

The Naval War of 1812: A Documentary History

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build and fit out their Ships, is scarcely credible, and I am very apprehensive of the mischief their Cruizers will do to our Trade—

Several large Clipper Schooners of from two to three hundred Tons, strongly manned and armed have run thro' the Blockade in the Chesapeak, in spite of every endeavour and of the most vigilant attention of our Ships to prevent their getting out, nor can any thing stop these Vessels escaping to Sea in dark Nights and Strong Winds, their Lordships will be pleased to observe by Captn. Barrie's letter which is herewith enclosed, an instance of Several of these Schooners passing out in a Squadron and outsailing every Ship in Chace.

Two Ships of the Line each to be called 76 Guns are to be finished and launched in March, one at Portsmouth the other at Charlestown near Boston.

The Southern Coast about Charlestown is a retreat for the Enemys Privateers and Letters of Marque, I am anxious to Send Small Cruizers thither to destroy and intercept them, the large Class of our fast sailing Brigs are the best adapted and I should be very happy if their Lordships w[ould] cause some to be Selected and ordered to join me.

I take the liberty likewise to represent that as all the American Men of War, Privateers and even Traders, are particularly good Sailing Vessels such of his Majesty's Ships as are appropriated to my Command, should be of the same description—I have the honour to be Sir Your most obedient humble Servant

John Borlase Warren

LS, UKLPR, Adm. 1/505, pp. 87–90.

Chapter Two

The Chesapeake Bay Theater: January–December 1813

Given American offensive operations in Canada, the timing of the inevitable attempt of the British to prosecute the war in Chesapeake Bay was a matter of resources. During 1812 British land forces were thinly stretched in the defense of Canada, and the Royal Navy needed reinforcements to mount a meaningful blockade of the Atlantic coast of the United States. When a small squadron of British frigates made rendezvous at Lynnhaven Bay near the mouth of the Chesapeake in early February 1813, however, officials in Washington should not have been surprized. These ships were a portent of the trouble to come.

Henry, the third Earl Bathurst, British Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, had planned a military diversion on behalf of British forces in Canada by launching a series of amphibious raids in Chesapeake Bay intended to frighten American politicians into withdrawing troops from the Canadian border to defend the rich and vulnerable plantations of the Chesapeake, to say nothing of the safety of the capital and principal government officers. Bathurst provided Admiral Sir John B. Warren with an expeditionary force that totalled about 2,400 men, including two battalions of Royal Marines, some 300 infantry from Bermuda and another 300 French "chasseurs" who were in fact prisoners of war who had been persuaded that the risk of death in battle was preferable to languishing in British prisons. The Royal Marines were under the command of Colonel Sir Thomas Sidney Beckwith, a distinguished veteran of campaigns in India and the Iberian Peninsula.

To reinforce Admiral Warren's naval forces, the Admiralty sent Rear Admiral George Cockburn in H.M.S. Marlborough, 74, to the Chesapeake to take command of a squadron, including the 74s Poictiers, Victorious, and Dragon, the frigates Maidstone, Junon, Belvidera, and Statira, and several other vessels. Warren ordered Cockburn to blockade the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays, capture and destroy shipping in the James, York, Rappahannock, and Potomac Rivers and off Baltimore, gather intelligence of the American military and naval forces, obtain pilots and a safe anchorage for the squadron, discover the best way of capturing the U.S. frigate Constellation, cut off trade in Long Island Sound, maintain constant communication with other British squadrons, and send prizes in convoy to Bermuda. Cockburn arrived off Lynnhaven Bay on 3 March 1813 and was joined by Warren nineteen days later.

In early April, Cockburn and Warren got underway with their squadron for a prolonged expedition up the bay, returning to Lynnhaven Bay nearly a month

later. Warren sailed for Bermuda with forty prizes on 17 May. During the entire operation, the British had faced no serious opposition although there were some sharp battles and attacks on privateers and revenue cutters. In June, after Warren's return, the British attacked the American position on Craney Island in the Elizabeth River only to receive a harsh setback.

A combined force of Virginia militia, naval gun crews from *Constellation*, and gunboats from the Gosport Navy Yard repulsed an amphibious attack of British Royal Marines, the 102nd Regiment, the two Independent Companies of Foreigners, and sailors from the fleet. Shortly afterward, the British attacked the town of Hampton near Newport News with shocking results. The French troops got out of hand, looting and killing defenseless civilians, much to their officers' consternation. They were sent back to the fleet in disgrace and did not fight again for the British.

To counter the forces at Admiral Warren's disposal, the Americans had virtually no regular land forces and only a few small naval vessels in the Chesapeake. For defense, the inhabitants of the Chesapeake Bay coast had to depend on the Virginia and Maryland militias; three poorly manned naval gunboat squadrons at Norfolk, Washington, and Baltimore; the blockaded frigate *Constellation*; the frigate *Adams* in the Potomac under the command of Captain Charles Morris; and a division of four privateer schooners operating out of Baltimore under Captain Charles Gordon, U.S.N.

During the summer of 1813, Secretary of the Navy William Jones adopted a new idea for the defense of the bay proposed by Joshua Barney: a flotilla of well-armed barges. The Chesapeake Bay flotilla did not come into being until 1814, for it took an entire year for this concept to take shape. The Virginia militia's finest hour was its defense of Craney Island; otherwise, it showed itself to be active in reconnaissance and spirited in resistance, as British units using the elements of surprise and mobility by sea staged a series of hit and run raids along the shores of the Chesapeake Bay and her tributaries.

The Maryland militia was so divided in its command between Eastern and Western Shores, and so weakly armed and inexperienced, that little activity can be credited to its account. Admiral Cockburn bypassed Baltimore but attacked Havre de Grace, Frenchtown, and Georgetown on his first northerly expedition. In a second cruise, his vessels reconnoitered the Severn River off Annapolis and the Patapsco below Baltimore, but attacked neither city. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of these towns were fearful and prepared for the worst. The British landed on and occupied Kent Island in August and probed the Eastern Shore rivers for points of resistance. The Maryland militia made a creditable stand at St. Michaels on the Miles River in an artillery action in which the British naval patrol retreated. After this skirmish, the British under Cockburn withdrew from Kent Island to the southern reaches of the bay and left for Bermuda in September 1813. Captain Robert Barrie was left to maintain the blockade in *H.M.S. Dragon*, 74, in charge of some frigates, brigs, and schooners. Despite his best efforts, some American privateer "clippers" slipped through the blockade on northerly gales.

For thousands of Americans in the middle Atlantic states, and particularly for those living in tidewater Maryland and Virginia, the events of 1813 brought fear,

threats, loss and destruction of property, imprisonment on board British vessels, and death for some if, in the path of the enemy, they chose to stand and fight or were unable to escape. British vessels tested the defenses of the bay and probed the Potomac as high as Cedar and Maryland Points. By mid-July, the alarm had spread to Washington, as the British had intended, "to embarrass the enemy in the measures for the further invasion of Canada." The British withdrew but had learned much that would be useful in the next campaign season: the weakness of the American defenses, the wealth of the area to be plundered, a knowledge of navigation in the rivers of the Chesapeake, and how easy it would be to stage a raid in depth toward the national capital. The Madison administration might also have taken a lesson from these same factors: the strength of their opponent, his seaborne mobility, the vulnerability of the Chesapeake region to such attacks, and the likelihood that, if the war lasted another year, the British would return in force with a more strategic objective.

Constellation and the Defense of Norfolk

Captain Charles Stewart intended to take the refitted *Constellation* on a cruise in February 1813, but the newly arrived British blockading squadron prevented his escape from the Virginia Capes. Retiring to the refuge of Norfolk Harbor, Stewart, senior officer on the station, in coordination with John Cassin, commandant of the Gosport Navy Yard, prepared plans to defend the Norfolk-Craney Island area. Their first task was to reorganize the gunboats into a fighting unit.

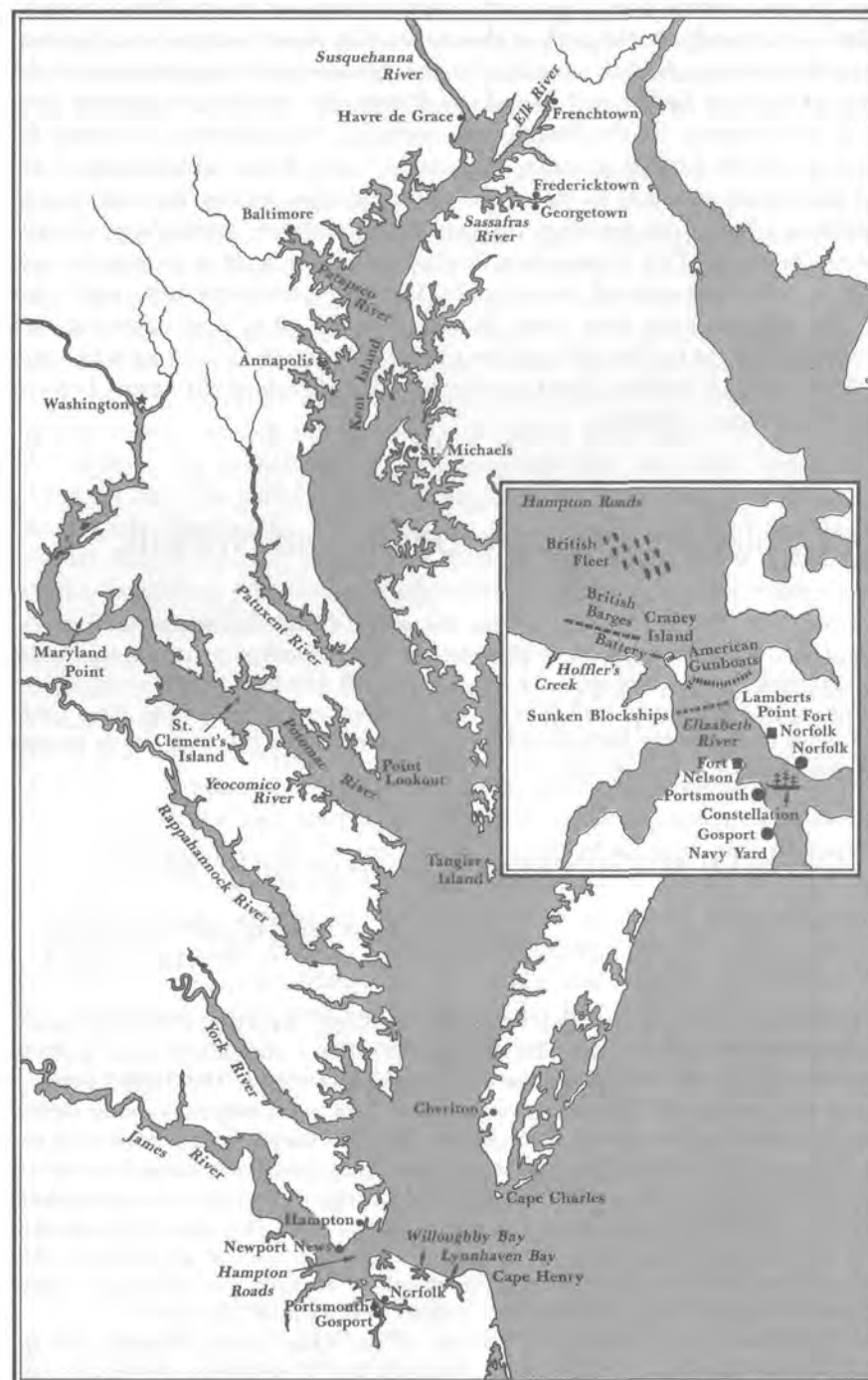
CAPTAIN CHARLES STEWART TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

United States frigate *Constellation*
February 5, 1813

Sir

I received your letter of the 25th ult. by Lieut. Biggs directing a further proof to be made of the quality of the *Constellation's* powder. I endeavoured to accomplish the object of your instructions at Annapolis, and sent to the Navy Agent at Baltimore for a cask of Dupont's powder that had been ascertained to be of good proof, intending by comparison, (with the small means in my power) to ascertain their relative strength; but after waiting four days I was disappointed as the powder was not sent. It is probable it was at Annapolis but the severe weather that set in prevented my having any communication with the shore afterwards, and the ice making so fast obliged me to get under way on the morning of the 1st. inst. and proceed down to Hampton Roads. The ship has sustained some slight injury from the ice, a few sheets of copper being cut off the bows.

Yesterday morning we discovered two sail of the Line, three Frigates, a Brig and Schooner of the Enemy working up between the Middle ground and Horse Shoe for the Roads. It being calm we hove up and kedged the Ship up to the flats where the tide having fallen the Ship took the ground and lay until the



Map 2. Chesapeake Bay Theater

evening flood made, during which time we were engaged lightening the Ship, by taking out the provision Stores and starting the water. At seven P.M. she floated, and by placing our boats with lights along the narrows, the pilot, Mr. James Thomas brought her up in Safety to fort Norfolk. The object of the Enemy appeared to be this Ship, as they got under way (from information) on the evening's flood with a leading breeze and run up to the roads. Finding us gone they went down again and anchored in Lynnhaven Bay. As they are in force it is very probable some attempt may be made against Norfolk.

From the first I was desirous of avoiding this place, satisfied that our chance of getting to sea, would be rendered difficult, as the Enemy possesses, no doubt, the earliest information from their Agents here. We had not been twenty four hours in the Roads before they were apprised of it.

There are no means Captain Cassin informs me of proving powder at this place as he has no Provets.¹

I shall now get the Ship in a state of readiness to proceed whenever the Enemy gives us an opportunity. Owing to the length of time we have been in the river and bay; and the exposure of our crew to the changeable weather, we have had a good many sick with colds and inflammatory fevers, but fortunately no deaths. I have the honor to be, Respectfully, Sir, Your obedient Servant.

Ch^s. Stewart

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 53 (M125, Roll No. 26).

1. Provett is the aphetic form of eprouvette, an instrument for proving the strength of gunpowder.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN JOHN CASSIN

Capt. John Cassin
Commandant at the
Navy Yard Gosport.

Navy Depart.
Feb: 16. 1813.

The present menacing attitude of the enemy's Squadron in the waters of the Chesapeak immediately in the vicinity of your Command calls for the utmost exertion of your talents & vigilance and zeal to guard against an attack either by land or water.

You will therefore place the Gun Boats in the best condition for efficient Service and with the Crews already attached to them and such as may be collected from the local force, which in such a Crisis cannot fail to be sufficient for the purpose I trust when combined with the other means of defence will give perfect Security. The Flotilla is placed under your immediate Command, but in all general operations Capt. Stewart of the *Constellation* your Senior will command the whole naval force on the Station as long as he shall remain there.

The enemy having penetrated the Bay as far as New point with their tenders and Boats, and are now greatly annoying the trade all the force at this place and its vicinity will be employed for the protection of the Bay and in repelling the Marauders. For the same purpose you will despatch the *Scorpion* Cutter for Annapolis,¹ as soon as the safety of your Command will admit, there to report to this Department. If you can procure either by reasonable hire or purchase a well constructed Schooner of 80 to 90 tons of easy draught of water and have



Captain John Cassin

the means of manning her, you will equip her with one heavy long gun amid-ship and such other armament, as will render her the most efficient, and despatch her also for Annapolis.

As it is very important to give timely notice of the Blockade to vessels destined for the Chesapeake and Delaware and particularly to our public vessels, you will immediately employ a fast sailing pilot Boat to cruize on such Stations as will be most likely to avoid the enemy and meet such vessels, as may be coming in from S.E. to E.N.E.

You will return to this Department a list of the vessels and their force and the officers and Crews attached to your Command. In the pilot Boat you will take care to employ a trusty Crew and send with them a midshipman to communicate the intelligence.

If you deem a further supply of ammunition or other Stores necessary report the same to this Department.

According to your Suggestion I revoke the arrest of Lieutenant Kennedy as his acknowledgement to you is deemed sufficient by yourself.²

W Jones.

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, CNA, Vol. 1, pp. 359-61 (M441, Roll No. 1).

1. *Scorpion* was sent to the Potomac flotilla instead; see p. 333.

2. Cassin and Lieutenant Edmund P. Kennedy, commander of the cutter *Scorpion*, became embroiled over a question of command. See Cassin to Jones, Feb. 1813, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 54 (M125, Roll No. 26). Cassin did not date this letter, but it was probably written about 10 February.

CAPTAIN CHARLES STEWART TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

United States frigate *Constellation*
Norfolk Harbour March 17. 1813.

Sir

On the 9th instant I got under way with the *Constellation* and went down to Crany Island lte. The Enemy on the 10th. moved up from Lynnhaven Bay with three Ships of the Line and two Frigates and came into Hampton Roads on the 11th. where they have since been joined by two other Ships of the Line. Their frigates, tenders, and armed boats are constantly in motion.

I found the Gun boats so weakly manned and so utterly incompetent to protect themselves, should the Enemy make the attempt to board them in the night, to prevent their falling into their hands I was under the necessity of withdrawing them within the fortifications of Norfolk and to return up from that position with the Ship. Ten of the boats have been sent up to the Navy Yard and their men put on board of those remaining which renders them about half manned. When the means and force of the Enemy are considered, and the state of this place for a defence, it presents but a gloomy prospect of Security, and although you may expect all will be done that can be done by resistance with the means of opposition which we possess, yet such is the state and limit of these means (the place has been so utterly neglected) that I do not think we ought to flatter ourselves that it will be effectually successful. Our dependance on the local forces for manning the gun boats, which is the only active force we have on these waters, has proved abortive, indeed some of the Militia have already deserted from an apprehension of being ordered into them. Many of the inhabitants have moved from Norfolk

with their effects and many more are preparing to go. Four block ships have been sunk in the channel off Lamberts point, but that I fear will present very little opposition. One of their frigates passed up James river to day. I have the honor to be Respectfully Sir Your obedient Servant

Ch^s Stewart

P.S. I am getting out of the Ship all the Stores, Sails, Spars, &c. and sending them up the Elizabeth river, as it is now reduced to a certainty that this ship will not have an opportunity of getting to sea.

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 2, No. 53 (M125, Roll No. 27).

CAPTAIN CHARLES STEWART TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

United States frigate *Constellation*
Norfolk Harbour March 22. 1813

Sir

I had the honor to address you on the 17th inst informing you that I was under the necessity of withdrawing the Flotilla from Crany Island owing to the weak state and condition of the Gun Boats, since which time I have been busily engaged selecting and preparing as many of them, best sailing, as we could man and arm, holding them ready for any movement which may be required of them. The following number are all that we could put in such state and condition under the order issued the 18th instant

No. 67	Lieutenant Gardener
60	Henley
152	Neale
155	Wilkinson
149	Shubrick
61	Saunders
154	Sailing master Young.

Owing to a deficiency of all most every article required, (it taking from the other boats and Navy Yard all the small arms and stores to complete this number agreeable to the order) the two tenders *Franklin* and *Despatch* are manned and armed from this Ship with forty men each.

Yesterday Lieut. Ridgely went down to Admiral Cockburn in the *Franklin* tender as a Flag of Truce, to convey on board the Secretary to the Russians Ambassador. He was treated with great civility, and learned that the night before they had despatched their launches and cutters with six hundred men above Crany Island for the purpose of suppressing this division of Gun Boats. The Guard boat from this Ship lay near them for two hours unperceived and heard most of their conversation; they retired however before day light finding the division of Gun Boats withdrawn.

There are still in Hampton Roads three sail of the Line and two Frigates. Their ships do not separate much. Their Frigates and tenders when we make a movement with the Flotilla retire under the protection of the ships of the Line. Their

excursions have been confined to the shores of James's river, occasionally landing in strong parties to procure stocks &c. They have destroyed a number of the Oyster boats, and taken possession of the licensed vessels that had retired up that river.

It is much to be regretted that a strong work has not been erected on Crany Island, I mean a small work for eight or ten guns made sufficiently high to prevent an escalade or surprize; the Narrows piered and secured with strong booms and chains; should that have been done, the Gun Boats well manned and stationed above the booms, it appears to me we might bid defiance to their operations by water. I have the honor to be, Very Respectfully, Sir, Your obedient Servant.

Chs. Stewart

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 2, No. 78 (M125, Roll No. 27).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN CHARLES STEWART

Capt. Chas. Stewart
Comg. U S. naval force nfolk

Nav: Deptmt.
27. March 1813

Your letters of the 17th, 22d & 24th were received by the regular course of the mail— Capt. Cassin has instructions to recruit the deficiency of the crews of the gunboats, & for this purpose to give a reasonable bounty. If he succeeds, you will be enabled to act offensively when occasion may offer: but satisfied as I am, that the special object of the movements of the enemy is to draw your force out from the waters of Norfolk with the hope of cutting off its return—it will be necessary to be extremely guarded in your movements, in order to avoid the possibility of an event so hazardous in its consequences: this your penetration has anticipated, & prudence will avert—considering the present force of the enemy, the defence of your present position is the object of chief solicitude, & the movement you made with the flotilla, is a proof that the enemy is not altogether insensible of your offensive power. I highly approve of the measure you have adopted—a few of the best gunboats, with the heaviest metal well manned, will prove more efficient than a greater number indifferently manned— Your two tenders, will also be found extremely usefull. It is some consolation, that while a strong squadron of the enemies Ships are employed in watching your little squadron & carrying on a Petty larceny kind of warfare, against the river craft & plantations, our gallant commanders are scouring the ocean, in search of a superior foe, & gathering laurels in such abundance, & in such rapid succession, as to afford the enemy scarcely time to soothe the chagrin of one defeat before he is subjected to the mortification of another. This days mail brought the account of the arrival at New York of the *Hornet* Capt. Lawrence, having, on the coast of Surinam captured the enemies Brig *Peacock*—rated 18. but mounting 21. The action was very short, & most decisive; The *Peacock* sunk before all the prisoners could be removed, 9 of them went down with her—of the enemy, 9. were drowned 9. killed, 33. wounded— The *Hornet*, one killed & two wounded

W. Jones

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 324-25 (M149, Roll No. 10).

British Activity and Strategy

The Admiralty, desiring to take the offense in its Atlantic campaign, ordered Rear Admiral George Cockburn,¹ in November 1812, to join Admiral Sir John B. Warren in Bermuda. Arriving in mid-January 1813, Cockburn formed a squadron under his flag Marlborough, 74, and left for the Chesapeake about a month later. The Lords Commissioners chose the Chesapeake as their target for offensive operations because Baltimore privateers were devastating British commerce and they felt that marauding Royal Navy squadrons could attack the unprotected coastal towns there with impunity.

Frustrated by his inability to pursue *Constellation* into the shallow Elizabeth River, and wary of Norfolk's defenses, Cockburn sent a force of small boats to forage for food along the James River. Similar raiding missions along the Chesapeake's inland waterways would follow throughout the year. Meanwhile, the British government, hoping to divert American troops from Canada, ordered Colonel Sir Thomas Sidney Beckwith² to America to coordinate military expeditions with the naval force in the Chesapeake.

1. For a recent biography of Cockburn, see Pack, *Man Who Burned the White House*.

2. Colonel Sir Thomas S. Beckwith had a long, distinguished career in the British Army, being considered one of the finest leaders of light troops. In 1812 he was appointed assistant quartermaster general in Canada.

CAPTAIN GEORGE BURDETT, R.N.,¹ TO
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

Copy

His Majesty's Ship
Maidstone Lyn Haven Bay
Chesapeake, 9th Feby. 1813.

Sir,

I have the pleasure to inform you of a very gallant achievement that was performed by the boats of the Squadron you did me the honor to place under my command for the Blockade of this Port and its Rivers; Yesterday morning at 9 O'clock AM a Schooner was observed in the NW standing down the Chesapeake Bay, at the same time I made the *Bekvidera* & *Statira*'s Signal No. 239 with the North West Compass Signal; as the Stranger approached the Squadron I perceived her to be a Vessel of considerable Force, Captain Byron at the same time made the Signal for her being superior to the Boat in chace, but not to those of the Squadron United. I immediately made the Signal for all Barges, Cutters &c to proceed in the same direction upon which the Schooner made all Sail in the direction from whence she came, and I had the satisfaction to perceive she was quite becalmed, at One o'clock P.M. the Stranger opened a well directed Fire upon the headmost of our Boats from her Stern chace Guns and I was happy to find the boats in advance rested on the Oars until they all formed up when a rigorous and Gallant attack was made by all the boats (nine in No.) under the Orders of Lieutt. Nazer Second Lieutt. of His Majesty's Ship under my Command who happened to be Senior Officer, through a very heavy Fire from all the Enemy's Guns, when he was Boarded & carried Sword in hand, after a most obstinate resistance which was maintained upon the Deck of the Enemy for a few Minutes. She proves to be the American Armed Schooner *Lottery* of Two Hundred and Ten Tons, mounting Six twelve pound Carronades (but pierced for Sixteen) with a Complement of Twenty eight



Rear Admiral George Cockburn, R.N.

men, from Baltimore bound to Bourdeaux with a Cargo of Coffee, Sugar and Logwood, She is Coppered and Copper fastened.

I cannot sufficiently applaud the stile of Gallantry that this Service was performed with, for every Officer and man went away with the conviction the chace was a large Privateer, and I beg leave Sir particularly to recommend Lieutt. Nazer to your notice, and the conduct of every Officer and man in the boats of the Squadron employed upon this Service was most conspicuous.

I also have the honor to enclose a List of the killed & Wounded in the different Boats of the Squadron which I am happy to add is trifling, when compared to the obstinate resistance made by the Enemy whose loss was very great, the Captain & eight men dangerously Wounded.² I have the honor to remain Sir, Your most Obedient Servant

Signed: George Burdett Captain

Copy, UKLPR, Adm. 1/503, pp. 137-38.

1. Captain George Burdett commanded a squadron of four frigates which entered Chesapeake Bay on 4 February. He relinquished that command to George Cockburn upon the latter's arrival in the bay a month later.

2. No enclosure of killed and wounded was found in the Admiralty records. The *Naval Chronicle* printed the following return: "Maidstone—2 wounded (1 severely). Belvidera—None. Junon—2 wounded (1 severely). Statira—2 wounded (both dangerously), 1 since dead." See Vol. 29 (Jan.-June 1813), p. 250.

REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N., TO
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

No. 2

Marlborough Hampton Roads
the 13th March 1813

Sir

1st I have the honor to inform you that owing to strong WSW Winds which we met with in the Gulf Stream, it was not in my Power to reach Lynhaven Bay with the Squadron under my Orders before the Evening of the 3rd instant, and it was the 4th before the whole of the Ships—got in.

2nd On my arrival I was most concerned at being informed by Captain Burdett, that although every possible exertion had been made by the Squadron of Frigates of which he had had Command, yet that it had not been within their Power to collect the slightest Intelligence either as to the force in Norfolk, as to the strength or Position of the Forts in this Neighbourhood, nor as to the actual situation of the *Constellation* Frigate, nor had any Survey been made of the position of the Middle Ground Sand, and other Shoals in the Mouth of the Chesapeake, in short that nothing further was Known than at the moment of your Sailing for Bermuda; It became therefore necessary for me to take immediate Measures for advancing at once on all these very essential Points.

3rd I of course was most anxious previous to separating the Squadron (in obedience to the 6th Paragraph of your Orders to me) to ascertain how far our united Force would have any prospect of success in an Attack upon Norfolk and whilst taking Measures for obtaining this Information, I employed the Masters of this Ship and the *Poictiers* to Survey and Buoy off the Middle Ground Sand &c.

4th On the 6th I gave the Order to Captain Burdett of which the enclosed No. 1 is a Copy, and on the 8th having tolerably well ascertained from Different corroborating Sources that the Military Force in Norfolk actually consisted of at least Three Thousand Men, 1500 of which were supposed to be well trained and composed principally of their best Rifle Corps the whole on the alert and expecting Attack, I was forced to give up the Idea of making any serious Debarkation from the Ships, and Judging how anxious you would be to have the Delaware secured as well as this Bay I determined on immediately detaching Sir Jno Beresford, to whom I therefore gave the Order of which No. 2 is a Copy.

