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# Naval and Combined operations in Chesapeake Bay and the adjacent waters during the war of 1812

There is no part of our Atlantic sea frontier that affords so much opportunity to a naval fleet of an enemy as the waters of Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries if the command of the sea is in their hands. This is the case at the present time but it was especially the case during the war of 1812 when the outer approach to the ~~James~~ Elizabeth and James Rivers or to the cities of Norfolk and Richmond was undefended by Fort Monroe and the Rip Raps. The outer battery ~~for~~ of the James River entrance was at the town of Hampton, the outer defence of Norfolk at Craney Id.

In other respects the conditions are practically and relatively the same for Washington and Baltimore and the ~~other~~ rivers whose course presents possibility of an approach to Washington, like the Patuxent and Rappahannock.

Fort Washington is still the outer defence of the national capital and as the city of Baltimore has grown out to Fort McHenry, Fort Carroll stands in the relative position that McHenry formerly held, while the navy yard at Norfolk and the gun factory have grown in importance as factors in naval strength and consequently temptations and objectives for an enemy. Submarine mines fortunately have added to the

possibilities of naval defence — if protected by batteries not easily silenced or turned. — The coaling, docking & repair facilities afforded by Newport News add to the importance of the waters tributary to the Chesapeake.

To the American fleet concentrated at Hampton Roads, New York Harbor or Gardiner's Bay would be committed the protection of the waters of the Chesapeake unless the perhaps more important port of New York ~~and~~ was threatened by another fleet, in which case the waters tributary to the Chesapeake would be subject to a blockade, a blockade that would be commercial as well as military, and that would include the canals leading on the North to Delaware Bay and on the South to the sounds of ~~Cal~~ North Carolina

The naval force operating in the defence of Chesapeake Bay, stationed at Hampton Roads, born of inferior to an enemy it placed as a force in the rear, a threatening element against any naval or combined force that proposes to ascend the Potomac, the Patuxent, the Severn, or the Patapsco rivers or to attack Philadelphia by the way of the C&O and the ~~Pennsylvania~~ railways from the South

Chesapeake Bay was the scene of the closing act of the Revolution and during the war of 1812 not only was the shore line harassed by the British and one of the islands of the bay converted into a naval rendezvous and station

but attacks were made upon Norfolk and Baltimore but a successful raid made from the Patuxent River which resulted in the humiliating capture and partial destruction of the National Capital –

It is my purpose to relate the operations of the British fleet in these waters during the war of 1812 and of the combined expeditions based upon that fleet to impress upon you the possibilities that come from Naval Operations in these waters and the remarkable helplessness of this rich and for that time well populated country arising from a want of an ample and efficient force –

The war against Great Britain was declared by the ~~President~~ United States upon the 19th. of June 1812 – The blockade of Chesapeake and Delaware Bays was not announced however by the British until the 26th. of December of that year following close after the disastrous retreat of Napoleon from Moscow. As a result of the blockade the export of American produce from the waters of the Chesapeake soon ceased.

Sea Power of France -

At end of 1893 France to have 250 Torpedo boats -

Changes since 1812 -

~~Norfolk~~ approaches to James & Severn Rivers protected at Hampton Roads by Fort Monroe

~~The~~ Atlantic & Pacific coasts the same - Indian Head -

Baltimore - Fort Carroll

Adams
Argus - 18
Columbia - 44
Adams - 28

Erie - 18
Cincinnati - 44
Ontario - 18

Constitution 36 Wy

Ships blockaded at Norfolk, Washington & Baltimore

Now the same - Concentration vs Dissemination

On the 4th of July, 1813 the first blockading fleet arrived in the waters of the Chesapeake under Admiral Sir George Cockburn. It consisted of four 74's – the Marlborough, carrying the flag of the Admiral, the Poictiers, ~~Dragon~~, Capt Beresford, the Dragon, Capt Berry, and the Albion's, Capt Talbot. The other vessels were the frigates Acasta 44, Capt Kerr, the Junon 38, also by Capt Kerr, Statira, 38, Capt Maxwell, Maidstone 38 – Capt Burdett, Belvidera, 36 Capt Byron, Narcissus, 32, Capt Aylmer, Lacedemonian 21 – Capt Gordon and Tartarus 20 Capt Gordon. 4 – ~~four of~~ ships of the line and 8 frigates – ~~They carried with them~~ After the fleet was a landing detachment of 1800 men ~~and~~ equipped with surf boats for landing. + These were joined from time to time by other vessels among them being both bomb vessels and vessels flying the Congreve rocket then in vogue. The appearance of this force which anchored in Lynnhaven Bay alarmed the inhabitants ~~of the~~ living near waters of the Chesapeake and the lights of the coast were directed to be extinguished.

