 200 Muskets with Cartouch boxes
- 150 pair pistols with Do. Do.
- 200 Sabres
- 200 Boarding pikes
- 200 Battle Axes
- 24 Spunges & Rammers for 32 pounders.
- 24 Ditto Ditto ... 24 Do
- 24 Ditto Ditto ... 18 do
- 24 do 12 pound Carronades
- 50 dressed Sheep Skins for Spunges
- 12 Gun locks for 32 pounders
- 2 Setts of Copper Weights & Measures
- 4 Gun Scrapers for 32 pounders
- 4 Ditto do ... 24 do
- 4 Ditto do ... 18 "
- 4 Ditto do ... 12 "
- 4 Ditto do ... 9 "
- 1 Galley Complete for No 9
- 6 Small Do for Barges
- 20 pieces blue Bunting
- 20 Do red do
- 20 do white do
- 6 do yellow do
- 2 Anchors. 18 cwt Mooring Anchors for No 9.
- 1 do stream 11 cwt for Do
- 6 Spare Anchors for Brigs
- 6 Spare Cables from 11 to 14 inches
- Hawsers from 3 to 7 inches
- Cordage running rigging
- Canvass Assorted
- Twine Ditto

Iron	Ditto	
Shot		
500	Stand of Grape.	for 32 pounders.
400	do . .	Do . . 18 do
400	do . .	do . . 12 do
200	. . . Cannister.	. . 12 do

An assortment of medicine

1. Sett of Amputating Instruments for Wilmington Station.

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 9.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Charlestown
5th June 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you, that I have had all the Powder belonging to the Navy Department, that is in the Boston Magazine proved, the following quantity has been condemmd. Viz.

146	Casks containing	14600 lbs
31	Do	----- 2985 part of the <i>J. Adams's</i>
23	do	----- 2229 part of the <i>Chesapeake</i>
	Pound	<u>19814</u>

From the *Chesapeakes* Stores there is about 9900 lbs and from the *John Adams* 6400 lbs which has stood the proof & is fit for Service. Be pleased to inform whether the above quantity of damaged Powder is to be sold or remanufactured. I shall move the good powder from the State Magazine into the U.S. Magazine to save expence of Storage & to have it more convenient—the damage I shall not move until I hear from you on the Subject. I have the honor [&c.]

W^m Bainbridge

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 12.

The Need for a Navy Wharf at Charlestown

A common complaint among naval officers was the high cost of fitting out and repairing the navy's ships at commercial yards. A good part of these excess costs was spent in the rental of storage warehouses and wharves from private firms. In the following letter, Captain Bainbridge makes the point that a navy wharf will be even more essential with the coming of war. Whatever the worth of his argument, the wharf was not built during his tenure as commandant.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Charlestown
10 June 1812

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that from Several estimates which I have received, a good Wharf can be made at this Navy Yard for 20,000 Dollars, and can be compleated by Septr next: The almost indispensible necessity, and great public benefit of having a Wharf here has been so frequently reiterated by me as to make a repetition unnecessary. I will meerly observe that the present period is favourable for building a Wharf, and that if it was begun immediately it would lessen the expence of repairing the *Chesapeake* and in the event of War, our Ships might be necessiated to resort to this Port for repairing damages received in Battle in which event the cost of the Wharf would soon be remunerated

There are Several hundred Tons of Timber lying in decay in the Pond here entirely unfit for Ship purposes, and will be lost except it is put into a Wharf. The Wharf would be so constructed, at some future period would facilitate the making a dry Dock here. A Rough Sketch of the dimensions of the proposed Wharf is at bottom.¹ I have the honor Sir [&c.]

W^m Bainbridge

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 24.

1. The sketch shows a wharf 600 feet long, 60 feet wide at water's edge and 80 feet wide at the other end.

Ships in Ordinary at Washington
Navy Yard

The 28-gun frigate Adams was one of the several ships built at the onset of the Quasi-War with France in 1799. After service in that conflict and in the first year of the Tripolitan War, Adams was ordered to the Washington Navy Yard where her crew was paid off. The ship was then laid up in ordinary along with the frigates New York and Boston for several years, to be maintained by workmen at the Washington Navy Yard. She served as a receiving ship during 1811-1812, but had deteriorated badly. The following letter contains Commodore Tingey's thoughts on her condition.

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washtn: 13th June 1812

Sir

The Master Shipwright states that "the Ship *Adams* will want such a general repair, that it will be necessary to haul her up; as it is almost impossible to get at the work so low down as it is necessary to go" And requests orders to prepare the ways, if approved.

I have carefully examined this Ship, and feel convinc'd from her extreme state of decay that to repair her afloat, will be by far more expensive than to build a new ship. At the same time it appears extremely doubtful whether in attempting to heave her up, we may not destroy her altogether, all which is respectfully submitted for your consideration.¹ I have the honor [&c.]

Tho^s: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 31.

1. After some delay, repairs and rebuilding were commenced. *Adams* was razeed or cut down from a frigate to a corvette, carrying fewer guns but with an additional fifteen feet along the waterline. She later saw useful service in 1814 under Captain Charles Morris.

The Supply of "Slops"

A word frequently used in contemporary documents to describe the working uniform of 1812 sailors was "slops," yet rarely does a writer bother to explain what the word meant. The following document is unusual in that it does explain what "Slop Clothing" was and how it was distributed. It was common for ships' pursers to sell clothing to ships' personnel at a slight markup, pocketing the difference as a commission.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO
PURSER SAMUEL HAMBLETON

Saml Hambleton Esqr
St Michaels, E Shore Md

Nav: Depm't
15 June 1812

I have received Your letter, of the 8. inst. The Navy agent at N York, has made a contract, with Mr [Seth G.] Macy of Hudson, for a considerable supply, of blue cloth, for navy use; I wish such cloth used in preference to any other.

On your arrival at N York You will make a requisition on the Navy agent, for such supply of Slop Clothing, as may be necessary—who will accordingly furnish such supply.

The following, are considered articles of the first necessity, & what is generally understood, by the term, Slop Clothing, viz.

Common Hatts	Com: Shoes
pea Jacketts	Stockings
Cloth Jacketts	Blankets
Duck Jacketts	Mattresses
Cloth. & Duck Trowsers	
Duck frocks	
Guernsey ditto	
Check Shrts	

In order to enable You safely to keep these articles, you will be allowed, at the public expense, a suitable room: & You will also be allowed a room, in which to keep Your accounts.

Each of the gunboats will be allowed a steward, & You will be allowed one extra Steward

Upon the articles of Slop Clothing to be issued out by You, to the Crews of the Gunboats stationed at New Port, You may charge to the men to whom You may issue them, a commission of 12½ P.Cent.

The Navy agent at N York, will advance You such sums, not exceeding \$2000, as may be required, to enable You, to Provide a supply of Small Stores.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 58.

An Intelligence Report from Decatur

Just two days before the declaration of war, Commodore Stephen Decatur sent Secretary Hamilton a brief report on British cruising procedures on the Bermuda station, along with information concerning the issuance of trading licenses to Americans. The latter subject became one of increasing concern to Decatur and other naval officers, for it was clear that Americans were engaging in trade with the enemy. Yet, the "licensed trade" was not made illegal in the United States until July 1813. One historian has noted that in one month during 1812, the British issued 722 licenses for American grain shipments to Lisbon and Cadiz.¹

1. Bradford Perkins, Castlereagh and Adams: England and the United States, 1812-1823 (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1964), pp. 8-9, 9n.

COMMODORE STEPHEN DECATUR TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S.F. *United States*
at sea June 16th 1812

Sir,

Owing to adverse winds, I have been prevented executing your orders until this day. The information I communicated to you, respect-

ing the British Naval force at Bermuda was derived from a British Naval Agent the precise force, I have not been informed of. The Admiral does not permit more than two vessels to cruise at a time: those are instructed not to approach our coast nor to continue out, more than fifteen days. I am also informed from a source that is entitled to great credit that the British consul at Norfolk & at other places have now in their offices, which they distribute to those who apply for them, British Licenses,¹ protecting against capture all vessels trading to British ports or the ports of their Allys. I have the honor [&c.]

Stephen Decatur

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 38.

1. See Memorandum of Vice Admiral Sawyer "on the Licensed Trade," pp. 202-203.

War Has Begun

On the very day Congress voted to declare war against Great Britain, Secretary of the Navy Hamilton started to warn his officers of this event and of the rights and dangers they would immediately assume as belligerents. Writing to Captain Isaac Hull, he urged him to hasten to New York when ready. There, Commodore John Rodgers was assembling his ships, and those assigned to Commodore Decatur were to form a cruising squadron under Rodgers's flag. According to plan, Hull was to rendezvous with Rodgers off New York, but this was not to be. Rodgers' squadron sailed from Sandy Hook on 21 June, headed in a northeasterly direction. Hull's Constitution did not depart Chesapeake Bay until 12 July, heading for an unexpected rendezvous of a very different sort.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL

Navy Departt
June 18th 1812

Sir

This day war has been declared between the "United Empire of Great Britain & Ireland" and their dependencies and the United States

of America and their territories and you are with the force under your command entitled to every belligerent right to attack and capture, and to defend—You will use the utmost dispatch to reach New York after you have made up your complement of men &c at Annapolis—In your way from thence, you will not fail to notice the british flag, should it present itself—I am informed that the *Belvidere* is on our coast, but you are not to understand me as impelling you to battle, previously to your having confidence in your crew unless attacked, or with a reasonable prospect of success, of which you are to be at your discretion the Judge—You are to reply to this and inform me of your progress¹
Respectfully yrs

Paul Hamilton

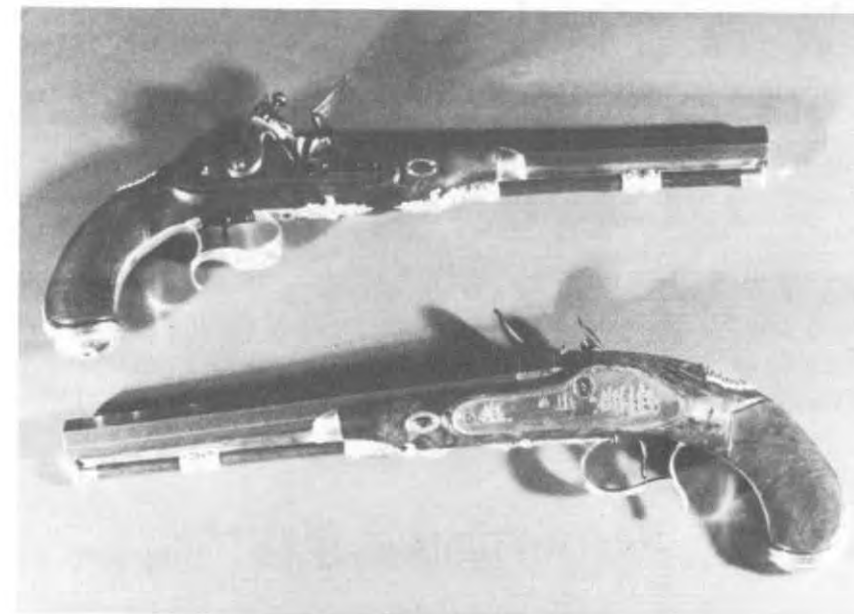
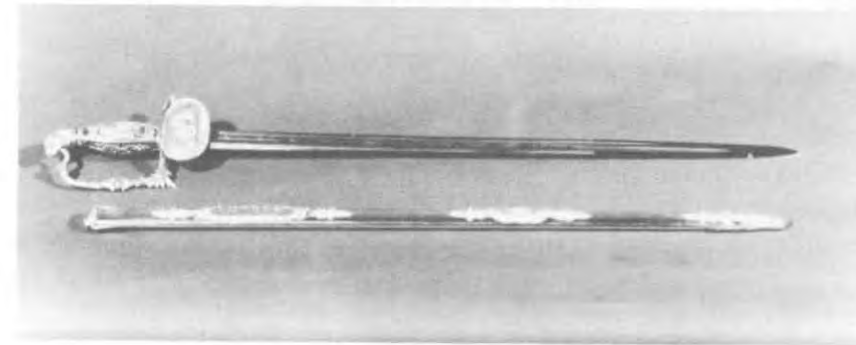
Capt Hull U S Frigate *Constitution*

ALS, DNA, RG45, AF 7, 1812.

1. At the moment, *Constitution* was engaged in shakedown cruises in Chesapeake Bay after an extensive refitting.

Intelligence and the Element of Surprise

One day after the declaration of war in Washington and one day before that news arrived in New York, Commodore Rodgers was optimistic about the U.S. Navy's chances against British warships then stationed along the American coast. He had learned that there were no more than two dozen enemy ships between Halifax and Bermuda and wanted to strike while opposing forces were relatively balanced. To do this required rapid deployment as soon as the war commenced. This would enable his squadron to take advantage of the many days or weeks that might elapse before British warships received official word on the declaration of war. Rodgers' squadron was ready, and he lost no time in getting to sea two days later to seize this unparalleled opportunity.



Captain Isaac Hull's Sword and Pistols

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *President*
New York 19th June 1812

Sir

Since writing you last I have ascertained, & I think from a source that may be depended on, that the British naval force at present on this side the Atlantic consists of one sixty four-seven frigates-seven sloops of war-seven Brigs, & two or three schooners-Hallifax & Bermuda are their ports of rendezvous; & permit me to observe, Sir, that should war be declared, & our vessels get to sea, in squadron, before the British are apprised of it; I think it not impossible that we may be able to cripple & reduce their force in detail; to such an extent as to place our own upon a footing until their loss could be supplied by a reinforcement from England.

The *President* & *Hornet* are ready for sea & the *Essex* will I hope be ready in ten days from this date.

It is this moment reported that the frigates *UStates* & *Congress* are off the Bar. The British frigate *Belvidera* & Sloop of War *Tartarus* were seen off Sandy Hook yesterday morning-The schooner *Mackerel* with Mr Ruff (the English messenger) sailed last evening for Hallifax. With the greatest respect [&c.]

Jn^o Rodgers

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 42.

Recruitment of Marines

On the eve of the war, the Marine Corps was badly understrength and had little prospect of attracting recruits. Several months before, Congress passed legislation to strengthen the army which contained attractive rewards for those willing to take up arms.¹ As an enlistment bounty, each recruit was to receive sixteen dollars, half at time of enlistment and the rest when mustered. As a bonus, however, each soldier who received a certificate of faithful service at the time he was discharged would receive a lump sum equivalent to three months pay

and 160 acres of land. Likewise, if the soldier was killed in action or died "in the service of the United States," his heirs would receive the bonus. This placed the Marine Corps at a severe disadvantage, for there was no comparable system of rewards for enlisting in the marines at that time. In June, Secretary of the Navy Hamilton attempted to make enlistment in the Marine Corps more attractive.

1. Peters, "An Act for Completing the Existing Military Establishment" of 24 Dec. 1811, and "An Act to Raise an Additional Military Force" of 11 Jan. 1812, Public Statutes at Large, II: 669-70, 671-74.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO
LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT FRANKLIN WHARTON, U.S.M.C.

Navy Dept
19th June, 1812

Sir,

After having performed your business at N York-you will proceed to Hudson.

Congress having offered extraordinary inducements to Soldiers to enter the army, it becomes proper that some additional inducement should be offered to persons to enter the Marine Corps. You will therefore consider yourself at liberty-to allow to each man who shall enter the Corps-Twenty dollars bounty-: of which 10\$ are to be paid at the time of signing the articles-& 10\$ on their being first mustered. I am Sir [&c.]

Paul Hamilton

ALS, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Received.

Army-Navy Relations

In anticipation of shortages in munitions that were likely to occur, Secretary of the Navy Hamilton requested officers in charge of naval stations at various points to cooperate with army commands. Interservice rivalries flourished despite common needs and goals. An occa-

sional reminder of the need for collaboration with the army was essential, as can be seen from the following circular letter sent by the Navy Department.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO SELECTED OFFICERS

Circular

Navy Dept
20 June 1812

Capt John Shaw Esqr Commanding	at N. Orleans
Capt John H. Dent	" at Charleston
Capt. H. G. Campbell	" at St. Mary's G.a.
T. N. Gautier	" at Wilmington
Capt Ch. Gordon	" at Baltimore M.d.
Capt Alexr Murray	" at Philadelphia
Lt O. H. Perry	" at New Port R I.

In order to provide against a deficiency in the munitions of war, either on the part of the War, or Navy Departments; it has been agreed between the Secretary of War, and myself; that if on any occasion, the army should be deficient in its supply of any of the munitions of war, & the navy should have such munitions on hand, they are, upon the requisition of the Officer Commanding the Army, to be furnished out of the Navy supply; & if the Navy, should in like manner be deficient, the Army Officers will upon like requisition, from the Commanding Navy Officer, furnish such supply.

Indeed a mutual interchange of civilities of every kind, will become, in the event of exigencies arising, an obvious duty of patriotism.

Paul Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, CGO, Vol. 1, p. 93.

Medical Care for the Navy

Prompt and capable attention to the medical needs of ships' crews was a matter of concern to the Navy Department. A small corps of

surgeons and surgeon's mates had been established for the Continental Navy and was later renewed in the "Act to Provide a Naval Armament" in 1794. The six frigates authorized by this legislation were each assigned a surgeon. On the four large frigates, two surgeon's mates were also assigned, but the small ships were to have only one. Five years later, "An Act for the Government of the Navy of the United States" anticipated future provisions for sick bays on warships, stating, "a convenient place shall be set apart for the sick or hurt men, to which they are to be removed, with their hammocks and bedding when the surgeon shall advise the same to be necessary, and some of the crew shall be appointed to attend them . . ."¹ Although no naval hospitals were built before the War of 1812, it was customary for the navy to rent rooms or houses for this purpose when there was an urgent need. Since 1799, a small portion of the pay of officers, seamen, and marines had been deducted and invested in the Marine Hospital Fund, but in 1811, the Navy Department established a separate fund that eventually led to the building of several naval hospitals in the 1830s.

American naval medicine was in its infancy during the War of 1812, but impetus for its growth and improvement came from the surgeons themselves. Fortunately, there were several energetic medical officers who took the lead at this time, including Dr. Edward Cutbush, Dr. Lewis Heermann, and Dr. Usher Parsons. The letter that follows is an example of Dr. Cutbush's contribution.

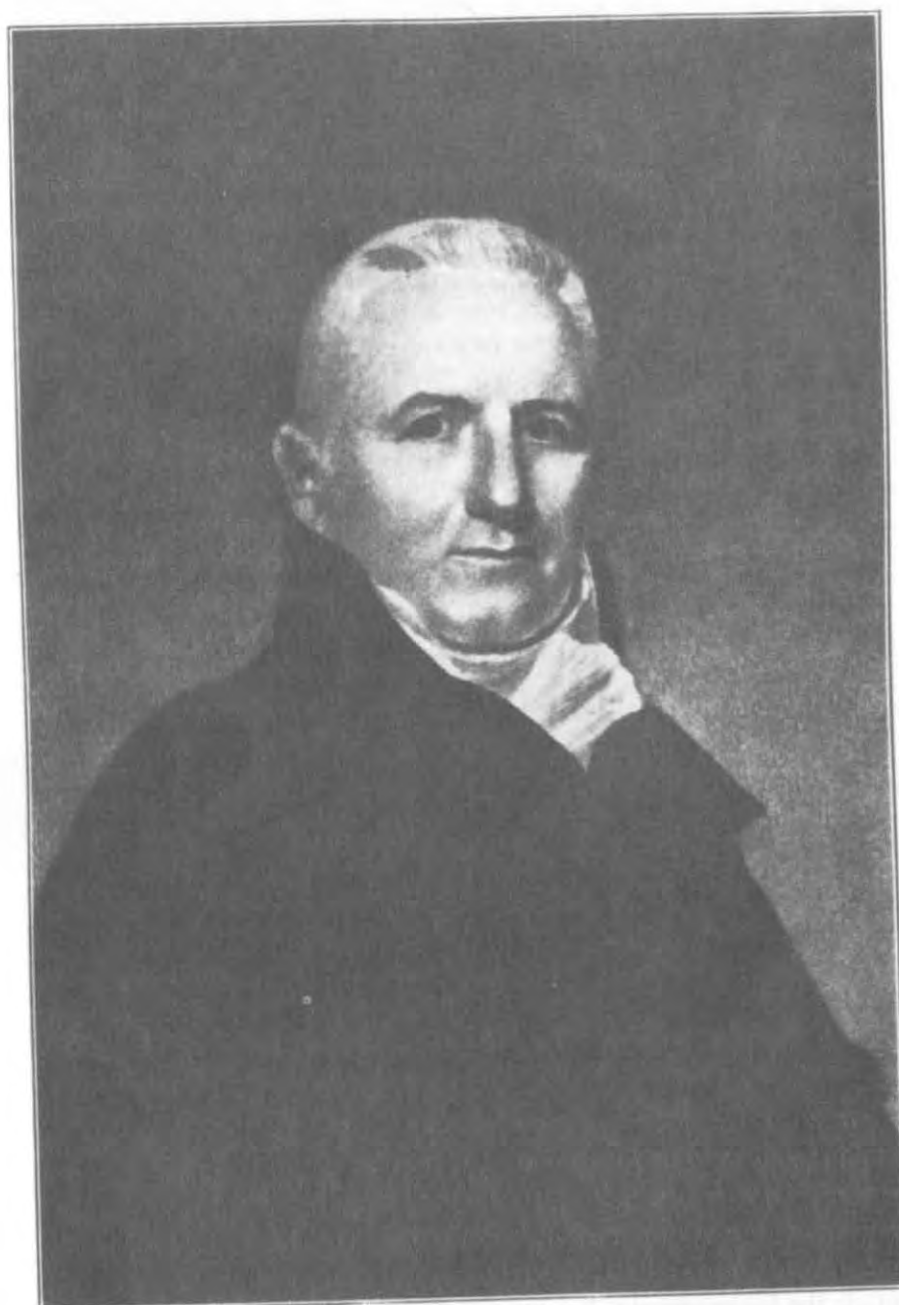
1. Callan & Russell, *Laws . . . of the Navy*, p. 109; see article 15.

SURGEON EDWARD CUTBUSH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Philada June 21 1812

Sir,

An improvement in Surgeons' needles, for the purpose of taking up deep seated arteries in wounds, has been made in this City, which I conceive of so much consequence, that I think it worthy of being submitted to your consideration, in order that they may be added to the instruments allowed to Naval Surgeons.¹ The gentleman, who has made the improvement, has not yet given publicity to it, in any of our periodical publications, the surgeons of the Navy have not, therefore, become acquainted with it, otherwise I am confident that they would be solicitous to be possessed of them. I have ordered a case on my private account, the cost of which is not to exceed \$10, they may be



Dr. Edward Cutbush, Surgeon, U.S.N.

made, however, in a plainer style and of cheaper materials for 5 or 6 dollars per case. I have the honor [&c.]

E Cutbush²

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 45.

1. Secretary Hamilton replied indirectly to Cutbush's suggestion in a letter of 24 June to George Harrison, navy agent, Philadelphia, asking Harrison to thank the doctor, and giving his permission to obtain and distribute the number of needles required. See Hamilton to Harrison, 24 June 1812, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, p. 108.

2. Edward Cutbush, M.D., (1772-1843) attended Philadelphia College and served his internship at the Pennsylvania Hospital, graduating in 1794. He was a founding member of the Medical Society of Philadelphia and served as surgeon general of the Pennsylvania Line during the Whiskey Rebellion. On 28 May 1799, he was appointed surgeon in the United States Navy, and received orders to join the frigate *United States* flagship of Commodore John Barry. At the time of this letter, Cutbush was the senior surgeon of the navy. See F. L. Pleadwell, "Edward Cutbush, M.D., The Nestor of the Medical Corps of the Navy," *Annals of Medical History*, Vol. V, No. 4 (Dec. 1923): 337-86.

Repairs for *Essex*

Commodore John Rodgers's and Master Commandant David Porter's letters convinced the secretary that Essex stood in need of an emergency overhaul to improve her sailing qualities. Porter sailed up to the New York Navy Yard from Sandy Hook and placed his ship under the auspices of Captain Isaac Chauncey, commandant of the Navy Yard. Chauncey's artificers, with the assistance of the ship's crew, accomplished the necessary work in three weeks, a remarkably short time for work of this type. Essex was ready for sea by the first week of July. The letter which follows contains Chauncey's statement as to the work that had been done.

CAPTAIN ISAAC CHAUNCEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard New York
22 June 1812

Sir,

The *Essex* has been completely calked inside and out, both sides hove out, her copper all repaired, a false keel put on her, and is now with all her ballast on board, and nearly all her water Casks Stored. Yesterday (Sunday) we took all her masts out, and by 12 O'clock to day her Main Mast will have been altered for a foremast and stepped. Her Main and Mizen Masts will be completed by Thursday and I think by Saturday that she will be completely ready for Sea. Nineteen GunBoats will go down today ready to co-operate with the Ships or Forts. I have the honor [&c.]

Isaac Chauncey

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 52.

The Need for Spars

The requirement for operational readiness in all ships capable of action produced demands for materiel that were not easily met. The 36-gun frigate Congress had been laid up at the Washington Navy Yard after the Tripolitan War, along with Adams, New York, and Boston. Being in somewhat better condition than these ships, she was recommissioned in the fall of 1811 under the command of Captain John Smith. By June 1812, Congress was sailing as part of Commodore Stephen Decatur's squadron out of Norfolk. In the following letter, Commodore Tingey requests spars for Congress, as he had used all those previously available to fit out other ships, including Constitution.

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washn: 22d June 1812

Sir

Of my Requisition for 105 Black Spruce Spars of October last, refer'd to the Navy Agent [Samuel Storer] at Portland, ninety three came to the Yard in February. The remaining 12 are now materially wanted. And, as we have used some of the longest of those received at that time (for the frigate *Constitution*) The Mast maker that the number to be yet forwarded may be augmented so as to amount to the following particulars vizt

		inches			inches		
10 Spars	67 feet	15	diatr	5 Spars	48 feet	16	diamtr
8 do	60 "	14	do	5 do	45 do	12	do
5 do	52 "	12	do	6 do	44 do	16	do
5 do	49 "	15	do	4 do	36 do	14	do

The diameter to be measured at the middle.

As many of these spars are necessary for the frigate *Congress*, it is desireable that Mr Storer be directed to furnish them immediately: which is respectfully submitted. I have the honor [&c.]

Tho^s: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 54.

Robert Fulton and the U.S. Navy

Although Robert Fulton's fame has emanated primarily from his development of the steamboat and experiments in canal transportation, he was also an inventor of undersea weapons and a steam war-ship.¹ During a long residence in France in the Napoleonic era, Fulton made several experiments with mines which he called "torpedoes." Stimulated by the Chesapeake-Leopard incident, Fulton called his experiments to the attention of the Navy Department and arranged a demonstration of his mines at New York in 1810. The results were unsuccessful, but he was not deterred. Soon after the outbreak of war, Fulton reminded Secretary of the Navy Hamilton of his inventions.

The letter which follows contains his suggestions for their use against British warships.

1. Fulton developed what is now considered to be the first steam propelled man-of-war. See Howard I. Chapelle, "Fulton's 'Steam Battery': Blockship and Catamaran," in United States National Museum Bulletin 240: Contributions from the Museum of History and Technology (Washington, D.C., 1964), pp. 139-76. He entered into an interesting correspondence with several leading naval officers, including Stephen Decatur and David Porter. Selections from these documents will be published in a later volume.

ROBERT FULTON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New York June 22d 1812

Sir,

Before the termination of the present War we may expect a visit from British ships of war in this port; and I should like to be prepared for such an event in the best manner I can—There is yet 2500\$ due on the mony appropriated to Torpedo experiments. If you think proper to send it to me, and I do not use it in a manner satisfactory to Congress, I will always be responsible to refund it. My intention is with that Sum to construct 10 or 12 Torpedoes with all their apperatus and of such a size as to do execution, Also to make some preperation for Using them

When Mr Barlow¹ left Washington he sent to the Navy Yard, and I believe in Boxes all my various apperatus for Torpedoes and My machine for Cutting Cables.² will you have the goodness to give orders that they be carefully packed, and the whole materials Sent to me in the first trader from Georgetown or Alexandria to New York, Also my Row Boat?

To promote these experiments, Which if successful go direct to diminish British influence over the seas and to Accomplish the great object of our solicitude, A reasonable freedom of commerce. There should be either a corps organized and encouraged by a premium per gun for every vessel of an enemy they could destroy, Or there should be a premium established by law of 2000\$ a gun for all vessels of an enemy which could be destroyed by any means, and then we might find in our ports men of enterprise a kind of Sea fencibles who would exercise themselves and watch every opportunity to attack or annoy the enemy, With so great an object in View it would be policy in congress to give great encouragement 2000\$ a gun and that for the guns

the vessel is rated is as little as the reward, in the commencement should be; for then a 20 gun vessel would yield 40,000 and an 80 gun-Ship 160,000. Admitting this mode practicable and nothing has proved that it is not so, How can government get rid of 74 or 80 Gun Ships so Cheap as by this means? Is it not worth a million of dollars, only to prove that a vessel of War can be blown up Vi & Armis?

Would it not also be good policy to publish a reward offering the whole value of the ship in cash to any crew who would bring one in and deliver her to our officers; or one fourth of her value for stranding and Burning her on our coast. The men to have an Asylum in our country; It may be Said Such is not honorable war. But is war confined within the limits of honor? the British by pressing american Citizens and compelling them to fight against their Brethren have not consulted Honor, the Laws of Nations or humanity, but simply their own convenience or caprice, every thing in these times to weaken the enemy and defeat them on our coast is Right. and for War sufficiently Honorable. have the goodness to favour me with an answer as soon as convenient, I have sir the honor to be [&c.]

Rob^t Fulton

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 4, No. 132.

1. Joel Barlow (1754-1812), a poet and statesman who befriended Fulton and financed some of his experiments.

2. For documents relating to Fulton's experiments with torpedoes and cable cutting equipment, see "Experiments on the Practical Use of the Torpedo," *ASP, Naval Affairs*, 1: 234-45. An appreciation of Fulton's contributions to naval warfare may be seen in Wallace S. Hutcheon, Jr., *Robert Fulton, Pioneer of Undersea Warfare* (Annapolis, Md., 1981).