But as on our Arrival off the Capes the Squadron captured two Pilot Boats at a considerable distance from the Shore, one of which was manned by the *United States* American frigate, and had on board an Officer belonging to that Ship, I thought it probable they were actually looking for the French Squadron which you intimated to me was to be expected, although the officer of course denied it, and stated that he was merely cruising to warn off Merchant Vessels. I therefore Judged it wise not to send away the *Dragon* immediately to Cruize off New York, nor to make for the moment any further Detachments from this Squadron and as at the same time that I received the Intelligence as to the Land Force at Norfolk, I likewise learnt that the *Constellation* was laying some way below that Town surrounded by Gun Boats. I determined to move with the Line of Battle Ships towards Hampton Road to ascertain positively the actual strength and Position of the Enemy's Batteries on the different Points approaching Elizabeth River, and to see if it were practicable to get at and Capture or Destroy the Frigate; I therefore weighed on the 10th from Lynhaven Bay with the *Marlborough* *Victorious*, *Dragon* and *Acasta*, and I am happy to say we got safe up on the 11th although the weather was extremely unfavorable to us, and we were obliged to buoy off the whole of the Channel as we advanced not having any Person in the Squadron who was in the slightest degree acquainted with it, and as we found it much more intricate and very different to our Charts and Directions.

5th There is not any Battery on Point Comfort, nor is there yet any upon Sewell or Willoughby Points.

The Frigate is I think about half way up Elizabeth River apparently protected by two Batteries and Seventeen Gun Boats each carrying (as I am informed) a 42 Pounder and the Channel into Elizabeth River is so intricate as to leave us but little chance of getting at her except by Boats, and for them I fear herself and Gunboats will prove somewhat too strong, we are however sounding and endeavouring to gain a Knowledge of the Entrance of the River and you may depend on it that no Opportunity will be lost of doing any thing I may find practicable and our means equal to, without unnecessarily risking His Majesty's Ships. And I have the greatest pleasure in assuring you that nothing can exceed the Zeal, Exertion Gallantry, and good Conduct invariably displayed by every Officer and Man in the Squadron.

6th I think it also right to state to you, that if you can obtain from General Horsford or by any other means, One Regiment to add to the Marines of the Squadron I have no doubt that we should be able to get possession of Norfolk and from such a blow to them now the greatest Benefits might certainly result.

The Chief American Officers in this neighbourhood are acting with a severity that cannot be long tolerated, it is suspected in Norfolk that we have been assisted in getting up here by Pilots, and that we have received Information and other Aids from Agents in the Town. These Ideas have occasioned the arbitrary Imprisonment of many People (certainly innocent of the Charge) which must naturally add to their Confusion and Difficulties whenever they are seriously threatened, and should the Information which I have read in an American Paper prove Correct, that a large reinforcement of Ships with Major Williams's Division of the Marine Battalion are on their way here I have no hesitation in pronouncing that the whole of the Shores and Towns within this Vast Bay, not excepting the Capital itself will be wholly at your mercy, and subject if not to be permanently occupied, certainly to be successively insulted or destroyed at your Pleasure; I should however here remark to you that I conceive Bomb Ships or other Strong Vessels of light draught of Water would also be extremely useful in carrying into effect any extensive operations of this Nature.

7th Our Masters are now tolerably well acquainted with the Middle Ground, Horse Shoe and Willoughby Shoals and I have placed Buoys on most of the Dangerous Projections of each of them for the guidance of any Ships which you may hereafter send here to me.

8th On the 9th the *Sydney* a fine American Letter of Marque Schooner from Baltimore bound to Havannah carrying one long Gun Amidships on a Swivel and two Carronades endeavour'd to get from the Chesapeake round Point Comfort towards Norfolk, She being when discovered above eight Miles from any Ship of the Squadron, the Wind westerly and an Ebb Tide, the Signal was immediately made for the boats to chase her, and after a most fatiguing pull of Three Hours they succeeded in getting up to her and the headmost of them under the Command of Lieutenant Westphall (1st of the *Marlborough*) dashing at once alongside carried her, and I am happy to add without loss though she had kept up a constant fire on the Boats from their arriving within reach of her Shot 'till they got alongside.

9th I have directed this Vessel and the several other Prizes that are manned and fit to proceed to endeavour to find their way to Bermuda without Convoy, as the *Statira* had unfortunately sailed for that place previous to my arrival, and I see no prospect of being able to spare another Ship, besides the one charged with this Dispatch, from the various Duties of this Bay, and I conceive your speedily getting this Letter to be so essential to the public Service that I cannot think of allowing the Frigate charged with it, to be subjected to the Detention which her taking such a Convoy would probably Occasion.

10th It is not in my Power to send you by this opportunity a correct List of Captured Vessels, as I had not collected one previous to my quitting the lower anchorage.

11th I have directed that the Frigate to be charged with this Dispatch, should carry to Bermuda all the Prisoners in the Squadron, I enclose you a letter on this Subject which I sent by a Flag of Truce to the Commanding Officer at Norfolk,¹ as also his answer thereto and I trust that this obstinate determination to refuse all overtures for a partial exchange here will induce you to send to England these Prisoners (as I have threatened them that you will do) and such others as we may take beyond the Number of

Englishmen actually restored to you for I am credibly informed that this is a measure which would be attended with much Inconvenience to the American Government, which begins already to find a difficulty in procuring the necessary Number of men for its Naval Operations—confined and trifling as they must of Course yet be.

12th If the *Ramillies* has not sailed for this place previous to your receiving this Letter, I beg to submit to you the propriety of her being ordered here with as much Provision and Water as she can stow, as we shall by that Time be all getting short, and the *Victorious* still having in her sick List upwards of Seventy. I doubt whether I shall be able to Keep her with me even 'till so relieved.

13th You will perceive by the above statements that I have not been yet able to make up a Squadron to Cruise off Block Island, indeed the *Narcissus* which I had stationed off the Light House having again parted Company from me, the only Vessel of War of any description whatever now in Lynhaven Bay is the *Junon*. I hope however by the Time the *Acasta* gets down there herewith, that the *Narcissus* will have found her way back, or that some other Frigate may have arrived equal to carrying this Letter and the Prisoners, without obliging me to lose for this Purpose the services of a Frigate of the largest Class.

14th Should circumstances and my further observations induce me to think all our efforts to get at the *Constellation* likely to prove vain I shall probably drop down again myself to Lynhaven Bay to enable me the better to spare a greater Proportion of my Force on detached Services for whilst occupying this Anchorage, close to all the Enemy's Gun Boats and all his Resources, I am forced to Keep a sufficient Force with me to enable me to act offensively with my Boats by Night, and to overpower him therewith, should he attempt any Attack during Calms, or any Annoyance by Fire Vessels, or other Means, but in Lynhaven Bay the Distance the Enemy would be from Shelter is so great and the Expanse of Water so wide that it is impossible for him to cause the slightest Disturbance or Inconvenience to our Ships whilst there, in Return however our laying there is of course neither so annoying nor so disgraceful to him, as our being here threatening and holding in Consternation and Dismay one of his principal Towns with a Frigate and Flotilla before it equally or more seriously menaced with Destruction. I am therefore anxious to know from you whether you conceive it to be more advantageous to carry on here Operations of this Nature requiring our united Efforts, or by sacrificing Views of this Description to divide the Ships and by detaching them along the Coast to annoy more particularly any Trade Afloat which the Americans may still endeavour to carry on.

15th I am not without Hopes that the Squadron here may be furnished from time to time (from the upper part of the Chesapeake) with supplies of Cattle and Vegetables, a Person having engaged to send me such, but whether he will be enabled for any continuance to elude the present great Vigilance of the American Government is I think extremely doubtful.

16th Whenever I can spare another Vessel, I shall transmit you further Particulars and accounts of our Proceedings, but almost despair of having it within my power 'till you send me some Schooners or other dispatch Vessels from Bermuda, those taken and manned by the Squadron being

wholly wanted and constantly occupied in Keeping up our requisite Communications. I have the Honor to be Sir Your very faithful and most obedient Humble Servant

"sd." G. Cockburn Rr. Admiral

LB Copy, DLC, Papers of George Cockburn, Container 9, Letters Sent, 3 Feb. 1812-6 Feb. 1814, pp. 117-29. This was addressed to Warren in Bermuda.

1. Robert B. Taylor was a brigadier general in the Virginia militia, commanding the defense of Norfolk.

REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N., TO
LIEUTENANT COLONEL KENDALL ADDISON¹

His Britannic Majesty's
Ship *Marlborough* Hampton
Road the 19th March 1813

Sir,

I have the Honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Letter under date the 18th Current requesting to Know,

- 1st Whether some Inhabitants of the County of Northampton who happen to be at this moment in Norfolk may be permitted to return to their families unmolested by the British Squadron.
- 2nd Whether the Packet accustomed to ply between Northampton and Norfolk may still continue so to do.
- 3rd Whether the Vessels accustomed to fish on the Eastern side of the Chesapeake and to carry their Fish to Norfolk may still continue so to do?

In answer to which Questions I have the Honor to inform you that any small unloaded Vessel coming from Norfolk with the Gentlemen alluded to in the 1st Question shall be permitted to proceed without molestation provided they pass immediately through the British Squadron, and do not shew any Disposition to avoid it.

I will also allow the Packet alluded to by you in the 2nd Question to pass under similar restrictions, and it being perfectly understood that she is not to have any Cargo on board but merely to convey Passengers and Letters.

With respect to the 3rd Question although I will certainly permit your fishing Vessels to follow unmolested their usual occupations, yet I am sorry I cannot meet your further wishes in permitting them to carry their Cargoes to Norfolk.² I have the Honor to be &c &c &c

("Sd") G. Cockburn Rr. Adml.

To Lt. Coll. Addison
of the United States
27th. Regt. Northampton.

LB Copy, DLC, Papers of George Cockburn, Container 9, Letters Sent, 3 Feb. 1812-6 Feb. 1814, pp. 130-31.

1. Addison commanded the 27th Regiment of the Northampton County, Virginia, militia.

2. For the Admiralty's reaction to permitting such communication, see p. 356.

THE RIGHT HONORABLE HENRY, EARL BATHURST TO
COLONEL SIR THOMAS SIDNEY BECKWITH, BRITISH ARMY

Most Secret.

Downing Street 20th March 1813

Sir,

It having been judged expedient to effect a diversion on the Coasts of the United States of America, in favour of Upper and Lower Canada, which the American Government have declared it to be their intention to wrest from His Majesty in the course of the ensuing Campaign, Sir J. B. Warren will receive Instructions to direct a Squadron to proceed with the Troops named in the Margin, towards those places on the Coast, where it may appear to him most advisable that a descent should be made— And His Royal Highness the Prince Regent confiding in your Valour, Enterprize and Discretion, has been generously pleased to commit to you the Command of these Troops, in such Operations as you may judge it expedient when on shore to undertake.

The number and description of the Force placed under your Command, as well as the object of the Expedition itself, will point out to you that you are not to look to the permanent possession of any place, but to the reembarking the Force as soon as the immediate object of each particular attack shall have been accomplished.

While afloat, you will consider yourself as under the Command of the Naval Officer Commanding this Expedition. The Disembarkation of the Troops, and their Re:embarkation, will be directed by him; but he will be instructed to concert with you as to the best mode of effecting the same respectively. You will decide as to the time of re:embarking the Troops, as that must in a great measure be regulated by the success of your undertaking, and by the approach of the Enemy's Force; but you will previously ascertain, whether, in the opinion of the Commander of the Naval Force, there is any time peculiarly unfavourable for Re:embarkation.

As the object of the Expedition is to harrass the Enemy by different attacks, you will avoid the risk of a general action, unless it should become necessary to secure your retreat.

When the object of the Descent is to take possession of any Naval or Military Stores, you will not delay the destroying them, if there is reasonable ground of apprehension that the Enemy is advancing with a superior force to effect their recovery.

If you shall be enabled to take such a position as to threaten the Inhabitants with the destruction of their property, you are hereby authorized to levy upon them Contributions in plate and Money in return for your forbearance. But you will not by this understand that the Magazines belonging to the Government, or their Harbours, or their Shipping are to be included in such arrangement.

You will on no account give encouragement to any disposition which may be manifested by the Negroes to rise against their Masters. The Humanity which ever influences His Royal Highness must make Him anxious to protest against a system of Warfare which must be attended by the atrocities inseparable from commotions of such a description. If any Individual Negroes shall in the course of your operations have given you assistance, which may expose them to the vengeance of their Masters after your retreat, you are at liberty on their earnest

desire to take them away with you. You are authorized to enlist them in any of the Black Corps if they are willing to enlist; but you must distinctly understand that you are in no case to take slaves away as Slaves, but as free persons whom the public become bound to maintain. This circumstance as well as the difficulty of transport, will make you necessarily cautious how you contract engagements of this nature, which it may be difficult for you to fulfill. I am Sir Your most obedient Humble Servant

Bathurst

LS, MiU-C, Thomas Brisbane Papers, 1813-15. The following was written in the left margin, first page: 1st. Battn. of Marines—842; 2nd Battn. of Marines—842; 103rd Regt., Detachment—300; 2 Independent Companies—300; A Detachment of Marine Artillery—50. Bathurst meant the 102d.

REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N., TO
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

No. 3

Marlborough Hampton
Road the 23rd March 1813

Sir

1st

Herewith I have the honor to enclose the duplicate of my Letter and its enclosures under date of the 13th Current which was transmitted to you by the *Laurestinus* and I have now the honor to state for your further information, that subsequent to sending away the abovementioned Dispatch the utmost possible endeavours and perseverance were exerted Night after Night by all the Boats of the Squadron to find and Buoy off (in the same manner as we had done to this Anchorage) the channel into Elizabeth River, but so intricate and difficult is it that all our efforts proved vain and the Boats were never able to get into the deep water abreast of Craney Island without passing occasionally in as little as four feet, and the smallest of them at times taking the ground, at last however one of the Pilots we had taken (and who 'till then had resisted all my offers and Solicitations) came forward and agreed for a Stipulated reward to shew us the Passage into the River, declaring however that it was so extremely narrow and difficult that neither himself nor any Pilot in the Place could possibly Keep in the deepest water during the night, or be able in the dark to carry thro' the Flats more than twelve feet, and that by day he conceived Three and a half and Three and a quarter fathoms would be the utmost depth he could insure to us. It became therefore necessary to take advantage of his assistance to prove what depth could actually be found in this difficult part of the Navigation, and to learn the marks for Keeping in the deepest water previous to attempting the Passage with any of the Ships—I consequently sent the Master of the *Marlborough* with him in the Barge well armed and guarded by other Boats, to run through the channel with the marks on to sound it and make the necessary Remarks relative thereto, and I am sorry to say on the return of the Master he informed me that through these Flats, which extend from this side of Sewells Point to abreast Craney Island, about four miles in distance, he had more casts of 3 1/4 than 3 1/2 Fathoms, very few deeper than the latter and none shoaler than the former, and that to ascertain whether

the Pilot had kept him in the deepest water possible, he on returning occasionally hauled to either side of the marks pointed out, when he always almost instantaneously, shoaled the water; This report of course obliged me to give up at once all further Idea of carrying our Ships into Elizabeth River, and I therefore gave the necessary directions for converting some of our Prizes into Fire vessels to endeavour by means of these and our Boats with Congreve's Rockets,¹ to destroy the Enemy's Frigate, but the Americans having I suppose, observed our Boat stand in through the right channel. The Frigate was run up to Norfolk the next flood tide accompanied by the Gun Boats, which amount to nineteen (instead of Seventeen as is mentioned in my last letter) and immediately after she passed the Forts, three Merchant Ships, which were prepared for the purpose, were sunk across the Channel abreast the Lower Fort, which is called Fort Norfolk apparently a regular Stone Work having about Nineteen or twenty Guns mounted on Barbette and being somewhat below and on the opposite side to Fort Nelson, which is supposed to have from twenty to twenty four Guns; the appearance of these Forts and of the present position of the Frigate &c you may form some Idea of by the enclosed sketch made by one of my officers.

2nd

These movements of the Enemy having put it quite out of my power to attempt any thing further in Elizabeth River with adequate prospect of success until we should have a sufficient military Force to land at the same time on both its Banks, I determined on making a movement up James's River to distract the Enemy and to capture such of his vessels as might have taken shelter there, and I therefore moved one of the Frigates close to the mouth of it and sent the Tenders and Boats of the Squadron under the Command of Lieutenant Westphale of this Ship to penetrate as far up as might prove practicable for the aforesaid purposes and I am happy to add that they succeeded in getting up as high as Hog Island, and in capturing a number of Vessels which from their inland position had considered themselves in perfect safety, and I have the satisfaction to remark, from the Prisoners taken on this occasion and from some Americans who have since been on board here with Flags of Truce, that it appears the Capture of these Ships so high up one of their Rivers, the probability of their other Rivers being subject to similar visitations, the state of alarm in which our arrival has put the whole country, their late ineffectual application to Government for means of defence, added to the rigorous blockade of the Bay, and the Delaware, and the check lately given to the Licence trade by the recent orders on that head, have caused the continuation of Hostilities with us to be now as unpopular in this as it has been in other parts of the United States and the Virginians who a few Months back so loudly called for war are beginning to be as clamorous and anxious for Peace.

3rd

It may be also useful for me Sir here to state to you that in a conversation I had an opportunity of entering into the other day, with an intelligent Merchant of Richmond he fairly explained to me that the Commencement of this War could not but have been popular in this part of the world from the increased Advantages which they appeared at the moment to derive from it for he assured me he never had seen since his entering into Business such Commercial activity in America, offering such Prospects of general Profit to all concerned in it as for the four or five Months immediately following the Declaration of Hostilities he said the demands for Supplies

from Europe and the West Indies had been naturally very much increased by it, and the Superabundance of British Licences occasioning Plenty of them to be always in the market at as reasonable Rate, the Ship owners were able without risk to get Freight the moment their ships were ready to receive it, the Merchants had more orders for Shipments to Europe &c than they could well execute, and the Farmers and Cultivation of the land consequently got higher prices for the produce of their Labor, than had been known for many years; but the late measures of our Government having (he said) not only put a Stop to these advantageous prospects but having also thrown back into the Country an immense quantity of last years produce and caused an entire and complete stagnation of all Commerce to succeed so immediately to the late Scenes of activity and profit, had had a proportionate effect on the minds of the People, and there was now only to be heard from one end of the Country to the other Lamentations of Individuals who were now beginning to suffering from the effects of the war. He also added with much apparent pleasure that Mr. Maddison had lost all the latter measures he had proposed to Congress (previous to its breaking up) for prosecuting the War with rancour, and he assured me from the present state of the Country the President would neither be enabled nor permitted to continue it—within 48 hours after this conversation a Flag of Truce from Norfolk with Mr. De Siverskoff on board of her brought me the Letters of which the enclosures marked a and b, are copies, and the dispatch from Mr. Dashkoff which I had the honor of personally delivering to you this morning, which occasioned me to send the replies and order as marked C. D. E. & F.

- 4th Since my arrival at this anchorage I have also received by Flag of Truce from Lieutenant Coll. Addison Commanding the United States Forces at Northampton on the Eastern shore of Virginia a Midshipman and Eight men belonging to the *Victorious*, together with the Letters of which the enclosures G and H are copies, to which I returned the answers marked I and K.
- 5th On the 19th. Curr. the Guard Boats for the night whilst reconnoitring in Elizabeth River had the good Fortune to meet with the Carpenter and Seven men belonging to the *Tartarus*, who had just made their escape from the jail of Norfolk where they had been confined as Prisoners of War, and it is right I should mention to you that they complain much of the mode in which they have been disposed of, and fed during the time they have been in the power of the Americans.
- 6th I have now Sir only to assure you of the continuation of the same Zeal and good conduct of the officers and men of this Squadron which I had the satisfaction of noticing in my last dispatch.
- 7th I have the honor also to transmit herewith in a separate accompanying Packet copies of all the Memoranda and other orders which I have seen occasion to issue to the Squadron since parting from you as likewise a Return of Vessels Captured. I have the honor to be Sir &c. &c.

(Signed) G. Cockburn Rr. Adl.

LB Copy, DLC, Papers of George Cockburn, Container 9, Letters Sent, 3 Feb. 1812–6 Feb. 1814, pp. 136–46. Enclosure letters mentioned in the margin of the 3rd part: A—letter from Brig. Gen. Taylor; B—letter from Capt. Stewart; C—letter to Brig. Genl.

Taylor; D—letter to Capt. Stewart; E—letter to Exy. Mon. De Dashkoff; F—pass for a Vessel to carry Dispatches to Russia. Enclosures G and H and responses I and K, all mentioned in part four, were neither identified nor included in the letter book.

1. Developed by William Congreve at the Royal Laboratory, Woolwich, England, Congreve's rockets were first used by the British at the siege of Boulogne in 1806. The 32-pound version, the most successful model, consisted of a cylinder of sheet iron wrapped with wire, constituting a projectile 42 inches long and 4 inches in diameter. A composition akin to gunpowder served as propellant, while a wooden stick 15 feet long extending from the rear provided stability in flight. The rockets' range varied from 1500 to 3000 yards. Their great advantage was mobility, but their major defect was unpredictability in flight. For further reading on these rockets, see Hobbs, *Congreve War Rockets*, and Hogg, *Artillery*, pp. 248–50.

Baltimore Defense Plans

News that the British blockading squadron was off Hampton Roads spread quickly throughout the Chesapeake. By mid-February, a group of Baltimore insurance company underwriters queried Secretary Jones about fitting out their own schooners to protect the city's merchant trade from the British. Captain Charles Gordon, commander of the Baltimore Station since November 1811,¹ also solicited more vessels from Jones.

1. Gordon's rank as captain dated from 2 March 1813.

COMMITTEE OF UNDERWRITERS OF BALTIMORE TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Baltimore February 1813

Sir,

Under the Circumstances of the present Blockade of the Chesapeake, and the extraordinary Hazards to which our Commerce is exposed, the public & private Underwriters of this City have been consulting on the best mode of affording some protection to our Homeward and Outward bound Trade.

We find by experience, that the intrepid Navigators of our fast sailing and War-built vessels, willingly encounter the Risk of passing the large British Ships, which form the Blockade and have been unexpectedly successful in their attempts. But in executing their bold designs, they calculate only on the danger to be apprehended from these Ships.— They are not aware that armed Boats and small craft are prepared to decoy and intercept them in their passage, and these are sometimes met at considerable distance from the Fleet, and are the more dangerous, because least, if at all, expected.

It was the opinion of a General Committee formed of Deputies from each Insurance Company, that two, or more, not exceeding Four, fast sailing and well equipped, and well armed Schooners, might be employed to great advantage in destroying or checking these armed Boats and the other small Craft engaged in the same service, and afford an effective protection to the Ships or vessels that may evade, or dare to take the fire of, and to pass, the blockading Squadron. They have accordingly appointed a Committee to engage Suitable vessels for

this purpose, and to cause them immediately to be fitted & equipped and despatched under vigilant Commanders & competent Crews, to render all the Service that may be found practicable.

The Committee are aware that the protection of Commerce is the proper province of the General Government, with which they do not desire to interfere. But the occasion is urgent, and they are confident that their Exertion will be received as intended, as an auxiliary measure, that will procure temporary relief, until a more efficient plan can be devised & executed. They will provide for the present expence of the proposed armament, with a due regard to œconomy, and trust for reimbursement to the Justice of Government, sincerely hoping the present proceeding will be duly appreciated & approved.

We have been ordered to make this Communication to you, and shall be happy to hear from you in Reply, with as little delay as possible. With great Respect We have the honor to be in behalf of the Underwriters of Baltimore Sir Your humble Servts.—

Jn^o Hollins presidt. of the Maryd. Insce. Co.
D Winchester Prest. of the Baltimore Ins: Compy.
S. Sterett, Ps. Isn. Ins. Co.

LS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 106 (M124, Roll No. 53).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO
COMMITTEE OF UNDERWRITERS OF BALTIMORE

Messrs John Hollins	Presidents of	Navy Depart.
Winchester	Baltimore Insurance	16 Feb: 1813
& S Sterrett	Company	

Your letter of [?] ¹ inst. has this moment reached me and I shall tomorrow lay it before the President. It is true that the Government of the United States is Constitutionally charged with the protection of Commerce, but its means are limited and inadequate to protect at all points our extensive Coast and coasters against a powerful Naval foe whose Superiority enables to attack a vulnerable point with a celerity and force that cannot be repelled but by the Cooperation of the voluntary local force, whose interests & feelings are directly assailed.

The Naval force of the Government in the waters of the Chesapeake is the Frigate *Constellation*— 17 Gun boats and a Cutter now at Norfolk and will be retained there for the defence of that place now directly menaced with an attack.

The force here is three Gun boats to which I expect to add a Schooner with a heavy gun amidship— these will be ready in two days and under the Command of Captain Sinclair of the Navy will immediately proceed to the Mouth of the River and cooperate with any other force that may offer and I trust will soon clear the Bay of the marauders, who now infest it.

The *Scorpion* Cutter is also ordered from Norfolk to join Capt Sinclair. This little flotilla will be well officered and manned with the crew of the *Adams* Frigate now fitting here.

The movements and object of the contemplated force both public and private had better be conducted with as much circumspection as may be, and if it were practicable to get below their tenders and launches in the night so as to intercept them and chastize their temerity, it would probably confine them to their ships in future. I am &c

W Jones.

P.S. I have ordered a fast Pilot Boat from New York to cruize off the Coast and warn our vessels public & private of the Blockade of the Chesapeake and Delaware.

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, MLS, Vol. 11, pp. 198-99 (M209, Roll No. 4).

1. The Baltimore underwriters' letter was undated.

MASTER COMMANDANT CHARLES GORDON TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Baltimore 16th Feby. 1813

Sir/

In reply to yrs. of yesterdays date I have the honor to inform you that there is but one Gun Boat (*No. 138*) at this place— She has a Commander, one mate, a steward & two ordinary seamen— She will be provisioned, watered & ready for service by tomorrow night if men can be procured— She has been detained here two months entirely for the want of men that could not be procured in consequence of the high wages & bounty offer'd to seamen for the Letter of Mark service—

There are nine other Gun Boats belonging to this station, which I contemplated keeping at Annapolis during this winter to be always ready for immediate service; But on my sending them round to Washington on duty, the greater part (I understand) were ordered from thence to Norfolk, & the remainder were caught in the Ice in the Eastern Branch— very respty. Sir yr. Obt. servt.

Cha^s. Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1813, No. 17 (M147, Roll No. 5).

CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Baltimore 13th March 1813

Sir/

I have the honor to inform you that Governor Winder having placed the defence of this City under the direction of Genl. Saml. Smith, he has this day solicited of me my cooperation with the Land forces in the defence & protection of Baltimore Town & harbour against any attack which the Enemy may meditate—

I informed the Genl. that it would give me infinite pleasure to render any assistance in my power untill I could receive your further instructions; But that my force was now reduced to a single Gun Boat, and even that Boat was destined to join Captn. Sinclair in the Potomac—

In consequence of the reports (now in circulation) of part of the British squadron having advanced up the Bay, I had determined on suggesting to you the propriety of fitting out one or two small Tenders at this place for the purpose of cruising in the Bay between Annapolis & the Potomac in order to protect the Bay trade against those Tenders & boats of the Enemy, and also to give to Annapolis & Baltimore the most early information of their advance & situation from time to time— Having stated this my intention to the Genl. he immediately urged the necessity, and requested I would solicit of you permission to procure & equip two or three such vessels for that service—

It being well ascertained that no heavy ship can enter the Patapsco without lightening more than is usual in such cases, we have nothing to apprehend from any force except the approach of Gun or Bomb Vessels, which if attempted could be repell'd with our Tenders well fitted & man'd— I confess I do not myself apprehend an attack on this place, still I believe the Enemy may without much difficulty distress Annapolis—

There are now laying at Fort McHenry ready for sea, two or three very fine Privateer Schooners which I am of opinion are well adapted to our Bay cruising & capable of contending with any of the Tenders & boats of the Enemy— I know not if the owners of those vessels would agree to their serving the United States on the present occasion— But with your permission I would suggest to them the idea of their loaning those vessels & armaments & Crews to the United States for 1 or 2 months or during the Blockade; the United States agreeing to return them in the same condition we receive them, and to put their Crews in the pay and establishment of the Navy for the time being—

I beg leave also to inform you that I am much in want of a Lieutt. to take charge of the recruiting service on this station, as I have no person with whom I can trust the necessary monies for the advances &c.— And should you determine on fitting out anything from this place I could find employment for 2 or 3 smart Lieutts. & Midshipmen— I have the honor to be most respectfully, Sir, yr Obt. servt.

Cha^s. Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 2, No. 36 (M125, Roll No. 27).

The Potomac Flotilla under Sinclair and Kennedy

William Jones considered Washington more vulnerable to attack than Baltimore or Annapolis and therefore established a Potomac flotilla in February 1813, under Master Commandant Arthur Sinclair, late of Argus. Sinclair took his newly purchased schooner and three gunboats down the bay as far as Piankatank River to annoy the enemy and destroy small tenders from the blockading squadron. His orders required him to return his crew to Washington by 15 March for duty on board Adams.¹

At the end of March, Jones ordered Lieutenant Edmund P. Kennedy to relieve Sinclair. In an effort to insure greater protection of the Potomac River, Jones's new orders to Kennedy curtailed the flotilla's cruising range to just beyond the mouth of that river.

