

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

**Volume III  
1814–1815  
Chesapeake Bay, Northern Lakes,  
and Pacific Ocean  
Part 6 of 7**

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only to compleat the Vessels now upon the Lakes but with a View to any emergency which may make it needful to encrease the number of our Ships.

This outline of my Intentions will meet I hope, your Excellency's wishes and be Satisfactory: Should it appear defective, in any point or should Your Excellency think any alteration necessary, I shall be most happy in receiving any suggestions with which you may have the goodness to favor me who have the honor to be Sir Your Excellency's most obedient humble servant

E W C R Owen  
Commodore  
Commr. in Chief

LS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 735, pp. 8-17.

### Chapter Three

## The Pacific Theater: January 1814–August 1815

*In December 1813 as David Porter prepared his frigate to leave the Marquesan island of Nuku Hiva, he could reflect on a year of memorable accomplishment and extreme good fortune. Ten months earlier he had made the bold decision to enter the Pacific and cruise singly against British merchant shipping off the coasts of Chile, Peru, and Mexico. In March he arrived at the Chilean port of Valparaiso where he was greeted enthusiastically by a people in the midst of their own revolutionary struggle for independence. The frigate commander was gratified on this occasion to win the friendship and support of the Carrera family who controlled Chile's military and ruling national junta. Fortified by these demonstrations of pro-American sentiment, Porter set sail for the Galápagos Islands where he cruised in search of British whaling ships from 17 April to 3 October. Essex enjoyed good hunting in the waters surrounding that exotic archipelago, bagging twelve whalers and more than 300 prisoners. Porter next headed for the Marquesas Islands to refit his ship and give his men a well-deserved rest ashore. He arrived at Nuku Hiva on 25 October and immediately began the hard work of repairing Essex and fitting out her prizes for the voyage home. He was impressed enough with the strategic importance of the island to claim it on behalf of the United States, a gesture the overawed natives were temporarily unable to dispute. After seven weeks of labor Essex was again ready for sea.<sup>1</sup>*

*Porter had hopes for even greater success in 1814. His reasons for such high expectations were not unfounded. His ship had suffered no material damage in the course of her cruise, his crew was healthy, and he had manned and fitted out the captured whaler Atlantic, renamed Essex Junior, to act in concert with Essex. Yet the American captain aimed at something more grand and personally gratifying than adding to the tally of whalers captured in 1813. As Porter would later explain it, I sought "to signalize my cruize by something more splendid before leaving" the Pacific.<sup>2</sup> Having learned before sailing for the Marquesas that the British had sent three warships in quest of Essex, Porter now determined to seek combat with the enemy. Knowing that Captain James Hillyar, the British squadron commander, would seek Essex at Valparaiso, Porter set sail for that port on 13 December 1813.*

Essex arrived off the coast of Chile on 12 January 1814, anchoring in Valparaiso harbor on 3 February. Porter returned to a country whose political landscape had altered dramatically since his visit the previous March. The Carreras, whom Porter styled "my particular friends," were no longer in power, having been stripped of their political and military offices and thrown in prison.<sup>3</sup> With the government torn by faction from within, and the nation threatened by royalist forces from without, the entire tone of Chilean sentiment toward the Americans had shifted to open suspicion and hostility.

Porter did not have to wait long for Phoebe's arrival, for on 8 February the British frigate sailed into Valparaiso harbor. She was accompanied by the sloop of war Cherub, a contingency Porter seems not to have anticipated. The American commander now found himself outnumbered by a superior force in a foreign port whose officials were openly Anglophile. Within a week Hillyar had stationed his ships in a blockading position off Valparaiso, awaiting the arrival of reinforcements to bottle up, or perhaps destroy, the Yankee cruiser.

Porter would later record in his Journal that Essex was so superior in point of sailing compared to Phoebe and Cherub that he believed he could escape their blockade "at almost any time."<sup>4</sup> He remained at Valparaiso specifically to provoke Hillyar into a ship-to-ship combat. Despite several ploys, Porter was unable to tempt, taunt, or shame Hillyar into accepting his challenge. As an officer who had demonstrated bravery in battle on numerous occasions, Hillyar did not feel compelled to risk all in a sea fight simply to prove his courage. More important, the British commander knew he had time on his side and saw little reason to hazard battle when a more prudent course of action would accomplish the same ends.

When the engagement Porter sought finally happened, it occurred not on the terms he wished, but under circumstances he could not control. On 28 March strong winds drove Essex from her anchorage in Valparaiso. Porter seized the opportunity to sail past his blockaders outside the harbor and run for open sea. But a sudden squall snapped Essex's main topmast, compelling Porter to abandon his bid for freedom. Instead he anchored close in to shore on the eastern side of Valparaiso Bay, in waters he considered neutral and thus safe from British attack. Hillyar now deemed the crippled frigate fair game and moved in to engage Essex. The ensuing battle lasted, with some periods of interruption, nearly two and a half hours. The American ship and its crew took a dreadful pounding, with sixty percent casualties among all hands.

On 27 April David Porter and the majority of Essex's survivors set sail for the United States in Essex Junior, now serving as an unarmed cartel. The defeated captain and crew arrived in New York in early July and were acclaimed heroes. Although he was publicly lauded for his exploits in the Pacific, Porter sought official vindication of his conduct through a court of inquiry. But Porter was denied even this satisfaction for no sooner had his court convened than the Navy Department ordered its proceedings suspended so that Porter and his crew could proceed to Washington to aid in the defense of the capital. Lacking the venue of a court of inquiry to defend his actions, Porter would use the publication of his Journal in 1815 to lay his case before the American public.<sup>5</sup>

While Porter and the survivors of the battle returned home, the small command he had left behind at Nuku Hiva suffered its own hardships. Porter had detached Marine Lieutenant John M. Gamble and twenty officers and men to remain at the Marquesan island to prepare three prize ships for sea and a future rendezvous with Essex. The marine commander was in an unenviable position with an understrength crew, a charge of six prisoners, deserters lurking ashore, and an uneasy alliance with the native islanders. His situation unraveled over the next five months, with breaches in discipline, growing friction with the native population, incidents of desertion, and finally mutiny. On 7 May Gamble and his loyal seamen were overwhelmed by mutineers. It was at this critical juncture that the native islanders struck, killing four of Gamble's men. Gamble and his remaining crew of seven made a hairbreadth escape to the Sandwich Islands only to be captured there in June by Cherub. Gamble and his unfortunate shipmates were forced to endure six months of confinement in Cherub and an additional six months of captivity ashore before finally being permitted to return home.

The return of Gamble's crew to the United States brought a close to the longest and most colorful and daring cruise undertaken by a U.S. Navy vessel during the War of 1812. In summing up the accomplishments of his cruise, Porter calculated that he had inflicted more than two and a half million dollars of damage on the British whale fishery in the Pacific. He also claimed that the Essex's success had forced the British government to expend more than six million dollars in accomplishing her capture through the deployment of additional ships and men in Asian and Pacific waters. While Porter's figures may be inflated, there is no question that he had dealt the enemy's whale fishery a serious blow or that he had caused the Admiralty to divert large resources to the hunt for Essex, resources that would have better served the British war effort elsewhere. It is this aspect of Essex's cruise that showed the true potentialities of a war on enemy commerce. It was this type of war—a *guerre de course*—that Secretary Jones believed was best suited to the size and resources of the U.S. Navy. The more questionable dimension of Porter's cruise was his decision to seek combat with Hillyar. With a service strapped for ships and men, there was little to gain from such an encounter other than personal glory, nor would the loss of a single British frigate significantly weaken the enemy. By the end of 1813 it had become standard practice for the Navy Department to issue cruising instructions to its officers that included a strict prohibition against giving and receiving challenges. As Secretary Jones would remind his officers, the enemy's "Commerce is our true Game, for there he is indeed vulnerable."<sup>6</sup> The capture of Essex demonstrated the wisdom of this dictum.

1. For documentation on the events of 1813 in the Pacific theater, see Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, pp. 683–714.

2. Porter to Jones, 3 July 1814, p. 733.

3. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, p. 490.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 484.

5. In an 1822 reprint of *Journal of a Cruise*, Porter included additional documentation on British perfidy in the capture of Essex.

6. Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, p. 296.

## Essex Blockaded

On 8 February *Phoebe* and *Cherub* entered Valparaíso harbor to find the U.S. frigate *Essex* lying at anchor with three of her prizes. In short order the British warships took up their station outside the harbor effectively bottling up the American man-of-war within. These documents describe the dramatic first encounter between *Phoebe* and *Essex* and illustrate the strong nationalistic and competitive spirit each nation's sailors exhibited as they prepared to square off.

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO MASTER COMMANDANT JOHN DOWNES

[“Memorandum for Lt. Downes,—

Sh]ould I fall in [with the “*Phoebe*,” the “*Raccoon*”<sup>1</sup>] the *Cherub* altogether I shall endeavour to make my retreat in the best manner I can and to effect this we must endeavour to keep together and act from circumstances—

If we fall in with the *Phoebe* & one Sloop of War you must endeavour to draw the Sloop off in chace of you and get her as far to leeward of the Frigate as possible and as soon as you effect this I shall engage the Frigate—

If we meet the *Phoebe* alone, and to leeward of us I shall run along side of her, You must remain out of Gun shot to windward of us until you see how matters are likely to go with us, if you find we can master her ourselves you will not bring your ship into action but keep her free from injury to assist us in case of need, if you find from the loss of our masts or other damage that we are worsted you will take a position that will most annoy the enemy to enable us to haul off or take such advantage as may offer—

If I make the *Phoebe* to windward I shall manoeuvre so as to endeavour to get the weather gage otherwise I shall avoid coming fairly along side of her unless I can disable her so with my stern chace Guns as to obtain an advantage—

Should we make the *Phoebe* & a sloop to windward draw the sloop off if you can and leave the *Phoebe* to me—

I wish you to avoid an engagement with a sloop if possible as your ship is too weak, if however you cannot avoid an action endeavour to cut her up so as to prevent her coming to the assistance of the *Phoebe*—

I shall in all probability run along side the *Phoebe* under the Spanish Ensign & pendant, should I do so you will show British colours until I hoist the American—

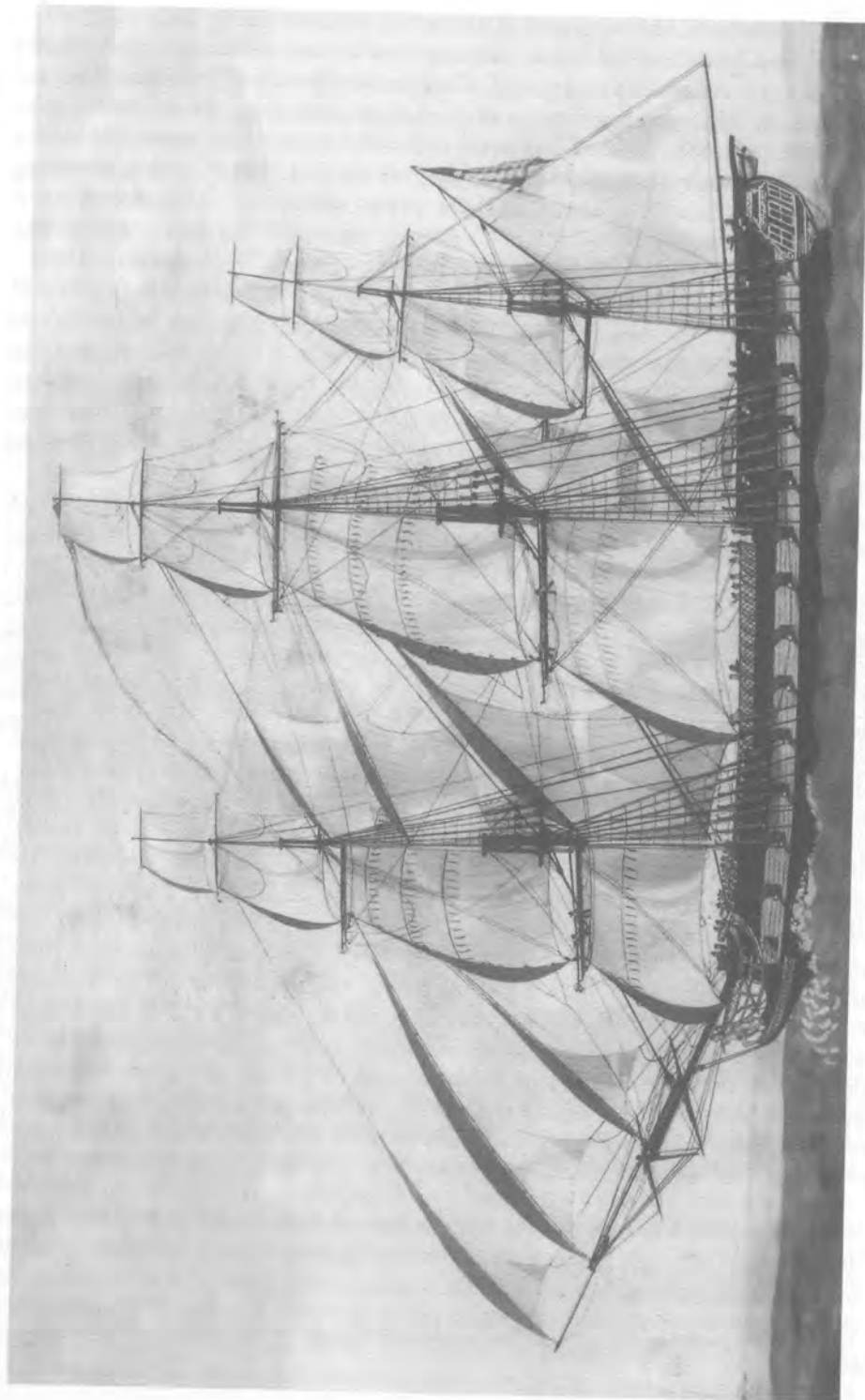
It will be advisable for you at all times to keep to windward of us—

D Porter.

U S Frigate *Essex* 10th Jany. 1814<sup>2</sup>

DS, MdAN. A typescript of this memorandum is attached to its top edge obscuring a portion of the text. The obscured text is supplied in brackets from the typescript.

1. Near the end of his cruise in the Galápagos Islands in 1813, Porter received intelligence that *Phoebe*, *Cherub*, *Raccoon*, and a twenty-gun store ship (*Isaac Todd*) had sailed from Rio de Janeiro for the Pacific in search of *Essex*. This was only part of their mission. The British vessels had also been ordered to destroy American fur trading settlements on the Pacific Northwest coast. See Porter, *Jour-*



Essex Under Sail



*nal of a Cruise*, pp. 271-72; Porter to Jones, 3 July 1814, p. 732; and, Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, pp. 710-14.

2. This memorandum was drafted while *Essex* and her consort were at sea, two days before their arrival off the Chilean coast. Porter was cruising off Valparaiso harbor as early as 21 January. Porter to Secretary of the Navy, 21 Jan. 1814, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 1, No. 55 (M125, Roll No. 34).

### LOG BOOK OF H.M. FRIGATE *PHOEBE*

Remks. &c. *Phæbe* Tuesday 8th. Feby. 1814

AM, Do. Wr. [Moderate & Cloudy]— At 3.40 Set the Jib At 4 Moderate & Cloudy Wr. At 4..55 Saw the Land, Made Sail Trimmed Sails. At 7 Saw a Strange sail on the Starbd. Bow ranged Cables, Cleared Ship for Action At 8 Do. Wr. *Cherub* in Company, Tackd. Occasionally Working into Valparaiso Bay, Spoke the United states Frigate *Essex* at Anchor, At 11..55 came too with the small Bower in 16 fms.— Noon moderate Wr. Furled Sails— *Cherub* at Anchor— P.M, Do. Wr. Sent away Empty Casks for Water Bearings at Anchor, Point of Angels NW by N, A Fort<sup>1</sup> on the West side of the Bay NW by W Governors House in another Fort<sup>2</sup> West— a rocky point running off from the town SSE Best bower NNE in 24 fms. Small Ditto SSW in 16 fms., found lying at Anchor *Montezumer Hector*<sup>3</sup> & *Atlantic*<sup>4</sup> the latter Armd, (Prizes to the *Essex*) At 4 Do. Wr. Recd. 10 Tons of Water Pr. boats Recd. 2 Oxen Weighing 657 lbs, Suppd. the *Cherub* with 129 lbs. of Fresh Beef— At Sunset up Boats— Midnight Moderate & Cloudy Wr.—

Remks. &c. *Phæbe*, Moored in Valparaiso Bay, Wednesday 9 Feby. 1814

AM, Moderate & fine Wr. Sent empty Casks for Water Mended sails, At 8 Do. Wr. Obsd. the *Essex* hoist a White flag at the Fore Top Gallt. mast head (Motto) Free Trade & Sailors rights *Phæbe* return'd it, Traitors offend both, God & Country, British sailors best rights, Obsd. the *Essex* mand. the rigging and gave three Cheers was Instantly return'd by H M Ship *Phæbe* playing God Save the King Accompd. with three Cheers— People empd. as Necessary, Saluted the Fort with 15 Guns Obsd. the Fort to return Ditto Noon Do. Wr. Saluted the Governor of Valparaiso<sup>5</sup> with 15 Guns P.M. Moderate & fine Wr. Recd. 11 Tons of Water, Empd. Stowing away Ditto. Mustered at Quarters: At Sunset up Boats Midnight Do. Wr.

D, UKLPR, Adm. 51/2675, Log Book of *Phoebe*, 1 Jan. 1813-28 Aug. 1815, fol. 151.

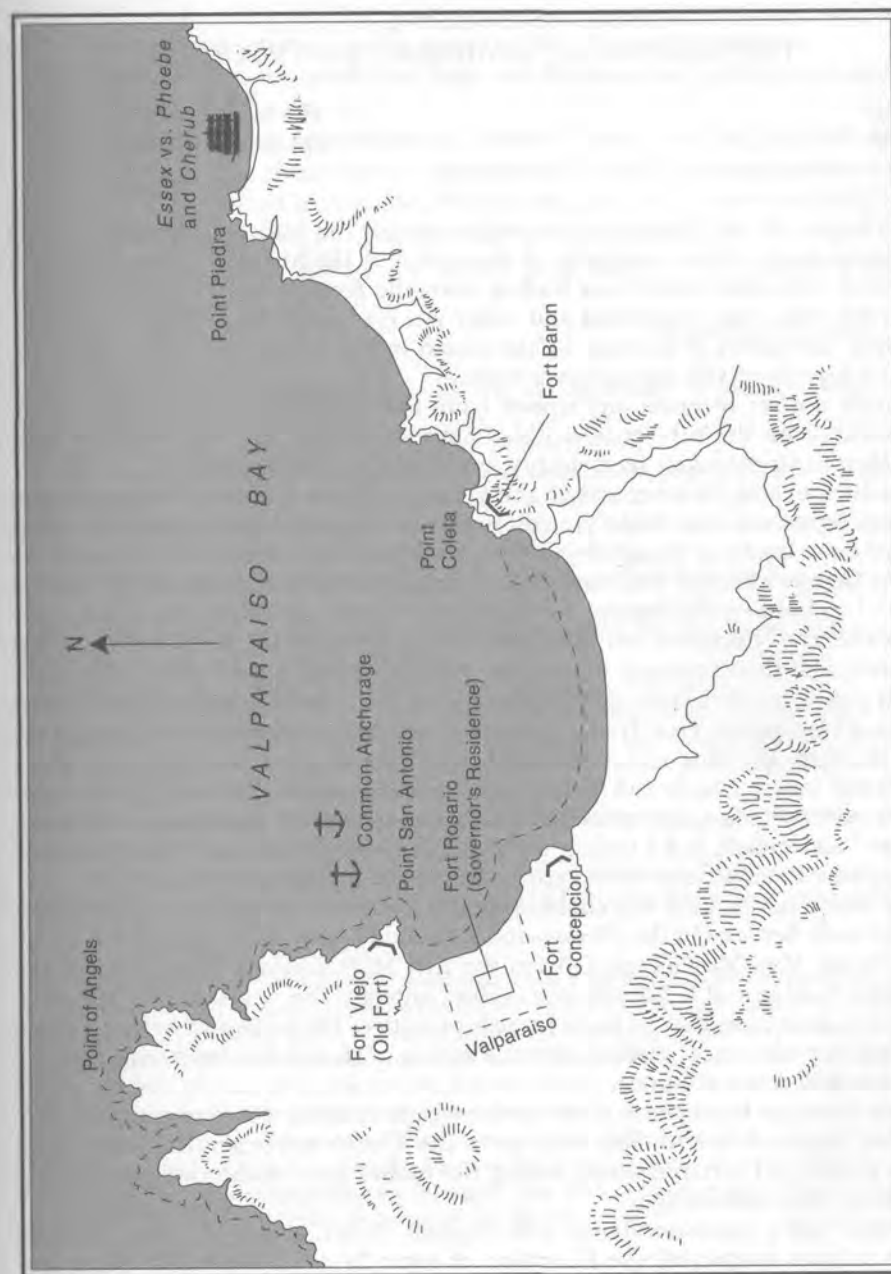
1. Fort Viejo (Old Fort), situated on St. Antonio Point.

2. Fort Rosario.

3. In July 1813 Porter directed John Downes to escort *Montezuma*, *Hector*, *Catherine*, and *Policy* to Valparaiso where he was to offer the captured whalers for sale. Unable to find buyers for the prize ships, Downes left the first three vessels moored at the Chilean port and dispatched *Policy* to the United States. *Policy* was captured en route to America by the privateer *Loire*. *Hector* and *Catherine* were destroyed following Porter's return to Valparaiso on 3 February 1814. *Montezuma* remained moored at Valparaiso at least through the spring of 1814 with the Chilean government rebuffing British efforts to claim the whaler as a lawful prize. On the destruction of *Hector*, see p. 717; and, *Montezuma*, see Hillyar to Croker, 26 June 1814, pp. 716-19, 739.

4. Renamed *Essex Junior*.

5. Francisco de la Lastra y de la Sotta, governor of Valparaiso. With the dissolution of Chile's ruling junta in early March 1814, Lastra was elected Supreme Director of Chile. He left for Santiago in mid-March to assume his new duties, appointing Captain Francisco de Formas to act as interim governor of Valparaiso. For a contemporary sketch of Lastra, see Johnston, *Three Years in Chile*, pp. 165-67.



Map 14. Valparaiso Harbor

CAPTAIN JAMES HILLYAR, R.N., TO  
FIRST SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

No. 4.  
Copy

His Majesty's Ship *Phæbe*  
Off Valparaiso 28th. feby. 1814

Sir

My Letter of the 10th. instt.<sup>1</sup> acquaints you for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty of the arrival of His Majestys Ships *Phæbe* and *Cherub* at Valparaiso and of our finding here, the *Essex* and a Corvette; it was not until the 14th. that our Bread and water was on board when from the Enemy shewing intentions of moving, I determined to put to Sea the following morning; we have been Off the port ever since.

I have not yet received any answer from the Government respecting my remonstrance on the subject of British Captured Vessels, and the claims of English Merchants therefore have nothing particular to communicate<sup>2</sup>

on the morning after our arrival, the *Essex* displayed a Flag on which was written "Sailors rights and free Trade"; to counteract this (as I conceived) insidious effort to shake the loyalty of thoughtless British Seamen, I had ordered to be worked on our St George's Ensign "God and their Country, Sailors best rights, traitors offend both":<sup>3</sup> on hoisting this Ensign, the Crew of the *Essex* manned the rigging and gave three cheers— I ordered our little band to play God save the King, which we first cheered, and then returned that of our Enemies, Boats full of liberty Men afterwards passed us, the parties carrying small Flags with inscriptions on them; such as "Sons of Commerce, Free Trade" & who on landing, paraded on the Hills and before the Ships shouting very insultingly,<sup>4</sup> I am happy to say all this and much more was borne with a temper and forbearance by the Crews of both His Majestys Ships which evinced their correctness and loyalty and gave great satisfaction to Captain Tucker<sup>5</sup> and myself; and I believe no Men can be more desirous than they are of seeing their Enemies clear of the protection of a Neutral Flag.

We found here a little Merchant Ship, the *Emily*,<sup>6</sup> whose Crew to a man volunteered their Services in the *Phæbe*—and I should do very great injustice to a very fine Young Man Mr. George O'Brien the first Mate (once a Lieutenant in His Majestys Service and broke for misconduct onboard the *Sparrowhawk*) If I omitted recommending him to their Lordships notice: He came Off before we Anchored, attended most usefully to our wants in port, and has been with me ever since we sailed as a Volunteer.

The *Essex* has been three times under weigh, and last evening with her consort we expected her to close with us as the *Cherub* was seperated some Miles from Calms and variable winds during the earlier part of the day, but they returned to their Anchorage.

I have had a correspondence with Captain Porter, and interviews with him when in port, respecting the liberation of some British Seamen, his Prisoners. He has at last landed them and I have pledged myself that they shall not serve onboard any Ship under my orders, and that the British Government will immediately on hearing from me, restore an equal number of Americans.<sup>7</sup> The *Essex* carries Forty Thirty two Pound Carronades, Six long Guns and about three hundred and twenty or thirty men, the Corvette twenty Guns.<sup>8</sup>

Her destination (The *Essex*) if she gets safe from hence, is said to be Off the River Plate on her way to America, but that I think is very uncertain. I have

warm assurances of Friendship both from the Governour<sup>9</sup> here and the Intendant, who transacts business in the absence of the Junta,<sup>10</sup> at St Iago.

our wants are not yet numerous Sails and Cordage are getting bad, and we cannot procure Salt Provisions.