Orders Sent but Not Received

Having had from two to three weeks to consider the cruising strategies proposed by Commodores Rodgers and Decatur, Secretary Hamilton finally decided that it would be better for Rodgers to keep the two divisions separate. He ordered them to cruise in this manner off their respective stations, New York and Norfolk, occasionally meeting. They were not to join forces unless they expected to meet a

superior force. It is also apparent that Hamilton expected his commodores to keep relatively close to the coast, between Norfolk and the New England states, in order to protect merchant ships that would soon be returning to their home ports. Secretary Hamilton embodied this policy in a letter addressed to Commodore Rodgers one day after he departed with his squadron on a cruise that extended far across the Atlantic. Rodgers did not learn of the missed orders until his return in September.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS

Nav Dep' 22 June 1812.

Comr Rodgers
New York

For the present, it has been judged expedient, so to employ our public armed vessels, as to afford to our returning commerce, all possible protection—nationally, & individually. The safe return of our commercial vessels, is obviously of the highest importance.

To accomplish this object, as far as may be in your power, you will, without doubt, exert your utmost means, & consult your best judgment: The Vessels under you command, will consist of

The frigate *President*
Essex
J. Adams
Hornet
Nautilus

Your general cruising ground, for the present, will be, from the Capes of the Chesapeake Eastwardly: Comre Decatur, with the frigates *United States*, the *Congress*, & the *Argus*, having the same object in view, will for the present, cruise from N York Southwardly: with this arrangement, the two squadrons may occasionally meet between the Hook & the Capes of the Chesapeake—& if on such occasions, an object of sufficient importance should present itself, our whole force could be concentrated for the purpose of effecting it. The great bulk of our returning commerce, will make for the ports between the Chesapeake, & our Eastern extremities—& in the protection to be afforded such ports are to be considered, as claiming particular attention.

It will be all important, that yourself & Comre. Decatur, should not only conduct your operations, in perfect harmony, but that each should know, as far as may be practicable, the intended operations of the other—Having one object in view, you will consult together, in order that you may the more effectually accomplish it.

By all safe opportunities, which I hope, may frequently occur, you will write to me, apprising me of all your movements—I shall occasionally write to you, & direct my letters to N York, N Port, Boston & sometimes Norfolk. As to the disposition of the vessels under your immediate command, consult your own best judgment. When you shall judge it expedient sail in squadron, with the whole in company; when in your opinion, a different arrangement may promise more success detach them, either singly, or two in company. I will, on this point, merely intimate to you my opinion, that it may not be prudent, for the vessels to sail singly, & that it may be well for all the vessels occasionally to concentrate—& put into port, for further instructions.

Referring to the patriotic feelings, with which it is known, that the bosoms of our officers are highly animated—& to those sentiments which special causes have excited—it appears proper, from prudential considerations, to say to you; that, possessing as you do, every Belligerent right of capture, attack & defence, still you are not voluntarily to encounter a force superior to your own—I know, that I need not say to you, that you are not to fly from an equal—& you are not to yield to a Superior without using your best exertions to repel him—nor need I remind you of the precious effects, which victory will procure.

You are now Sir, in possession of the present views of the Government, in relation to the employment of our vessels of war—Go forth then, under the assurance, that in your valor & discretion every confidence is placed; & may the God of battles be with you, & with all, our beloved Countrymen.

P Hamilton

You will be together, & constitute one squadron, when in your opinion, a Superior force may be expected; & you will look to N York, in the latter case, if too Strong for you, as to a place, of safety the most eligible.

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 69-70.

East Florida and the War of 1812

By the end of May 1812, with Congress about to debate the issue of war or peace, the United States' position on East Florida hardened. If there were war with Great Britain, there was a distinct possibility that British troops would land to reinforce the Spanish in East Florida. One of the conditions under which Congress had voted to occupy East Florida was to forestall occupation of that province by a "foreign power." The troops that were already there through the intrigues of Brigadier General Mathews had been ordered withdrawn, if the Spanish would agree to guarantee the safety of the rebels. But since the Spanish refused to negotiate that issue and there were rumors of preparations for a landing of British troops, the U.S. position had become more legitimate. On 27 May, Secretary of State Monroe reminded Governor Mitchell of Georgia that he should not withdraw the troops under these conditions. He also reassured Mitchell that orders would be sent "to the commander of the naval force of the United States in the neighborhood of East Florida to give you any assistance, in case of emergency which you may think necessary and require."¹

In the following letter, sent five days after the United States declared war on Great Britain, Governor Mitchell requested reinforcements from Captain Campbell in expectation of an attack from the Spanish at St. Augustine. For those in the United States who saw in war an opportunity to expand national territory, the time seemed propitious.

1. Monroe to Mitchell, 27 May 1812, ASP, Foreign Relations, III: 573; Hamilton to Campbell, 27 May 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 66.

GOVERNOR DAVID B. MITCHELL TO CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL

St. Marys 23d June 1812

Dear Sir,

I have this moment received a letter from Colonel Smith in which he states, that he has received information that the Spaniards in St Augustine are fitting out two Large schooners mounting each twelve six pounders and one sixteen pounder for the purpose of entering the St John's and attacking our Gun Boats, and that a reinforcement of one hundred Black troops had been received from the Havanna, and

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more expected. I am therefore under the necessity of requesting that you will order at least three Gun Boats, or four if you think proper, into the St John's to prevent the ill consequences that would result from an attack by water in the rear of our troops by a force so great as that said to be fitting out for the purpose. I am Dear Sir [&c.]

(Signd) D. B. Mitchell

Commodore Campbell
A true Copy
Loring Pepoon Clerk

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 67a (enclosure).

Gunboats for the Carolinas

Having received news of the declaration of war between the United States and Great Britain, Master Commandant Evans's next letter to Secretary Hamilton was largely concerned with gunboats recently dispatched to Ocracoke Inlet, North Carolina, problems in manning gunboats that had been readied, and the need for early intelligence of British warships if they should appear off the Virginia Capes.

MASTER COMMANDANT SAMUEL EVANS TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Gosport
24 June 1812

Sir,

I had the honor to receive your letters of the 19th and 20th inst. to day¹—The orders contained in them shall be executed with all the zeal and abilities I possess.

On Sunday last I dispatched Gun Boat No 149 for Ocracock; To day the Pilot has returned from her and informs me she only put to Sea yesterday, and as it now blows a gale from the Southd, I think it is probable she will return, in which case I shall feel a reluctance to dispatch her again until I receive your orders, as it is reported here

that the British Frigate *Belvidere* is off the Capes, and that advice has been forwarded to her of the declaration of War.

I have this day received a letter from Mr [Lewis B.] Page the Senior Sailing Master of the four Boats that first Sailed for Ocracock. He informs me they have all arrived safe after a passage of three days. He states that a Surgeon is much wanted there as the crews of all the Boats begin to be very sickly and that he has been obliged to employ a Doctor for two of his Men already—I enclose you a Copy of the Instructions I gave to the Commanders of the Boats on their leaving this for Ocracock, and beg to know whether they are to receive their instructions hereafter through me, and whether they are to remain there after the period I have instructed them to.

I regret that I have to state to you that there is now scarcely a possibility to procure a Seaman here. It is said there is not more than twenty in Norfolk, and none of them will enter—On any Sudden emergency Volunteers might I think be obtained to Man the few Boats here, was I authorised to receive them, but I apprehend they would not be content to remain on board the boats long.

As there will only be four boats ready for Service when *No 67* is repaired, I have considered it advisable to inform the Builder of the Boats now on the Stocks that they must be launched immediately. If I have been incorrect in doing this, it can be remedied by you as I expect they will not be enabled to procure hands and commence on them, in less than a week or ten days.

I beg leave to state to you that I think it would be advisable to have two fast Sailing Pilot-Boats either hired or purchased, to act as look out boats between this and the Capes, until a Telegraph is established.

They might have a Midshipman to Command them, and a few men on board, and would I think furnish us with information of what took place about the Capes more speedily than any other mode that could be now adopted.

Were letters from the Office for me directed to Norfolk I would generally receive them a day earlier than I do, as by the arrangement of the Post Office establishment here the Mails for Portsmouth some days in the week remains in the Office at Norfolk for a day before it is called for. Respectfully I have the honor [&c.]

Sam^l Evans

1. There are no letters of the 19th or 20th June to Evans in the secretary of the navy's letterbook, but Evans may have been inadvertently omitted as an addressee when the letter was copied into the letterbook. He probably received a letter identical to those sent to other officers announcing the declaration of war and giving specific orders.

Two Narrow Escapes: H.M.S. *Belvidera* and U.S.S. *Constitution*

There is a remarkable similarity in the strategies utilized by the British and American navies at the beginning of the war. It is likely that the British learned of Commodore Rodgers's plan to cruise in squadron soon after he departed New York. To meet this threat, Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer ordered formation of a British frigate squadron of approximately the same size of Rodgers's, but with the significant addition of H.M.S. Africa, a 64-gun ship of the line. Rodgers had predicted this outcome in recommending his cruising squadron strategy, but the British squadron under the command of Captain Philip B.V. Broke did not follow Rodgers into the eastern Atlantic.

After only two days under way, Commodore Rodgers's squadron met the British frigate Belvidera, 36 guns, Captain Richard Byron, sailing alone approximately 100 miles southwest of Nantucket Shoals. Rodgers was in search of a homeward-bound West Indies convoy, but to find a British frigate under these conditions must have seemed too good to be true. Belvidera was far outmatched in firepower. She was facing two large 44-gun frigates, President and United States, and a 36-gun frigate, Congress, as well as the sloop Hornet, 18, and the brig Argus, 16. Rodgers led the ensuing chase in his President and closed to within gunshot, but at that point the skillful Captain Byron managed to resist an engagement at close quarters which would have been fatal for Belvidera. The result was a remarkable escape for the British frigate and a disheartening first engagement for Commodore Rodgers whose cruise from that moment on suffered a streak of bad luck. The official accounts of both captains are offered to show the event from differing perspectives.

Captain Isaac Hull's Constitution enjoyed a similar but more difficult escape when chased by Commodore Broke's squadron off the New Jersey coast during mid-July. Isaac Hull's report is as suspenseful and

exciting a document as one can find in the annals of the War of 1812. Constitution's escape proved as uplifting for Hull as Belvidera's escape was disappointing to Rodgers. From this narrow victory, Hull went on to a greater one when he met Guerriere off the Grand Banks in August.

EXTRACT FROM COMMODORE RODGERS'S JOURNAL,
U.S.S. *PRESIDENT*, 23 JUNE 1812

June 23rd Pleasant breezes from N.N.W. to W.S.W.: At 3 A.M. spoke an American Brig from Madeira, bound to New York, the Master of which informed me that four days before (in Latd 36° Longd 67°) he had passed a Fleet of British Merchantmen, under convoy of a Frigate and a Brig, steering to the Eastward: I now perceived that this was the Convoy of which I had received intelligence, prior to my leaving New York, and shaped our course East in pursuit of them: At 6 A.M. (Nantucket Shoal bearing N.E. distant 35 leagues) saw a large Sail in the N.E. standing to the S.W. which was soon discovered to be a Frigate: The Signal was now made for a general chase, when the several vessels of the Squadron took in their Studding Sails and made all sail by the wind (on the larboard tack) in pursuit: At 1/4 before 7 the Chase tacked, made all sail, and stood from us, by the wind, on the same tack: At 1/2 past 8 he made signals, when perceiving we were coming up with him he edged away a point, or thereabouts, and set his Top Gallant Studding Sails: At 11 cleared Ship for Action, in the expectation that we should soon be up with the Chase, the breeze about this time however began to incline more to the Westward and became lighter, which I soon discovered was comparatively an advantage to our opponent: At 1/4 past 1 P.M. the Chase hoisted English Colors: At 2. the wind veered to the W.S.W. and became lighter: at 20 minutes past 4 having got within gun shot of the Enemy, when perceiving that he was training his chase guns, and in the Act (as I supposed) of firing, that the breeze was decreasing, and we now sailed so nearly alike, that to afford him an opportunity of doing the first injury to our Spars and rigging, would be to enable him to effect his escape. I gave orders to commence a fire with the bow chase guns, at his spars and rigging, in the hope of crippling one or the other, so far as to enable us to get alongside: the fire from our bow chase guns he instantly returned

with those from his Stern, which was now kept up by both Ships without intermission until 30 minutes past 4 P.M. when one of the *Presidents* chase guns burst and killed and wounded sixteen persons, among the latter myself: This was not however the most serious injury, as by the bursting of the Gun, and the explosion of the passing box, from which it was served with powder, both the Main and Forecastle decks (near the Gun) was so much shattered as to prevent the use the Chase Gun, on that side, for some time: our main deck guns being single Shotted, I now gave orders to put our helm to Starboard and fire the starboard broadside, in the expectation of disabling some of his Spars, but did not succeed, altho I could discover that his rigging had sustained considerable damage, and that he had received some injury in the Stern.

I now endeavoured, by altering our course half a point to port and wetting our Sails, to gain a more effective position on his Starboard quarter, but soon found myself losing ground: after this a similar attempt was made at his larboard quarter, but without any better success, as the wind at this time being very light and both Ships sailed so nearly alike that by making an angle of only half a point from the course he steered enabled him to augment his distance: no hope was now left of bringing him to close action, except that derived from being to windward, and the expectation the breeze might favor us first: I accordingly gave orders to steer directly after him, and to keep our bow chase guns playing on his Spars and rigging, until our broadside would more effectually reach him: At 5 finding, from the advantage his stern Guns gave him, that he had done considerable injury to our sails and rigging, and being within point blank shot, I gave orders to put the helm to starboard, and fire our Main deck guns: this broadside did some further damage to his rigging, and I could perceive that his Fore Top Sail Yard was wounded, but the sea was so very smooth, and the wind so light that the injury done was not such as materially to affect his sailing: after this broadside our course was instantly renewed in his wake (under a galling of fire from his stern chase guns, directed at our Spars and rigging) and continued until 1/2 past 6 at which time being within reach of his Grape, and finding our Sails, rigging, and several spars (particularly the Main Yard, which had little left to support it except the lifts & braces) very much disabled, I again gave orders to luff across his stern and give him a couple of broadsides.

The Enemy at this time finding himself so hardly pressed, and seeing, while in the Act of firing, our head sails to lift, and supposing that the Ships had in a measure lost the effect of her helm, he gave a broad yaw with the intention of bringing his broadside to bear: finding the *President* however answered her helm too quick for his purpose, he immediately reassumed his course and precipitately fired his four after main deck guns on the Starboard side, altho they did not bear upon us at the time by 25 or 30 degrees, and he now commenced lightening his Ship by throwing overboard all his boats, waiste, anchors &c &c, and by this means was enabled by 1/4 before 7 to get so far ahead as to prevent our bow chase guns doing execution, and I now perceived with more mortification than words can express, that there was little or no chance left of getting within gun shot of the Enemy again: under every disadvantage of disabled Spars, sails, and rigging I however continued the Chase with all the Sail we could set, until 1/2 past 11 P.M., when perceiving he had gained upwards of three miles, and not the slightest prospect left of coming up with him, I gave up the pursuit and made the Signal to the other Ships, as they came up, to do the same

During the first of the Chase, while the breeze was fresh, and sailing by the wind, I thought the whole of the Squadron gained upon the Enemy: It was soon discoverable however the advantage he acquired by sailing large, and this I concieve he must have derived in so great a degree by starting his water, as I could perceive, upwards of an hour before we came within gun shot, water running out of his scuppers

While in Chase it was difficult to determine whether our own situation or that of the other vessels of the squadron was the most unpleasant: The Superior sailing of the *President* was not such (off the wind) as to enable us to get upon the broadside of the Enemy: the situation of the others was not less irksome as not even the headmost, which was the *Congress*, was able at any time to get within less than two Gun Shots and even at that but for a very little time

In endeavouring to get alongside of the Enemy the following persons were killed and wounded: 16 of whom were killed & wounded by the bursting of our own Gun viz

Killed	
John Taylor Junr	Midshipman
John H. Bird	Midshipman
Francis H. Dwight	Marine

Wounded		
Commodore Rodgers		
Thomas Gamble	Lieutenant	severely
John Heath	Lieut of Marines	slightly
Mathew C. Perry	Midshipman	slightly
Frank Ellery	Midshipman	slightly
Lawrence Montgomery	Midshipman	lost his left arm
John Barrett	Quarter Gunner	Severly
James Beasley	do	Slightly
David Basset	do	Severly, since dead
Andrew Mathews	do	Slightly
Jordon Beebe	Armourer	do
John Clapp	Seaman	severely
James Stewart	do	Slightly
George Ross	do	do
William Thomas	Ordy Seamn	do
Neil Harding	do	do
John Berry	do	do
Henry Gilbert	do	do
John Smith 5th	Boy	do

The great part of the wounded have since recovered.

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 2 (enclosure to Commodore Rodgers's letter to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton, 1 Sept. 1812).

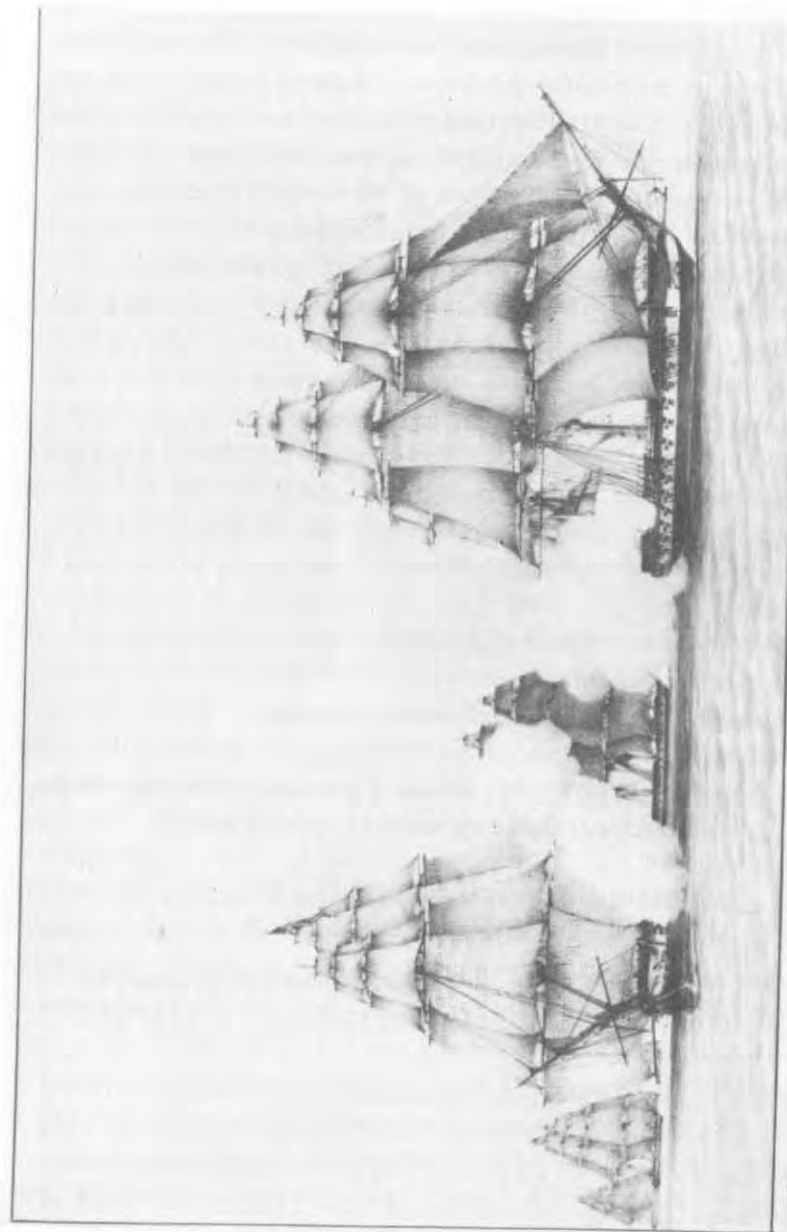
CAPTAIN RICHARD BYRON, R.N., TO
VICE ADMIRAL HERBERT SAWYER, R.N.

His Majesty's Ship *Belvidera*
Halifax Harbour 27 June 1812

Sir,

I beg leave to acquaint you that in pursuance of the Orders I had the Honor to receive from you at Bermuda, the *Belvidera* was on the 23rd instant in Latde. 39.26N, Longde 71.10W, in expectation of the French Privateer *Marengo* coming out of New London. At break of Day, the Officer of the Watch informed me the upper Sails of five vessels were seen in the South West. I stood towards them to reconnoitre.

When about six Miles from us, they haul'd to the wind, by Signal, in chace of the *Belvidera*. I tack'd from them and in consequence of their



ESCAPE OF THE BELVIDERA, HANDED OFF BY THE AMERICAN SQUADRON.

not answering the Private Signal, made sail At 11:30 A.M. hoisted our Colours, the strange Squadron showed the American flag. The Breeze falling light, but still favoring the American Squadron, brought their van Ship, which I believe to have been the *President*, within point Blank distance on the Weather Quarter At 4:20 p.m. he opened his fire from his foremost Guns. I had given the most positive Orders to my Lieutenants to prick the Cartridges but not to prime the Guns. Although ignorant of the War, we were of course prepared, and about five Minutes afterwards opened ours with two Carronades 32 Pounders and two long Eighteens from the Stern. In light Winds the *President* sail'd better than the *Belvidera*, and as his second, a very heavy Frigate, sail'd as well. I acknowledge I was much surprised at the nearest Ship, yawing repeatedly and giving starboard and larboard Broad sides, when it was fully in his power to have run up alongside the *Belvidera*. I thought it my duty to make a firm retreat from three Frigates of the largest Class accompanied by a small Frigate or Sloop and a brig of War, two of which bore broad Pendants. The Cannonade continued on both sides until seven o'clock. About half an Hour previous to the close, his second began an ineffective fire. At 10:30, by the good advice of the Master, I shifted the course at once six points to starboard. The Enemy haul'd up after us but with less decision, evidently apprehensive of losing some of his Consorts, and at 11:30 being a fine Moon, we saw him wear and heave to on the opposite Tack, also the Second, and the other Frigate, and I conclude the two stern-most did, as they came up.

The necessity of retreat was painful to every one on board the *Belvidera*. The Stern and Quarters are damaged. Main topmast shot through, and Cross Jack Yard away in the Slings. Sails cut with some standing and running Rigging The *President* must have suffer'd considerably from the excellent direction of the two quarter Deck Guns by Lieutenant John Sykes, first of this Ship, an Officer of seventeen years standing; and the fire of the two eighteen Pounders was very quick and well directed by Lieutenant William Henry Bruce and the Honble Lieutenant George Pryse Campbell. To the Lieutenants I am much indebted and equally so to Mr James Ker the Master for his speedy refitment of the Rigging as it was Shot away, and his spirited activity in resetting the Studding Sails as their Halliards were cut. Much praise is due to Lieutenant James Campbell of the Royal Marines for the determined example he shew'd to his Party. I am infinitely satisfied with the valourous and steady conduct of the Warrant and Petty Officers, Seamen and Marines of the *Belvidera*.

Herewith I enclose the small list of kill'd and wounded which in some measure is to be attributed to the endeavor of the Enemy to dismantle us.¹ John Hill, the Armourer and William Gould of the Forecastle were very good Men. I feel obliged to account for not waiting personally upon you, having received a contusion above my knee by one of the Carronades breaking loose in firing which will very soon be well. The Bearer of this, Lieutenant John Sykes is an excellent Officer that will give you every information. I hope my conduct will meet your approbation. I have the Honor to be [&c.]

(signed) R. Byron Captain

Herbert Sawyer Esqr
Vice Admiral of the Blue
and Commander in Chief

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1 (In-Letters), Vol. 502, part 1, 299-302.

1. For the enclosure, see *ibid.*, p. 303.

CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *Constitution*
Annapolis Bay July 2d 1812

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that I have this day received from Baltimore, Ten Men, recruited by Mr. [Midn. Charles W.] Morgan, the vessel has also arrived from Norfolk with the Marines and Spars. The Officer that came with the Marines, reports that on Sunday Evening, a heavy cannonading was heard off the Capes, which lasted for three quarters of an hour. Several vessels have passed up the Bay to day; none of which saw any Cruizers. By Sunday next, the Ship will be in tolerable order for Sea but the Crew you will readily conceive, must yet be unacquainted with a Ship of War, as many of them have but lately joined us and never were in an armed Ship before. We are doing all that we can to make them acquainted with the duty, and in a few days, we shall have nothing to fear from any single deck Ship; indeed;

unacquainted as we now are, we should I hope give a good account of any Frigate the enemy have, I have the Honour [&c.]

Isaac Hull

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 85.

CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *Constitution*
At Sea July 21st 1812

Sir,

In pursuance of your orders of the 3d inst I left Annapolis on the 5th inst and the Capes on the 12th of which I advised you by the Pilot that brought the Ship to sea.

For several days after we got out the wind was light, and ahead which with a Strong Southerly current prevented our making much way to the Northward On the 17th at 2 PM being in 22 fathoms water off Egg harbour four sail of Ships were discovered from the Mast Head to the Northward and in shore of us; apparently Ships of War The wind being very light all sail was made in chase of them, to ascertain whether they were Enemy's Ships, or our Squadron having got out of New York waiting the arrival of the *Constitution*, the latter of which, I had reason to believe was the case.

At 4 in the afternoon a Ship was seen from the Mast head bearing about NE Standing for us under all sail,¹ which she continued to do until Sundown at which time, she was too far off to distinguish signals and the Ships in Shore, only to be seen from the Tops, they were standing off to the Southward, and Eastward. As we could not ascertain before dark, what the Ship in the offing was, I determined to stand for her and get near enough to make the night signal. At 10 in the Evening being within Six or Eight miles of the Strange sail, the Private Signal was made, and kept up nearly one hour, but finding she could not answer it, I concluded she, and the Ships in Shore were Enemy. I immediately hauled off to the Southward, and Eastward, and made all sail, having determined to lay off till day light, to see what they were. The Ship that we had been chasing hauled off after us showing a light, and occasionally making signals, supposed to be for the Ships in Shore.

18th. At day light, or a little before it was quite light, Saw two sail under our Lee, which proved to be Frigates of the Enemies. One Frigate astern within about five or Six miles, and a Line of Battle Ship, a Frigate, a Brig, and Schooner, about ten or twelve miles directly astern all in chase of us, with a fine breeze, and coming up very fast it being nearly calm where we were.² Soon after Sunrise the wind entirely left us, and the Ship would not steer but fell round off with her head towards the two Ships under our lee.

The Boats were instantly hoisted out, and sent ahead to tow the Ships head round, and to endeavour to get her farther from the Enemy, being then within five miles of three heavy Frigates. The Boats of the Enemy were got out, and sent ahead to tow, which with the light air that remained with them, they came up very fast. Finding the Enemy coming fast up and but little chance of escaping from them; I ordered two of the Guns on the Gun Deck, run out at the Cabbin windows for Stern Guns on the gun deck, and hoisted one of the 24 Pounders off the Gundeck, and run that, with the Fore Castle Gun, an Eighteen pounder, out at the Ports on the Quarter Deck, and cleared the Ship for Action, being determined they should not get her, without resistance on our part, notwithstanding their force, and the situation we were placed in. At about 7 in the Morning the Ship nearest us approaching with Gun Shot, and directly astern, I ordered one of the Stern Guns fired to see if we could reach her, to endeavour to disable her masts, found the Shot fell a little Short, would not fire any more.

At 8 four of the Enemy's Ships nearly within Gun Shot, some of them having six or eight boats ahead towing, with all their oars, and sweeps out to row them up with us, which they were fast doing. It soon appeared that we must be taken, and that our Escape was impossible, four heavy Ships nearly within Gun Shot, and coming up fast, and not the least hope of a breeze, to give us a chance of getting off by out sailing them. In this Situation finding ourselves in only twenty four fathoms water (by the suggestion of that valuable officer Lieutenant [Charles] Morris) I determined to try and warp the Ship ahead, by carrying out anchors and warp her up to them, Three or four hundred fathoms of rope was instantly got up, and two anchors got ready and sent ahead, by which means we began to gain ahead of the Enemy, They however soon saw our Boats carrying out the anchors, and adopted the same plan, under very advantageous circumstances, as all the Boats, from the Ship furthestmost off were sent to Tow, and Warp up those nearest to us, by which means they again came up, So that at

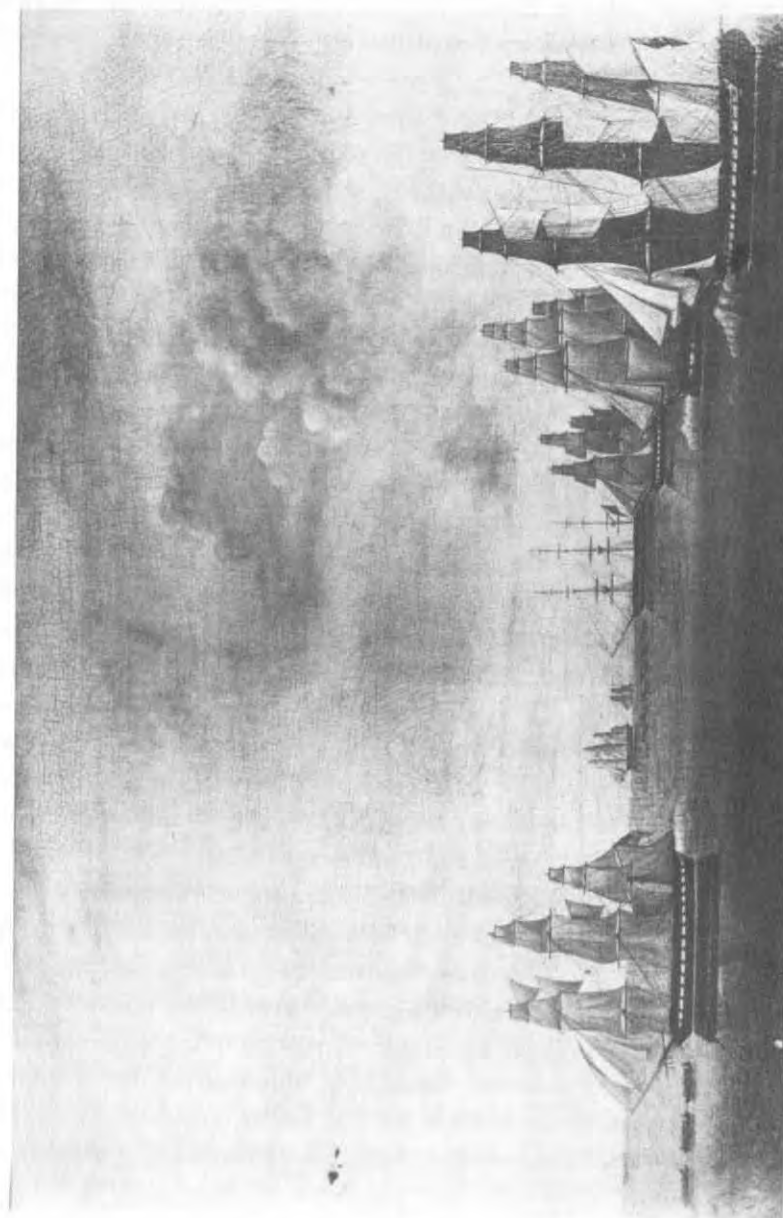
9 the Ship nearest us began firing her bow guns, which we instantly returned by our Stern guns in the cabbin, and on the Quarter Deck; All the Shots from the Enemy fell short, but we have reason to believe that some of ours went on board her, as we could not see them strike the Water.