1. See Jones to Sinclair, 26 Feb. 1813, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 278–79 (M149, Roll No. 10).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO MASTER COMMANDANT ARTHUR SINCLAIR

Capt. Arthur Sinclair¹
Present.

Nav: Deptmt.
17. Feb: 1813.

The waters of the Chesapeak, being now under a vigorous blockade by a squadron of the Enemies Ships at the entrance of the Bay—and their Tenders & launches having penetrated as high as new point, to the very great hazard of the trade inward & outward bound, it has become necessary to direct the small force now here, to repel those predatory incursions, & confine the depredation of the enemy to the sphere of his ship.

For this purpose, I have directed the commandant of the Navy Yard, to procure a schooner calculated for the purpose & capable of bearing a heavy gun a mid-ships, & such other armament as may be deemed proper, & also to equip the three gunboats now at the Navy Yard, as soon as possible. You will therefore immediately take the command of this expedition, & with the utmost dispatch, proceed to the mouth of the Potomac, & thence, as your judgment & discretion may direct, to execute the object of this enterprize. You will immediately ascertain, the names of officers & men, now attached to the gunboats, & report to me, the additional number & rank of officers, & number of men required to render your force efficient, which will be furnished from the *Adams*, for this temporary purpose, to be returned to that ship, when the expedition is terminated. A voluntary force of at least two stout privateers is now equipping at Baltimore, for the same purpose, & a perfect co-operation is my desirable; they will probably meet you at the mouth of the Potomac. I have ordered the *Scorpion* cutter from Norfolk to Annapolis & if you meet her, you will take her under your command²

W. Jones.

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, p. 262 (M149, Roll No. 10).

1. Master Commandant Sinclair was not promoted to captain until 24 July 1813.

2. *Scorpion*, the cutter at Norfolk originally intended for use at Annapolis, was sent to the Potomac instead.

MASTER COMMANDANT ARTHUR SINCLAIR TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U States Armed Schooner *Adeline*¹ in
the Mouth of the Peankitank River
March the 11th. 1813

Sir

Agreeable to your instructions I take the earliest opportunity to inform you of my proceeding with the Flotilla under my command— Owing to contrary winds and the extreme dull sailing of the gunboats I was until the 10th Inst reaching the mouth of the Patowmack where I recd. direct information that the Enemy were in Lynhaven Bay with four 74's—five Frigates & some small vessels; and that two other Frigates with two armed, Baltimore built, Schooners and a Sloop, were off New Point light, committing depredations in every Inlet and on every Bay craft they could come across— I immediately proceeded down the Bay, and at midnight made a harbour under Gwins Island, the wind being a head and a prospect of bad weather— After having anchored in a line across the Channel with two

gunboats in company (the other not being able to fetch in had gone into the Rappahannock) I was hailed from an armed Schooner,² within us, to know who we were— I informed him, and upon requiring to know who he was, he went to quarters immediately and ordered my Boat onbd. him— I had anchored with Springs upon our cables and our men at quarters— I ordered him to let me know who he was, and upon his insisting on my Boats being sent to him, I fired a musket a head of him, which he instantly returned with a Broadside of Round and grape with a constant fire of small arms— Being well assured, from this conduct that it was one of the Enemies Schooners, I opened a fire on her from this vessel and in 15 or 20 minutes silenced her— I now ceased firing and desired the nearest gunboat to hail him and know if he had struck to us, and who he was— He made no reply but immediately renewed the Action— I then ordered a genl. fire from all the vessels, and in about the same length of time silenced him a second time— He acted, upon our ceasing our fire, precisely as he had before done, and it was now half an hour before he was a third time silenced— Altho his conduct did not deserve a third indulgence, yet humanity induced me to stop the effusion of Blood which our well directed fire must evidently have caused onboard his vessel— I was now in the act of sending an officer on board him to take possession, when I discovered he had made Sail and was endeavouring to escape under cover of the darkness of the night— I immediately cut my cable and made sail after him; but after a running fight of half an Hour, his great superiority of sailing and the extreme darkness of the night effected his escape— The last we saw of him he appeared to be on wind down the Bay— This procedure, added to his other conduct, and his having, as I am informed by the inhabitants of this place, anchored here just at night without shewing any colours, confirms me in the opinion of his being one of their light cruisers— He has, no doubt, suffered severely in killed and wounded, as we were at all times in good grape and canister distance, and from the quantity of his Bull Works which were floated onshore near where he lay, his hull must have been as much shattered as we could see his rigging appeared to be, by the light from his guns,

Our damage has been very trifling, only one man severely wounded, and our Rigging a little cut— I cannot say too much in praise of all the officers and crew of this vessel— I find from the excessive unwealdiness of the gunboats that I can calculate on but little support from them on this Expedition. They cannot hold their own upon a wind in the Bay, and never will stay, but in perfectly smooth water— A few light, fast sailing schooners, of easy draft, would be of infinitely more utility on such a service as this—

I find from this days information that we are here almost in the midst of their upper Squadron— Two Frigates, a Brig & Sloop of war with a number of smaller vessels are in and about Mockjack [*Mobjack*] Bay, which is the next harbour below us— They are blocking in a number of valuable vessels from Baltimore now at Anchor in the Severn, making from that Bay— If the sailing of the Flotilla would by any means justify the attempt, I would endeavour to get over to that River, in order to protect them from being cut out by their Boats; but such is the situation of the heavy ships in that Bay, as I have just been informed, that such a movement could not be attended with success: however I shall govern my self as circumstances may accrue. I have the honor to remain with great respect, Sir, your obt. Servt.

A Sinclair

ALS, DNA, RG45, MC, 1813, No. 34 (M147, Roll No. 5).

1. *Adeline* was purchased by the navy in February 1813 and renamed *Asp*.

2. Two days later Sinclair identified the ship as H.M. schooner *Lottery* and noted that she had sunk before she could reach the fleet at New Point Comfort; see Sinclair to Jones, 13 Mar. 1813, DNA, RG45, MC, 1813, No. 34 (M147, Roll No. 5). Both this letter and Sinclair's of 11 March were given the document number 34. *Lottery* was the Baltimore privateer that the British had captured on 8 February and renamed *Canzo*; see pp. 318, 320. This vessel remained in British naval service until 1816. Perhaps Sinclair mistakenly attacked an American privateer. There is an allusion to this in the following letter.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO LIEUTENANT EDMUND P. KENNEDY

Lt. Edmd. P. Kennedy
Comg. the U S. flotilla Potomac River

Nav. Deptmt.
29. March 1813

The Flotilla, consisting of the *Scorpion* cutter, Schooner *Asp*—& gunboats Nos. 70. 71. & 137. is placed under your command. The object of this force is to watch the mouth of the Potowmac & occasionally to observe the situation & movements of the enemies force below, availing yourself of any fair opportunity of attacking with success, but taking especial care that your return to the mouth of the Potowmac, is not intercepted by the enemy. The main object of your command is the protection of this River.

Should the enemy attempt to enter it, with a force superior to yours, you will retire as he advances, until you reach Fort Warburton, where you will take a favorable position, on the spit of sand opposite, & in co-operation with the Fort defend the passage. If you observe the enemy, moving up the Bay, in force, you will if possible, employ a small Boat, to give information at Annapolis. It will be proper, to embrace every possible opportunity of communicating with this Department, whatever may be interesting, & for that purpose, you will not be absent from the mouth of the Potowmac more than five days at any one time. The gunboats sail & work very heavily, & it will be necessary to observe some caution lest in the event of pursuit by a superior force, they should be cut off or seperated. It will require some circumspection lest you should come in contact with some of our private armed vessels in the Bay, which by the imprudence of the commander of one of them, was the case during the late cruise of the Flotilla. It is known that some of the gunboats under your command, are Latteen rigged, which is a conspicuous & sufficient distinction of itself.

W. Jones

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 325–26 (M149, Roll No. 10).

LIEUTENANT EDMUND P. KENNEDY TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U. States Cutter *Scorpion*
Abreast Fort Washington
9th April 1813

Sir,

I have the Honr. of inclosing you the Guard report of the *Asp*, belonging to the Flotilla under my command— The Flotilla is anchor'd in the place directed in order to cooperate with the Fort but I really do not calculate on receiving any

aid from that Quarter, the Platform being very badly constructed & in miserable Order—one Gun Boat well mann'd might attack it in the present Situation with certain Success.

I wish very much to proceed farther down the river Sir, but I have no Surgeon, & the Men are very Sickly; the Boats are badly Mann'd as well in Number as in quality of the Crew Shou'd it meet your approbation Sir I wou'd be glad to have a few Men exchanged & permission to proceed to St. Marys—Respectfully, I have the Honor to be Your Mst. Ob. Svt.

Edm'd. P. Kennedy

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 178 (M148, Roll No. 11).

[Enclosure]

A Report of Vessles boarded by the U States Schooner *Asp* Jas. B. Sigourney Commander
from Friday 9th At 8 am Until Saturday 10th At 8 AM Inclusive

Day date & Hour	description of Vessles	Vessles Names	Masters Names	Where from	Where bound	Cargo	Remarks
Friday Apr. 9							
1 PM	Sloop	<i>Little Liddy</i>	Bnj H Merick	Alexandria	French Town	Flour	
5 PM	Schooner	<i>Hariot</i>	Wm. Jackson	Wecomico	Alexandria	Wood	Reported that the British Squadron was off Rappahannock
1/2 5 PM	Schooner	<i>Polly</i>	Jos. Smith	Pottomack Creek	Alexandria	Plank	Reported that the British Squadron At Mouth of the River
9 PM	Schooner	<i>Adolphus</i>	Capt. Linavall	from the mouth Potomack	Alexandria	Flour	Put Back in consequence of the British Vessels being of the mouth of the River
1/2 9 PM	Schooner	<i>American</i>	Capt. Smith	from ditto	Alexandria	Flour	Put Back in consequence of the British cruisers being of the mouth of the River

Boarded a number of small Craft and Permitted to Pass
Also Boarded a Small fishing Schooner from Little Wecomico
Reported a heavy firing was heard off patuxon on Tuesday

Saturday 10th April 1813
J B Sigourney

DS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1813, Vol. 1, No. 178, enclosure (M148, Roll No. 11).

British Raiding Parties

Admiral Sir John B. Warren in his flagship *San Domingo*, 74, arrived in Lynnhaven Bay on 22 March accompanied by *Ramillies*, 74, *Statira*, 38, *Mohawk*, 12, and *Highflyer*, tender. Frustrated in their attempts to attack *Constellation* in the *Elizabeth River*, the British decided in early April to proceed up the bay to harass American merchantmen and coastal towns. Warren and his squadron sailed as far as Annapolis, leaving the amphibious operations in the upper bay to Rear Admiral Cockburn. Besides attacking several towns and a cannon foundry, Cockburn made charts of the waters through which he cruised, which would prove useful when the British returned with an even greater vengeance in 1814.

LIEUTENANT JAMES POLKINGHORNE, R.N.,¹ TO
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

Copy

His Majesty's Ship *San Domingo*
in the Chesapeake 3d April 1813

Sir,

In pursuance of the Orders to proceed with the Boats of the Squadron you did me the honor to place under my Command, and attack the Enemys vessels at the Mouth of the River Rappahannock—

I have to inform you, that after rowing fifteen Miles I found they were four Armed Schooners drawn up in a line ahead, apparently determined to give us a warm reception, notwithstanding their formidable appearance and the advantage they would necessarily derive from mutual support, I determined to attack them, the Issue of which is such as might have been expected, from the brave Men you did me the honor to Command and is as follows (Vizt.)—

<i>Arab</i> -----	7 Guns 45 Men Run on Shore & boarded by two Boats of the <i>Marlborough</i> Under Lieut. Urmston & Scott
<i>Lynx</i> -----	6 Guns 40 Men Hauld her Colours down on my going along side in the <i>San Domingos</i> Pinnace—
<i>Racer</i> -----	6 Guns 36 Men boarded and carried after a sharp resistance by the <i>San Domingos</i> Pinnace—
<i>Dolphin</i> ----	12 Guns 98 Men the Guns of the <i>Racer</i> were turned upon her, and then gallantly Boarded by Lieut. Bishop in the <i>Statira's</i> large Cutter and Lieut. Liddon in <i>Maidstones</i> Launch—

From the scattered situation of the Squadron and strong Tide, only the fast rowing Boats were able to get up, and much credit is due to the Officers and Men in the heavy Boats for their great exertions and perseverance, and had they been up in time to join the attack, I am Confidant I should have received every support that could be expected—

Lieutenant Urmston & Scott of the *Marlborough* Lieut. Bishop of the *Statira* and Lieut. Liddon of the *Maidstone* speak in the highest terms of the gallantry



American Privateer Schooner *Dolphin* and Others Captured in the Rappahannock River by British Boats, 3 April 1813

of their respective Crews, and it would be an injustice to those Officers and Men were I not to bear testimony to their gallant and intrepid Conduct—

I must also beg leave to represent that the conduct of Lieut. Flint, and the Royal Marines in the Pinnace deserve great praise for the steady and well directed fire kept up by them when advancing under the Enemies Grape and Musquettry, and that the assistance I received from Lieut. Brand Messrs. Pearce & Ridgeway Midshipmen (who have served their time and passed) as well as the Crew of the pinnace was such as to merit the highest encomium and to whom I shall ever feel much indebted

I herewith enclose a List of the Killed and Wounded² And have the honor to be Sir, Your most obedient Servant

(Signed) J Puckinghorn

P.S. The Enemys loss as far as I have been able to ascertain, is Five Killed, and one died since of his Wounds, and Ten Wounded.

Copy, UKLPR, Adm. 1/503, pp. 482–85.

1. Various spelled Puckinghorn, Puckinghorne, and Polkinghorne. Marshall's *Royal Naval Biography* refers to him as Polkinghorne.

2. The British suffered two killed and eleven wounded during the 3 April engagement on the Rappahannock River. See UKLPR, Adm. 1/503, p. 487.

REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N., TO
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

No. 8

Marlborough, Swan Point East
2 miles April 19th 1813.

Sir,

The *Mohawke* having come to me last night owing to a mistake of Signals and that Vessel drawing less Water by Three feet than the Tenders, which is of essential consequence in the difficult Navigation around this spot, I have ventured to keep her and send you the *Lynx* in her stead to inform you that I brought the Squadron to this Anchorage on Friday Evening without other accident than the *Racer* (Tender) taking the Ground on Swan Point spit from which however she was soon got off again without damage.

On opening the Patapsco River I was mortified to observe that there was no Vessel below the Fort, excepting one large Gun Boat advanced about a Gun shot from it, and some Schooners and Small Vessels under Sail near the mouth of the River apparently endeavouring to regain a safe anchorage in consequence of our approach, as soon as we anchored. I dispatched the *Hornet* and Boats in pursuit of these (the shallowness of the numerous Knowls around here not allowing me to make use of the larger Tenders.) Two of the *Statira's* Boats pulling towards the Gun Boat she immediately weighed and instead of waiting to give Protection to the other Vessels she ran up beyond the Fort firing at these two Boats as she run away from them, and a constant fire was kept up on all the Boats from the Shore from small Guns or Field Pieces without however any effect, and every Vessel (except the Gun Boat which made such a timely retreat) was Captured and brought out. Enclosed I have the honor to transmit a List of

these Vessels and how I have disposed of them, they not being of a description for sending into an English Port.

On Saturday morning learning from the Prisoners that all the Vessels in the Patapsco had been hauled as close up as possible, unloaded and disarmed, excepting only one Privateer and therefore there being little prospect of my being able to effect any advantageous operations in that River, I determined to avail myself of our advanced position to endeavour to procure a Supply of Fresh Water, that alongside and between us and Poole Island being however (contrary to the Information you had received) too Brackish to drink, I directed the *Maidstone* to move as much higher toward Turkey Point as from the depth of Water Capt. Burdett should find practicable and then to advance the Tenders again from him for the protection of the Watering Vessels into which I had converted the Prizes taken the day before, in spite however of the assistance of all our Masters and Pilots the *Maidstone* was not able to get above Five miles to the Northward of me and the Tenders not above a mile further, but the watering Vessels nevertheless succeeded in getting off Turkey Point under the Protection of Armed Boats & I am happy to say have just returned with a Load of Excellent Water and the *Mohawke* which on taking under my orders, I immediately dispatched to get as near Turkey Point as possible for the protection and furtherance of this Service, having succeeded in getting Six or Seven Miles higher than the Tenders, I have no doubt of being able to complete the whole Squadron in Water by tomorrow night or the next day at furthest without difficulty or risk, and all the Ships are completed in Fact from the Prizes.

I am endeavouring to have the position of the different Shoals and Knowls around us ascertained and buoyed off, and if I find it possible to get any thing into the entrance of Patapsco I shall do so, and should it appear practicable to annoy their Fort or Vessels above it with Rockets &c. I shall not hesitate in attempting it.

I transmit also an intercepted Letter which will give you Some Idea of the Effect our appearance here has had at Baltimore and of the Precautions taken in consequence thereof. I have the honor to be Sir Your very faithful and most obedient Humble Servant

G. Cockburn Rr. Adml.

LB Copy, DLC, Papers of George Cockburn, Container 9, Letters Sent, 3 Feb. 1812–6 Feb. 1814, pp. 150–54.

REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N., TO
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

No. 11

His Majesty's Ship *Maidstone*,
Tuesday Night 3rd May 1813
at Anchor off Turkey Point

Sir

I have the Honor to inform you that whilst anchoring the Brigs and Tenders off Spesucie Island agreeable to my Intentions notified to you in my official Report of the 29th Ult. No. 10 I observed Guns fired and American Colours hoisted at a Battery lately erected at Havre-de-Grace at the entrance of the Susquehanna River, this of course immediately gave to the Place an Importance which I had not before

attached to it, and I therefore determined on attacking it after the completion of our Operations at the Island, consequently having sounded in the direction towards it and found that the Shallowness of the Water would only admit of its being approached by Boats, I directed their assembling under Lieutenant Westphal, (1st of the *Marlborough*) last night at 12 O'Clock alongside the *Fantome*, when our Detachment of Marines consisting of about 150 Men (as before) under Captains Wybourn and Carter with the Small Party of Artillery men under Lt. Robertson of the Artillery, embarked in them and the whole being under the immediate direction of Captain Lawrence of the *Fantome*, (who with much Zeal and readiness took upon himself at my request the conducting of this Service) proceeded towards Havre to take up under cover of the Night the necessary Positions for Commencing the Attack at dawn of day—The *Dolphin* and *Highflyer* Tenders Commanded by Lieutenants Hutchinson and Lewis followed for the support of the Boats but the Shoalness of the Water prevented their getting within Six Miles of the Place. Captain Lawrence however having got up with the Boats and having very ably and judiciously placed them during the dark, a warm fire was opened on the Place at Daylight from our Launches and Rocket Boat, which was smartly returned from the Battery for a short time, but the Launches constantly closing with it and their Fire rather encreasing than decreasing, that from the Battery soon began to Slacken, and Captain Lawrence observing this, very judiciously directed the landing of the Marines on the Left, which movement added to the hot fire they were under, induced the Americans to commence withdrawing from the Battery to take Shelter in the Town—Lieut. G. A. Westphal who had taken his station in the Rocket Boat close to the Battery therefore now judging the moment to be favorable pulled directly up under the work and landing with his Boat's Crew got immediate possession of it, turned their own Guns on them, and thereby soon obliged them to retreat with their whole Force to the furthest Extremity of the Town, whither (the Marines having by this Time landed) they were closely pursued and no longer feeling themselves equal to a manly and open Resistance, they commenced a teasing and irritating fire from behind their Houses, Walls, Trees &c. from which I am sorry to say my gallant first Lieutenant received a Shot through his Hand whilst leading the pursuing Party, he however continued to Head the Advance with which he soon succeeded in dislodging the whole of the Enemy from their lurking Places and driving them for Shelter to the Neighbouring Woods &c whilst performing which Service he had the satisfaction to overtake and with his remaining Hand to make Prisoner and bring in a Captain of their Militia—We also took an Ensign and some armed Individuals but the rest of the Force which had been opposed to us having penetrated into the woods I did not judge it prudent to allow of their being further followed with our small Numbers, therefore after setting Fire to some of the Houses to cause the Proprietors (who had deserted them and formed Part of the Militia who had fled to the Woods) to understand and feel what they were liable to bring upon themselves by building Batteries and acting towards us with so much useless Rancor, I embarked in the Boats the Guns from the Battery, and having also taken and destroyed about 130 Stand of small arms, I detached a small division of Boats up the Susquehanna to take and destroy whatever they might meet with in it, and proceeded myself with the remaining Boats under Captain Lawrence in Search of a Cannon Foundry which I had gained Intelligence of whilst on shore in Havre as being situated about 3 or 4 Miles to the Northward where we found it accordingly and getting Possession of it without difficulty, commenced instantly its destruction and that of the Guns and other Materials we

found there, to complete which occupied us during the Remainder of the Day as there were several Buildings and much complicated heavy Machinery attached to it,—It was known by the names of the Cecil or Principio Foundry, and was one of the most valuable Works of the Kind in America, the Destruction of it therefore at this moment will I trust prove of much national Importance—per Margin¹ I have stated the Ordnance taken and disabled by our small Division this day, during the whole of which we have been on Shore in the Centre of the Enemy's Country and on his high Road between Baltimore and Philadelphia. The Boats which I sent up the Susquehanna returned after destroying five Vessels in it and a large Store of Flour, when every thing being compleated to my utmost wishes, the whole division re-embarked and returned to the Ships where we arrived at 10 O'Clock after being Twenty two Hours in constant exertion without Nourishment of any kind, and I have much pleasure in being able to add that excepting Lt. Westphal's wound we have not suffered any Casualty whatever.

The Judicious Dispositions made by Captain Lawrence of the *Fantome* during the preceeding Night, and the able manner in which he conducted the attack of Havre in the Morning, added to the Gallantry, Zeal, and attention shewn by him during this whole day, most justly entitle him to my highest Encomiums and Acknowledgements and will I trust ensure to him your Approbation and I have the Pleasure to add that he speaks in the most favorable manner of the good conduct of all the Officers and Men employed in the Boats under his immediate Orders, particularly of Lieutenants Alexander and Reed of the *Dragon*, and, *Fantome* who each commanded a Division—Of Lieutenant G. A. Westphal whose exemplary and gallant Conduct it has been so necessary for me already to notice in detailing to you the operations of the day, I shall only now add that from a thorough Knowledge of his merits (he having served many years with me as 1st. Lieut.) I always on similar Occasions expect much from him, but this day he even outstripped these expectations, and though in considerable Pain from his wound he insisted on continuing to assist me to the last moment with his able Exertions, I therefore Sir cannot but entertain a confident hope that his Services of today, and the wound he has received added to what he so successfully executed at French Town (as detailed in my letter to you of the 29th Ultmo.) will obtain for him your favorable consideration and Notice and that of My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty—² I should be wanting in justice did I not also mention to you particularly the able Assistance again afforded me this day by Lt. Robertson of the Artillery who is ever a Volunteer where Service is to be performed and always foremost in performing such Service, being equally conspicuous for his Gallantry and Ability and he also obliged me by superintending the destruction of the Ordnance taken at the Foundry. To Captains Wybourn and Carter who commanded the Marines and shewed much Skill in their Management of them, every Praise is likewise due, as are my acknowledgements to Lt. Lewis of the *Highflyer*, who not being able to bring his Vessel near enough to render us assistance, came himself with his usual active Zeal to offer his Personal Services—And it is my pleasing Duty to report to you in addition that all the other Officers and Men seemed to vie with each other in the Cheerful and Zealous Discharge of their Duty, and I have therefore the Satisfaction of recommending their general good Conduct on this Occasion to your Notice accordingly— I have the honor to be Sir, Your very faithful and most humble Servant

(Sd.) G. Cockburn Rr. Adml.

LB Copy, DLC, Papers of George Cockburn, Container 9, Letters Sent, 3 Feb. 1812–6 Feb. 1814, pp. 162–70. Another copy is in UKLPR, Adm. 1/503, pp. 669–77.

1. "Taken from the Battery at Havre, Six Guns—12 & 6 Prs. Disabled in the Battery for Protection of Foundry five 24 Prs. Disabled Ready for sending away from Foundry Twenty eight—32 Prs. Disabled in Boring House and Foundry, Eight Guns & four Carronades of different Calibres—Total 51 Guns and 130 Stand of Small Arms—"

2. In July 1813, the Admiralty rewarded George Augustus Westphal's exploits with the rank of commander. He led the division of boats that captured the privateer *Anaconda* at Ocracoke, North Carolina; see pp. 184–87.

REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N., TO
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

No. 12

H.M.S. *Maidstone* off the
Sasafras River the 6th May 1813

Sir

I have the honor to acquaint you that understanding George Town and Fredericstown, situated up the Sasafras River were Places of some Trade and Importance, and the Sasafras being the only River or Place of Shelter for Vessels at this upper Extremity of the Chesapeake which I had not examined and cleared, I directed last Night the assembling of the Boats alongside the *Mohawke*, from whence, with the Marines as before under Captains Wyburn and Carter with my Friend Lt. Robertson of the Artillery and his small Party they proceeded up this River, being placed by me for this Operation under the immediate directions of Captn. Byng of the *Mohawke*.

I intended that they should arrive before the abovementioned Towns by Dawn of Day, but in this I was frustrated by the Intricacy of the River, our total want of local Knowledge in it, the darkness of the Night, and the great Distance the Towns lay up it; It therefore became unavoidably late in the morning before we approached them, when having intercepted a small Boat with two of the Inhabitants, I directed Captain Byng to halt our Boats about two Miles below the Town, and I sent forward the two Americans in their Boat to warn their Countrymen against acting in the same rash manner the People of Havre-de-Grace had done, assuring them if they did that their Towns would inevitably meet with a similar Fate, but on the contrary, if they did not attempt Resistance no Injury should be done to them or their Towns, that Vessels and Public Property only, would be seized, that the strictest Discipline would be maintained, and that whatever Provisions or other Property of Individuals I might require for the use of the Squadron should be instantly paid for in its fullest Value. After having allowed sufficient Time for this Message to be digested and their Resolution taken thereon I directed the boats to advance and I am sorry to say I soon found the more unwise alternative was adopted, for on our reaching within about a mile of the Town between two projected elevated Points of the River, a most heavy Fire of Musquetry was opened on us from about 400 Men divided and entrenched on the two opposite Banks, aided by one long Gun. The Launches and Rocket Boat smartly returned this Fire with good Effect, and with the other Boats and the Marines I pushed ashore immediately above the Enemy's Position, thereby ensuring the capture of his Towns or the bringing him to a decided action, he determined however not to risk the latter, for the

moment he discovered we had gained the shore, and that the Marines had fixed their Bayonets, he fled with his whole Force to the Woods, and was neither seen or heard of afterwards, though several parties were sent out to ascertain whether he had taken up any new Position or what had become of him, I gave him however the Mortification of seeing from wherever he had hid himself that I was Keeping my word with Respect to his Towns, which (excepting the Houses of those who had continued peaceably in them and had taken no Part in the attack made on us) were forthwith destroyed as were four Vessels laying in the River, and some Stores of Sugar, of Lumber, of Leather, and other Merchandize; I then directed the re-embarkation of our small Force and we proceeded down the River again to a Town I had observed situated in a Branch of it about half way up, and here I had the satisfaction to find that what had passed at Havre, George Town, and Fredericstown had its Effects, and led these People to understand that they have more to hope for from our Generosity than from erecting Batteries and opposing us by the Means within their Power. The Inhabitants of this Place having met me at landing to say that they had not permitted either Guns or Militia to be stationed there, and that whilst there I should not meet with any opposition whatever, I therefore Landed with the Officers and a small Guard only, and having ascertained that there was not any Public Property of any Kind or warlike Stores, and having allowed of such Articles as we stood in need of being embarked in the Boats on Payment to the Owners of their full value, I again re-embarked leaving the People of this Place well pleased with the wisdom of their Determination on their mode of receiving us, I also had a Deputation from Charleston in the North East River, to assure me that that Place is considered by them as at your Mercy, and that neither Guns nor Militia Men shall be suffered there and as I am assured that all the Places in the upper Part of the Chesapeake have adopted similar Resolutions, and as there is now neither public Property, Vessels, nor Warlike Stores remaining in this Neighbourhood, I propose returning to you with the light Squadron Tomorrow Morning.