I enclose documents received from Captain Porter, and beg you will assure their Lordships, that in my future movements, I shall anxiously endeavour to Act for the good of my Country and His Majestys Service: I expect an awful combat if the two Ships meet, but humbly wish to repose my trust in Gods goodness for a favourable result. I have the honor to remain Sir, Your most obedient humble servant.

(Signed) Ja's Hillyar

Copy, UklPR, Adm. 1/22, fols. 214–16. Docketing signed by Manley Dixon.

1. Hillyar to Croker, 10 Feb. 1814, UklPR, Adm. 1/1949, No. 194.

2. Hillyar wrote Governor Lastra to protest the destruction of the prize ship *Hector* in Valparaiso harbor on 26 February. Hillyar to Governor of Valparaiso, 26 Feb. 1814, UklPR, Adm. 1/1950, No. 300. For the complaints of British merchants on this head, see British Citizens at Valparaiso to Hillyar, 25 Feb. 1814, pp. 717–19.

3. For Porter's discussion with Hillyar regarding the flying of these flags, see Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, p. 477.

4. For more on these spirited displays between the Americans and their British rivals, see *ibid.*, pp. 478–79, 485–87; and pp. 720–23, 750, below.

5. Captain Thomas T. Tucker, R.N., commanding H.M. sloop of war *Cherub*.

6. Porter believed that Hillyar's aggressive actions on 8 February—nearly running aboard *Essex*—were prompted by intelligence received from a British merchant ship lying at Valparaiso, *Emily* may have been this vessel. *Phoebe's* log book records several contacts with the merchant ship while *Essex* was blockaded. See Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, p. 475.

7. Correspondence and discussion between Porter and Hillyar on this subject is printed in Porter's *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 479–84.

8. According to Porter *Essex* was manned by two hundred fifty-five and *Essex Junior* by sixty men. Together these numbers total close to the figure given by Hillyar for *Essex's* crew. Porter to Jones, 3 July 1814, p. 733.

9. Francisco de la Lastra y de la Sotta.

10. On 18 September 1810 Chilean patriots established a junta government to rule in the name of King Ferdinand VII of Spain. Composed of five members who acted as a national executive, the junta immediately voted to raise a Chilean army and open trade to all friendly nations. Over the next three and a half years a succession of juntas ruled Chile, reflecting the fractured state of revolutionary politics in Chile. When David Porter arrived at Chile in March 1813, José Miguel Carrera Verdugo was president of the junta, a position he surrendered in September of that year in order to assume command of the Chilean army. Junta government in Chile came to an end in March 1814 with the election of a single executive, the Supreme Director, to govern the country. For a contemporary description of Chilean politics see Johnston, *Three Years in Chile*; see also, Rippey, *Joel R. Poinsett*, pp. 35–60, and, Collier, *Chilean Independence*, pp. 92–125.

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

N York July 13th. 1814

Sir/

There are some fact relating to our enemy and, although not connected with the action, serve to shew his perfidy and cowardice and should be known.

On Comre. Hillyars arival at Valparaiso he ran the *Phoebe* close along side the *Essex* and enquired politely after my health—, observing that his ship was cleared for action and his men prepared for boarding, I observed “sir if you by any accident get on board of me I assure you that great confusion will take place, I am prepared to receive you but shall only act on the defensive”— he observed coolly and indifferently “oh sir I have no such intentions”— at this instant his ship took aback on my starboard bow, her yards nearly locking with those of the *Essex*— I called all hands to board the Enemy, and in an instant my crew were ready to spring on her decks— Comre. Hillyar exclaimed with great agitation—“I had no intention of geting on board of you— I had no intention of coming so near you— I am sorry I came so near you”— his ship fell off with her jib boom over my decks her bows exposed to my broad side her stern to the fire of the *Essex Junior* her crew in the greatest confusion and in 15 minutes I could have taken or destroyed her— after he had brought his ship to anchor Comre. Hillyar and Captn. Tucker of the *Cherub* visited me on shore when I asked him if he intended to respect the neutrality of the port— “Sir, said he, you have paid such respect to the Neutrality of this port that I feel myself bound in honor to do the same”—<sup>1</sup> I have the Honor to be With great respect Your Obedt. Servt.

D Porter

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 162 (M125, Roll No. 37).

1. This incident is also described in Farragut, “Reminiscences of Early Life,” p. 749; and, Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 474–77. Hillyar’s correspondence and *Phoebe’s* log book are silent on this encounter.

## Flames in Valparaiso Harbor

*On 25 February the Americans burned the prize ship Hector in Valparaiso Bay. The event was significant because in Hillyar’s estimation it represented a hostile act violating the neutrality of the Chilean port. As Porter would later charge Hillyar with violating the Chilean neutrality in attacking and capturing Essex on 28 March, the British viewed the destruction of Hector as an act that vitiated American accusations of British perfidy.*

### LOG BOOK OF H.M. FRIGATE *PHOEBE*

Remks. &c. *Phoebe* Friday 25th Feby. 1814

AM. Fresh breezes & fine Wr. At 3 Tackd. Ship, up Driver At 4 Do. Wr. Wore Ship. *Cherub* in Compy. At 6 Carried away the Larbd. Main Sheet rove another, Made & Shortened sail Occasionally At 10 Wore Ship, Light airs Inclinable to Calm, Sounded in 53 fms. Came on board a boat with fresh beef 600 lbs Vegetables 1091 lbs At 11..30 Tackd. Noon Do. Wr. *Cherub* in Company, Point Angels SSE on 4 or 5 miles, Enemy’s Frigate<sup>1</sup> at Anchor

P.M, Fresh breezes & Cloudy Wr. At 1.30 Wore Ship At 2.50 Shortened Sail & hove to, At 3 h. 40 m. Sent a boat on board the *Cherub* with Fresh beef lbs Vegetables At 4 Do. Wr. *Cherub* in Company. At 4..30 up Boat Filled & Made Sail At 5 Obsd. the Enemy’s Boats towing an English prize<sup>2</sup> and burnt her, Point of Angels SS.E½E 3 Miles At 6.30 Wore up Main Sail, Obsd. the Prize Burning, At 8 Do. Wr. *Cherub* in Company At 9 Wore Ship, Set Fore top Mast Staysail Enemys Prize Still Burning, At 9.30 *Cherub* North 3 Miles. Tackd. Ship Occasionally Midnight Moderate & fine [*weather*] *Cherub* in Compy.

D, UKLPR, Adm. 51/2675, Log Book of *Phoebe*, 1 Jan. 1813–28 Aug. 1815, fol. 157.

1. *Essex*.
2. *Hector*.

### BRITISH CITIZENS AT VALPARAISO TO CAPTAIN JAMES HILLYAR, R.N.

Valparaiso February 25th. 1814.

Sir

We beg leave to inform you that this afternoon between the hours of 4 & 5 oClock the *Essex* Frigate set fire to the English prize ship *Hector*, as near as we can judge within Musket shot of the shipping, and considerably withinside the fort.— Mr. Whittaker and Mr. Munro have seen the Governor;<sup>1</sup> who strongly expressed his surprise and indignation at such an unwarranted act; and disavows all sanction or knowledge of it.— We have farther to represent to you, that it is the general opinion of every one in this town, that the Americans have most grossly and shamefully in this instance violated the neutrality of the port.

Leaving to your better judgment how far the American frigate is now entitled to avail herself of what Capt. Porter may call neutral rights, after so repeatedly having broken them, and after even in the event of this afternoon exposed the English property on the water (had the wind suddenly changed) to a total ruin: we conceive it needs no apology on our part to represent to you, that it is our decided opinion, that you are now authorised in taking those decisive steps in retaliation, which perhaps previous to this occurrence you might have doubted—

from several circumstances which have taken place this afternoon we strongly suspect that Captn. Porter will leave this the very first opportunity. we remain with the greatest respect Sir Your most obedient humble servants

George Cood  
James Whittaker  
Andrew Munro  
Tho<sup>s</sup> N. Crompton  
James Dent  
And<sup>o</sup> Blest

P.S. Since writing the above, we have seen the Governor of this Place on the subject, who has informed us, that he sent this afternoon on board the *Essex* to let Captn. Porter Know; that he considers the burning of the English prize in the Port, a complete violation of all Law, and that he might depend upon it; the government here would not by any means be guarantee for anything the British



Commander might be pleased to do regarding them here.— he also is writing strongly on this subject to the Government in St. Iago.—

LS, UKLPR, Adm. 1/1950, No. 300. This letter was enclosed in Hillyar to Croker, 26 June 1814, pp. 719–20.

1. Francisco de la Lastra y de la Sotta.

CAPTAIN JAMES HILLYAR, R.N., TO  
FIRST SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

No. 13

H.M.S. *Phoebe* At Sea  
June 26th. 1814—

Sir

Having understood that Capn. Porter, before he left Chile had declared the neutrality of the Port of Valparaiso violated by the Capture of the *Essex* within its limits, although previous to her being taken, he had Burnt a British Ship in the bay; had come out with his Armed Boats in the Night for the avowed purpose of boarding one of our Ships,<sup>1</sup> while his own were enjoying the protection of the Neutral Flag; and besides these acts had actually fired Two Shot at the *Phoebe* when much nearer the Port than w[h]ere he was attacked

I have the Honor to transmit you for their Lordships information Copies of Letters sent and received on the Subject, by which I trust Captain Porter will be proved the only aggressor as well as the last I received from the Supreme Director<sup>2</sup> respecting the *Montezuma* with my reply to it

On my Arrival at Valparaiso there were two Prizes of his. The *Hector* and *Montezuma* laying in the Bay the former he Burnt on the 25th. about a mile & a half from the Anchorage. we were Standing towards the Bay, while he was in the Act of towing her out and fearing I believe, an attempt to cut her off was induced to take this unwarrantable Step: The four Letters dated from the 25th. Feby. to the 28th. are on the Subject. My Letter on the 11th. May to the Supreme Director and his Answer of the 16th. May follows: the latter refers to those of the 25 and 28 Feby. On the 19th. May I wrote to the Governor of Valparaiso; a Copy of my Letter is enclosed with his Answer: which not proving quite satisfactory to me I addressed another Note to him, the Copy of which I have mislaid or lost requesting he would have it Certified whether the *Essex*, when She fired two Shot at the *Phoebe* on the Eveng. of the 27th. Feby. was nearer the limits of the Port of Valpo. than when she was attacked by H B M. Ships *Phoebe* & *Cherub* on the 28th. March: he forwarded in reply the accompanying attestations, an oath, of several respectable Inhabitants of Valparaiso who were Eye Witnesses of the facts.<sup>3</sup>

I shall now state as well as my memory will enable me, the particulars of the circumstance: On the Evening of the 27th. of Feby.<sup>4</sup> being about three miles from the Anchorage & the *Cherub* some distance to leeward we perceived the Enemys Ships Slip their Cables and stand out towards us with a Commanding Breeze and Flags flying at all the mast heads: The *Phoebes* head was off Shore on the larboard Tack: we immediately prepared to receive them, the Colours were hoisted, the main Topsail Backed and the driver brailed up. The *Essex* led, and as there appeared a determination to bring us to Action I prepared commencing it on the other Tack in order to prevent Captain Porter's choosing his Dis-



James Hillyar



tance or Situation, and therefore directed the Ship to be wore and the Starboard Guns to be manned; while wearing the *Essex* was observ'd to make a Signal with a Gun and haul her Wind on the Larboard tack. We immediately did the same She fired two Shot towards us and soon afterwards Tackd we tacked also and Stood after her as far as the entrance of the Bay. She reached the Port before our Shot could be expected to produce any material effect and therefore I would not allow any to be fired She took in her Cables and we brought too a mile and a Half or two miles from her. I should not have thought this circumstance of sufficient consequence to detail to their Lordships had not Capn. Porters unkind assertion call'd it forth.

When the *Essex* fired at the *Phoebe* she was certainly not more than Two miles and a half from the point of angels which forms the western extremity of the bay; and when she was attacked by the *Phoebe* and *Cherub* she was then more than Five Miles from the said point, and at least Three and a quarter from Fort St. James<sup>5</sup> which forms the Eastern Extreme.

On my conversation with the Supreme Director on the impropriety of the *Montezuma* being allowed to remain any longer in the Port, he informed me that Captain Porter having declared her to be a recapture, She was entitled to Stay untill the contrary was proved, I enclose a letter from him on the Subject with my answer;<sup>6</sup> and have the Honor to remain, Sir, Your most Obt. servt.

Ja<sup>s</sup> Hillyar

LS, UKLPR, Adm. 1/1950, No. 300.

1. Porter did not mention this incident either in his letters to Secretary Jones or in his *Journal of a Cruise*. Farragut describes it in his "Reminiscences of Early Life," see pp. 749–50. Hillyar received intelligence that ten armed boats from *Essex* had made an attempt to board *Phoebe* on the night of 12 March. Andrew Blest to Hillyar, 15 Mar. 1814, UKLNMM, AGC/23/7.

2. Francisco de la Lastra y de la Sotta.

3. Copies or originals of the letters mentioned in this paragraph follow Hillyar's letter to Croker. They cover the period 25 February to 30 May 1814. The copy of Hillyar's letter of 11 May 1814 to the Supreme Director of Chile was incorrectly dated 11 April.

4. For more on the events of 27 February and on Porter's determination to bring *Phoebe* to combat, see pp. 720–23, 733–34, 750; and, Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 477–78, 484–89.

5. Probably Fort Baron.

6. See enclosures Lastra to Hillyar, 22 May 1814, and, Hillyar to Supreme Director of Chile, 30 May 1814.

## Challenge Given—Challenge Declined

*Because of Essex's superior sailing qualities, David Porter believed that he could elude the enemy's blockade any time he chose. He remained at Valparaiso in order to provoke Hillyar into single-ship combat. Porter thought his wish would be granted on 27 February when Hillyar seemed to signal his intention to battle alone the American frigate. But Phoebe's captain had no intention of throwing away his advantage, so the battle Porter so eagerly sought failed to materialize. These documents illustrate some of the gamesmanship involved between rival navies and the frustration Porter's officers felt at what they perceived to be cowardly behavior on the part of the British.*

## LOG BOOK OF H.M. FRIGATE PHOEBE

Remks. &c. *Phoebe*. Sunday 27th. Feby. 1814

AM Moderate & Cloudy Wr. At 12.15 Wore Ship Wore Ship Occasionally. At 4 Do. Wr. *Cherub* in Company, At 7 Light Airs inclinable to Calm At 8 Calm & cloudy Weather, At 8.15 up fore Sail, Trimmed Sails At 9 Wore Ship At 10 Mustered by Divisions & performed Divine Service Noon Calm & fine Wr. Enemy's Frigate at Anchor

Point of Angels SE by S 9 Miles

P.M. Calm & cloudy Weather At 2 a light breeze from the Westd. At 3 out 3d. reef of the Top Sails, At 4 Do. Wr. *Cherub* in Company, Point of Angels SE½E 6 or 7 Miles, Enemy Anchor. At 5.30 *Cherub* N by W 6 Miles, Made Signal to make more Sail & to close with a Gun, Set Top Gallt. Sails, At 6.15 Tackd. Enemy's Frigate ESE 4 Miles At 6.45 Saw the Enemys Frigate & Sloop of War Get under weigh & Stand out of the Bay, towards us, Backd. the Main Topsail Shew'd our Colours & Beat to quarters, a Gun Went off in Clearg. Read Prayers to the Ships Company Adapted to the occasion, Captain<sup>1</sup> admonished them to be Calm & steady, which was received with three cheers *Cherub* N by E 5 or 6 Miles. At 7.20 When in the Act of wearing to bring the Starbd. Guns to bear on the *Essex* Obsd. her haul to the wind on the Larbd. tack & fire one Gun to Windward & two, to Leward, hauld to the Wind. on the Starbd. tack. Made Sail in Chase. At 7.20 Obsd. her shorten sail & Anchor in the Bay At 7.40 Tackd. Ship & hove to, hoisted a light, *Essex* North 3½ miles, West Point of the Bay SSW 3 miles, Tackd. occasionally, Midnight Do. Wr. *Cherub* in Sight.—

D, UKLPR, Adm. 51/2675, Log Book of *Phoebe*, 1 Jan. 1813–28 Aug. 1815, fol. 158.

1. James Hillyar.

## THE CREW OF ESSEX TO THE CREW OF PHOEBE

*Challenge of the crew of the Essex to the crew of the Phoebe.*<sup>1</sup>

"On board the U.S. frigate *Essex*, March 9th, 1814.

"The sons of liberty and commerce, on board the saucy *Essex*. whose motto is "Free Trade and Sailor's Rights," present their compliments to their oppressed brother tars, on board the ship whose motto is too tedious to mention, and hope they will put an end to all this nonsense of singing,<sup>2</sup> sporting, hunting and writing, which we know less about than the use of our guns—Send the *Cherub* away, we will meet your frigate and fight you, then shake hands and be friends; and whether you take us or we take you, either will be to your advantage; as in the first case, you will not doubt, for the service you render in a cause every brave and free man detests, be turned over to Greenwich hospital<sup>3</sup> or to a new ship, on your arrival to England; and if we take you, we shall respect the rights of a sailor, hail you as brethren whom we have liberated from slavery, and place you in future beyond the reach of a press gang.

(Signed,)

FROM THE SONS OF LIBERTY.

Printed, *Aurora*, reprinted in *Niles' Weekly Register*, 20 Aug. 1814.

1. According to Porter, the crew of *Cherub* penned several offensive letters to their American adversaries following the events of 27 February. The *Essex* crew's challenge was written in response to those letters. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, p. 485.

2. From 8 to 14 February *Cherub* was anchored in Valparaiso harbor within hailing distance of *Essex* and *Essex Junior*. During this time the rival crews taunted each other with insulting songs. "The national tune of yankee doodle was the vehicle through which the crew of the *Essex*, in full chorus, conveyed their nautical sarcasms," recalled Porter, "while 'the sweet little cherub that sits aloft,' was generally selected by their rivals." Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, p. 478.

3. Established in the 1690s by William and Mary, Greenwich Hospital provided care and pensions for Royal Navy seamen who were unable to support themselves.

#### A MIDSHIPMAN OF *PHOEBE* TO THE CREW OF *ESSEX*

##### ANSWER.

[10? March 1814]

To you, Americans, who seek redress,  
 For fancied wrongs from Britons you've sustained;  
 Hear what we Britons now to you address,  
 From malice free, from blasphemy unstain'd;  
 Think not, vain boasters, that your insidious lay,  
 Which calls for vengeance from the Almighty God—  
 Can from their duty Britons lead away,  
 Or path of honor which they have always trod.  
 No—Your vile infamy can never fail,  
 To excite disgust in each true Briton's heart;  
 Your proffered liberty cannot avail,  
 For virtue is the sons of Albion's crest.  
 Our God, our king, our country and our Laws,  
 We proudly reverence like Britons true;  
 Our captain who defends such glorious cause,  
 Meets due respect from all his grateful crew.  
 When to the battle we're by duty called,  
 Our cause, like Britons, bravely we'll maintain;  
 We'll fight like men whom fear ne'er yet appall'd,  
 And hope, AMERICANS! you'll do the same.  
 Your vile letter, which on board, was brought,  
 We scorn to answer, tho' with malice fraught;  
 But if, by such foul means, you think to make  
 Dissentions rise our loyalty to shake,  
 Know then we are Britons all, both stout and true,  
 We love our king, our country, captain too;  
 When honor calls, we'll glory in his name,  
 Acquit like men and hope you'll do the same.

Lieut. Ingraham<sup>1</sup> acknowledged the above to have been written by a midshipman of the *Phæbe*, and with the approbation of com. Hillyar.<sup>2</sup>

Printed, *Aurora*, reprinted in *Niles' Weekly Register*, 20 Aug. 1814.

1. Lieutenant William Ingram, R.N., first lieutenant of *Phoebé*, mortally wounded 28 March 1814. For Ingram's role as an intermediary between Hillyar and Porter, see p. 723; and, Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 487–89.

2. Porter suspected Hillyar of writing several of the "poetical effusions" sent to *Essex*. For more on this war of words and Porter's attempts to rouse Hillyar to action, see Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 485–87.

#### STATEMENT OF THE OFFICERS OF *ESSEX*

On Sunday, the 27th February, 1811 [1814], at 5 P.M. the *Phæbe* run close in with the harbor, hoisted an English ensign bearing the motto—"God and our country—British sailor's best rights—Traitors offend both"—and fired a gun to windward; the sloop of war was about two and an half miles the leeward. The *Essex* immediately got under way, hoisted a flag bearing the motto—"God, our country and liberty—Tyrant's offend them" and fired a gun to windward. The *Phæbe* hove to until the *Essex* was within gunshot, when she bore up and run down for the sloop—Two shot were fired across her bows to bring her to, without effect—After chasing her as far as was prudent, captain Porter observed that their conduct was cowardly and dishonorable, and returned into port where we came to anchor.

John Downs,  
 Wm. Odenheimer,  
 Edwd. Barnwell,  
 Rich'd K. Hoffman,  
 John R. Shaw,

M. W. Bartnue,<sup>1</sup>  
 Alex. Montgomery,  
 Geo. W. Isaacs,  
 Saml. L. Dusenberry,

Printed, *Aurora*, reprinted in *Niles' Weekly Register*, 20 Aug. 1814.

1. Melancton W. Bostwick.

#### STATEMENT OF MASTER COMMANDANT JOHN DOWNES

On the 16th March, 1814, lieutenant Ingraham,<sup>1</sup> first of the *Phæbe*, came on board the *Essex* under a flag of truce, having a letter from commodore Hillyar to captain Porter. Lieutenant Ingraham informed captain P. that commodore H. had heard that captain P. had called him a coward for running away from the *Essex*, and begged to know if it was the case; captain P. informed him, that, considering the circumstances of the challenge, and the conduct of the *Phæbe* in bearing up, he believed any thing he could have said on the occasion; justifiable. Lieutenant Ingraham assured captain Porter that no challenge was intended, and that the gun was fired by accident.<sup>2</sup> Captain P. said he supposed it at the time to be a challenge, and accepted it, and that he should accept another, if given by the *Phæbe*, observing—"it cannot be expected that I would take upon myself the responsibility of challenging a 36 gun frigate with a frigate of 32 guns, as my country would censure me should I prove unsuccessful, but the difference of force will not prevent my accepting a challenge given by captain Hillyar.

The *Phæbe* and *Cherub* soon after kept close together, and shewed a determination of not risking an action unless they could both engage the *Essex*.

(Signed)

J. DOWNS.

Printed, *Aurora*, reprinted in *Niles' Weekly Register*, 20 Aug. 1814.