Soon after 9 a Second Frigate passed under our lee, and opened her Broadside, but finding her shot fall short, discontinued her fire, but continued as did all the rest of them, to make every possible exertion to get up with us. From 9 to 12 all hands were employed in warping the Ship ahead, and in starting some of the water in the main Hold, to lighten her, which with the help of a light air, we rather gained of the Enemy, or at least hold our own. About 2 in the afternoon, all the Boats from the line of Battle Ship, and some of the Frigates, were sent to the Frigate nearest to us, to endeavour to tow her up, but a light breeze sprung up, which enabled us to hold way with her notwithstanding they had Eight or Ten Boats ahead, and all her sails furled to tow her to windward. The wind continued light until 11 at night, and the Boats were kept ahead towing, and warping to keep out of the reach of the Enemy, Three of their Frigates being very near us. At 11 we got a light breeze from the Southward, the boats came along side, and were hoisted up, the Ship having too much way to keep them ahead, The Enemy still in chase, and very near.

19th. At day light passed within gunshot of one of the Frigates but she did not fire on us, perhaps for fear of becalming her as the wind was light. Soon after passing us, she tacked, and stood after us, at this time Six Sail were in Sight under all sail after us.

At 9 in the morning saw a Strange sail on our Weather Beam, supposed to be an American merchant ship, the instant the Frigate, nearest us saw her she hoisted American colours, as did all the Squadron in hopes to decoy her down, I immediately hoisted English colours, that she might not be deceived, she soon hauled her wind, and it is to be hoped made her escape. All this day the Wind increased gradually and we gained on the Enemy, in the course of the day Six or Eight miles, they however continued chasing us all night under a press of Sail.

20th. At day light in the Morning only three of them could be seen from the Mast head, the nearest of which, was about 12 miles off directly astern. All hands were set at work wetting the Sails, from the Royals down, with the Engine, and Fire buckets, and we soon found that we left the Enemy very fast. At 1/4 past 8 the Enemy finding that



Chase of U.S.S. Constitution off the Jersey Coast, 17-19 July 1812

they were fast dropping astern, gave over chase, and hauled their wind to the Northward, probably for the Station off New York. At 1/2 past 8 Saw a sail ahead gave chase after her under all sail. At 9 Saw another Strange sail under our Lee Bow, we soon spoke the first sail, discovered and found her to be an American Brig from St Domingue bound Portland, I directed the Captain how to steer to avoid the Enemy, and made sail for the vessel to leeward, on coming up with her, She proved to be an American Brig from St Bartholemews, bound to Philadelphia, but on being informed of War he bore up for Charleston, S.C.

Finding the Ship so far to the Southward, and Eastward, and the Enemy's Squadron stationed off New York, which would make it impossible for the Ship to get in there. I determined to make for Boston to receive your further orders, and I hope that my having done so will meet your approbation. My wish to explain to you as clearly as possible why your orders, have not been executed, and the length of time the Enemy were in chase of us with various other circumstances, has caused me to make this communication much longer than I would have wished, yet I cannot (in justice to the brave Officers, and crew under my Command) close it without expressing to you the confidence I have in them, and assuring you that their conduct whilst under the Guns of the Enemy was such as might have been expected from American Officers and Seamen. I have the Honour to be [&c.]

Isaac Hull

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 127.

1. H.M. Frigate *Guerriere*, 36 guns, Captain James Dacres.

2. These ships comprised Commodore Philip V. Broke's squadron out of Halifax, including *Africa*, 64, *Shannon*, 38, *Belvidera*, 36, and *Aeolus*, 32. When *Guerriere* joined, the squadron was made up of one ship of the line and four frigates. Hull's account also mentions a "brig and a schooner" sailing in company with the squadron. The schooner was probably a prize sailing in company or a tender of H.M.S. *Africa*. The brig was the former U.S. brig *Nautilus* which Broke's own *Shannon* had captured on 16 July. See *The Naval Chronicle containing a general and biographical history of the Royal Navy of the United Kingdom* . . . , 40 vols. (London, 1813), XXVIII: 53, and James Fenimore Cooper, *The History of the Navy of the United States of America*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1839), II: 153.

Privateering in the War of 1812

American privateering developed naturally from an ancient seafaring tradition pursued in England and other countries.¹ During the War of 1812, as in the wars during the colonial period and Revolution, entrepreneurs, sea captains, and seamen joined company in the building, fitting out, manning, and fighting of private armed ships. These civilian warships were of all rigs and sizes, and in effect, they augmented the naval forces of the United States. The distinction usually drawn between letter of marque traders and privateers was often blurred in practice. A government-issued letter of marque and reprisal gave license to a ship's captain to engage in warlike acts in self defense. Some ships with such a license would carry a cargo for trade while mounting cannon for defensive purposes, but others sailed with holds filled with munitions for the sole purpose of capturing or destroying enemy merchantmen. Letter of marque traders, however, might also seek out targets of opportunity as their navigation permitted.

The typical privateer ship of the War of 1812 was a fast-sailing schooner or brig out of Salem or Baltimore, heavily armed and carrying a large crew. Ship owners drafted their captains' orders and expected that they would operate independently of other ships. Privateers did not usually choose to fight a British warship, and it was considered no disgrace to run from such an encounter when the odds were dubious. Privateering was a very speculative business venture and the taking of a heavily-laden merchantman was much more desirable than running the risk of damage or capture that could result from an attack on a man-of-war.

Owners, captain, and crew shared unequally in the proceeds of a successful capture. When possible, prize crews were placed on board captured vessels, and they were directed to sail to the nearest safe port where the prizes could be libelled and condemned in an Admiralty Court proceeding. After judgment, the ship and goods were put up for sale, and the proceeds went to the owners who received a 50 percent share. The remainder was then distributed to captain, officers, and crew in accordance with articles of agreement signed before the voyage.

As normal trade was either difficult or impossible during a naval war, merchants in most seaports looked to privateering as the only alternative for making profits with the ships and men at their disposal. On the other hand, seamen frequently preferred to sign on for a

privateering cruise than to enlist in the navy for longer terms, lower pay, and stricter discipline. Under the circumstances, it is understandable that there was an enthusiastic response to Congress' prompt action in passing a law to encourage and to govern privateering in June 1812. The document that follows is an extract from the law that details the procedures for privateering. Within days of the publication of the act, privateers put to sea, anticipating an active and profitable summer.

1. Some classic works on early American privateering are J. Franklin Jameson, ed., *Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period* (New York, 1923; reprint ed., 1970) and Howard M. Chapin's *Privateer Ships and Sailors, the First Century of American Colonial Privateering, 1625-1725* (Toulon, France, 1926), *Rhode Island Privateers in King George's War, 1739-1748* (Providence, 1926), and *Privateering in King George's War, 1739-1748* (Providence, 1928). A popular account of privateering from colonial times through the War of 1812 is Edgar Stanton Maclay's *A History of American Privateers* (New York, 1899). William James Morgan's "American Privateering in America's War for Independence, 1775-1783" in *The American Neptune* XXXVI, No. 2 (Apr. 1976) provides a recent assessment of the state of research on the subject and questions Maclay's sweeping assertions. There are few specific works dealing with privateering during the War of 1812, but the contemporary George Coggeshall, a privateersman himself, provided the colorful *History of the American Privateers, and Letters-of-Marque, during Our War with England in the years 1812, '13 and '14* (New York, 1861) and Jerome R. Garitte's *The Republic's Private Navy: The American Privateering Business as Practiced by Baltimore during the War of 1812* (Middletown, Conn., 1977) is an excellent history of urban business and seafaring during the war.

"AN ACT CONCERNING LETTERS OF MARQUE, PRIZES, AND PRIZE GOODS."

[Extract]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States shall be, and he is hereby authorized and empowered to revoke and annul at pleasure all letters of marque and reprisal which he shall or may at any time grant pursuant to an act entitled "An act declaring war between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the dependencies thereof, and the United States of America and their territories."

SEC. 2. And be it further enacted, That all persons applying for letters of marque and reprisal, pursuant to the act aforesaid, shall state in writing the name and a suitable description of the tonnage and force of the vessel, and the name and place of residence of each owner concerned therein, and the intended number of the crew;

which statement shall be signed by the person or persons making such application, and filed with the Secretary of State, or shall be delivered to any other officer or person who shall be employed to deliver out such commissions, to be by him transmitted to the Secretary of State.

SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That before any commission of letters of marque and reprisal shall be issued as aforesaid, the owner or owners of the ship or vessel for which the same shall be requested, and the commander thereof, for the time being, shall give bond to the United States, with at least two responsible sureties, not interested in such vessel, in the penal sum of five thousand dollars; or if such vessel be provided with more than one hundred and fifty men, then in the penal sum of ten thousand dollars; with condition that the owners, officers, and crew, who shall be employed on board such commissioned vessel, shall and will observe the treaties and laws of the United States, and the instructions which shall be given them according to law for the regulation of their conduct; and will satisfy all damages and injuries which shall be done or committed contrary to the tenor thereof by such vessel, during her commission, and to deliver up the same when revoked by the President of the United States.

SEC. 4. *And be it further enacted*, That all captures and prizes of vessels and property, shall be forfeited and shall accrue to the owners, officers and crews of the vessels by whom such captures and prizes shall be made; and on due condemnation had, shall be distributed according to any written agreement which shall be made between them; and if there be no such agreement, then one moiety to the owners, and the other moiety to the officers and crew, to be distributed between the officers and crew as nearly as may be, according to the rules prescribed for the distribution of prize money, by the act entitled "An act for the better government of the navy of the United States," passed the twenty-third day of April, one thousand eight hundred. . . .

SEC. 12. *And be it further enacted*, That the commanders of vessels having letters of marque and reprisal as aforesaid, neglecting to keep a journal . . . or wilfully making fraudulent entries therein, or obliterating any material transactions therein, where the interest of the United States is in any manner concerned, or refusing to produce such journal, commission or certificate, pursuant to the preceding section of this act, then and in such cases, the commissions

or letters of marque and reprisal of such vessels, shall be liable to be revoked; and such commanders, respectively shall forfeit for every such offence the sum of one thousand dollars, one moiety thereof to the use of the United States, and the other to the informer. . . .

SEC. 13. *And it be further enacted*, That the owners or commanders of vessels having letters of marque and reprisal as aforesaid, who shall violate any of the acts of Congress for the collection of the revenue of the United States and for the prevention of smuggling, shall forfeit the commission or letters of marque and reprisal, and they and the vessels owned or commanded by them, shall be liable to all the penalties and forfeitures attaching to merchant vessels in like cases. . . .

SEC. 15. *And be it further enacted*, That all offences committed by any officer or seaman on board any such vessel, having letters of marque and reprisal, during the present hostilities against Great Britain, shall be tried and punished in such manner as the like offences are or may be tried and punished when committed by any person belonging to the public ships of war of the United States: *Provided always*, that all offenders who shall be accused of such crimes as are cognizable by a court martial, shall be confined on board the vessel in which such offence is alleged to have been committed, until her arrival at some port in the United States or their territories; or until she shall meet with one or more of the public armed vessels of the United States abroad, the officers whereof shall be sufficient to make a court martial for the trial of the accused; and upon application made, by the commander of such vessel, on board of which the offence is alleged to have been committed, to the Secretary of the Navy, or to the commander or senior officer of the ship or ships of war of the United States abroad as aforesaid, the Secretary of the Navy, or such commander or officer, is hereby authorized to order a court martial of the officers of the navy of the United States, for the trial of the accused, who shall be tried by the said court. . . .

SEC. 17. *And be it further enacted*, That two per centum on the net amount (after deducting all charges and expenditures) of the prize money arising from captured vessels and cargoes, and on the net amount of the salvage of vessels and cargoes recaptured by the private armed vessels of the United States, shall be secured and paid over to the collector or other chief officer of the customs at the port or place in the United States, at which such captured or recaptured vessels may arrive; or to the consul or other public agent of the

United States residing at the port or place, not within the United States, at which such captured or recaptured vessels may arrive. And the monies arising therefrom, shall be held and hereby is pledged by the government of the United States as a fund for the support and maintenance of the widows and orphans of such persons as may be slain; and for the support and maintenance of such persons as may be wounded and disabled on board of the private armed vessels of the United States, in any engagement with the enemy, to be assigned and distributed in such manner as shall hereafter by law be provided.

APPROVED, June 26, 1812.

Peters, *Public Statutes at Large*, II: 759-60, 762-64.

A Tar and Feathering Incident

During the period while Essex lay at New York Navy Yard undergoing urgent repairs, Master Commandant David Porter mustered his crew at quarters and administered an oath of allegiance. When Sailmaker John Erving [or Irving], an Englishman, objected, his messmates went to Porter and asked permission to apply the ancient punishment of tar and feathers to humiliate the man for his lack of patriotism. Porter was caught up in the enthusiasm of the moment and granted their request.¹ He may have regretted this later on. After receiving his coating of tar and feathers, Erving was sent on shore where he knew no one. The police took him into custody to protect him from irate civilians. The case attracted considerable attention and some sympathy for Erving. An account was published in the press, and ultimately the event came to the attention of British naval authorities at Halifax. The secretary of the navy was not amused and sent Porter a sharp rebuke. The documents that follow include Porter's report, the secretary's reply, communications between the police magistrate and Porter, and a document called a "protection" purporting to identify Erving as an American citizen.

1. As an example of what another commander did when faced with British seamen who did not wish to fight against their countrymen see Isaac Hull to Secretary Hamilton, 20 June 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 43 and Hamilton's reply, 1 July 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 82. The British seamen in Constitution did not want to serve at sea for fear of being

hung if captured by the British. They asked for service in a fort or guardship but were discharged instead.

MASTER COMMANDANT DAVID PORTER TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *Essex*
Navy Yard Brooklyn
28th June 1812

Sir,

A circumstance that occurred on board the *Essex*, the day before yesterday excited some interest in this place and may produce some enquiry from the Department.

John Erving an American seaman belonging to the *Essex*, declared himself to be an Englishman when called upon to take the oath of allegiance. The crew requested me to permit them to tar & feather him, and turn him out of the ship with appropriate labels on him, I consented; The Police to prevent a riot took him in charge; The British consul I am informed has declared him to be an Englishman, and is about engaging a passage for him to Halifax. The Police Office I am told has consented to this measure. Erving has already had an interview with the Consul.

Yesterday the enclosed correspondence took place between me and a magistrate of the Police Office, & it was from the bearer of the letter that I received information of the above arrangement; I desired him to inform the officers of the police that I should protest in the most solemn manner against the delivery of Erving to our enemy, who may through him obtain much information respecting our Navy. Perhaps Sir, there may be such a character on board each of our vessels. I have the honor &c

D Porter

LS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 72.

[Enclosure]

City of New York ss June 26th 1812

John Erving being duly sworn depose & saith, that he was born in New Castle on Tyne (England) that he has resided within the United States of America since the year 1800, is a Sail Maker, has never been naturalized in the United States. That on the 14th day of last Octr 1811, he entered at Salem in the capacity of Sail Makers Mate, for the frigate *Essex*, that he joined said Frigate at Norfolk on board of which he continued until this day that about 9 O'clock this morning all hands were pipe'd to muster when Capt Porter (Capt of said Frigate) told the hands that they were called up to take the oath of allegiance to the United States, and gave them to understand that any man who did not chuse to take the oath should be discharged, that when deponents name was called, he told Capt Porter that he, the deponent, could not take the oath required, being a British subject, on which Capt Porter called the Petty Officers and said to them, that they must pass sentence on him the deponent, on which the said Petty Officers put him in the Launch which was along side the Frigate and there put a bucket of tar on him, and after which laid on him a quantity of feathers. They then rowe'd said Launch stern foremost on shore on New York Island and put him on shore, but whereabouts deponent does not know as he was never here before. That deponent went from Street to Street naked from the waist up, smeare'd with Tar & feathers not knowing where to go, when a man (Benjamin Ford) told him to go into his shop from the mob, or crow'd of people then around him, that he staid in said Shop until the Police Magistrate took him from thence and put him in the City Prison for protection, where he has been cleansed and got a Shirt & Trowsers. The deponent further swears that none of the citizens, or inhabitants of the City of New York done him any manner of injury, or insulted him, but that he has been assisted and protected by the civil authority thereof

(Signed) John Erving

Taken & Sworn before me in the
Police Office of the City of New York
June 26th 1812

(Signed) Charles Christian
Special Justice of the peace for said City

Copy, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 72.

[Enclosure]

Police Office City of New York
June 26th 1812

(Copy)

Sir,

The bearer John Erving was this morning put on shore in this City Tarred & Feathered-the Mayor of this City-the Justices at this Office, and the citizens without exception have protected him. Finding on examination that the said Erving is a British Subject and a total stranger in this City, I therefore refer him to you for further succour. Your Obt Servt

(Signed) Charles Christian
Special Justice of the Peace

Thomas Barclay Esqr

Copy, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 72.

[Enclosure]

Police Office, City of New York
June 27th 1812

Sir,

I had the honor this moment to receive your note of the present date, and in consequence of the information it contains, I have committed John Erving, with a view to his safe keeping, and further examination of this subject, as a disorderly person. Presuming that a perusal of his examination at this office may be useful to you individually, or to the service, I have communicated it by Mr Montgomery (Police Officer) with instructions to return it to this office; should you judge proper a copy of it is entirely at your service. Respectfully [&c.]

(Signed) Charles Christian

David Porter Esqr
Capt. U S Frigate *Essex*-
Brooklyn

Copy, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 72.

[Enclosure]

Commanding officer on board
the *Essex* Frigate

Police Office
New York
June 27th 1812

Sir,

John Erving who was landed in this City yesterday from the *Essex*, says that his clothing is on board that Frigate. He is in the care of the Police of this City who have given him a Shirt & Trowsers. If you judge proper to give his chest and clothes to the bearer, Mr. Raynor, Police Officer, he will receive them. Erving says that the Armourer of the *Essex* can inform you where his clothes is placed. Your Obt Servt

(Signed) Charles Christian
Special Justice

Copy, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 72.

[Enclosure]

U.S. Frigate *Essex*
27th June 1812

Sir,

John Erving is an American Citizen, I herewith enclose a copy of his protection. His clothes cannot be delivered until I am furnished by the Purser with a statement of his accounts, should he not be indebted to the United States they shall be delivered to your order. Very Respectfully [&c.]

(Signed) D. Porter

Charles Christian Esqr
New York

Copy, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 72.

[Enclosure]

(Protection)¹

No: 189

United States of America

Virginia, ss

I, Larkin Smith Collector of the District of Norfolk & Portsmouth, do hereby certify that John Erving an American Seaman, aged twenty-

three years, or thereabouts, of the height of five feet four 1/4 inches, of a light complexion, brown hair, Grey eyes, Born in Salem in the State of Massachusetts, has this day produced to me proof in the manner directed in the act entitled "an act for the relief and protection of American Seamen" and pursuant to said act, I do hereby certify, that the said John Erving is a citizen of the United States of America.

In witness whereof,

Seal

I have hereunto set my hand & seal of office
this 23d day of April

One thousand eight hundred and eleven

Signed Larkin Smith
Collector

I certify that the above is a true copy of the original

W W Bostwick

Copy, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 72.

1. Documents such as this were commonly carried by American seamen in the years when British warships were stopping and searching American merchantmen. If a seaman could produce a document certifying American citizenship, there was less chance of being pressed. Yet, British officers frequently refused to honor "protections" because they were easily forged or falsely sworn. If Erving was indeed English, the above document is an example of a false protection.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO
MASTER COMMANDANT DAVID PORTER

Capt. David Porter
New York

Navy Depmt
30 June 1812

I have just received your letter of the 28 Inst.

It is much to be regretted that you gave sanction to the proceedings on the part of your crew in the case of John Irving. It is indeed to be regretted that you did not suppress the proceedings. Mobs will in Spite of all Law, sometimes Act licentiously, but Mobs should never be suffered to exist on board of a Man of War, while ordere discipline & a perfect observance of the Law should be inforced. Tyrany in whatever Shape it may appear, ought to be resisted by all men. I do

exceedingly regret, that an officer of your rank & intelligence should have permitted the proceedings in question.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 81-82.

Navy Appropriations

To pay for an expanded navy, including the repairs for three of the smaller frigates, Constellation, Chesapeake, and Adams, the equipping and manning of additional gunboats, the repair of damage which was likely to occur to American warships, and the refitting of prizes captured worthy of being taken into the navy, required much larger sums of money than had been spent on the navy for many years. To obtain some departmental support for this legislation, Langdon Cheves, chairman of the Naval Committee of Congress, requested Secretary Hamilton's written opinion on several topics. The following letter is Hamilton's reply to the Naval Committee.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO
LANGDON CHEVES, CHAIRMAN OF THE NAVAL COMMITTEE

Navy Depart.
30 June 1812

I have this moment received your communication of this day's date, and in reply have the honor to state

that in the Estimates & appropriations for the naval Service for the year 1812, the employment of three frigates, authorized to be repaired & equipped, has not been provided for: also that there are ninety gun boats, for the employment of which no provisions have been made—that these three frigates namely—The *Constellation*, the *Chesapeake* & the *Adams*—will probably be prepared for Service in time to admit of their being employed three months during the present year & that the President has judged it expedient to put into Service the ninety additional gun boats above mentioned.

The Sixty two gun boats at this time in Service, are employed at New Orleans, St marys Savannah, Charleston, Wilmington N.C. Ocracock Norfolk & New York. The additional ninety will be employed & distributed in our several ports most requiring them, as the President shall direct. Among other places, Norfolk and New York will require an additional number—Baltimore, Annapolis, The Potomac, Philadelphia, Newport, R.I., Stonington [Connecticut], Boston, Portsmouth, Portland, Saco [Maine], Kennebunk [Maine] &c also require gunboats.

To state the respective periods of service of each of the gun boats now in service, would involve considerable enquiry, necessarily producing considerable delay and as you have requested an early answer to your communication, I have not judged an answer to that branch of your inquiries to be indispensable.

With respect to the appropriation required to enable the Executive to employ the three frigates & the 90 gun boats the following general Estimate is submitted.

The annual cost of the <i>Constellation</i> in service	
is estimated at	\$10,5000
that of the <i>Chesapeake</i> the same	10,5000
that of the <i>Adams</i>	75,000
annual expense of the three	\$285,000
One fourth of which, that is three months service	
of the whole will be	\$71,250
The annual cost of a gun boat in actual service	
in time of war is estimated at	12,500
The annual expense of ninety gun boats would	
therefore be	1,125,000
One half of which that is six months service	
of the 90 gun boats would be	562,500

The repairing our vessels of war, that may be damaged in action no provision has yet been made—neither has any provision been made for purchasing or bringing into service any of the vessels of war of the enemy that may be captured by our Cruizers. For the first of these two objects namely the repairing of our vessels that may be damaged in action with the enemy, I would recommend that there be appropriated the sum of \$400,000.

What sum will probably be required, to enable the Government to purchase & employ the vessels of war of the enemy, that they may be

captured by our cruizers; it is obviously impossible to say—it will depend in a great degree upon the Enterprize of our Commanders, upon which in my opinion, great reliance may be justly placed—that the limited means committed to them will be judiciously, faithfully & zealously employed, I am fully persuaded. I will only further remark, that the greater the number of occasions for expenditure under this head, the greater will be the number of our national trophies: that the governments of Europe almost invariably, make it a point to purchase and put into Commission their enemy vessels of war captured by their cruizers, and that the money, by being specifically appropriated to that object, if not required for such objects would remain unexpended. If to the sum above stated to be required for other objects, we were to add the sum of \$466,250 for this, the whole together would constitute a total of \$1,500,000, that is to say

for 3 months service of the <i>Constellation</i> , <i>Chesapeake</i> & <i>Adams</i>	71,250
for 6 months service of 90 Gun boats	562,500
for repairing our vessels of war, that may be damaged in action	400,000
for purchasing & putting into Commission the war vessels of the enemy, that may be captured by our cruizers.	466,250
making a total	\$1,550,000

Should Congress deem it expedient to provide for these objects the appropriations, in order to make them correspond with the specific heads of appropriation usually observed should be made as follows viz.

For pay & subsistence of the officers & pay of the Seamen	322,500
For provisions	184,500
For medicine, instruments & hospital stores	14,000
For Repairs	482,750
For Contingent expenses	30,000
For purchasing & equipping & putting into commis- sion the war vessels of the Enemy, that may be cap- tured by our cruizers	466,250
Dollars.	1,500,000

I have the honor
Paul Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, Secretary of the Navy Letters to Congress, Vol. 1, pp. 112-14.

British Naval Strength in North America

When evaluating the strength of the British Navy assigned to the western Atlantic, historians frequently count only the ships based on what the British called the "North American Station." This station was based on Halifax under an admiral or vice admiral. Not usually considered is the number of ships assigned to other stations either in the North Atlantic or in the Caribbean. Privateers and U.S. Navy ships risked meeting many of these ships as well as those strictly based at Halifax. The Admiralty kept track of the ships assigned to or ordered from its naval stations by means of a "Ships in Sea Pay" list that had been issued quarterly during the American Revolution. By the time of the War of 1812, however, Ships in Sea Pay was issued only twice a year, in January and July. In the following Ships in Sea Pay list, one finds listed the ships assigned to the Leeward Islands (based on Antigua), Jamaica (based on Port Royal), and Newfoundland (based on St. John's), as well as those on the North American station. Ships such as Southampton, Frolic, and Brazen belonged to the Jamaica station when they met American naval forces in the first year of the war. H.M. sloop Alert was operating out of St. John's, Newfoundland, when she was captured by Essex in August 1812. Thus, although American ships were most likely to encounter British warships from Halifax, they might also meet warships from other western Atlantic or Caribbean stations.