Nothing much was done at first but destroy the ~~vessels~~ small merchant vessels found in the bay using Lynnhaven Bay as their rendezvous. After a few weeks the Poictiers under Commodore Beresford and the Belvidera

and some of the smaller vessels were sent to Delaware Bay and River to blockade those waters and raid upon their shores. ~~The Geo. Cockburn was but second in command of the station, the~~ Though the free blockading operating in the Chesapeake & Delaware Bays were under the command of Admiral Cockburn the whole station extending along the North American Coast and including the West Indies was under the Command of Vice Admiral Sir John Borlase Warren who had reached an age which lacked vigor but whose second in command to per as he was permitted at that time gave a vigor to his operations which made his name a familiar one for more than fifty years among the people of whose habitations were in the vicinity of the Chesapeake. Admiral Warren was at this time at Bermuda letting out re-inforcements for the force on the American Coast.

The land force accompanying the Cockburn fleet were foreigners known as the Chasseurs Brittaniques, and were deserters from the French army who preferred service under the English flag rather than a long confinement in prison. This corps had been formed in Spain during the Peninsular war and did little credit to the flag under which they served. —

The naval force of the United States at ~~this time~~ the outbreak of the war consisted of 8 ~~ff~~ frigates and 8 sloops and brigs and 165 gunboats. The number of officers upon the rolls was ~~[illegible]~~ 570 and the number of seamen, ordinary seamen & boys was 5230. The marine corps numbered 1523. Our whole coast at that time from Maine to the Chesapeake was a nursery of seamen and the enormous expansion of the neutral carrying trade in consequence of the Napoleonic wars made the wages of ~~a~~ ~~[illegible]~~ ~~a~~ a seamen before the mast * £3 a month and flew into the merchant marine from the coastwise trade, men of intelligence and independence who but for such wages would have sailed their own craft. No navy was ever manned with a better class of men than those which our government ~~[illegible]~~ in turn drew from our merchant marine at the beginning of the war. ~~before the preparations~~

Of the naval vessels in active service and in readiness for sea the Constellation and Adams were the only ones in the waters leading to the Chesapeake at the time of the arrival of the British vessels.

The Constellation carrying 38 guns had been commissioned at Washington under Barnbridge but Charles Stewart had succeeded him in the command. In January 1813

Stewart dropped down the Potomac with a view of going to sea but upon reaching St. Mary's near the mouth of the Potomac where the crew were drilled at the guns and at target firing, the powder proved defective and the ship was ordered to Annapolis to have this defective powder replaced. From Annapolis the Constellation went to Hampton Roads and the next morning ~~a force of the~~ a number of British vessels came in and anchored off Willoughby Point where they were becalmed. While the British were waiting for the change of tide the Constellation was kedged towards Norfolk until she grounded upon the flats at the entrance of the channel way to Norfolk. In the night time however at high tide the vessel moved up to an anchorage off the city. A few days later she dropped down to a position abreast Lamberts Point to cover the batteries being erected upon the island for the defence of Norfolk. In this position she was exposed to attack from the boats of the English Blockading Squadron and Cooper in his Naval History gives the following account of the preparations made by Stewart to defend both her ship and the approaches to Norfolk (Ex) - See "The Constitution" p. 155 & middle of p. 156 Cooper with underlined.

Three times attempts were made to surprise the Constellation but ~~[illegible]~~ owing to friendly information and vigilance the approach of the British boats was discovered and they returned to their ships without attacking.