1. William Ingram.

2. For Hillyar's own description of the events of 27 February, see Hillyar to Croker, 26 June 1814, pp. 719–20.



## The Battle

*Unsuccessful in provoking Hillyar to engage Essex in ship-to-ship combat, and concerned about the imminent arrival of additional enemy warships, Porter began making preparations in late March to leave Valparaiso. Fate took a hand in the timing of Essex's escape when strong winds drove the frigate from her anchorage on 28 March. The American captain seized the opportunity to make a run for open sea. An accident to Essex's rigging forced Porter to abandon his attempt and return to the safety of the harbor's neutral confines. He anchored Essex close in to shore on the eastern side of the harbor in what he believed were neutral waters. Undeterred by concerns about Chilean neutrality, Hillyar moved in to engage the American ship. After nearly two and a half hours of bloody combat Essex struck her colors. These documents detail the battle that brought the cruise of Essex to a sanguinary close.*

### LOG BOOK OF H.M. FRIGATE PHOEBE

Remks. &c. Monday 28th March 1814

AM. Fresh breezes, Obsd. a Blue Light NE by E Bore up for Ditto, At 12.20 Obsd. Several blue lights North, made all Sail in chase, At 1 Obsd. Several Blue Lights & Rockets a Head, Shew'd a Light— At 1.20 Light not being Ansd. Shortd. Sail & Hauled to the wind on Larbd. Tack, Suppd. the Above Sigl. made by Enemy's boats as a Decoy, Spoke the *Cherub*— At 1.40 Split the Main Topsail, Shifted Ditto, in 2 & 3 reefs of main Topsails, At 4 Fresh breezes *Cherub* in Co. At Daylight Obsd. the Enemy's Ships at Anchor, Wore Ship Occasionally At 8 Do. Wr. Point Angels E by S½S 3 miles Wore ship Occasionally, At 10.30 Down Royal Yards & in 2 reefs of Mizzen Top Sail Noon Do. Wr. Close reef'd the Top Sails

Point of Angels SE by E 3 miles

P.M. Fresh Breezes & fine Wr. At 3.10 Obsd. the Enemys Frigate Standing out of the Bay of Valparaiso, Set Main Sail in Chase, Fresh Gales & heavy Squalls, Beat to Quarters, At 3.50 the *Phæbe* & *Cherub* hoisted each a St. Georges Ensign bearing the following Inscription, God & Country British Sailors best Rights, Traitors offend both Obsd. the Enemy to lose his Main Top Mast and soon afterwards he Bore up and run along shore, At 4 the Enemy Anchor'd about half a mile from the Land & bore long Ensigns, with two white Flags, flying, One at the Fore top Gallt. mast head, having, written on it Free Trade and Sailors Rights, the other at the Mizzen top Gallt. mast Head having on it, God our Country and Liberty. Tyrants offend them At 4.10 made the Sigl. to prepare to Anchor with Springs, up Courses Came on board the *Emely's* boat with Mr. OBryan first Mate and Mr. Porter & Boats Crew of the *Phæbe Essex* a Head one Mile, Standing towards her quarter, Empd. ranging Cables and repairing Springs, As we drew into the Bay, Ship broke off in the Squalls, so as to prevent us from bringing the Enemy to so close Action as we intended, At 4.20 having fetched as near as the wind permitted, Commenced firing about half Gun Shot off— St Antonio SW½ by W 5 Miles. *Cherub* close to us on the Starbd. Quarter,— Enemy returned our fire with her Aftermost Guns & Stern Chacers, At 4.40 Very near the Shore, ceased firing; Wore round and came to the Wind on the Larbd. tack— Mainsail much cut, Jib boom badly wounded,

Fore Main & Mizzen Stays Shot away and other rigging damaged— Empd. repairing damages,— At 4.50 Tackd. Ship, furl'd the Mainsail, At [blank] hailed the *Cherub*, informed him of our intending to Anchor and ordered him to keep under weigh At 5.35 commenced firing with the Bow Guns on the Enemy, which was returned,— Light airs Inclinable to Calm, At 5.50 the Enemy cut his Cable, Set his Jib Fore Topsail & Foresail; Wind becoming light & variable, endeavoured to keep our broadside to bear on the Enemy— At 6 the firing was hot and incessant on both sides, At 20 Minuets past 6 the Enemy struck his Colours— Made Sigl. to take possession of the Prize,— Calm came to with the Small Bower, furl'd Sails, out Boats, & Sent Lt. Pearson and two Petty Officers with a Party of Men to take possession of her, Light airs & hazy Wr. Weighed the Small Bower and made Sail Boats Empd. as necessary, Came on board Captain Porter a few of his Officers & part of his Crew At 12 Calm, came to with the Stream Anchor in 34 Fms. furl'd Sails, The following Men were killed in action vizt. Thos. Griffiths Ab, Willm. Knowles Ab, Dennis Murphy Ab, Lieutenant Ingram mortally wounded, died about Midnight,— Robert Bruce, Humphry Jameson, Thos. Warren Seamen & Geo. Fieldhouse Marine Severly Wounded— James Madden, Thos. Millery (Seamen) James Evans, Marine, Slightly, *Cherub's* Return as follow's,— Willm. Derbyshire Marine killed, Captn. Tucker Severe Contusion, John Edwards Corpl. Marines & Chrstr. Rafferty Private Marine, Slightly Wounded,— Damages pr. Carpenters report,— seven 32 prs. between Wind & Water & one 12 pr. 3 feet under water, Thirteen 32 & 12 prs. into the Waist & Qr. Deck A number of Grape Shot & Musquet Balls in different parts of the Ship, Starbd. Bill-boards & Bolsters, three chain plates & three dead Eyes Shot away, Hammock Boars & Stantions, Boats, Cabins, Qr. Galleries & Sashes considerably damaged, Main Mast head Wounded badly, Wounded also below Ist. Qr. with Cannon Shot,— Main & Main Topsail Yards, Mizzen Mast Jib Boom & Sprintsail Yard Severaly Wounded,— Gunners report, Transon and Transon Bolt damaged of an 18 Pr.—, An Axeltree of a nine Pr. Carrage,— A 12 pr. Carronade Slide destroyed & 2 Cap Squares,— Boatswains Report, Cutter Swampd—all her Oars & Geer lost, One Fore Top Gallt. Studdg. Sail, 200 Yards of Main Topmast Staysail, Thirty Fms. of Spring hawser 4½ Fore Jib Guys, Martingale & Stay,— Messenger Cablet of 11 In 4 Fms. for yarns,— Bowsprit Gammons & three eight Inch & 4.6 Inch Single Blocks,

D, UkLPR, Adm. 51/2675, Log Book of *Phoebe*, 1 Jan. 1813–28 Aug. 1815, fols. 173–74.

### LOG BOOK OF U.S. FRIGATE ESSEX

*United States Frigate Essex, David Porter, Esq Commander, March 28th 1814*

Light Winds and cloudy, at day light got every thing ready to weigh, expecting the enemy's ships were to leeward, according to the report of Lieutenant Maury, who was last evening entrusted with an expedition to effect this end;¹ we were much surprised at about half past six to see both ships close to the weather point of the Bay—they stood within the point, tacked and stood out again—at noon the wind freshened at S.S.W. and encreased to a strong gale—struck royal



yards and masts, at 45 minutes past 2, parted the larboard cable, which caused us to drag the starboard anchor—Capt Porter hailed the *Essex*, Junr to send her boat to take Mr. Poinsett<sup>2</sup> on shore—Immediately after he left us, Captain Porter gave orders to cut the cable, which was done, and sail made on the ship; the enemy's ships were at this time standing in for the port. On luffing round the point of Angels, a heavy squall struck us which carried away our main-topmast by the lower cap; 2 men, Samuel Miller and Thomas Browne, fell overboard and were drowned as we suppose; the ship was wore and hauled to the wind on the starboard tack, and orders given to clear the wreck; the main-sail and main-top sail were cut away from the yards, so as not to act against us in working into the Bay Captain P finding it impossible to gain our former anchorage, concluded to bear up for a small Bay situated on the westward side of the harbor.<sup>3</sup> At 45 minutes past 3 came too with the best bower in 9 1-2 fathoms water, and in half pistol shot of the shore.— The Western Fort (Castello Viego,) bore E. by N distant 3 miles;<sup>4</sup> the Eastern Fort, (or Castello jel Barren) bore S.W by W. distance about 1 1-2 miles. This fort was not in sight, as we were anchored under a high bluff that screened us from it. There was a long 24 pounder detached from it on a rising ground to the N.E. distant 1-2 a mile, and consequently so much nearer to where we anchored. In this situation we considered ourselves perfectly secure. Capt. Porter gave orders to clear the ship for action, although he did no[t], I believe, entertain an idea that the enemy would attack him At 55 minutes past 3, the *Phæbe* commenced firing on our larboard quarter, and at 4 the *Cherub* commenced firing on our starboard bow In about half an hour they wore round and stood out to repair damages. They appeared to be much cut in their rigging, their top sail-sheets a flying away. In this Interval we got the 3d spring on the cable, the two first being shot away as soon as put on—They soon returned and took their position out of reach of our short guns, and opened a most galling fire upon us, the wind shifting about this time Capt P. determined to lay the *Phæbe* aboard—the cable was accordingly cut, but the only hallyards standing were those of the flying jib, this sail was partly hoisted, but not sufficient to ware the ship off—we were now in a most dreadful situation as the enemy hull'd us every shot, and our brave fellows falling in every direction, but we were all so animated by the brave, cool and intrepid conduct of our heroic Commander, that every man appeared determined to sacrifice his life, in defence of our Ship and of *Free Trade and Sailor's Rights*, for which they were continually huzzaing fore and aft, but an unlucky accident took place which frustrated all our hopes, to wit, the explosion of some loose cartridges in the main hatchway, which caused a general consternation among the crew, the greatest part of which jumped overboard. Capt. Porter seeing now no hopes left gave orders to fire the ship, but humanely considering that many of his brave companions were lying wounded below, he countermanded this order and gave the painful one to lower our ensign which was executed precisely at half past six, the enemy did not cease firing for some minutes afterwards—During this interval some of our men were wounded and four shot dead—Thus fell the *Essex* into the hands of the English, after a resistance worthy the cause which animated us.

Since the action I have been informed by the 1st Lieut. of Marines of the *Phæbe* (Mr. Burrows) that they passed those two unfortunate men on our Life

Buoy, which had been thrown over to them & inhumanly left them to perish in the waves, without endeavoring to afford them the least assistance.

*Printed, New-York Evening Post, 8 July 1814.*

1. Hillyar received intelligence that the Americans had been preparing to depart Valparaiso as early as 23 March. Thomas N. Crompton to Hillyar, [24 Mar. 1814?], UKLNMM, AGC/23/7. To mislead Hillyar as to his true intentions, Porter ordered Purser John Shaw ashore before *Essex* sailed in order to create the impression that the American frigate was not yet ready to leave Valparaiso. Memorial of Mrs. John R. Shaw to the Naval Affairs Committee, 5 Feb. 1839, DNA, RG46, SEN 25A-G13.

2. Joel R. Poinsett, Special Agent to Buenos Aires, Chile, and Peru.

3. *Essex* anchored on the eastern side of the harbor. This may be a transcription error on the part of the copyist or typesetter.

4. Fort Viejo (Old Fort), bore WSW of *Essex's* position. This may be a transcription error on the part of the copyist or typesetter.

CAPTAIN JAMES HILLYAR, R.N., TO  
FIRST SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

No. 5  
Duplicate

His Majesty's Ship *Phoebe* in  
Valparaiso Bay 30th. March 1814

Sir

I have the honor to acquaint you for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty that a little past 3 o'clock on the afternoon of the 28th. Instant, after nearly five Months anxious Search, and Six Weeks Still more anxious look out for the *Essex* and her Companion to quit the Port of Valparaiso, we Saw the former under weigh, and immediately, accompanied by the *Cherub* made Sail to close with her: On rounding the outer point of the Bay and hauling her wind for the purpose of endeavouring to weather us and escape, She lost her Main Topmast; and afterwards, not Succeeding in an effort to regain the limits of the Port, bore up and Anchored So near the Shore, a few Miles to leeward of it, as to preclude the possibility of passing a head of her without risk to His Majesty's Ships.— As we drew near, my intention of going close under her Stern was frustrated by the Ship breaking off, and from the wind blowing extremely fresh, our first fire, commencing a little past four, and continuing about ten minutes produced no visible effect: Our Second, a few random Shot only, from having increased our distance by wearing, was not, apparently, more Successful; and having lost the use of our Mainsail, Jib, & Main Stay, appearances were a little inauspicious: On Standing again towards her, I Signified my intention of Anchoring, for which we were not ready before with Springs, to Captain Tucker, directing him to keep under weigh, and take a convenient Station for annoying our opponent.— On closing the *Essex*, at thirty five minutes past five, the firing recommenced, and before I gained my intended position, her Cable was cut, and a Serious conflict ensued; the Guns of His Majestys Ship gradually becoming more destructive and her Crew, if possible more animated which lasted until twenty minutes past Six, when it pleased the Almighty disposer of events to bless the efforts of my gallant companions, and my personal, very humble one, with Victory.— My friend Captain Tucker, an Officer worthy



Essex Battles Phoebe and Cherub

of their Lordships best attentions, was Severely wounded at the commencement of the Action, but remained on Deck until it terminated; using every exertion against the baffling winds and occasional Calms which followed the heavy firing to close near the Enemy: He informs me that his Officers and Crew, of whose loyalty, Zeal, and discipline I entertain the highest opinion, conducted themselves to his Satisfaction.—

I have to lament the death of four of my brave companions, and one of his: With real Sorrow, I add, that my first Lieutenant, Ingram, is among the number: he fell early, is a great loss to His Majesty's Service, and the many manly tears which I observed this morning, while performing the last mournful duty at his funeral on Shore more fully evinced the respect and affection of his afflicted companions, than any eulogium my pen is equal to. Our Lists of wounded<sup>1</sup> are Small, and there is only one for whom I am under anxiety.—

The conduct of my Officers & Crew without an individual exception that has come to my knowledge before during, and after the Battle, was Such as became good and loyal Subjects zealous for the honour of their much loved though distant King & Country: I believe I may add a still higher Species of praise, and Say Such a Christian Should observe— they joined me in asking the blessing of the Almighty previous to the battle, met the Enemy with cheerfulness generously felt for them when subdued, and humbly ascribed their preservation & Victory to the kindness of that gracious Being in whom they wish to repose their trust.—

The defence of the *Essex*, taking into consideration our Superiority of force; the very discouraging circumstance of her having lost her Main Topmast; and being twice on fire, did honor to her brave defenders, and most fully evinced the courage of Captain Porter and those under his command: Her Colours were not Struck until the loss in killed and wounded was So awfully great, and her Shattered condition So Seriously bad as to render further resistance un-availing

I was much hurt on hearing that her Men had been encouraged, when the result of the Action was evidently decided; Some to take to their Boats, and others to Swim on Shore: Many were drowned in the attempt, Sixteen were Saved by the exertions of my people and others, I believe between thirty and forty, effected their landing: I informed Captain Porter that I considered the latter, in point of honor, as my Prisoners: he Said the encouragement was given when the Ship was in danger from fire, and I have not pressed the point.— The *Essex* is completely Stored & Provisioned for at least Six Months, and although much injured in her upperworks, Masts, Rigging, is not in Such a State as to give the Slightest cause of alarm respecting her being able to perform a Voyage to Europe with perfect Safety.— Our Main & Mizen Masts, & Main Yard are rather Seriously wounded,— these with a few Shot holes between wind and water, which we can get at without lightening; and a loss of Canvas and Cordage, which we can partly replace from our well Stored Prize; are the extent of the injuries His Majesty's Ship has Sustained.—

I feel it a pleasant duty to recommend to their Lordships notice my new Senior Lieutenant Pearson and Messrs. Allen, Gardner, Porter, & Dew, Midshipmen; and to request that they will do me the honor to confirm my acting appointments, Since passing Cape Horn, of Messrs. Henry S. Gardner Kirby and Rickard as Lieutenants, Nickinson as Purser, and John Gillispie as Boatswain, all unhappily in consequence of death Vacancies— they have acquitted themselves well with me in battle, both Gardner's, and Kirby, on two occasions.— I Should



do very great injustice to Mr. George O'Brian, the Mate of the *Emily*, Merchantman who joined a Boat's Crew of mine in the Harbour, and pushed for the Ship the moment he saw her likely to come to action, were I to omit, again recommending him to their Lordships: His conduct with that of Mr. N Murphy, Master of the English Brig *Good Friends*, was such as to intitle them both to my lasting regard, and prove that they were ever ready to hazard their lives in their Country's honorable cause: They came on board when the attempt was attended with great risk, and both their Boats were Swamped.— I have before informed their Lordships, that Mr. O'Brian was once a Lieutenant in His Majesty's Service, and may now add that youthful indiscretions appear to have given place to great correctness of conduct and as he has proved his laudable zeal for its honour, I think if restored, he will be found one of its greatest ornaments.— I enclose returns of killed & wounded, and, if conceived to have trespassed on their Lordships time by this very long letter, hope it will kindly be ascribed to the right cause.— An earnest wish that merit may meet its due reward.— I have the honor to remain Sir your obedt. huml. Servt.

Ja<sup>s</sup> Hillyar

P.S. There has not been found a Ships Book or paper of any description, (Charts excepted) on board the *Essex*, or any document relative to the number Serving in her previous to the Action.— Captain Porter informs me that he had upwards of two hundred & Sixty Victualled: Our Prisoners including fifty two wounded, amount to one hundred and Sixty one, twenty three were found dead on her Decks, three wounded were taken away by Captain Downes of the *Essex*, *Junr.* a few minutes before the Colours were Struck and I believe twenty or thirty reached the Shore—the remainder were killed or drowned—<sup>2</sup>

LS, UkLPR, Adm. 1/1950, No. 264.

1. Enclosure not printed. Hillyar reported eleven men killed and wounded in *Phoebe* and four in *Cherub*.  
2. The list of *Essex's* killed, wounded, and missing is published in Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 463-66.

#### CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

*Essex Junior* July 3d. 1814 at sea

Sir,

I have done myself the honor to address you repeatedly since I left the Delaware but have scarcely a hope that one of my letters have reached you therefore consider it necessary to give you a brief history of my proceedings since that period—

I sailed from the Delaware on the 27th. October 1812 and repaired with all diligence (agreeable to instructions from Commre. Bainbridge)<sup>1</sup> to Port Praya, Fernando de Noronho, and Cape Frio, and arrived at each place on the day appointed to meet him— On my passage from Port Praya to Fernando de Noronho I captured his Majesties Packet *Nocton* and after taking out about £11,000 sterling in specie sent her under command of Lt. Finch for America.<sup>2</sup> I cruized off Rio de Janeiro and about Cape Frio until the 12th. January 1813, hearing frequently of the Commre. by vessels from Bahia; I here captured only one Schooner<sup>3</sup> with Hides and Tallow, I sent her into Rio— The *Montague* the Admirals<sup>4</sup> ship being in pursuit of me, my provisions now getting short and find-

ing it necessary to look out for a supply to enable me to meet the Commre. by the 1st. April off St. Helena, I proceeded to the Island of St. Catharines (the last place of rendezvous on the coast of Brazils) as the most likely to supply my wants, and at the same time afford me that secrecy necessary to enable me to elude the British Ships of war on the coast and expected there— I here could procure only wood, water and rum, and a few bags of flour, and hearing of the Commre. action with the *Java*,<sup>5</sup> the capture of the *Hornet* by the *Montague*, and of a considerable augmentation of the British force on the coast and of several being in pursuit of me, I found it necessary to get to sea as soon as possible: I now agreeable to the Commres. plan stretched to the southward and scouring the coast as far as Rio de la Plata, I heard that Buenas Ayres was in a state of starvation, and could not supply our wants, and that the Government of Montivideo was very inimicable to us— The Commre. instructions now left it completely discretionary with me what course to pursue and I determined on following that which had not only met his approbation but the approbation of the then Secretary of the Navy.<sup>6</sup> I accordingly shaped my course for the Pacific and after suffering greatly from short allowance of provisions and heavy gales off Cape Horn (for which my ship and men were very illy provided) I arrived at Valparaiso on the 14th. March 1813.<sup>7</sup> I here took in as much Jerked Beef and other provisions as my ship could conveniently stow and ran down the coast of Chili and Peru; In this track I fell in with a Peruvian Corsaire<sup>8</sup> which had on board twenty four Americans as prisoners, the crews of two whale ships which she had taken on the Coast of Chile. The Captain informed me that as the allies of Great Britain they would capture all they should meet with in expectation of a war between Spain and the United States. I consequently threw all his Guns & ammunition into the sea, liberated the Americans, wrote a respectful letter to the Vice Roy<sup>9</sup> explaining the cause of my proceedings which I delivered to her Captain: I then proceeded for Lima and recaptured one of the vessels as she was entering the port— From thence I proceeded for the Gallapagos Islands where I cruized from the 17th. April until the 3d. October 1813, during which time I touched only once on the coast of America which was for the purpose of procuring a supply of fresh water as none is to be found among those Islands which are perhaps the most barren and desolate of any known—<sup>10</sup>

While among this Groupe I captured the following British ships employed chiefly in the Spermacity whale fishery—viz<sup>11</sup>

<i>Montezuma</i> - - - - -	270 Tons,	21 men,	2 Guns,
<i>Policy</i> - - - - -	275 --"	26 --"	10 --"
<i>Georgiana</i> - - - - -	280 --"	25 --"	6 --"
<i>Greenwich</i> - - - - -	338 --"	25 --"	10 --"
<i>Atlantic</i> - - - - -	351 --"	24 --"	8 --"
<i>Rose</i> - - - - -	220 --"	21 --"	8 --"
<i>Hector</i> - - - - -	270 --"	25 --"	11 --"
<i>Catharine</i> - - - - -	270 --"	29 --"	8 --"
<i>Seringapatam</i> - - - - -	357 --"	31 --"	14 --"
<i>Charlton</i> - - - - -	274 --"	21 --"	10 --"
<i>New Zealander</i> - - - - -	259 --"	23 --"	8 --"
<i>Sir, Andrew Hammond</i> - - -	301 --"	31 --"	12 --"
	<hr/> 3465 tons,	302 men,	107 guns.



As some of those ships were captured by boats and others by prizes my officers and men had several opportunities of showing their gallantry

The *Rose & Charlton* were given up to the prisoners, the *Hector*, *Catharine* and *Montezuma* I sent to Valparaiso where they were laid up, the *Policy*, *Georgiana* and *New Zealander* I sent for America, the *Greenwich* I kept as a Store Ship to contain the stores of my other prizes necessary for us, and the *Atlantic* now called the *Essex Junior* I equipped with 20 Guns and gave command of her to Lieut. Downes—

Lt. Downes had convoyed the prizes to Valparaiso and on his return brought me letters informing me that a squadron under the command of Commre. James Hillyar consisting of the Frigate *Phoebe* of 36 guns, the *Raccoon* and *Cherub* Sloops of war and a Store Ship of 20 guns had sailed on the 6th. July for this sea—<sup>12</sup> The *Raccoon & Cherub* had been seeking me some time on the coast of Brazils and on their return from their cruize joined the squadron sent in search of me to the Pacific— My ship as may be supposed after being near a year at sea required some repairs to put her in a state to meet them, which I determined to do and bring them to action if I could meet them on nearly equal terms— I proceeded now in company with the remainder of my prizes, to the Island of Nooaheevah or Madisons Island laying in the Washington groupe discovered by Captn. Ingraham of Boston: here I caulked and completely overhauled my ship, made for her a new set of water casks, her old ones being entirely decayed and took on board from my prizes provisions and stores for upwards of four months and sailed for the coast of Chili on the 12th. Decr. 1813—<sup>13</sup> Previous to sailing I secured the *Seringapatam*, *Greenwich* and *Sir Andrew Hammond* under the Guns of a Battery which I erected for their protecti[on] and (after taking possession of this fine Island for the United States<sup>14</sup> and establishing the most friendly intercourse with the natives) I left them under the charge of Lieut. Gamble of the Marines with 21 men with orders to repair to Valparaiso after a certain period—<sup>15</sup>

I arrived on the coast of Chili on the 12th. Jany. 1814, looked into Concepcion and Valparaiso, found at both places only three English Vessels, and learnt that the squadron which sailed from Rio de Janeiro for that sea had not been heard of since their departure and were supposed to be lost in endeavouring to double Cape Horn.

I had completely broken up the British navigation in the Pacific, the vessels which had not been captured by me were laid up and dare not venture out, I had afforded the most ample protection to our own vessels which were on my arrival very numerous and unprotected— The valuable British whale Fishery there is entirely destroyed, and the actual injury we have done them may be estimated at two and a half millions of dollars independant of the expences of the vessels in search of me— They have furnished me amply with sails, cordage, cables, anchors, provisions, medacines and stores of every description, and the slops on board them have furnished cloathing for the seamen, we had in fact lived on the enemy since I had been in that sea<sup>16</sup> I had not yet been under the necessity of drawing any Bills on the Department for any object and had been enabled to make considerable advances to my officers and crew on account of pay—

For the unexampled time we had kept the sea my crew had continued remarkably healthy, I had but one case of the scurvy, and had lost only the following men by death's, to wit—

John S Cowan, Lieutenant.  
Robert Miller, Surgeon.  
Levy Holmes, Ody. Seaman.  
Edwd. Sweeny—do—  
Samuel Groce, Seaman—  
James Spafford, Gunners Mate—  
Benjamin Geers } Qt. Gunners  
John Rodgers }  
Andrew Mahan Corporal of Marines,  
Lewis Price, Private Marine—

I had done all the injury that could be done the British commerce in the Pacific, and still hoped to signalize my cruize by something more splendid before leaving that sea, I thought it not improbable that Commadore Hillyar might have kept his arrival secret and believing that he would seek me at Valparaiso as the most likely place to find me, I therefore determined to cruize about that place and should I fail of meeting him hoped to be compensated by the capture of some merchant ships said to be expected from England—