SHIPS IN SEA PAY

[Extract]

Admiralty Office }
1 July 1812 }The present disposition of His Majesty's
Ships and Vessels in Sea Pay

Rate	Ships	No of		Commanders	When Commissd	When sailed from England
		Guns	Men			
Leeward Islands.						
Rear Admiral Sir Francis Laforey Bart:						
				R.A. Sir F. Laforey }		
3	<i>Dragon</i>	74	640	F.A. Collier	1 Sept 1810	31 Oct 1810
5	<i>Statira</i>	38	300	H. Stackpoole	30 July 1807	3 Oct 1808
"	<i>Orpheus</i>	36	274	H. Pigot	22 Aug 1809	24 Nov 1809
"	<i>Tribune</i>	36	274	Geo: Reynolds	15 July 1803	5 Mar 1811
6	<i>Cherub</i>	20	121	T.T. Tucker	7 Apl 1807	29 Feb 1808
"	<i>Lightning</i>	20	121	B.C. Doyle	25 Mar 1807	2 Feb 1812
Sloop	<i>Amaranthe</i>	18	121	G. Pringle	17 Jany 1805	20 Apl 1805
"	<i>Forester</i>	18	121	A. Kennedy	12 Apl 1806	29 Augt 1808
"	<i>Surinam</i>	18	121	J. E. Watt	19 Mar 1805	15 Dec 1808
"	<i>Scorpion</i>	18	121	R. Giles	14 Nov 1803	3 Apl 1809
"	<i>Ringdove</i>	18	121	W. Dowers	17 Sep 1806	4 Dec 1808
"	<i>Charybdis</i>	18	121	J. Clephane	18 Feb 1809	23 June 1809
"	<i>Peruvian</i>	18	121	A. F. Westropp		
"	<i>Arachne</i>	18	121	S. Chambers	16 May 1808	9 May 1809
"	<i>Julia</i>	16	95	Hon V. Gardner	7 Feb 1806	30 June 1807
Sloop	<i>Demerary</i>	14	86	W. H. Smith	Commissd abroad	
"	<i>Spider</i>	14	85	F. G. Willock		
"	<i>Dominica</i>	14	62	R. Hockings	29 May 1811	23 Nov 1811
"	<i>Opossum</i>	14	76	Thos Wolrige	24 Nov 1808	13 Oct 1809
Gun Brig	<i>Morne- fortunée</i>	14	65	Lt. J Steele	Commissd abroad	
"	<i>Netley</i>	14	65	" J. Jackson	Do	Do
"	<i>Elizabeth</i>	10	55	" E. F.		
"				Dwyer	Do	Do
"	<i>Ballahou</i>	4	20	" N. King	Do	Do
Schooner	<i>Swaggerer</i>	10	50	" G. J.		
"				Evelyn	Do	Do
Schr	<i>Subtle</i>	10	50	Lt C. Browne	Commissd Abroad	
"	<i>Laura</i>	10	50	" C. N. Hunter	Do	Do
"	<i>Maria</i>	10	50	" G. Kippen	Do	Do

Rate	Ships	No of		Commanders	When Commissd	When sailed from England
		Guns	Men			
Jamaica Vice Admiral Stirling						
3	<i>Polyphemus</i>	64	491	V. Adml Stirling } C. Quinton }	9 July 1804	2 July 1808
5	<i>Arethusa</i>	38	284	F. H. Coffin	8 Apl 1805	21 Nov 1811
"	<i>Thetis</i>	38	284	W. H. Byam	20 July 1805	31 Mar 1809
"	<i>Thalia</i>	36	264	J. G. Vashon	1 Nov 1805	17 May 1810
"	<i>South- ampton</i>	32	215	Sir J. L. Yeo	3 Nov 1810	13 Mar 1811
6	<i>Barbadoes</i>	24	195	T. Huskisson	3 May 1810	23 Nov 1811
6	<i>Garland</i>	22	175	R. P. Davies	23 Nov 1807	11 Nov 1807
"	<i>Cyane</i>	22	175	T. Forrest	25 Mar 1807	
"	<i>Herald</i>	20	121	G. Jackson	12 Mar 1807	under orders to proceed.
Sloop	<i>Moselle</i>	18	121	G. Mowbray	21 Nov 1807	16 Jany 1808
"	<i>Frolic</i>	18	121	T. Whinyates	1 Apl 1807	25 Feb 1808
"	<i>Sappho</i>	18	121	H. O'Grady	4 Feb 1807	22 June 1808
"	<i>Brazen</i>	18	121	J. Stirling	26 Mar 1803	3 Mar 1809
"	<i>Reindeer</i>	18	121	C. C. Askew	30 Aug 1804	4 Nov 1809
"	<i>Sapphire</i>	18	121	Hy Haynes	4 Feb 1807	21 Sep 1810
Sloop	<i>Rhodian</i>	14	76	J. G. Boss	28 Jany 1809	25 Apl 1809
Gun Brig	<i>Decouverte</i>	10	50	Lieut. Williams	Commissd abroad	
"	<i>Variable</i>	10	50	" Yates	Do	Do
Rec:Ship	<i>Shark</i>		70	J. Gore	23 June 1806.	
North America Vice Admiral Sawyer						
3	<i>Africa</i>	64	491	V. Adml Sawyer } J. Bastard }	4 Feb 1809	28 Jany 1811
5	<i>Guerriere</i>	38	300	J. R. Dacres	30 Nov 1807	10 Feb 1808
"	<i>Spartan</i>	38	300	E. P. Brenton	15 Aug 1805	25 July 1811
"	<i>Shannon</i>	38	300	B. P. V. Broke	14 Jany 1806	9 Aug 1811
"	<i>Belvidera</i>	36	274	R. Byron	14 Jany 1810	27 Oct 1810
5	<i>Aeolus</i>	32	254	Lord J. Townshend	3 Sep 1802	16 Aug 1807
6	<i>Tartarus</i>	20	121	J. Pasco	13 Dec 1806	30 Apl 1812
Sloop	<i>Emulous</i>	18	121	W. H. Mulcaster	15 Aug 1806	6 Augt 1807
"	<i>Rattler</i>	18	121	A. Gordon	13 Dec 1803	— 1811

Rate	Ships	No of		Commanders	When Commissd	When sailed from England
		Guns	Men			
"	<i>Atalante</i>	18	121	Fred: Hickey	Commissd abroad	
"	<i>Indian</i>	18	121	H. Jane	Do	Do
"	<i>Goree</i>	18	121	H. D. Byng	Do	Do
"	<i>Morgiana</i>	18	121	D. Scott	Do	Do
"	<i>Sylph</i>	18	121	W. Evans	Do	Do
Sloop	<i>Recruit</i>	18	121	H. F. Senhouse	19 Mar 1809	19 Nov 1811
"	<i>Martin</i>	18	121	J. Evans	21 Mar 1807	under orders to proceed.
"	<i>Colibre</i>	16	100	J. Thompson	Commissd abroad	
Schr	<i>Paz</i>	10	50	Lt Dumaresq	15 Oct 1808	22 Apl 1811
Gun Brig	<i>Plumper</i>	10	50	" Bray	Commissd abroad	
"	<i>Juniper</i>	8	42	" Vassall	Do	Do
Schr	<i>Chub</i>	4	20	" Nisbett	Do	Do
"	<i>Cuttle</i>	4	20	" Saunders	Do	Do
"	<i>Bream</i>	4	20	" Simpson	Do	Do
Recg Ship	<i>Centurion</i>		36	Lt Kinsman	20 Nov 1808	1809
"	<i>Ruby</i>		90	Comre Evans	7 Oct 1810	25 July 1811
				Lt Trounce		

Newfoundland						
Admiral Sir J. T. Duckworth Bart: & K.B.						
4	<i>Antelope</i>	50	345	Adml Sir J. T. Duckworth Jas Carpenter	12 Mar 1803	22 June 1812
5	<i>Pomone</i>	38	300	F. W. Fane	22 Feb 1812	23 May 1812
"	<i>Hyperion</i>	36	274	W. P. Cumby	21 Jany 1808	13 May 1812
"	<i>Jason</i>	32	215	Hon: W. King	22 Nov 1804	13 Mar 1812
6	<i>Comet</i>	20	121	G. W. Blamey	9 Jany 1808	23 May 1812
Sloop	<i>Hazard</i>	18	121	Jno Cookesley	27 June 1802	23 Mar 1811
"	<i>Avenger</i>	18	121	U. Johnson	14 June 1804	19 May 1812
"	<i>Electra</i>	14	95	W. Gregory	7 Feb 1812	27 Apl 1812
"	<i>Alert</i>	16	90	T.L.P.		
				Laugharne	14 June 1804	5 Apl 1812
"	<i>Muros</i>	10	86	Jas Aberdour	Dec 1811	24 June 1812
Cutter	<i>Adonis</i>	10	42	Lt Buchan	8 Mar 1806	1809
Schr	<i>Holly</i>	10	50	" Treacher	Commissd abroad	

D, UkLPR, Adm. 8, Ships in Sea Pay, 1812-1813. This chart has been condensed, eliminating two columns which were virtually blank. Lieut. Trounce appeared in a column "Lieutenants" which is placed between "Commanders" and "When Commissd." The phrase "under orders to proceed" originally appeared in a final column labeled "Disposition."

Timbers for *Constellation*

In his letter of 22 June to Secretary Hamilton, Commodore Tingey expressed the need for timber to be used as spars in the refitting of the frigate Congress. At the same time, Constellation also needed timber. In the following letter, Tingey sets out his requirements.

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washtn 1st July 1812

Sir

The extreme delay of a vessel, with Pine timber Mast Pieces &c (part of a late Contract with Mr [George] Beale) renders it highly probable that some accident has happened to her, which may prevent a timely supply of materials necessary to finish the lower masts, and make a *Bowsprit for the frigate *Constellation*. I therefore beg leave to suggest the propriety of an immediate order to the Navy Agent at Norfolk, to send as speedily as practicable the following pieces of heart yellow pine

	feet	inches		feet	in
Six Cheeks	70 long	24 by 11	Two top masts	61 long	19 diamtr
Six Side trees	74 "	24 by 10	Five do	56 "	18 do
Six halfyards	56 "	19 by 19	Five Bowsprit pcs	62 "	18 by 18

To be clear of large knots, sap & defects I have the honor [&c.]

Tho^s Tingey

*Her Bowsprit has been supplied to the frigate *Constitution*.

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 82.

The War of 1812 Reaches East Florida

U.S. gunboats under the command of Captain Hugh Campbell, stationed on the St. Marys River, were deeply involved in holding a position taken by U.S. troops and Georgia militia at Amelia Island in

March. Already on a war footing, Captain Campbell found himself faced with another enemy after receiving news of the declaration of war with Great Britain, Spain's ally. The following letter records Captain Campbell's report to the secretary on the readiness of the vessels under his command.

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St Marys July 4th 1812

Sir

I am honored with your orders of the 20th Ult enquiring of me how many Gun Boats are on this station, how many in commission and their condition. For particulars respecting the number of Boats under my command and their stations I beg leave to refer you to my letter of the 27th ult by last mail.

As respects their condition I have to report *Nos 10, 62, 63, 158, 160, 161, 164, 165 & 168*, in good order and fit for service with the exception of their crews which are not compleat. *No 4* although defective will answer for some time on river service. *Nos 160, 165, and 168* are on the *St Johns*, *No 10* designed for that place agreeable to my last advice, yet remains wind bound.

The Inhabitants of this place are calling on me for protection to the town. The force above mentioned is all I have for the General duty required in these waters. I have the Honor [&c.]

Hugh G. Campbell

P S

By letter from Charleston This day, the *Vixen* Lay at that Place on the 29th Ult her Commdr Sick

H.G.C.

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 89.

Medical Care for Gunboat Crews

Surgeon Edward Cutbush, senior surgeon of the navy, was in charge of the health needs of seamen assigned to gunboats in the Delaware

River. As these men served at a considerable distance from Philadelphia, where there was an improvised naval hospital, he was concerned that the Navy Department make some definite arrangement to provide for hospitalization of men closer to the probable scene of action. He expresses his concerns in the following letter.

SURGEON EDWARD CUTBUSH TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

United States Navy Yard

Philada July 6 1812

Sir,

In consequence of a conversation between Comme [Alexander] Murray and myself, I beg leave, by his request, to address you, on the subject of the medical department of the Gun Boats, and the arrangements connected therewith on which your instructions appear to be requisite. The Commodore expects two mates to be ordered to the twenty gun boats. There will be about 400 men, exclusive of officers, attached to them, the presumption is, that they will be divided into two divisions, each division having a surgeon's mate, or a surgeon and mate to the two divisions, with the necessary articles to render immediate assistance to the sick or wounded of the squadron-but persons who are wounded or very ill cannot be accomodated on board of the boats, neither can any operation of consequence be performed on board. A question then arises, what is to be done with the sick or wounded? Are they to be sent to the Navy Yard at Philada, which may require several days, before an operation can be performed, or are they to be landed at some convenient post on the River Delaware? in either case some provision will be necessary, which cannot be made without your order.

Two small medicine chests have been ordered for the two divisions, I conceive that they ought to be furnished with such articles as may be necessary, having regard to economy, to the number of men and the good of the service, should an engagement at any time take place; but I am restricted: I hope therefore, should any blame be attached, in consequence of the want of Tourniquets or other articles, that I may not be censured. I have the honor [&c.]

E. Cutbush surgeon.

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 83.

Condition of U.S. Frigate *John Adams*

John Adams, a 32-gun frigate, had been constructed for the navy at Charleston in 1799 by the people of that city, in exchange for government securities, just as Essex had been contributed by the city of Salem. During the Quasi-War with France and the Tripolitan War, John Adams saw extensive service, but she was laid up in 1805. At the commencement of the War of 1812, John Adams was at Boston when Master Commandant Charles Ludlow received orders to sail her to New York for repairs. The following letter records Ludlow's judgment of her potential as a warship.

MASTER COMMANDANT CHARLES LUDLOW TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Ship *John Adams*
Frog's Point July 9th 1812

Sir

I receiv'd orders from Commodore William Bainbridge of the 2nd Inst to proceed to New York with the Ship *John Adams* under my Command, & report myself to the Navy Department on my arrival. I sail'd the 4th in Company with the U.S. Brig *Nautilus* and arrived at this place last evening, am now waiting for a wind to take us through Hurler-Gate [*Hellgate*] to the Navy Yard. I had a very good opportunity to try the Sailing of the Ship, and conceive it my Duty to report the Same. She cannot pass for more than a tolerable Sailing Merchant Ship, and so Crank that a Ship of 20 Guns ought to take her, in what would generally be call'd a topgallant breeze for Ships of War.

When I took Command of this Ship from Capt'n [Joseph] Tarbell he assured me it was his intention to apply to the Department for Orders to rejoin the Ship again, and wished me not to make any alterations. I have not made any of any consequence; but if Capt'n Tarbell is not to have her, nor any other Commander desirous of the Command (which I will give up with much pleasure) I shall be under the necessity of applying for a Survey on the Ship, & trust can make it appear, that as a Corvette she will answer as a Vessel of War, but at present she is unworthy the name of an American Ship of War, and I should very reluc-



Early 19th-Century Surgical Instruments
Shown, from top to bottom, bone saw, bone scraper,
forceps clamp, artery clamp, 3 sizes of knives, suture
hook, 3 sizes of scalpels, and 2 curved knives.

tantly hazard the reputation of her Officers, & that of the Service; in her present state; she will be consider'd by the Public; & particularly by any vessel she may have to contend with, as a 32 Gun Frigate, when she mounts but 32 Guns.¹

With due deference have I made the above report & hope have not exceeded the bounds of rectitude. With highest respect [&c.]

Ch^s Ludlow

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 84.

1. Secretary Hamilton left the mounting of additional guns on board *John Adams* to the discretion of Captain Isaac Chauncey, commandant of the New York Navy Yard, noting that some of Tarbell's previous alterations were not "judicious." See Tarbell to Hamilton, 30 July 1812, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 82 and Hamilton to Chauncey, 15 Aug. 1812, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, p. 313.

Shortages of Arms and Ammunition

The urgent readying of warships for sea drew down the ordnance stocks of the Washington Navy Yard to an alarming degree. Commodore Tingey, facing constant requisitions from naval stations at Gosport, Wilmington, and Charleston, expresses his concern over the situation in the following two letters, written only six days apart.

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washtn
9th July 1812

Sir

I am honor'd with your instructions of 7th instant: directing the shipment of sundry articles to Savanna for account of the Department of War.

Of those articles, we can at this time supply only the Match rope—for, of 18 Pdr round shot we have not one, over the indent for the frigate *Constellation*—of 24 Pound round shot, we have not one in the yard, since the departure of the frigate *Constitution*. Of the 100 barrels

gun powder lately by your order to be shipped to Charleston, I could ship only 50, and have not above 10 left in the Magazine, nor have we more port-fire than necessary for the *Constellation*, and other immediate wants. A vessel is now at the Yard, ready to sail for Charleston, by which I shall with your approbation ship the materials for Captn Dent. I have the honor

Tho^s: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 99.

COMMODORE THOMAS TINGEY TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Washtn 15th July 1812

Sir

The Indents for the frigate *Constellation* state the want of one hundred Muskets & bayonets, fifty pair of pistols, and one hundred Cutlasses; of the two former we have none fit for use—and of the latter only sufficient for the Gun boats, about to be send from this yard—and those not of very good quality. I enclose also a list of articles in her indents, not attainable in this vicinity, and beg leave to recommend that they be ordered from Philadelphia¹ I have the honor [&c.]

Tho^s: Tingey

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 112. Endorsed at foot of letter: "20 July wrote to G[eorge] Harrison for the small articles, to Chauncey for the Muskets pistols & Cutlasses."

1. Enclosure not found.

The Return of *Chesapeake's* Seamen

For more than four years, the United States and Great Britain negotiated fitfully over H.M.S. Leopard's unopposed cannonading of the frigate *Chesapeake* and the impressment of four of her crew in 1807. The insult rankled American opinion to the degree that it is considered to be an indirect cause of the War of 1812. Finally, however, the British government agreed to a settlement in which it paid indemnities to the victims or their families and returned two of the four seamen who had been impressed.¹ Of the other two, one had died in Halifax hospital and the other was hanged as a deserter from the British Navy. The United States accepted the British settlement offer on 12 November 1811, but the two surviving American seamen were not returned until 11 July 1812, too late to have any effect on the state of hostilities. Captain William Bainbridge received the seamen at Boston with an appropriate ceremony, described in the following letter.

1. For the text of the agreement, see ASP, Foreign Relations, III: 499-500.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM BAINBRIDGE TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Charlestown
11th July 1812

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that the British Schooner *Brim* [*Bream*], commanded by Lieutenant [John] Simpson, arrived yesterday in this Port; as a flag of Truce from Halifax—sent by Admiral [Sir Herbert] Sawyer, to return onboard the Frigate *Chesapeake*, John Strawhaun [*Strachan*], and Daniel Martin, two of the Seamen which were taken by the *Leopard* from the *Chesapeake*. This day the said Men were received in the following manner onboard the *Chesapeake*. viz.

The Commanding Officer of the British vessel brought them on the Quarter Deck of the Frigate—where Lt [Jesse] Wilkinson received the officer, who informed him that Admiral Sawyer had directed him to return those Seamen onboard of the *Chesapeake*, to which Lt Wilkinson (by arrangement) made the following reply

"Sir I am commanded by Commodore Bainbridge, to receive those two American Seamen on the very deck from which they were wantonly taken in time of Peace by a vessel of your Nation of Superior Force" After which the Seamen were brought aft of the Quarter Deck, where I made the following short address to them.

"My Lads, I am glad to see you. From this Deck you were taken by British outrage. For your return to it you owe gratitude to the Government of your Country. Your Country now offers you, an opportunity to revenge your wrongs, and I cannot doubt but you will be desirous of doing so on board of this very Ship. I trust the Flag that flies on board of her, will gloriously defend you." On which three Cheers were given by a numerous crowd onboard of the Frigate and the Crews of the Gun Boats lying alongside. I afterwards politely invited the British Officer to dine with me. who Accepted with Mr Ruff the Bearer of the Despatches onboard the vessel, for Mr [Augustus J.] Foster the late British Minister. The Despatches by General Dearborns permission have been forwarded by the British Agent here to Mr Foster at New York. I have the honor [&c.]

Wm Bainbridge

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 102.

The Privateer *Matilda*

The rush to go into privateering was not entirely smooth, as the following document indicates. Discipline in privateers varied from ship to ship, and the altercation between captain and crew on board Matilda offers a case in point. The men had apparently signed on at Philadelphia, but according to this statement by a crew member, one Charles Read, the brutality of one of the officers caused a good number of the crewmen to refuse to sail. Mr. Read wrote directly to the secretary to describe their plight. Under Article 15 of the Act Concerning Letters of Marque, offenses by either officers or crewmen of privateers were to be tried by a court martial made up of U.S. Navy officers. The disposition of the case is not known, but the incident demonstrates some of the problems that existed for privateersmen on board their own ships.

CHARLES READ TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

New Castle [Delaware] Goal 13 July 1812

Sir

At the request of 25 of the crew of the Privateer Schooner *Matilda* who with myself were sent to this prison on Saturday last by order of Capt [Noah] Allen of the said Schooner I take the liberty of informing you that in consequence of the Barbarity and threatnings of our Officers we have refused to go the cruise for which we had engaged. but previous to this refusal we wrote a letter to the Capt requesting that the first Lieutenant (who had staubed a man with a boarding pike and threatened to blow the brains out of many others) might be tried by a Court Martial which was refused; And having been informed that the said Capt Allen has applied to you for the appointment of a Court Martial to try us for the said offence, we also request that a like Court Martial for the trial of the said first Lieutenant for the Offence above mentioned may be also appointed. If Officers are permitted to pursue such conduct with impunity our seamen will be no longer safe they will have their enemies on all sides and in fact they will have more to fear from the violence of our own Officers than from the real enemy; Our Ignorant Officers in our Privateers begin already to boast of having Martial law on their side which they seem to consider as a scourge to seamen in my humble opinion it is as much intended to protect the seamen against the violence of their Officers as for any other purpose. The whole crew refused to go in the schooner but when they had got 26 of us in prison they kept the rest on board in hopes they would think better of it and proceed on the cruise. I have the Honor [&c.]

Charles Read

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 5, No. 113.

Reducing the Gunboat Crews

In order to provide full complements of crew for the frigates, brigs, schooners, and sloops of the navy, the many gunboats on duty along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts would have to suffer the loss of many of

their men. On the 6th of May, the secretary had found it necessary to withdraw Marines from gunboat crews, and the following letter shows the flotillas were weakened even further.

CIRCULAR TO COMMANDANTS AND NAVY AGENTS

Navy Depart 14 July 1812

It is the order of the President of the United States, that the gunboats in Commission shall not have exceeding eight men each, exclusive of officers, that is just enough to exercise the gun-the balance of the crew can it is conceived, on an emergency, be made up by volunteers from the neighbourhood of the respective stations of the gunboats; and on such occasions you will beat for volunteers.

The eight men for each may all be able Seamen at the usual wages of 12\$ p. month each.

In cases then, where all the gunboats under your command are fully manned, you are immediately to discharge all the surplus exceeding eight, or you may if an opportunity should occur turn them over to any of our public vessels that may require them. If discharged they are to be paid off.

In cases where the gunboats in Commission are some fully manned, others not manned, you are to draft the quota allowed from those fully manned in order to man the others-and this you will do so as to make each boat as nearly equal in efficiency as may be practicable. I mean with respect to the qualities of the crew. If you have not able Seamen enough for the whole, let each crew consist of part able & part ordinary Seamen.

In discharging a due regard must be paid to the public interest and those Seamen in debt to the Department are, being in other respects equal, to be detained in preference to those not in debt. It is indeed desirable that we should avoid discharging any Seamen in debt to the public, and if cases should exist, where it would be proper to discharge them you will retain them until they shall have served sufficient length of time to pay the amount respectively due by them.

Paul Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, p. 302.

Barges for Georgia

In an interesting communication, Captain John Dent informed the secretary that he would send six barges built at Charleston to Sunbury, Georgia. The design of these barges is uncertain, but they may have been similar to those built at the Washington Navy Yard by William Doughty in 1813.¹ If so, they were row galleys about 50 feet in length and 12 feet in the beam, with a depth of 3 feet, 6 inches. In Charleston, these barges were worked by slaves, but this was not to be the case in Georgia. This document provides an instance where the use of slaves in naval vessels was countenanced and probably reflects the relative scarcity of white seamen for such drudgery, as well as the common use of slaves in maritime pursuits in the South.

1. *Chapelle*, *American Sailing Navy*, p. 276.

CAPTAIN JOHN H. DENT TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Charleston. 17th July. 1812

Sir

Your letter of the 9th inst. I had the honor to receive.¹

The Six barges built here are now in complete order, and have entered into the active Service designed them in rowing guard at the Bar, during the night, and visiting the inlets &c. I shall dispatch them to Sunbury (Georgia) agreeable to your order, as soon as I can obtain men to replace the 10 blacks now on board each boat. They are slaves belonging to this port and shipped for six months, if required, and not to be taken out of the State. The Acting Masters and mates were engaged on the same conditions and am afraid will not proceed to Sunbury. That shall not detain the boats as Masters of vessels may be had to perform that Service. I shall have six more barges built agreeable to your order. The two barges that left this yesterday for Beaufort, had not proceeded far when your order was received. I have ordered them back.

In constructing and arming *No 9* for a Guard-ship, I never anticipated that she was to be ordered to Sea but merely intended to be a depot for the Barges, and act in this harbour where little movement is required. The Waters of Port Royal require a vessel of easy draft of

water, that will work and sail well, to carry one long heavy Gun & 8 smaller. None of these requisites does *No 9* possess. She cannot go through the inland navigation, and shall I be obliged to dismount her 32 pounders and have her ports caulked up and a vessel to attend her in going round, as she does not sail or work well, having two thirds of her above water and very lightly rigged. I think her illy calculated for the service you intend her for that I will wait untill I receive an answer to my letter of 7th inst enclosing a communication from the city council of Beaufort through General [Thomas] Pinckney relative to a vessel in Beaufort. I Have the Honor to be [&c.]

J H Dent

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 115.

1. Hamilton to Dent, 9 July 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 83. The secretary's letter of 9 July was copied in the letterbook out of chronological sequence, among letters dated 1-2 July.

Prizes Taken at St. Marys

Captain Hugh Campbell's gunboats moved quickly once the news of war arrived. The following letter reports the taking of seven ships, probably the first British ships to have been captured by U.S. gunboats during the War of 1812.

CAPTAIN HUGH G. CAMPBELL TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

St Marys, Georgia
18th July 1812

Sir

Herewith I have the honor to enclose a List of British Vessels Captured and detained on the 29th and 30th ult. in consequence of my orders to the different commanders of the Public Vessels under my Command. You will be pleased to observe sir, that several of these vessels were taken within the Spanish waters, being under the impres-

sion that Spain would be viewed as an alley of Great Britain, likewise that our Flag has been flying for months past on the Banks of Amelia, from thence to the walls of St. Augustine, Which Gave us the Control of that Part of the Country, Consequently the Waters of the same I have the Honor to be [&c.]

Hugh G Campbell

A List of British Vessels detained, by the Squadron of Gun Boats, on the St. Marys Station.

Ship <i>Emperor</i> of London 575 Tons, Abraham Bound Master Navigated by 8 men, seized on the 29th day of June 1812, on the North Breaker under English Colours, bound to a Port in Great Britain, with a Cargo of ranging Timber	Brig <i>Camilla</i> of New Castle of 281 16/94 Tons, Robt Coss master mounting 4 Guns, Navigated by 10 men, seized on the 30th day of June 1812 in Bells River, under English Colours bound to a Port in Great Britain, with a Cargo of Ranging Timber
Ship <i>Experiment</i> of London 309 41/94 Tons, James Rutherford Master, Mounting 8 Guns, Navigated by 8 men, seized on the 29th day of June 1812, on the River St. Marys under English Colours, bound to a British port, with a Cargo of Ranging Timber.	Schooner <i>Adventure</i> Bradshaw Master Without Papers or Crew, seized at Amelia the 6th day of July 1812 under English Colours, nothing on board except two negroes
Brig <i>Adventure</i> of Kirkaldy of 157 4/94 Tons James Walker Master Mounting two Guns, Navigated by men, seized on the 29th day of June 1812, under English Colours, bound to a Port in Great Britain, with a Cargo of Ranging Timber	Schooner <i>Wade</i> Grand Cacios 88 90/94 Tons, Wm Johnston Master navigated by five men, seized on the 6th day of July 1812, at the entrance of the River St. Marys, under British Colours from Nassau New Providence, With a Cargo of Turtles and pine apples, 4 negro slaves on board. Pine apples and Turtles sold at Auction

Schooner *Trimer* New Providence, John Pinder, of 23 Tons, navigated by 4 men, seized by Mr. George Tomlin Commanding Gun Boat No 10, on the 9th day of July 1812, Comeing in the St. Marys River, under British Colours, from Nassau New Providence, with a Cargo of Pine apples and four thousand four hundred and Eighty nine dollars and 6/100 in specie-3 negro slaves on board-Pine apples sold at auction

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 121.

Sloop of War *Wasp* Refitting for Sea

There were four Wasps that saw naval service for the United States during the War of 1812.¹ The two that achieved fame were both sloops of war. The first was built at the Washington Navy Yard in 1806, carried 18 guns, and was commanded by Master Commandant Jacob Jones at the onset of the war. The second, a larger ship carrying 22 guns, was built at Newburyport, commissioned in 1814, and put under the command of Master Commandant Johnston Blakely. During the summer of 1812, Jones's *Wasp* was being refitted at Philadelphia in preparation for a cruise that had a short duration commencing in October 1812. The following letter contains Jones's report concerning the progress of the refit and ship's personnel.

1. For further information on these ships, see Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, 8 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1959-1981), VIII (W-Z): 139-41.

MASTER COMMANDANT JACOB JONES TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S.S. *Wasp* Philada 21st July 1812

Sir

An alledged or a real scarcity of carpenters here, has rendered it impossible for us to have had our tops ready before to day. We shall have them this evening & will be riged & ready for sea the day after tomorrow.

Several of our men have claimed their discharges to day, alledging they are british subjects & I've discharged them, ordering those of them whose times have expired to be paid off, & those who had the greater part of their time to serve, to receive nothing; in consequence of their having placed themselves upon us to serve their own purposes under the characters of Americans, at a time when there was no imperious demand for them.

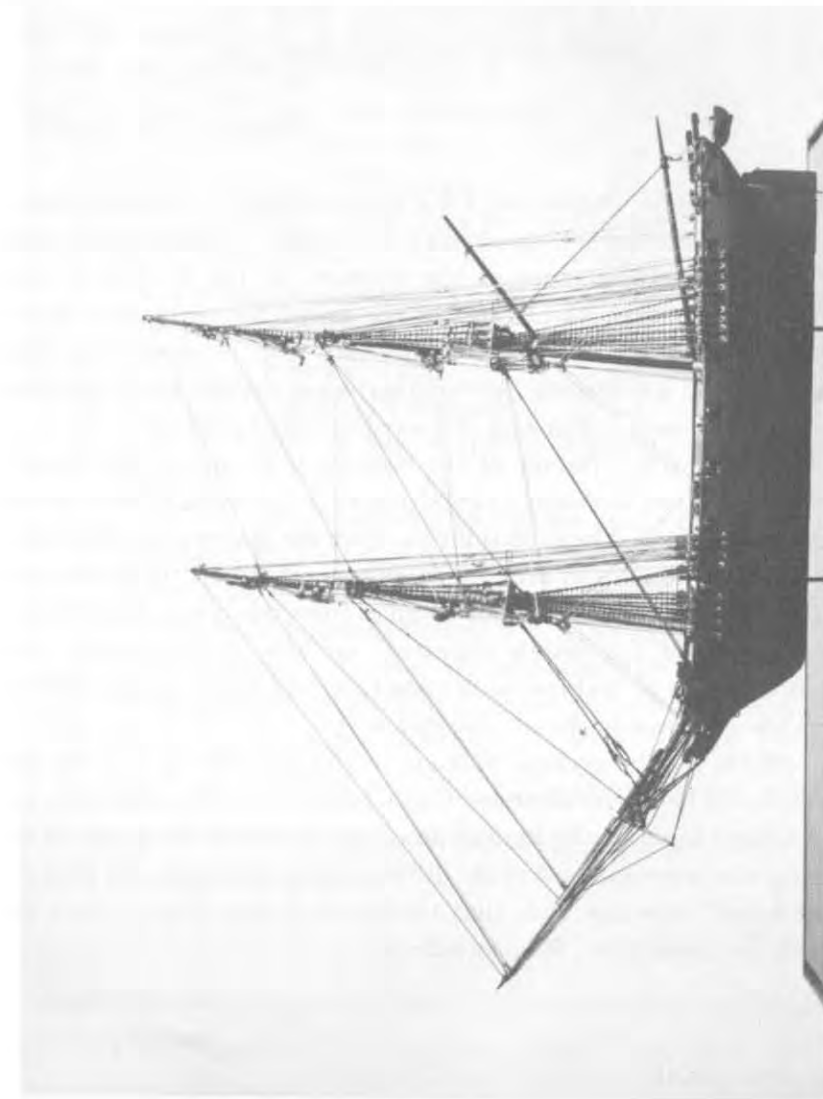
The Midshpn have joind the Ship, but the Surgeon or mate, which I believe it was your intention to order to us, has not yet appeared. If it may be consistent with your arrangements to let us have another commissioned & experienced Lt, in addition to those We have, I should be much gratified. I am respectfully yr

Ja^c Jones

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1812, Vol. 1, No. 79.