I am sorry to say the hot Fire we were under this Morning cost us five Men wounded one only however severely and I have much Satisfaction in being able again to bear Testimony to you, of the Zeal, Gallantry, and good Conduct of the different Officers and Men serving in this Division— To Captain Byng of the *Mohawke* who conducted the various arrangements on this Occasion with equal Skill and Bravery every possible Praise is most justly due, Captains Wybourne and Carter, likewise conducted the Marines much to my satisfaction, and Lt. Robertson of the Artillery as usual rendered me the greatest Service by his Advice Activity and Gallantry; Lt. Lewis of the *Highflyer* (who left his Tender after bringing her as near as the depth of Water would allow her to approach) having throughout the day acted as my Aid-de-Camp and rendered me much useful assistance, is entitled to my best acknowledgements and Recommendations to your Notice; Lt. Alexander of the *Dragon* the Senior Officer under Captn. Byng in Command of the Boats deserves also that I should particularly notice him to you for his Steadiness, Correctness, and the great ability with which he always executes whatever Service is entrusted to him, and I must beg permission to seize this opportunity of stating to you how much I have been indebted since on this Service, to Captain Burdett of this Ship who was good enough to receive me on board the *Maidstone* when I found it impracticable to advance higher in the *Marlborough* and has invariably accompanied me on every occasion, whilst directing these various operations and rendered me always the most able

prompt and efficacious Assistance. I have the honor to be, Sir, Your very faithful and Most Humble Servant.

(Sd.) G. Cockburn. Rr. Admiral

LB Copy, DLC, Papers of George Cockburn, Container 9, Letters Sent, 3 Feb. 1812–6 Feb. 1814, pp. 171–79. Another copy is in UKLPR, Adm. 1/503, pp. 679–85.

Craney Island Defense Preparations

Captain Charles Stewart continued to fortify the Gosport Station during April and May, but was faced with the perennial manpower shortage. Jones concurred with Stewart's defense plans, but cautioned him to leave the erection of an artillery battery on Craney Island to the War Department.

CAPTAIN CHARLES STEWART TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

United States frigate *Constellation*
Norfolk harbour April 4. 1813

Sir

The Enemy's Squadron put to Sea on the evening of the 2d. inst. leaving the *Victorious* of 74 guns off Willoughby's point, one frigate on the tail of the horse shoe, and one in Lynnhaven bay. I presume the rest have gone to Bermuda to replenish their water and provisions. It appears to me that no time ought to be lost now to erect a battery on Crany Island, and to put the flotilla in a respectable condition, for I am persuaded they intend something more than a blockade in this quarter.

Something might be effected against the enemy with fire vessels and powder chests floated down in the night, but unless I am particularly instructed on this head I should not feel myself authorised to attempt it. I have the honor to be, Very Respectfully, Sir, Your obedient Servant

Ch^s. Stewart

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 2, No. 129 (M125, Roll No. 27).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN CHARLES STEWART

Charles Stewart Esqr.
Commanding Naval Officer, Norfolk Harbour.

Navy Deptmt.
April 8. 1813.

Sir,

Yours of the 4th is received, and I am inclined to believe that part of the Squadron that left the Chesapeake on the 2nd of May¹ be those which it is said have appeared off Sandy Hook.²

Agreeably to the instructions I have already given I trust the recruiting of the Crews of the Flotilla will progress until the requisite number are obtained. But

the demand for men and the great number of places not less exposed than Norfolk, and with much less protection, does not admit of a further diminution of the defence of those places in order to strengthen Norfolk: nor will it do to strip our Ships of their crews, because that would render the war on our part merely defensive, and completely release the enemy from the pressure of our active hostility. If you have any other mode of putting the "Flotilla in a respectable condition" than that of strengthening your force at the expense of other exposed situations, I shall be glad to hear it. I have already mentioned that our efforts to recruit for the Gun Boats have failed at Baltimore, and progress very slowly at Philadelphia, even for the small force ordered for the defence of the Delaware, now as effectually blockaded and annoyed as the Chesapeake.

Every possible effort and resource of Department will be employed for the defence of Norfolk, and every other exposed situation; but the defence of a part must be regulated by a view of the whole; for no reasonable man can suppose that our means are competent to the defence of all against a superior force, which can be concentrated against any one point. You will, therefore, make the best use of the means you possess, and encrease them by all the resources within your vicinity.—

The presence of a powerful hostile squadron is naturally calculated to excite alarm, thus we have urgent calls from Maine to Georgia, each conceiving itself the particular object of attack.

Whatever may be the ultimate design of the Enemy against Norfolk, nothing should relax our exertions for its defence; but I do not believe it his intention to attack that place, or the force in its waters. His prospect of success diminishes by delay, and if it is necessary for that end to increase his force, the object to be attained and the sacrifice to be made does not appear to warrant the undertaking. I yesterday authorised you to construct floating Battery you suggested, and if you think any thing of importance can be effected by means of Fire vessels and powder chests you are authorised to try the experiment. I am, very respectfully, Yours &ca.

W. Jones.—

P.S. The Battery you suggest on Crany Island comes within the scope of the Department of War, and not of this Department. It has long since been suggested to the Secretary of War.—

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 339–40 (M149, Roll No. 10).

1. The clerk meant to write "2nd of April may be those. . ."
2. *Acasta*, 40, arrived at Sandy Hook on 7 April.

CAPTAIN CHARLES STEWART TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

United States frigate *Constellation*
off Norfolk May 13. 1813

Sir

Yesterday afternoon the Enemy's squadron returned down the bay and came into Lynnhaven; they are now extended in line from Willoughby's point to cape Henry light and in all probability will move up into Hampton roads to day as

the wind is fair; there are fifteen sail of ships of war. There is a party at work throwing up a battery on Crany island, but I fear they have been too tardy in their operations; there are about five hundred troops on the island, and I have stationed seven gun boats there to assist in covering the operations; in all probability Hampton or that place will be attacked soon.

I shall defer my departure in compliance with your orders of the 7th. inst, a few days, untill the enemy's intentions are developed.¹ I think it highly probable, if they design any thing against Norfolk, that active operations will commence immediately on these waters.

I have had the bomb-ketch *Spitfire* given some slight repairs, which will be completed this week, and she will answer very well on the bay or rivers. Captain Cassin is collecting logs for the floating battery which when done I feel persuaded will prove most formidable to a ship of the line She is designed to carry thirty four ~~long~~ heavy guns. I have the honor to be, Respectfully Sir Your Obedient Servant

Ch^s. Stewart

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 3, No. 126 (M125, Roll No. 28).

1. On 7 May Jones ordered Stewart to leave immediately for Washington and then proceed to command *Constitution*, refitting at Boston. Stewart was apparently more concerned about a possible British attack than Jones, because the captain asked to delay his departure. On reflection, the secretary agreed. See Jones to Stewart, 7 and 17 May 1813, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 401 and 421-24 (M149, Roll No. 10).

Leasing Schooners for Baltimore's Defense

Reports of a British squadron in Chesapeake Bay prompted Secretary Jones to accept the proffer of leased vessels from Baltimore shipowners. Captain Charles Gordon spent April and May choosing four ships and recruiting the officers and crews to man them. On completing his flotilla's complement, he set out on a month-long cruise hoping that his naval presence in the bay would encourage American vessels to venture out. He saw no action because the larger British ships did not permit their smaller vessels to stray far from their protection. Gordon did succeed, however, in removing some of the British buoys, placing them elsewhere to confuse the enemy.¹

1. For further reading on Baltimore's leased schooners, see Calderhead, "Naval Innovation."

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON

Captain Charles Gordon,
U.S. Navy, Baltimore

Navy Department
April 15, 1813.—

Sir,

The President of the United States desirous of affording to the trade of the City of Baltimore and its intercourse with the waters of the Chesapeake, the aid of such a naval force as may be practicable with immediate effect, and having no regular Naval force near Baltimore, except the Gun Boat under your orders,

I hereby authorize you to enter into an engagement in behalf of the Navy Department with any of the Citizens of Baltimore, who may have Schooners of a class and description suitable for the occasion, completely equipped for service, and who may be disposed to loan the said vessels to the Government for the purpose aforesaid, to accept of the loan of four such vessels, conditioned to restore the said vessels when demanded by the owners thereof, or directed by the Secretary of the Navy, in the same condition in all respects in which they may be delivered to you.—¹

In order to ascertain the fair equitable value of such vessels at the time of receiving them into the service of the United States, you will, in conjunction with the Navy Agent, cause an exact account of the State and condition, an inventory of the appurtenances, and an impartial valuation of each vessel to be taken and acknowledged by the Navy Agent in behalf of the Navy Department, and by the owners of each of the said vessels on the other Part—

You are then to proceed to man and provision them for service with the utmost dispatch by recruiting such number of seamen, ordinary seamen and boys, as the nature of the service may require, to serve during the time the said vessels shall be employed, and you will also engage & appoint such acting officers, subordinate to the commanders, as may be necessary. The private commanders of the vessels you may thus engage, if of approved character, conduct and qualifications may continue to command them in the public service, and in order to give them the necessary authority and render them responsible to the Government, the commanders will receive the appointment of Sailing Masters in the Navy of the United States, to continue during the period of such service.—

The whole of the officers and of the crews will be entitled to the same pay, rations and prize money, and subject to the discipline and regulations as the other officers and crews of the Navy of the United States. The purser of the Station will act as purser for the whole force under your command and forward to the Department correct muster rolls of the whole.—

As those vessels will be, to all intents and purposes, vessels of the Navy of the United States, whilst so employed, and the engagement to restore them in their original condition provides for the wear and tear, and is equivalent to the hire of said vessels, and, moreover, as the officers and crews if wounded or disabled in the public service will be entitled to the benefit of the Navy pension fund, it is to be clearly understood that that fund will be entitled to the one half of whatever prizes may be made, and the officers and crews to the other half, except when the captured force may be equal, in which case the officers and crews will be entitled to the whole.—

Your command will be independent of any authority but that of this Department; but in the possible event of the approach of the enemy towards the City of Baltimore, you will on all proper occasions afford to the Commanding General² the most effective co-operation in your power. Your force, comprising the four schooners contemplated by this arrangement, and the United States Gun Boat No. 138, will be very respectable, and admirably adapted for vigorous offensive service; and I trust you will be enabled if not to cut off, at least to confine, the light cruisers of the Enemy within the range of the Guns of his Squadron; but it would be a more acceptable and important service to recapture those fine Schooners which have recently and unfortunately fallen into his hands.

Should the enemy retire below the Potomac, the flotilla in that river consisting of the *Scorpion* cutter, Schooner *Asp* and three Gunboats, under the com-

mand of Lieutenant Kennedy, will be directed to join your command. I am, respectfully, your ob: servant

W. Jones.

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 10, pp. 352-54 (M149, Roll No. 10).

1. For the Baltimore merchants' offer to lease ten armed schooners, see Joseph H. Nicholson to Jones, 13 Apr. 1813, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1813, Vol. 3, No. 15 (M124, Roll No. 55). For Gordon's description of the leased schooners, *Comet*, *Patapsco*, *Revenge*, and *Wasp*, see p. 352.

2. Major General Samuel Smith, Republican senator from Maryland, was in command of the Third Division of the Maryland militia and charged with the defense of Baltimore.

CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Baltimore 18th April 1813

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that our last accounts from North point (this evening) reports a Ship of the Line & one Frigate off swan point, another Frigate a little above (apparently watering at swan point by floating their Casks) and a Brig with other small vessels a few miles higher up the Bay (no doubt) sounding— Another square rigg'd vessel was in sight coming up the Bay (supposed to be a Brig—

In compliance with yr. instructions, I engag'd the Schooners *Comet* & *Patapsco* on Friday evening; The *Comet* is haul'd off & only waiting for her crew 80 of which have enter'd today— The *Patapsco* requiring some alterations in her equipment besides ballasting, provisioning &c., will delay us a few days tho. I think she will be ready before her crew can be procur'd; For notwithstanding the great outcry of vessels & men in abundance I find (except in the case of the *Comet*) trouble & difficulty— A great number of the sailors now in port are still attach'd to the Letters of Marque laying here with there Cargo's, in which deprives us the use of those fine Schooners well fitted, and the services of those men; Still I hope, in a few days, we shall procure a sufficiency—

I have also engag'd the *Revenge*, she will haul off tomorrow, & be in readiness for her crew, 20 of which have already entered—

The fourth I have found it difficult to procure without taking a new unfinished vessel— I have applied for 4 or 5, but their owners have all made some objections, respecting their cargoes &c.—

The *Fox* privateer that is now heaving out to repara her false keel can be got ready as soon as any other vessel now idle— I have applied for her & shall receive a decisive answer from her owner to morrow—

As all the officers & crews of those vessels are unacquainted with our service & accustom'd to privateers, I think it necessary (to preserve order as well as to preserve the stores & to look out at night) to have a Corporals guard of U.S Marine (say 3 or 4) in each vessel for a week or untill their crews are organized & disciplin'd— We have 5 or 6 now fit for duty, those with an addition of 15 would answer our purpose, all of which will be requir'd on this station during the building of the ships— very respty. Sir, yr. Obt. Servt.

Cha^s. Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 3, No. 9 (M125, Roll No. 28).

CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Baltimore 27th April 1813

Sir

Nothing material has occur'd since the last, I had the honor to address you except, an increase of the Enemy's squadron— From our last reports there were 2 ships of the line & 2 Frigates off Swan point, one Frigate above, & two Brigs with 4 Schooners nearly about Elk river The Schooners cruise from one extreme of the Squadron to the other, & all the small craft appear occupied in watering— The alarm in Town appears to increase daily as it is reported that the Frigates are lightening to cross the shoal There are now five hulks in the Channel opposite the Fort ready for sinking, which if done must effectually keep them out of the harbour, & the Fort with such a body of Militia ought to be competent to repel vessels of light draft & any attempt to land; Still the alarm increases to such a degree that the Citizens are packing up their valuables, & it is rumour'd the specie will be removed from the Banks—

A surprise by Boats in the night appears to be their greatest fear, & in order that we may sound the alarm, I have 6 Guard Boats from my little force every night rowing Guard from 3 to 4 miles below the Fort with signals—

The *Comet* (being the only vessel I have yet been able to mann) we are exercising & preparing for the first opportunity to act— The *Revenge* & *Patapsco* have about half their Crews each— There is a little Privateer Schooner of 50 Tons loan'd to me which I contemplate using as a Tender, if men can be procur'd, which I doubt very much as a great number have already gone off to Philada. & N. York—

I have the promise of 8 long eighteens, which I contemplate putting in Scows, if on trial, they will stand the concussion, and if men can be had to man them— Those with the schooners all well mann'd would enable me to form a line across the Channel opposite the Fort, sufficient to oppose a formidable force of Boats &c.— And five Hulks when sunk, with the heavy pieces on Fort M'Henry most certainly ought to keep any heavy force at a respectful distance— But Sir, it is with the utmost concern I perceive through our whole forces, a want of confidence in ourselves from the Major Genl. Throughout the City & [Govt.?] on down to the Citizen Soldier on post upon the ramparts— I shall exert myself to take (as soon as possible) my contemplated position across the Channel, because the least movement on our part appears to inspire them all; And I believe was I enabled to make an advance for a few days it would give time to rouse the people & inspire them with confidence—

So soon as all the vessels are mann'd I should forward the names of the Commanders agreeable to yr. orders— I have the honor to be very respectfully. Sir, yr. Obt. servt.—

Cha^s. Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 3, No. 58 (M125, Roll No. 28).

CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Revenge off Baltimore 19th May 1813

Sir,

The difficulties attending the transfer of the Command of the *Patapsco* from Captn. Mortimer to Mr. Mull has detain'd me two days; But I am happy to say

we have now all hands on board, and only wanting for the signal to weigh— As I contemplate cruising a few days about Kent Island & Annapolis to exercise and organize our crews, I shall be enabled to receive any communications or instructions you may wish to make by the way of Annapolis or Baltimore— Mr. J. S. Skinner, the Agent for Prisoners at Annapolis, has a lookout Boat, which he has promised to keep constantly running up & down the Bay to communicate with me & to forward any communications without delay.

My whole force consists of the *Revenge* mounting 14–12 lb. Carronades 2 long 12's & one long eighteen on a pivot in a midships, The *Comet* mounting 12–12 lb. Carronades & 2 long nines, The *Patapsco* mounting 12–12 lb. Carronades & 2 long twelves, The *Wasp* mounting 2 9 lb. Carronades shifting, & one long nine on a Pivot in a midships And the U.S. Gun Boat No. 138 mounting one long four & twenty & two 12 lb. Carronades—

The compliment of officers & men as pr. muster roll forwarded by the Purser— The *Wasp* being small & in the character of a tender & Cruiser jointly, I have given her Commander an appointment as acting Sailing Master (for the time being—

The City Committee having refus'd Mr. Mix¹ the vessel he ask'd for, he left here last evening in a fast rowing boat with 6 men to join me in the bay—

In case the officers & men (alluded to by you in a former letter) should arrive here I leave orders seal'd (with the Agent for him). I have the honor to be very respectfully. Sir, yr Obt. servt.

Cha^s Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 3, No. 153 (M125, Roll No. 28).

1. See pp. 354–56 for more on Elijah Mix.

CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

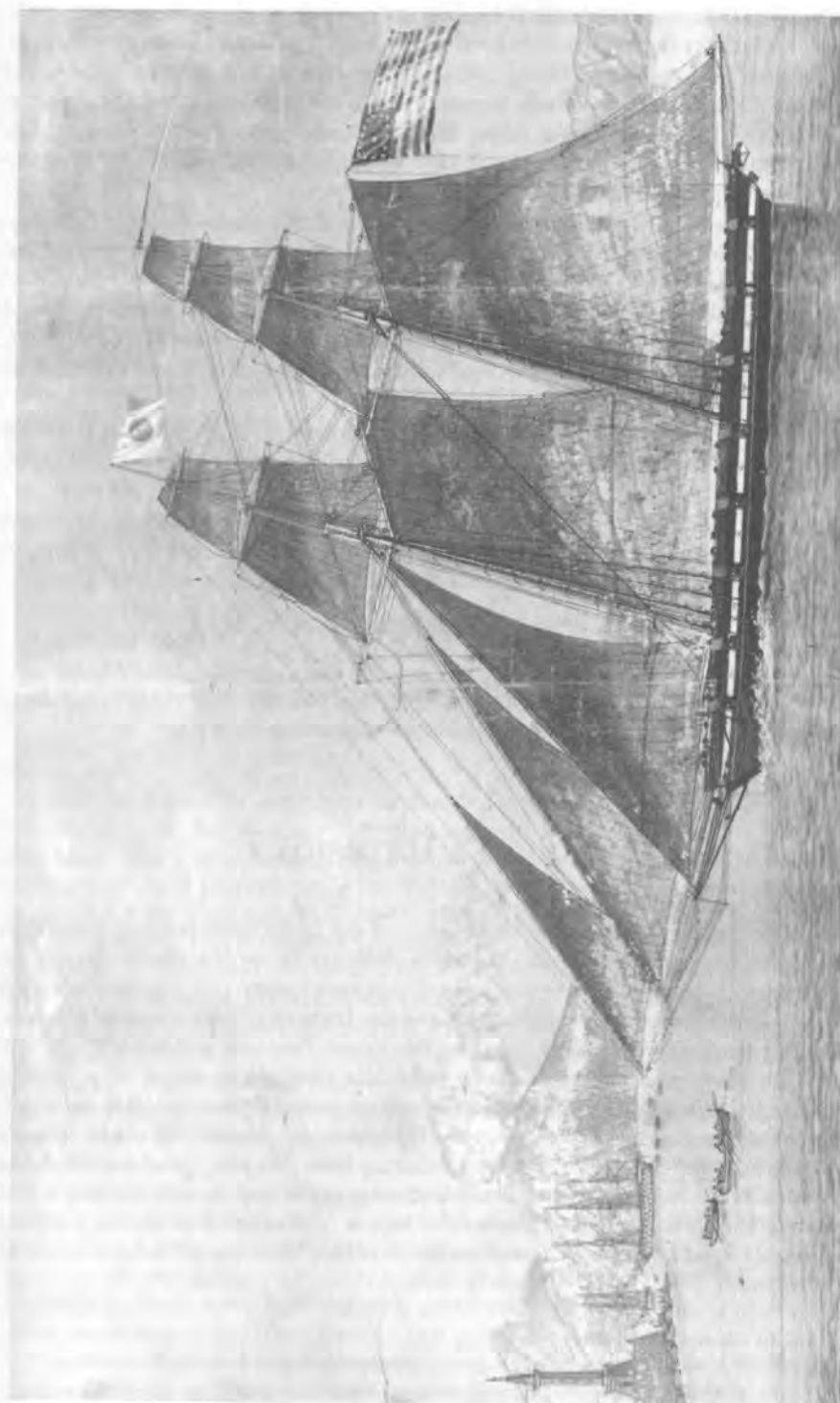
Baltimore 21st June 1813

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you of my arrival at this place today, with the 4 Schooners & the Gun Boat under my Command, after a Cruise of 30 days between this & the Middle ground at the entrance of the Chesapeake—

Since the date of my last communication, I have been laying off & on below the Potomac taking every opportunity to reconnoitre & observe the movements of the Enemy, whose force the day before yesterday consisted of 2 Ships of the Line (one bearing a Rear Admirals flag) 4 Frigates & 1 Brig—

After laying 2 days becalm'd off New point Comfort, with the fleet in sight from our decks part of the time, I received a breeze at noon the day before yesterday & stood down to the head of the middle, from whence I could discover two Frigates under way near Old point Comfort & the rest of the fleet at Anchor in the Channel from the Roads to the Capes forming a line of communication from Cape Henry up into the Roads— The Admiral with the other Ship of the line off the Horse shoe 2 Frigates below, 2 off old point & the Brig (one of the objects of our pursuit) at Anchor close under the Admirals stern—



Schooner Patapsco of Baltimore

Such a position, together with the constant protection given their small cruisers (particularly in the night) rendered any offensive operations on our part impracticable— The squadron being generally in want of water and all the small articles of provisions expended, together with the main mast of the *Revenge* being sprung, I conceived it a favorable time (while the Enemy were so low down) to return for a supply & to refit for another Cruise, I therefore bore up at 5 P.M. on Saturday & arrived here this afternoon—

They will be ready to proceed down again in a short time, when I will do myself the honor to report to you in order to receive any instructions you may contemplate giving—

The force under my Command being so totally different from vessels own'd by the United States, And the services of the vessels & Crews limited to the Bay, induces me to solicit of you some instructions to govern me in my movements as well as in the expences of repairs, refittings &c.

There are many little occurrences that might drive us to sea, such as the Enemy's getting above us in the night or heavy squalls from the westd. in the night, such as we experienc'd the other night while laying off New point [Comfort.]

I feel extremely desirous of [knowing] yr. wishes in those situations, it would therefore be gratifying to me to be permitted to come on for a day or two, to communicate to you more fully on the subject of my situation— with great respect Sir yr. obt. servt.

Chas. Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 4, No. 98 (M125, Roll No. 29). Two words in the document were obliterated by the seal. Conjectures are supplied in brackets.

Fulton's Torpedo

The tightening of the British blockade around the Chesapeake renewed interest in Robert Fulton's torpedo experiments. An article published in the Maryland Gazette on 4 March extolled the use of his weapons against the enemy's ships. It is possible that Elijah Mix,¹ a Chesapeake mariner, read this piece and was inspired to destroy some vessels himself, because in April he requested President Madison's financial assistance in this endeavor.² The navy responded with supplies and Mix spent the month of May working closely with Captain Charles Gordon to perfect his weapon. Mix had intended to use torpedoes against the British when they were in the upper bay, but their departure in early May for the Virginia Capes necessitated his following them. His plan encompassed rowing a boat close to an anchored enemy vessel and dropping a torpedo into the water. The weapon would drift to the ship and explode on impact. The second letter in this grouping documents the sighting of one of these "Powder Machines," which might have been one of Mix's weapons.³

1. Elijah Mix was appointed sailing master in June 1813.

2. Elijah Mix to James Madison, 8 Apr. 1813, DLC, James Madison Papers, Ser. I, Vol. 51, No. 87.

3. For further reading on Mix's experiments, see Calderhead, "Naval Innovation," pp. 216–18.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON

Charles Gordon Esq:
Commanding Naval officer
Baltimore.

Navy Department,
May 7th 1813.—

(Confidential)

Sir,

A Mr. Elijah Mix will call upon you by my order to furnish him with such aid in carrying into effect his plans for the destruction of the enemy's Ships now off the Patapsco as I have encouraged him to expect; viz:

You will furnish him with 500 lbs. of powder, a Boat, or Boats, and Six men; provided he can prevail upon that number of men, fit for the enterprise, to volunteer their services. His plan is that of Fulton's Torpedo. He is an intrepid Zealous man and means to perform the service in person. The Mayor of Baltimore, I understand, has patronized his undertaking, but; if it is to be carried into execution, the greatest privacy ought to be observed. I am, very respectfully &c—

W. Jones.—

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1813, pp. 23–24.

REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N., TO
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

No. 17

Marlborough off Willoughby
Point, 16 June 1813.

Sir,

I have the honor to acquaint you that the boats of the *Victorious* picked up on the morning of the 5th Curr. drifting out with the Ebb Tide, one of the Powder Machines, commonly known by the name of Fulton's, made to explode under Water and thereby cause immediate destruction to whatever it may come in contact with. This was no doubt destined for the *Victorious* or some other of our Ships here. The American Government intending thus to dispose of us by wholesale Six Hundred at a time, without further trouble or risk, but as it is not likely their laudable Efforts in this way have been confined to one Machine only, and this having actually drifted outside of all the Ships prior to its being discovered by us, I think it extremely probable others of a similar Description have passed out to Sea unobserved, and as they will be as likely to come in contact with Neutrals, or indeed some of their own Countrymen as with English, it may be right that in such case it be generally known by whom such infernal Machines have been promiscuously turned adrift into the Ocean, for otherwise it will scarcely perhaps be attributed to a Government, the head of which has, in a public message to Congress so recently boasted of its "unvaried examples of Humanity," and whose public prints and authorized documents are so constantly harping on the same Theme, that it requires examples like these and such Communications as we have recently received from its officers to prove the real spirit predominating in its Councils.

I have now closed with His Majesty's Ships towards Hampton Roads, which will enable the Enemy to try further humane Experiments with us with much more

facility to himself and much less Risk to the Public at large, but the zealous activity of the Officers of this Squadron fully authorize me to assure you Sir that be the Enemy's attempts what they may, they will prove equally futile and unavailing with respect to their Effects upon us.¹ I have the honor to be &ca &ca

(Sd.) G. Cockburn Rr. Admiral

LB Copy, DLC, Papers of George Cockburn, Container 9, Letters Sent, 3 Feb. 1812–6 Feb. 1814, pp. 202–4. Another copy is found in UklPR, Adm. 1/504, pp. 29–30.

1. During the summer of 1813, Mix made several attempts to destroy H.M.S. *Plantagenet*, which was guarding the Chesapeake Bay near Cape Henry. He nearly succeeded on 24 July, but his torpedo exploded too soon and the resulting damage was limited to a cascade of water on the decks.

Admiralty Criticizes Warren

The Admiralty's assessment of Admiral Sir John B. Warren's handling of the Chesapeake campaign was negative on several points. The Lords Commissioners criticized Warren for taking too active a role in peace negotiations, for being too permissive with the local American citizenry, for not allocating his resources equitably, and for not making regular returns on his ships' dispositions.

FIRST SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER TO
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

Secret
Duplicate

Admiralty Office 17 May 1813

Sir,

I have received and laid before my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty your Letter No. 104 of the 28th of March last with its inclosures, relative to the offer made by M. de Dasckoff, of the mediation of His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of all the Russias for reestablishing Peace between his Majesty and the United States of America, and I have their Lordships Commands to repeat to you their approbation that neither you or Rear Admiral Cockburn should have thought yourselves authorized to enter into any Negotiation, or to defer or relax your measures of hostility on the proposition from the Russian Minister, or from the American Government.

I have it further in Command to acquaint you that their Lordships see no reason why Rear Admiral Cockburn should have consented to permit the communication of the Americans with the Chesapeak to be continued, when he could have prevented it, and they cannot but express their opinion that the regular communication by Letter which he has granted may on several obvious occasions be of the greatest injury and danger to our Military operations.¹

Their Lordships hope that as soon as it was ascertained that the *Constellation* was beyond the reach of Naval attack, you kept no more Ships in the Chesapeak

than were necessary for the complete and secure Blockade of that River, and that in the distribution of your force, you have particularly attended to their Lordships former directions to keep as much as possible, a line of Battle Ship with each Squadron of Frigates, and above all that you will have attached at least one line of Battle Ship to the Squadron off Boston.