The *Phoebe* agreeable to my expectations came to seek me at Valparaiso where I was anchored with the *Essex*, my armed prize the *Essex Junior* under the command of Lt. Downes on the look out off the harbor; but contrary to the course I thought he would pursue Commre. Hillyar brought with him the *Cherub* Sloop of War mounting 28 guns, 18 thirty two pound carronades, and 8 twenty fours and two long nines on the quarter deck and fore castle and a complement of 180 men: the force of the *Phoebe* is as follows, 30 long eighteen pounders, 16 thirty two pound Carronades, one Howitzer, and 6 three pounders in the tops, in all 53 guns, and a complement of 320 men; making a force of 81 guns & 500 men in addition to which they took on board the crew of an English letter of Marque laying in port; both ships had picked crews and were sent into the Pacific in company with the *Raccoon* of 22 guns and a Store Ship of 20 guns for the express purpose of seeking the *Essex*, and were prepared with flags bearing the motto "God & Country, British sailors best rights, traitors offend both." this was intended as a reply to my motto "Free trade & Sailors rights." under the erroneous impression that my crew were chiefly englishmen or to counteract its Effect on their own crews— The force of the *Essex* was 46 Guns, 40 thirty two pound Carronades & six long twelves, and her crew which had been much reduced by prizes amounted only to 255 men— The *Essex Junior* which was intended chiefly as a Store Ship mounted 20 Guns, 10 Eighteen pound Carronades and 10 short sixes, with only 60 men on board— In reply to their motto I wore at my mizen "God our Country & liberty, Tyrants offend them." On getting their provisions on board they went off the port for the purpose of blockading me where they cruized for near six weeks, during which time I endeavoured to provoke a challenge and frequently but ineffectually to bring the *Phoebe* alone to action, first with both my ships and afterwards with my single ship with both my crews on board<sup>17</sup> I was several times underway and ascertained that I had greatly the advantage in point of sailing, and once succeeded in closing within gun shot of the *Phoebe* and commenced a fire on her, when she ran down for the *Cherub* which was 22 miles to leeward; this excited some sur-

prize and expressions of indignation, as previous to my getting underway she hove to off the port, hoisted her motto flag, and fired a Gun to windward— Commre. Hillyar seemed determined to avoid a contest with me on nearly equal terms, and from his extreme prudence in keeping both his ships ever after constantly within hail of each other, there was no hopes of any advantages to my country from a longer stay in port, I therefore determined to put to sea the first opportunity which should offer, and I was the more strongly induced to do so as I had gained certain intelligence that the *Tagus* rated 38 and two other frigates had sailed for this sea in pursuit of me, and I had reason to expect the arrival of the *Raccoon* from the NW coast of America where she had been sent for the purpose of destroying our fur establishment on the Columbia— A rendezvous was appointed for the *Essex Junior*, and every arrangement made for sailing, and I intended to let them chace me off to give the *Essex Junior* an opportunity of escaping. On the 28th. March the day after this determination was formed the wind came on to blow fresh from the southward when I parted my larboard cable and dragged my starboard Anchor directly out to sea, not a moment was to be lost in getting sail on the ship, the enemy were close in with the point forming the west side of the Bay but on opening them I saw a prospect of bringing passing to windward when I took in my top Gt. sails which were set over single reefed topsails and braced up for this purpose, but on rounding the point a heavy squall struck the ship and carried away her main Top mast precipitating the men who were aloft into the sea who were drowned; both ships now gave chace to me and I endeavoured in my disabled state to regain the port, but finding I could not recover the common anchorage I ran close into a small Bay about three quarters of a mile to leeward of the battery on the East side of the harbor and let go my anchor within pistol shot of the shore, where I intended to repair my damages as soon as possible; the enemy continued to approach and shewed an evident intention of attacking me regardless of the neutrality of the place where I was anchored, and the caution observed in their approach to the attack of the crippled *Essex* was truly ridiculous, as was their display of their motto flags and the number of Jacks at all their mast heads— I with as much expedition as circumstances would admit of got my ship ready for action and endeavoured to get a spring on my cable, but had not succeeded when the enemy at 54 minutes after 3 P.M. made his attack, the *Phoebe* placing herself under my stern & the *Cherub* on my starboard bow, but the *Cherub* soon finding her situation a hot one bore up and ran under my stern also where both ships kept up a hot raking fire, I had got three long twelve pounders out of the stern ports, which were worked with so much bravery and skill, that in half an hour we so disabled both as to compel them to haul off to repair damages— In the course of this firing I had by the great exertions of Mr. Edwd. Barnewall the Acting Sailing Master, assisted by Mr. E. Linscott the Boatswain succeeded in getting springs on our cable three different times but the fire of the enemy was so excessive that before we could get our broad side to bear they were shot away and thus rendered useless to us— My ship had received many injuries and several had been killed and wounded, but my brave officers and men, notwithstanding the unfavorable circumstances under which we were brought to action, and the powerful force opposed to us, were no ways discouraged, all appeared determined to defend their ship to the last extremity and to die in preference to a shameful surrender; our Gaff with the Ensign and the motto flag at the mizen had been shot away, but Free trade and sailors rights contin-

ued to fly at the Fore— our Ensign was replaced by another and to guard against a similar event an Ensign was made fast in the Mizen rigging and several Jacks were hoisted in different parts of the ship— The enemy soon repaired his damages for a fresh attack, he now placed himself with both his ships on my starboard quarter out of the reach of my carronades, and where my stern Guns could not be brought to bear, he there kept up a most galling fire which it was out of my power to return, when I saw no prospect of injuring him without getting underway and becoming the assailant; my top sail sheets and haliards were all shot away, as well as the Jib and Fore top mast stay sail haliards, the only running rope not cut away was the Flying Jib haliards, and that being the only sail I could set I caused it to be hoisted, my cable to be cut and ran down on both the ships with an intention of laying the *Phoebe* on board, the firing on both sides was now tremendous, I had let fall my fore top sail and fore sail, but the wants of tacks and sheets rendered them almost useless to us, yet we were enabled for a short time to close with the enemy, and although our decks were now strewn with dead and our Cock pit filled with wounded, although our ship had several times been on fire and was rendered a perfect wreck we were still encouraged to hope to save her from the circumstance of the *Cherub* from her crippled state being compelled to haul off, she did not return to close action again, although she apparently had it in her power to do so, but kept up a distant firing with her long guns: The *Phoebe* from our disabled state was enabled however by edging off to choose the distance which best suited her long guns, and kept up a tremendous fire on us which mowed down my brave companions by the dozen: Many of my guns had been rendered useless by the enemies shot and many of them had had their whole crews destroyed, we manned them again from those which were disabled, and one gun in particular was three times manned, fifteen men were slain at it in the course of the action! but strange as it may appear the Captn. of it escaped with only a slight wound— Finding that the enemy had it in his power to choose his distance, I now gave up all hopes of closing with him, and as the wind for the moment seemed to favor the design, I determined to endeavour to run her on shore, land my men, and destroy her; every thing seemed to favor my wishes, we had approached the shore within musket shot, and I had no doubts of succeeding when in an instant the wind shifted from the land (as is very common in this port in the latter part of the day) and payed our head down on the *Phoebe* where we were again exposed to a dreadful raking fire: my ship was now totally unmanageable, yet as her head was toward the enemy and he to leeward of me I still hoped to be able to board him. at this moment Lt. comdt. Downes came on board to receive my orders under the impression that I should soon be a prisoner, he could be of no service to me in the wretched state of the *Essex* and finding (from the enemy's putting his helm up) that my last attempt at boarding would not succeed, I directed him after he had been about 10 minutes on board to return to his own ship to be prepared for defending and destroying her in case of attack, he took with him several of my wounded leaving three of his boats crew on board to make room for them. The *Cherub* now had an opportunity of distinguishing herself by keeping up a hot fire on him during his return— The slaughter on board my ship had now become horrible, the enemy continuing to rake us and we unable to bring a gun to bear, I therefore directed a hawser to be bent to the sheet anchor and the anchor to be cut from the bows to bring her head round, this succeeded, we again got our broad side to bear, and as the enemy was much crippled and unable to



hold his own, I have no doubt he would soon have drifted out of gun shot before he discovered we had anchored had not the hawser unfortunately parted. My ship had taken fire several times during the action but alarmingly so forward and aft at this moment, the flames were bursting up each hatchway and no hopes were entertained of saving her, our distance from the shore did not exceed three quarters of a mile and I hoped many of my brave crew would be able to save themselves should the ship blow up, as I was informed the fire was near the magazine, and the explosion of a large quantity of powder below served to increase the horrors of our situation, our boats were destroyed by the enemies shot I therefore directed those who could swim to jump overboard and endeavour to gain the shore, some reached it, some were taken by the enemy, and some perished in the attempt—but most preferred sharing with me the fate of the ship—we who remained now turned our attention wholly to extinguishing the flames, and when we had succeeded went again to our guns where the firing was kept up for some minutes, but the crew had by this time become so weakened that they all declared to me the impossibility of making further resistance, and entreated me to surrender my ship to save the wounded, as all further attempts at opposition must prove ineffectual; almost every gun being disabled by the destruction of their crews—I now sent for the officers of Divisions to consult them, but what was my surprize to find only Acting Lt. S D McKnight remaining (who confirmed the report respecting the condition of the guns on the Gun deck, those on the spar deck were not in a better state) Lt. Wilmer after fighting most gallantly throughout the action had been knocked overboard by a splinter while getting the sheet anchor from the bows and was drowned, Actg. Lt. John G Cowell had lost a leg, Mr. Edwd. Barnewall Actg. Sailing Master had been carried below after receiving two severe wounds one in the breast and one in the face, and Actg. Lt. Wm. H Odenheimer had been knocked overboard from the quarter an instant before, and did not regain the ship until after her surrender—I was informed that the Cock pit, the steerage, the ward Room and Birth deck could contain no more wounded, that the wounded were killed while the Surgeons<sup>18</sup> were dressing them, and that unless something was speedily done to prevent it the ship would soon sink from the number of shot holes in her bottom, and on sending for the Carpenter<sup>19</sup> he informed me that all his crew had been killed or wounded, and that he had once been over the side to stop the leaks when his slings had been shot away and it was with difficulty he was saved from drowning—The enemy from the smoothness of the water and the impossibility of our reaching him with our Caronades, and the little apprehension that was excited by our fire which had now become much slackened, was enabled to take aim at us as at a target, his shot never missed our hull, and my ship was cut up in a manner which was perhaps never before witnessed, in fine I saw no hopes of saving her and at 20 minutes after 6 PM. gave the painful order to strike the colors, 75 men including officers were all that remained of my whole crew after the action capable of doing duty, and many of them severely wounded, some of whom have since died—The enemy still continued his fire and my brave though unfortunate companions were still falling about me, I directed an opposite gun to be fired to shew them we intended no further resistance, but they did not desist, four men were killed at my side and others in different parts of the ship; I now believed he intended to show us no quarters and that it would be as well to die with my flag flying as

struck, and was on the point of again hoisting it when about ten minutes after hauling the colors down he ceased firing—

I cannot speak in sufficient high terms of the conduct of those engaged for such an unparalleled length of time (under such circumstances) with me in this arduous and unequal contest, let it suffice to say that more bravery skill patriotism and zeal were never displayed on any occasion, every one seemed determined to die in defence of their much loved countries cause, and nothing but views to humanity could ever have reconciled them to the surrender of the ship, they remembered their wounded and helpless shipmates below—To Actg. Lieuts. McKnight and Odenheimer<sup>20</sup> I feel much indebted for their great exertions and bravery throughout the action in fighting and encouraging the men at their divisions, for the dexterous management of the long guns, and for their promptness in remanning their guns as their crews were slaughtered—The conduct of that brave and heroic officer Actg. Lt. John G Cowell who lost his leg in the latter part of the action excited the admiration of every man in the ship, and after being wounded would not consent to be taken below until loss of blood rendered him insensible—Mr. Edwd. Barnewall<sup>21</sup> Actg. Sailing Master whose activity and courage was equally conspicuous, returned on deck after his first wound and remained after receiving his second until fainting with loss of blood—Mr. Saml. B Johnston<sup>22</sup> who had joined me the day before and acted as Marine officer conducted himself with great bravery, and exerted himself in assisting at the long guns, the musketry after the first half hour (from our distance) being useless—Mr. M W Bostwick<sup>23</sup> whom I had appointed Actg. Purser of the *Essex Junior*; and who was on board my ship, did the duties of Aid in a manner which reflects on him the highest honor—and Midsn. Isaacs, Farragut & Ogden, as well as Actg. Midsn. James Terry,<sup>24</sup> James R Lyman and Saml. Duzenbury,<sup>25</sup> and Masters Mate Wm. Pierce exerted themselves in the performance of their respective duties and gave an earnest of their value to the service, the three first are too young to recommend for promotion, the latter I beg leave to recommend for confirmation as well as the Acting Lieutenants and Messrs. Barnewall, Johnston & Bostwick—

We have been unfortunate but not disgraced the defence of the *Essex* has not been less honorable to her officers and crew than the capture of an equal force, and I now consider my situation less unpleasant than that of Commodore Hillyar who in violation of every principle of honor and generosity, and regardless of the rights of nations attacked the *Essex* in her crippled state within pistol shot of a neutral shore, when for six weeks I daily offered him fair and honorable combat on terms greatly to his advantage; the blood of the slain must be on his head, and he has yet to reconcile his conduct to heaven, to his conscience and to the world—The annexed extract of a letter from Commr. Hillyar which was written previous to his returning me my sword will shew his opinion of our conduct—<sup>26</sup>

My loss has been dreadfully severe 58 killed and have since died of their wounds and among them Lt. Cowell, 39 were severely wounded, 27 slightly, and 31—are missing making in all 154<sup>27</sup> killed wounded and missing, a list of whose names is annexed<sup>28</sup>

The professional knowledge of Doctr. Richd. K Hoffman<sup>29</sup> Acting Surgeon, and Doctr. Alxr. Montgomery<sup>30</sup> Acting Surgeons Mate, added to their assiduity, and the benevolent attentions and assistance of Mr. D P Adams the Chaplain, saved the lives of many of the wounded those gentlemen have been indefatiga-



6. Paul Hamilton.
7. *Essex* arrived at Valparaiso on 15 March 1813. For *Essex's* visit to the Chilean port, see Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, pp. 685–90; and, Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 114–30.
8. *Nereyda*. On the capture of the Peruvian privateer, see Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, pp. 690–92; and, Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 131–34.
9. José Fernando Abascal y Sousa. For Porter's letter of 26 March 1813 to the Viceroy, see Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, p. 692.
10. On *Essex's* Galapagos operations, see *ibid.*, pp. 692–702; and, Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, chapters 5–10.
11. A fourth column, written in pencil, appears to the left of the "Guns" column entitled "No of Guns Pierced for." The numbers in this column are listed in the following order beginning with *Policy*: 18, 18, 20, 20, 20, 18, 26, 18, 18, and 18. To the left of the ships' names, also in pencil, appears a brace and the words "Letters of Marque." These are written parallel to the left margin. These pencil notations appear in printed versions of this letter, illustrating how Porter's letter was edited for publication.
12. For background on Hillyar's mission in the Pacific, see Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, pp. 710–14. The store ship mentioned in the text is the North West Company store ship *Isaac Todd*.
13. On *Essex* in the Marquesas, see Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, pp. 702–10; and, Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, chapters 13–17.
14. See Porter's declaration of 19 November 1813 claiming Madison Island (Nuku Hiva) for the United States, Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 2, pp. 707–10.
15. For documentation on John M. Gamble's command, see pp. 772–80.
16. The following appears in pencil here and appeared in printed versions of this letter: "Every prize having proved a well found Storeship for me."
17. On Porter's efforts to bring *Phoebe* to battle, see pp. 719–23, 733–34, 750.
18. Acting Surgeon Richard K. Hoffman and Acting Surgeon's Mate Alexander M. Montgomery.
19. John Langley.
20. William H. Odenheimer entered *Essex* as a midshipman and received promotions to acting sailing master on 23 June 1813, and acting lieutenant on 31 January 1814. He was commissioned a lieutenant 16 July 1814.
21. In 1813 Edward Barnewall commanded *Colt*, an American brig purchased into Chilean service. Following the seizure of his ship by mutineers, Barnewall was imprisoned at Callao, Peru, at the order of the Viceroy, in retaliation for Porter's seizure of *Nereyda*. Upon his release Barnewall went to Valparaiso, shortly after which he offered his services to David Porter. Porter appointed Barnewall acting sailing master in *Essex* on 31 January 1814. The Navy Department confirmed the appointment on 16 July 1814. Six days later Barnewall was commissioned a lieutenant. Johnston, *Three Years in Chile*, pp. 101–46; and Porter to Jones, 19 July 1814, NcD, U.S. Department of the Navy Papers.
22. Samuel Burr Johnston served as a lieutenant in the Chilean brig *Colt* in 1813. Like Edward Barnewall, Johnston was imprisoned in Callao, Peru, after *Colt* was seized by mutineers. He was released along with his captain and sailed to Valparaiso in November 1813. With the assistance of Joel Poinsett, Johnston received an appointment as acting lieutenant of marines in *Essex* on 26 March 1814. Johnston was commissioned a 1st lieutenant of marines on 16 July 1814. Johnston, *Three Years in Chile*, pp. 101–46, 168.
23. Melancton W. Bostwick entered *Essex* as a captain's clerk. He was appointed an acting purser on 14 February 1814. He was commissioned a purser on 16 July 1814.
24. James Terry entered *Essex* as a master's mate. It is not known when Porter appointed him an acting midshipman. The Navy Department confirmed his appointment on 16 July 1814. He resigned from the naval service on 30 April 1815.
25. Samuel J. Dusenberry had served as a midshipman in the Chilean brig *Colt*. Like his fellow officers Samuel B. Johnston and Edward Barnewall, Dusenberry was imprisoned in Callao, Peru, after the *Colt's* crew mutinied. After obtaining his release, Dusenberry made his way to Valparaiso and on 4 February 1814 received an appointment as acting midshipman in *Essex*. He was warranted a midshipman by the Navy Department on 16 July 1814. Johnston, *Three Years in Chile*, p. 123.
26. Enclosure not printed here. For a published copy, see Hillyar to Porter, 4 Apr. 1814, in Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, p. 463.
27. The correct casualty total, 155, has been inserted here in brackets in another hand. The casualty total published in Porter's *Journal of a Cruise* alters the number of slightly wounded men from 27 to 26. All other numbers are identical to those given by Porter in this letter.
28. Enclosure not found, but a notation in the letter reads: "List of killed and wounded is filed with similar papers for pensioner Certificates." A printed list of the killed, wounded, and missing is published in Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 463–66.
29. Richard K. Hoffman was commissioned a surgeon on 16 July 1814.

30. Alexander M. Montgomery was appointed an acting surgeon's mate on 2 July 1812. He was commissioned at that grade on 16 July 1814.
31. This paragraph was edited for publication with significant portions of text stricken out in pencil. As published, this paragraph read: "I must in justification of myself observe that with our six twelve pounders only we faught this action, our carronades were almost useless."
32. Lieutenant William Ingram, R.N.
33. Hillyar to Porter, 4 Apr. 1814, and, Passport for *Essex Junior*, 13 April 1814, pp. 746–47.
34. Captain Francisco de Formas, who was appointed interim governor of Valparaiso by Lastra sometime in mid-March.
35. For the destruction of *Hector*, see pp. 716–19. It is unknown when *Catherine* was destroyed. *Phoebe's* log book makes no mention of her presence at Valparaiso, nor is she mentioned in any other related documents. It is possible Porter destroyed her before Hillyar's arrival.
36. Lieutenant Stephen Decatur McKnight and Acting Midshipman James R. Lyman were directed to proceed with Hillyar to Rio de Janeiro and thence to England to give affidavits in the condemnation of *Essex*. On 22 August 1814 the two officers departed for England from the Brazilian port in the Swedish brig *Adonis*. On 9 October the Swedish brig was overhauled by the U.S. sloop of war *Wasp*, Johnston Blakeley commanding. This was the last time McKnight, Lyman, and the company of *Wasp* were seen. The American sloop of war met with some form of accident at sea and never returned home. Porter had appointed Lyman an acting midshipman on 25 August 1813. The Navy Department confirmed this appointment on 16 July 1814, but Lyman never arrived home to receive his warrant. For documentation on the fate of McKnight and Lyman, see Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 555–67.
37. This correspondence between Porter and Hillyar and a list of paroled officers and crew is not printed here. Published copies may be found in Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 467–72.
38. Enclosure not printed.
39. See pp. 741–44.

BOATSWAIN'S REPORT OF DAMAGE TO *ESSEX*

Boatswains Report of rigging, sails &c &c damaged on board the late U S Frigate *Essex* in an action faught with the British Frigate *Phoebe* & Sloop of War *Cherub* on the 28th. March 1814

## Rigging shot away—

Four Larbd. lower shrouds.  
 Five starbd. —do—  
 Both Fore top sail sheets,  
 Jib, Flying Jib, & Fore top mast stay sail haulyards,  
 Fore Top Gt. Stay,  
 Five Fore top mast shrouds,  
 Starbd. Fore lift, & Fore stay,  
 One pair bob stays  
 One larbd. Fore top mast back stay,  
 All the larbd. main shrouds & five of the starbd.  
 The Miz: rigging much injured  
 The greater part of the larbd. dead eyes & chain plates  
 The greater part of the running rigging—  
 Most of the Hammocks on the larbd. side shot out of the nettings—  
 All the sails bent rendered entirely useless by shot holes.

Edw<sup>d</sup>. Linscott<sup>1</sup>  
 Boatswain

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 127, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 37).

1. Linscott was severely wounded in the engagement with *Phoebe* and *Cherub*. See Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, p. 464.

CARPENTER'S REPORT OF DAMAGE TO *ESSEX*

Carpenters report of damages sustained by the late U S Frigate *Essex*, in an action with the British Frigate *Phoebe* and Sloop of War *Cherub*, on the 28th. March 1814

The shot were planted so thick in the hull they could not be well counted, but supposed to be upwards of 200—18 pd.—through the larbd. side below the spar deck—

The starbd. side much injured,

The head shot away,

The bullworks of the larbd. side of the Fore Castle nearly demolished.

The larbd. quarter much shattered and Qr. Gallery destroyed,

A large breach in the larbd. counter,

The stern much shattered.

Two shot in the head of the rudder & the wheel injured—

Seven of the Spar deck knees cut in two.

Two spar deck beams cut from the clamps,

Two Gun deck beams cut through in the ward room—

Five shot between wind & water.

Pump well destroyed, and much injury done between decks from the shot which passed through—

The Bow sprit much damaged, several shot in it—

Spritsail yard cut in three pieces,

Jib boom shot half off

Five shot through the center of the Fore mast.

Three shot through the center of the Main Mast

The Mizzen Mast much crippled.

The Miz. Top mast cut half off.

Larbd. Fore yard arm shot half off.

Main Yard very badly crippled

Cross Jack yard— ditto ditto—

Gaff & Spanker boom shot away.

Both lower swinging booms shot away.

The larbd. Fore Top mast studding sail boom cut,

Nearly all the spare spars on the booms & in the chains entirely destroyed.

All the boats shattered to pieces—

John Langley<sup>1</sup>

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 127, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 37).

1. John Langley shipped in *Essex* as a carpenter's mate on 25 September 1812. He was promoted to carpenter on 23 March 1813. DNA, RG45, *Essex* muster and pay rolls, 1801-14, entry no. 394, p. 260, and no. 563, p. 264. Langley was slightly wounded in the engagement with *Phoebe* and *Cherub*. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, p. 465.

GUNNER'S REPORT OF DAMAGE TO *ESSEX*

Report of the killed and wounded at the different Divisions on board the late U S Frigate *Essex*, mounting 46 guns and 255 men, D Porter Esqr. Comdr. in an

action fought on 28th. March 1814, in the port of Valparaiso de Chili, with the British Frigate *Phoebe* & Sloop of War *Cherub* mounting together 81 guns and 500 men J Hillyar Esqr. Comdr.—

Together with the Gunners report of the guns damaged and rendered useless by the enemies shot—

Quarters	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Guns, how disabled.
<u>Spar deck</u>				
Quarter deck —				
Lieutenants —	4	"	"	
Sailing Master —	"	1	"	
Midshipmen —	"	2	"	
Master at Arms —	"	1	"	
Armourer —	"	1	"	
Marines —	"	"	3	
Wheel —	1	1	"	
Qt. Gunners —	"	"	1	
Braces —	"	3	3	
1st. Gun & opposite	2	2	2	Larbd. gun, side bolts tackles & blocks shot away
2d. Ditto —	1	1	1	
3d. Ditto —	2	3	1	Larbd. gun, fighting bolt shot away —
4th. Ditto —	3	"	3	
Carried fowd.	10	15	14	
Brot fowd.	10	15	14	
5th. gun & opposite	1	2	1	Larbd. gun struck by a shot which split the muzzle
6th. Ditto —	2	2	2	Starbd. gun britchings shot away
7th. Ditto —	1	4	1	Larbd. gun, eye bolts & britching shot away and carriage shattered —
Fore Castle. —	4	1	1	
Lieutenants, —	1	"	"	
Boatswain —	"	1	"	
Qt. Gunners —	"	1	"	
1st. gun & opposite	1	3	"	Larbd. gun, ring bolts shot away and the carriage splintered
2d. —Ditto —	"	"	"	Larbd. Gun, Carriage shattered first part of the action —
3d. —Ditto —	1	2	2	
<u>Gun Deck.</u>				
1st. Division —				
Qt. Gunners —	"	1	"	
1st. gun & opposite	"	"	1	
2d. —ditto —	3	2	1	



Quarters	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Guns, how disabled.
Gun Deck— <i>continued</i>				
3 —ditto —	1	1	"	Larbd. Gun, naval bolt shot away —
4th. —Ditto —	4	"	"	—Ditto—Fighting bolt shot away —
5th. —Ditto —	5	5	"	
Second Division				
Lieutenants —	1	"	"	
1 Gun & Opposite	2	4	1	Larbd. Gun, Carriage splintered & fighting bolt injured.
2d. —Ditto —	2	6	1	
	38	48	25	Carried fowd. —
Brot fowd.	38	48	25	
3d. Gun & opposite—	3	4	"	Larbd. Gun struck with a shot, muzzle carried away & the gun split —
4th. Ditto —	4	"	"	
Third Division				
1st. Gun & opposite	"	4	"	Larbd. gun struck with a shot & split, Starbd. gun muzzle shot away —
2d. —Ditto —	3	2	"	
3d. —Ditto —	4	1	1	Larbd. Gun, Eye bolts, britchings, tackles & blocks shot away — Larbd. gun dismantled, one truck & the screw shot away, carriage splintered —
4th. —Ditto —	3	1	1	
Tops, Pumps & birth deck.				
Fore Top —	2	2	"	
Main Top —	1	"	1	
Mizen Top —	"	"	2	
Magazine passage	"	2	1	
Pumps Carpenter	"	1	"	
Total — <sup>1</sup>	58	65	31	13 Larbd. & 2 starbd. guns completely disabled —

James Stedy<sup>2</sup>

DS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 127, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 37).

1. The ditto marks in this table represent zeros. The first subtotal in the killed column was incorrectly added. The correct subtotal is nine killed. The final figure for the wounded column was incorrectly totaled. The correct total is sixty-seven wounded. The casualty figures Porter published in *Journal of a Cruise* match those in the three columns above. See Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 463–66.

2. James Stedy or Steady shipped in *Essex* as a quarter gunner on 25 September 1812. He was promoted to gunner's mate on 8 April 1813. DNA, RG45, *Essex* muster and pay rolls, 1801–14, entry no. 142, p. 256, and entry no. 564, p. 264. It is unclear why Stedy signed this report rather than Laurence Miller, who was *Essex's* gunner.

## Parole Given

In the days following the battle there was much that commanded the attention and energies of the Americans and the British. There were wounded to be cared for and dead to be buried, prisoners to be confined and ships to be repaired. There was also the issue of the parole and exchange of *Essex's* crew. The arrangements for the parole of the American sailors were soon settled, but the preparations for the voyage home were not completed until the last week of April. On the afternoon of 27 April, Porter and his men set sail in *Essex Junior* for America.