Perry Sends News about *Constitution*

During the first months of the war, Lieutenant Oliver H. Perry was in charge of gunboats stationed at Newport, Rhode Island. Anxious to obtain a more important command, Perry wrote frequently to the Navy Department keeping the secretary informed on the events as they occurred. Cartels occasionally arrived and departed from Newport, and by this means, Perry obtained shipping news from American prisoners who had been paroled. Though not always reliable, there was usually an element of truth in these reports, hence their usefulness for shipowners and commanders about to put to sea. The following letter



Wasp, shown here as a brig. Her rigging was altered to that of a sloop before commissioning.

comments on the loss of *Nautilus* and *Constitution's* recent escape from a British squadron.

LIEUTENANT OLIVER H. PERRY TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Newport July 26 1812

Sir

By Captn Blunt who arrived a few moments since in company with a number of masters of vessels taken by the English, I am informed of the unfortunate circumstances of the capture of the U. States Brig *Nautilus* Lt [William M.] Crane, by the British Squadron (mentioned below) after a chase of 6 hours on the 16th Inst. It appears the wind was fresh, and a heavy sea on-the frigates out carried her-I also send you a list of vessels taken and destroyed by this Squadron.

Capt [James R.] Dacres of the *Gurrier* told one of the Masters arrived here, they intended on receiving a reinforcement to make an attack on New York. The probability is, from the course they were steering when the vessel who brought those persons in, left them, they are now off Montaug, distant about 40 miles from this place. The Masters and Seamen of the vessels captured, are sent in on parole. The *Nautilus* is sent to Halifax, with only Lt Crane onboard, the officers and crew continue on board the *Africa*.

It affords me the greatest pleasure to communicate to you Sir, the testimony all bear who witnessed Capt Hull's (of the *Constitution*) conduct when chased by the English Squadron to use the language of the Masters who were onboard of the different English ships at the time-"it was elegant"-they say also, that neither of British frigates dare approach him seperately. Respectfully [&c.]

O. H. Perry

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 110.

[Enclosure]

Report of Vessels taken &c by the British Squadron consisting of the following Ships of war viz.

<i>Africa</i>	64	Guns	mountg	76
<i>Shannon</i>	38	"	"	48

JANUARY-AUGUST 1812

<i>Guriere</i>	38	"	"	48
<i>Belvideira</i>	44	"	"	-
<i>Eolus</i>	38	"	"	-

1812

July	6th	Brig <i>Minerva</i> of Plymouth sent to Halifax	
"	9	Ship <i>Brutus</i> of Portsmouth N.H.	burnt
"	"	Schoor <i>Mount Hope</i> of Nantucket	Do
"	10	" <i>Argus</i> of New York	Do
"	11	Ship <i>Mecanic</i> of Philadelphia	Do
"	12	" <i>Oronoke</i> of New York sent to Halifax	
"	"	" <i>Elisa Gracie</i>	Do burnt
"	13	Brig <i>Illuminator</i> of Boston sent to Halifax	
"	14	Schooner <i>Fame</i>	do burnt
"	15	" <i>Emerant</i>	do do
"	16	" <i>Citizen</i> of Falmouth	do
"	"	" <i>John & George</i> of New York captured & lost in chase	
"	"	U.S. Brig <i>Nautilus</i> , sent to Halifax, the officers & crew excepting the Commander who remained onboard the Brig was taken onboard the <i>Africa</i> .	
"	23	Schooner <i>Eleonora</i> of Boston	burnt
"	"	Brig <i>Dispatch</i> of New Haven most part of her cargo destroyed & 155 American prisoners put onboard her & permitted to proceed to the U.S.	

Lat:38°:56" Long: 70°:26"

The above has been handed me by one of the Masters who was captured by the above Squadron.

O. H. Perry

DS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 110. The last sentence and signature are in Perry's hand.

The Licensed Trade

British land and naval forces were locked in a struggle against the French when the War of 1812 commenced, but they had a continuing need for supplies, particularly grain, flour, and naval stores which had customarily been purchased in North America. Thus, even though the United States had declared war, the British countenanced trade with those Americans willing to continue. In order to protect American ships involved in trade that supported British armies in Portugal and Spain, the consulates were authorized to issue documents in favor of such ships. They instructed British warship commanders to release, assist, and protect the ship they had halted. In the following memorandum, Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer, commander of British ships on the North American station, advises the captains under his command that such licenses were being issued.

VICE ADMIRAL HERBERT SAWYER'S
MEMORANDUM ON THE LICENSED TRADE

(Copy) Centurion at Halifax 27th July 1812
Secret Memorandum

The former minister of his Majesty in America having granted 180 numbered Licenses and 5 distinct ones for vessels under American, Portuguese and Swedish colors to carry provisions to the Armies in Spain & Portugal, and return in ballast, and further 14 for American vessels loaded with wood for the Dock Yards in England. 30 for those loaded with cattle & flour for the West Indies and the government of New Brunswick having given permission to American Merchant Vessels loaded with provisions for St. Johns, and to take English Merchandize in return; and the following vessels viz. *Bingham, Stag Harriet, Orion, & Centurion*, are under such circumstances, as to be particularly protected, and can pass without fear of being molested by any of his Majestys vessels, as vessels being employed in an innocent commerce, and according to the intention herein expressed; and vessels which are provided with licenses from his Excellency Sir John C. Sherbrooke, to import provisions to Halifax, are free from detention. I

have likewise granted 20 protections to Mr. Robert Elwell for vessels loaded with flour and other provisions for Spain & Portugal. And I have written a letter to Mr Andrew Allen, his Majesty's Consul in Boston, specifying that all vessels having a Copy of that letter among their papers, certified by him under the English Consulate Seal, with such Articles as are before specified, and bound to the before mentioned Countries, are to be protected by his Majesty's vessels under my command, you therefore govern yourself accordingly.

12 August 1812

There has been written a letter subsequent to the above order, to Chevalier [Luis] D'Onis, His Catholic Majesty's Minister in America, something similar to that written to Mr. Allen, on the same subject.¹ Accordingly all vessels having a Copy Certified by him are to be protected. I have granted a protection to Mr Charles Bradford, to import a cargo of dry goods to a port in the United States & likewise one to Mr Elijah Mix, their vessels will hoist the following flags on the approach of any of his Majesty's vessels.

The first	The Second
Black	Black
Red	White
Yellow	Black

By order of the Vice Admiral
(Signed) William Ayre
Secretary

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 26 (enclosure).

1. See p. 492.

A Merchants' Petition

The merchants of Salem, Massachusetts, sent the petition which follows to the Navy Department, asking for the stationing of gunboats to protect their harbor. As can be seen, they had lost no time in fitting out ships for privateering after the declaration of war. The eagerness with which privateersmen made ready for sea seems to have been general along the Atlantic coast. According to the account of George Little, a merchant seaman who shipped on board the privateer George Washington out of Norfolk, the atmosphere was electric at both Baltimore and Norfolk in late June and early July 1812. "When we arrived in Baltimore, I found the most active preparations were in progress to prosecute the war. A number of privateers were fitting out; and everywhere the American flag might be seen flying, denoting the places of rendezvous; in a word, the most intense excitement prevailed throughout the city. . .," and at Norfolk, "on the morning of July 20th, 1812, the officers and crew being all on board, [the ship] weighed anchor, made sail, and stood down the river, with the stars and stripes floating in the breeze, was saluted with a tremendous cheering from the shore."¹

1. George Little, *Life on the Ocean; or, Twenty Years at Sea: Being the Personal Adventures of the Author* (Boston, 1851), pp. 194-96.

SALEM MERCHANTS' PETITION TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Salem July 27 1812

The undersigned merchants and citizens of the Town of Salem (State Mass) had the honor, a short time since, to address you on the exposed situation of this harbour. Since which period the danger of an attack from the Enemy's boats is greatly increased from the number and activity of the private armed vessels fitted out. Eight privateers, carrying about 400 men, were added and Equipped within ten days after the declaration of War was received. Three ships carrying from 16 to 20 guns and from 100 to 200 men are in a state of forwardness, one of which will sail this day, and a number of others are preparing. The number of prizes already sent in amount to sixteen sail, and a number more are known to be captured. Many of the prisoners taken

in these prizes are about to return to Halifax to be exchanged. They will carry with them a full knowledge of our exposed situation, and the number of armed vessels as well as prizes in the port, we therefore earnestly request that 2 Gun boats may be stationed in our harbour, as soon as possible, that they may aid the fort and citizens in the event of an attack. We are, respectfully, yours &c. &c.

Robert Stone
Henry Prince
Jon^a Neal
James Chever
W Crowninshield
Jos White Jr
Joseph Rofus
M Townsend
Ja^s Devereux
Butler Fogerty
William Silsbee
Rob^t Stone Junr
Henry Elkins
Jos Winn
Joshua Dodge
Jos E Sprague
Jno W Treadwell
Will K Lee
John Dodge

DS, DNA, RG45, AF 7, 1812.

Isaac Hull Prepares for Independent Operations

Having narrowly escaped capture by Commodore Broke's squadron off New York during the middle of July, Captain Isaac Hull sailed Constitution into Boston harbor on 26 July for replenishment and news of Commodore Rodgers' squadron. To his considerable disappointment,

Hull found neither orders nor news awaiting him and had to make his own plans for cruising. This he did with some reluctance, as can be seen in the two letters that follow. He was evidently discomforted by the large responsibility of departing without official approval of his plans. Nonetheless, he set his course for the shipping lanes east of the Gulf of St. Lawrence where he was most likely to encounter British merchantmen and men-of-war. It was in these waters that he was cruising, not without success, when he met H.M. frigate Guerriere.

CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *Constitution*
Off Boston July 28th 1812

Sir,

I have the Honour to inform you that the *Constitution* under my Command, has this moment arrived off the Light house at this place, without having seen any thing except American vessels, since leaving the British Squadron.¹ There has not been as yet any of the Enemies Cruizers in this Bay, nor have any been spoken on this part of the Coast, great numbers of vessels are daily arriving from different Ports of Europe and the West Indies. Eight or Ten Sail are now in Sight standing in, several of which I have warned off the Southern Ports and advised them running for this Place. I regret extremely being obliged to come into Port but, you will recollect that in consequence of being bound to New York, I took only Eight weeks Provisions, nearly three weeks of which is expended, which leaves me too little to think of making a cruise, of any length. Indeed I could hardly get off Halifax, or any other Port of the same distance, to remain any time, before I should be obliged to return.

This with a hope of getting some instructions from New York, or receiving instructions here from you has induced me to call in. Indents for the Provisions will go to town this Evening, and I have directed the Agent to work night and day until they are furnished, so that the Ship will be ready for Sea in three days at Most. Should I not by the time she is ready get instructions from New York, or find some at this place I am at present under the impression that I shall proceed to Sea and run to the Eastward, and endeavour to join the Squadron,² and if I am so unfortunate as not to fall in with them I

shall continue cruising where (from information I may collect) I shall be most likely to distress the Enemy. Should I proceed to Sea without your further orders, and it should not meet your approbation, I shall be very unhappy, for I pray you to be assured in doing so I shall act as at this moment I believe you would order me to do, was it possible for me to receive orders from you.

I am confident that it is your wish that the Ship should be at Sea, and I am equally confident that this Bay will not remain long without some force, and in all probability a force of Two Frigates will be sent here, as it appears the Enemy have been disappointed in blocking up the Squadron in New York. They can now separate into Cruizing Squadron which they probably will do. As it is impossible for any of our ships to calculate what Ports they may be obliged to enter would it not be well to have instructions left for them at all the Ports where Ships of War can enter, that they may proceed immediately on Service again after they have took in Such Stores as they stand in need of. As they can generally get in, and ready for sea in less time than it would take to hear from Washington.

I will write you the moment the Ship is in, and at Anchor, and from time, to time make you acquainted with all my proceedings. I have the Honour to be [&c.]

Isaac Hull

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 145.

1. Commodore Broke's squadron which unsuccessfully chased *Constitution* during 17-20 July. See pp. 161-65.

2. Commodore John Rodgers' squadron, comprised of the frigates *President*, *United States*, and *Congress*, sloop *Hornet*, and brig *Argus*. The squadron was by this time well to the eastward in search of a British homeward-bound West Indies convoy. See pp. 262-65.

CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U S Frigate *Constitution*
Off Boston August 2d 1812

Sir,

The wind for the first time since the Ship came in, has hawled so far to the Westward as to enable us to fetch out, and as this Harbour is so

difficult to get to Sea from I have determined to run out, having great hopes that my Boat which is now at the Post Office, may bring me letters from you. If she does not I shall indeed be at a loss how to proceed, and shall take a responsibility on myself, that I should wish to avoid, but to remain here any time longer I am confident that the Ship would be blockaded in by Superiour force, and probably would not get out for months.

I had great hopes that Commodore Rodgers had left me some instructions at New York by which I might have got some information what his plans were, and how he intended the Ships to cruize; But my letters from there have come to hand, and not a word have I received from him. It is my intention to run to the Eastward between Georges Bank, and Cape Sables, and from that on to the Bank of Newfoundland to intercept some small convoys that are now about to sail for England. The American vessels that have been taken by the Enemy are about sailing under convoy of the *Plumper*¹ and some other small vessel so that if I should fall in with them no doubt I should be able to take some of them; or should I not fall in with them I shall be in the track of the Havannah convoy which is not far from the Coast, and bound to England.

I have put in shore here, and discharged about Twenty sick and disabled men, and have taken from the Gun Boats the men that were ordered to be discharged from them, my crew is now strong but want exercise. If I can keep from action a few days I promise myself that we shall be able to see any Frigate. I have great confidence in the men, and thus appear in good Spirit.

How the Ship will sail I have doubts. I fear that being obliged to fill her up with Provisions, and water will make some difference, but she will soon grow light. The last information I have of the Enemy, they were S. East of the South Shoal about twenty Leagues, there was also a Frigate a little to the Eastward of Cape Ann, indeed there has been reports that several different Frigates have been seen on the Eastern Coast. Should I not get letters from you, and should proceed as above, I pray you to be assured, that I have done so, with a view of being useful to my country, and of taking a direction, that I supposed you would give me, had I your orders. The force of the Enemy is so Superiour on our coast that it is impossible to cruize with any hope of escaping them, and if we could they have no vessels that we could take, nor should we have any means of arraying them, where by cruising off the coast we

may do them great injury. These Sir, are the Motives that have led me to take the Steps I have, and should they not meet your approbation I shall truly be unfortunate. I have the Honour to be [&c.]

Isaac Hull

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 155.

1. H.M. gunbrig *Plumper*, 12, built at Halifax in 1807.

The First U.S. Navy Loss

The dubious honor of being the first American naval officer to lose his ship to the British went to Lieutenant William M. Crane, commander of the brig Nautilus. Departing New York on 15 July, Crane was only a few hours out when he sailed within view of Commodore Philip Broke's squadron. After a furious chase, Broke overtook and captured Nautilus. It was only two days after this that Hull's Constitution brushed with the squadron and made her famous escape. Crane and his men were taken to Halifax where they were held as prisoners of war and then were paroled in September.

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM M. CRANE TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Halifax July 29 1812

Sir,

I am under the unpleasant necessity of acquainting you with the loss of the United States Brig *Nautilus*,¹ late under my command. I sailed in obedience to your order of the 11th inst² on the 15th and passed Sandy Hook at 6 P.M. with the wind fresh and squally at N.b.E standing off E.b.S—at 4 A.M. we had cleared the Hook about 75 miles under reefed top sails and fore Course at 1/4 past 4 discovered five large sails about two points before our weather beam. immediately wore ship turned out the reefs and made all sail the vessel would bear; the Ships bore up and made sail in chase displaying signals which were not understood and hoisted American colours I also hoisted my private

signal and ensign which not being answered, continued to carry a press of sail to the Westward. there was a heavy swell from the Northward, and it was impossible to gain the wind from our pursuers. we had many times to take in sail to preserve spars and finally carried away our top mast steering sail boom which was replaced. it was soon evident, that, they were drawing up with us-every manouvre in trimming ship was tried, but this not having the desired effect I ordered the anchors to be cut from the bows, when we appeared to hold way with them. at 9 the wind became lighter and the Brig laboured excessively in the swell. I then ordered a part of the water to be started threw over her lee guns, and a part of the round shot, she was instantly relieved and bore her canvass with much greater ease, the wedges were then driven out from the masts and the standing rigging slackened up-at 10 the Squadron hoisted French colours and we saw they neared us fast at 11 the leading ship was within grape distance but owing to the construction of the *Nautilus* she can fire no guns abaft, there was not no chance of escape if the chasing vessels were enemies, which we were not certain of as they still kept French colours flying-at 12 the leading ship was within musket shot when I destroyed the signals Signal books and the despatches with which I was entrusted at 1/2 past 12 I consulted with my principal officers all were of opinion, that, everything had been done to preserve the vessel, and, that no hopes of escape were left. I then took in studding sails and light sails trained the weather guns aft and put the helm a lee-the chasing ship put her helm up hoisted a broad pendant and English colours and ranged under my lee quarter-unable to resist I was compelled to strike the Flag of the United States-I have been particular in detailing to you Sir, circumstances as they occurred in order to prove to you that no efforts were wanting to effect our escape-it is but justice to my officers and crew to add, that, they executed my orders with promptness and rendered me every possible assistance and I feel persuaded had an opportunity offered of engaging anything of equal force they would have distinguished themselves-The Frigate hoisted out her boats and sent for me on board She proved to be the *Shannon* of 38 Guns Commodore Broke, the other vessels of the Squadron were *Africa* 64 Guns Cpt [John] Bastard *Guerrier* 38 Guns Cpt [James R.] Dacres *Belvidera* 36 Guns Cpt [Richard] Byron *Aeolus* 32 Guns Cpt Lord Townsend [James Townshend]-my officers and crew were sent on board the *Africa* I remained with the *Nautilus* The treatment I received from Commodore Broke was polite and gentlemanly-we arrived here last

evening-if it is not improper I beg leave to request your interference in having me exchanged as I feel great unwillingness to remain inactive at this time. very Respectfully [&c.]

W. M. Crane

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 114.

1. Built in 1799 as a merchant vessel, *Nautilus* was purchased by the navy in 1803. She was originally rigged as a schooner armed with 12 6-pounders. In 1810, she was altered to a brig carrying a battery of 12 18-pound carronades.

2. Secretary Hamilton's orders of the 11th directed Crane to depart New York without delay for the purpose of finding Commodore Rodgers' squadron and to deliver a letter, dated the 10th, which reads as follows: "It is confidently believed that there will be a strong British force on our coast in a few days-be upon your guard-we are anxious for your safe & speedy return into Port." See Hamilton to Crane, 11 July 1812, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 93, and Hamilton to Rodgers, 10 July 1812, *ibid.*, p. 91.

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM M. CRANE TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Halifax July 31 1812

Sir

I beg leave to call your attention to the probable situation of the American prisoners belonging to the Navy which may shortly arrive at this place. I have assurances from the Admiral (Sawyer) that they will receive every indulgence allowed to persons in their situation, but should they remain until the winter sets in they will require cloathing and many other necessities to make them comfortable. I understand I shall be allowed to visit them and examine into their wants. I have no funds nor do I feel authorised to draw on any of the public Officers to furnish both men and Officers with what they may stand in need of. I should be gratified with receiving instructions from you on this subject. my Purser was left sick at New York and has with him the accounts and books of the vessel-it may not be improper to acquaint you, that there are many hundreds of American Prisoners here taken in private armed and merchant vessels and, that, they look with confidence to the generosity of their Government for such assistance as may be thought reasonable and proper. it has been suggested to me that if our Government had an authorised agent for prisoners here to attend to their exchange and wants their hardships might be greatly lessened. I merely

mention this circumstance without presuming to offer any opinion. an American gentleman here Mr B.F. Bourne, an Attorney of Boston is well qualified for this situation if it should be thought necessary.¹ You must be sensible Sir that my correspondence with persons in the United States must be limited. I feel it a duty to add that I have received the kindest attentions from Admiral Sawyer. I have been paroled and live in the Town, with certain limits assigned me. will you allow me Sir to ask for your interference with regard to myself I feel extremely desirous of having an opportunity of being useful to my country and I rely on you Sir for the means. very respectfully [&c.]

W. M. Crane

P.S. Since writing the above I have had a conversation with the Agent for Prisoners (Mr [Lt. William, R.N.] Miller an Officer of the Navy a most excellent and humane gentleman) he recommends strongly, that a person should be appointed to the situation before named and says it is the custom of their service to have an officer of this kind residing in an enemies Country. he further states, that his Government cannot furnish beds bedding and cloaths but for the sick. the Government prisoners he has promised me shall be separated from the others and that their Officers may visit them daily, inspect their cloathing cleanliness, and furnish them with any comforts they may require. I learn that all letters written by me or received must be submitted to the inspection of the Agent. I should otherwise enlarge this communication. Respectfully [&c.]

W. M. Crane

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 122.

1. Regarding appointment of an individual to supervise prisoner exchange see Hamilton to Mitchell, 26 Aug. 1812, pp. 227-29, and Hamilton to Mitchell, 8 Sept. 1812, pp. 469-70.

The Need for Additional Surgeons

Surgeon Cutbush had requested authorization from the Navy Department to obtain suitable hospital facilities for seamen on the

Delaware River. In the following letter, he discusses the problem again and mentions various difficulties encountered in treating the illnesses of navy men. The lack of trained assistants was a concern that became increasingly apparent as the service strained to accommodate the new demands placed upon it; for surgeons as well as other officers, shortages were critical.

SURGEON EDWARD CUTBUSH TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Philada July 30 1812

Sir,

Agreeably to your instructions of the 9th Inst. I have visited New Castle to procure accommodations for the sick of the squadron of Gun Boats stationed there; I have not yet succeeded, in consequence of the objections which the owners of vacant houses have to employ them for this purpose, Mr. Riddle, however, thinks that he will be able to procure a small house in a few days. I received your order of the 28th inst., and have directed Dr [William P. C.] Barton to attend the rendezvous for the *Constellation*. I beg leave to suggest the propriety of transporting the Seamen to Washington, with all convenient speed, at this warm season, if effective men are expected; long confinement on board of a Gun Boat may have a tendency to impair their health, where many are crowded together. An old hulk would be preferable. Our sick list of the Gun boats has been numerous from the number confined on board the Gun boat, and a very prevalent disease which Seamen call the "Ladies' fever", for which, I think they ought to pay something to the Hospital fund, as it is not contracted in the line of their public duty. I have one man under my charge from the *Wasp*; several remaining sick of the Gun Boats' crew; every marine to examine on signing his enlistment, besides the sick of the corps to attend; also the sick at New Castle when the accommodations are prepared, which will require 48 hours to go and return to this station, I must therefore beg leave to solicit two assistants, One to remain at New Castle the other at Philada, Dr. Barton's time will be wholly engaged at the rendezvous for the *Constellation*, if the business be properly attended

to; I hope my request will not be considered unreasonable, when the quantum of duty is taken into consideration. I have the honor [&c.]

E Cutbush Surgeon.

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 120.

British Navy in Action off Halifax

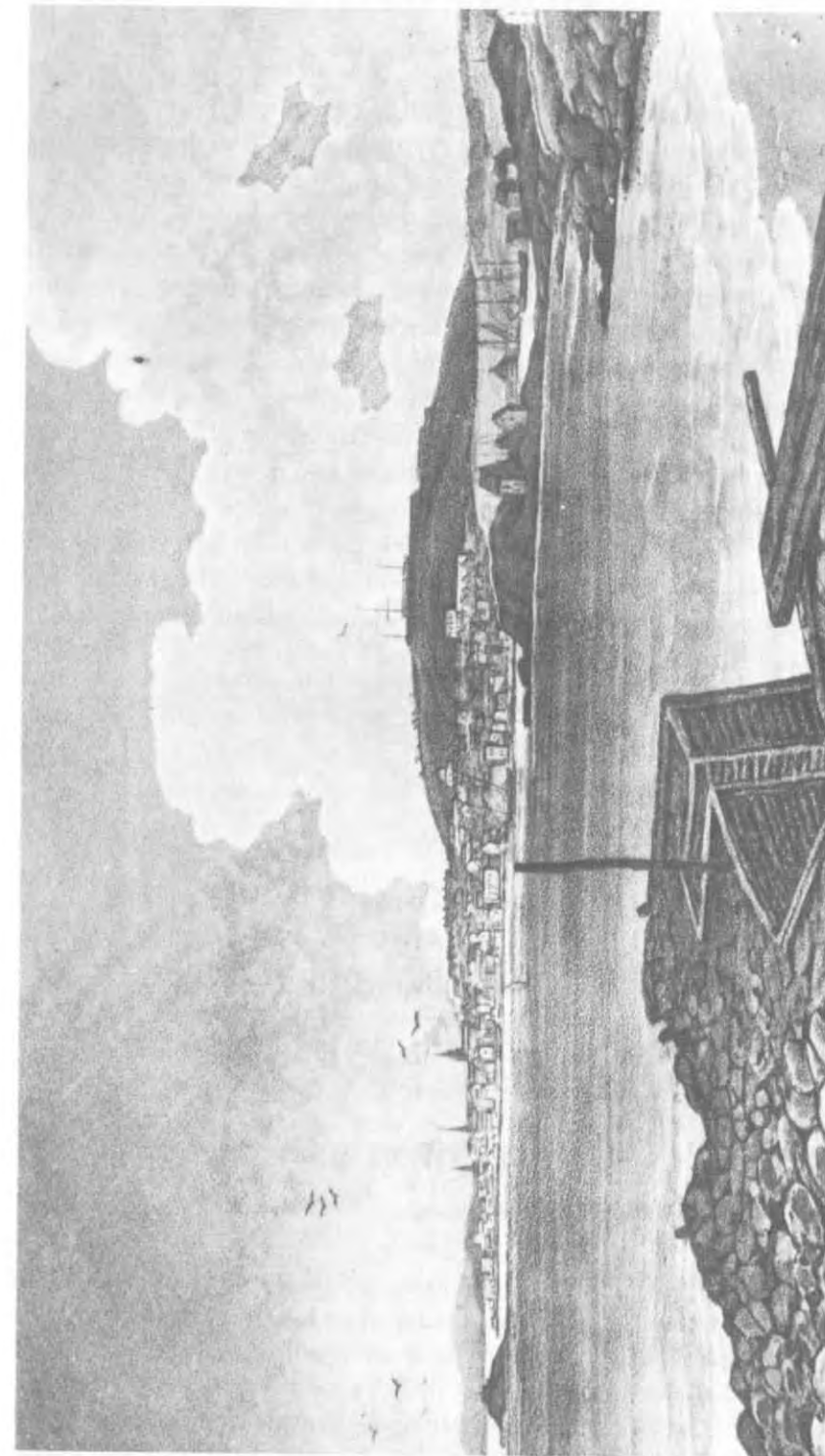
While Captain Broke's squadron was cruising in search of Commodore Rodgers' ships, seizing Nautilus, and chasing Constitution during July, other Royal Navy ships were active in pursuit of Yankee privateers which were infesting the waters around Nova Scotia, particularly in the Bay of Fundy. The following document is one of the first reports of British captures sent by Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, following the American declaration of war.

VICE ADMIRAL HERBERT SAWYER, R.N., TO
SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

His Majestys Ship *Centurion* at
Halifax, the 2nd of August 1812

Sir,

I have the pleasure to enclose, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the Copy of a Letter from Captain Thomson [John Thompson] of his Majesty's Sloop *Colibri*, detailing the circumstances attending the Capture of the American Ship Privateer *Catherine* of fourteen long six Pounders, and eighty eight men on the 26th Ultimo, two days previous to which, the *Gleaner* Sloop Privateer of six guns and fifty Men-also of one from Captain [William Howe] Mulcaster of the *Emulous*,¹ stating the Capture of the *Gossamer*, Brig Privateer of 14 Guns and 100 Men, on the 30th ultimo. To these Officers, I am much indebted for their Zeal and activity in protecting the Coast of this Province and the Trade, and in annoying the Enemy since the declaration of War. I cannot therefore suffer this opportunity to



Halifax, from Dartmouth Point

pass without expressing my highest approbation of their general conduct, while serving under my Command. You will receive enclosed the Copy of another Letter stating the Capture of the American Privateer Brig *Curlew* pierced for 20 Guns, but only 16 mounted, with a Complement of 172 Men, by the *Acasta*, on the 24th ultimo.

I am much gratified that these Vessels were taken so soon after their Sailing, as they would doubtless have done much mischief. The only Vessels taken by them are the *Mary Anne* of Glasgow, and a Barque.

The United States Brig *Nautilus* of 14 guns and 100 Men has been sent in here, by His Majesty's Squadron, under the Command of Captain Broke, but I have received no official account of this Capture, the Squadron being then in Chase of an Enemy's Frigate, which I am concerned to say, effected her escape.

I have to add, three small Privateers have been destroy'd by the *Spartan* and two by the *Indian* in the Bay of Fundy. They carried one or two Guns and between twenty and thirty Men with small Arms. I have the Honor [&c.]