I have their Lordships Commands to refer you to my various Letters relative to sending to me your disposition of the Squadron under your Command, and to express their great surprize that you should not have sent home by the *Childers*, the account of the disposition of your ships, and as far as you could collect it, of the state and condition thereof. The want of these Accounts is a serious inconvenience to their Lordships, and one which you do not in any degree endeavour to obviate, by stating in your dispatches which have been received, any particulars relative to the situation of the Squadron under your Command. I am Sir Your Most Obedient humble Servant

J W Croker

LS, DLC, Alexander F. I. Cochrane Papers, MS 2340, fols. 75–76. Another copy is in UklPR, Adm. 2/1377, pp. 14–16.

1. Cockburn permitted the American packet carrying mail and passengers between Northampton and Norfolk to continue to ply between those two places. See Cockburn to Addison, 19 Mar. 1813, p. 324.

Gunboat Flotilla Attacks British Frigate

Admirals Sir John B. Warren and George Cockburn returned to the mouth of the Chesapeake in mid-May after completing the initial phase of their raiding expeditions. Cockburn remained behind while Warren sailed for Bermuda with captured vessels under convoy. Warren rejoined Cockburn in mid-June with the reinforcements that the Admiralty had ordered in March for the Chesapeake. Now the British were prepared for extensive operations instead of forays. Before the British could attempt their planned attack on the Craney Island defenses, however, the American gunboat flotilla took the offensive for the first time and engaged H.M. frigate Junon on 20 June.

CAPTAIN JAMES SANDERS, R.N., TO
REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N.

His Majestys Ship *Junon* at the Mouth of
Norfolk River Chesapeake 20th June 1813

Sir,

In obedience to your orders I anchored off Newport Neuse in this Ship last evening, the *Narcissus* and *Barossa*, as near to us as the wind and tide would allow them to get, at this time perceived the enemy's eight Gunboats stated to you in my report of yesterday had been strengthened by seven more; at 1/2 past 2 AM observed them in motion standing towards us with light and variable wind the ebb tide beginning to make, soon after they opened their fire upon us, I

then got this Ship quietly under Sail, *Narcissus* and *Barossa* quickly following and opening their fire as they approached; the *Junon* was wore occasionally the more effectually to bring her Guns to bear, and as we found her getting into shoal water, at 1/2 past 6 AM ceased firing and again took up our anchorage Newport News bearing W by N and Sewels point E 3/4 S the *Narcissus* and *Barossa* anchoring E by S from us: I regret our ignorance of Norfolk River¹ would not allow the Squadron to follow higher up, indeed from the great attention of Mr. Griffiths the Master, this Ship was enabled to go considerably further than she had before; had the exertions of our little Squadron been called properly into Action I have no doubt but the result would have been highly creditable to His Majesty's Arms. I am very sorry to tell you our loss is one Marine killed and three Seamen wounded, and one Seaman killed by the exploding of a Gun after the Enemy withdrew, Several shot in our hull and some of the standing and running rigging cut, Captain Lumley and Sherriff report none killed or wounded. I have the honor to be Sir your most obedient humble Servant.

("Signed") Jas. Sanders. Captain

Copy, UklPR, Adm. 1/504, pp. 313-14.

1. Sanders meant James River. A similar error is in the dateline.

CAPTAIN JOHN CASSIN TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Navy Yard Gosport
June 21st 1813

Sir,

On Saturday at 11 p.m. Captain Tarbell¹ moved with the Flotilla under his Command Consisting of Fifteen Gun Boats, in two Divisions, Lieutenant John M. Gardner 1st Division & Lieutenant Robert Henley the 2nd man'd from the Frigate & fifty Musketeers Genl. Taylor ordered from Craney Island, and proceeded down the river but adverse winds & squalls prevented his approaching the Enemy untill Sunday morning at 4 P.M.,² when the Flotilla commenced a heavy gawling fire on a Frigate at about three quarters of a mile distance laying well up the Roads, at half past four a breeze sprung up from E.N.E which enabled the two frigates to get under way, one a razee or very heavy Ship & the other a frigate to come nearer into Action the boats in consequence of their approach haul'd off tho Keeping up a well directed fire on the razee, & other Ship which gave us several broadsides; The Frigate first engaged supposed to be the *Junon* was certainly very severely handled for I heard the Shot distinctly strike her, had the calm continued one half hour; that frigate must have fallen into our hands or been destroyed, she must have slipt her mooring so as to drop nearer the razee, who had all sail set coming up to her with the other Frigate, the Action continued one hour & half with the three Ships, shortly after the Action the Razee got along side of the Ship and has her upon a deep careen in a little time with a number of boats & stages round her, I am satisfied considerable damage was done to her, for she was silenced some time untill the razee open'd her fire when she commenced again. Our loss is very trifling Mr. Allinson Masters Mate on board *No. 139* was kill'd early in the action by an Eighteen pound ball which past through him & lodged in the Mast. *No. 154* had a shot between wind & water. *No. 67* had her franklin shot away & several of them had some of their

Sweeps, as well their Stantions shot away but two men slightly injured by splinters from the Sweeps; on the flood tide several ships of the line and Frigates came into the roads & we did expect an attack last night, there is now in the roads, thirteen Ships of the Line & Frigates, one Brig & several Tenders—

I cannot say too much for the Officers & Crew on this occasion, for every man appeared to go into Action with so much chearfullness and apparently to do their duty, resolved to Conquer, having a better oppertunity of discovering their actions than any one else being in my boat the whole of the Action. I have the honor to be Sir, Your obt. hble. St.

John Cassin

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 4, No. 97 (M125, Roll No. 29).

1. Jones ordered Captain Charles Stewart to leave Master Commandant Joseph Tarbell temporarily in command of *Constellation* when Stewart departed for his new command. Tarbell had been stationed at Norfolk since March. Seeing *Junon* becalmed, Captain John Cassin directed Tarbell to attack her with the gunboat flotilla.

2. Cassin meant a.m.

Attack on Craney Island

When Admiral Sir John B. Warren returned to the Chesapeake with reinforcements, he selected Norfolk as his first target. Craney Island, on the western side of the mouth of the Elizabeth River, was the first obstacle the British had to confront in approaching the harbor.

The official battle report from Captain John Cassin, commanding officer at Norfolk, neglected to mention the contributions made by the Virginia militia under Lieutenant Colonel Henry Beatty, whose men controlled all but one of the cannon on the northern edge of the island. Warren's account of the engagement minimized the British defeat.¹

1. For more background on the attack, the events leading up to it, and the controversy regarding the nature of the joint American naval-militia operation, see Hallahan, Craney Island.

CAPTAIN JOHN CASSIN TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Navy Yard Gosport
June 23rd 1813

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you on the 20th the Enemy got under way, in all thirteen Sail, and drop'd up to the mouth of James River, one Ship bearing a flag at the Mizen at 5 P.M were discovered making great preparation with troops for landing, having a number of boats for the purpose, finding Craney Island rather weak man'd, Captain Tarbell directed Lieutenants Neale, Shubrick, & Sanders¹ with One Hundred Seamen on shore at 11 P.M. to a small battery on the N.W. Point of the Island— Tuesday 22nd at the dawn the Enemy were discovered landing round the point of Nansemond river, Said to be Four thousand troops, and at 8 A.M. the barges attempted to land in front of the Island out of reach of the Shot from the Gun Boats, When Lieutenants Neale, Shubrick & Saunders and the Sailors with Lt. Brackinbridge [*Breckenridge*] & marines of the

Constellation One Hundred & fifty in number, opened their fire, which was so well directed that the Enemy were glad to get off, after sinking three of their largest boats, one of which called the *Santapee*,² Admiral Warren's boat, fifty feet in length, carrying seventy five men, the greater part of the Crew were lost by sinking; twenty Soldiers & Sailors were saved & the boat haul'd up; from the boats that were sunk I presume there was forty prisoners, the troops that were landed fell back in the rear of the Island & Commenced throwing rockets from Mr. Wise's house, when Gun Boat 67 throw'd a few shot over that way, they dispersed & went back; we have had all day deserters from the Army coming in, I have myself taken in twenty five and Eighteen prisoners belonging to the *Santapee*; the Officers of the *Constellation* fired their 18 pounder more like riflemen than Artillerists, I never saw such shooting and seriously believe they saved the Island yesterday. In the evening their boats came round the point of Nansemond, and at sun set were seen returning to their Ships full of men, at dusk they strew the shore along with fires in order to run away by the light— I have the honor to be Sir, Your obt. Hble. Servt.

John Cassin

P.S. This moment Captain Tarbell has just come up, and informs me the enemy have withdrawn their Troops from Craney Island, and have landed at Newportnews—and were firing Congreve Rockets.

J. C.

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 4, No. 107 (M125, Roll No. 29).

1. James Sanders was an acting lieutenant until his appointment was confirmed by the Senate in July 1813.

2. *Centipede*.

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N., TO
FIRST SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

San Domingo Hampton Roads Chesapeake,
June 24th 1813.

Sir,

I request you will inform their Lordship's that from the Information received of the Enemy's Fortifying Crany Island, and it being necessary to obtain possession of that place to enable the Light Ships and Vessels to proceed up the Narrow Channel towards Norfolk; to transport the Troops over on that side for them to attack the New Fort and Lines; in the Rear of which the *Constellation* Frigate was Anchored: I directed the Troops under Sir Sidney Beckwith to be landed upon the Continent wither the nearest Point to that Place, and a Re-inforcement of Seamen and Marines from the Ships; but upon approaching the Island, from the extreme Shoalness of the Water on the Sea Side, and the difficulty of getting across from the Land: as well as the Island itself being Fortified with a Number of Guns & Men from the Frigate, and Militia; and Flanked by Fifteen Gun Boats: I considered, in consequence of the representation of the Officer Commanding the Troops, of the difficulty of their passing over from the Land: that the persevering in the attempt would cost more Men than the numbers with us would permit: as the other Forts must have been Stormed before the Frigate and Dock Yard could be destroyed; I therefore ordered the Troops to be Re-embarked.

I am happy to say the Loss in the above affair (a Return of which is enclosed) has not been considerable, and only two Boats Sunk.

I have to regret that Captain Hanchett of His Majesty's Ship *Diadem* who Volunteered his Services and led the Division of Boats with great Gallantry was severely Wounded by a Ball in the Thigh.

The Officers and Men behaved with much Bravery, and if it had been possible to have got at the Enemy, I am persuaded we would soon have gained the place.

I shall endeavour to carry their Lordships further Orders into Execution upon every favourable occasion. I have the honor to be Sir, Your most obedient humble Servant

John Borlase Warren

LS, UklPR, Adm. 1/503, pp. 743-46.

[Enclosure]

Return of Officers, Seamen, and Marines belonging to His Majesty's Ships, Killed, Wounded, and Missing, in the attack on Craney Island 22nd June 1813.

Killed— None
Wounded— One Officer & 7 Seamen
Missing— Ten Seamen
Name of the officer Wounded.
Captain Hanchett of His Majesty's Ship *Diadem*,
Severely, but not Dangerously.

John Borlase Warren

DS, UklPR, Adm. 1/503, p. 747.

Assault on Hampton

The British attack on Hampton followed quickly on the heels of their abortive attempt on Craney Island. Captain Samuel J. Pechell, commander of Warren's flagship, San Domingo, had led the unsuccessful raid on Craney Island, but Rear Admiral George Cockburn directed the amphibious assault on Hampton. Sir Thomas Sidney Beckwith's initial report of the 25 June action did not indicate the slightest hint of misconduct among his regiments. A later version, however, substantiated American accounts of atrocities committed by the two Independent Companies of Foreigners.

CAPTAIN JOHN CASSIN TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Navy Yard Gosport
June 26th 1813

Sir,

I am sorry to inform you the Enemy succeeded in taking Hampton yesterday morning, after a very obstinate resistance, and no doubt great loss on both sides; the Enemy landed several hundred Troops near Newportnews at 4 A.M.

marched round, commencing the Action with their Rockets, while the barges forty in number entered the Creek, so few troops tho I believe brave as Ceazer did not exceed five hundred, were overpower'd by numbers, and the Rockets thrown in such way as to confuse them; from the best information we can receive the Inhabitants had flown and little or nothing left in town but the shells of houses, I have not heard of any more than two houses burnt as yet, after finishing watering I fear they will destroy the place being apprehensive of an attack from the land side—

I have only forty casks of powder and only one hundred 32 pound Shot left in the yard, no Grape or Cannister, of any description, I believe it might be procur'd at Richmond. The *Dispatch* laying at Cabbins point, I had sent her to Richmond with Captain Brooks & officers destined for Canada & on her return found the Enemy at the mouth of the river which compel'd her to return to that place, she could be ordered to Richmond for that purpose, should it meet your approbation—

I presume they have not forgotten us, and will pay us another visit ere long, very few days will make Craney Island very secure; they have had two extraordinary opportunities to attack the Gunboats, was their inclination that way by strong & favourable winds; I do most sincerely think they do not like our mettle in the boats since Sunday last— I have the honor to be Sir, your obt. hble servt.

John Cassin

LS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 4, No. 119 (M125, Roll No. 29).

COLONEL SIR THOMAS SIDNEY BECKWITH, BRITISH ARMY, TO
ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

His Majestys Ship *San Domingo*
Hampton Roads 28th June 1813.

Sir,

I have the honor to report to you that in compliance with your orders to attack the enemy in town and Camp at Hampton, the troops under my command were put into light sailing vessels, and boats, during the night of the 25th Inst., and by the excellent arrangements of Rear Admiral Cockburn who was pleased in person to superintend; the advance under Lieut. Colonel Napier consisting of the 102nd Regt. two companies of Canadian Chasseurs,¹ three companies of Marines from the Squadron, with two 6 Prs. from the Royal Marine Arty. were landed half an hour before day light the next morning, about two miles to the westward of the town—and the Royal Marine Battalions under Lieut. Colonel Williams were brought on Shore so expeditiously that the column was speedily enabled to move forward.

With a view to turn the enemy's position our march was directed towards the great road leading from the country into the rear of the Town. Whilst the troops moved off in this direction Rear Admiral Cockburn, to engage the enemy's attention ordered the armed launches and rocket boats to commence a fire upon their batteries this succeeded so completely that the head of our advanced guard, had cleared a wood and were already on the enemy's flank be-

fore our approach was perceived. They then moved from their camp to their position in rear of the town and here they were vigorously attacked by Lieut. Colonel Napier, and the advance unable to Stand, which they continued their march to the rear of the town, where a detachment under Lieut. Colonel Williams conducted by Capt. Powell Asst. Qr. Mr. Genl. push'd thro' the town and forced their way across a bridge of planks into the enemy's Encampment, of which, and the batteries, immediate possession was gained— In the mean time some Artillery men stormed and took the enemy's remaining field force.

Enclosed I have the honor to transmit a return of ordnance taken— Lieut. Colonel Williams will have the honor of delivering to you a stand of colours of the 68th Regt. James City Light Infantry, and one of the 1st Battn. 85th Regt. The exact numbers of the enemy it is difficult to ascertain— From the woods country, and the strength of their position our troops have sustained some loss;² that of the enemy was very considerable. Every exertion was made to collect the wounded Americans, who were attended by a Surgeon of their own, and by the British Surgeons who performed amputations on such as required it, and afforded every assistance in their power; the dead bodies of such as could be collected were also carefully buried.

I beg leave on this occasion to express the obligations I owe to Lieut. Colonel Napier and Lieut. Colonel Williams for their kind and able assistance— The gallantry of Capt. Smith the officers and men of the two Companies Canadian Chasseurs who led the attack was highly conspicuous and praiseworthy; as well as the steadiness and good conduct of the officers, and men of the 102nd Regt. and the Royal Marines disembarked from His Majestys Ships *San Domingo*, *Malbro* and *Plantagenet*— My best thanks are also due to Capt. Parke the officers and men of the Royal Marine Artillery—to the officers & men of the 1st Royal Marine Battalion, as well as to Major Malcolm & the officers & men of the 2nd Royal Marine Battalion.

I beg leave to point out to you the exertions of Capt. Powell Asst. Qr. Mr. General; of acting A.D.C. Lieut. Frederick Robertson Royle. Artillery & of Capt. Romilly Royle. Engineers whose Zeal, and spirited conduct entitle them to my best acknowledgements. I am also much obliged to Capt. Gore Royle. Cheshire Regt. whose services you were pleased to accept during these operations, and attach to me as an acting A.D.C. I have the honor to be Sir Your most obedient most humble Servant

Sidney Beckwith
Qr. Mr. Genl.

LS, UKLPR, Adm. 1/503, pp. 779-82.

1. These were not Canadian companies but two Independent Companies of Foreigners composed of French prisoners of war who chose fighting over prison. For more background on the Hampton attack and the confusion surrounding the nationality of these soldiers, see Hitsman and Sorby, "Independent Foreigners."

2. Beckwith enclosed a casualty chart reporting the following return of killed, wounded, and missing at Hampton, 26 June 1813: Royal Marine Artillery—1 rank and file killed, 4 rank and file wounded; (Ships) Three Companies of Royal Marines—1 rank and file wounded, 1 rank and file missing; 1st and 2d Canadian Chasseurs—3 rank and file killed, 13 rank and file wounded, 6 rank and file missing; 1st Batt. Royal Marines—1 rank and file killed, 1 lieutenant, 6 rank and file wounded; 2d Batt. Royal Marines—1 lieutenant, 1 sergeant, 6 rank and file wounded, 3 rank and file missing. Total—5 killed, 33 wounded, 10 missing; see UKLPR, Adm. 1/503, p. 785.

[Enclosure]

Return of Ordnance Stores &c taken in Hampton on the 25th¹ June 1813.—
 Four 12 Pr. Iron Guns on travelling Carriages—
 Three 6 Pr. Do.—on Travelling Carriages with Timbers and a proportion of
 Ammunition for each of the above Calibres—
 Three Covered Waggon and their Horses.

T. A. Parke
 Capt. & Senr. Offr. R.M. Arty.

DS, UKLPR, Adm. 1/503, p. 783.

¹, Parke meant 26th.

COLONEL SIR THOMAS SIDNEY BECKWITH, BRITISH ARMY, TO
 ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

H.M.S. *San Domingo*
 July 5th 1813.

Sir

It is with great Regret I am obliged to entreat your Attention to the Situation & Conduct of the Two Independent Companies of Foreigners embarked on this Service.

It may be necessary on this Occasion, that I should remind You of the Idea, I entertained, of the Character & Description of the 2d. Company which sailed with me from England, which I had the Honor of stating to You at Bermuda: and also my doubts of their Fidelity, whenever an Opportunity of deserting should present itself.—That this apprehension was not a groundless one, will appear when I state to You, that of this Company, an Officer and 30 Men have already deserted to the Enemy.

With the Character of the 1st. Company, You were acquainted before we left the Island of Bermuda: where their Conduct was so perfectly insubordinate, that it was necessary to hold repeated Courts Martial upon them, and one Man was actually shot there for Mutiny.

I learned also from Brigadier General Horsford, and from Lieutenant Colonel Napier of the 102d Regiment, that the Company mutinied on Parade in presence of the Garrison under Arms assembled for Punishment—

Of these also many have deserted; amongst others, the Quarter Master Sergeant, having previously robbed ~~the~~ his Captain & Officers of their Money—

Their Behaviour on the recent Landing at Hampton, has already been reported to You, together with the circumstances of their dispersing to plunder in every direction; their brutal Treatment of several Peaceable Inhabitants, whose Age or Infirmities rendered them unable to get out of their Way; the necessity of sending them in from the Outposts; and upon the Representation of their Officers, who found it impossible to check them, and whose Lives they threatened, the subsequent Necessity of re-embarking & sending them off to their Ship—

Since their Return on Board, their Conduct has been uniformly the same. Individuals have broken into open Mutiny, encourag'd & supported by the rest—they have set their Officers at Defiance; and on being remonstrated with,

have not hesitated to say, that when next landed, they would chuse a Service for themselves—Capt. Smith, their Commanding Officer, whose Intelligence and Activity, deserve that he should be employed with better men, has been oblig'd, great as the disappointment must be to him, to report the Two Companies, a desperate Banditti, whom it is impossible to controul; & who, he does not doubt, will desert in a Body, the first Opportunity.

Impress'd with the Conviction that these Companies can no longer be safely employ'd on the present Service, & that retaining them may be productive of some serious Disaster: I take the Liberty of submitting to You, the necessity of their being sent away as soon as possible.

I need not recapitulate the pains that have been taken to conciliate these men, both by holding them up in a respectable Light—and by every Attention being paid to their Comforts—And, I trust, it will appear to You, the Trial of them, has been carried as far as Reason or Prudence can possibly justify—

For any further Information, I beg leave to refer You to Capt. Barclay, Commanding HMS *Success*, in which these companies are embarked. His report I am persuaded, will fully establish the Statement now laid before You. I have the Honor to be Sir Your most obedt. most humble servt.

Sidney Beckwith
 Qr. Mr. Genl.

ALS, CaOOA, British Military and Naval Records, RG8, I, "C" Ser., Vol. 679, pp. 189–91.

Cockburn's Reflections on the Blockade

Rear Admiral George Cockburn's raid on Ocracoke¹ alerted him to the necessity of extending the blockade to North Carolina in order to stop the American diversion of the Chesapeake's trade southward through inland waterways.

¹. See *Cockburn to Warren*, 12 July 1813, pp. 184–86.

REAR ADMIRAL GEORGE COCKBURN, R.N., TO
 ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

No. 21

*Sceptre*¹
 the 19th July 1813

Sir,

From Observations which I had opportunities of making whilst executing your Orders at Ocracoke

I feel it right to state to you that the Blockade of the Chesapeake is very materially, if not entirely frustrated by the Port of Beaufort and the Ocracoke Inlet not having been hitherto declared to be also in a state of Blockade, for there being an easy inland navigation from Norfolk and Elizabeth Town to the before mentioned Places the Flour and other Produce of the neighbourhood of the Chesapeake, which can no longer be sent by the Capes of Virginia, is now sent in numerous small Craft to the Neutrals and other large vessels safely laying at Ocracoke and Beaufort to receive

it, and nothing I believe can possibly interrupt or prevent this active Trafick by inland Navigation, but declaring that these Places are in future to be considered strictly Blockaded as well as the Chesapeake of which in fact they now form a part, owing to their immediate water Communication with it, and forming as they do not only an Outlet for its Produce but a Depôt likewise for whatever is to be important to it, as in a recent instance of the *Atlas* letter of Marque whose Cargo amounting to 600,000 Dollars was sent from Ocracoke to Norfolk by means of the inland Navigation here alluded to, the Vessels employed in which are I understand kept in constant activity from the immense Quantity of Goods in this manner sent from and received at the various Towns situated on the Shores of the Chesapeake

The putting an immediate Stop to the Enemy reaping these advantages, appearing to me an object of the highest Importance, and as it will be nearly if not wholly attained by declaring these Places to be Blockaded I have deemed it my Duty Sir to submit these Remarks for your consideration. I have the honor to be &c &c

(Sd.) G. Cockburn Rr. Admiral

LB Copy, DLC, Papers of George Cockburn, Container 9, Letters Sent, 3 Feb. 1812–6 Feb. 1814, pp. 222–24.

1. Before leaving the Chesapeake for an assault on Ocracoke Inlet, Cockburn shifted his flag from *Marlborough*, 74, to *Sceptre*, 74.

British Activity in the Potomac

Captain Charles Morris ordered Lieutenant George C. Read,¹ on 5 July, to take Scorpion and Asp to the mouth of the Potomac for reconnoitering service. A day earlier, Warren's squadron arrived at that river, intending to sound the waters and proceed up as far as possible. Cutters from H.M. sloop Contest and brig Mohawk engaged Asp in fierce action.

1. George C. Read relieved Lieutenant Edmund P. Kennedy of the flotilla command on 4 May 1813. Kennedy was sent to the Charleston Station.

COMMANDER JAMES RATTRAY, R.N., TO ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

Copy

His Majesty's Sloop *Contest*
Yeacomoco Creek July 14th. 1813

Sir,

I have the honor to acquaint you that agreeable to your directions this morning, I chased the strange sail in Company with His Majesty's Brig *Mohawk*, who took refuge in Yeacomoco Creek, but in consequence of the water being very shoal, I was obliged to Anchor two or three Leagues distant from here and send the Cutter of his Majesty's Brig under my Command, under the directions of Lieut. Curry, accompanied by Lieut. Hutchinson with the Cutter of His Majesty's Brig *Mohawk* with Orders to bring her out (if possible) or to destroy her—

The Vessel proves to be the United States Schooner, *Asp*, mounting one long 18 pr. and two 18 pr. Carronades, Swivels, &c. Commanded by a Lieutenant and

a Complement of twenty five Men, and fully prepared with boarding netting for a strong opposition

The Enemy had hauled the Schooner within her own width of the Beach, under the protection of a large Body of Militia and placed her in a position with a spring on her Cable to bring all the guns to bear on the two Boats. On their approach, a heavy & tremendous fire opened from the Schooner and the Shore, notwithstanding which, the cool and determined bravery of Lieut. Curry and his Crew, seconded by Lieut. Hutchinson and Crew of the *Mohawk*, she was carried by Boarding in a few minutes.—

On discovering the Schooner to be an Armed Vessel, I followed the Boats in my Gig, accompanied by Captain Litchfield of the *Mohawk*, and arrived alongside her at the moment of her Capture, which afforded us an opportunity of observing the gallant manner in which she was carried.—

In consequence of the *Asp* being three or four miles up the Creek, and the Channel extremely difficult and narrow, with a wind right and a vast number of Troops advancing towards the Beech, I deem'd it prudent to set her on fire, which I trust will meet your approbation—

I am sorry to state that two men have been Killed and Six Wounded, among whom is Lieut. Curry, slightly in the Arm whose distinguished conduct, with that of Lieut. Hutchinson, Messrs. Morey and Bradford, Midshipmen of the *Mohawk*, Mr. Tozar Midshipman of the *Contest* and the rest of the Crews cannot do otherwise than merit my warmest praise on this spirited occasion

I have taken ten of the Enemy Prisoners, the Lieutenant¹ was found Killed [on board the] Schooners Decks, and some others were drowned making their escape on Shore.—

I beg leave to subjoin a list of the Killed and Wounded in the Margin.— I have the honor to be Sir Your most obedient humble Servant

(Signed) James Rattray Captain

Contest

Wounded

R. C. Curry Lieut. slightly

Killed

George Taylor Marine

Mohawk

Killed

Geo. Marsh Ordy

Wounded

T. Bennett A.B. dangerously

R. Roberts L.M. Do.

A. Gordon Qr. Mr. Slightly

B. Flynn Marine Do.

Jno. Sawyer Supy. Do.

Copy, UKLPR, Adm. 1/504, pp. 69–71.

1. Midshipman James B. Sigourney, commander of schooner *Asp*. He had been attached to the Potomac flotilla since February 1813.

MIDSHIPMAN HENRY M. MCCLINTOCK¹ TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Kinsale July 19th, 1813

Sir

I have to inform you of the unfortunate event which occurred here on the 14th, the action between the British barges and U.S. Schooner *Asp*, commanded by Mr Sigouney, at 9 o'clock A.M. the *Scorpion* & *Asp* got under way from Yeocomico River and stood out, at 10 discovered a number of sail which proved to be the enemy; the *Scorpion* then made signal to act at discretion and stood up the River, the Schooner being a bad sailer and the wind ahead we were not able to get out; finding the enemy approaching us we thought best to return, immediately two of the Brigs stood towards us and anchored a short distance from the bar, when they manned their boats. Mr Sigouney thought it would be for our advantage to run further up the Creek which we did, but finding the enemy had left their vessels we had not time to weigh anchor therefore we were obliged to cut our cable, we were attacked by 3 boats well manned and armed we continued a well directed fire on them and after a short time they were compelled retreat and obtain a reinforcement about an hour after we retired we were attacked by 5 boats we continued doing the same as before but having so few men we were unable to repel the enemy, when they boarded us they refused giving any quarters, there was upwards of fifty men on our decks which compelled us to leave the vessel, as the enemy had [possest] it they put her on fire and retreated, a short time after they left her we went on board and with much difficulty extinguished the flames, but it is with deep regret that I inform you the death of Mr Sigouney, who fought most gallantly in defence of the vessel, and the utmost exertion was used by every man on board, our crew only consisted of twenty one and there is ten killed wounded and missing, we have our ammunition and two of our carronades on shore, our men are very much in want of clothing as they were all taken from them. I shall remain here until further orders. Your obed. Serv.