LOG BOOK OF H.M. FRIGATE *PHOEBE*

Remks. &amp;c. Tuesday 29th. March 1814

AM. Light Airs & fine Wr. At 6 Weighed & Made Sail Standing in for the Bay of Valparaiso Obsd. the Prize<sup>1</sup> at Anchor, At 8.50 Shortened Sail & came to with the Best Bower in [blank] fms. Furl'd Sails Came on Board [blank] Prisoners Recd. Fresh Beef [blank] lbs Vegetables [blank] lbs Moored Ship,— Bent the Sheet Cable Noon moderate & fine *Cherub* under weigh  
P.M. Do. Wr. Empd. Getting the Sheet Cable and Anchor on board the Prize Sent the Prisoners on Board the Spanish Prison Ship, Sent an Officer & A Guard of Royal Marines with them, Employ'd unbending the Courses & Jibs Empd. as Necessary, At Sunset up Boats Midnight moderate & fine Wr.

Remks. &c. Wednesday, March 30th. 1814 Moor'd in Valparaiso Bay  
P.M. [A.M.]— Light Airs & fine Weather. Recd. Fresh Beef [blank] lbs Vegetables, Hoisted out the Launch, At 10 sent the body of the Deceased, Lt. Ingram on shore, for Interment, attended by the Officers, & a party of Seamen & Marines Fired minute Guns while conveying the corpse on Shore, Noon moderate & fine Wr.

P.M. Do. Wr. People empd. washing the Decks, Bent the Sheet Cable, At 8 Do. Wr. Midnight moderate & fine Wr. . . .

Remks. &c. Monday. 4th. March [April] 1814 Moored in Valparaiso Bay  
A M, Calm & cloudy Wr. At 8 Do. Wr. sent away Empty casks for Water, Suppd. the *Cherub* with [blank] Wood Recd. Vegetables 220 lbs Recd. 10 Tons of Water & a boat load of Wood. Got the Fore Yard down People Empd. overhauling & fitting the rigging fore & Aft, Noon Light Airs & fine Wr. Arrived a Spanish Ship from Juan Fernandez

P M Do. Wr. Sent empty Casks on Shore for Water, Carpenters, Empd. Fishing the Mizzen Mast & Head of the Main Mast, Recd. Fresh Beef 545 lbs being the weight of two Oxen, At 8 Light Airs & fine Wr. Came on board an Englishman having made his escape from the *Essex Junr.* Midnight Do. Wr. . . .

[Remks. &c.] Tuesday 26th. [April 1814 Moored in Valparais Bay]  
A M, Fine Weather, At Daylight discharged 52 Prisoners to the *Essex Junr.* Cartel, recd. Vegetables 246 lbs, People Empd. as required, Came on board the Marines from the prison Ship. Noon Do. Wr.

P.M. Do. Weather Carpenters Empd. fishing the Jib boom & Main Mast At Sunset up Boats. Midnight. Do. Wr.

Remks. &c. Wednesday 27th April 1814 Moored in Valparaiso Bay  
A M, fine Weather, At daylight sent the Caulkers & a party of Men on board the prize. Completed the Water Carpenters Empd. fishing the Jib boom & Main

Mast, Sailmakers Empd. making a New Main Sail, Noon moderate Wr. P.M. Do. Wr. Sailed the *Essex Junr.* (Cartel) with Captn. Porter & the remg. part of his Officers & Crew, People Empd. as before, at Sunset up Boat[s] Mid-night Moderate & fine Wr.

D, UklPR, Adm. 51/2675, Log Book of *Phoebe*, 1 Jan. 1813–28 Aug. 1815, fols. 174–75, 177.

1. *Essex*.

CAPTAIN JAMES HILLYAR, R.N., TO CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER

Valparaiso April 4th. 1814

Sir,

Taking into consideration the immense distance we are from our respective countries; the uncertainty of the future movements of His Majesty's ships under my command, which precludes the possibility of my making a permanent arrangement for transporting the officers and crew late of the *Essex* to Europe; and the fast approaching season which renders a passage round Cape Horn in some degree dangerous: I have the honor to propose for your approbation the following articles, which I hope the Government of the United States, as well as that of Great Britain, will deem satisfactory; and to request, that should you conceive them so, you will favour me with the necessary Bond for their fulfilment—1stly. The *Essex Junior* to be deprived of all her armament and perfectly neutralized; to be equipped for the voyage solely and wholly at the expence of the American government; and to proceed with a proper American Officer and crew (of which I wish to be furnished with a list, for the purpose of giving the necessary passport) to any port of the United States of America that you may deem most proper—

2ndly: Yourself, the Officers, Petty Officers, seamen, marines &c composing your crew to be exchanged immediately on their arrival in America; for an equal number of British prisoners of similar rank—Yourself and officers to be considered on their parole of honor until your and their exchange shall be effected—

In case of the foregoing articles being accepted the *Essex Junior* will be expected to prepare immediately for the voyage, and to proceed on it before the expiration of the present month—Should any of the wounded at that period be found incapable of removal from not being sufficiently advanced in their recovery, the most humane attention shall be paid them; and they shall be forwarded home by the first favorable conveyance that may offer—I have the honor to remain With great respect Your Obt. Servt.

Signed Jas. Hillyar—

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 127, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 37). Addressed: "Capt. David Porter/late Commander of the/United States Frigate *Essex*/Valparaiso—."

PASSPORT FOR *ESSEX JUNIOR*

By James Hillyar Esq. captain of H.B.M. Ship *Phoebe*, and senior officer of his majesty's ships in Valparaiso Bay.

I hereby certify, that I have on the part of his Britannic Majesty, entered into an agreement with Captain David Porter, of the United States navy, and late commander of the frigate *Essex*, who, on the part of his government, engages as follows, to wit: That himself, his officers and crew will proceed to the United States, in the ship called the *Essex-Junior*, as a cartel, commanded by Lieutenant John Downes, of the United States navy, and having a crew, consisting of the officers and men, named in the annexed list.<sup>1</sup>

The said Capt. Porter, his officers and crew, a list of which is subjoined, will remain as prisoners of war on parole, not to take arms against Great Britain until regularly exchanged, and that he pledges his honour to fulfil the foregoing conditions. I therefore request, that said ship, the *Essex-Junior*, may be permitted to pass freely to the United States without any impediment, and that the officers commanding the ships of war of his Britannic Majesty, as well as those of private armed vessels, and all others in authority under the British government, as also those in alliance with his said majesty, will give the said David Porter, his officers and crew, and the crew of the aforesaid ship called the *Essex-Junior*, every aid and assistance to enable them to arrive at the place of their destination.

And as it may become necessary for the *Essex-Junior* to touch at one or more places for the purpose of obtaining refreshment and supplies, it is requested, that in such case all, to whom this passport may be presented, will give the persons on board said ship every facility in supplying their wants, and permit them to depart with her without hindrance.

Given under my hand, on board his majesty's ship *Phoebe*, at Valparaiso, [13] April, 1814.

Printed, Bowen, *Naval Monument*, pp. 119–20.

1. One hundred thirty-two names appear on this list, a copy of which is enclosed in Porter to Jones, 3 July 1814, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 127 (M125, Roll No. 37). A printed version may be found in Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 469–72.

## Midshipman Farragut

*David Glasgow Farragut, who would achieve fame for his naval service during the Civil War, entered the U.S. Navy as a midshipman at the age of nine. He was not yet twelve when he participated in his first sea fight, the capture of H.M. sloop of war Alert by Essex on 13 August 1812. Even more memorable adventures awaited the young Farragut as a member of Essex's crew on her cruise in the Pacific. Farragut later recorded these experiences in "Some Reminiscences of Early Life." Although penned nearly three decades after the fact, they offer a vivid description of the people, places, and events of that cruise. Particularly noteworthy is Farragut's own critique of Porter's decisions on the day of the action with Phoebe and Cherub. The following excerpt relates the departure of Essex from the Marquesas in December 1813 and follows the fortunes of the frigate's crew until they returned home in July 1814.*



## DAVID G. FARRAGUT: "SOME REMINISCENCES OF EARLY LIFE"

[Extract]

[9 December 1813–July 1814]

... we were ready for sea, on the 9th Dec, when many of the *Essex* Crew went as was usual on Sunday on board the *Essex Junior*— on Monday morning, I saw all was not right— the Capt. was much agitated. All Hands were called to muster— When the hands were announced up, the Capt. took his cutlass in his hand, went one side of the Deck & laid it on the Capstan— He then trembling with anger, but with forced composure, addressed the crew "All you who are for weighing this ships anchor when I give the order, go over on the Starboard Side, you who are of a different determination stay on the Larboard"— All to a man, walked over on the Starboard side— He then called a man, named Robert White an Englishman & said to him in the same smothered tone "How is this? did you not tell them on board the *Essex Junior* that the crew of this Ship would refuse to weigh the anchor?" He tremblingly replied "No Sir" "You lie you scoundrel" was the answer. "Where is the list of the libertymen" "Here Sir" said the Officer [of] the deck— Then calling out one or two, he said "Did you not hear it on board the *Essex Junior*" "Yes Sir" was the response. "Run you Scoundrel for your life"—and out he went through the Starbd. Gangway. It was evident that the Capt. would have Killed him if he had caught him, but it was equally evident that he did not wish to catch him. The Capt. then went aft and addressed the crew in an exciting manner, praising their good conduct, in always holding up such miserable villians to punishment and shame at the same time letting them Know that no set of villians should ever disgrace him, for he was always ready should they so far forget themselves, to attempt it, to blow them all to Hell, before they could attain their ends. He then wheeled round and ordered them to man the Cap[s]tan, and the Music to play, the "Girl I left behind me, the music struck up and the anchor literally flew to the bows, and we made sail and stood to sea— White jumped overboard, and was picked up by a passing canoe<sup>1</sup> Take it altogether it was one of the most exciting scenes I ever witnessed, and made such an impression on my young mind, that the Circumstance is as fresh as if it had happened yesterday. We went to sea in the usual light fine weather leaving behind all the Prizes, but the *Essex Junior* when about 12 miles from Hoods Island, a fresh breeze blowing at the time, a splash was heard in the water along side— No attention was paid to it, in fact the person that heard it did not report it until,—at quarters next morning an Oteheitian by the name of Tameoy, was missing and upon inquiry it was found that some difficulty had occurred between a Boatswains Mate and himself, and the Boatswains Mate had struck him, this he could not brook, and so jumped overboard, as a matter of course we all thought he was drowned, and as he was a general favorite on board it gave us great regret— I learned some years after from an Officer of one of the Prizes, that Tameoy arrived at Nooahevah on the 3rd. day after we left, having swam more than 30 miles— The nearest land at the time he jumped overboard was distant 12 miles, and we thought it very doubtful if he could have landed on it—<sup>2</sup> I shall not attempt to give any description of Nooahevah, as it is glowingly described by Capt. Porter—<sup>3</sup> I shall only confine myself solely to my own walk thro life. Our passage was as usual, uninteresting every day the Crew were exercised at Great Guns and small arms,

and amused themselves at single sticks—& by the way I will mention a fact—, that I have never been in a Ship, where there were any of the *Essex* Crew, that were not the best stick players on board— Boarding was our forte, and every man was prepared for it, with a dirk made by our armourer out of an old file, a Cutlass that you might shave with, and a pistol— We arrived on the coast of Chile in Jany. 1814—looked into Conception and then ran down to Valparaiso where we lay until the arrival of the British Frigate *Phebe*, and Sloop of War *Cherub* which was early in February—<sup>4</sup> The Frigate mounted 30 long 18s. 16 32pd. carronades, 1 Howitzer and 6 3pds. in the Tops, with a crew of 320 men— The *Cherub*. 18 32pd. Carronades 8. 24pd. 2 Long 9s. and had a crew of 180 Men— When they made their appearance off the Port one third of our crew, were on shore on liberty, which was one watch, our crew having been divided into 3 watches as before mentioned— The Mate of an English Merchant Ship that lay in Port,<sup>5</sup> went immediately on board the *Phebe*, and stated to Capt. Hylar, that one half of our crew were on shore, and the Ship would fall an easy prey— The Ships hauled into the harbor on a wind— The *Phebe* made our larbd. quarter, but the *Cherub* fell to leeward, about ½ mile— when the *P* had gained our quarter, she put down her helm, and luffed up on our Starbd. Bow, within 10 or 15 feet of our Ship— The moment the enemy hove in sight, a gun was fired and a cornet hoisted for all boats and men—and in 15 minutes every man was at his quarters, and not one the least intoxicated except one, and he a boy— and here I may relate an incident in which this lad figures, which might have made a different result to record of the fight between the *Essex* & *Phebe*— While the *P*. was alongside within 20 yards, and all hands at quarters the Powder Boys, were stationed, with matches to discharge the Guns, as the men boarded in the smoke— This Boy saw some one from the Port, as he imagined grinning at him— "D—n you my fine fellow" said he, "I'll stop your laughing or making faces at me" when as he was in the act of firing his gun, Lt. McKnight saw him and with one blow sprawled him on the Deck— Had that gun been fired, I am convinced the *P*— would have been ours. But it was destined otherwise— As before stated we were all at quarters cleared for action, and all were awaiting with breathless anxiety for the order to board, Capt. Hyllyer appeared standing on the after Gun, dressed in a Pea Jacket, and said Capt. H's Compliments to Capt. P. And hopes Capt. P. is well— Capt. Porter replied, very well, I thank you, but I hope you will not come too near, for fear some accident might take place,—that would be disagreeable to you— Capt. Porter, then Called "All hands repel boarders, and with a wave of his Trumpet the Kedges went up to the Yard Arms— Capt. H hove his yards aback, and said to Capt. P. that if he fell on board of him, he assured him it would be entirely an accident— Capt. P replied, that he had no business where he was, and if he touched a rope yarn of his ship, he would board him that instant. he then hailed the *Essex Junior*, and told Capt. Downes to be prepared to repel the enemy— But the *P*. backed astern her yards passing over ours, and not touching a rope, and anchored ½ mile astern of us—<sup>6</sup> Thus we lost the opportunity of taking her— We remained together in port some days, when the British vessels having Completed their provision and watering, went to sea, and commenced a regular blockade of us— one night we manned all our boats, and went out for the purpose of boarding him outside— the Capt. went so near, that he heard the conversation on her forecassle of the *Phebe*, and thereby lear[n]ed that they were lying at their quarters, so that we did not make the at-

tempt, but returned on board—<sup>7</sup> One day it was understood throughout the Ship, that, Capt. Porter, had sent out word to Capt. H, that if he would send the *Cherub* to the leeward point of the harbor, he would Come out and fight him we all believed he would accept the terms, and were in readiness to get underway. The *Phebe* was soon after seen standing in with her Motto Flags flying "God and Our Country" "Traitors offend them" She fired a gun to windward and the *Cherub* was seen running to leeward In 5 minutes we were underway, under our topsails and Jib, cleared for action (in fact we were always ready for that. When within about 2 miles of the *P.* she bore up and out steering sails== This I consider the 2nd. breach of faith on the part of Capt. H. for by his maneuvers in both instances it was Evident, he either had not the Courage or wanted the good faith of a high toned chivalrous spirit, to act out the original attention, and as Capt. H. has shown himself a brave man, in more instances than one, I will not deny him that Common attribute of a naval officer, therefore I impute it to a want of good faith. He was dealing with a far inferior force, and it was ignoble in the extreme, not to meet his foe when he had the show of an excuse for so doing Ship to Ship<sup>8</sup> on the 28th. Mar[*ch*] 1814 the wind Came on to blow, from the Southward, when we parted our Larbd. Cable, and dragged our Starbd. anchor Leeward== We immediately weighed and made sail in the Ship== the Enemy's Ships were Close in with the weathermost point of the bay, but the Capt. thought, we could weather them, and hauled up for that purpose and took in our Top Gallant Sails, which were set over ~~Double~~ Single Reefed Topsails== The Top Gallant Sails were hardly clewed down when a squall struck the Ship, and Altho the Top sail Halyards were let go, the yards jammed and would not come down—, when the Ship was nearly gunwale too, the Main Topmast, went by the board, Carrying the men on the Main Top Gallant Yard—, into the sea, and they were drowned— We immediately wore Ship, and attempted to gain the Harbor but owing to our disa[s]ter were unable so to do but anchored in a small bay, about a ¼ of mile of the shore, and ¾ of a small battery on the East Side of the Bay,<sup>9</sup> here we commenced our repairs, but it was soon evident from the preparations of the Enemy that it was his intention to attack us, and we made the best preparations to receive him we were able— Sp[r]ings were got on our Cable and the Ship perfectly prepared for action== Well do I remember the awful feelings, produced on me at their approach, by perceiving in the face of every one as clearly as possible even to my young mind that all was hopeless, and yet a determination equally clear, to die at their guns, rather than surrender— And such I believe were the feelings of the Crew almost to a man— There had been so much bantering of each other, with letters and songs,<sup>10</sup> and whenever the boats Crews met they invariably fought, so that their feelings were entirely different to what they would have been under different Circumstances== our Flags were flying in every direction, at the first Gun down she came with Flags, Jacks and Ensigns flying in every direction— At 54' after 3 P.M.—they Commenced the attack the *Phebe* under our stern, and the *Cherub* on our Starbd. Bow— The latter soon found that too many guns bore on her, so she bore up and ran under our stern also— we got 3 long guns out astern and kept up as well directed a fire as possible, under the fire of such unequal numbers, In ½ hour they were both Compelled to haul off and repair damages, during this period we had succeeded 3 times in getting springs on our cables, but the instant they were hauled taught they were shot away. Notwithstanding the Constant fire of both the enemy's Ships we had suffered

less than might have been expected under the Circumstances, having but 3 Guns opposed to 2 BroadSides== we had many men Killed in the first 5 or 10 minutes of their fire, before we could get our stern guns to bear on them— They soon repaired damages, and again renewed the attack by placing both Ships on our Larbd. Quarter out of reach of our carronades, and where the stern guns, could not be brought to bear, then they kept up a most galling fire, which it was out of our power to return, at this juncture the Capt. ordered the Cable to be cut, and after many attempts to get sail on the Ship at last succeeded, in finding the flying Jib Halyards in a condition to hoist the Sail, it being the only servicable rope on the occasion, not shot away, by these means, we were for a short time enabled to close with the enemy— The fire on both sides was tremendous, the *Cherub* was again compelled to haul off, and did not come again to Close action, but laid off and used her long guns, as if firing at a target== The *Phebe* was enabled by her better condition to edge off, and choose her distance, suitable for her long guns, and kept up a most destructive fire upon us— Finding as the Capt. says "the impossibility of closing with the *Phebe*" he determined to run the ship on shore and to destroy her— we accordingly stood for the land, but when within ½ mile of the Shore the wind suddenly shifted, took us flat aback and payed our head off shore— We were now again exposed to a most galling fire from the *P*— at this moment Capt. Downes came on board to receive his final orders, the enemy continued to rake us, while we could not bring a gun to bear— Capt. Porter now ordered a hawser to be bent to the Sheet Anchor and the Sheet to be let go— This brought the Ships head round, and we were in hopes the *P* would drift out of gun shot, as it was now nearly calm—but the hawser parted and we were again at the mercy of the enemy— The Ship was now reported to be on fire, and the men came rushing up from below, with their clothes on fire which we pulled off from them as fast as possible, and when we could not do so fast enough, told them to jump overboard, and put out the torment of the flames many of the Crew, and some of the Officers hearing the order to jump overboard took it for granted it was to guard against blowing us [*up*], jumped into the sea, and attempted to reach the shore about ¾ of a mile distant== The Capt now sent for the commissioned Officers to consult with them upon the propriety of further resistance, but first went below to ascertain the quantity of powder in the Magazine and on his return to the deck met Lt. McKnight the only commissioned Officer left, all the others having been Killed or wounded and it was determined to surrender the Ship in order to save the wounded, as it was evident the Ship must soon sink— At 20 minutes after 6 P.M, the painful order was given to haul down the colors, and executed— They did not cease firing for some 10 minutes after the colors were hauled down, and many of our unfortunate crew were Killed during those 10 minutes— Thus terminated one of the most bloody fights that ever occurred== On our side there were but 75 left of our brave companions Most of the above account is taken from minutes of the action Kept by Mr. Bostwick the Actg. Purser of the *Essex Junior*, who happened to be on board our Ship when we put to sea—<sup>11</sup> The remainder is from memory and in some instances I differ from my most venerated friend and Commodore—

Remarks on the Action. In the first place I think the 1st. and greatest error was in our attempting to regain the anchorage. Being greatly superior to our enemies in Sailing, I think we should have borne up, and run before the wind, if we had come in contact with the *P*—we could I think have carried her by



boarding if she avoided the contact as she might have done by her greater ability to manoeuvre, then we would have taken her fire and passed on leaving them behind us, until we could have replaced our topmast, by which time they might have been considerably separated, as unless they did so, it would have been no chase, as the *Cherub* was a dull sailor==

2ndly. It was apparent to every body that we had no chance of success, under these circumstances the Ship should have been run ashore, throwing her broadside to the Beach, to prevent raking fought him as long as consistent with humanity, and then set fire to her— But as we determined on anchoring we should have bent the anchor to the Ring of the Anchor instead of bending it to the Cable, where it was so exposed. that it was shot away as fast as it was put on— This mode of proceeding would have given us a better opportunity of injuring our opponents although I by no means intend to intimate that with our commodore we could hope for a different result to ourselves— If the above were not my reflections at the time, it was because I had always been in the habit of relying on the Judgement of others, for certainly they have always been my opinions whenever I can recollect to have thought on the subject— We are in the habit of blaming Capt Hillyar, but when we reflect upon the difference of the 2 commandrs we are not surprised at Capt. Porters complaint they were as different as day and night— Capt. P. was about 32 years of age and the Pink of Chivalry of an ardent and impetuous temperament While Capt H was a man of 50 [years] of age,<sup>12</sup> of as cool, calculating man had as he said to the Lt. gained his reputation by several single Ship combats and that he only expected to maintain it on the present occasion, by an implicit obedience “to his orders to captin [*capture*] the *Essex*, at the least possible risk to his vessel and crew,” and as he had the superior force, he was determined not to risk any thing to chance, believing it would call down the disapprobation of his government Mr. Ingraham his 1st. Lt: was a young chivalrous and ardent man, and it is said begged Capt. P<sup>13</sup> to bear down and board us, and the above was the cool reply of the Capt. Ingraham said it was deliberate murder to lay off and fire at us like a target, when we were unable to return it— This young Officer visited us once with a Flag of Truce, and was shewn throughout the ship==<sup>14</sup> His manly, frank and chivalrous bearing quite won the hearts of all on board our Ship. Whilst admiring her he said it would be the happiest moment of his life, to take her to England, could we have taken her in equal fight— To which Capt. Porter replied, that if such an event had to occur, he knew of no British officer to whom he would more readily yield his honor—&, and in this sentiment all our Officers and crew sincerely coincided. Unfortunately he was not destined to survive the Action—, a shot struck the rail one of the Splinters scalped him, and he died before its close,— All the remnant of our Officers and Crew attended his funeral, which took place on shore, he was buried in the Governors Castle at Valparaiso<sup>15</sup>