H Sawyer Vice Adml

J. W. Croker Esqr &c &c &c

LS, UkLPR, Adm. 1/502, Part 4, 455. Endorsed below dateline: "R. 10 Sepr." John Wilson Croker was Secretary to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty.

1. H.M.S. *Emulous* went aground and was lost off Ragged Island, Nova Scotia, 2 Aug. 1812. See Mulcaster to Sawyer, 3 Aug. 1812, UkLPR, Adm. 1/502, Part 4, 467-71.

Captain Porter's Cruise

Captain David Porter's frigate Essex, 32 guns, had been ordered to sail with Commodore Rodgers' squadron in June, but Porter's reports concerning Essex's faulty spars and weed-encrusted hull convinced Rodgers that she had to be sent into New York for an overhaul immediately.¹ On 22 June, Captain Isaac Chauncey, commandant of the New York Navy Yard, reported that his men had careened Essex, cleaned and repaired her copper bottom, caulked her inside and out,

and replaced her masts.² Porter weighed anchor on 3 July commencing a highly successful cruise during which he ranged from the Grand Banks to Bermuda, capturing nine ships, including H.M. brig Alert. The four letters that follow reflect Porter's aggressive spirit and initiative, qualities that he exploited to the fullest on his cruise in the Pacific during 1813-1814.

1. Porter to Rodgers, 31 May 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 10.

2. Chauncey to Hamilton, 22 June 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 52.

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *Essex*
At Sea Augt 2d 1812
Lat 45°N Long 49°W

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that I have this day captured the British Ship *Nancy*, and put Midn Joseph L Biggs on board as prize Master, with instructions to proceed to the United States & make the first port he could.

I have also just captured the British Brig *Hero*, but owing to her having no cargo, & being an old defective vessel have thought it adviseable to burn & scuttle her.

By former communications I have informed you of my having captured & ransomed the British transport *Samuel & Sarah*, and captured & sent in the brigs *Lamprey & Leander*. I have the honor to be [&c.]

D Porter

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 154.

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *Essex*
At Sea Augt 8th 1812
Lat 45° 40'N Long 40°W

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that I have just captured the British Brig [*King George*]¹ and have put Midn [Richard] Dashiell on board as

Prize Master.² I enclose you a letter intended to have been sent by the Prize Ship *Nancy*. after writing the enclosed letter I fell in with & captured the British Brig *Brothers* having 62 prisoners on board captured by the American private Armed Schooner the *Rossie* Joshua Barney Esqr Comdr on board of which Brig I put 25 prisoners making in all 87 under the command of Midn McKnigh [Stephen D. McKnight] whome I furnished with a passport as a Cartel & instructions to proceed to St Johns Newfoundland for the purpose of effecting an exchange of prisoners.³ I have the honor to be &c. &c.

D Porter

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 169.

1. Blank in the manuscript.

2. Porter included a detailed list of prizes taken in his letter of 3 Sept. 1812. See pp. 446-47.

3. Barney, on this highly successful cruise, had already captured five enemy ships. His *Rossie* took *Brothers* on 1 Aug. and released her after putting his prisoners on board under parole with instructions to make for St. Johns. Porter retook *Brothers* on 3 Aug. and converted her into a prize cartel. This manner of effecting an exchange was quite irregular, as British Admiral Sir John T. Duckworth later pointed out in a letter to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton. See David D. Porter, *Memoir of Commodore David Porter of the United States Navy* (Albany, N.Y., 1875), pp. 95-96.

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *Essex*
At Sea Augt 15th 1812
Lat 40°N Long 38° 10'W

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that H B M Sloop of War the *Alert* Capt L P Laugharn [Thomas L. P. Laugharne] yesterday at 12 oclock AM ran down on our weather quarter gave three cheers and commenced an action (if so trifling a skirmish deserves the name) and in eight minutes struck her colours with 7 feet water in her hold and three men wounded.¹ I need not inform you that the Officers and crew of the *Essex* behaved as I trust all Americans will in such cases, and it is only to be regretted that so much zeal and activity could not have been displayed on an occasion that would have done them more honor. The *Essex* has not received the slightest injury.² I have the honor to be [&c.]

D Porter

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 178.

1. *Alert* was the first British warship to be taken by a U.S. Navy ship in this war. Sources vary as to *Alert's* armament at the time. She was one of twelve colliers that had been purchased for the Royal Navy in 1804. She originally had been fitted with 16 18-pound carronades. Both William James, *The Naval History of Great Britain*, 6 vols. (London, 1886), V: 365-66, and William L. Clowes, *The Royal Navy: A History*, 7 vols. (London, 1901), VI: 31-32, 32n, agree that at the time of the engagement she fought with her original armament. Theodore Roosevelt, *The Naval War of 1812* (New York, 1882), p. 80, disagrees, stating that *Alert* was carrying 20 18-pound carronades at the time of capture.

2. In a duplicate dated 17 Aug., Porter added the following at this point: "The *Alert* was out for the purpose of taking the *Hornet*!!!" Porter to Hamilton, 17 Aug. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 181.

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U S Frigate *Essex*
At Sea Augt 20th 1812

Sir,

Finding myself much embarrassed by the *Alert*, and from the great number of prisoners we have already made (about 500) I concluded that before our arrival in America the number would be considerably augmented, and as I found my provisions low, water getting short, and being well satisfied that a plan had been organized by them for rising on the ship in the event of an engagement, I considered it in the interest of my country to get clear of them as speedily as possible, particularly as I was well assured that immediately on their arrival in St Johns, an equal number of our countrymen would be released and find a sure and immediate conveyance home. I therefore drew up written stipulations corresponding with the accompanying letters; threw the Guns of the *Alert* overboard, withdrew from her all of the men belonging to the *Essex*, appointed Lieut J [James] P Wilmer to command her as a Cartel, put all the prisoners on board her and dispatched her for St Johns with orders to proceed from thence to New York with such Americans as he may receive in exchange.

At a more suitable opportunity I shall do myself the honor to lay before you copies of every paper relative to this transaction, and sincerely hope that my conduct in this affair may meet with your approbation.

The Capt of the *Alert* informed me that Sailing Master of the *Hornet* had been taken with a prize he was bringing home, and has been carried into St Johns Newfoundland.¹

The *Essex* has been so anoying about Bermuda, Novascotia & Newfoundland, I expect I have to run the gauntlet through their cruizers, you may however rest assured that all that a ship of her size can do, shall be done, and whatever may be our fate, our country shall never blush for us. I have the honor to be [&c.]

D Porter

P.S. Capt Laugharne informed me that in the engagement between the *President* & *Belvidere* one of the *President*'s Guns burst, & killed 14 men and severely wounded Commre Rodgers—that the Capt of the *Belvidere* was wounded in the leg and his ship much cut to pieces, particularly her quarter.

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 182.

1. Midshipman David Conner, placed in charge of prize brig *Dolphin*, was captured by H.M. sloop *Hazard*. Exchanged, he merited two congressional medals for his service during the war. As commodore of the Home Squadron during the Mexican War, Conner directed the landing of Major General Winfield Scott's army at Vera Cruz.

Interservice Friction: Marines vs. Army

In most of the wars fought by the armed services of the United States, interservice rivalries have caused problems which had to be thrashed out at the highest levels of the services. The following letter from the commandant of the Marine Corps to Lieutenant James Broom, commanding officer of the marine detachment at Boston Navy Yard, makes it clear that the War of 1812 was not an exception to the rule. Apparently, Lieutenant Broom had yielded to the blandishments of an army officer senior to him and provided a marine guard for some army prisoners. This depleted the small number of marines available for other, more appropriate duties. Franklin Wharton was not one to conceal his views on such an issue.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT FRANKLIN WHARTON, U.S.M.C.,
TO FIRST LIEUTENANT JAMES BROOM, U.S.M.C.

H. Q. of the Marine Corps
Washington, Augt 22d 1812

Sir!

I have received your Letters of the 13th & 14th Inst. I do not know the authority by which you were order'd, & which you obeyed—in detaching from the Navy Yard, a Guard for prisoners of the Army—it will be proper at all times to cooperate with the Military of our Country for the public good, where the particular service in which we are order'd, & which is more or less Naval, will not be injured or frustrated thereby—but I must consider it voluntarily done, & not imperative, as we act under the Department of the Navy, and not of War—unless so specially ordered by the President of the United States; from a conversation had with the Honourable the Secretary of the Navy you are hereby made acquainted, that your detachment will be relieved by the Army, & you are now required, on such relief being made, to again place it where it was taken from—the Navy Yard—at Charlestown.

You have made enquiry on some points which at present cannot be fully answer'd. they are in regard to the duties which may be expected from your Men as a Guard, & their priviledges—so much difficulty having arisen on the Rights & priviledges of the Sea & Marine Officers when acting together on shore & no alternative left—I have submitted the business to the Head of the Department for his Examination, & hope he will direct some system to be formed, which while it will tend to the benefit of the Service, may reduce, if not do away, the difficulty which attends both parties.

I have already written to you about the Supplies for the Barracks, as far as Sacks &c. do I understand you that you now have Carpenters & Masons in the Guard—if so how many? I am respectfully [&c.]

F. Wharton,
Lt. Col. Commt.
M. Corps.

Lieut. James Broom,
Navy Yard,
Charlestown, Mas:

Copy, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Sent. Lieutenant James Broom was killed in action on 1 June 1813, during the *Chesapeake-Shannon* engagement.

Life at the Gosport Navy Yard

The accommodations for officers and men at navy yards other than Boston, New York, and Philadelphia were far from comfortable as can be discovered by a reading of the following letter from Captain John Cassin to Secretary Hamilton. Habitations were spartan, work was frequently done out in the open, and the condition of the gunboats stationed in the vicinity was discouraging for men who knew they might be called upon to repel a British attack in the near future.

CAPTAIN JOHN CASSIN TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

Navy Yard Gosport
25th August 1812

Sir

I have the honor to inform you of my arrival at this place on Sunday last, after a very disagreeable passage of ten days heavy gales & rainy weather and [I am] extremely unwell, but by the assistance of Doctor [Joseph S.] Schoolfield I am much better. I caught a violent cold in the river followed up by going into the house which is too Small entirely for my family and on the first night we had 18 inches water in the cellar, when I was compell'd to call all hands to pump or bail the Ship out. I shall be compell'd to partake of your liberal instructions as it respects my quarters by making two Small wings & kitchen to the House, my Office is too small and under the Hospital whenever they wash it the water runs all over me, books & every thing. I find we are in want of everything to make it like a Navy Yard. on my arrival five Schooner Gunboats were under Sailing orders for North Carolina, two of which I have had to order up to the yard, to heave out again, and in hopes will

be able to leave this in all this week. I have ordered Lieut. Henley to Command the Flotilla which is Stationed down below the Town, untill your pleasure is known on the Subject.¹ The Tender will be of infinite Service here & as you had the goodness to Say I might have her I have taken the liberty of reminding you on that Subject.

We are much in want of a Master Blacksmith also a Plumber and Joiner. I should recommend John Bishop & Willm Saunders from King's Shop, also Nicholas Fitzpatrick Joiner, there is a very Smart man Boat builder who formerly worked under me at the Yard, which is now employed at Norfolk by piece work for the Navy, which I do not admire. I would beg leave to recommend him also should it meet your approbation to get me these workmen with the addition of a few Shops to be able to Save a good deal of the out door work, all of which I have the honor to submit for your Consideration. Respectfully [&c.]

John Cassin

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 201. Endorsed at foot of letter: "Entitled to early attention. P.H."

1. Lieutenant Robert Henley (1783-1828) who, in 1814, commanded the brig *Eagle* in the Battle of Lake Champlain.

Privateering: A Risky Business

Just as Essex and Constitution were cruising in search of British prizes during July and August, so too were ships of the British Navy patrolling for the opportunity of taking American merchantmen and privateers. The document that follows shows that Royal Navy ships had a good hunting season on the Halifax station, capturing 24 ships. Although Vice Admiral Sawyer considered them all privateers, at least one was not. Commodore Barry was a revenue cutter of the U.S. Marine Revenue Service which normally operated under the Treasury Department; in time of war revenue vessels cooperated with the Navy Department.¹ One conclusion to be drawn from this is that although privateering excited much interest among investors, sea captains, and seamen, the risk of capture was high. Fortunes were just as frequently

lost as gained. Investors who placed all their funds into the financing of one privateer might never see her again. Officers and men alike could end up as prisoners of war. Early in the war prisoners held either in Halifax or England were likely to be returned in exchange for British prisoners taken by Americans. However, as the conflict deepened, many American mariners were incarcerated in prison ships or in prisons at such desolate places as Melville Island near Halifax or at Dartmoor Prison outside of Plymouth, England, with infrequent opportunities of being exchanged.²

1. Commodore Barry is described as "Commander Barry" in Horatio Davis Smith's *Early History of the United States Revenue Marine Service, 1789-1849* (Baltimore, 1932), p. 34; but *Treasury Department, United States Coast Guard, Record of Movements, Vessels of the United States Coast Guard, 1790-December 31, 1933* (Washington, D.C., n.d.), p. 122, describes her as "Commodore Barry chartered vessel."

2. For vivid descriptions of the plight of American prisoners of war, see Charles Andrews, *The Prisoners' Memoirs of Dartmoor Prison . . .* (New York, 1852), and Benjamin Waterhouse, *A Journal of a Young Man of Massachusetts, late a Surgeon on Board an American Privateer . . .* (Boston, 1816).

"A LIST OF AMERICAN PRIVATEERS TAKEN AND DESTROYED BY HIS MAJESTY'S SHIPS AND VESSELS ON THE HALIFAX STATION BETWEEN THE 1st JULY AND 25th AUGUST 1812"

Names of Vessels Capturing	Names of Prizes	How rigg'd	No of			When Taken		Where taken	Remarks
			Men	Tons	Guns	Swivels	Destroy'd &c		
<i>Spartan</i>	<i>Active</i>	Schooner	20		2		16 July 1812	Off Cape Sable	
Capt'n [Edward Pelham] Brenton									
<i>Indian</i> Capt'n [Henry] Jane	<i>Fair Trader</i>	*	20		1		*	Bay of Fundy	
<i>Plumper</i> Lieut [James] Bray									
*	<i>Argus</i>	*	23		1		17	*	
*	<i>Friendship</i>	*	8		1		18	*	
<i>Spartan</i> Capt'n Brenton	<i>Actress</i>	Sloop	53		4		*	Off Cape St Mary	
*	<i>Intention</i>	Schooner	29		1	3	19	*	Off Annapolis
<i>Colibri</i>	<i>Gleaner</i>	Sloop	40		6		23	*	Off Cape Sable
Capt'n [John Thompson] Thomson									
<i>Acasta</i>	<i>Curlw</i>	Brig	172	270	16		24	*	Pierced for 20 Guns
Capt [Alexander Robert] Kerr								Latde 44 15 N Long 62 30 W	
<i>Colibri</i> Capt'n Thomson	<i>Catherine</i>	Ship	88		14		26	*	Off Cape Sable
<i>Emulous</i>	<i>Gossamer</i>	Brig	100		14		30	*	"
Capt'n [William Howe] Mulcaster									
<i>Maidstone</i>									
Capt'n [George] Burdett	<i>Morning Star</i>	Schooner	50	70	1	4	1 August	Bay of Fundy	Burnt by the Boats in a Creek called Bailly's Mistake
& the <i>Spartan</i> Capt'n Brenton	<i>Polly</i>	*	40	60	1	4	*	"	

Names of Vessels Capturing	Names of Prizes	How rigg'd	No of			When Taken	Where taken	Remarks
			Men	Tons	Guns	Swivels		
Colibri and Statira	Commodore Barry revenue cutter	Cutter			6		pierced for 10 guns Bay of Fundy	Attack'd in Little River and brought out by the Boats-the chief part of the crew escaped
	Madison	Schooner			2	3 August		
	Olive	"			2			
	Spence	"			2		Entrance of Bay of Fundy	
	Polly	"	35		4	11		
Earl Moira	Buckskin	"	32		1	3	Off Cape Sable	
	Dolphin	"	28		1	12	Off Shelburne	
	Regulator	"	40		1	*	Off Cape Sable	After an
	Dolphin	"	48		2	13	Off Cape Sable	Action of
	Lewis	"	30		6	14	Off Halifax	20 Minutes
Bream Lieut [John] Simpson	Pythagoras	"	35		3	9	Off Shelburne	Enemy had
	Bunkers Hill	"	72		7	21	Sambro Light House N.W. 242 Miles	2 Men Wounded

H Sawyer Vice Admiral

DS, UKLPR, Adm. 1/502, Part 4, No. 497.

An American Agent
for Prisoners of War at Halifax

Within two months after the declaration of war, numerous seamen had been taken prisoner by American and British warships. As both sides were anxious for the return of their men, a means of releasing and exchanging them had to be determined. After the necessary diplomatic preparations were made, Secretary Hamilton appointed John Mitchell, a Philadelphian, to represent the interests of the United States at Halifax. The following documents contain Hamilton's instructions to Mitchell and notification of his appointment.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO JOHN MITCHELL

Navy Depart.
26th Augt 1812

You are hereby appointed agent for Prisoners, taken and that may be taken, in our public vessels of war, by British Cruizers.¹

With this appointment it will be your duty to discuss & arrange, with the proper authority, all points in relation to the exchange of prisoners-and to their personal comfort while in the custody of the enemy, and when exchanged, should the exchange take place in the enemy's country, to provide for their transportation and safe conveyance to the United States. If at the time the exchange should be effected, our Seamen should be in the United States upon their parole, you are to cause the information to be conveyed to them as early as may be practicable-that they may forthwith be at liberty to enter into the service of their Country.

A roll of all persons captured by our Cruizers and allowed to go upon parole or of all that may be so captured and detained as prisoners must be kept by you, and our Commanders will be instructed to transmit to you at Halifax information of all such captures, as may be made by them, stating the disposition made with respect to the prisoners-and in cases, where our vessels may be captured by the enemy, our Commanders will be instructed to transmit to you information thereof, with the rank, station & description of each person

on board—and the pursers of our ships will, in such cases transmit to you or deliver to you a roll stating the monthly pay allowed to each person—and the state of the accounts of the Crew.

The principles of exchange will be, rank for rank, man for man. If you can do better, you will of course do so—and when it can be done, without injury, you will in commencing the exchange, pay that respect to rank, to which it is entitled, by giving to the senior officer, tho' of the same class, the preference.

Possessed as you will be of every information in relation to the persons and to the accounts of our prisoners, you will afford to them every comfort in your power—taking care however not to advance to them more than may be due, without the previous approbation of the Commanding officer—where the pursers shall be present the most simple way will be for you to pay over to them, from time to time, upon their requisitions, countersigned and approved by the Commanding officer, such sums of money as may be required, and they will attend to its disbursement, under the direction of the Commanding officer. Indeed this will in every view be the most eligible course; and you will consider yourself instructed to pursue it.

As to the manner of obtaining supplies of money—you will make the best arrangement in your power—giving to me full and timely information upon this and all other points of importance connected with your agency.

For the relief of the crew of the late United States brig *Nautilus*, now detained as Prisoners at Halifax, you will receive an advance of the sum of three thousand dollars out of the appropriation for Pay &c of the Navy—Should you find this sum insufficient, you will under the restrictions herein provided, advance each additional sum as may be necessary—It is confidently hoped that you will be able to effect the exchange of this Crew without delay; and I recommend the subject to your earliest and most earnest attention.

For your services rendered to this Department you will be allowed at the rate of One thousand dollars pr annum commencing from this day. I have the honor [&c.]

Paul Hamilton

P.S: any drafts that you may make on this Department in pursuance of the above instructions, will be punctually honored.

Copy, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, pp. 135–36.

1. On 28 Aug., Secretary Hamilton sent a letter to James McKenzie and A. Glennie, whom he referred to as "Navy Agents, London," informing them that he had deposited three thousand pounds sterling in their account and requesting that if they should receive bills from John Mitchell as agent for American prisoners, they should honor them, charging the amounts to the account of the Navy Department of the United States. On the same day, Hamilton wrote to Mitchell, informing him of this action. Hamilton to McKenzie and Glennie, 28 Aug. 1812, and Hamilton to Mitchell, 28 Aug. 1812, both in DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, p. 138.

CIRCULAR LETTER FROM SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO COMMANDANTS AND NAVY AGENTS

Circular

Navy Depart.
27 Augt 1812

John Mitchell Esqr has been appointed agent for Prisoners, and will reside for the present at Halifax.

You will transmit to Mr Mitchell information of all captures made by you and the names of the prisoners and the disposition you may make with respect to them. Should any of our public vessels be so unfortunate as to be taken by the enemy, a minute description of each person on board with the state of his accounts, must be transmitted to Mr Mitchell at Halifax. Mr Mitchell is empowered to arrange the subject of an exchange of prisoners and to provide for the comfortable accommodation of our Seamen, that may fall into the hands of the Enemy.

Paul Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, p. 321.

American Shipping

During July and August 1812, many ships which had sailed from American ports before the April embargo was promulgated were homeward bound. They ran the risk of capture by both British and American warships. Many had traded at British ports, as the Orders in Council had been rescinded, but they were vulnerable to charges of having broken U.S. embargo regulations. The following letter contains the instructions of the Navy Department regarding such ships.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON TO SELECTED OFFICERS

CircularNavy Dept
28 August 1812

Capt [Alexander] Murray	Philadelphia
Capt [Charles] Gordon	Baltimore
T. [Thomas] N Gautier	Wilmington N.C.
Capt [John H.] Dent	Charleston S.C.
Capt [Hugh G.] Campbell	St. Mary's G.a
Capt [John] Shaw	N Orleans
Comr [John] Rodgers	at Sea
" [Stephen] Decatur	at Sea
Capt [Isaac] Hull	Boston
" [David] Porter	at Sea

The public & private armed vessels of the U.S. are not to interrupt any vessels belonging to the Citizens of the U.S. coming from British Ports to the U.S., laden with Merchandize in consequence of the alleged repeal of the orders in Council, but are, on the contrary to give aid & assistance to the same, in order that such vessels & their cargoes may be dealt with on their arrival, as may be decided by the competent Authorities.

P. Hamilton

Copy, DNA, RG45, CGO, Vol. 1, p. 95.

Captain Hull's Cruise

Taking advantage of a westerly breeze, Constitution weighed anchor and departed Boston harbor on 2 August. Hull shaped a course for Cape Sable, Nova Scotia, and then cruised in the direction of Newfoundland, cutting directly across the shipping lanes into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. During the first two weeks of his cruise Hull took several merchant ships and gathered news of British warships patrolling in the area. One of the ships Constitution chased and overtook proved to be the American privateer brig Decatur, whose captain informed Hull of a British warship not more than one day's sail from his present position. This news provided a positive lead to the whereabouts of the frigate Guerriere. In the following letter, Hull recounts his activities from the beginning of his cruise until the eve of his engagement with Guerriere.

CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U S Frigate *Constitution*
Off Boston Light, August 28th 1812

Sir

I have the Honour to inform you that after leaving Boston Light on the 2d inst, the date of my last letter to you I stood to the Eastd along the Coast, in hopes to fall in with one of the Enemy's Frigates, which was reported to be cruising in that direction the day before I left Boston. I passed near the Coast, as far down as the Bay of Fundy, but saw nothing. I then run off Halifax, and Cape Sables, and remained near there, for three, or four days, without seeing any thing, which made me determine to change my situation to the Eastd, towards Newfoundland, I accordingly bore up, and run to the Eastd under all sail, passing near the Isle of Sables, and hauling in, to take a Station off the Gulph of St Lawrence near Cape Race, to intercept the Ships of the Enemy, bound either to, or from Quebec, or Halifax, and to be in a situation to recapture such of our vessels, as they might be sending in.

On the 10th inst being off Cape Race I fell in with a light Merchant Brig bound to Halifax, from Newfoundland, and as she was not worth sending in, I took the crew on board, and set her on fire. On the 11th I fell in with the British Brig *Adeona* from Nova Scotia, bound to England loaded with Timber I took the crew out of her, and set her on fire, and made sail to take station nearer Cape Race; Where we continued cruising untill the morning of the 15th at daylight when five sail were in sight ahead of us, apparently a small convoy, I gave chase under a press of sail, and soon found that we gained on them very fast, and discovered that one of them was a Ship of War, at Sunrise they tacked, and Stood on the same tack with us, by this time we could plainly discover that the Ship of War had a Brig in tow. At 6 coming up very fast with the Ship and could see that she had cast off the Brig, that she had in tow, and had set her on fire, and had ordered a second Brig to stand before the wind, to separte them. The Ship of War making sail to Windward I gave chase to a ship which appeared to be under her convoy but when we came up with her, she proved to be a British Ship, Prize to the *Dolphin*¹ Privateer of Salem she had been Spoken by the Ship of War, but we came up with them before they had time to put men on board, and take charge of her, whilst our boats were boarding this

vessel the Ship of War had got nearly Hull down from us, and understanding from one of the prisoners that she was a very fast sailer, I found it would not be possible to come up with her before night, or perhaps not then, I therefore gave chase to the Brig that run before the Wind, determined to destroy all his convoy, we soon found we came fast up with the Brig and that they were making every exertion to get off by throwing overboard all the Lumber, Water Casks &c &c.

At 2 PM we brought too the chase and found her to be the American Brig *Adeline*, from Liverpool, loaded with dry goods &c Prize to the British Sloop of War *Avenger*, I took the British Prize Master, and crew out and put Midshipman Madison [John R. *Madison*], and a Crew on board, with Orders to get into the nearest Port he could make. From the prize master of this vessel I learnt that the Brig burnt by the Sloop of War, belonged to New York, and was loaded with Hemp, Duck &c last from Jutland, having gone in there in distress.

Having chased so far to the Eastd as to make it impossible to come up with the Sloop of War, I determined to change my cruising ground, as I found by some of the Prisoners that came from this vessel that the Squadron that chased us off New York were in the Western Edge of the Grand Bank, not far distant from me. I accordingly stood to the Southd intending to pass near Bermuda, and cruise off our Southern Coast. Saw nothing till the night of the 18th at 1/2 past 9 PM, discovered a Sail very near us it being dark, made Sail and gave chase, and could see that she was a Brig. At 11 brought her too, and sent a boat on board, found her to be the American Privateer *Decatur* belonging to Salem,² with a crew of One Hundred and Eight Men, and fourteen Guns, twelve of which, he had thrown overboard whilst we were in chase of him. The Captain came on board, and informed me that he saw the day before a Ship of War standing to the Southward, and that she could not be far from us. At 12 PM, made sail to the Southd intending if possible to fall in with her. The Privateer Stood in for Cape Race intending to cruise there, and take Ships by boarding as he had lost all his Guns but two. The above is a Memorandum of what took place on board the *Constitution* under my Command from the time we left Boston, up to the 18th inst, which I hope will meet your approbation. I have the honour to be [&c.]

Isaac Hull

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 210.

1. Captain J. Endicott. There were six American *Dolphin* privateers during the War of 1812. Captain Endicott's *Dolphin* carried only 5 guns, but within a few weeks had captured three ships, seven brigs, and six schooners. She had herself been taken several days before Hull spoke her prize. Maclay, *American Privateers*, p. 468n.

2. Brig *Decatur*, 14, Captain William Nicholls, out of Newburyport, not Salem. She took nine prizes during a two month cruise in the summer of 1812. See Benjamin W. Labaree, *Patriots and Partisans: The Merchants of Newburyport, 1764-1815* (Cambridge, 1962), p. 188.

American Prisoners of War at Halifax

The conduct of a naval commander who was captured was sure to be scrutinized after he had obtained his release. But even if this were not the case, a capable officer would continue to look after his men. Lieutenant William M. Crane of Nautilus showed himself to be zealous in observing the treatment of his men by their British captors. He protested the slightest deviation from the norm, writing directly to Vice Admiral Sawyer, commander in chief of the North American station. Sawyer, too, observed the niceties of conduct toward his captives, though firm on the principles as he saw them. American seamen suspected of being British were sent to England, unless Crane managed to prove they were American. This was a serious and difficult matter. On the other hand, Crane also objected to one of his men being called a "rascal," an objection that Sawyer felt trivial, but nonetheless, the admiral agreed to have the matter investigated. As has been seen in a previous document, the procedures for the parole and exchange of prisoners were being established at the time the following two letters were written.

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM M. CRANE TO
VICE ADMIRAL HERBERT SAWYER, R.N.

Halifax August 28th 1812

Sir

I deem it my duty to enquire of you for the information of my government the causes which have occasioned the transportation to

England in his B.M. ship *Thetis* of
Phillip Tully Seamen belonging to Philadelphia where he has a wife
and family

Henry McDermot Seamn belonging to Boston

James Snyder Seamn belonging to Norfolk Virginia

George West O. Seamn of New Jersey

John Carr Corpl. of Marines of Staten Island state of N York

Michael Spilliard private marine SchuylKill near Philadelphia where
he has a wife and family

composing a part of the crew of the late U.S. Brig *Nautilus*, and also
the reasons for the detention of.

Jesse Bates Seamen

Wm Jones O.S.

Jno O Neale do

Jno Rose marine

Wm Young Marine

Saml Lang ditto on board B.M. Ship *Shannon*.

Reuben Williamson Armourer on board the *Africa*

Hugh Dougherty an O.S. late a part of the same crew all of whom
voluntarily engaged in the service of the United States and are Citizens
of the same.

I learn from my crew that every art was Essayed to induce them to
enter the service of his Brittanick Majesty and on their refusal the most
insulting epithets were bestowed, they have also been stripped of their
cloathing on board the Frigate *Shannon*, the Uniform of the Marines
taken from them, and all are now nearly naked. this conduct I feel per-
suaded Sir, has not been authorised, nor will it be warranted by you.
Very respectfully [&c.]

Signed W. M. Crane

Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer
Commander in Cheif &c. &c.
Halifax

Copy, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 122, filed with Crane's letter to
Secretary of the Navy Hamilton of 31 July 1812.