When the fortifications was completed the Constellation was taken back to Norfolk, Captain Stewart was transferred to the command of the Constitution and the Constellation remained blockaded in Norfolk harbor until the close of the war

In the early days of the occupation of the Chesapeake by the British, various boat attacks were made upon ~~[illegible]~~ American privateers attempting to run the blockade or to refuge up the many tributaries of the bay. Some very gallant affairs resulted creditable to both sides and in the case of the schooner Lottery lying becalmed in the bay, a resistance was made to an attack of nine boats with 200 men from the British frigates lying at anchor in Lynnhaven Bay which was both brilliant and honorable to those concerned. The privateer was taken only after the Captain and Nineteen out of the crew of 25 were either Killed or wounded.

The admiral of the Station Sir Jno. B. Warren arrived in Chesapeake Bay upon the 3d of March 1813 carrying his flag on board of the line of battle ship the St. Domingo - 74 -. After some delay at the mouth of the Chesapeake the ~~fo~~ fleet under Warren proceeded up the bay having an engagement with privateers the early part of April - Reaching the vicinity of

Annapolis, Admiral Warren detached Lord Cochrane with a fine squadron consisting of his flagship the Marlborough, a fine ship of 36 guns, two brigs the "Fantome" and "Mohawk" and three tenders, schooners captured from the Americans and a detachment consisting of 180 seamen & 200 marines from the naval brigade of the squadron together with a small force of the Royal artillery which had joined the fleet at Bermuda. Carrying the Marlborough as far up towards the head of the bay as ~~the draft~~ depth of water would allow, he shifted his flag to the Mandarine and proceeded to the Elk town at the head of the bay. Since the blockade the overland passage from the Delaware to the Chesapeake near and parallel to the present canal was used as a line of communication from the North to the South. Proceeding up the Elk Frenchtown was occupied after a slight resistance and a depot of flour and ~~military~~ military stores destroyed.

On the 3d of May an attack was made upon Havre de Grace at the mouth of the Susquehanna where a battery had been erected, the town was partially burnt and a gun foundry a short distance up the Susquehanna destroyed. The expedition entered and cleared every inlet in the Upper Chesapeake meeting with some resistance at the Sassafras River on the eastern shore which was successfully overcome.

After this ~~the~~ successful attack Cockburn met with no further resistance so that during a

period not exceeding a week and without a person being killed on either side he was enabled with one hundred and fifty men in his boats to subdue all resistance along the shores of the Upper Chesapeake and to so alarm Baltimore that its inhabitants suspended their ordinary pursuits and occupied themselves with preparations for the defence of their city. Cockburn finally returned to Lynnhaven Bay and joined the forces of Admiral Warren at that point. Three cities Norfolk, Baltimore and Washington still, from their proximity and inferior defences, invited attack from the British

On the 20th. of June an attack was made upon a British frigate - the Junon - by a flotilla of gunboats from Norfolk. The gunboats had been built under the Jeffersonian policy before the war, a few were fairly seaworthy and had been employed in service in the war against Tripoli, the largest reached 90 tons burthen and they were of various rigs as well as sizes, the larger ones rigged as topsail schooners, some as fore & aft schooners and others with a lug or felucca rig. They had for armament one or two long heavy guns at times supplemented with light carronades to repel boarders. In long Island Sound these gunboats were of service in keeping boats from the British men-of-war from landing, from coasting vessels and also kept the Sound clear of British privateers. The smaller class were propelled by sweeps

As a whole they were a failure for the purpose intended - a serious attack upon men-of-war

They were very unstable, easily put out of action and difficult to ~~get into a~~ work & fight except in calm weather, the recoil of their guns caused them to roll so much that it was almost impossible to fire with any accuracy after the first discharge.

The attack upon the Junon[38] was made about 4 o'clock in the morning, the gunboats, 15 in number, forming in crescent shape and being organized in two divisions, each under a lieutenant the whole under Capt. Tabb then in command of the Constitution. The flotilla did not make a vigorous attack, a distant fire not very injurious to either side being maintained for about three quarters of an hour; the Junon was at first becalmed but a breeze springing up the Barren 36 guns, and the Lauchlan, 24 guns, lying 5 miles off got underway & stood towards the Junon, causing the gunboats to retire towards Norfolk. The engagement was not particularly creditable on either side and demonstrated the inefficiency of the gunboats.