#### Incidents of the Action.

During the action I was like Paddy in the catharpins “a man on occasions. I performed the duty of Capts. Aid, Quarter Gunner, Powder Boy, and in short every thing that was required of me. I will here remark the horrid impression made upon me, by the death of the 1st. man— It was a Boatswains Mate his abdomen was taken entirely out, and he expired in a few moments, but they soon fell so fast around me, that it all appeared like a dream and produced no effect on my nerves. I well remember while standing near the Capt. just abaft

the main mast, a shot came through the waterways, which glanced upwards, Killing 4 men who stood by the side of the Gun, taking the last man in the head, and his brains flew over us both, but it made no such impression on me as the death of the 1st. man I neither thought of, or noticed any thing but the working of the Guns== On one occasion Mid Isaacs came up and reported to the Capt., that a quarter Gunner by the name of Roach had deserted his quarter the sole reply of the Captain was, “do your duty Sir—” I seized one of the Capts. Pistols that lay on the Capstan, and went in pursuit of him, but did not find him, and as soon as the Ship was said to be on fire, he contrived to get into the only boat we could keep afloat, and with 6 others made his escape to the shore— The most remarkable part of this is that Roach had always been a leading man in the Ship—and on occasion before mentioned of the *Phebe* running into us, when the boarders were called away. I distinctly remember Roach being in the most exposed situation—on the Cat Head ready to board, with every expression in his countenance of eagerness for the fight== All of which only goes to prove that man is not always the same thing. Roach was a brave man with a prospect of success, but a coward in adversity Soon after this, tubes were wanted, and the Capt. sent me after them== In going below when on the Ward Room Ladder the Capt. of the Gun directly opposite the Hatch, was struck full in the face by an 18 pd Shot and fell back upon me— We both fell down the Hatch together, I struck on my head, and fortunately he fell on my hips, whereas, as he was a man weighing about 200 Pounds, had he fallen directly on my body he would have Killed me; I lay there stunned for a few minutes by the blow, when awaking as it were from a dream, I ran on deck— The Captain seeing me covered with blood, asked me if I was wounded, to which I replied I believe not Sir. Then my son said he where are the tubes? This first brought me again to my senses and I ran down again, and brought them on deck when I arrived on deck the second time, I saw the Capt fall, and in my return, ran up and asked him, if he was wounded, he answered me in almost the same words. “I believe not my son, but I felt a blow on the top of my head” he must have been crushed down by a passing Shot, as his hat was some what injured. When not wanted for other purposes, I generally assisted in the working of a gun, would run and fetch powder from the boys, and send them back for more, until wanted by the Capt to carry a message, so continued to employ myself during the action== When it was determined to surrender, the Capt sent me to ascertain if Mr Odenheimer, had the signal book and if so, to throw it overboard== I could neither find him or the book for some time, at length I found the book in the sill of a port, and threw it overboard, after the action Odenheimer said he was overboard himself trying to clear the book from some part of the wreck where it had lodged==very unfortunate story for him as I found it in the Port. Isaacs, and myself amused ourselves throwing overboard, Pistols &c to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy== At length the boarding Officer came on board, and running up to the Capt asked him, how he would account to some one, I do not recollect who, for allowing the men to jump over board, and demanded his sword That sir said the Capt is “reserved for your master.” The Capt then went on board the *Phebe*, and I followed in about ½ hour== The effect of excitement is astonishing== I have already noticed how soon I became accustomed to blood and death during the action but so soon as the excitement ceased, and I went below, and saw the mangled bodies of my shipmates, dead, and dying, groaning cursing, and expiring with the most patriotic

sentiments on their lips== I became faint and sickened, my sympathies were all excited, I assisted to staunch the blood, and dress the wounded, as occasion required— Among the wounded was one of my best friends Lt J. G Cowell when I spoke to him, his reply was “Oh Gatty, I fear it is all up with me”— I looked at his wound as the Dr. with some assistance laid him on the table, and found he had lost his leg above the knee— But the Doctor said his life might have been saved if he would have consented to the amputation an hour ago but when it was proposed to drop another patient to attend to him, he replied “no, no Doctor—none of that— Fair Play is the jewell, one mans life is as dear as anothers, and I would not cheat any poor fellow out of his turn” he lived 21 days, when from loss of blood, mortification took place, and life went out, like a candle<sup>16</sup> Thus died one of the best of Officers as well as the bravest of men— He belonged to Marblehead, It was curious to hear dying men, who had hardly ever before been thought of, expiring with sentiments on their lips worthy of a Washington— you could hear in all directions “Dont give her up Logan” (a sobriquet applied to the Capt. “Hurrah for our Liberty—&c”— There was related by the crew of one of the Bow Guns, a singular act of heroism on the part of a young Scotchman by the name of Bissley, who had one leg shot off clean up to the groin, he secured it with his handkerchief for a tourniquet and turning to his Gunmates said “I left my own country, and adopted the U. States to fight for her, I hope I have this day shown myself worthy the Country of my adoption, I am no longer of any use to you or her. I will not be a burthen to her—, so goodbye” with these words he leaned the stump upon the sill of the Port and leaped overboard—<sup>17</sup> Many of our fine fellows bled to death for want of tourniquets— An old Quarter Master by the name of Bland, was standing at the Wheel, I saw a Shot coming over the Fore Yard in such a direction as I thought would hit him or me. so I told him to jump, and pulled him towards me, at the same instant, the shot took off his right leg— I helped the old fellow below, and after the action went to see how he fared, but I just got to him in time to hear his last words, he had bled to death, before it came his turn to be amputated I had escaped without any injury except the bruise from my fall in the Ward Room, a few scatches, and the loss of my coat tail, was all the damage done me— next day however my bruise pained me considerably, but it worked off in 4 or 5 days, cured by hard work— I went on board the *Phebe* about 8. P.M and was ushered into the steerage; I was so mortified at my capture, that I could not refrain from crying, and so I laid down and gave vent to my tears— I was aroused from my stupor, by hearing a young Reefer sing out “Prize Oh” Boys “a fine grunter by Jove”— I thought at once of a Pet Pig we had on board by the name of Murphy== I immediately claimed him as my Pig— “my Pet Pig” ah, but said he “you are a prisoner, and your Pig also,” but said I “we always respect private property,” and as I had laid hold of Murphy at the beginning I said I would not give him up unless compelled this was nuts for the Oldsters, who immediately sung out, “go it my little Yankee, and if you can thrash Shorty” (a sobriquet applied to the reefer) “you shall have your Pig.” Agreed said I, for I knew there were few of any boys of my age that could master me. so a Ring was formed and in the Open space, at it we went. I soon found, his pugilistic education did not equal mine, and that he was no match for me, and as he made the discovery as soon as I did, he yeilded the Pig, and I took Master Murphy under my arm, feeling I had in some degree wiped off the disgrace of our capture== The



John G. Cowell



next morning I looked round to see what had become of all the Officers of our ship— Lt Wilmer poor fellow had been sent forward to let go the sheet anchor, and while in the performance of that duty, had been struck by a shot, Killed and fallen overboard; after the action a little negro boy that he had, by the name of Ruff, came up on the Quarter Deck, and asked me where his master was— I replied, I had heard he was killed, well said he, if he is gone, I will go to, and jumped out of the port and was drowned— Wilmer was a good fellow, but was not fit for a 1st. Lt and let his faults go with him— Lt McKnight still lived, and together with Actg. Mid Lyman was to go to England or Rio, to give evidence of the capture of the Ship—<sup>18</sup> Cowell was dead and Odenheimer was the only one Lt. left us. Barnwell the Actg. Master, had been wounded in the face and breast, but was doing well— Isaacs, Ogden, Dusenberry and myself were all that remained of the Midn. without material injury— Drs. Hoffman and Montgome[r]y were neither of them hurt, although some of their patients were Killed whilst under their hands— Too much praise cannot be given to those gentlemen for their skill and attention to the wounded— Many of those who were burned died, but very few of those who had been early amputated— It is astonishing what powers of endurance, some men possess there was one man who swam on shore with scarcely a square inch of skin on him, and altho he was for some days deranged he ultimately got well, and served with me afterwards on the W. I. Station— It was the same old Boatswains Mate Kingsbu[r]y who so distinguished himself off Cape Horn and for which he was made Boatswain of the *Essex Junior*, he accompanied Capt. Downes on board in his boat, as he said to share the fate of his old Ship— Another seaman swam on shore with 16 or 18 pieces of iron in his leg, scales from the muzzle of his gun, he also recovered without losing his leg— I was sent for by Capt. H into the cabin, Capt. P was present— Capt. H asked me to take some breakfast— my heart was too full— I could not eat— Capt. H said in a Kind manner, never mind my little fellow, it will be your turn next perhaps— I told him I hoped so,— and I left the cabin, to keep from crying in his presence— We were all soon put on parole, and I went on shore— our wounded were all removed from the ship to a comfortable Room, hired for the purpose— I volunteered my services to the Surgeon, as an assistant, and was given charge of all such patients as required plastering and rubbing— These consisted of those burnt and bruised— never have I earned Uncle Sams money so faithful and hardly as during my service in that Hospital— I rose at day light, and spead a bolt of linen into plasters by 8 o'clock—got my breakfast, and then went to work on my patients— This continued until the 27th. of April, when the Capt. succeeded in making arrangements, with Capt. H. for the transportation of the remainder of our crew to the U.S. in the *Essex Junior*—<sup>19</sup> She was accordingly dismantled, and we embarked— We were but a small band of officers when we were assembled, and yet we were better off than the crew their numbers, were wofully diminished, we went into action with 255 men, and now numbered only 132, including wounded— we were compelled to leave 2 of our poor fellows in the hospital, one died the day after we sailed, and the other recovered and returned to the U States. His name was Wm. Call, he lost his leg during the action, and while he was weltering in his blood, and it yet hung by the skin, he discovered Adam Roach skulking on the Berth Deck, and he dragged his shattered stump all around the Bay House with his pistol in his hand, trying to get a Shot at him— On the 27th. April

we embarked and made sail for the U. States having made all the arrangements necessary for the wounded— We had generally good weather, and passed the Cape with Top Gallant Steering Sails set— on the passage, I still attended to my patients, and made a singular discovery on one of them,— a young Scotchman by the name of John Glasser, who had been handed over to me to treat for a severe contusion of the right Shoulder— The Shoulder was much swollen and the Skin ruffled, but apparently not broken, but as he always complained of a particular spot, at length I informed the Doctor that there was a rising from the bone forming, and that there was some thing hard inside, on examination the Doctor agreed with me, and made an incision with his knife laid the shoulder bone bare, and found the half of a grape shot, that was so fast in the shoulder bone, that it required all his strength to remove it— When we arrived off Long Island at the distance of 10 leagues from the land we were boarded by the Razeer, *Saturn*, Capt. Nash<sup>20</sup> the boarding officer took Capt. P's report on board, to Capt. N. who said Capt. Hillyer had no right to make such an arrangement wheerupon Capt. P. told him, that by the agreemnt. if any of his Majesty's Ships should detain him over 12 hours, that by Capt. P.s delivering his sword to the Officer detaining him, he would be considered a prisoner of War to said Officer, and absolved from all obligations to Capt. H— Capt. P. reminded the officer of that fact, and Offered him his sword, to convey to Capt. Nash, which was refused, and we were ordered to remain under the lee of the Razeer, all night— The last words of Capt. P to the boarding Officer were, "tell Capt. Nash, that if British Officers have no respect for the honor of each other, I shall have none for them" and I will consider (if detained all night) myself at liberty—to effect my escape if I can— On the return of the boat to the S. they hailed us, and ordered us to remain under their lee all night— The next morning after breakfast, the Capt. ordered his boat manned and armed— She was a whale boat, that pulled very fast, and it was evident he was determined to make a desperate fight if pursued— He then pushed off and they did not discover him for some time as our Ship was Kept directly between the Razeer and the Boat— As soon as they discoved him from the mast head, they turned the hands up and wore Ship, and passed under our stern but in an instant there came up such a dense fog, that though we heard every order given on board the Razeer, we could not see her— We made all sail to Sandy Hook, and in a few moments were going 9 Knots, we Kept a man at the Royal Mast Head, and about 11 A.M. he discovered the broad pendant of the *Saturn*, to windward and before the ma[i]n was out of the fog, on her Fore Top Gallant Yards we were all snug with the Main Topsail to the Mast. She fired a gun to leeward, and ran down to us. Their boat then came on board, with a different officer in her for the 1st. was a gentleman, and this one was an upstart; & as he came over the gangway he comm[enced] by saying. "You drift quite fast, we have been going 9 Knots for the last 3 hours, and yet we find you abeam of us, with your Maintopsail to the Mast." "Yes" was the quiet reply of Capt. Downes. "And that was Capt. Porter who left the Ship in a boat I suppose" "It was" said Capt. D. "By God you will a be leaving soon, if we dont take your boats from you" "You had better" replied Capt. D. coolly— "By God, I would if I had my way" Capt. D. now advanced saying, "You impertinent puppy, if you have any duty to do here sir—Do it, but if you dare again to insult me, I will throw you overboard" accompanying these words with a very significant gesture— The young man jumped into his boat, and left the Ship

soon after the regular boarding Officer came on board, and said Capt. Nash hoped the Capt. D would excuse the youth and ignorance of the Officer, who had insulted him, and receive his apology, as the Capt. had commanded him to ask pardon for the insults— He then told Capt. D. that Capt. N. had ordered the men to be mustered, to see if they tallied with the passport the crew were accordingly mustered, their names were called and each man critically examined as he passed forward, but no one was stopped As the last man passed, the officer said to the man beside him, (one of his own boats crew) "which is the man, of whom you spoke as being an Englishman" we all now trembled for some poor devil, we knew not who, but the fellow with the utmost composure replied "I never said he was an Englishman" but said the Officer "You said you had sailed with him" "Oh Yes" replied the man "but it was out of New York though" The Officer then with some confusion, made an apology, returned on board the *Razee*, our passport was countersigned by Capt. Nash and we were allowed to depart.—<sup>21</sup> We then made all sail for Sandy Hook, about sundown we fell in with the Frigate *Narcissus*, the boarding officer took our passport on board, it was countersigned by the Capt.<sup>22</sup> whose name I have now forgotten, and we proceeded, about 8' o'clock we made the Hook. The night was dark and squally, we could not procure a pilot so the Capt took her in by his chart. When we got opposite to the small Battery in the Horse Shoe, we hoisted our colors with a lantern, clewed up our sails, and sent a boat ashore, with a light in it— By accident the light was extinguished, and the fort immediately commenced firing on us— This continued until the boat returned and procured another light, our men were all ordered below, but the ship was not struck by a single shot, which convinced me it was not as awful a thing as was supposed to lie under a battery— We now furled sails and remained here all night for as they were now convinced that we were Americans, we were unwilling to risk another contact with the next battery— It was well we did, for next day while we were standing in to the harbor under full sail, at mid day, with our colors flying, they fired at us again, so that we found it as difficult to get clear of the shot of our friends as of our enemies We anchored in N. York in July,<sup>23</sup> and were much surprised to find the Capt. had not arrived, but he did so in a day or two afterwards and informed us he was much farther from the land when he left us than he supposed, and did not reach it until near sun set, that he was sufficiently below the fog, to notice all our movements, and saw both ships make sail for the Capes, he had great difficulty—in landing in consequence of the Surf— When he did succeed he was taken prisoner by the Militia, but as soon as he showed his commission, they gave him 3 cheers, and fired a salute of 21 Guns from a small swivel, gave him a horse to ride to N. York, and an ox cart to carry his boat— When he arrived in Brooklyn he reported to the Commanding Officer, took a hack and came over to N. York, where the mob, took the horses from the carriage, and dragged him all over the city—thereby showing that his countrymen, had esteemed his defeat not less than he had,<sup>24</sup> we were all put on leave—until regularly exchanged or peace concluded The *Essex Junior* was sold—<sup>25</sup> and thus terminated one of the most eventful cruises of my life—

D, MdAN, "Some Reminiscences; of Early Life. By, D. G. Farragut, A Captain of The U.S. Navy," pp. 20–27. Farragut dictated the majority of this autobiography to an amanuensis in 1845. The first two hundred twenty-one pages of text are

numbered. The last seven pages are not and appear to be in Farragut's hand, carrying his life's story through 18 September 1854. Farragut's son, Loyall, incorporated lengthy, edited selections from "Some Reminiscences" in his biography of his father, *Life of David Glasgow Farragut*, published in 1879. Lewis, *David Glasgow Farragut*, Vol. I, pp. 241, 306n.

1. Robert White entered *Essex* as a seaman. He would later participate in the mutiny at Nuku Hiva on 7 May 1814, leaving that island with his fellow mutineers in the prize ship *Seringapatam*. See *Journal of Midshipman William W. Feltus*, 7 May 1814, pp. 772–74; and, Gamble to Crowninshield, 28 Aug. 1815, pp. 774–80. Porter's confrontation with White is also described in *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 442–43.

2. This incident involving Tameoy is related in Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 444–45, 497–98, 502. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, chapters 14–17.

3. *Essex* arrived off the coast of Chile on 12 January and at Valparaiso on 3 February 1814. *Phoebe* and *Cherub* arrived at the Chilean port on 8 February.

4. Probably George O'Brian, first mate of the British merchant ship *Emily*. Hillyar to Croker, 28 Feb. 1814, p. 714.

5. This initial encounter between *Essex* and *Phoebe* is described in Porter to Jones, 9 July 1814, pp. 764–65.

6. For Hillyar's complaint on this head, see Hillyar to Croker, 26 June 1814, pp. 719–20.

7. The incident Farragut describes occurred on 27 February 1814. For additional documentation, see pp. 719–23, 733–34.

8. A one-gun battery detached from Fort Baron. Log Book of U.S. Frigate *Essex*, 28 Mar. 1814, p. 726.

9. For documentation on several of these exchanges, see Crew of *Essex* to Crew of *Phoebe*, 9 Mar. 1814; and, Midshipman of *Phoebe* to Crew of *Essex*, 10 Mar. 1814, pp. 721–23.

10. Shortly before the events of 28 March, Porter had ordered *Essex's* purser, John R. Shaw, ashore to mislead the British into thinking the American frigate was not yet ready to put to sea. Bostwick must have been ordered to *Essex* to serve in Shaw's stead. See note 1, p. 770.

11. Hillyar was forty-four years old at the time of the battle. The British commander had entered the Royal Navy in 1779, rising to the rank of lieutenant by the age of fourteen. He saw his first service on the North American Station during the Revolutionary War and later earned distinction for his performance in the Mediterranean during Britain's wars with France. It was in the Mediterranean that Hillyar met and befriended David Porter. After the capture of *Essex*, Hillyar helped to negotiate the Treaty of Lircay in May 1814, ending armed hostilities between Peru and Chile. On Porter's earlier acquaintance with Hillyar, see *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 474–75. Documentation on Hillyar's role as an intermediary between Chile and Peru may be found among his 1814 correspondence with the Admiralty in UKLPR, 1/1950, and, Graham and Humphreys, *The Navy and South America*, pp. 141–97.

12. Farragut means Hillyar here, not Porter.

13. On Lieutenant William Ingram's visit to *Essex*, see Statement of Master Commandant John Downes, 20 Aug. 1814, p. 723.

14. Fort Rosario.

15. According to *Essex's* muster roll, Cowell died on 25 April 1814. DNA, RG45, *Essex* muster and pay rolls, 1801–14, entry no. 637, p. 266.

16. For additional examples of heroism in *Essex* that received public notice after the return of the frigate's survivors, see the editorial entitled "American Heroism," in *Niles' Weekly Register*, 20 Aug. 1814.

17. On the fate of McKnight and Lyman, see note 36, p. 741.

18. See Hillyar to Porter, 4 Apr. 1814, p. 746; and, Passport for *Essex Junior*, 13 Apr. 1814, p. 747.

19. Captain James Nash, R.N.

20. On the detention and consequences of *Essex Junior's* detention by *Saturn*, see pp. 764–68.

21. Captain John R. Lumley, R.N.

22. *Essex Junior* arrived at New York on 8 July after a passage of seventy-one days from Valparaiso. Downes to Jones, 8 July 1814, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 2, No. 3 (M147, Roll No. 5).

23. On the hero's welcome Porter received on his return to the United States, see pp. 760–64.

24. Secretary Jones authorized the purchase of *Essex Junior* for \$25,000. Jones to Porter, 13 July 1814, p. 766.



## A Hero's Welcome

If David Porter had any doubts as to how the loss of *Essex* would be greeted by the public and the Navy Department, they were immediately dispelled when he stepped ashore at New York. The defeated captain and his crew were given a hero's welcome.<sup>1</sup> Parades, dinners, and public rallies celebrated the return of *Essex*'s brave sailors. As the documents below illustrate, Americans saw little to criticize in what was deemed an unequal contest between *Essex* and her captors.

1. The *Daily National Intelligencer* reported that on Porter's arrival at New York City "the citizens took the horses from his carriage, and drew it up to the City Hotel, and from thence to his lodgings in Greenwich street, with constant and loud huzzas." *Daily National Intelligencer*, 11 July 1814.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER

Navy Department  
July 10th. 1814

Sir

Accept my congratulations upon the safe arrival of the gallant commander and surviving Officers and crew of the U.S. late Ship *Essex*, in triumph though captives; having gloriously elevated the naval character of our country even beyond the towering eminence it had before attained.

The enquiry you solicit shall be speedily made—not the mere formal investigation which necessarily follows ordinary casualty, but the official record of facts, which shall place the fame of the vanquished on the same proud column with that of the most renowned Victors.<sup>1</sup>

The interesting narrative of your cruise<sup>2</sup> has been received and shall be laid before an anxious and admiring public without delay, and no effort will be wanting to effect the exchange of your brave companions. I am very respectfully  
Sir Your Obdt. Servt.

W Jones

ALS, PHI, Simon Gratz Autograph Collection. Addressed: "Captain David Porter/U.S. Navy/New York."

1. Porter requested a court of inquiry into the loss of *Essex* in his letter to Jones of 8 July 1814. On 11 August Secretary Jones ordered Captain Stephen Decatur to convene a court of inquiry on board the frigate *President* in New York harbor. Eight days later Jones ordered the court suspended so that Porter and the remaining crew of *Essex* could proceed to Washington and aid in the defense of the capital. The court was never reconvened. Porter to Jones, 8 July 1814, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 144 (M125, Roll No. 37); Jones to Decatur, 11 Aug. 1814, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 400 (M149, Roll No. 11); and Jones to Porter, 19 Aug. 1814, p. 199.

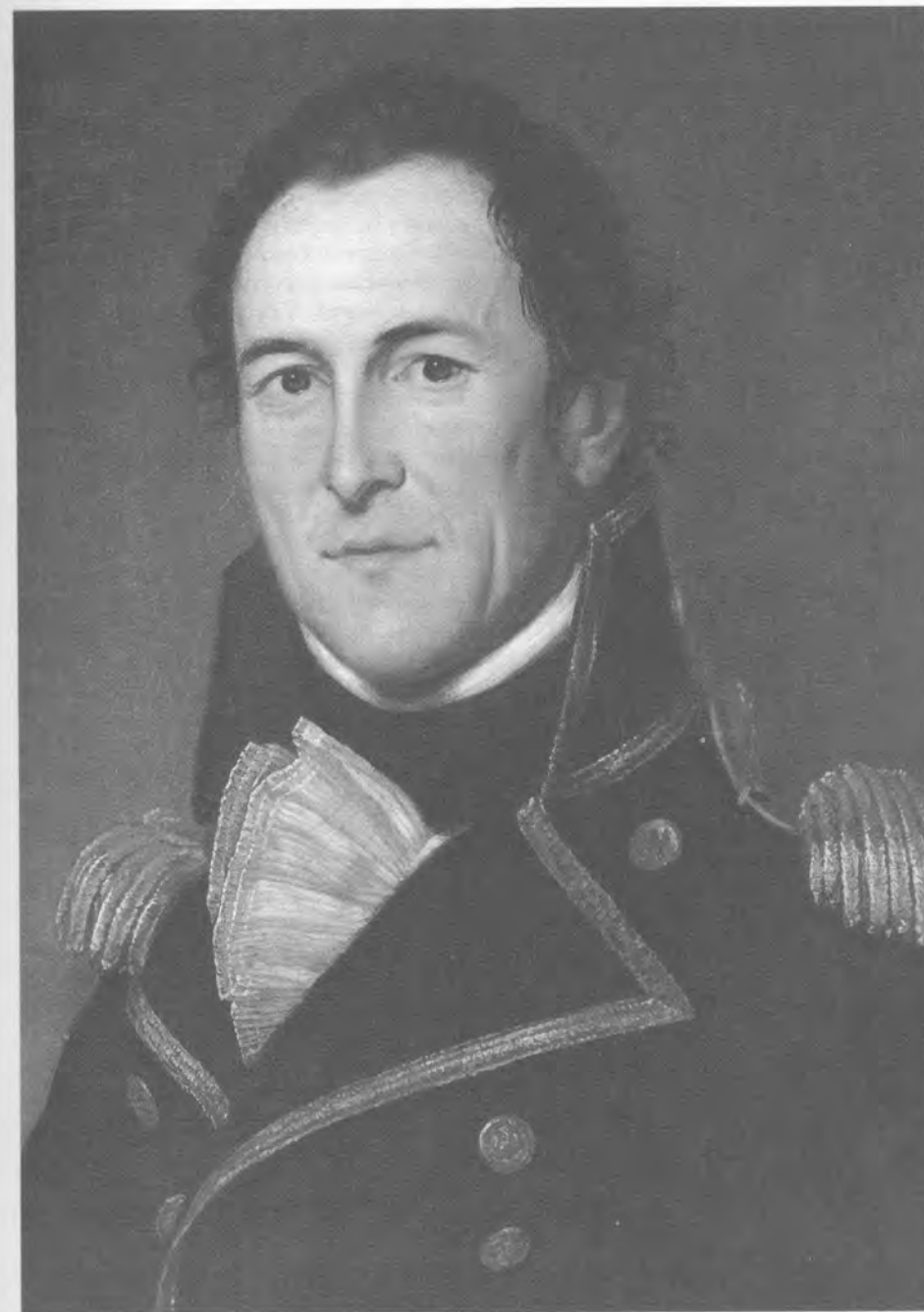
2. Porter to Jones, 3 July 1814, pp. 730–41.

EDITORIAL ON THE LOSS OF *ESSEX*

CAPTAIN PORTER

From the *Columbian*.

The return of this distinguished naval officer to his native country after a toilsome absence of nearly two years in her service, has created in the hearts of his



David Porter

fellow citizens a kind of melancholy joy scarcely ever equalled on any similar occasion. We are rejoiced once more to clasp the hand of a hero whose bravery stands pre-eminent in the naval records of our country; but, at the same time, are lost in a sort of indescribable sorrow that almost silences utterance, and we can only faintly articulate with tears of transport starting in our eyes—welcome home, our dearest brother. We can speak to him of his health—of his good fortune, in reaching after a variety of vicissitudes the grateful bosom of his paternal land, but we dare not ask him how fares his brave little *Essex* and her gallant crew. Alas! She is no more—His downcast looks speak but too plainly the nature of her fate, and, painful as the tidings are, we must receive them and bear up manfully under the stroke. And need we then indeed recoil at the recital of these tidings? Was she fairly won, in equal combat, by a more courageous and intrepid foe? No—Thanks to the brave spirits who sailed beneath her glorious flag, and ten thousand thanks to the yet braver spirit under whose auspices they fought; she stood her ground, with incomparable zeal, against a far superior force, for an almost incredible period, and only yielded the victory when the flower of her heroes were laid speechless on her encrimsoned decks. What! my fellow-citizens, shall we mourn the loss of the *Essex*, when we bear in mind the stupendous force by which that loss, after two and a half hours of desperate fighting, was effected: and yet even while we have the strongest reason to believe, that had not the unfortunate explosion of a few cartridges paralyzed the efforts of an unwearied crew, her most powerful antagonist in all likelihood would have been carried by boarding, and this day, wore the American flag? Surely, none but men of the most exalted courage could ever dare to hazard so unequal a conflict; and our regret at the ignoble capture of the vessel should be drowned in the loudest applauses of our tars. The archives of the British navy, we venture to assert, throughout their voluminous extent do not contain a similar display of unexampled magnanimity, and the only plausible reason that can be assigned for it in this instance emanates from the peculiar principle universally adopted by the naval warriors of the United States, never to surrender the ship, even to a superior force, while power is left to fight her. Such was the brilliant exit of that truly valuable frigate, and such the characteristic energy of those hardy tars, by whom she was so long and so valiantly defended.