VICE ADMIRAL HERBERT SAWYER, R.N., TO
LIEUTENANT WILLIAM M. CRANE

His Majesty's Ship *Centurion*,
at Halifax, the 29th August 1812

Sir,

In reply to your Letter of Yesterday's date, I have to inform you, the
six Men you mention lately belonging to the United States Brig
Nautilus, were sent to England, in His Majesty's Ship *Thetis*, by Cap-
tain Broke of the *Shannon*, to be examin'd, there being strong grounds
for thinking they are British Subjects and Deserters—that Officer has
written the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty about them.

With respect to those consider'd to be detain'd onboard the *Shannon*
and to the general accusations made, relative to the ill treatment said
to have been receiv'd by the Crew of the *Nautilus*, so contrary to the
principles and practice of the British Navy and so derogatory to its
high Character, I must wait her arrival, before I can reply; in the
meantime, it will be necessary you should furnish me with the names of
the Persons who can support what they have alledged, that they may
be detain'd till that period.

The *Africa* being here, should any part of your Letter have a refer-
ence to the Captain, Officers or Crew of that Ship, you will without
delay state it, and the Complainants, that an investigation may take
place. I am [&c.]

H Sawyer—Vice Adm

Captain W. M. Crane

P.S. I have omitted to mention that Reuben Williamson is not
detain'd on board the *Africa* but was sent to Melville Island¹ with the
other Prisoners, and Hugh Dougherty whose dialect denotes his Coun-
try, remain'd on board her for conveyance to England, there to be
examin'd.

LS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 122, filed with Crane's letter to
Secretary of the Navy Hamilton, 31 July 1812.

1. Melville Island, 3 miles from Halifax, was the location of a small fort and prison barracks where American seamen were held. As the war progressed and prisoners became more numerous, many were sent to Dartmoor Prison in Devonshire, England.

Diplomatic Arrangements for Prisoner Exchanges

During the early months of the war, the British government was conciliatory on diplomatic issues, hoping that the Madison government might be persuaded to end hostilities without full-scale warfare.¹ Indeed, the Foreign Office wrote to Admiral John B. Warren, who replaced Sawyer in August, instructing him to halt all hostilities if the United States did so after hearing of the revocation of the Orders in Council.² Admiral Warren wrote in this vein to Secretary of State Monroe on 30 September.³ Thus it is consonant with this attitude that one finds British Chargé d'Affaires Anthony St. John Baker writing to Monroe on 29 August in such a manner as to facilitate the exchange of prisoners in the following letter.

1. Perkins, Castlereagh and Adams, p. 13.

2. See Castlereagh to Foster, 8 July 1812, as printed in Bernard Mayo, ed., "Instructions to the British Ministers to the United States, 1791-1812," Annual Report of the American Historical Association, 1936 (Washington, D.C., 1941), III: 389-90, and Alfred T. Mahan, Sea Power in its Relations to the War of 1812 (Boston, 1905; reprint ed., New York, 1969), I: 390-91.

3. ASP, Foreign Relations, III: 595-96.

ANTHONY ST. JOHN BAKER TO
SECRETARY OF STATE JAMES MONROE

Washington August 29 1812

Sir,

I have had the honour to receive your letter of yesterdays date in reply to mine of the 26th Inst and acquainting me that the President is willing to enter into an arrangement for the Exchange of prisoners taken at Sea, and that a person will be duly authorized for the purpose as soon as I shall intimate to you with whom and at what place the arrangement may be made.

I shall not fail to take the earliest opportunity of communicating with Vice Admiral Sawyer on these subjects, and will lose no time in transmitting to you the information in question.

In order to prevent any delay in the departure of the prisoners of war who have been so readily and in so satisfactory a manner liberated by the government of the United States, I have authorized the following persons viz: Mr [Andrew] Allen His Majesty's late Consul at Boston, Mr Thomas Wm Moore, late agent of his Majesty's Packet Boats at New York, Mr Alexander Walker, a British subject, and merchant of the highest respectability at Philadelphia who has the superintendence of the departure of His Majesty's Subjects leaving the United States from that port, and Mr Wood his Majesty's late Consul at Baltimore, to receive the prisoners who may be released and to give Certificates for them to the Marshals at those respective places, duplicates of which they will forward to me, upon which will be founded the receipts which I shall have the honour of giving to you, or to any person whom you may be pleased to designate.

I have already written to Vice Admiral Sawyer to acquaint him with the appointment of Mr [John] Mitchell to regulate the concerns of the American prisoners of war at Halifax, and will with the greatest pleasure furnish that gentleman with the letters which may be necessary to facilitate his entrance upon the duties of his situation. I have the honour to be [&c.]

Anthony St Jno Baker

Honble James Monroe
&c &c &c

Copy, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 64. Chargé d'Affaires Anthony St. John Baker succeeded Augustus J. Foster as the principal diplomat from Great Britain in the United States shortly after war was declared.

Constitution vs. Guerriere

Captain Hull's cruise to the northward provided valuable information that a British frigate was cruising alone south of Newfoundland,

and he pursued that lead. On the afternoon of 19 August, *Constitution* sighted and chased an unidentified warship. After three hours, Hull brought her to action, defeated her, and discovered she was the 38-gun frigate *Guerriere*, Captain James R. Dacres.¹ Hull's complete report of this engagement, which follows, is paired with that of his opponent. Captain Dacres's report to his superior, Vice Admiral Herbert Sawyer, was written while Dacres was a prisoner of war in Boston.

This celebrated battle provided a highlight for the American military during the relatively dismal summer of 1812. Captain Hull's uncle, Brigadier General William Hull, had been forced to surrender his army at Detroit. Isaac Hull's single-ship victory helped to even the score and put the British Navy on notice that her frigates would not be able to sail the North Atlantic with impunity.

1. For a thorough discussion of the battle and the relative strengths of the two ships, see James, *Naval History of Great Britain*, V: 372-88; Roosevelt, *Naval War of 1812*, pp. 88-100; Mahan, *Sea Power in its Relations to the War of 1812*, I: 330-36; and Linda McKee, "Constitution Versus *Guerriere*," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings* 88, No. 2 (Aug. 1962): 72-79.

CAPTAIN ISAAC HULL TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U S Frigate *Constitution*
off Boston Light August 28th 1812

Sir,

I have the Honour to inform you that on the 19th inst. at 2 PM being in Latitude 41°. 42° Longitude 55°. 48° with the wind from the Northward, and the *Constitution* under my command Steering to the S.S.W. a sail was discovered from the Mast head bearing E by S. or E.S.E. but at such a distance that we could not make out what she was. All sail was immediately made in chace, and we soon found we came fast up with the chace, so that at 3 PM. we could make her out to be a Ship on the Starboard tack close by the wind under easy sail. At 1/2 past 3 PM. closing very fast with the chace could see that she was a large Frigate, At 3/4 past 3 the chace backed her Maintopsail, and lay by on the Starboard tack; I immediately ordered the light sails taken in, and the Royal Yards sent down, took two reefs in the topsails, hauled up the foresail, and mainsail and see all clear for action, after all was clear the Ship was ordered to be kept away for the Enemy, on hearing of which the Gallant crew gave three cheers, and requested to be laid



Captain Isaac Hull,
U.S.S. Constitution



Captain James Dacres,
H.M.S. Guerriere

close alongside the chace. As we bore up she hoisted an English Ensign at the Mizzen Gaff, another in the Mizzen Shrouds, and a Jack at the Fore, and MizentopGallant mast heads. At 5 minutes past 5 PM. as we were running down on her weather quarter She fired a Broadside, but without effect the Shot all falling short, she then wore and gave us a broadside from Larboard Guns, two of which Shot Struck us but without doing any injury. At this time finding we were within gunshot, I ordered the Ensign hoisted at the Mizzen Peak, and a Jack at the Fore and MizentopGallant mast head, and a Jack bent ready for hoisting at the Main, the Enemy continued wearing, and manœuvring for about 3/4 of an hour, to get the wind of us. At length finding that she could not, she bore up to bring the wind, on the quarter, and run under her Topsails, and Gib, finding that we came up very slow, and were receiving her shot without being able to return them with effect, I ordered the MaintopGallant sail set, to run up alongside of her.

At 5 minutes past 6 PM being alongside, and within less than Pistol Shot, we commenced a very heavy fire from all of our Guns, loaded with round, and grape, which done great Execution, so much so that in less than fifteen minutes from the time, we got alongside, his Mizzen Mast went by the board, and his Main Yard in the Slings, and the Hull, and Sails very much injured, which made it very difficult for them to manage her. At this time the *Constitution* had received but little damage, and having more sail set than the Enemy she shot ahead, on seeing this I determined to put the Helm to Port, and oblige him to do the same, or suffer himself to be raked, by our getting across his Bows, on our Helm being put to Port the Ship came too, and gave us an opportunity of pouring in upon his Larboard Bow several Broad-sides, which made great havock amongst his men on the forecastle and did great injury to his forerigging, and sails, The Enemy put his helm to Port, at the time we did, but his MizzenMast being over the Quarter, prevented her coming too, which brought us across his Bows, with his Bowsprit over our Stern. At this moment I determined to board him, but the instant the Boarders were called, for that purpose, his Foremast, and Mainmast went by the board, and took with them the Gib-boom, and every other Spar except the Bowsprit. On seeing the Enemy totally disabled, and the *Constitution* received but little injury I ordered the Sails filled, to hawl off, and repair our damages and return again to renew the action, not knowing whither the Enemy had struck, or not, we stood off for about half an hour, to repair our Braces, and such other rigging, as had been shot away, and wore around to return

to the Enemy, it being now dark, we could not see whether she had any colours, flying or not, but could discover that she had raised a small flag Staff or Jurymast forward. I ordered a Boat hoisted out, and sent Lieutenant Reed¹ on board as a flag² to see whether she had surrendered or not, and if she had to see what assistance she wanted, as I believed she was sinking. Lieutenant Reed returned in about twenty minutes, and brought with him, James Richard Dacres Esqr. Commander of his Britannic Majesty's Frigate the *Guerriere*, which ship had surrendered, to the United States Frigate *Constitution*, our Boats were immediately hoisted out and sent for the Prisoners, and were kept at work bringing them and their Baggage on board, all night. At daylight we found the Enemy's Ship a perfect Wreck, having many Shot holes between wind, and water, and above Six feet of the Plank below the Bends taken out by our round Shot, and her upperwork[s so] shattered to pieces, that I determined to take out the sick and wounded as fast as possible, and set her on fire, as it would be impossible to get her into Port.

At 3 PM. all the Prisoners being out, Mr Reed was ordered to set fire to her in the Store Rooms, which he did and in a very short time she blew up. I want words to convey to you the Bravery, and Gallant conduct, of the Officers, and the crew under by command during the action. I can therefore only assure you, that so well directed was the fire of the *Constitution*, and so closely kept up, that in less than thirty minutes, from the time we got alongside of the Enemy (One of their finest Frigates) She was left without a Spar Standing, and the Hull cut to pieces, in such a manner as to make it difficult to keep her above water, and the *Constitution* in a State to be brought into action in two hours. Actions like these speak for themselves which makes it unnecessary for me to say any thing to Establish the Bravery and Gallant conduct of those that were engaged in it, Yet I cannot but make you acquainted with the very great assistance I received from that valuable officer Lieutenant Morris³ in bringing the Ship into action, and in working her whilst alongside the Enemy, and I am extremely sorry to state that he is badly wounded, being shot through the Body. we have yet hopes of his recovery, when I am sure, he will receive the thanks, and gratitude of his Country, for this and the many Gallant acts he has done in its Service.

Were I to name any particular Officer as having been more useful than the rest, I should do them great Injustice, they all fought bravely, and gave me every possible assistance, that I could wish. I am extremely sorry to state to you the loss of Lieutenant [William S.] Bush of Marines. He fell at the head of his men in getting ready to board the Enemy. In him our Country has lost a Valuable and Brave Officer. After the fall of Mr Bush, Mr [Lieutenant John] Contee took command of the Marines, and I have pleasure in saying that his conduct was that of a Brave good Officer, and the Marines behaved with great coolness, and courage during the action, and annoyed the Enemy very much whilst she was under our Stern.

Enclosed I have the Honour to forward you a list of Killed, and Wounded, on board the *Constitution*, and a list of Killed, and Wounded, on board the Enemy, with a List of her crew and a Copy of her Quarter Bill, also a report of the damage the *Constitution* received in the Action.⁴ I have the honour to be [&c.]

Isaac Hull

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, No. 207. This report, written on 28 Aug., was the first and most detailed report Hull wrote on this action, but he sent a shorter version, dated 30 Aug., to the secretary with a note stating that he had drafted a "short sketch" which the secretary might deem more worthy of publication. See Hull to Hamilton, 30 Aug. 1812, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 2, Nos. 219 and 220. The shorter version is the one commonly thought to be Hull's only report and was in fact the one published in John Brannan, *Official Letters of the Military Officers of the United States* . . . (Washington, D.C., 1823), pp. 49-52.

1. George C. Read, warranted midshipman on 2 Apr. 1804, promoted lieutenant on 25 Apr. 1810, attained rank of rear admiral, retired list, 30 July 1862, died 22 Aug. 1862.

2. "Flag": abbreviation for "flag of truce," individual carrying messages or sent on a special mission to visit an enemy unit.

3. Charles Morris, warranted midshipman on 1 July 1799, promoted lieutenant on 28 Jan. 1807 and captain on 5 Mar. 1813, by virtue of his performance of duty during the *Constitution-Guerriere* engagement. His rapid promotion ahead of other lieutenants and masters commandant drew criticism from his peers. See particularly the reaction of Master Commandant James Lawrence, pp. 519-20.

4. Enclosures not found.

CAPTAIN JAMES R. DACRES, R.N., TO
VICE ADMIRAL HERBERT SAWYER, R.N.

Boston 7th September 1812

Sir,

I am sorry to inform you of the Capture of His Majesty's late Ship *Guerriere* by the American Frigate *Constitution* after a severe action on the 19th of August in Latitude 40.20 N and Longitude 55.00 West At 2 PM being by the Wind on the starboard Tack, we saw a Sail on our Weather Beam, bearing down on us. At 3 made her out to be a Man of War, beat to Quarters and prepar'd for Action. At 4, She closing fast wore to prevent her raking us. At 4.10 hoisted our Colours and fir'd several shot at her. At 4.20 She hoisted her Colours and return'd our fire. Wore several times, to avoid being raked, Exchanging broadsides. At 5 She clos'd on our Starboard Beam, both keeping up a heavy fire and steering free, his intention being evidently to cross our bow. At 5.20, our Mizzen Mast went over the starboard quarter and brought the Ship up in the Wind. The Enemy then plac'd himself on our larboard Bow, raking us, a few only of our bow Guns bearing and his Grape and Riflemen sweeping our Deck. At 5.40 the Ship not answering her helm, he attempted to lay up on board at this time. Mr [Samuel] Grant who commanded the Forecastle was carried below badly wounded. I immediately order'd the Marines and Boarders from the Main Deck; the Master was at this time shot thro the knee, and I receiv'd a severe wound in the back. Lieutenant [Bartholomew] Kent was leading on the Boarders, when the Ship coming too, we brought some of our bow guns to bear on her and had got clear of our opponent when at 6.20 our Fore and Main Masts went over the side, leaving the Ship a perfect unmanageable Wreck. The Enemy shooting ahead, I was in hopes to clear the Wreck and get the Ship under Command to renew the Action but just as we had clear'd the Wreck our Spritsail yard went and the Enemy having rove new Braces &c, wore round within Pistol Shot to rake us, The Ship laying in the trough of the Sea and rolling her Main Deck Guns under Water and all attempts to get her before the Wind being fruitless, when calling my few remaining officers together, they were all of opinion that any further resistance would be a needless waste of lives, I order'd, though reluctantly, the Colours to be struck.

The loss of the Ship is to be ascribed to the early fall of the Mizen Mast which enabled our opponent to choose his position. I am sorry to say we suffered severely in killed and wounded and mostly whilst she lay on our Bow from her Grape and Musketry, in all 15 kill'd and 63 wounded, many of them severely; none of the wounded Officers quitted the Deck till the firing ceas'd.

The Frigate prov'd to be the United States Ship *Constitution*, of thirty 24 Pounders on her Main Deck and twenty four 32 Pounders and two 18 Pounders on her Upper Deck and 476 Men—her loss in comparison with ours was trifling, about twenty, the first Lieutenant of Marines and eight killed and first Lieutenant and Master of the Ship and eleven Men wounded, her lower Masts badly wounded; and stern much shattered and very much cut up about the Rigging.

The *Guerriere* was so cut up, that all attempts to get her in would have been useless. As soon as the wounded were got out of her, they set her on fire, and I feel it my duty to state that the conduct of Captain Hull and his Officers to our Men has been that of a brave Enemy, the greatest care being taken to prevent our Men losing the smallest trifle, and the greatest attention being paid to the wounded who through the attention and skill of Mr [John] Irvine, Surgeon, I hope will do well.

I hope though success has not crown'd our efforts, you will not think it presumptuous in me to say the greatest Credit is due to the Officers and Ship's Company for their exertions, particularly when exposed to the heavy raking fire of the Enemy. I feel particularly obliged for the exertions of Lieutenant Kent who though wounded early by a Splinter continued to assist me; in the second Lieutenant the Service has suffered a severe loss; Mr [Robert] Scott, the Master, though wounded was particularly attentive and used every exertion in clearing the Wreck as did the Warrant Officers. Lieutenant [William] Nicoll of the Royal Marines and his party supported the honorable Character of their Corps, and they suffer'd severely. I must particularly recommend Mr [William] Snow, Masters Mate, who commanded the foremost Main Deck guns in the absence of Lieutenant [John] Pullman and the whole after the fall of Lieutenant [Henry] Ready, to your protection, he having serv'd his time and received a severe contusion from a Splinter. I must point out Mr [John] Garby, Acting Purser, to your notice, who volunteer'd his Services on Deck, and commanded the after quarter Deck Guns and was particularly active as well as Mr [John W.] Bannister, Midshipman who has passed.

I hope, in considering the circumstances, you will think the Ship entrusted to my charge was properly defended; the unfortunate loss of our Masts, the absence of the third lieutenant, second Lieutenant of Marines, three Midshipmen, and twenty four Men considerably weakened our Crew, and we only muster'd at Quarters 244 Men and 19 Boys, on coming into action;¹ the Enemy had such an advantage from his Marines and Riflemen, when close and his superior sailing enabled him to choose his distance.²

I enclose herewith a List of killed and wounded on board the *Guerriere*³ and have the Honor to be Sir, Your most obedient &c.

Sign'd J R Dacres

Vice Admiral Sawyer
Commander in Chief
&c &c &c Halifax

Copy, UkLPR, Adm. 1/502, Part 4, 541–45.

1. Of the 29 officers and men absent, 24 had been sent off as prize crews in various vessels captured by *Guerriere*.

2. It should be noted that the sentiment of the British Navy, as expressed through the court martial of Captain Dacres at Halifax on 2 Oct. 1812, was sympathetic. Captain Dacres was acquitted of any improper conduct in surrendering his ship to the enemy. The Court stated that "the surrender of *La Guerriere* was proper, in order to preserve the lives of her valuable remaining crew; and that her being in that lamentable situation was from the accident of her masts going, which was occasioned more by their defective state, than from the fire of the enemy, though so greatly superior in guns and men." See *The Naval Chronicle* . . . 28: 422–24.

3. Enclosure not found.

Constitution's Marines

Just as Captain Isaac Hull dispatched accounts of the Constitution-Guerriere battle to Secretary Hamilton, so the commanding officer of a marine detachment was expected to send an after-action report to the commandant of marines. Lieutenant William S. Bush died in the engagement. In the official report, his successor, Lieutenant John Contee, gave a memorable description of the death of his leader. In the terse lines of the dispatch, one can sense the enthusiasm of a young officer as well as his awareness of the needs of his men.

FIRST LIEUTENANT JOHN CONTEE, U.S.M.C., TO
LIEUTENANT COLONEL COMMANDANT FRANKLIN WHARTON, U.S.M.C.

[Frigate Constitution]¹
[Boston, 31st Augt 1812]

Franklin Wharton Esq.

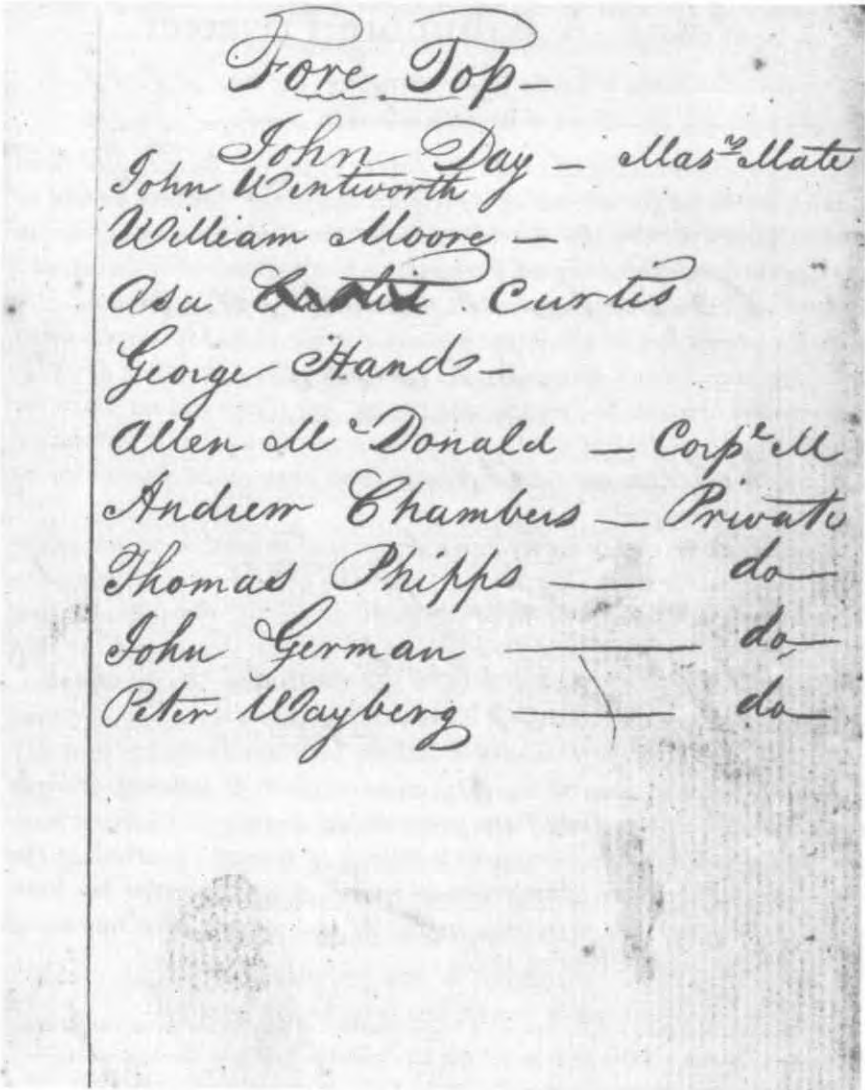
Sir

On the evening of the 19th in Latitude 41°30 N Longitude 55 W from Greenwich, we had an action with His Majesty's Frigate *Guerriere*, in which gloriously fell the Gallant Bush, who, mounting the Taffie,² sword in hand, and as he exclaimed! Shall I Board Her! received the fatal ball on the left cheek bone which passed thro' to the back of his head. Thus fell that brave and illustrious officer, who, when living, was beloved, and, now gone, is lamented by all. The conduct of the Detachment was highly honorable to themselves and their country; and the execution, they did, is allowed, by the officers of Both Ships, to have been of essential service. Francis Mullen, Stationed in the Mizzen Top, was the only Marine wounded, and he slightly thro' the ankle, by a musket ball. The rest of the Guard in good health; all very much in want of clotheing. For the particulars of the action I refer you to Captn Hull's communication to the Secretary. I shall make every proper return as soon as possible. With Sentiments of the Highest Respect, I Remain, Sir [&c.]

John Contee
Lt. Marines Comdg

ALS, DNA, RG127, CMC, Letters Received.

1. John Contee, commissioned 2nd lieutenant on 17 Apr. 1812, was promoted 1st lieutenant on 24 July 1812.
2. "Taffie": a phonetic spelling of taffrail, the curved wooden railing at the stern of a ship.



Page from U.S.S. Constitution's Quarter Bill, showing the manning of the ship's foretop at battle stations.

Rossie: A Baltimore Privateer

Even before the War of 1812, the career of Joshua Barney had been a notable one in the annals of American seafaring.¹ Barney served in merchantmen before the American Revolution, became an officer in the Continental Navy, served in the sloop Hornet, sailed in privateers, and escaped from confinement as a prisoner of war in England. He took a commission in the French Navy during the 1790s and owned shares in two French privateers. At the outbreak of the War of 1812, Barney was anxious to join the war at sea, but there was no place for him in the navy. In Baltimore, however, several merchants purchased a five-year-old schooner named Rossie, and they asked Barney to be her captain.

On 11 July, Barney departed on a cruise that proved to be one of the most remarkable in the history of American privateering. During the next six weeks, Rossie captured eighteen vessels off Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. He put into Newport on 30 August, resupplied the ship and departed again, cruising toward the Caribbean. By 22 October, when he returned to Baltimore, Barney had taken a total of 3,698 tons of British shipping worth about a million and a half dollars and 217 prisoners.² Rossie was afterward converted into a letter-of-marque trader, and Barney retired from privateering, hoping to receive a navy commission. The document which follows is Barney's journal of the events in the first part of his cruise in Rossie. A large portion has been selected because it is so representative of the routine of a successful privateer during the War of 1812.

1. See Ralph D. Paine's *Joshua Barney: A Forgotten Hero of Blue Water* (New York, 1924), and Hulbert Footner's *Sailor of Fortune: The Life and Adventures of Commodore Barney, U.S.N.* (New York, 1940).

2. *Garitee, The Republic's Private Navy*, pp. 152-54.

"JOURNAL OF A CRUIZE ON BOARD THE SCHOONER ROSSIE"

[Extract]

Saturday July 11th 1812 At 11 a m got under way & beat from the Point to Fort M Henry & anchored

Sunday 12th At Meridean I went on board, called all hands, mustered the crew, found every person on board,

except Mr Saml Poe Prize Master & three hands, Appointed Mr Christopher Deshon Agent for Prizes, at 2 P.M. got under way, at 7 PM anchored below North Point, near the Man of War Shoals, saw coming down the River, the Privateers *Nonsuch*, *Comet*, *High-flier*, & *Eagle* who anchored to the N. West of us

Monday 13th At 5 a m got under way, the above Privateers & several other sail in Company, Wind S.E. ahead of the Fleet. at 8 PM abreast of the High land, off Patuxant, hove too, & spoke the *Nonsuch* the other Privateers some distance a stern, continued beating down the Bay. light winds

Tuesday 14th July at Day light abreast of Point Look out, the *Nonsuch* near us, & the *High flyer* about Six Miles ahead. continued beating down the Bay, found that we gained on the *High flyer* but the *Nonsuch* kept way with us. Ran four of our Guns forward, where we immediately left the *Nonsuch* & in three hours was 1 1/2 miles to windward of her at 7 P.M. weathered the *High flyer* at 10 P.M. anchored under New Point Comfort.

Wednesday 15th at 5 a.m. got under way. wind S.W. in company with the *Nonsuch*. left the *High-flyer* at anchor, stood towards the Capes, at 8 a.m. discharged our Pilot, then a considerable distance a head of the *Nonsuch*, no other Privateer in sight, saw several vessels coming out of Hampton, at 9 abreast of Cape Henry at 10 Cape Henry W by S 6 miles, at meridian Latt 37.4

Thursday 16th July Spoke a schooner out of Hampton Roads bound to Philadelphia. informed us that a Schooner the day before had arrived from Phld who saw Five men of war off Cape May, supposed them British Exercised our Guns, & prepared every thing on board for action, when necessary Light winds from South to North, Easterly Latt Obs 37.30 Nth Long 73.22

Friday 17th Begins with fresh Breezes from the NE and a cross Sea, the Prize Masters drew lots, Mr Harris No 1, Mr Stubbs No 2, Mr Chittenden No 3,

Mr Scott No 4, Mr Worthington No 5, Mr Coale No 6, Mr Jenkins No 7 At 6 a.m. Saw a sail, tacked Ship, at 9 spoke her, The *Electra*, Capt Williams, from Lisbon to Philadelphia. 48 days out, had spoke the British Sloop of War *Morgana* off the Western Isles, no news of the war. I advised her pushing for the Chesapeake Bay. fresh winds from the E.N.E. No observation Longt DR 71.20. . .

Wednesday 22d At 2 P.M. came up with the chase a Brig from Martinique bound to Newbury Port The *Nymph* Capt Patch being loaded with molasses, finding the Governors Pass from Martinique loaded with the produce of that Island. I made a Seizure, under the Non Importation Law, mann'd her & sent her for a Port in the U.S. gave chase to a Brig & a Ship. at 5 came up with the Brig (American) from [St Ubes] for New London continued in chase of the Ship Rain & squalls, lost sight at 7 P.M. tack'd to the North under an Idea that the ship had done so at 10 P.M. saw her ahead, at 11 boarded her, she was from Martinique, but hailed from Porto Rico, took the Capt & People on board, examined the Papers, found every thing to satisfy my self of her being subject to the Non Importation Law but did not find her pass her Spanish Passes were all forged at Martinique, at 4 a m sent the Capt & crew on board & discharged them The Ship is called the *Reserve* belongs to Mr King of Bath, Capt Prior light winds, saw a ship to the westwd Latt 40.16 No Longt 62.50 W

Thursday July 25th 1812 first & middle part light winds from the Easwd & pleasant, at 8 a m saw a Sail in the North Et stood for her, at 9 perceived she was in chase of us, tacked ship to the Southd gained to windward of her, at 10 tacked to N.E. and discovered her to be a Frigate of the first rate, on passing to windward of her, she began firing at us. without shewing any colours, she tack'd. as she tack'd we tack'd also on the contrary way, She then hoisted American Colours & continued to fire at us. we

Provisions expended	
Beef	807 lbs
Bread	1154 lbs
Pork	460 "
Flour	156 "
Peas	29 Gall
Rum	36 do
Officers	
Beef	120 lbs
Pork	120 "

Peas	10 Gall	hoisted American Colours & fired a Gun to Leeward, we made several Tacks & gain'd considerably to windward, she continued her Fire untill she had fired 25 Guns, & then made several private signals Latt 40.6 No Longt 62.0
Rice	40 lbs	
Water	840 Gll	

Friday 24th The Frigate continued in chase. but dropping to Leeward, at 3 P.M. the Frigate fired a Gun to Leeward & gave over chase, having carried away her flying Gibb Boom, we then tack'd to the Easwd at half past 3 saw a Sail a head, under Jury Masts standing to the WNW at 5 the Frigate spoke her, under English Colours, at 6 P.M. the Frigate bore NW & BW distant 8 miles so that in 8 hours we had got round to the Easwd of a Frigate that bore N.E. in the morning, & had got to windward of her 8 miles after being nearly within Gunshot at 1/2 past 7 P M lost sight of the Frigate, we carried Sail all night to the E.N.E. (I am in doubt respecting the Frigate being American or English) fresh winds from S.S.E. Latt 41.41 No Longt 59.30 Wt . . .