H M McClintock
Midn in U.S. Navy

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1813, Vol. 3, No. 33 (M148, Roll No. 12).

1. On 22 March 1813, the Navy Department ordered Midshipman Henry M. McClintock attached to one of the gunboats in the Potomac flotilla.

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N., TO
FIRST SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

San Domingo Off Point
Lookout Chesapeake,
29th July 1813—

Sir,

I beg you will inform their Lordship's that on the 14th July the Squadron and Troops arrived at the entrance of the Potomac, when two sail of small Vessels being discovered I sent the *Contest* & *Mohawk* in pursuit of the smallest, which was destroyed, as stated in my letter No. 170 of the 22nd July, the other a Sloop of 12 Guns, also manned from the *Adams* Frigate from being far ahead escaped and passed up the River.

The Ships of the Line proceeded up as far as Sandy Point where the Squadron was Anchored: I afterwards directed Clements Island to be taken possession of by a Company of Marines, for the purpose of obtaining Water, Cattle and Refreshments during our stay in the River, and the Boats burnt some small Vessels on the Virginia shore. I likewise detached Captain Shirreff with the Ships named in the margin,¹ after receiving on board a Corps of about 600 men from the 1st. Battalion of Marines and 102d. Regt. which Sir Sydney Beckwith accompanied, to proceed as far up the River as possible, in order to make an impression if practicable upon the Enemy's Frigate & small Vessels below Alexandria, as well as to create an Alarm at Washington and to embarrass the Enemy in the measures for the further Invasion of Canada during the setting of Congress in that City: I am sorry to say that in consequence of the Shoals between Cedar & Maryland Points, that the Frigates could not get higher up, without being lightened, than the former place: Several dis-embarkations however were made upon the Shores of the River by the Troops under Sir Sydney Beckwith's directions, as well as small detachments from the ships, and some Vessels destroyed which had the effect of obliging the Enemy to march down large Corps of Regulars and Militia on each side the River and in one instance the American Cavalry & Infantry on the Maryland Shore were accompanied by the Ministers of State and War: Colonels Monroe and Armstrong, and several persons from the Capitol where much confusion seems to have existed; and it appearing that it would be impossible for the Ships of War to go further up & that a larger Corps must be sent, which might probably engage our attention in measures that would take a longer period of Time and prove incompatible with our future operations: I directed the Light Squadron to join me, and returned down the River opposite Point Lookout where the 102nd Regts. and two Battalions of Marines and Artillery were landed under the direction of Rear Adml. Cockburn, and the Troops Commanded by Sir Sydney Beckwith marched across the Peninsula and took up a Position to protect the Party Employed in procuring Cattle and Forage for the use of the Squadron, where I am happy to say 120 head of Cattle and 100 Sheep were obtained, and the Troops Re-embarked after having undergone a very fatiguing March, with the utmost good Order and celerity, and the Squadron is again pursuing its course to the upper part of the Bay.—I have the honor to be Sir, Your most Obedient humble Servant.

John Borlase Warren

LS, UKLPR, Adm. 1/504, pp. 79–83.

1. "*Barossa*, *Laurestinus*, *Conflict*, *Mohawk*, and *High Flyer*."

Defense Plans for Washington

Reports of British activity in the Potomac spurred Captain Charles Morris to propose defense plans for Washington. William Jones concurred with his general outline but cautioned Morris against retreating to an extreme defensive position because of the effect it would have on public opinion.

CAPTAIN CHARLES MORRIS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S Frigate *Adams* July 18th, 1813.

Sir,

I have the honor to propose the following plan of defence for the city of Washington—and enclose a rough plan of the Ship channel from about 4 miles below Greenleaf's point to the Navy Yard, for convenience of reference—¹

I would propose a battery on Greenleaf's point of as many heavy cannon as can be conveniently mounted, which would I should presume be at least twenty—

I would remove this ship, over the Bar and place her across the Channel opposite Windmill point with the gunboats on the flat toward the point marked A and the Gallies and barges between them and the point— on the point A mount a heavy Carronade or two if they can be made ready, to rake the full of the line of boats with Grape &c in case of attack

Construct a Battery for Ship guns on Windmill point, in which I would mount one half my gundeck Guns (13, 18 pounders) and as far as might be possible man them from the Ship—at all events have the battery under the command of our own officers— Let the Scows Guns be placed on the line of gunboats—

As a further defence let a hulk be sunk across the Channel one mile below Greenleafs point which will be near the line B, C on this plan. One of our old Ships at the yard might be soon prepared, would be quite sufficient and can never be better employed—

Defences may be easily and speedily erected on and opposite Mason's Island for the protection of the Foundry, as the Water is too shoal to admit the enemy using other than light force on that service. Such troops as can or may be collected to be stationed in such parts of the city as may be best adapted to repel an attempt to land—

I would leave the defence of the pass of Fort Warburton to the Fort itself and the water battery which we have constructed for them which mounts, 5-18 pr. & 2 32 prs, and to the other force which may be deemed requisite to protect its rear—

I will now proceed to state as concisely as possible my reasons for this arrangement—

I take for granted that should the enemy really intend proceeding as high as this place that their first object, is the destruction of the navy yard and its dependencies— the second object in point of Military importance is the destruction of the Foundry above Georgetown and the third, which in a moral point of view is equal to the others would be the removal of the seat of Government which though of no real injury in itself would depress the public mind in this country, and naturally affect our reputation in Europe—

To attempt either of these objects they would at least send six Frigates and I believe one or more ships of the line— Against such a force your own observation will have shown you that our force here could make no effective resistance— If we awaited their attack in that Ship, however gallant our defence might be, it must in all probability terminate in the destruction of our force—and they would then immediately proceed and find the passage to the navy yard without material obstruction. The breadth and depth of the channel here prevents the possibility of artificial obstruction— These are the defects of our present position—

My reason for sinking the hulk at B. C. is, that the Channel is of sufficient depth to admit any ship within 150 yards of Greenleafs point, and should they

improve that advantage, I fear we have no troops sufficiently disciplined to stand discharges of grape— I place it one mile below that it may be fairly under the protection of our batteries— It prevents the possibility of an attack on the Ship or yard except in Boats—

I place the Battery on Greenleafs' point, from its advantageous situation commanding the main channel by a raking fire and covering the diverging channels on each side of it with a powerful cross fire—

I erect a Battery for Ship guns on Windmill point because it raked the navy yard channel and because it enables us to use immediately our own guns, which are mounted and provided with all kinds of ammunition—

I place the Ship opposite Windmill point that we may act in concert with our own battery because she will so completely fill the channel as to prevent any other ship from passing us, which enables us to spare one half our guns—because it is the best position for repelling an attack from boats and because it is the best position to act in concert with our other floating force—

I place the gun boats, Scows and gallies in a line between Windmill point and point A because it is the narrowest place and easiest supported— And I place the carronades at A as a cover & support for that end of the line—

As the General defence of the other part of the city belongs more exclusively, to other officers more conversant and competent than myself with that subject I forbear making any observations upon it—

I proposed this plan this morning to the Secretary of War, who seemed to approve it, and has ordered Genl. Vanness, with the militia to proceed immediately to Washington for the purpose of fortifying Greenleafs point— He will I presume give you his opinion himself of the plan generally— He desires me to request you will endeavor to have the battery constructed on Windmill point for the reception of this ship's guns— Should you order it—please to let the platform be 13 feet wide, as long as the ground will allow—to face a point one mile below Greenleafs point in the Channel—with a breast work of Timber two feet above the platform so that our guns will play over it—

Your opinion on this subject, and further orders will be very desirable, in the mean time I shall continue to use every exertion for strengthening our present position

Should we be ordered up I propose bringing the gunboats, and leaving the scow—taking all our own men with us—

I enclose a letter from Lt. Read received last Evening since which I have received no further information Very respectfully yr. Ob. Sert.

C Morris

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 5, No. 14 (M125, Roll No. 30).

1. Morris's rough sketch is bound after his letter.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN CHARLES MORRIS

Captain Charles Morris
U.S. Frigate *Adams*Navy Department
July 18th 1813

Sir,

Mr Morris¹ has delivered to me, your letters of this day, with the several enclosures therein referred to, which will receive deliberate attention. Mr Morris

will hand to you the Night Signals, for the purpose of the alterations you suggest, which you will please transmit, as soon as your pressing duties will admit of the necessary attention. From the last article, in the enclosed hand bill, I fear the *Asp* has been captured, and poor Sigourney killed. I confide much in the vigilance of Lieutenant Read, and trust he will avoid approaching too near the enemy, lest, by a calm, or other casualty, their Barges should get hold of him. Your plan of defence, with very little exception, meets my full approbation, but only as a dernier resort.

To retire from your present position with the Naval force, before the enemy had approached its vicinity, with a decidedly superior force, would have the worst possible effect, in destroying the confidence, and depressing the spirits of the people. Those of Alexandria would consider their defence as abandoned, and though the enemy may not now seriously meditate the attempt, (and I firmly believe he does not,) yet, invited by the absence of the squadron, and the consequent panic, he would, in all probability, make the attempt, were it only to destroy Alexandria, and reconnoitre and menace this place.

If the maintenance of your position is at all doubtful, with the Fort and Squadron combined, its fall will be the necessary consequence of withdrawing the squadron.

My opinion is, therefore, that it will be better to remain until the enemy shall approach, in such force as to leave no doubt of the propriety of retiring, and in the interim, to prepare all the means of defence, you have pointed out as the ultimate stand. This I shall take immediate measures to do, as far as attaches to my Department.

The platform, for the Battery, shall be immediately commenced, if hands can be had, and the people of the yard, now out with the Militia, had better be detached by the Secretary, for the service of the Navy Yard; for without them, you must be sensible of the difficulty of making the contemplated preparations. Be pleased to suggest it to the Secretary of War. The Hulk of the old *Boston* will answer for the channel, and the line you have chosen, opposite Windmill point, is strong and judicious. I have some doubts of the propriety of the two Caronades, at the point A, unless the hill, in the rear, is covered by troops. These points, however, can easily be settled; the main design is agreed upon.

The great object will be, to retire in time, to reach the ultimate position, with the Frigate, and of that you will be the exclusive judge. Your knowledge of the Channel, and depth of water, will indicate to you the proper time—Your Ship draws much less water than any of theirs, and you could reduce your draught of water materially, by starting the water in the after hold. The Scows are clumsy, and must retire in time; these and the Gunboats, would cover the passage of the Frigate over the Bar. I have written in haste, and will again write to you tomorrow. I am, respectfully your Obt. Servant,

W. Jones.

Would it not be better to moor the *New York* at Windmill point, and put one half your Guns on her; she would, I think, answer the purpose better than a Land Battery.

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, CLS, 1813, pp. 54–56.

1. Lemuel Morris, an uncle of Captain Charles Morris, served as chaplain in *Adams* from 16 March to 8 August 1813.

Joshua Barney and the Defense of the Chesapeake

The Baltimore flotilla commanded by Captain Charles Gordon and composed of a gunboat and four leased schooners was considered by Jones to be "a cheap prompt and efficient temporary force."¹ The navy knew that the owners of these vessels would want their ships back once privateering activity started again, but the return of these ships would leave the Chesapeake vulnerable. When Joshua Barney² in July 1813 proposed a defense force of twenty barges or row-galleys, a "flying Squadron," Secretary Jones jumped at the chance to fill the vacuum caused by the loss of the leased schooners and appointed Barney to the special command of the Chesapeake flotilla. Barney spent the summer and fall of 1813 superintending the construction of eight barges and manning and outfitting vessels from the former Potomac flotilla that he also inherited.

1. Jones to James Madison, 17 Apr. 1813, DLC, James Madison Papers, Ser. I, Vol. 51, No. 97.

2. For background on Barney's earlier career and his successful cruise on the privateer *Rossie*, see Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, Vol. 1, pp. 248–60.

JOSHUA BARNEY'S DEFENSE PROPOSAL

Defence of the Chesapeake Bay &c

The Enemy have on this Station, 11 ships of the line, 33 frigates, 38 Sloops of war, and a number of Schooners &c.

Each ship of the line, <u>now</u> has 110 Marines,	Total 1210
each frigate	50 1650
each Sloop of War	30 1140
Marines coming from England	2000
Two Battallions of Royal Artillery, ditto,	1000
Two Battallions of Seamen (men they can trust) . . .	1200
	<u>8200</u>

The Avowed object of the Enemy, is, the distruction of the City & Navy yard, at Washington, the City and Navy yard at Norfolk, and the City of Baltimore, we see by the above statement that upwards of 8000 men, can be landed from the Enemies ships.

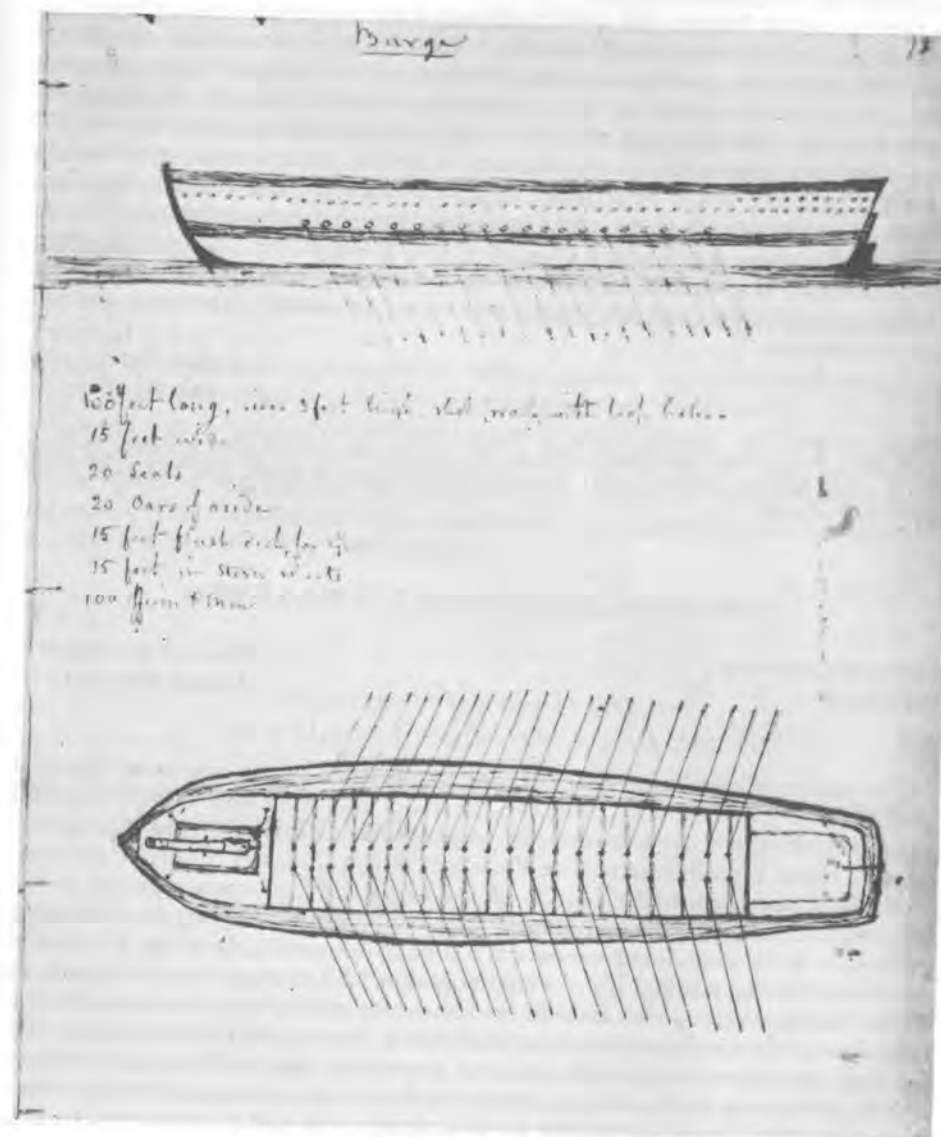
Frigates, Sloops of War, Schooners with Barges and small craft will be employed against those places; Now, what force have we to oppose such an Armament, should they make the attempt in a short time, which in my opinion will be done the moment Admiral Warren returns from Bermuda, (where I conceive he is now gone to meet the Marines and Royal Artillery from England) there to organize, and provide every thing necessary for the Campaign; he has already tried our waters, knows our Channels, received information, and will no doubt speedily return prepared for Mischief—

The question is, how to meet this force with a probability of success. Our ships (two frigates) cannot act, our old gunboats will not answer, they are too heavy to Row, and too clumsy to sail, and are only fit to lay moor'd, to protect a pass, or Assist a Fort. I am therefore of opinion the only defence we have in our

power, is a Kind of Barge or Row-galley, so constructed, as to draw a small draft of water, to carry Oars, light sails, and One heavy long gun, these vessels may be built in a short time, (say 3 weeks) Men may be had, the City of Baltimore could furnish Officers & men for twenty Barges, we have now in Baltimore 150 Masters and Mates of vessels, all of whom have seen, and some of them been, on-board such kind of vessels, in Sweden and Denmark, and among the Spaniards, these men can be relied on, and when no further services should be required, would again return into the Merchants service, by which means the officers of the U S Navy, need not be called into this service. Let as many of such Barges be built as can be mann'd, form them into a flying Squadron, have them continually watching & annoying the enemy in our waters, where we have the advantage of shoals & flats throughout the Chesapeake Bay, the Enemy could be followed by such boats in every direction, without danger, their force would be respectable, and the enemy dare not dispatch Small ships, Brigs, or Schooners upon any expedition whilst such a force lay near them, these boats may be constructed to Row, beyond all possibility of the enemy having it in their power to Injure them, each boat ought to carry 50 officers and Men, and 25 Soldiers; A Squadron of twenty Barges would require 1000 officers & men, and 500 Officers & Soldiers, which in a few hours could be transported to any given point, and if necessary 500 or 1000 additional troops might be added; let each boat have, one 24 pounder, and small arms compleat, with such a force there would be no necessity for Camps being formed at any given point, as this force would always be hovering round the Enemy, and prevent any partial attacks on our bay-shore, or within our Rivers; such vessels as are here discribed, might oblige the Enemy to quit our waters, for during the summer months, they could so harrass them at Night: by getting near the ships of War, and keeping up a constant fire upon them, when no object would appear as a mark for the enemy, so that little damage could be received, especially as the Barges would be fitted to prevent boarding from the enemy, even if they were disposed to make the attempt, but a force like this would be sufficient to deter such an undertaking.

Add to this squadron three or four, light fast-sailing vessels, prepared as fire-ships, which could with ease, (under cover of the Barges) be run onboard any of the enemies ships, if they should attempt to anchor, or remain in our Narrow rivers, or harbours. In the Winter the Enemy could not act, but then our Barges might be kept at Hampton or in York river and other places at the mouth of the Bay. Should the enemy land all their forces with a design on any of our large Cities, they must be met in the field, but unless their heavy ships can cover the landing, and receive them onboard again, the Barge squadron could cut off their retreat by acting in concert with our troops onshore.

I would recommend as absolutely necessary, that the channel in the Potomac, below Washington be Immediately stopped up by sinking of vessels, or other substance for that purpose, let the frigate Adams, and all the Gun-boats (Old ones) be stationed at that place above the Obstruction, and also a floating Battery, to prevent the enemy from coming up, this obstruction can be easily removed when necessary, by ourselves, I would also sink vessels &c and stop the channel at Hawkins's point, a few miles below the fort at Baltimore; and defend the pass by armed schooners now in service, and two floating Batteries, prepared with furnaces for hot shot, and so fitted as to prevent being boarded by the Enemy. The defence at Norfolk I am told is nearly compleat— The expense of these Barges



Barge for Use in the Defense of Chesapeake Bay

would not be great, they would cost about 3000\$ each, and after the service was performed might be sold for Coasters, having only a deck to put on them.

This plan was before the Assembly of Maryland, a few days ago, and a Bill passed the Senate for building and manning twenty Barges, but was rejected by the house of Delegates, by which means our Bay harbours and Cities lay exposed to the fury of the Enemy. This is the outlines of a plan of Defence & offence, the details can be better explained verbally than in writing, when all the advantages could be pointed out, in fact we have no other mode of defence left us, but if we had, I conceive this by far the best, most effectual, and cheapest; 50 Barges will not cost more than One half the price of One frigate, the officers and men will be on pay but a short time, and will have no further claim on the government. This Marine force would be separate from, and unconnected with the Navy, and could be so organized, as to have One Regiment of troops, annexed to it, the whole under the command of an able, active Naval officer, and one Colonel, with powers to correspond, not only with the General Government, but with the Governors of Virginia & Maryland, and to act in concert whenever circumstances required.

Joshua Barney
July 4t. 1813

ADS, DLC, James Madison Papers, Ser. 1, Vol. 52, No. 73. A draft copy is found in DNA, RG45, AF11 (M625, Roll No. 405). Barney's barge sketch is found with the copy at the National Archives.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO JOSHUA BARNEY

Joshua Barney Esqr.
Baltimore

Navy Department
August 20th 1813.

Sir,

The nature of the force, necessary for the defence of the extensive Bays and rivers of the United States, and the means of manning and employing that force, requiring an organization, in some degree, different from that in the general Naval Establishment, The President of the U. States, in order more effectually to accomplish the objects of the Legislature, as contemplated in the late law, providing for the building or procuring, and employing, such number of Barges, as he may deem necessary, has determined to select, for the special command of the Flotilla, on the upper part of the Chesapeake, a Citizen, in whose fidelity, skill, local knowledge, and commanding influence with the Mariners of the district, reliance may be placed, in cases of great emergency.

I have, therefore, the pleasure to offer to you that Special Command, subject only to the orders of this Department; and for the economy, and efficient employment of the force committed to your charge, you will be held responsible, and subject to the Rules and regulations for the government of the Navy of the United States.

It is not intended, because it would be incompatible with the rights of others, to appoint you, by Commission, to any regular and permanent rank in the Navy of the U. States; but, for the purpose and direction of your command, you will be considered as an Acting Master Commandant, in the Navy of the U. States,

respected, and obeyed as such, within your special command, and be entitled to the pay, rations, and emoluments of a Master Commandant, exclusive of such reasonable allowances, for the extra expenses you may necessarily incur, in consequence of the peculiar nature of the service, and your superintendence of the objects, connected with your command on Shore. Your command will consist of the Barges, now building by contract at Baltimore for this Department, such of the City Barges, as may be purchased, or taken into the service of the U. States, and such other Barges, Gun Boats, or vessels, as may, from time to time, be attached thereto, by order of this Department.

The Officers immediately subordinate to you, as commanders, will be Sailing Masters in the Navy of the U. States, and such other subordinate and petty officers as this Department shall direct.

The Petty Officers and crews, will be regularly shipped, as in the Navy of the U. States, subject to the rules and regulations for the government thereof, and entitled to all the rights, privileges, and advantages of the Navy Pension fund, and Hospital, distribution of prize Money, pay, rations, &c. as in any other branch of the service.

They will moreover be shipped for twelve months, for the special service of the Flotilla, and not liable to be draughted for any other service.

You will, herewith, receive a special letter of appointment, with a copy of the rules and regulations of the Navy, and a blank oath of Office. Your acceptance will be signified by letter, and by taking and subscribing the oath, which you will transmit to this Department; from which time your pay, &c. will commence. I am, very respectfully, Your Obedt Servant,

W. Jones.

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, pp. 56-58 (M149, Roll No. 11).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO ACTING MASTER COMMANDANT JOSHUA BARNEY

Joshua Barney Esqr.
Comg. the U.S. Flotilla, Baltimore.

Navy Department
Augt. 27th 1813.

Sir,

James Beatty Esqr. Navy Agent Baltimore, having by order of this Department, contracted for the building of eight Barges, or Galleys, for the defence of the Chesapeake and its waters, four of which are to be 75 feet long, and 4 of 50 feet long, to be armed and equipped, as this Department shall direct; and considerable progress having been made in the construction thereof you will immediately superintend, and direct the equipment, with as much expedition as possible.

Mr. Beatty will state to you what the builders have engaged to perform, which you will cause to be faithfully executed; and for the residue of the equipment and finishing, Mr. Beatty will, upon your requisition, provide.

He is directed to have a number of 24 Pounders, belonging to the Navy Department, immediately transported to Baltimore; four of which you will appropriate to the four largest Galleys, in addition to which, they will each have a 42 pd. Carronade, if we have an opportunity of sending them round from this place; and if not, you will substitute four of the 32 pd. Carronades in Baltimore. The smaller

Galleys will be armed with long 18 pounders, to be sent from this place, and with 32, or 24 pd. Carronades. The opportunity you had of inspecting the new "*Black Snake*" Galley, at the Navy Yard here, will have conveyed to you a more perfect idea of the manner in which I wish them to be armed and equipped, than any written description; and if the movements of the enemy will admit, the "*Black Snake*" shall be sent round to you, completely fitted, to the most minute article, ready for action, from which all the rest can be fitted in exact conformity. In the interim you shall have the dimensions, description, and drawing of the Masts, Spars, Sails, &c. and, if the "*Black Snake*", cannot be sent round, either the Naval Constructor, Mr. Doughty, or our Master Boat builder will attend at Baltimore to give directions.

The Galleys, building at Baltimore, are upon the same plan and construction as those here, except that the former are a little fuller at each ~~each~~ end, the better to enable them to bear the heavy metal without hogging. The *Black Snake*, now with everything on board, ready for service, draws 21 inches water. Much pains have been taken to perfect those built here, in order to serve as an exact guide for those built elsewhere; and I am so perfectly satisfied with them, in all respects, that every possible effort will be made, to get one of them round to Baltimore in due time. I not only rely upon your exertions, to equip them in the shortest possible time; but upon your judgment, care, and economy, in doing it to the best advantage. The three Galleys, building here, will be added to your squadron, together with the *Scorpion* Cutter, Schooner *Asp*, and two or three Gunboats. Also such of the Barges, belonging to the City of Baltimore, as come within the description of the Act of Congress, provided the Agent, and Committee can agree upon terms. It will be necessary to look ahead, and take measures to prepare your ammunition, small stores, &c. If the Grape shot and stools are to be cast, it should be done immediately.

The small armament will be, for the largest Galley,

36 Muskets,
36 Boarding Pikes.

Ammunition for the long Gun,

80 Round Shot,
30 Stand of Grape.

For the Carronade—

60 Round Shot,
30 Stand of Grape,
30 Cannister.

For the Smaller Galley

26 Muskets,
26 Boarding Pikes.

Ammunition same as for the large Galleys. Powder equivalent to the above, exclusive of 10 rounds of powder and round shot, for exercise at the target.

The Schooners¹ will soon be delivered up to their owners, and the crews, if practicable, transferred to the Barges. I am, respectfully, your Obedient Servt.

W. Jones.

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, pp. 62–64 (M149, Roll No. 11).

1. For more information on the schooners *Patapsco*, *Comet*, *Revenge*, and *Wasp*, see pp. 348–54.

ACTING MASTER COMMANDANT JOSHUA BARNEY
TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Baltimore Augt. 31st 1813

Sir

I had the honour, yesterday, to receive your letter of Instructions of the 27 Inst. I immediately waited upon Mr. Beatty the Navy Agent, and with him went to see the Barges building here, I am sorry to inform you that they are very backward, only one nearly ready to launch, several with the Ribbs up and neither floored or planked, and others merely floored, I do not see that they will be compleated in less time than four weeks, The Contractors appear to me, either not to understand what they are about, or will not understand, which will make it absolutely necessary to have either Mr. Doughty or the Master boat-builder here to give directions, and the sooner the better, could the "*Black-Snake*" be brought round, many difficulties, and much time & trouble would be avoided, and the work done in a more masterly Stile. Not knowing what Guns I shall be obliged to take for the Barges, I cannot prepare the ammunition for them, I have ordered the "Grape shot" and Stools to be cast immediately of every size.