Admiral Warren who had left the Chesapeake in May for Bermuda returned on the 19th of June with considerable re-inforcements so that the British fleet collected within the Capes of the Chesapeake to 8 ships of the line, 12 frigates and a considerable number of smaller vessels, carrying a detachment of nearly 3000 soldiers principally marines under Sir Sydney Beckwith, within a short distance of Hampton Roads at the time of the attack of the Junon. There were gathered about, 3 74's, 1 64, four frigates and five sloops.

An attack upon Norfolk being evidently in preparation and the principal battery - of 7 guns - at the N.W. end of Craney Id. was put in a state of readiness being manned by a detachment of 150 seamen from the Constellation while a force of regulars and militia numbering nearly 500 men were sent to reinforce a force of artillery on the West side of the island. The island was connected by a foot bridge with the main land.

Across the channel leading to Norfolk, situated between Craney Id. and the East shore were placed the gunboats - fifteen in number - moored in ~~the~~ a crescent shaped formation - The Constellation was then at the Navy Yard -

The attack was made under the general direction of Admiral Warren on the 22d. of June, the land forces being in command of General Sidney Beckwith. The division of seamen was placed under the command of Captain Rechell of the flag ship St. Domingo 74 -

The plan of operation was to have the soldiers land upon the main land to the westward of Craney Id at Hoffman's Creek and to march so as to take the island from the rear while the seamen and marines in boats were to make a direct attack in front upon the island but to approach so as to be covered from the fire of the gunboats anchored in the channel. The attacking force consisted of 18 boats with 500 men in the landing division and 15 ~~boats~~ with 700 men

in the 2nd division which made the direct attack. This force was more than double the number of the Americans upon the island.

The first division landed at the creek distant two miles from the island as proposed and moved towards the point opposite the island. Meeting with a fire from the guns of the battery and being badly led and ~~delayed~~ detained by the creeks that were to be passed, this attack was repelled, finally abandoned and the troops re-embarked.

The direct attack made somewhat independently of the other as to time fared little better, the boats grounding under the battery and a few were sunk and the others pulled off without landing the men. The British found the bottom too soft to wade ashore although some of the Americans waded out and took possession of the boats left behind.

To compensate for this repulse Admiral Warren landed a force at the village of Hampton where a battery and a small supporting force of militia invited attack. The battery was turned ~~and the militia~~ dispersed, while Admiral Cockburn with his boats made a feint in front and the militia after slight resistance dispersed. The outrages committed by the British force at this time disgraced their own officers and frequented our countrymen.

The British fleet numbering 25 vessels entered the Potomac and greatly alarmed the people of Washington and Alexandria; the only defences of the river being at Fort Washington just above mount Vernon. The fleet did not approach nearer than 70 meters to Washington but the channel and shallow bottom thwarts

were closely examined by the British. Annapolis and Baltimore were also kept in a state of alarm by this movement.

After a marauding attack upon Ocracoke inlet in North Carolina Cockburn returned to the Chesapeake and took possession of Kent Is. opposite Annapolis landing his troops to recruit, from Kent Is. excursions were made into the neighboring inlets for plunder. After a stay of about two weeks here the forces were re-embarked and the squadron returned to Lynnhaven Bay. In September Admiral Warren sailed with the principal part of his force to Halifax, leaving Admiral Cockburn in command who in turn afterwards repaired to Bermuda leaving Capt. Barrie the senior officer on board the Dragon 74.

In May 1814 Cockburn returned to the Chesapeake, Warren being relieved as too inactive in the summer of 1814 by Vice Admiral Sir Alex. Cochrane. Cochrane directed Cockburn to take possession of some island in the Chesapeake that would serve as a rendezvous and ~~center~~ where they could securely anchor and ~~refit~~ recruit. Tangier Is. and Island opposite the mouth of the Potomac were selected for this purpose. The island is low and sandy with little in the way of resources except its central position, deep anchorage and proximity to the mouths of the Patuxent and Potomac rivers. Earthworks and storehouses were erected and the labors of the fugitive slaves were utilized in

their Erection. The British flag was hoisted upon the island and about 1700 negroes collected there, a number of them being formed into a military organization and drilled by an Officer of marines. At the end of the war an award was made to their owners by requirements of the treaty of peace for their loss. A line of battle ship the "Albion" was moved close to the shore for its protection.