As to the enemy, a victory like this can indeed be of no other service to him than as affording another extraordinary example of the superior discipline and undaunted valor of American seamen, and all he can reap from the acquisition of so dear-bought a prize, will amount only to the plain simple fact, that another frigate has been taken. He dare not say *how* she has been taken—nor dare he without the most flagrant injustice add an unmerited laurel to the brows of the two inhuman wretches<sup>1</sup> who took her, should either of these wretches ever reach home. Inhuman wretches, did I say? Yes, fellow-citizens, *after* the colors of the *Essex* were lowered and the reluctant signal of submission thrown out, not content with having abandoned in cold blood two unfortunate men on a buoy, to perish in the storm; these inhuman Britons continued without relaxation their galling fire and barbarously murdered four American tars. Gracious God! grant that the hour may soon arrive when Porter shall chastise these monsters for their savage cruelty, and pour out vengeance on their devoted heads. But let us endeavor to lower this exulting tone a little, and state the case to the public as fully as the nature of it will admit, so that upon striking the balance it may be clearly seen upon what high grounds captain Porter and his matchless crew are

entitled to the grateful plaudits of their countrymen. It appears that on the 28th March last, while the *Essex* was lying at anchor, near the bay of Valparaiso, in a violent gale, having already suffered considerable damage, the British frigate *Phæbe* and sloop of war *Cherub* fell in with her, and after a most sanguine contest of two hours and a half, during which the *Essex* obliged them to haul off to repair, as might be expected, succeeded in capturing her. Now, before we proceed any further, we shall just stop to ask two simple questions. First, whether the scene of this action, being within "pistol shot of the shore" and within gun-shot of two Spanish forts, was not within the jurisdiction of a sovereign state, in amity with the United States and Great Britain? Second, whether the best writers on national polity do not universally acknowledge that the jurisdiction of a state extends *at least* within the waters of the sea, as far as its cannon can reach, if not farther, and that no foreign ships can commit any acts of hostility upon each other while within the jurisdiction of a third, with whom they are both in amity, upon any pretences whatever? This *Phæbe* from all accounts appears to be an old hand at the business, and is perhaps one of the strongest frigates, without exception, in the British navy. From "Steel's List" we learn that she was built in the year 1795, and that previous to 1798 she took the *L'Africaine*, of 44 guns, and afterwards the *La Neried*, of 36, and that in 1810, under the command of her present captain, in company with the *Astrea* and *Galatea*, she took the *La Neride* and *La Renomine*, of 44 guns each. The *Cherub* was built in the year 1807,<sup>2</sup> and is well known to be one of the most powerful ships of her class. Now, when in the capture of the *Essex* this immense disparity of force is connected with the fact that the crew of the latter were greatly reduced in number, while the *Phæbe* and *Cherub* had each their full complement of men, we cannot wonder at the result of the battle. Let us then console ourselves with the proud reflection that she was ably defended to the last against a very superior force—that she was only delivered over into the hands of her antagonists to preserve the lives of many of her wounded heroes—that the conduct of Captain Porter and his courageous tars outshines the most gallant exploit recorded in the naval annals of the world—and that the defence of the *Essex* surpasses that of the late *Epervier*,<sup>3</sup> as infinitely as the Heavens surpass the earth. Before we conclude these hasty remarks, however, we cannot avoid congratulating our fellow citizens upon the important advantages resulting from the long cruise of the *Essex*; from which it will be seen that though her own carcass is lost perhaps forever to the U. States, she has bequeathed them a legacy that will ever remain a splendid monument of her inestimable services, and fully entitle her late intrepid captain to the immediate command of another frigate.

#### NAUTILUS.

*Note.* It is proper to add several interesting particulars which, though doubtless not far from the real truth of the case, may perhaps differ a little from the future statement of captain Porter; for which we look forward with the liveliest anxiety, reserving, in compliance with his request, a more correct account of the action until his official report appears. The *Phæbe* is 19 years old, and according to "Steel's List" is rated at 36 guns, but in the engagement with the *Essex* mounted 48,<sup>4</sup> and had a full crew of 320 men. The *Cherub* is 7 years old, and by the same author is rated at 20 guns, though she mounted at this time 28 and had a complement of 180 men. The *Essex* is 14 years old, rated at 32 guns and went into action with a crew of only 260 or 265 men.<sup>5</sup> All her guns are car-



ronades,<sup>6</sup> excepting 6, which alone could reach the enemy, who were more fortunate in being enabled to annoy her with 34 of their long cannon. The *Essex* had 52 men killed and 100 wounded and missing.<sup>7</sup> The loss of the enemy could not be ascertained.<sup>8</sup> It is stated in addition that the *Essex* had safely deposited, previous to the battle, two millions of specie in Valparaiso.

Printed, *Columbian*, reprinted in the *Daily National Intelligencer*, 22 July 1814.

1. James Hillyar and Thomas T. Tucker.

2. *Cherub* was launched on 12 December 1807. Colledge, *Ships of the Royal Navy*, Vol. 1, p. 120.

3. H.M. brig-sloop *Epervier* was captured after a forty-five minute action by U.S. sloop of war *Peacock* on 28 April 1814. The British vessel was severely damaged in her hull and rigging with more than five feet of water in her hold at the time of her capture. Her casualties numbered more than twenty killed and wounded out of a crew of one hundred twenty-eight men. For the after action report of *Peacock's* commander, Lewis Warrington, see Warrington to Jones, 29 Apr. 1814, DNA, RG45, MC, 1814, Vol. 1, No. 94 (M147, Roll No. 5).

4. According to Porter, *Phoebe* mounted fifty-three guns of all calibers. Porter to Jones, 3 July 1814, p. 733.

5. Porter states that *Essex* had a crew of two hundred fifty-five men and mounted forty thirty-two pound carronades and six long twelve pound guns. *Ibid.*

6. For Porter's complaint to Jones about the disadvantages of his armament, see *ibid.*

7. Porter reported one hundred fifty-four total casualties. *Ibid.*, p. 737.

8. Hillyar reported eleven men killed and wounded in *Phoebe* and four in *Cherub*. Hillyar to Croker, 30 Mar. 1814, UKLPR, Adm. 1/1950, No. 264, enclosure.

## Parole Broken

*The passage of Essex Junior from Valparaiso to New York was uneventful until the cartel ship arrived off Sandy Hook. There she was overhauled by the British raze Saturn and detained while Saturn's captain determined on the validity of the passport she was sailing under. An enraged Porter considered the terms of the American parole violated and therefore no longer in force. Rather than remain subject to Saturn's captain, Porter made an early morning escape from Essex Junior by boat, landing at Babylon, New York. In his report to Secretary Jones, Porter requested a ruling on the status of his men.*

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

N York July 9th. 1814

Sir/

You have already been made acquainted with the arrangement made with Commodore Hillyar respecting the *Essex Junior*—

On the 5th. inst. fell in with the British Razée *Saturn* Captain Nash who examined our passport<sup>1</sup> endorsed it and permitted us to proceed, About two hours afterwards we were again brought too by the same ship and were informed we must remain under her lee next morning as Comre. Hillyar had no authority to make such arrangement with me; I informed them that if the ship met with any further detention I should consider it a violation of the contract and no longer hold myself bound to comply with it but wished them to consider me their prisoner and offered my sword, they refused to receive it and took my passport on board the *Saturn*— at 7 O'clock next morning perceiving no disposition on the part of the enemy to liberate us I determined to attempt my escape; the

Ships being distant from each other near musquet shot and about 40 miles from the east end of long Island I maned and Armed a boat and pulled off, before I had got out of gun shot they discovered my intentions and gave chase to me under a press of canvass but fortunately it suddenly grew very foggy and by changing my course I was enabled to elude them— on its clearing off I discovered the *Essex Junior* under a press of Sail and the *Saturn* in chase of her and on her firing a gun she hove too— at 5 o'clock that evening I reached long Island landed at the Town of Babylon About 40 miles from N York where I put my boat on wheels and at 5 PM next day launched her at Brooklin— The *Essex Junior*, (Captain Downs informs me), was detained 24 hours had her hold broke out casks scutled the Warrants and commissions of all the Officers strictly examined the crew mustered and every insult and indignity offered that their motive and ingenuity could invent— it remains only for you to say whether the British government is now entitled to an exchange for the prisoner[s] brought home in the *Essex Junior*.<sup>2</sup> I have the Honor to be With great respect your Obedt. servt.

D Porter

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 4, No. 147 (M125, Roll No. 37).

1. See p. 747.

2. Porter also describes *Essex Junior's* encounter with *Saturn* in *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 491–93.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER

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

Navy Department  
July 13th. 1814

Sir,

I have before me your letter of the 9th. which has been exhibited to the President and received his attention.—

The conduct of the commander of the *Saturn*, has excited in his breast, as it must in every liberal and correct mind, the most indignant feelings.—

The history and the presence of the brave remnant of the crew of the *Essex*, was alone calculated to inspire a generous sympathy and courteous demeanour, though the highest safeguard known to civilized warfare had not guaranteed their exemption from molestation, and it is difficult to reconcile the absence of those feelings with the character which captain Nash doubtless aspires to.—

The circumstances of your escape from the *Essex Junr.* while under detention, would it is believed sustain yourself and your government in dissolving your parole, but as the *Essex Junr.* was suffered to proceed under the original passport though indecently detained & rudely treated the scrupulously exact and liberal conduct of the Government of the United States in despite of the injustice and illiberality which it has received from the hands of the Enemy may possibly induce the President to wave the right which the violation in this case would enable him to assert.—

The matter however is still under consideration and will be decided upon in due time.—

Your Officers will for the present and until further order can be taken remain attached to the *Essex Jr.*

Your crew will be immediately paid off upon a requisition being made upon the Agent at New York<sup>1</sup> for the amount of the Balance due them, which shall be remitted to him without delay.—<sup>2</sup>

I have this day accepted Purser Shaw's Bills for \$29,000. approved by yourself.

You will proceed to join your friends at your pleasure and after having consoled them for your long absence and reposed yourself we shall be gratified with your presence here.—

The court of Enquiry will be ordered to be held either in Philada. or New York as may best suit your convenience.—<sup>3</sup>

I confirm the purchase of the *Essex Junr.* for account of the United States at the sum of \$25000.—<sup>4</sup>

You will please to transmit to this Department the valuation made by the persons appointed by you for that purpose.— I am respectfully &c.

W: Jones.

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, pp. 374–75 (M149, Roll No. 11).

1. Navy Agent John Bullus.

2. For documentation on the payment of *Essex's* crew, see pp. 768–72.

3. Jones ordered the court of inquiry convened at New York. See pp. 768, 769–72.

4. The prize case papers for *Atlantic*, renamed *Essex Junior*, are in DNA, RG21, Records of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, Case 10 (M928, Roll No. 1). Additional documents are printed in *ASP: Naval Affairs*, Vol. 1, pp. 388–92, 425.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO  
COMMISSARY GENERAL OF PRISONERS JOHN MASON

The Commissary General  
of Prisoners

Navy Department  
July 16th 1814

Sir

I have the honor to transmit to you the original passport granted at Valparaiso de Chili on the 13th April last by Commodore Hillyar Commander of the British Frigate *Phæbe* to the Officers & Crew of the U S Ship *Essex Junior* and to the surviving officers and Crew of the U S late ship *Essex* named in that passport as prisoners of War protecting as well the persons as the said Cartel Ship *Essex Junior* from any impediment or molestation. I shall immediately transmit to you copies of the letters received from Captain David Porter<sup>1</sup> and Lieut. John Downes<sup>2</sup> on the subject of the outrage and molestation committed by Captain Nash commanding the British Ship of War *Saturn*—upon the said Cartel from which, while under unwarrantable detention by the said Capt. Nash, Captain Porter after having declared the Cartel Violated and himself no longer bound thereby and offered his sword; made his escape in a boat though pursued and fired at by the said British Ship of War *Saturn*—

I shall exhibit to you these documents in order that the President of the U States may decide whether under the Circumstances stated, Captain Porter, and those who escaped with him in the boat, can be justly considered as prisoners of War and upon such measures as he may deem necessary to adopt in relation to the violation of said Cartel—

In the event of the brave Officers & Crew of the *Essex* being considered as prisoners of War, I pray your best efforts to restore them as speedily as possible

to the Service of their Admiring Country and in particular their heroic Commander I am very respectfully your Obt. Servt.

W Jones

LB, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 12, p. 196 (M209, Roll No. 4).

1. Porter to Jones, 9 July 1814, pp. 764–65.

2. Downes to Jones, 11 July 1814, DNA, RG45, MC, 1815, No. 130 (M147, Roll No. 6).

CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Chester 19th. July 1814—

Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th.

You no doubt have before this received the passport given by Capt. Hillyar, as well as farther particulars from Capt. Downes of the conduct of the Captain of the *Saturn*—

Capt. Downes and the rest of the officers are of the belief that my escape, alone, was the cause of the liberation of the *Essex Junior*—

I was a prisoner on parole, the conditions on which that parole was accepted were not respected, I was consequently no longer bound, I had the right of absolving myself from my parole, did so and yielded myself a prisoner offering to return my sword, the acceptance of this was refused, I could obtain no satisfactory information as to their intentions and made my escape— Under such circumstances I hope my country will never subject me to the humiliation of an exchange, it would be the cause of more triumph to the British Naval Officers than even their victory over the *Essex*— I am willing to take on myself the risque of the consequences which might result from being again taken prisoner. I have the honor to be with great respect Your Obedient Servant

D Porter

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 9 (M125, Roll No. 38).

COMMISSARY GENERAL OF PRISONERS JOHN MASON TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

"Office of commissary Genl. of Prisoners"  
August 10th. 1814

"Sir,

"I beg leave to transmit you, herewith, copies of three letters, of the 3d. 4th. & 9th. instant, which have passed between Colo. Thomas Barclay, the British Agent for Prisoners of War & myself in relation to an exchange proposed by me, of captain Porter and the officers and crew of the United States' late Frigate *Essex*."— You will remark Sir, that the British Agent, altho' he considers, under the practice of his Government, that their paroles "are null and the officers & men at liberty to serve, in like manner as if they had not been made prisoners," declines to exchange them against British Officers and crews similarly situated: for these and other reasons, given in my letter to him of the 9th. instant, I have been instructed by the Secretary of State to declare the officers & crew of the *Essex* discharged from Parole."—



"I have therefore, the honor to announce to you that, capt. David Porter and other officers and the crew of the U States late Frigate *Essex* captured in March last, by the British Ships of War under the command of captain Hillyar, are accordingly declared discharged from their paroles taken by the said Captain Hillyar, and as free to serve, in any capacity, as if they had never been made prisoners.—"<sup>1</sup> "I have the honor to be with great respect, Sir, Your most obedt. Servt."

"J: Mason"

LB, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 401 (M149, Roll No. 11). This letter was enclosed in Jones to Porter, 11 Aug. 1814, for a copy of which, see DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 402 (M149, Roll No. 11).

1. Vice Admiral Cochrane would later signify to Mason the Admiralty's concurrence with this judgment. Cochrane to Mason, Feb. 1815, UKENL, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2349, p. 258. For Cochrane and Mason's earlier exchanges on this subject, see Cochrane to Mason, 7 Sept. 1814, and Mason to Cochrane, 27 Sept. 1814, MiU-C, David Porter Papers.

## Pay, Promotions, Prize Money, and Pensions

*Money was uppermost in the minds of Essex's surviving crew members once they arrived home. With many of the ship's company having lost all they owned after being made prisoner by the British, the condition of these men was truly desperate. Thus, they eagerly anticipated the payment of back wages and prize shares from the sale of Essex Junior. Relatives of Essex's fallen also sought their financial due, putting forth claims for pay, prize shares, and pensions. In addition, the frigate's officers sought rewards of a different kind—promotion.*

ACTING LIEUTENANT JOHN M. MAURY TO SECRETARY OF STATE MONROE

New York July 19th 1814.

Sir

The enclosed letter I recieved a few days ago, and very much regret, that it is not in my power, to present it in person. You will percieve by the General's letter<sup>1</sup> my motive for thus troubling you. As my situation has been peculiarly unpleasant I will relate to you the circumstances attending it which I will thank you to explain to The Honble. Secretary of the Navy. In March 1809 I obtained a warrant as Midshipman dated 16th of January of the same year and at the same time recieved orders to join the Frigate *United States* which I did, a few days afterwards, and continued in her until June 1811 when I accepted of an offer made me by my friend Lt. Lewis<sup>2</sup> to accompany him on a trading voyage to the East Indies: my reason for adopting this measure was that I considered the merchant service a much better situation for a young officer to become a proficient in seamanship than on board one of our ships of war as they, in time of peace are more in port than at sea. This plan met with the approbation of the then Secretary of the Navy<sup>3</sup> and on your recommendation he granted me a furlough to carry it into execution. Whilst pursuing this voyage I was left at the Island of Nooaheevah. On the arrival of the

*Essex* at that place I was first informed of the war. I immediately offered my services to captn. Porter which were accepted and on the 28th of Octbr. 1813: I recieved his orders to Join the Frigate *Essex* where I remained until February last; when I recieved from him an appointment as acting Lieutenant on board the *Essex Junr.*<sup>4</sup>

On my arrival here I found that most of the officers of my own date and many who entered the service but a short time previous to my departure; had recieved commissions or appointments to act as Lieutenants . . . May I hope sir that you will interest yourself in my favor and endeavour to procure me a commission of or near the same date of those officers' who entered the service in 1809. The voyage I have made has been an extensive one, comprising the circumnavigation of the globe; and I flatter myself that I have not been idle. Perhaps sir I ask too much of you; but I certainly ought to expect to rank higher than two, of the officers, late of the *Essex* who have gone on to Washington to apply for commissions neither of them have been so long in service as myself—<sup>5</sup> I hope sir you will excuse the liberty I have taken of troubling you with this disagreeable task and permit me to assure you that I remain with the highest respect and esteem your obt. and very humble svt.

Jn<sup>o</sup> M Maury

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1814, Vol. 3, No. 27 (M148, Roll No. 13). Addressed: "To The/Honble. Jas Monroe/Secretary of State/Washington."

1. J. Minor to James Monroe, 13 July 1814, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 51 (M124, Roll No. 64). The letter is endorsed: "General Minor/of Virga."

2. William Lewis, commissioned a lieutenant on 14 March 1807, and promoted to master commandant 3 March 1815. He was lost in *Epervier* in 1815.

3. Paul Hamilton.

4. Maury was entered on *Essex's* muster roll as a midshipman on 25 October 1813. Porter promoted him to acting lieutenant on 14 February 1814. DNA, RG45, *Essex* muster and pay rolls, 1801–14, entry no. 689, p. 267, and entry no. 703, p. 268.

5. Secretary Jones approved Maury's appointment as acting lieutenant on 22 July 1814. On 28 April 1815, he was appointed a lieutenant with his commission dated 9 December 1814. Maury was ordered to the Lake Champlain station on 12 September 1814 and from thence to *Epervier* at Savannah on 15 October.

MEMBERS OF *ESSEX'S* CREW TO CAPTAIN DAVID PORTER

New York 20th. July 1814

Sir

We the undersigned encouraged by the noble and generous conduct we have ever experienced from you since we have had the honor of being under command, beg leave in the most respectfull manner to represent our hard case to you, being well assured that the moment you are made acquainted with it we shall meet with redress.— It is not Sir our intention to be guilty of any disrespectfull conduct towards those in authority over us, or to make any unnecessary complaints, & it gives us extreme pain to be under the necessity of intruding on the quiet you are about to enjoy with your family, and which you are so justly entitled to after your well earned Laurels, but merely to request that you will see that justice done us which we, who have in our station equally defended the honor of our Country deem ourselves entitled to.— We have now been ten

days onshore without one Cent in our pockets, except what we are obliged to borrow from our Landlords, who are now pressing for what We are due them on Account of Board, and the money they have advanced us.— We have applied to the Purser,<sup>1</sup> who has promised from day to day that we should be paid off; we have waited from day to day to no effect, and at last been referred to the Navy Agent<sup>2</sup> who amuses us with the same promises, our patience is worn out, and we candidly confess our confidence likewise: we are men Sir, who tho' not in so high a station in life as you are, have some feelings of pride about us, and cannot bear to be dependent on strangers, when we have money due us which we have hardly and honorably earned.—! Is this the reward Sir we expected to meet from our Country, [or] the Conduct for men to receive who have been at all times willing to shed their blood in defence of that Countries rights,— “no; the fault is with those who have the paying of you, & I will see you righted” this we feel confident will be your answer, for we are convinced you would as soon, if not sooner suffer yourself than see those who have faught under you do so;— under this impression we respectfully make known our case to you, and request your immediate interference in our behalf.— These are the Sentiments of the whole Crew who have requested us to make them known to you.—

Wishing you every happiness, and with the greatest respect we are—Sir Your faithfull Servants

Thomas Edwards  
 Enoch M Midey  
 Adum Williams  
 John Wyble  
 James Galley  
 Charels Hay  
 James Smith

LS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1814, Vol. 5, No. 64 (M124, Roll No. 64). Addressed: “David Porter Esqr./Captain U.S. Navy/Chester/Pensylvania.” Porter forwarded this letter to the secretary of the navy, and in response Jones wrote that the moneys for *Essex's* crew would soon be remitted. He stated that the delay in paying off the crew was unintentional and due to bureaucratic procedure. Jones to Porter, 24 July 1814, CSmH, Charles T. Harbeck Collection, HR 187. The following day a credit of thirty thousand dollars was forwarded to Porter at New York for the pay of *Essex's* crew. Jones to Porter, 25 July 1814, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 385 (M149, Roll No. 11).

1. John R. Shaw.

2. John Bullus, Navy Agent at New York.

#### PENSION CERTIFICATE FOR SARAH SMITH

William Smith<sup>1</sup> of New York in the state of NewYork, late a seaman acting as a Boatswain's Mate on board the United States Frigate *Essex* David Porter Esqr. Commander having been wounded in the action with the British Frigate *Phaëbe* and ship *Cherub* on the 28th. day of March 1814 in the gallant defence made by that ship of which wounds he died at Valparaiso while in the line of his duty in the service of the United States, Sarah Smith widow of the said William Smith is

entitled to receive Nine and a half dollars per month from the Commissioner of Loans of the state of NewYork payable half yearly on the first day of January and first day of July in every year for the term of five years to commence on the sixteenth day of April eighteen hundred and fourteen the day of said William Smith's decease. She producing a certificate that she is and still remains the widow of said William Smith and has not since intermarried with any other person; which certificate shall be signed by one of the principle magistrates of the town or place where said widow resides. And in case of her intermarriage as aforesaid then the said pension shall be paid to the guardian of the child or children, if any there be under the age of sixteen years; of which also a certificate shall be produced to the Commission of Loans signed as aforesaid with proof of the legal apointment of the guardian; and also that the child or children were living within one month of the period of payment of the pension. In default of which proofs this pension shall cease

Given under my hand and the seal of the Navy Department this fifth day of November 1814

W Jones—

Registered Benjamin Homans  
 Secretary to the board of Commissioners of the Navy pension fund—

Copy, DNA, RG45, AF 4, Jan. 1811–Dec. 1827 (M625, Roll No. 4). Two documents not printed but filed with Smith's pension certificate include a receipt for fifty-seven dollars from the New York Office of Discount and Deposit and Smith's sworn statement affirming that she is the widow of William Smith.

1. William Smith shipped as a seaman in *Essex* on 25 September 1812. He was promoted to acting boatswain's mate on 1 June 1813. He died at Valparaiso on 16 April 1814. DNA, RG45, *Essex* muster and pay rolls, 1801–14, entry no. 317, p. 259, and entry no. 612, p. 265.

#### JAMES HUGHES TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

Philadelphia 18th. February 1815

Sir.

I have to inform you that I have in my possession a Will & Power for to recover and act for George Martin<sup>1</sup> & Joseph Holly<sup>2</sup> late Seaman belonging to U.S. Frigate *Essex*, Captain Porter objects paying there prize Money although Knowing they left there wills & powers with Lavina Hickey<sup>3</sup> widow when they left Philadelphia on the Account of being indebted to her when they shipped hands in her House Lieut. Downes & Midshipman Odenheimer R.O—in 1812—

Holly was left ashore in the Boat & George Martin the Captain<sup>4</sup> of the English Frigate Knew him and threatened he would try him by a Court Marshall, the Purser<sup>5</sup> of the *Essex* disguised him and gave him Forty Dollars and sent him back in the Country at Valparaisa and ordered him to make the best of his way to the United States—

I hope you will have the goodness to forward me an order for the recovery of their Prize Money & Wages during their time of Servitude on board the said Ship on Captain Porter or otherwise I shall consider Wills & Powers void hereafter



I beg you will have the goodness to answer this Letter informing me how to proceed in behalf of the poor widow with Children to Support and I believe her house has produced as many (Seamen) for the States as any other in America<sup>6</sup> I remain Sir with every Sentt. of Respect Yours

J: Hughes

Your answer addressed to James Hughes No. 27 Penn St will be gratefully recd.