The small armament mentiond in your letter, consists only of Muskets and pikes, we shall want pistols and Sabres in proportion; I would suggest having the Grape and Cannister made up at Washington, or, if you could spare a Gunner from the yard, to send here, he might be employed in fitting every Article of gunnery whilst we are fitting the Barges; Mr. Beatty informed me yesterday that he had agreed with the Baltimore Committee for three of their Barges, which I presume you intend should be immediately employed, and as the Schooners and the Barges are now about to be paid off, we must make a new agreement, on which subject I beg your Instructions, and whether in case the Commanders of the Barges does not wish to remain in them I may be permitted to appoint others. I have daily application from old Masters of vessels for employment but shall as you mentioned take the Masters of the Schooners if they are "disposed" to continue, some I am informed will, others will not, should you be of opinion that I should ship men immediately, I shall prepare a place for them untill called into service. If the Commanders of Barges were appointed, I could direct each of them to superintend the building and procure his men at the same time, which would prevent delay but for gods-sake send me the "*Black-Snake*", or I must come again to Washington, to see her, and make these thick-skuls here do their duty. If we could get the Guns &c round from Washington I should feel perfectly at ease. I am informed the Enemy has gone down from below Annapolis—A short correspondance has taken place between Genrl Smith and myself, I inclose a Copy of my letter—

AL, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1813, Vol. 5, No. 154 (M124, Roll No. 57). The last page of Barney's letter was not bound in with Vol. 5 but was in Vol. 6, No. 3 1/2 (M124, Roll No. 58). Barney did not sign this letter, but he did sign an enclosed copy of a letter to Samuel Smith relating to captured British signals. The enclosure is not printed here.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO
ACTING MASTER COMMANDANT JOSHUA BARNEY

Joshua Barney Esqr.
Comg. U.S. Flotilla, Baltimore.

Navy Department
Sepr. 2nd 1813

Sir,

Your letter of the 31st Ult. has been received. Mr. Doughty will be in Baltimore probably to-morrow. Four 18 pounders, such as the *Black Snake* carries, will be sent for the four large Barges; four 18 pounders, something shorter and lighter for the 50 feet Barges, and four 24 pd. carronades for the same. The 32 pd. carronades, for the large Barges, the Agent will deliver from Mr. Dorsey's works. Those are now shipping on board the *Scorpion* and *Asp*, which, together with the *Black Snake*, will proceed immediately to Baltimore, and deliver them to you. The *Scorpion* and *Asp*, having part of the crew of the *Adams* on board, will return to watch the mouth of the Potomac, until that Ship is ready.

With Muskets and pikes, I do not see much necessity for pistols and cutlasses; indeed pistols are not to be had. We shall endeavour to send you the Grape and Canister from this yard, or a part certainly.

You will open a Rendezvous, and recruit as many men as will man the whole of the new and old Barges. The Complement of Officers and men, and the rate of pay, &c. to be agreeable to the subjoined list.*

As soon as it is determined what number of the Sailing Masters of the Schooners and old Barges agree to continue, you will inform this Department. I am, Sir, respectfully, Your Obedient Servant,

W. Jones.

*Complement of Officers and Men for the new Barges, building at Baltimore for the U. States. viz.

75 feet Barges,	1 Sailing Master Commanding.
	1 Master's Mate,
	1 Gunner,
	1 Boatswain,
	1 Steward,
	1 Cook,
	10 Seamen and
	34 Ordinary Do.
Officers & Men	50.

50 feet Barges,	1 Sailing Master Commanding.
	1 Masters Mate,
	1 Gunner,
	1 Boatswain,
	1 Steward,
	1 Cook,
	8 Seamen and
	26 Ordinary Do.
Officers & Men	40.

Master's Mates \$20, Gunners \$20, Boatswains \$20, Stewards \$18, Cooks \$18, Seamen \$12, Ordinary Seamen \$6 to \$10 per Month, being the same pay, and will be entitled to the same rations, and privileges, as in the Navy of the U. States.

To be regularly shipped, under articles for 12 Months, subject to the Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Navy; but not liable to be drafted into any other service, than that of the Chesapeake Flotilla.

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, pp. 72-74 (M149, Roll No. 11).

British Incursions in the Upper Bay

When Admiral Warren's frigates could not sail beyond Upper Cedar Point on the Potomac because of the shoals, he ordered his squadron to venture up the bay again. The British spent August attacking St. Michaels and Queenstown as well as establishing a base on Kent Island. The appearance of their ships off Baltimore and Annapolis caused great consternation. Fear for the safety of Maryland's capital prompted Navy Secretary Jones to permit Captain Charles Morris and the crew of Adams to serve as artillerists at the Annapolis forts.

LIEUTENANT JAMES POLKINGHORNE, R.N., TO
COMMANDER HENRY LORAINE BAKER, R.N.¹

Copy

His Majesty's Sloop *Conflict*
10th August 1813

Sir,

In compliance with your orders I proceeded with the Division of Boats under my direction up the St. Michaels River; we advanced alongshore close to the Town of St. Michaels, and were discovered by the Enemy's Patrole who fired on us; a few minutes after a Battery mounting six twelve, and six pounders, gave us a round of Grape and Canister, when we immediately landed, got possession of the Battery, and drove the Enemy into the Town, After spiking the Guns splitting the Carriages, and destroying all the ammunition and stores, I re-embarked with the loss of only two wounded; by this time the Enemy had collected in considerable numbers, and commenced firing from two Field peices in the Town the destruction of the Battery being complete, and not a vessel to be seen,² I deemed the object of the enterprize fulfilled, and returned onboard with the Boats. The Conduct both of Officers and Men was exemplary and highly praise worthy for their steadiness in forming quickly in landing and driving the Enemy into the Town. Lieutenant Cairns and Roberts headed the small arm men and Royal Marines and Lieutenant Blood who had the care of the Launch with carronades, most effectually kept the Enemy on the defensive and rendered every assistance in covering our embarkation I have the honor to be Sir, your most obedient humble Servant

Signed J. Puckinghorn

Copy, UKLPR, Adm. 1/504, pp. 249-50.

1. Commander Henry Lorraine Baker commanded H.M. sloop *Conflict*.
2. One reason the British had attacked St. Michaels was to destroy several privateers being built there.

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N., TO
FIRST SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY JOHN W. CROKER

San Domingo Off the
South end of Kent Island
Chesapeake, 23rd August 1813.

Sir,

I request you will communicate to their Lordships' that on the 28th Ultio, I detached Captain Shirreff with the *Barossa*, *Laurestinus*, *Conflict*, and *Mohawk* Sloops, and *High Flyer* Tender up the Bay in hopes of cutting Off some of the Baltimore Flotilla amounting to Six or Seven sail of Schooners and some Row Gallies, likewise to secure the passes and Ferry round Kent Island, And I also directed Rear Admiral Cockburn to lead the Squadron up the Bay, it falling little Wind however on the 4th Instant several of the Ships on account of the Tide were obliged to Anchor, but the *Sceptre* from having a light breeze was enabled to get up as high as Kent Island; when the Rear Admiral, having three Companies of the 102nd Regiment on board very Judiciously and Zealously directed them to be disembarked with the Marines of that Ship and took possession of the above Island, secured the Ferry just as a considerable Number of Oxen and Sheep were at the Point ready to pass over to the Continent. On the 6th Instant the remainder of the Squadron arrived Off the Southern part of the Island and on the following day the Troops under the Command of Sir Sydney Beckwith were disembarked and Marched for the Northern part of the Island where they were placed in Camps and Sir Sydney established here several Posts and gave the necessary Orders on the occasion.

I was glad to obtain possession of this valuable & beauty Island which is half as large as the Isle of Wight not only on account of its' situation as a central Point between Annapolis, Baltimore, Washington and the Eastern Ports of the State of Maryland which joins the Delaware, but with the further view of refreshing the Troops and Crews of the Ships who had been so long Embarked and living upon Salt Provisions, and at the same time of receiving Cattle, Stock & Vegetables, which this Fertile and well Cultivated Spot furnished in the greatest abundance.

On the 12th. Instant Sir Sydney Beckwith marched with a part of the Troops upon a Reconnoissance against several Corps of the Enemy that had made their appearance near the Island: and the First Batallion of Marines were Embarked and proceeded under the direction of Captains Patterson and Maude toward Queen Town; & for a fuller description of the Operations on that occasion I beg leave to refer their Lordships' to the enclosed letter from the Quarter Master General: Upon the return of the Troops to the Island on the 13th the Army & Squadron remained near this place untill the 22nd, when after having large supplies of Fresh Provisions and Stock, and the Artillery & Officers having been furnished with Horses for their Service; And it having been ascertained that upwards of Eleven Thousand Troops were assembled at Baltimore exclusive of the Flotilla & Works established near that City, and that a Corps of Five Thousand men were around Annapolis and others expected from Washington, and the defenses of that Town much encreased: And Sir Sydney Beckwith having agreed with me that an Attack from the Force with us would prove very doubtful; I gave Orders for the whole of the several Corps to be Embarked, and proceeded

down the Bay, in execution of their Lordships Orders.¹ I have the honor to be Sir, Your most Obedient humble Servant.

John Borlase Warren

LS, UkLPR, Adm. 1/504, pp. 137-41.

1. Warren had reported problems with desertions in the army and poor discipline among the marines. He wished to return to Halifax to avoid the hurricane season, to refit his ships, and to refresh the troops; see Warren to Croker, 14 Aug. 1813, UkLPR, Adm. 1/504, pp. 91-92.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN CHARLES MORRIS

Captain Charles Morris,
U.S. Frigate *Adams*, Navy Yard.

Navy Department
August 12th 1813.

Sir,

The attitude of the enemy off Annapolis, indicating an immediate attack upon that place, and being informed that in the military force assembled for its defence, there is a great deficiency of Artillerists you will immediately repair, with the Officers and crew of the *Adams*, to Annapolis, and offer your cooperation to the commanding military officer, in conformity with the terms of the joint regulation of the War and Navy Departments, copy of which you will present to him.

As your force will not be prepared for field service, he will doubtless assign to you the command of one or both forts, in which you can act with most effect, as your men have been well trained to the use of great guns, of which the example of their brethren, on similar occasions, has furnished the fullest assurance you will take with you, a sufficiency of Pikes and Cutlasses, as the most convenient weapons for the occasion, and three days provision cooked. Mr. Buller Cocke, of the Navy Yard, will procure carriages for the speedy transportation of your force, and will take care to keep you provided, with all that may be necessary for the sustenance and comfort of your command; and you will make such requisitions on the Navy Agent, Mr. Randall, for other objects as your wants and the nature of the service may render expedient.

You will please keep me informed of such occurrences as may be interesting, and as soon as your services can be safely dispensed with, you will return to this place. I am, respectfully, your Obedt. Servt.

W. Jones.

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, pp. 47-48 (M149, Roll No. 11).

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN CHARLES MORRIS

Capt. Charles Morris,
Comg. U.S. Naval Forces, Annapolis.

Navy Department
Augt. 29th 1813.

Sir,

I have received your letter of the 27th and though the position of the enemy may be still as favourable for an attack upon Annapolis, as at any period hitherto, yet I do not think the probability, or indication of an attack, by any means as great as it has been.

Indeed there are many who apprehend an attempt to debark at Herring Bay, and by a forced march for this place, in the absence of those who are called off from its defence, accomplish its destruction, then cross the country to Port Tobacco, and reach their ships without serious opposition. You will have found General Bloomfield of this opinion. I do not however believe, that the enemy is at all prepared, or disposed, for so bold and vigorous an enterprize. Although you are independent of the command of either the Governor, or General Bloomfield, yet it would have been more regular to have conferred with the latter than the former. The Governor is acting in his State capacity, and has no command of the forces of the U. States—the General is the U.S. Military commander of the District.

It is not at all certain that the enemy may not again enter the Potomac, were it only to keep up the alarm, and harrass the Country. The Naval force, though ready upon an emergency, to defend a fort as well as a Ship, cannot be expected to do Garrison duty; therefore, as you have put the Forts at Annapolis in order, and given time to collect the proper force for its defence, you will, without delay, return to this place, with the whole of the force under your command, and as symptoms of fever have appeared among your Seamen at Fort Madison, you cannot remove too soon.

I am, moreover, anxious to have the necessary alterations made in the *Adams* as soon as possible. I am, respectfully, Your Obdt. Servt.

W. Jones.

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 67 (M149, Roll No. 11).

Blockade Duty

By the beginning of September 1813, Admiral Warren had sailed for Halifax and Rear Admiral Cockburn had departed for Bermuda. They left behind Captain Robert Barrie with a skeleton force to blockade the Virginia Capes and conduct occasional raids on coastal towns. The latter helped to dispel the monotony of this unrewarding service.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BARRIE, R.N., TO MRS. GEORGE CLAYTON

Dragon Sept 4th 1813
Chesapeak Bay

My Dear Mother

The *Bramble* Schooner arrived here yesterday in six weeks from Plymouth and I was sadly disappointed in not receiving a line from any of ye—your last letter was the 1 May—I wrote from Halifax to say that I was to rejoin the Squadron in the Chesapeake—I found it at anchor off Annapolis & in possession of Kent Island—this has been evacuated and we are now in Lynn haven bay—where I am to be left in charge of the blockade of the Chesapeake I shall have a few frigates & small craft under my orders & if the Americans venture to run any of their French traders during the winter I hope to catch a few of them—but this Blockading affair is a sad disappointment to me who expected a Cruise off New

York for the winter—I have also a most serious charge on my hands and have a duty to perform with one ship of the line two frigates ~~and~~ two Brigs and three schooners that has hitherto employed never less than four sail of the Line six frigates & Brigs & Schooners without end—I expect to remain on this service for at least five months, unless a Peace takes place before that time—The Enemy has one frigate & about twenty other armed Vessels at Norfolk—one frigate at Alexandria and a considerable collection of government armed Vessels at Baltimore and as Nathan has not had any trade whatever during the summer I hope he will dash a little now the bad weather is coming on—our news is very old from Europe—in Canada we are going on pretty well but I can not boast much of the exploits of our Chesapeak squadron—thank god the *Dragon* had no share in the attack of Craney Island, Hampton or any of the towns in the Chesapeake—Tubs has left me he got too old for old Thompson & was [sawing?] therefore I have sent him about his business he is now with the Commander in Chiefs Secretary—but I do not think he will remain in his service long Thompson is very well for an old one [?]

Cirie has gained great credit for his very gallant conduct in the *Narcissus* boats & should be promoted if merit had its due reward—Mr. Hamer is going on very well but he is not a particularly bright sailor The Admiral has promised to send my letters from Halifax when the Packets arrive therefore I expect to hear from some of you every month—The Squadron is very sickly but *dragon's* crew at present are in good health but they are a most troublesome set of blackguards—making best remembrance to all & ever believe me my dear Mother your truly affectionate & dutiful son

Robt. Barrie

We are sadly afraid of a dirty Peace with Nathan—

ALS, MiU-C, Barrie Papers. The brackets represent indecipherable words.

CAPTAIN SAMUEL JACKSON, R.N., TO CAPTAIN ROBERT BARRIE, R.N.

Copy

His Majesty's Ship *Lacedemonian*
in the Chesapeake 23d Sept. 1813

Sir,

From the representation that was made by the Masters of the *Dragon* and *Lacedemonian* respecting the Enemy's Schooners in Cheriton and Kings Creeks and the Evening of the day I left you proving favourable for an attack on them, for the purpose, not only of ascertaining what they were, but also of either bringing them out or destroying them.

I therefore at 12 O'Clock that night sent five Boats with two Carronades, Sixty Seamen and Twenty five Marines under the Orders of Lieutt. Maw first Lieutenant of this Ship (accompanied by Captain Litchfield who very handsomely volunteered his services upon the occasion—The *Mohawk* was also ordered as close inshore as possible for the purpose of giving any assistance to the Boats that might be requisite—From the intricacy of the navigation in bringing the Vessels down the Creeks, I judged dawn of day to be the best time for making the attack. The Brig and Boats were however discovered by the Enemy some time before they reached the Shore, and they soon collected a considerable body of Militia to

oppose the Boats at the entrance of the Creek which was not above Musket shot across— Their Force at this time was about a Hundred Riflemen which covered themselves behind Trees, Sand Hills, and every where they could shelter themselves. Independent of this Force they have two Field Pieces, one of which was abandoned and it is thought dismounted— The Launch was stationed to keep clear and secure the entrance of the Creek, whilst the other Boats were employed in bringing down the Vessels, and after towing them down for nearly two miles exposed to a heavy fire of Musketry from both sides the Creek. I am sorry to say that there was not sufficient Water to get them over the Bar—the *Mohawk* at this time also took the ground, and upon which it was found necessary to set fire to the vessels in our possession—Their Cargoes consisted of Corn and Potatoes— By this time the Enemy had collected from two to three Hundred Men who were driven from one position to another whenever they came within the reach of our fire— Thus terminated this little but brilliant piece of Service, which I can bear testimony from the way it was performed deserved every success and certainly the whole of the Enemy's vessels would have been brought out had their been sufficient Water to have got them over the Bar which indeed when we left them was nearly dry, and scarcely Water left to float the Boats over.

Captain Litchfield and Lieutenant Maw speak in the highest terms of Lieut. Taylor, Mr. Franklin Master and of every Officer and Man employed upon this occasion.

I am extremely sorry to add that in heaving a new Schooner off that was on shore, I had one man killed and one wounded, I fear dangerously, of the *Lacedemonian*, and one wounded from the *Mohawk*— The Enemy's loss was considerable they were driven in every direction, and all the Officers agree in their having at least from Twenty to Thirty Killed and Wounded.

One Boat from the *Mohawk* accompanied the *Lacedemonian*. I have the honor to be Sir your most Obedient and very humble Servant

(Signed) Saml. Jackson Captain

Copy, UklPR, Adm. 1/505, pp. 139–41. Enclosed in Warren to Croker, 29 Dec. 1813, pp. 129–30.

Changes in the Potomac Flotilla

Continuity of command did not mark the first seven months of the Potomac flotilla's existence. Lieutenant Alexander S. Wadsworth, late of Adams, replaced Lieutenant George C. Read as that group's commander on 28 September. Wadsworth was the flotilla's fourth leader since February. His duties remained essentially the same as those of his predecessors—to reconnoiter the river for British activity and to engage the enemy's small vessels if feasible.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO LIEUTENANT ALEXANDER S. WADSWORTH

Lt. Alexander Wadsworth
U.S. Frigate *Adams*. Nav. Yard

Nav. Deptmt.
28 Sept. 1813.

Having received information that a 74 a Frigate a Brig & a Tender part of the enemy's squadron, anchored in the Bay off the mouth of the Potomac on satur-

day last; You will immediately take the command of the Flotilla now at the Navy Yard—consisting of the *Scorpion* Cutter, Schr. *Asp.* Gun Boat no. 70. 71. & 137. the Galley *Shark*. & the small Barge mounting two 12 pd. caronades; & proceed toward the mouth of the river reconnoitering the enemy's force with care, & if you shall be satisfied that his Boats & tenders cannot attack you with a superior force, you will endeavor, should a favorable opportunity occur, to annoy & drive him from his station: until you ascertain the enemy's force it will be prudent to direct the heaviest sailing gun Boats, to remain at Port Tobacco to be ordered, as circumstances may dictate: you will take especial care to prevent all intercourse with the enemy & suffer no vessel to pass whose destination either avowed, or such as you have good reason to suspect will lead her within the power of the enemy whatever intelligence you may wish to communicate, will reach the Department through the Post office at Port Tobacco.

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, A & R, Vol. 11, p. 58.

W. Jones

Condition of *Constellation*

Captain Charles Stewart departed Constellation for Constitution in May 1813, leaving Master Commandant Joseph Tarbell in temporary command of that ship. Jones wanted Captain Charles Gordon to take charge of Constellation once the Baltimore flotilla could spare him. But British activity in the upper bay and the necessity of returning the leased schooners to their owners during the summer of 1813 precluded an early departure. Jones ordered Gordon in late August to restore all the leased schooners to their owners and assign his gunboats to Joshua Barney, who would succeed Gordon in command of the Chesapeake flotilla.

On 15 September Gordon was still in Baltimore and Jones, unhappy with Captain Tarbell's¹ command of Constellation, directed Gordon to proceed immediately to Norfolk via Washington. Once in Norfolk, Gordon discovered the neglected state of his ship and crew. Secretary Jones attempted to determine who was to blame for the frigate's poor condition.

¹ Joseph Tarbell was promoted to captain on 24 July 1813.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON

Capt. Charles Gordon,
Comg. U.S. Frigate *Constellation*, Norfolk.

Navy Department
Octr. 6th 1813.

Sir,

As the season is at hand when you will doubtless have an opportunity of eluding the vigilance of the enemy, and getting to Sea, but as it is first necessary to heave out and clean the bottom of the *Constellation*, you will use every exertion to accomplish that object, and re-equip without delay. Captain Cassin has my instructions to afford you every facility and assistance in his power, and to comply with your necessary requisitions. When the *Constellation* is ready to receive her crew, Captain Tarbell, the Commandant of the Flotilla, will deliver over to you all the men belonging to the

Constellation, who have been employed in the temporary service of the Flotilla. I am informed, that, during the time Capt. Tarbell had the temporary command of the *Constellation*, her powder was damaged, excessively, by inattention to the Pumps, and Captain Cassin informed me, that an enquiry was about to be made into the circumstances of the neglect;¹ but as I have heard nothing further on the subject, I have to request that you will make strict enquiry, and report to me what shall appear to you to be the facts of that case, and the nature and extent of the damage.

Should you require a new Cable or Cables, we have two or three here of a very superior quality, and you will not order them made, until we ascertain the practicability of transporting them from this place in due time. I am, very respectfully, Your Obedt. Servt.

W. Jones.

In everything relating to your command, you will receive orders direct from this Department.

W. J.

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, pp. 107-8 (M149, Roll No. 11).

1. See John Cassin to Jones, 7 Sept. 1813, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 6, No. 7 (M125, Roll No. 31).

CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

U S.F. *Constellation*
Gosport 12th Octr. 1813

Sir,

Ever since my arrival I have been collecting my Crew from the different Vessels of the Flotilla to enable me to prepare the Ship for sea— Not untill the day before yesterday was it in my power to have a general muster— Enclosed herewith is a copy of the Pursers report after Muster—

The ship is entirely stripp'd & every thing landed with a swept hold— The preparations of Pendants, Blocks &c. which had to be made (the yard being deficient in those articles) may delay us a little But I am happy to say Captn. Cassin uses every exertion to forward us and, I hope will not detain the Ship as I shall try to commence getting the outriggers out & pendants up to day— The Hull, Masts & standing rigging appear to require nothing of importance. But there are great deficiencies in every thing else— She will require a quantity of running rigging, One set of Top sails & Courses to replace those that have been bent & have become mildew'd & rotten, Two Bower Cables, One Mizen Top mast to replace a white pine one she has now And, to compleat her original indent for stores in the different Departments which I find are (in most cases) entirely gone— There being no inventory taken & no receipt from Captn. Tarbel to Captn. Stewart when the change took place, I find it difficult to ascertain precisely what is deficient or where the deficiencies are gone particularly the Cabin furniture— But having every thing now on shore, with officers attending to them I shall be enabled to compleat the indents by the time the Ship will be ready for them, except such as are not to be had here And for which I shall immediately forward my requisition on the Navy Yard Washington enclosed to you for approval— I found the Ship without order or arrangement in any degree owing to her Crew being so long absent & indeed had become almost strangers to the Ship, to their stations & to every thing like system & regularity. For in the Gun Boat service

they cannot be kept in that state of discipline necessary for a man of war— In fact the Ship will require re-fitting from her Keelson up and her Crew reorganis'd & train'd as tho. she were just from the Ordinary— my Commission'd officers are very inexperienc'd. And we are entirely deficient in warrant officers as you may perceive by the enclosed return— Mr Laughton an old midsn. on the Charleston station has applied to join us & I think would be an acquisition—

The report of the officers who were orderd by Captn. Cassin to enquire into the causes of the damag'd powder, I shall have the honor to forward by tomorrows mail—my men (25 in number) that left Baltimore with me arrived this day & are included in the enclosed report— The Powder is still on its way under charge of an officer, It has been detain'd unexpectedly at Urbanna, in the *Rappahannock*, for want of Waggons, And the Tender (*Franklin*) has now gone up James River with a smart officer to meet it & to assist in getting it across—

The Enemy being now in Lynhaven bay I am of opinion a Vessel may get into York river & send across to Hampton such articles as will admit of land transportation— If you contemplate sending us men from Washington they, with the sails & indeed everything the Ship will require, except the Cables, may be very readily sent a cross from Little York, and if the Cables could be landed we could send from here for them or even waggon them if necessary— I have the honor to be Sir, yr. obt Servt.

Cha^s Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 7, No. 96 (M125, Roll No. 32). This letter and the following enclosure are bound in with the November 1813 Captains' Letters.

[Enclosure]

(Copy)

An abstract of the Crew of the U. States Frigate *Constellation*, Charles Gordon Esqr. Commander—

One Captain	Four, Boatswain's Mates
Five Lieutenants	One, Carpenters— Do.
One, Surgeon	One, Boatswain Yeoman
One, Purser	One, Carpenters— Do.
One, Master	One, Gunners— Do.
Two, Surgeon's Mates	Five, Quarter Masters
Eleven, Midshipman	Eight, Quarter Gunners
One, Sailmaker	One Hundd. & fifty Seaman
One, Cook	Eighty, Ordiy, Seamen
One, Steward	Six, Boys
One, Cooper	<u>One</u> , Coxswain
One, Master At Arms	288 Total
One, Armourer	<u>44</u> Marines
Two, Master's Mates	332 Grand Total

(Sign'd) Isaac Garretson

Purser

October 11th 1813

Copy, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 7, No. 96, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 32).

CAPTAIN CHARLES STEWART TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Boston October 18. 1813

Sir

I have received your letter of the 12th. instant covering a copy of one from Captain Gordon of the *Constellation* to the Commandant of the Navy Yard at Washington detailing certain deficiencies on board that ship.

It is truly mortifying to me that there should have arisen any necessity for calling on me at this period to shew the state and condition of that ship at the time I surrendered her to the charge of Captain Tarbell; particularly as her books of indent and expenditure were left on board, made up to the day of my leaving her; by reference to them it will be seen what had been received on board, as stores, and what was expended. I also regret that you may have considered it a neglect on my part in not having taken an inventory, which I certainly should have done under any other circumstances. But, Sir, I deem it necessary to explain to you what appeared to render it unnecessary. An order from the Department directing that ship to be held in readiness for sea, which was fully complied with, agreeable to my report to you, dated May 12th, which stated her to be in every respect ready for a Cruise, except a small deficiency in her complement of men, and having, agreeable to that order, kept her so untill my leaving her, I did not consider there was any necessity for breaking up her store rooms &c to inventory her materials, to command the receipt of a temporary Commander who would in all probability be superceded in a few days. With respect to the Cabin furniture, I had taken the precaution to see all the articles (but chairs and tables) placed carefully into the Captains Store room, and locked up, except such as was necessary to take in the *Franklin* tender with me to Richmond, for our convenience—while on board; the return of which to the ship Lieut. Wilkinson and Mr. McCauley were charged with, who I presume complied accordingly. A list of them is enclosed.

Considering that Captain Tarbell's abode was with his family at the Navy Yard, and his command of the Ship but temporary, I did not presume any thing relative to the Cabin-furniture would be changed from the place in which I had left it, untill his successor had joined the ship; but in this I may have been mistaken. Enclosed you will receive a copy of the articles got at Washington, Annapolis, and Norfolk for the Cabin; also a list of what was broke and lost during the time I was on board.

Of the general stores and furniture of that ship belonging to the Boat-swain's, Gunner's, Sailmakers, Carpenter's and Master's departments, the bills or receipts bearing my Signature at the several places, will show what was received on board; the expenditure book will show what was used; the difference will be what was on board at the time I left her, except six hundred stand of grape shot loaned to Forts Norfolk and Nelson, the receipts for which was left with the first lieutenant Neale, and was to have been returned on demand if not used.

My indents for furniture and stores, when fitting out that ship, were made with the strictest regard to Economy so far as I had control, (which only consisted in quantity), and therefore she was more bare in that respect than any

outfit that preceded her; if they were costly the fault was the market price, and the extravagance of the agents in quality; if she has been expensive in her general stores the fault has been, the bad quality of her original Supplies, as heretofore reported to the Department, and no fault of mine.

It now remains for me to assure you, on the honour of an Officer, that the only articles taken with me from that ship and belonging to the Government, were, her Chronometer, Letter Book, Order Book, and one set of signal books, one towell left among my cloaths in the bag by mistake of my steward, and an edition of Bowditch's Practical Navigator among my books, which articles are now applied to the Public use in the *Constitution*, and that no other article was taken from her by me, or by my orders, but what belonged to myself. If positive proof of the above is necessary it is in my power to give it. Captain Ridgeley who is near you, and who is perfectly aware of the state and condition of the ship being such as I reported her to be at that time, can satisfy you that nothing was wanting to render her complete for her intended cruise, and Mr. McCauley can inform you whether the articles on board the *Franklin* were returned. If then, such proves to be the case, and any deficiencies have arisen afterwards, the fault was not mine, and must be attributed to the neglect of some other person. Had I thought it necessary at the time to have taken an inventory and receipt, it should have been done, but I deem it equally the duty of an Officer, to guard the property of the Navy, as much without having receipted for it, as though he had. If any articles have been distributed among the gun-boats, as appears by Captain Gordon's letter, it has occurred since I left there; for while on that station, I permitted nothing to go on board them but arms and ammunition, which were always returned to the ship immediately on the object being accomplished for which they were put there; this was at all times strictly complied with by the officers.