The next objective in contemplation after the repulse at Norfolk was the capital city - Washington. The success of Wellington allowed the detachment from his army of a ~~detachment~~ force under General Ross which eventually numbered 3500 men. This force was embarked at Bordeaux in a fleet composed of one ship of the line carrying 74 guns, two ~~battle~~ ships of 64 guns armed en flûte five frigates, two bomb vessels and a number of gun brigs storeships, and transports. Leaving the Gironde on the 2d. of June 1814 they reached Bermuda on the 24th where they met Admiral Cochrane the Commander in Chief of the station, who was awaiting there his flag ship the Tonnant - a line of battle ship of 80 guns. A squadron of six frigates from the Mediterranean arrived the same day. The whole fleet, after taking in stores, sailed from Bermuda upon the 3d of August and arrived in the waters of the Chesapeake on the 14th being joined immediately by Admiral Cockburn with three ~~ships~~ of the line and a number of frigates, sloops and gun brigs. The whole of the force

anchored off Point Lookout and about Tangier Island awaiting the arrival of an ~~[illegible]~~ additional detachment from Bermuda under Rear Admiral Malcolm

Before the arrival of Cochrane various ~~[illegible]~~ minor operations had taken place under Cockburn the first of importance being an attack upon the flotilla of gunboats organized for the defence of the Chesapeake at Baltimore under Captain Joshua Barney. This flotilla consisted of the sloop Scorpion, carrying Barney's flag, and an armament of 9 guns and 16 gunboats of various sizes, the largest with 32 pdrs. and a crew of 60 men and the smallest with 18 pdrs. and a complement of 40 men.

The flotilla left Baltimore the latter part of May, on its way down the bay it was sighted by the British off the mouth of the Patuxent river, the force encountered by Barney consisted of the schooner St. Laurence of 13 guns and seven armed boats, the whole being under the command of Capt. Barnes. This force was driven back by Barney to the Dragon, a 74 anchored off Smith Point. The Dragon getting under way joined ~~[illegible]~~ ~~with~~ the schooner & boats and in turn chased Barney's flotilla into the Patuxent river where it was blockaded by the Dragon reinforced by the Albion from Tangier Id. The British force being after wards joined by the frigates Loire and Narcissus and the sloop Jaseur the flotilla was forced further up the Patuxent entering St. Leonard's creek, about ten miles from the entrance of the river

Endeavors were made to drive the flotilla out the place of its refuge, in order to get the gunboats into proximity of the ships but without success. Landings were effected upon the shores of the creek and river but though the militia was driven back no injury was effected to the flotilla. In one of these landings Lower Marlborough was reached only 28 miles from Washington. The two frigates anchored off St. Leonards Creek were finally driven off by an attack made upon them by a force of the Americans under Colonel Wadsworth with artillery & aided by a force of regulars and marines. The frigates departed to an anchorage near the mouth of the river and the flotilla after experiencing some loss came out of the creek and ascended the river.

After this rencontre Cockburn proceeded with a battalion of marines, and some artillery — 700 men in all — up the Potomac river making a series of descents upon both the Maryland & Virginia shores, which carrying everything before him, were the cause of much mortification to the Americans besides furnishing supplies and new recruits to the British. The utter inadequacy of the coast & river defence was shown as well as its passive nature and the militia organization broke down for the very purpose for which it was formed and supposed to have its greatest strength — to resist invasion —

possibilities that might have been created by proper system of defence are suggested when we consider our Civil War. The whole United States had during the war of 1812 about the population of the States comprising the Northern Confederacy in 1861 and the difference between the resistance made ~~upon the~~ to the British and that to the Federal forces have a significance which the more modern days and difference of spirit existing will not alone explain. It must be borne in mind that slave property was endangered in both cases and that the party in favor of the vigorous execution of the war against the British was strongest in the Capital and along the waters and tributaries of the Chesapeake.

The arrival of the force under Admiral Cochrane and General Ross was not unexpected or unknown to the authorities at Washington. Preparations upon paper had been made for assembling the militia for the defence of the Capital. For two years of the war the only fortification that stood between the sea and the capital was, as now, the fort above Mount Vernon known as Fort Washington. No works surrounded the city or protected the favorable approaches by land.