LS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1815, Vol. 2, No. 71 (M124, Roll No. 69).

1. George Martin shipped as a gunner's mate in *Essex* on 25 September 1812. DNA, RG45, *Essex* muster and pay rolls, 1801-14, entry no. 139, p. 256. There is conflicting information in the ship's rolls as to Martin's ultimate fate. The muster roll records that he was detached at Valparaiso on 25 April 1814. The pay roll records that he deserted after the action with *Phoebe*. See entry no. 139, p. 276. The list of casualties printed in *Journal of a Cruise* numbers Martin among the missing. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, p. 465.

2. Joseph Holly or Hawley shipped as a boatswain's mate in *Essex* on 25 September 1812. The ship's muster roll records that he deserted at Santa Catarina on 24 January 1813. DNA, RG45, *Essex* muster and pay rolls, 1801-14, entry no. 134, p. 256.

3. Hickey also tried to recover moneys owed her for boarding and clothing seamen from the U.S. brig *Vixen*. Hickey to Jones, 24 Dec. 1813, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1813, Vol. 7, No. 126 (M124, Roll No. 59), and, Jones to Hickey, 31 Dec. 1813, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 12, p. 69 (M209, Roll No. 4).

4. James Hillyar.

5. John R. Shaw.

6. Secretary Crowninshield informed Hughes that David Porter was responsible for distributing the prize money and Purser Shaw the back wages owed to *Essex*'s crew. Crowninshield to Hughes, 23 Feb. 1815, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 12, p. 279 (M209, Roll No. 4).

## Mutiny in the Marquesas

*There would be no hero's homecoming for the small detachment of men Porter left behind at Nuku Hiva in charge of several prize ships. Within five months the entire company of twenty-one men had either mutinied, been taken prisoner, or died. Among the fatalities was Midshipman William Feltus, whom Te I'i warriors killed in May of 1814. Excerpts from his journal printed below provide a glimpse into the mounting disciplinary problems the detachment's commander, Marine Lieutenant John M. Gamble, faced. Gamble's own report describes how his small band of loyal officers and men survived first a mutiny, then a native uprising, only to suffer capture by the British in the Hawaiian Islands. The unlucky marine officer and his remnant crew were to endure a hard, twelve-month captivity in enemy hands before finally gaining their freedom.<sup>1</sup>*

1. The most complete account of Gamble's command is to be found in the 1822 edition of Porter's *Journal of a Cruise*. Porter's narrative was drawn from Gamble's own journal. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, chapters 19-20, and, *Gamble to Porter*, 30 Aug. 1815, in Bowen, *Naval Monument*, pp. 123-25.

### JOURNAL OF MIDSHIPMAN WILLIAM W. FELTUS

[Extract]

[*Nuku Hiva*] Thursday January 20th. [1814]

filling water At 8 P M went on board the *Sering* and found that the crew had brought off Girls contrary to Ordids punished the men also the women and turned the Latter on shore.<sup>1</sup> Cloudy. . . .

[*Nuku Hiva*] Sunday March 6th. [1814]

At 4 PM one of the Men<sup>2</sup> deserted at 8 Mr. Gamble took 8 men armed and found him in an Indian house. Put him in Irons At 10 AM Gave him 3 doz Lashes and again put him in Irons Ends Warm. . . .

[*Nuku Hiva*] Friday march 18th. [1814]

At 4 PM finished the *Sir Andrews* Hold At 12 PM (John Welch & Martin Stanly having the first watch) the boat was missing At ½ past 12 (Sansbury & Belcher having the watch) it was found that Welch had taken the Boat oars Sail &c. with 2 prisoners (Robison [*Robertson*] & Coffin) that he took out of Irons (the former being co[n]fined for theft and the Latter for desertion) also Peter Swack from the *Sering*. & had gone out to Sea.<sup>3</sup> they took from the *Greenwich* the following articles Boat, Sail, & oars 3 Muskets & 4 doz rounds of Ball cartridges &c. a considerable quantity of the mens cloathing. From the *Sering* 5 muskets 3 ½ Barrels of powder some Boat boards A new English ensign, 2 Axes a grind stone one of the mens bags containing all his cloathing. Spy Glass. a chissel file & some Gimblets Boat Sail and 2 compasses At day light I went out side but saw nothing of the Runaways. Ends Warm the Havous tribe brought down some bread fruit—

[*Nuku Hiva*] Saturday March 19th. 1814

Warm found that the Runaways had stove Mr. Gambles blue Boat in 2 places in order that they might not be pursued by her she being the fastest pulling boat Ends Warm—<sup>4</sup>. . . .

[*Nuku Hiva*] Saturday May 7th. 1814

At ½ past 2 PM being on board the *Sering* with Mr. Gamble & Clapp the crew mutinied tied us & put us in the Run Bent the top Sails got under weigh by 6 PM At ½ past 8 PM the mutineers being—Morrison—Clarke—Ransport—Stiles—workman—Stanly—Robert [*George*]—Richard [*Power*]—Rob Lambris—Rob White—Carpenter—<sup>5</sup> Curtis—Bantom—, put Mr. Gamble Clapp & myself with Worth and Sansbury 1 cask powder & 2 muskets into an old boat—to make the best of our way in— tom—Belcher also remained on board but called out to Lieut Gamble & several others to witness that he was obliged by the mutineers to stay—<sup>6</sup> at about 10 PM we got on board the *G—h* where we found they had spiked all the Guns also those in the fort on shore in the morning employed carrying the Sails to the *Sir A—H* our crew consisting of 11 Souls 3 of Whom are officers, one of the men wounded and other aged—<sup>7</sup>

AD, PHi, Journal of Midshipman William W. Feltus.

1. Gamble was concerned that in visiting the prize ships the native islanders would learn how few men he actually had under his command, thereby inviting an attack. Thus he issued orders forbidding the visit of any natives, male or female, to the prizes. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 507-8.

2. Ordinary Seaman Isaac Coffin. Coffin was not one of *Essex*'s original complement. He had shipped in the frigate on 28 June 1813. He deserted from *Essex* the day before she departed Nuku Hiva. He was soon captured and placed in irons on board one of the prize ships, only to escape again on 6 March. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 496, 511. DNA, RG45, *Essex* muster and pay rolls, 1801-14, entry no. 639, p. 266.

3. Seaman John Welch, Seaman John Robertson, and Private Peter Swook were part of *Essex*'s original complement of men.

4. The events of 18-19 March are also described in Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 511-12.

5. There were no mutineers by the name of Carpenter. Feltus must be referring here to James Duncan, a prisoner of war who was a cooper.

6. Of the fourteen mutineers Feltus lists, six—James Morrison, William Clarke, Lewis Ransford, William Stiles, Robert Lambries, and James Duncan—were prisoners; four—Robert George, Joseph Curtis, Richard Power, Jeremiah Workman—were former prisoners who had shipped in *Essex*; and

four—Thomas Belcher, James Bantum, Martin Stanley, and Robert White—were part of *Essex's* original crew, although White had deserted *Essex* after a confrontation with Porter.

7. The three officers were John M. Gamble, William W. Feltus, and Benjamin Clapp. The eight enlisted men included Benjamin Bispham, Joseph Burnham, Peter Caddington, Thomas Gibbs, John Pettenger, Richard Sansbury, John Thomas, and William Worth. The events of 7–8 May are also described in Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 516–20.

CAPTAIN JOHN M. GAMBLE, U.S.M.C., TO  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY CROWNINSHIELD

NEW YORK, August 28th, 1815.

SIR,

I have the honour to inform you that on the 12th of December, 1813,<sup>1</sup> (the day on which the *Essex* frigate and *Essex Junior* took their departure from Nooah-eevah,) I was left in Port Anna Maria Bay, with eighteen men under my command, and six prisoners of war in charge of the establishment on shore,<sup>2</sup> together with the prize ships *Greenwich*, *Seringapatam*, *Sir Andrew Hammond*, and *New Zealander*,<sup>3</sup> with orders from captain Porter to remain five and a half calendar months at that place; at the expiration of which time, should he not return or send me further instructions how to act, I was, if possible, to man two of the ships, and after taking every article of value out of the other and burning her, repair to the port of Valparaiso, where, in the event of not finding the frigate, or additional orders, I was authorized to dispose of one of the ships to the best advantage, and take all the men under my charge, as well as the prize crews of the different ships then in that port, on board of the other, and proceed to the United States.<sup>4</sup>

After receiving these instructions my first object was, agreeably to captain Porter's wish, to fill the *New Zealander* with oil from the other ships, and on the 28th day of December, she took her departure for the United States, with a cargo of 1950 barrels, and well found in every respect for so long a voyage.

It is with regret I inform you, that the frigate had scarcely got clear of the Marquesas, before we discovered a hostile disposition in the natives, and in a few days they became so insolent, that I found it absolutely necessary, not only for the security of the ships and property on shore, but for our personal safety, to land my men and regain by force of arms the numerous articles they had in the most daring manner stolen from the encampment; and what was of still greater importance, to prevent, if possible, the execution of threats, which might have been attended with very serious consequences to us, as duty required my men to be much separated.<sup>5</sup> I, however, had the satisfaction to accomplish my wish without firing a musket, and from that time lived in perfect amity with them, until the 7th day of May following, when my distressed situation had nearly placed me in their power. Before, however, mentioning the lamentable events of that and the two following days, I will give you a brief account of a few preceding occurrences, which were sources of great uneasiness:

The first was the death of John Witter, (a faithful old marine who was unfortunately drowned in the surf on the 28th of February,)<sup>6</sup> and the desertion of four of my men; one of them a black named Isaac Coffin, had deserted from the *Essex* the day before she left the bay, and was then a prisoner for making the second attempt.<sup>7</sup> They took advantage of a dark night, and left the bay in a whale boat, unobserved, (all, except the *prisoner*, having the watch on deck),



John M. Gamble



and carried off several muskets, a supply of ammunition, and many things of but little value. I was prevented from pursuing them, as they had in a measure destroyed the only remaining boat at that time seaworthy.<sup>8</sup>

On the 12th of April we commenced rigging the *Seringapatam*, and *Sir Andrew Hammond*, which, as I had calculated, kept the men employed until the 1st of May. All hands were then engaged in removing the remainder of the property from the *Greenwich* to the *Seringapatam*, as I began to despair of being rejoined by the frigate at that place.

The work went on well, and the men were obedient to my orders, though I discovered an evident change in their countenances which led me to suppose there was something wrong in agitation. Under that impression I caused all the muskets, ammunition, and small arms of every description, to be removed from the other ships to the *Greenwich*, (the one on board of which I lived,) as a necessary precaution against a surprise from my own men.<sup>9</sup>

On the 7th of May, while on board the *Seringapatam*, on duty which required my presence, I was suddenly and violently attacked by the men employed in that ship. After struggling a short time and receiving many bruises, I was prostrated on the deck and my hands and legs tied. They then threw me on the second deck, thence dragged me into the cabin and confined me in the run. Midshipman Feltus, and acting midshipman Clapp, were in a few minutes after thrown in, tied in the same manner as myself; the scuttle was then nailed down and a sentinel placed over it. After spiking all the guns of the *Greenwich* and of the *Fort*, and those of the *Sir Andrew Hammond* that were loaded; plundering the ships of every thing valuable; committing many wanton depredations on shore; taking all the arms and ammunition from the *Greenwich*; sending for Robert White, who was turned ashore from the *Essex* for mutinous conduct;<sup>10</sup> and bending all the necessary sails; they stood out of the bay with a light wind off the land. My fellow prisoners and myself were shortly after taken out of the run and placed in the cabin, under the immediate charge of several men. I then learned the names of the mutineers, and assure you, sir, even in my truly painful situation, it afforded me no small degree of consolation, that there were no Americans among them.

The following are the names of the mutineers and prisoners of war:—Thomas Belcher, boatswain's mate, Englishman; James Bantum, negro; Martin Stanley, foreigner; Robert George, Joseph Curtis, Richard Power, and Jeremiah Workman, Englishmen, (who entered on board the *Essex* from the whaling ships captured in the Pacific Ocean,) and Robert White, mutineer.—Prisoners, William Clarke, Lewis Ransford, James Morrison, William Stiles, James Duncan, and Robert Lambries.

Shortly after getting clear of the bay, one of the sentinels, (although repeatedly cautioned against putting his finger on the trigger) fired a pistol, the contents of which passed through my left heel a little below the ankle bone.<sup>11</sup> As soon as the men on deck heard the report, they immediately pointed their muskets down the sky-light and were in the act of firing, but were prevented by the sentinel, who told them that the pistol was accidentally discharged.

At nine o'clock, the night dark, and the wind blowing fresh, after receiving (by request) from the mutineers a barrel of powder and three old muskets, I was put into a leaky boat, in which I found my unfortunate companions, and the only two Americans that were in the ship at the time the mutiny took place, the others being employed on board the *Greenwich*, and on shore, in putting the

arms in order, baking bread, and doing other work which required the most trusty. In this situation, after rowing at least six miles, and every person exhausted from the great exertions made to keep the boat from sinking, we reached the *Greenwich*, where I found the few remaining men anxiously looking out for me, and seriously alarmed at the conduct of the savages, who had already begun to plunder the encampment, and been informed by Wilson,<sup>12</sup> (a man who had lived among them for several years, and who, as I afterwards learned, was not only instrumental in promoting the mutiny, but, in my absence, plundered the *Sir Andrew Hammond*) of our defenceless situation.

Finding it impossible to comply with that part of my instructions, directing me to remain in the bay until the 27th of May, I thought it most advisable to repair to the port of Valparaiso, and with that view, all hands, assisted by George Ross and William Brudenell, (who were living on the island for the purpose of collecting sandal wood,) exerted themselves in making the necessary preparations to depart. My first object was to put the *Sir Andrew Hammond* in such a situation, that we might get under way at any moment. After which, all hands were engaged in getting the few articles of value from shore, and in endeavouring to recover the property stolen from the *Sir Andrew Hammond*, when the savages made an unprovoked and wanton attack upon us, in which I have with the deepest regret to inform you, that midshipman William Feltus, John Thomas, Thomas Gibbs, and William Brudenell, were massacred, and Peter Coddington dangerously wounded, who, with William Worth, made his escape by swimming some distance, when they were both taken out of the water by acting midshipman Clapp, and the three remaining men. Our situation at this moment was most desperate. The savages put off in every direction for the purpose of intercepting the boat and boarding the ship, but were driven back by my firing the few guns we had just before loaded with grape and cannister shot. Before the boat returned and the guns were re-loaded they made a second attempt, and afterwards repeated efforts, first to board the *Greenwich* and then the *Sir Andrew Hammond*, but were repulsed by our keeping up a constant fire. During this time several hundred were employed in pulling down the houses and plundering the encampment, whilst others were in the fort, endeavouring (assisted by Wilson, who had received several casks of powder from the mutineers) to get the spikes out of the guns. As soon as William Worth had recovered a little strength, after having been so long in the water, I sent the boat to the *Greenwich* for John Pettinger, a sick man, and some things that were indispensably necessary, with orders to burn that ship and return with all possible despatch, as our ammunition was nearly expended, and we had no other means of keeping the savages one moment out of the ship. We then bent the jib and spanker, cut the moorings, and luckily had a light breeze, which carried us clear of the bay, with only six cartridges remaining.<sup>13</sup>

We now found our situation most distressing, for in attempting to run the boat up she broke in two parts, and we were compelled to cut away from the bows the only remaining anchor, not being able to cast it. We mustered altogether eight souls, of whom there were one cripple confined to his bed; one man dangerously wounded; one sick; one convalescent (a feeble old man just recovering from the scurvy); and myself unable to lend any further assistance, the exertions of the day having inflamed my wound so much as to produce a violent fever; leaving midshipman Clapp and two men only capable of doing duty.<sup>14</sup>

In that state, destitute of charts, and of every means of getting to windward, I saw but one alternative; to run the trade winds down, and, if possible, make the Sandwich islands, in hopes of either falling in with some of the Canton ships (that being their principal place of rendezvous) or of obtaining some assistance from Tamaahmaah, king of the Windward Islands.<sup>15</sup> No time was lost in bending the topsails, and on the 10th of May we took our departure from Robert's Island, on the 25th of the same month made Owhyhee [*Hawaii*], and on the 30th, after suffering much, came to anchor in Whytete [Waikiki] Bay, at the Island of Woahoo [*Oahu*].<sup>16</sup> I here found captain Winship,<sup>17</sup> several officers of ships, and a number of men, from whom (particularly captain W.) I received every assistance their situations could afford me. The natives, though at first surprised at our deplorable condition, and inquisitive to know the cause, of which I did not think prudent to inform them, supplied the ship with fresh meat, fruits and vegetables, partly on condition that I would take the chief man of the island and some others, with their property up to the Windward Island,<sup>18</sup> where I found it necessary to go (after shipping some men<sup>19</sup>) in order to procure from the king,<sup>20</sup> a supply of provisions. Thence, it was my intention to have proceeded to Valparaiso, in compliance with my instructions from captain Porter, but I was unfortunately captured on the passage by the English ship *Cherub*, of twenty guns.<sup>21</sup> I was some what surprised to hear captain Tucker say (when I pointed out a valuable canoe and many other articles, which I assured him was the property of the natives, and that I was merely conveying them and it from one island to the other, the weather being too boisterous at that time for them to make the passage in their canoes) that every thing found in a prize ship belonged to the captors. I thus had the mortification to see the people, from whom I had received so much kindness, sent on shore, deprived of all they had been collecting for twelve months, and were about to present to their king as a tribute.

The *Cherub* proceeded to Atooi [*Kauai*], where she captured the ship *Charon*,<sup>22</sup> and made many fruitless attempts to get the cargo of that ship, and of several others which had been deposited on the island under the immediate protection of the king of the Leeward Islands. She took her departure on the 15th of July, and on the 28th of November arrived at Rio de Janeiro with her prizes, touching on the passage for refreshments at Otaheite [*Tahiti*]<sup>23</sup> and Valparaiso. During her stay at the latter place, the frigates *Britton* and *Tagus* arrived from the Marquesas, where they had been in search of the ships left under my charge.<sup>24</sup> On the 15th of December the prisoners were sent on shore, having received the most rigorous treatment<sup>25</sup> from captain Tucker during their long confinement in his ship, and the greater part of them, like the natives, left destitute of every thing, save the clothes on their backs. The men belonging to the *Essex* had little to lose, but those I shipped at Woahoo, had received in part money and goods, for one, two, and some of them three years services in the Canton ships.

On the 15th of May (by the advice of a physician who attended me,) I took my departure from Rio de Janeiro in a Swedish ship,<sup>26</sup> bound to Havre de Grace, leaving behind acting midshipman Benjamin Clapp and five men, having lost one soon after my arrival at that place, with the small pox. No opportunity had previously offered by which I could possibly leave that place, the English admiral<sup>27</sup> on that station, being determined to prevent, by every means in his power, American prisoners returning to their own country.

On the 10th instant, in latitude 47 north and longitude 18 west, I took passage on board the ship *Oliver Elsworth*, captain Roberts, 15 days from Havre de Grace, bound to New York.

I arrived here last evening, and have the honour to await, either the orders of the Navy Department or the commandant of the marine corps.<sup>28</sup> I have the honour to be, &c.

JOHN M. GAMBLE.

Printed, Brannan, *Official Letters*, pp. 362–66. Gamble was promoted to captain on 15 June 1814. He had three other brothers in the naval service, Thomas, Peter, and Francis. Peter was killed in action on 11 September 1814 at the Battle of Lake Champlain.

1. According to Porter and Farragut, *Essex* departed Nuku Hiva on 13 December. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, p. 495. and, Farragut, "Reminiscences of Early Life," p. 748.

2. A tally of the names cited in Feltus's Journal, Gamble's letter of 28 August 1815 to Secretary Crowninshield, and Porter's *Journal of a Cruise*, gives a total of three officers, eighteen enlisted men, and six prisoners. This total does not include Robert White or Isaac Coffin who had both deserted prior to *Essex*'s departure and thus were not part of Gamble's command.

3. Before departing Nuku Hiva, Porter had placed Master's Mate John King in command of the prize ship *Nau Zealander* with orders to sail her and a cargo of whale oil to the United States. She was captured on her voyage to the States by H.M. frigate *Belvidera*. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 383, 443.

4. Porter also directed Gamble to maintain friendly relations with the natives and "to introduce among them the cultivation" of various garden vegetables from seeds. Porter's rationale for leaving Gamble at Nuku Hiva was to provide a secure location for the repair of his ships in the event of a battle with the enemy. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, p. 443.

5. Natives had killed and stolen some of the swine left behind by Porter for the use of Gamble's men. On 24 December the marine commander landed a detachment of men and marched on the natives who were responsible for the thefts. He detained two chieftains aboard *Greenwich* to insure compliance with his demands for return of the swine. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 498–502.

6. See also Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 510–11.

7. On Isaac Coffin, see Journal of Midshipman William W. Feltus, 6 and 18 Mar. 1814, p. 773.

8. The four deserters stole away on 18 March 1814. See Journal of Midshipman William W. Feltus, 18 Mar. 1814, *ibid.*

9. For more on Gamble's suspicions and precautions, see Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 515–16.

10. This incident is recounted by Farragut in "Some Reminiscences of Early Life," p. 748, and Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 442–43.

11. Surgeon's certificates describing Gamble's gunshot wound to the ankle can be found among the papers accompanying the marine officer's petition to Congress asking compensation for his role in the capture of *Seringapatam*. DNA, RG46, SEN 21A-G13.

12. Wilson was an Englishman who had lived for many years in the Marquesas Islands. He was fluent in the native language and Porter wrote glowingly of the assistance he rendered in developing good relations with the Nuku Hivan islanders. Wilson would later claim that Gamble's men had stolen property from him and that he had no hand in inciting the natives to attack the Americans. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 304, 519–20, 544.

13. The dramatic events of 7–10 May are related in greater detail in Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 516–23.

14. The eight in order of description are: John Pettenger, Peter Caddington, Richard Sansbury, Joseph Burnham, John M. Gamble, Benjamin Clapp, Benjamin Bispham, and William Worth.

15. King Tamehameha resided at Taiegh Bay on the island of Hawaii. Tamehameha oversaw the sale of naval stores and provisions to visiting ships. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 524, 525.

16. According to Porter in *Journal of a Cruise*, Gamble arrived at Hawaii on 23 May and at Waikiki Bay, Oahu, on 31 May. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 524–25.

17. American Nathaniel Winship. He had resided at Oahu for two years and offered food, stores, and advice to Gamble. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 525–27.

18. Hawaii.



19. While at Oahu, Gamble shipped nine men to serve in *Sir Andrew Hammond* for an indefinite period of time. He paid each man an advance of fifteen dollars in new iron hoops. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 525, 527.

20. Tamahamaah.

21. The capture took place on 13 June 1813. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 529–30.

22. American merchant ship *Charon*, Captain Whittemore commanding. *Charon* was captured in ballast on 18 June 1814. Whittemore and his crew shared a twelve-month captivity with Gamble and his shipmates. On 22 June Tucker sent *Charon* and *Sir Andrew Hammond* to Rio de Janeiro to be condemned in admiralty court. Acting Midshipman Clapp sailed in the former vessel to give testimony in the proceedings. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 531, 532.

23. *Cherub* arrived at Tahiti, part of the Society Islands group, on 20 August. Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, p. 537.

24. *Cherub* arrived at Valparaiso on 23 September. There Gamble was reunited with Midshipman Clapp. Gamble visited the frigate *Briton* shortly after her arrival. Her captain confirmed that Midshipman Feltus and Seamen Thomas and Gibbs had been killed by the *Te I'i*; but that the trader George Ross had survived. Gamble also discovered that deserter Peter Swook and his three companions had sailed safely to the Marquesan island of Tahuata. Swook had shipped on board *Briton*. For events at Valparaiso during Gamble's stay there, see Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 539–45.

25. For examples of Tucker's maltreatment of Gamble and his men, see Porter, *Journal of a Cruise*, pp. 532–33, 546.

26. The Swedish ship *Good Hope*.

27. Vice Admiral Manley Dixon, R.N.

28. Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Franklin Wharton.

## Appendix

### REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE U.S. NAVY, JUNE 1814

Secretary of the Navy Jones to President James Madison

Navy Department

June 6, 1814

Sir

In obedience to your order of the 3d. Inst. I have the honor to Report the Several documents herewith enclosed lettered from A to H containing all the information in this Department on the various Subjects of your enquiry. I am with great respect Sir your Obdt. Servt.

W Jones

LS, DLC, James Madison Papers, Series 1 (Roll No. 16).

[Enclosure A]

#### United States' Naval Force on Lake Champlain.

* Ship <i>Saratoga</i> .....	26 Guns—6 long 24's. and 20–32 pdr. Carronades.
* Schooner <i>Ticonderoga</i> .....	16 Guns
Sloop <i>President</i> .....	10 "
* " <i>Commodore Preble</i> .....	9 " 18 pdr. Carronades.
* 6 Galleys .....	each 2 " 1 long 24 pdr. and 1–32 pdr. Carronade.
4 Ditto.....	each 1 "

☞ The Vessels marked thus, \* entered the Lake on the 26th. Ult. and sailed, immediately, in pursuit of the enemy.

Navy Department

June 6th. 1814.

W Jones

DS, DLC, James Madison Papers, Series 1, enclosure A (Roll No. 16).