With respect to Bunting, there was none, if I recollect right, received on board, although indented for; and I believe there was great difficulty in getting sufficient, at that time, to make her Signal flags.

With respect to her sails, one entire suit was bent at the time; and all the spare sails, which had been received on board a few days before from Captain Cassin agreeable to the receipt when deposited with him, were in the Sail Room.

Although desirous at all times of the good opinion of the Government, for correctness as an Officer, and a Gentleman, yet I wish them, at no time, to give me credit on that account in advance; and assure you, that at no time, will your doing so, oblige, or serve me; fairness of intention is all I claim, and that I am as liable to err in judgement as most men, there can be no doubt. Therefore on all such occasions as the present, I shall be infinitely more thankful to you to communicate them to me as you have now done; and I assure you that I shall always, very gladly, afford every elucidation in the case, of which I am capable and have the means of doing. Very thankfully, I have the honour to be Your obedient Servant

Ch^s. Stewart

[Enclosure]

Cabin furniture received onboard the U.S.F. *Constellation* at Washington &c &c

1 Dineing table with ends.	2 tin cannisters
12 Chairs.	3 dozn. glass tumblers
3 dozn. Table cloaths/large & small	3 dozn. wine glasses
1 green Table cover.	6 quart decanturs
24 China dishes/assorted.	6 pint ditto
2 dozn. Soup plates.	2 warter decanturs
3 dozn. Shallow plates	2 pr. Candlesticks & Muffers
12 vedgitable plates	1 table bell
6 sauce tureens	4 hair brushes
4 Salt Cellars.	1 tin dirt pan
18 desert plates	1 frying pan
1 Block-tin Tureene	4 stew pans
12 tin dish covers	4 tin bake pans
2 Cork screws.	1 Cullender
1 tin bread basket	1 Cleaver and tormentors ¹ /Cook
24 Silver table spoons	4 brass cocks, assorted
12 ditto Tea Do.	2 wash hand basons
1 Silver Soup ladle	1 set cot curtains
1 set of plated Castors	1 set Knives & forks.
4 Waiters Japaned.	1 set Tea China.
2 tea kettles.	

Articles lost and broken onboard the U.S. Frigate *Constitution*²

2 Dishes/Broken	1 milk jug Broken
2 vedgitable dishes/Broken	2 silver table spoons/lost
1 sauce turine/broken	14 towels/lost.
4 plates/broken	

Sundries taken onboard the *Franklin* tender to Richmond and returned onboard the *Constellation* at Norfolk

1 Quart decantur	1 dozn. plates
2 pint ditto	4 dishes
6 Tumblers	6 cups & saucers
6 wine glasses	1 frying pan
6 Table spoons } silver	2 stew pans
6 Tea spoons }	1 Tea Kettle
3 table cloaths/small	8 Knives & forks
6 towels	1 set Castors

D, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 7, No. 18, enclosure (M125, Roll No. 32).

1. A tormentor is a long iron meat fork used by sea cooks.
2. Stewart meant *Constellation*.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO CAPTAIN CHARLES STEWART

Charles Stewart Esqr.
Comg. U.S. Frigate *Constitution*, Boston

Navy Department
Octr. 28th 1813

Sir,

I have received your letter of the 18th current, relative to the Stores of the *Constellation*, which is perfectly satisfactory, and such as I had no doubt of receiving from you on the subject.

The disorganization, waste, and negligence, on board the *Constellation*, subsequent to your command, are, I believe, without a parallel in the service; sails rotting on the yards, seven feet water in her hold, 2000 lbs. of powder utterly destroyed, and great part of the furniture, &c. dilapidated or lost; and the responsibility attempted to be shifted from the Commander to a Warrant Officer, who is said to have been left with the entire command, under the pretext of the Commander and Lieutenants, being engaged in Flotilla expeditions, and on Craney Island.

This may account to you for the necessity of my enquiry, in order to investigate and trace the negligence to its proper source.

Wishing you a prosperous and honourable Cruize, I am, very respectfully,
Your Obedt. Servant,

W. Jones.

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, pp. 131-32 (M149, Roll No. 11).

SAILING MASTER BENJAMIN BRYAN¹ TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

The Honbl. William Jones
Secretary of the Navy

Norfolk 13th Nov 1813

Sir

It has recently come to my knowledge that an attempt has been made to fix on me the blame of damaging a quantity of powder, on board the Frigate *Constellation*, of which I was lately master; to enable you to judge to whom it justly belongs. I beg leave to submit the following extracts from the Log Book of the Ship.

Thursday 4 Feby 1813, the ship warping from Hampton Roads up towards Norfolk for Safety from three British frigates then in Chase, she grounded on the flats near the diamond rock: at 2 P.M. the master (myself) was ordered to start the water in the hold, which was immediately done, & the provisions discharged on board of four Schooners hired by Capt Stewart for the purpose of Lightening the ship. at 6 P.M. the ship floated, made sail, and at 11 P.M. anchored between Forts Norfolk & Nelson.—

To the following question propounded by Commodore Cassin viz

What was the situation of the Frigate *Constellation* between the 20th of June & 12th July 1813 (when the operations vs the enemy at Craney Island required the officers & crew of the ship)

I, answer

Capt Tarbell Commanding the Flotilla, manned it from the *Constellation*, on the 20th of June and proceeded to attack an English Frigate in Hampton Roads, on the 21st at 4 P.M. all hands returned on board from the Gun Boats; at 6 P.M. all hands repaired on board the Gun boats again and sailed for Craney Island, where they remained till the 23rd; at 9 am on the 23rd returned from Craney Island on board the ship, at 3 P.M. on the 24th all hands embarked on board boats and proceeded to Craney Island again and remained till the 27th when they returned on board; the ship during their absence having been in charge of the master & 12 men— On the 28th at 6 a.m. all hands embarked again for Craney Island, and remained there till the 30th and on that day at 5 a.m. returned on board, and on the 2nd July the boats and crew left the ship again for Craney Island— On the third of July at 6 P.M. all hands and the boats returned on board the ship; On the 5th at 4 P.M. the men were again embarked for Craney Island; at 6 a.m. the 6th all hands returned on board from the Island.

On the 7th at 4 P.M. all hands embarked again for Craney Island—

On the 8th at 6 a.m. all hands returned from the Island—

On the 9th at 6 P.M. all hands returned to the Island for the night.

On the 10th @ 6 a.m. all hands returned from the Island to the Ship and remained on board till the 12th (except those stationed on board Gun Boats) & boats were on the 12th sent to Craney Island to remove the ships arms & ammunition, from the Gun Boats, on board her.

The foregoing extracts embracing, nearly all the proceedings from the time of the ships grounding, to the return of her Crew after the expedition of the Enemy against Craney Island; I flatter myself with an opinion, that an examination of them (with a ~~an~~ ^{remark} assurance that the ship did not make more than from 12 to 15 inches water in 24 hours) will be sufficient to satisfy you, that I do not merit the stigma attempted to be Cast on me, and that the powder in all probability, was damaged by the water being started in the hold, and it was not my duty to interfere in the pumping it out—

And it will appear from the foregoing statement, that I was not at any one time longer ~~enough~~ in charge of the ship, ~~more~~ than 48 hours² I am Sir most respectfully Yr. Humble Servt.

Benjamin Bryan

ALS, DNA, RG45, BC, 1813, Vol. 4, No. 100 (M148, Roll No. 12).

1. Sailing Master Benjamin Bryan was ordered to *Constellation* on 7 August 1812.

2. For Joseph Tarbell's account, which substantiates Bryan's, see Tarbell to Jones, 7 Dec. 1813, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 8, No. 27 (M125, Roll No. 33).

British Blockade: Successes and Failures

Captain Robert Barrie continued to enforce the British blockade of the Chesapeake and harass coastal towns with forays against American merchant vessels during the last two months of 1813. The British were kept busy seeking new sites for replenishing their water reserves. The Americans found the British presence in the bay strong enough to prevent shipment of construction supplies for the sloops building at Baltimore.

LIEUTENANT GEORGE PEDLAR, R.N., TO CAPTAIN ROBERT BARRIE, R.N.

Copy

H.M. Ship *Dragon* Potowmac
River Novr. 5th 1813

Sir,

In compliance with your directions I beg leave to state the proceedings of the Boats you did me the honor to place under my orders on the night of the 5th Instant

On leaving the Ship with three boats of the *Dragon* and two of the *Sophie* I proceeded onshore to the entrance of St. Mary's and with the greatest silence rowed up the River a distance of four or five Miles without meeting the least resistance until within an hundred Yards of some Vessels moored to the Shore in a small Creek, when a Party of the Enemy from a Wood on the bank of the River gave three cheers and commenced a fire of Musquetry. The superior fire of Guns and small Arms from the Boats soon dislodged them. we then took possession of the Vessels named in the margin¹ and towed them out the Enemy having taken the whole of their Sails onshore.

I have great pleasure in acquainting you that this Service has been performed without any loss on our part and have only to regret that in this trifling affair no opportunity occurred where the Officers and men could particularly distinguish themselves as I am certain they would have fully answered your expectations. To Lieuts. Douglas and Fitzmaurice of this Ship the latter a Volunteer on this occasion one Pearson of the *Sophie*, the Petty Officers, Seamen & Marines employed in Boats I feel much indebted for their assistance and steady good conduct I have the honor to be Sir, Your most Obedient and humble Servant

"Signed" George Pedlar

Copy, UKLPR, Adm. 1/505, pp. 137-38.

1. "Quintessence. Sloop Packet of Alexandria—Sundries—Coppered & sails very fast John. Schooner. Corn and Glass Alexandria Schooner Wood."

CAPTAIN ROBERT BARRIE, R.N., TO ADMIRAL SIR JOHN B. WARREN, R.N.

Copy

H M Ship *Dragon* Lynhaven
Bay, 14th Novr. 1813

Sir,

As the severe Weather and sudden changes of Wind rendered the Watering at Cape Henry extremely precarious, I thought it best to secure a supply of that Article in time. I therefore left the *Lacedaemonian*, *Armide*, and *Actaeon* here, and proceeded with the *Dragon* and *Sophie* up the Potowmac, where I took possession of St. Georges Island and having completed the Wood & Water of both Vessels returned to this Anchorage yesterday.

During my absence there was a Weeks continuance of fine Weather which enabled Capt. Jackson to complete the Water of the Frigates and *Actaeon*.

In spite of our utmost endeavours the Enemy's Clippers continue to pass us every Northerly Wind. The *Armide* chased one 120 miles going ten and eleven knots without being able to come up with her.

The *Lacedaemonian*, *Armide* and *Sophie* are now outside the Cape, the *Lacedaemonian* slipped after a Schooner and as she and the *Sophie* are very fast Vessels I hope they will be fortunate. The *Actaeon* has chased several of their Clippers but she has no chance with them; I chased a Settee rigged Privateer yesterday in *Dragon* but I had the mortification to observe that we have lost our Sailing and the Privateer easily escaped us by the Tangier Shoals through the Cape Charles Passage.

The Enemy's Frigates have not attempted to make any movement; a Sloop of War was lately launched at Baltimore, but she is not yet Masted.

The Slaves continue to come off by every opportunity and I have now upwards of 120 men, women and Children on board, I shall send about 50 of them to Bermuda in the *Conflict*.

Amongst the Slaves are several very intelligent fellows who are willing to act as local guides should their Services be required in that way, and if their assertions be true, there is no doubt but the Blacks of Virginia & Maryland would cheerfully take up Arms & join us against the Americans.

Several Flags of Truce have been off to make application for their Slaves &ca., but not a single black would return to his former owner. I have the honor to be Sir, Your most obedient humble servant

"Signed" Robt. Barrie Capt.

Copy, UKLPR, Adm. 1/505, pp. 131-33.

JOHN S. SKINNER¹ TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Baltimore December 6th 1813. Sir—

As I have understood that you propose soon to send round the sails and rigging for the Sloops of war at this place, I feel it my duty to apprize you, that in my opinion, formed upon observations recently made while on a visit to the enemy at the Capes, this property coming here from the Potomac is exposed to imminent risque of being captured by the Brigs *Acteon* and *Sophie*. While the *Dragon* and the *Armide* remain stationary at the Capes watching the *Constellation* these two Brigs are employed either in intercepting the coasting trade or in looking into the mouths of the waters on the Chesapeake— A Traitor whose name is Lewis, lately captured in a Schooner the "*Lucy and Sally*" from ~~Richmond~~ Fredericksburgh volunteered to conduct them into Piankatank to cut out some Baltimore Schooners— We left them on Wednesday night last at the mouth of, and I think from appearances about to enter that River— The boarding Officer said they designed to put Lewis on shore at Rappahannock the next day— American Prisoners who were on board these Brigs represent the *Sophie* to carry 18 guns and from 120 to 150 Men she has a broad yellow Streak along her Ports— The *Acteon* has 14 or 16 guns and 100 men— The *Sophie* is a remarkably fast Sailor— I should suppose it would be well for a vessel coming round with public property to fell her way 10 or 15 miles ahead and having ascertained that those Brigs were not in sight of the mouth of Potomac she ought then to beat up with the wind from N.W. to the mouth of Patuxent or farther if practicable. There is reason to believe that an expedition will be fitted out from this place to attempt the capture of these Brigs—

I heard Sir T. Trowbridge, tell Com Barry that his men had gone aft that morning to ask him, as the *Lacedaemonian* was going to Bermuda for provisions, if he would send up a challenge to the *Constellation* and the Prisoners who were on board the *Lacedaemonian* say that when it was be[lieve]d the *Dragon* would have gone to Bermuda it was the intention of Capt Jackson who commands that Frigate and would have been the Senior officer, to send out the *Armide* and invite Capt Gordon to meet him. There is besides the vessels mentioned, a small schooner (tender) the *Cockchaffer* carrying 2 guns and twenty men I do not think that any inducements could draw the 74 and Frigate above Hampton Roads, while the *Constellation* remains at Norfolk— very respectfully your Obt. Servt.

John S Skinner

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1813, Vol. 7, No. 82 (M124, Roll No. 59).

1. John S. Skinner served at Annapolis during the war as agent for British packets, flags of truce, and dispatches and as agent for prisoners. His frequent contacts with the British fleet in the Chesapeake made Skinner an important source of military intelligence.

Offensive Actions in York River

When Captain Charles Gordon assumed command of *Constellation* in the fall of 1813, he joined two other captains at Norfolk—John Cassin and Joseph Tarbell. Cassin, who oversaw the Gosport Navy Yard, had commanded the gunboat flotilla until relieved by Tarbell in May. Gordon resented Tarbell's undertaking a naval expedition in the York River on his own initiative without consulting him first and asked Jones to clarify the lines of authority at Norfolk. Secretary Jones did not answer this query until April 1814, when Gordon was made commanding officer of all naval forces at Norfolk.

CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Constellation off Norfolk
December 13th 1813

Sir

For the last three or four days, I have been extremely anxious to hear from you, in answer to mine of the 3rd inst. as Linhaven Bay has been left for that time, with only one Frigate, the rest of the force on this Station having gone up the Bay in pursuit of Capt. Tarbell, who had taken seven Gun Boats & the two schooners well manned up to York river, in pursuit of two English Brigs—

Capt. Tarbell has this moment returned. I presume the rest of the Enemy's Squadron, will now resume their station off the Horse shoe—

The Expedition of Capt. Tarbell, caused much uneasiness & talk in Norfolk, fearful the Gun Boats might be blockaded in some of the rivers, and deprive Norfolk of that part of their defence— They were als apprehensive it might induce the enemy to send one or two Ships into the Roads, to shut the boats out and, keep them up the Bay—

There were repeated applications to me by the citizens, to know the Amount or object of this expedition. But as it was kept intire secret from me and my officers particularly, I could make no reply whatever, except that the Flotilla was under way & below Crany island before I had any knowledge of it. The strange and distant conduct of Capt. Tarbell to me on this occasion, and the great risk of having all his disposable force cut off from Norfolk by such an imprudent step, (when in my Opinion) the object which I now learn he had in view, could have been as well effected (if at all) with the two Schooners and launches without taking a Gun Boat, induced me to make some enquiry, into the state of those Boats, he left at Crany Island, and I found they only had a few men each to take care of them, and none capable of making any defence— Considering them exposed, and knowing the citizens were aware of this state, and felt uneasy; I had determined this day, (had not the Others returned) to order them all up in a situation to be ready to mann them from my ship, rather than leave them their, in the power of the Enemy— Those circumstances induces me to trouble you again, to know if any responsibility of this Flotilla, or its operations are attached to me, or if any interference is expected from me in any act or undertaking of Capt. Tarbell, as the commander of Said Flotilla. I have the Honor to be Sir your Obt. Servt.

Cha^s Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 8, No. 43 (M125, Roll No. 33).

Recruiting for Barney's Flotilla

In December 1813, Secretary Jones was concerned that Acting Master Commandant Joshua Barney's Chesapeake flotilla might not be strong enough in the spring to meet with "vigor" the return of the enemy whose "exertions will doubtless be great, and the theatre of his malignant hostility, will be our Barges, Waters, and Seaport towns."¹ He ordered Joshua Barney to contract for the construction of ten more barges and to continue his efforts to recruit seamen.

1. Jones to Barney, 8 Dec. 1813, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, p. 164 (M149, Roll No. 11).

ACTING MASTER COMMANDANT JOSHUA BARNEY TO
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Annapolis Decr. 15th 1813

Sir—

I had the honor to write you on the 9th Instant since then I have received your letter of the 8th directing me to confer with Mr. Beatty, respecting the building of 6 or 8 barges of the 2d Class, At "St. Mary's", on the Eastern shore, from a former letter of yours I rather suppose you meant St. Michaels, and have this day wrote to Mr. Perry Spencer, the only Builder of Note on the Eastern shore on that subject, my letter went by Mr. Spencer's Son, who is a Delegate in the Assembly of Maryland, and he thinks his father will undertake the Contract—

I am fully of your opinion, "that every possible exertion must be made during the Winter to meet the Enemy with Vigor in the Spring," under that Idea I have turned my views to the best means of procuring men, and beg leave to ask your permission to employ Captain Solomon Frazier a Senator, now here, from the Eastern shore, he is well known as a Character, perhaps the most popular among the seafaring men on the Eastern shore, of any man in Maryland; he was in the service of this State the latter end of the War, and commanded at that time a Galley, in which service he behaved on several occasions with great Gallantry and honour to himself—he is Rich and at his ease, but declares if you will give him an appointment, he will quit the Senate and serve under me, I have promised to write you on the subject, and with your consent have also agreed to give him the Command of One division of my flotilla, of course he will expect to be put on the same footing with Capt Rutter,¹ I am fully of opinion he will be able to procure men sufficient to mann his division, between this and the spring, and should Mr. Spencer agree to build the Barges, Capt. Frazier will have it in his power (being on the shot) to superintend the building, at the same time to recruit his men. I shall leave here the moment I receive your answer to mine of the 9th Inst. Since then two more men have shipped from the 38th Regt. whose discharge from the War Department I will thank you to order sent me to Baltimore from whence I will send for the men, whose names are Henry Davidson & Francis Davenport. I am Sir with Respect your Ob Servt.

Joshua Barney

My delay here distresses me much, as my presence is wanting in Baltimore

ALS, DNA, RG45, MLR, 1813, Vol. 7, No. 96 (M124, Roll No. 59).

1. On 15 September 1813, Jones appointed Solomon Rutter an acting lieutenant in the Chesapeake flotilla. He was commissioned a lieutenant in the flotilla service on 25 April 1814. Solomon Frazier received his appointment as lieutenant in the flotilla on 26 April 1814.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES TO
ACTING MASTER COMMANDANT JOSHUA BARNEY

Joshua Barney Esqr.
Comg. U.S. Flotilla, Baltimore

Navy Department
Decr. 17th 1813.

Sir,

Your letter of the 15th is before me. St. Michaels was the place intended to be designated in my letter of the 8th instant. Your representation of the character and qualifications of Capt. Solomon Frazier is very satisfactory; and as nothing will prevent our organizing such a Flotilla, as will enable us to repel all the force the enemy can employ, in the same way, if not to drive his Ships from the Bays, but the difficulty of getting men, it is of the utmost importance to employ able and enterprising Officers, who are popular among the Seamen and Watermen of their local Districts.

The services of Captain Frazier will, therefore, be accepted with pleasure; and I accede to your proposal of giving him the command of one division of your

Flotilla, with the same appointment, pay, &c. as Captain Rutter now holds by the authority of this Department.

Mr. Beatty will, therefore, with your advice and assistance, take measures for contracting for ten Barges of the second Class at St. Michaels, to be built as fast as possible, under the superintendence of Mr. Frazier, whom you will particularly instruct on that subject. If you have not already accurate drawings, and detailed instructions for the building, (which I believe were forwarded to Baltimore by the Constructor,) they can be forwarded from this place; but if you have one of the barges of that class, completely fitted, it will be well to send her as a model.

The order, from the War Department to discharge the men belonging to the 36th Regt. was sent to the Commanding Officer at Annapolis; and a general order, to discharge all the men who are willing to enlist with you, was this day forwarded to him, which will include the two men mentioned in your last.

Push the Recruiting service as fast as possible. I am, respectfully, Your Obedient Servt.

W. Jones.

LB Copy, DNA, RG45, SNL, Vol. 11, pp. 174-75 (M149, Roll No. 11).

Constellation and Adams Waiting to Get to Sea

By year's end Constellation and Adams, under Captains Charles Gordon and Charles Morris, were both ready to put to sea. Gordon had several opportunities to escape the blockade in December, but Secretary Jones did not forward him his cruising orders until January 1814. Morris, despite grave misgivings about the fitness of the redesigned Adams, was able to elude Captain Robert Barrie's blockading squadron in January 1814. Constellation was not so lucky.

CAPTAIN CHARLES GORDON TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Constellation Norfolk
28th Decr. 1813

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that the Ship is waiting yr. orders only—The favorable opportunities which have offered of late for our escape; And particularly the present moment induces me to trouble you again on the subject of some instructions— I have a good Hampton Pilot, and think on a certainty I could have gone out last evening—

Under the daily expectation of hearing from you (in answer to mine of the 13th Inst. &c) I have delay'd going to Craney Island, as I knew the Enemy would then be more vigilant; And, if I could receive yr. instructions before dropping down, I might proceed on to the roads if there was a prospect of getting out the same night— But as I have not heard from you, I have determined on going to my moorings at the Island so soon as the weather clears up—

Owing to the threatening weather of late & a want of confidence in my old Cables, I have been induced to get one new Bower; And will (with your permission) compleat them—

I am collecting all the old Charts I can find among the Ship Masters in Norfolk which (with my Book of Charts) will enable me to proceed on a Cruise at any moment—

The Bay is at times entirely clear for a Day &, but seldom more than one Ship at Anchor; The other one or two is either looking out off the Capes or up the Bay; And with such thick blustering & variable weather as we have had of late their situation must be very uncertain—

The Ship of the Line is generally at Anchor & rides out all Gales; The Frigates are kept under way (I presume) for the want of Cables—

This Ship having been now so long Idle &, under sailing orders twelve months ago, I have concluded it is not your intention that I should let a very favorable opportunity elude me; I however, shall not fail to communicate to you my movements on all occasions, keeping constantly in view the good of the service, And the honor of the Flag—with great respect Sir, yr. obt. servt.—

Cha^s Gordon

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 8, No. 111 (M125, Roll No. 33).

CAPTAIN CHARLES MORRIS TO SECRETARY OF THE NAVY JONES

Private, or public.

U S.S. Adams Decr. 31st 1813
Chesapeake Bay off Point Lookout

Sir,

I had the honor to receive yours of the 27th to day— I take the liberty of enclosing you a copy of Capt Stewart's letter in reply to mine of the 7th inst. I regret that his desire for one of the new frigates is not stronger than his anxiety and impatience for a cruise.¹

I took my present position two days since that I might be ready to improve the first Northeast snowstorm or thick weather which may happen, as I find the Northwest winds though sometimes violent during the day are invariably moderate or calm in the night

The increase of the moon renders thick weather absolutely necessary for our purpose and may perhaps compel us to wait its wane— Should no favorable opportunity occur soon I shall proceed near to Annapolis for the purpose of keeping our provisions and water full until the nights become darker and more favorable—

I regret that the Ship gives but little satisfaction either to myself or officers— They are so little satisfied with her that they would willingly change to any other vessel that can get to sea, but will not apply for a removal while I remain in her— They do not consider her a safe cruising vessel, owing to the motion of her rudder which I formerly mentioned— I believe myself that this continual motion, which increases in violence in proportion to the Ship's way in the water, must materially affect the durability of the Ship, and would probably soon wear out the rudder pintles— But I do not think there effects would produce immediate danger— though it is impossible to calculate how long first as none of us have ever met a similar case— I can only account for this motion by supposing

her main breadth so far aft that the water thrown off by it does not unite till it passes the rudder which is left to the action of an eddy violent in proportion to the Ship's velocity—This opinion is strengthened by the circumstance of the motion ceasing when she goes less than four knots and becoming exceedingly violent when going ten which is the most we can get out of her—

For myself although I should prefer almost every other vessel yet I trust my sense of duty will always secure my exertions to make the best use of such means as may be placed in my power— I should feel disposed to expose the Ship and crew to greater hazard if I believed they would be able to perform greater service when at sea— As it is I certainly shall neglect no opportunity which offers a reasonable hope of eluding the vigilance of the Enemy

I have ever felt a confidence that you would favor my wishes when the interest of the service would allow you to do it with propriety, and in this confidence shall wait such opportunity, and am Sir with Esteem and respect your Obed. Servant

C: Morris.

ALS, DNA, RG45, CL, 1813, Vol. 8, No. 120 (M125, Roll No. 33).

1. Morris, unhappy with *Adams's* seaworthiness, had asked Charles Stewart to relinquish the command of *Constitution* to him, leaving one of the new frigates being built for Stewart. The latter refused the proposition. Stewart's letter to Morris of 17 December 1813 was enclosed with Morris's letter to Jones.

Chapter Three

The Northern Lakes Theater: January–December 1813

The first campaign season of the War of 1812 demonstrated that successful military operations contiguous to the eastern Great Lakes and Lake Champlain required naval control of those lakes. Land transportation was laborious, slow, and expensive. Neither the United States nor Great Britain had made adequate preparations to use sea power effectively on the northern lakes. As military operations progressed, leaders on both sides realized that they must either exert themselves to establish competent naval forces on the lakes or risk military failure.

*On the Canadian side of Lake Erie, the British Army Quartermaster General's Department controlled the Provincial Marine vessels *Queen Charlotte*, 16 guns, and *General Hunter*, 6 guns. The American army had purchased and armed the brig *Adams* on Lake Erie. General William Hull had used *Adams* to carry his personal possessions and papers in attacking Detroit but lost all with the vessel when he surrendered in August 1812. *Adams*, captured without a contest, was taken into the Provincial Marine and renamed *Detroit*. On Lake Ontario, the Provincial Marine corvette *Royal George*, 22, the sloop of war *Earl of Moira*, 14, and the schooner *Duke of Gloucester* faced the lone American naval vessel, the brig *Oneida*, 16, stationed at Sackets Harbor. With these sparse naval resources, the contestants had begun the war on and around the lakes.*

*During September 1812, Commodore Isaac Chauncey, newly appointed commander on Lakes Ontario and Erie, took charge of building a naval squadron on Lake Ontario, combining purchased schooners and the corvette *Madison*, built by shipwright Henry Eckford and a team of skilled ship carpenters from New York City. At the same time, Daniel Dobbins, a lake mariner from Presque Isle (Erie), Pennsylvania, visited Washington to report on British naval activity in that area. Secretary of the Navy Paul Hamilton sent him back to Erie as a sailing master with gunboat plans and orders to construct the vessels at that place under Commodore Chauncey's command.*

Later that month, Navy Secretary Paul Hamilton gave Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough an independent command on Lake Champlain, a strategically vital link in the United States' line of defense. American control of this lake would give access to the St. Lawrence River via the Richelieu River that flows northward from the lake. If the British were to gain control of Champlain, they would have a way of striking at the heart of New York State and of severing the disaffected New England states from the rest of the country. At Macdonough's disposal were two decaying navy gunboats aground near Burlington, Vermont, to which would be