Fort Wolcott upon the Potomac and Benedict upon the Patuxent, both equi-distant from the Capital, were the two landing places naturally occupied by the British each

General Winder who for political reasons was given the command of the forces defending the Capital received his appointment on the 5th of July and for the succeeding month occupied himself riding between Baltimore and Washington and points upon the lower Potomac and Patuxent obtaining with great fatigue a personal knowledge of the Country, two important elements in a military campaign - good maps and an efficient staff being lacking - The headquarters of the Commanding General was so much in the saddle that important letters, essential to the preliminary formation of his command failed to reach him in time to be of service -

On the 18th. of August the British expedition anchored near the mouth of the Patuxent and, after being duly reported from the American Observatory at Lookout Point at the mouth of the Potomac, got underway and stood up the Patuxent river - The orders from the British War Office to Genl. Ross directed the nature of his operations to be that of a descent or raid as a "diversion on the coasts of the United States in favor of the army employed in the defence of Upper & Lower Canada". History repeats itself and we may again expect that any attack upon Canadian territory will almost invariably be answered by a naval or combined attack upon our extended coast, especially when its geographical conditions "are as striking as the shores of the Chesapeake & its tributaries

The attack upon Washington as urged by Cockburn was finally decided upon. The distance from Benedict on the Patuxent to the Capital city was about 36 miles, the distance from Port Tobacco being somewhat shorter, the roads were equally good. The distance up the Potomac to Port Tobacco was not only longer than up the Patuxent but the fleet would have to pass over the Kettle Bottom shoals which would involve at least delay. The Patuxent was clear of danger and the sand bottom insured the vessels from any injury. The Patuxent was then decided upon as the clearest and most direct way and that route stood as open to army as it did in 1814. The naval force ~~which~~ concentrated for the defence of one mid the Atlantic coast is now the only defence of the easy road to the Capital of the Republic.

Having decided upon the Patuxent route a squadron of light vessels was sent under Capt. Gordon of the Sea Horse up the Potomac as a diversion having for its objective the capture or destruction of Fort Washington below Alexandria and also to open communication with Ross' forces as it neared the Capital and cover its retreat in case of necessity. Still another force as diversion was sent to the Upper Chesapeake near Baltimore under Sir Peter Parker of the Menelaus.

The main portion of the fleet with the troops getting underway stood up the Patuxent to Benedict where the

the little army was disembarked. On the morning of the 19th. of August. The troops having been transferred to the lighter vessels as the ships of the line and larger transports took the ground on the way up; a gun brig was moored head and stern off Benedict with her broadside covering the shore, her guns loaded with grape and springs secured to her cables. The disembarkation was unopposed and conducted both with regularity and dispatch though the current ran rapidly and the vessels extended down the channel some distance below the town. By 3 P.M. the whole army was on shore and holding a strong position about two miles above the village. Had this ground been held in force with artillery by the Americans considerable damage and at least delay would have been caused. The houses and hedges could have been utilized in resisting the landing and as the wood approached the shores abundant cover was prone to any defending party. The number of the force landed consisted of 4020 infantry and marines; the artillery consisted of one six pdr & two three pdrs. Drawn by seamen from the fleet, one hundred more seamen were employed carrying ammunition & stores & there were 50 sappers & miners. There was not a single horse landed except those used to mount the General & his staff. I give details as showing what can be done by a small force based entirely upon a fleet.

During the night the army was posted upon an adjacent height two miles from the town. In front of this

was a cultivated valley intersected with orchards beyond which the pickets took their ground. The right of the position was protected by a farm house which with its enclosures & outhouses or buildings were occupied while the left rested upon the edge of the hill.

The troops remained in this position until 4 P.M. the next day (the 20th) when they proceeded to Nottingham; the boats of the fleet and the tenders of the squadron formed in three divisions under Admiral Cockburn left the same evening for the upper Patuxent keeping abreast the army as nearly as possible. The first objective of the combined Expedition – an evident of sound military instinct – was the American flotilla which had gone farther up the river.