Thursday 30th First & middle Part fresh breezes from the N.N.W. to North & N.N.E.-thick weather at midnight sounded, got Bottom on the Grand Bank in 47 Fathom water, at 5 a.m. discovered a Sail to the S.E. gave chase. soon perceived she was a Cruizer. at 7 discover'd that she was a Frigate we made private signal & fired 2 Guns, she hoisted a signal, fired a Gun to Leeward & shew American Colours. We bore down to windward of her, she did not answer my signal. at 8 A.M. made Sail to the Eastwd wind at N.N.E. The Frigate gave over chase, & stood about E.S.E. at Meridian she bore SSW 3 Leagues thick weather 45 Fathom Water No Observation Longt 51.5 Wt

2 Barrells Pork	Friday July 31st Light winds from the N.N.E. at 3 P.M. saw a sail to the Eastwd standing W.b N. gave chase at 5 spoke her, an English Ship from Belfast to St Andrews. in <u>Ballast</u> . sent on board her & took possession, found her of little value, took Sundry articles
4 Casks water	
1 Firkin Butter	
600 lb Bread	

3 Coils Rigging
1000 lb Sheet Lead
2 Boxes Candles
A number of small
stores
Compasses,
canvass, Twine,
housing, ec.

for use of the Schooner & set her on Fire. at 7 saw a sail to the Eastwd after firing the ship. we stood to the N.W. in order to bring the other sail under our Lee by morning, all night light airs, continued in sight of the Ship on Fire, at 9 PM saw the flash of Guns in the E.S.E. at day light discover'd the sail we saw last night, bearing South. appeared a large Ship with all Sail set. standing to the Westwd gave chase all sail set, at 6 perceived she had painted sides & a Tier of Ports (20) got every thing ready for action & stood down on her quarter. at 7 came along side, she hoisted English colours, we hoisted American Flag, & ordered her to strike her colours which she instantly did. was from Grenock to St Andrews in Ballast, being a fine ship, I mann'd her, sending on board Mr Jas Stubbs & 6 hands leaving 4 hands of the Ship on board, & 1 hand from the Ship I had burnt, & ordered her into the first Port in the United States. she is called the Kitty of 305 Tons, Daniel Thompson Master The Ship Burnt was call'd the Princess Royal 189 Ton Saml Heath Master, at 9 left the Prize & stood to the N.N.E. No Observation

Saturday 1st August 1812. Light airs. standing to the Eastwd at 6 P.M. Stood N.E. light winds, at 8 a.m. discover'd a Sail to the Northwd at 9 saw two other sail to the N.E. at meridian came up with the Chase, a Brig out of St Johns Newfoundland loaded with Cod Fish 18,000, having a number of Prisoners was anxious to get rid of them, sent the two Mates of the Ship Kitty, & Princess Royal, on board with 6 of their hands with orders to follow us, & to send the Capt of the Brig on board, which they did. we then gave chase to the two others found her to be the Brig Brothers of St Johns Richd Penny Master & 9 men cargo as above Latt Obv 45.20 Nth The 4 following men entd this day Js Osson, Joseph Francisco, John Stickman, & Andrew Wineberg

Provisions Expended

Bread 1718 wt Beef 1279 lb Pork 693 lb Flour

230 wt Peas 43 1/2 Gallns Rum 51 Gallns exclusive of officers water 1600 Gallons

Sunday 2d Aug A fine breeze from the Southwd, at 3 P.M. came up with the Chase another Brig with the Cod-Fish put on board her the Capt of the Prize Ship Princess Royal & 4 of his men, with orders to follow us & to send the Capt on board, which was done. she is the Brig Fame of Exeter England, Wm Standard Master with 18,000 Cod Fish at 3 continued our chase after the other who had haul'd her wind to the Eastwd at 4 discoverd a Schooner at Anchor fishing, at 6 P.M. got near enough the Brig to fire a shot at her, She hove too, we sent a boat on board, with orders to set her on Fire, & immediately bore down on the Schooner Sent our other boat on board with orders to send the prisoners on board, & to set her on Fire also, at 7 P.M. both vessels were in a Blaze The one, the Brig Devonshire of Exeter, the other the Schr Squid also of Exeter. the Brig had 21,000 fish, and the Schr 18,000 with 21 Prisoners. at 8 P.M. bore away after our two other Prizes, at 1/2 past 11 fell in with them, sent an officer & men on board the Brig Devonshire & set her on fire; we then put on board the Brig Brothers all our Prisoners consisting of 6 Masters, 6 Mates & 50 Men; tot [took] a Receipt from the Captains, that they acknowledged themselves Prisoners of War to the U.S. & that they would not serve against us untill regularly exchanged they & their crews: at 2 a.m. parted with them & stood to the Eastwd at 8 a.m. Saw a sail to the North. gave chase. soon after discover'd 4 more. continued our chase with light airs to the Southwd Latt Obs. 46.28 No Longt 50.10

Monday Aug 3d 1812 at 2 P.M. came up with a Schooner, sent the boat on board & ran down to Leeward to a Brig, our Boat took possession of the Schr and brought her down to us. She was a Fisherman with Fish call'd the Race Horse, Capt John Mudge 8,000 fish the Brig was the Henry, Capt Wm Halling both from St Johns, we took out the Crews & scuttled

them & gave chase to the others which were to the E.N.E. of us. we saw three sail ahead & a schooner to windward—at 6 came up with the Brig William Capt Richd Holeman from Bristol to St Johns. hoisted out our boat & took possession of her at the same time sent our other boat on board a Schr to windwd which was the Hallifax Capt Patrick Power with Fish Mann'd the Brig William & ordered her to the U.S. after having put on board Mr Nathl Chittenden as Prize Master. She had a Cargo of Coal, Beef, Cheese, Boots, Shoes, & Sundry articles at 7 PM sent our boat on board another Schooner, & took possession of her, loaded with fish call'd the Brothers, Capt. John Mathison, having then Forty Prisoners on board. I ordered the Schr Hallifax to be burnt, & put all the Prisoners on board the Brothers, taking a Receipt & sent them to St Johns to be exchanged for americans; during the last two days we have taken, burnt, & destroy'd nine sail, and 156 Prisoners. at 8 PM made sail to the Eastward. we were inform'd that a Frigate was off this place Yesterday Information from Capt Holeman that he fell in with the Homeward Jamaica Fleet—in number 91, all well, near the Coast of Europe, that the Orders of Council was off as respected the US & no expectation of a War in England at 8 P.M. made sail to the Eastward, thick fogg—fresh breeze from the Southwd find by observation that a strong current sets to Northward Latt Obs 46.46 No Longt 48.10. . .

Saturday Augt 8th Light winds from the N.N.W. standing to the N.E.—at 7 A.M. saw a Sail ahead of us at 8 She tack'd to the N.E. stood to the Westwd 1/2 an hour to observe her movements, as she appeared a large Ship at 9 tack'd & gave chase, gained on her fast. Water 1960 Gal Latt obs 44.26 No

Provisions Expd
Bread 2198 lbs
Beef 1693
Pork 897
Flour 302
Peas 56 glls
Rum 66 do
Officers not
countd

Sunday Augt 9 Continued in Chase, (a large Ship appearing to be armed) at 2 got to windwd of her, perceived she

had a Tier of Guns, prepared for Action & bore down. She hoisted English Colours, we did so likewise at 3 P.M. came upon her quarter saw that she was prepared to receive us, bore up across her stern, hoisted American colours, & began a well directed Fire from Great Guns & small arms, which was returned from the Enemy, we then hauled up directly under her Stern, with intent to run her along Side. on their perceiving our intentions, Struck their Colours, we rec'd no damage: the Enemy was much Cut in her Hull & Rigging, proved to be the Ship Jeanie from Liverpool to Newfoundland 450 Tons burthen mounting 6 Twelve pounders & 6 long sixes, & 20 men; with 18000 bushells Salt on board. Mann'd her by sending Mr Scott and 7 men & 5 prisoners in her, order'd her to the U.S. got out 400 Gallns Water. at 7 P.M. made sail, wind very light from the N.W. stood to the Westwd in company with the Prize—all night light winds—at 7 fresh breeze & squally. Ship in company, wind S.W. standing to the W.N.W. at 10 tack'd to the Southwd as did the prize Latt Obs 44.24 no Longt 49.10 wt

Monday Augt 10th at meridian saw a sail in the S.S.E. at 2 P.M. bore down upon her, & spoke her. Brig Rebecca, Capt Abbott, from London, bound to Boston finding her lading to consist of British Goods & a British Licence on board made Seizure of her under the Non-Importation Law & ordered her to the U.S. was informed that she had been in a convoy this morning at 4 oclock from Jamaica of 51 Sail under the convoy of a 64 Gun Ship, 5 Frigates, & some smaller that he had on board the Capt & Crew of a New York Ship, which had been taken by the Guerrier & put on Parole, that they (the British) had two fine American Ships in company as prizes, & that they had captured and destroy'd about 21 American Vessels since the War began, all these Ships of War belonged to the Halifax Station & were cruising when they fell in with the Jamaica Fleet but finding the convoy very weak (one Frigate only) they were escorting

Put on board
Rebecca
1 hhd Water
1 Bll beef
1 Bag Bread

The U.S. brig
Nautilus was
taken by the Bel-
videre The Crew
on board the
Africa 64—The
Essex had cap-
tured an English
Transport with

300 Soldiers
bound to Quebec,
had paroled them,
& sent them to
Halifax.

them to the Eastwd They inform'd the Capt that they had fallen in with the Constitution frigate, but she had escaped them, & gave much credit to Capt Hull for his conduct They also mentioned having recaptured a Brig which had been taken by Essex & that the Essex was cruising on the Bay of Newfoundland They had in consequence of the British Licence set the above Brig at liberty & she was proceeding for Boston Put Mr Worthington on board & stood to the Northwd middle & latter part cloudy & squally Latt 45.11 No. . .

Friday Augt 14 at 2 P.M. spoke the Chase, the Brig Hazard, Capt Luce from Cadiz bound to Boston, Cargo of Salt, was inform'd she had seen a Privateer Schooner on the 10th blowing a Gale—he could not board her, but inform'd that he was out of Rhode Island: last evening was chased by a Frigate who fired a Gun at him about dark, but coming thick weather he lost sight of her & that he saw a Brig in the night, standing to the N.E.—put the Capt of the Boston Brig we had seized on board this vessel & dismissed her—light winds from the Northwd Latt Obsd 40.16 No

Saturday Augt 15th 1812 Fresh breezes from the N.E. standing to the N.W. cloudy weather, anxious to see our Prizes, which we left to the Northwd in the last Gale—at 11 a.m. saw a Sail in the N.E. stood for her, she was steering to the N.W.—came up with her very fast Latt Obsd 42.4 No

Sunday 16th Augt at 2 PM perceived she had Ports, got to Quarters stood for her, under English Colours, she hoisted american colours, & then haul'd them down again prepared for action, the Chase shewing 16 guns, at 1/2 past 2, ran along side of her, changed our colours. she again shew American Colours, & hailed from Gibraltar to Boston. sent our Boat on board for the Capt Examined his Papers & dismiss'd him—Put on board on Parole Capt Stewart of the Jeannie & John Russel one of his apprentices. at 3 P.M. made sail to the Northwd—Oliver Salvador & John Martin

Prisoners of the Jeannie entered At 10 P.M. stood to the westwd under easy sail, a heavy Sea rolling at 8 a.m. saw a sail to the Southwd thick fog. made sail, & tack'd to the Eastwd after her, at 10 lost sight. continued to Steer to the East, where we saw her last, very thick fog & fine rain. No Observation

Monday Augt 17 Thick fog. continued to steer to fall in with the chase, but in vain, we find nothing but Gales, thick fogs, & cross heavy Seas, which makes unsafe & very unpleasant cruising. Steered to the Northwd untill midnight. then stood to the Southwd—At 5 a m discovered a Sail in the S.S.E. gave chase. at 7 spoke her. The Brig Favorite, Capt Sears from Cadiz bound to Boston, Cargo Salt & 11 Bales cloth. inform'd him of the War. dismiss'd him & made sail to the Southwd Fresh Gales & cloudy Latt Obs 42.49 No

Tuesday Augt 18th Strong Gale & heavy sea with rain. standing to the S.S.W. wind from the N.N.W.—wishing to get into more moderate at 6 PM set the Fore & main try Sails & hove too, head to the SW lay all night—at 4 A.M. more moderate made sail to the SW. at meridian fine weather Employed in drying small Sails, cleansing between decks & putting ship in order, every thing suffered very much from the late bad weather. Latt Obs 41.13 No

Wednesday 19th Moderate & pleasant with light winds from the Westwd standing to the Southwd my intention to proceed to Latt 39 Noh in hopes of falling in with the July Jamaica Fleet, which must soon be on this way Latt Obsd 40.36 No

Thursday 20th At 1 PM saw a sail in the S.S.W. & gave chase. at 4 spoke her, the Brig John Adams from Liverpool to New York Capt Foath she had been captured two days ago by the Frigate Guerrier part of her Cargo had been taken out, the Brig given up, and the Crew of an American Schooner from Naples put on board, which crew & that of the John Adams were put upon Parole, with several Women & Children Passengers finding the Brig in bad order, having lost her main

Top mast, with Salt & Coal & a few Crates of Earthen-ware left in her I did not make a Seizure of her under the Non Importation Law, but suffered her to proceed The Capt informed me, that he was told on board the Guerrier that the British had taken & destroyed on this Coast, upwards of 170 American vessels since the War commenced, he supposed that the Guerrier was not more than 15 Leagues to the Eastwd of us: this is the Second time I have found myself a few miles distance from this ship: fresh Gale from the N.N.E. at 6 P.M. bore away to the S.W. under easy sail, at 8 A M hauled up to the Westwd-pleasant weather Latt Obs 39.3 North . . .

Monday Augt 24th 1812 Winds variable. four sail in sight. took one for a Frigate made several Tacks to try her-at 1/2 past meridian she made sail to the westwd we then stood for the ship we had been chase of, At 1 PM came up with her: she proved to be the American Ship Euphrates, of New Bedford, Capt DeCost from Liverpool to New York, Lading, Dry Goods &c, with 18 Passengers-I took the Capt on board & examined him: we being under English Colours he informd me he had a British Licence, made a Seizure of the Ship & Cargo under the Non Importation Law, & put Mr Coale on board, with orders to proceed for the nearest Port in the U.S.-at 2 P.M. made sail in chase of another sail to the westwd blowing very heavy from the Northwd with squalls, carried a press of sail & shippd much water: at 10 P.M. came up with the chase, proved to be the Rebecca which I had seized a few days ago. The prize master inform'd me that he had been that morning on board the Constitution Frigate, Capt Hull where he saw the officer & crew of the British Frigate Guerriere which they had captured on the 20th after a short engagement of Fifteen minutes, the Guerriere having been totally dismasted, & the Capt wounded that they had burnt the Guerriere & was proceeding to Boston to refit, having had some of her masts injured by shot. Gave the Rebecca a Barrel of Pork & 2 Barrels of Bread-stood to the westwd

under easy sail-at 6 a m The Euphrates was near us, & the Rebecca a few miles to the westwd-spoke the Euphrates, gave them the news, & recommended pushing into the nearest Port My intention is to see those two valuable Prizes (£ 250,000 STG) in Safety, if Possible-light winds. Latt Obs 41.12 No . . .

Friday Augt 28th Begins with calm. afterwards light breezes from the N.E. middle & latter part at 6 a.m. got soundings on George's Bank in 48 Fathoms water & Saw 2 Sail to the Southwd & S.E. gave chase. at 9 came up with a Brig, she proved to be a prize, (loaded with Spars) to the Privateer Benjamin Franklin out of Philadelphia. the other sail was a Schooner, but she had run out of sight whilst we were chasing the Brig. at 9 made sail to join our two Prizes, which were then out of sight to the westwd. at 10 saw them. at meridian a fresh breeze 58 Fathom water. Latt Obsd 40.31 north.

Saturday Augt 29th Light winds from the N.W. standing in on the Bank near the South shoals of Nantucket. at 4 am tack'd to the Northwd at 5 am saw a sail gave chase: at 7 spoke her, the Ship Jewel, Robinson, from the Isle of May bound to Portland gave her information of the War-Our two Prizes in Company Latt Obsd 40.35 north

Sunday 30th Throughout light winds from the W.S.W. at 6 A.M. saw a sail. at 8 in 20 fathom water standing to the N.W. At meridian saw the Land off Martha's Vineyard bearing N.B.E. distant 9 miles, Our two Prizes in sight. Latt Obs 41.11 north

Monday Augt 30th Winds from the W.S.W. a sail to windwd of us. at 1 P.M. spoke her, the Schr Mary Ann from Cadiz to New London, our prizes astern, stood to them & spoke them, ordered the Brig to follow me into New Port & then tack'd for the Land, at 6 A.M. got to within No Mans Land, the Prize Ship in Company. under sail all night in the Sound at Day light; sent my boat & six men on board the Ship, & ordered her into New Port took a Pilot & bore away in the offing in order to fall in with our Brig (Prize) could not see her,

& stood for New Port. At 7 A.M. saw the Brig to the S.E. at 8 was near the light at the Entrance of the Harbour, the Ship in Company. At 10 came to anchor at New Port, & fired a Salute of 11 Guns—we have been Forty Five days Effective on this part of our Cruize, there remains Forty four days to complete the Cruize, according to articles. . .

Joshua Barney

District and Port of Newport Septem 2d 1812 I Joshua Barney Commander of the private armed Schooner *Rossie* do swear that what is contained in the above and foregoing Journal consisting of twenty-one pages is just and true in all its parts So help me God

Joshua Barney

Collr Office Port of Newport
Sworn to the day & year above mentioned
Wm Ellery Collr

DS, U.S. Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Md., Manuscript Collection; from a copy provided by the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, St. Michaels, Md., where the Naval Academy's original was on loan during the spring of 1981.

The Missing Husband

The urgent need for men frequently drove recruiting officers to extreme measures for gaining enlistments. The following letter discloses the plight of a woman whose husband apparently agreed to serve in the Marine Corps when he was less than sober. Although her complaint is one which has probably been uttered countless times through the ages, it is rare to find a document that so clearly states the case.

PETITION OF JANE STINGER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

The Petition of Jane Stinger

respectfully sheweth;

That on the 25th instant, the husband of your Petitioner Daniel Stinger, a Baker by trade, enlisted in the City of Philadelphia, as a Marine in the service of the United States. that at the time he enlisted he was so much under the influence of liquor as to be incapable of knowing what he did. that the enlisting officer took advantage of his intoxication when he persuaded him to enlist and that he had not recovered from the effects of the liquor when he took the Oath before the magistrate. That your Petitioner by the enlistment of her husband is left with two small children without possessing means to provide for their support and maintenance, and that her distress is greatly increased by reason of expences lately incurred by a severe illness from which her husband has been but recently recovered. That your Petitioner will willingly sacrifice a part of her furniture with with to procure the means of providing a substitute in the place of her husband. Your Petitioner therefore respectfully requests you will be pleased to direct the commanding officer on the station to discharge her Husband from the term of his enlistment upon her procuring a substitute in his place. And your Petitioner as in duty bound will ever pray.

Jane Stinger

Philadelphia August 31 1812.

We the Subscribers do Certify to the Honourable the Secretary of the Navy that he will greatly relieve a distressed Family by complying with the request of the Petitioner.

John Barker
John Dennis
Tench Coxe

DS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1812, Vol. 6, No. 68.

The Return of Rodgers' Squadron

On 21 June, the ships of the combined squadrons of Commodores Rodgers and Decatur weighed anchor at Sandy Hook and soon found themselves in chase of H.M.S. Belvidera, but failed to overtake her. Afterwards, Rodgers expended much time and effort in search of a homeward-bound British West Indian convoy. Hampered by poor visibility for most of the cruise, the squadron captured only seven vessels. Despite the lack of numerous captures, Rodgers's cruise did accomplish a strategic objective: Commodore Broke's squadron remained in existence during July, in order to protect British convoys from the threat posed by Rodgers' squadron.¹ In so doing, Broke withheld frigates that might have been assigned to blockade Boston and other eastern ports. In the meantime, many merchant ships, which had sailed from American ports before the 4 April embargo, were able to return safely. The effect of Rodgers's concentration of force did not last so long as it might have, however. Learning that the American warships had sailed far to the east, Commodore Broke dispersed his ships in early August. Thus, Guerriere was headed toward Halifax for refitting when intercepted by Constitution, and other British frigates returned to take station off New York.

1. In the view of Mahan, *Sea Power in its Relations to the War of 1812*, I: 320-27, Commodore Rodgers' strategy was an effective way to use a small naval force. For another view, suggesting that more prizes might have been taken and British frigates defeated had U.S. ships sailed singly, as the feats of Hull and Porter suggest, see Maloney, "The War of 1812," in Hagen, ed., *In Peace and War*, pp. 46-62.

COMMODORE JOHN RODGERS TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAMILTON

U.S. Frigate *President*
Boston September 1st 1812

Sir,

I had the honor yesterday of informing you of the arrival of the Squadron, and now to state the result and particulars of our cruise.

Previous to leaving New York on the 21st of June I heard that a British Convoy had sailed from Jamaica for England on or about the 20th of the preceding month, and on being informed of the declaration of

War against Great Britain I determined in the event of Commodore Decatur joining me with the *U. States*, *Congress* and *Argus*, as you had directed, to go in pursuit of them.

The *United States*, *Congress* and *Argus* did join me on the 21st with which vessels, this Ship and the *Hornet* I accordingly sailed, in less than an hour after I received your orders, of the 18th of June, accompanied by your official communication of the Declaration of War.

On leaving New York I shaped our course South Easterly, in the expectation of falling in with Vessels by which I should hear of the before mentioned Convoy, and the following night met with an American Brig that gave me the sought for information: The Squadron now crowded Sail in pursuit; but the next morning was taken out of its course by the pursuit of a British Frigate, that I since find was the *Belvidera*, relative to which I beg leave to refer you to the inclosed extract from my journal:¹ after repairing as far as possible the injury done by the *Belvidera* to our spars and rigging we again crowded all sail and reassumed our course in pursuit of the Convoy, but did not receive further intelligence of it until the 29th of June, on the western edge of the Banks of Newfoundland, where we spoke an American Schooner, the Master of which reported that he had, two days before, passed them in Latd 43°, Longd 55°, steering to the Eastward: I was surprised to find that the Convoy was still so far to the Eastward of us, but was urged however, as well by what I considered my duty, as by inclination, to continue the pursuit.

On the 1st of July, a little to the Eastward of Newfoundland Bank, we fell in with quantities of Cocoa Nut Shells, Orange peels &c &c: which indicated that the Convoy were not far distant and we pursued it with zeal, altho frequently taken out of our course by vessels it was necessary to chase, without gaining any further intelligence until the 9th of July, in Latd 48°30', Longd 23, we captured the British, private, armed brig *Dolphin*, of Jersey, and was informed by some of her Crew that they had seen the Convoy the preceeding evening, the weather was not clear at the time, but that they had counted 85 sail, and that the force, charged with its protection, consisted of one two decker, a Frigate, a sloop of War, and a Brig.

This was the last intelligence I received of the before mentioned Convoy, altho' its pursuit was continued until the 13th of July, being then within 18 or 20 hours sail of the British Channel.

From this we steered for the Island of Madeira, passed close by it on the 21st of July: thence near the Azores and saw Corvo and

Flores: thence steered for the Banks of Newfoundland, and from the latter place (by the way of Cape Sable) to this Port, it having become indispensibly necessary (by the time we reached our own coast) to make the first convenient Port in the United States: owing I am sorry to say to that wretched disease the scurvy, having made its appearance on board of the vessels, most generally to a degree seriously alarming.

From the western part of the Banks of Newfoundland to our making the Island of Madeira the weather was such, at least 6 days out of 7, as to obscure, from our discovery, every object that we did not pass within 4 or 5 miles of, and indeed for several days together the fog was so thick as to prevent our seeing each other, even at a cable's length assunder, more than twice or thrice in 24 hours.

From the time of our leaving the United States until our arrival here we chased every Vessel we saw, and you will not be a little astonished when I inform you that, although we brought too every thing we did chase, with the exception of four vessels, we only made seven Captures & one recapture.

It is truly an unpleasant task to be obliged to make a communication thus barren of benefit to our country: the only consolation I individually feel on the occasion being derived from knowing that our being at Sea obliged the Enemy to concentrate a considerable portion of his most active force and thereby prevented his capturing an incalculable amount of American property that would otherwise have fallen a sacrifice.

I am aware of the anxiety you must have experienced at not hearing from me for such a length of time, but this I am sure you will not attribute in any degree to neglect, when I inform you that not a single proper opportunity occurred, from the time of leaving the the United States until our return.

Mr Newcomb,² who will deliver you this, you will find an intelligent young man, capable of giving such further information as you may deem of any moment: He will at the same time deliver you a Chart, shewing the Tract in which we cruised: annexed is a list of Vessels Captured, recaptured, and Burnt.

The four vessels that we chased and did not come up with was, the *Belvidera* a Small pilot boat Schooner supposed to be an American Privateer, the Hermaphrodite Privateer Brig *Yankee*,³ which we lost sight of in a fog, but whose character we afterwards learnt, and a Frigate, supposed to be British, that we chased on the 28th Ult near

the Shoal of George's Bank, and should certainly have come up with, had we have had the advantage of two hours more day light.

On board of the several vessels of the Squadron there are between 80 & 100 Prisoners, taken from the vessels we captured during our late cruise: The Government not having any agent for prisoners here, I shall send them to Commor Bainbridge, to be disposed of in such a manner as best appears with the interest of the United States, and which I hope may meet your approbation. With the greatest respect [&c.]

Jn^o Rodgers

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 2.

1. See pp. 154-57.

2. Midshipman Walter Newcomb.

3. *Yankee*, 14, Captain Oliver Wilson, out of Rhode Island.

[Enclosure]

July 2nd	Brig <i>Traveller</i> 277 tons. James Amerry Master, of Newcastle, 10 men, bound from the Bay of Fundy to Newcastle, Eng. owned by George Dunn, John Watson, Matth Dunn & John Stoker, cargo Timber. Burnt.
July 4th	Brig <i>Dutchess of Portland</i> . 6 guns & 11 men, of Newcastle Engd. bound from Newcastle to Nova Scotia in Ballast. Burnt.
July 9th	Brig <i>Dolphin</i> 241 tons, 12 guns & 23 men. Philip Cabbot Master of Jersey [England] bound from Jersey to Newfoundland in ballast & some cargo owned by Winter & Nicoll. sent into the U. States
July 24th	Ship <i>John of Lancaster</i> , 16 guns & 30 men bound from London to Martinique in ballast. sent into the U. States
August 2nd	Brig <i>Argo</i> , 168 tons, 10 guns & 10 men. William Middleton Master, of London bound from Pernambuco to London, laden with Cotton, fustic & about \$8000 in Gold. ordered for the U. States

August 17th Schr *Adeline* of London, 10 Men, bound from Hayti to London, laden with Coffee, ordered for the U. States

August 25th Schr *Betsey* of Marblehead, from Naples, laden with Brandy, recaptured from the *Gurrierre*, who had ordered her for Halifax, 4 men & a Midshipman (prize master). ordered her for the U. States

Jn^o Rodgers

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1812, Vol. 3, No. 2.

Chapter Three

The Northern Lakes Theater: June–December 1812

Although Canada loomed large among the military objectives of the Madison administration at the beginning of the War of 1812, nothing had been done to prepare naval forces for action on the borders of the United States and Canada. From Lakes Superior and Huron to Erie and Ontario, the United States possessed but one commissioned warship, the 16-gun brig, Oneida, based at Sackets Harbor, New York. Farther east, Lake Champlain held a position that was exceedingly important from a strategic perspective. No land campaign around or beyond these lakes could succeed without first achieving naval superiority. Without population centers or local industries that could support an extensive campaign, invasion forces lacking command of the lakes would find their communications and supply lines severed. For both the United States and Great Britain, the logistical side of the lakes campaigns posed an unending series of problems.

Initial British victories and resistance all along the Canadian frontier blighted American dreams of an easy conquest of the lakes and control of the St. Lawrence River. The American Generals Hull, Van Rensselaer, and Dearborn attacked the British and their Indian allies at Detroit, Niagara, and Montreal, respectively, during the summer and autumn of 1812. Hull and his army were captured, Van Rensselaer was defeated after some gains, and Dearborn returned to winter quarters at Plattsburg after desultory skirmishes. In the 1813 campaign season, efforts were renewed with somewhat more success, partly because naval preparations had gone forward.

The documents presented in the following section portray the early weakness and the gradual buildup of American naval forces on Lakes Ontario, Erie, and Champlain. The bulk of the action took place on Lake Ontario during the period under consideration; the proportion of documents selected reflects that fact. For the Navy Department,