The march of the army though slow – due somewhat to the sultry August weather – was well ordered. It must be borne in mind that it was in the main composed of men who had shared with distinction in the famous Peninsular Campaign under Wellington. For that reason I give in detail the order of the march. Unfortunately for me I omit the precautions observed by this little force entering into a short campaign in a country supposed to be occupied by an enterprising enemy were unnecessary. Not an axe or spade was used by us to delay or obstruct the march and the army moved through woods, and over a cultivated region which were as deserted as if they far distant from a populated country.

The advanced guard of three infantry companies led the way, preceded however by a detachment of 20 men

one hundred ~~twenty~~ yards in advance, still further in advance and leading the whole force was a picket squadron of four men. On a line with the advanced guard to the right and left were the flank patrols consisting of about fifty men, these patrols reaching in files to a distance of nearly half-a-mile. After the advanced guard came the 1st. brigade with parties out on both flanks, then the 2d. brigade - then the artillery and finally the 3d brigade with a rear guard placed in rear as the advanced guard was in front. It was found that the men enervated by the long stay on board ship were quite overpowered with the loads they carried as well as from the extreme heat. Each man carried besides his musket and 60 rounds of ammunition a knapsack with shoes, shirts and stockings, a blanket, a haversack with 3 days provisions & a canteen of water

Bivouacing again at night, the march was ~~again~~ taken up the next day through a heavily wooded country with much underbrush, a little firing on the right being the only evidence of an enemy as the British column entered the deserted village of Nottingham. The flotilla ~~&~~ under Barney which had been stationed opposite this place had retired still further up the Patuxent. The ~~army~~ British spent the night here; the boats under Admiral Cockburn had arrived shortly before the army, Exchanging a few shots with a party of horse men ~~on entrance~~ upon arrival. The boats & tenders were anchored off the town during the night, proceeding the next morning up the river

but as the channel was very narrow & the wind ahead the boats pushed on leaving the tenders to follow. The American flotilla was anchored off Pig Point six miles above Nottingham & on approaching this point the marines from the boats were landed on the left bank of the river, the force under Ross advancing on the right bank at the same time. The flotilla was sighted at anchor off the point, extending in single line up and down the channel, but upon a nearer approach it was found to be abandoned and on fire - the vessels blew up in succession only one being captured.

Ross advanced over good roads to Upper Marlborough remaining there until the next forenoon, being joined there by Cockburn who urged an immediate attempt upon the capital City. This being agreed upon, the marines, marine artillery men and a part of the seamen from the boats joined the army Cockburn ~~again~~ readily consenting to accompany Ross.

The marines from the ships were to occupy Upper Marlboro' until the return of the Army when the marine artillery men & the seamen re-joined the army. On the 23rd of August the British again moved forward on the road to Washington. For the first time some opposition was encountered from small parties of Americans, and a ~~small~~ force was been drawn up to oppose the march but upon a flanking movement being made by the British that force retired this being effected the British encamped near a place called Woodyard with the exception of a party which had been sent to the River to bring off provisions from the River.

On the morning of the 24th of August the column was again in motion, the march continuing at first through a heavily wooded country finally emerging into an open country and the hot August sun. A few men had been mounted on horses seized en route and served as scouts. About noon the American forces were observed by them posted upon the brow of a hill at Bladensburg the front and left flank ~~being~~ being covered by the Eastern Branch here a probable stream. The right rested upon a wood and swamp. The stream was crossed by a bridge, an extension of the main street of the village which continued up the hill merging into the road to Washington. The village at the foot of the hill though capable of considerable defence was unoccupied by our forces.

It is not necessary or pleasant to go into the details of the engagement that followed, hardly worthy of the name of a battle except to say that the party of seamen and marines with the artillery under Commodore Barney, worthy of the flotilla, did most of the fighting and inflicted a very considerable loss upon the English force exceeding upwards of 500 men being killed and wounded.

The best British account says "The skirmishes were thrown in as soon as attacked, the first line gave way without offering the slightest resistance and the left of the main body was broken within half an hour after it was seriously engaged. Of the sailors, however, it would be injustice not to speak in the terms which their conduct merits. They were employed as gunners & not only did they serve their guns with a quickness ~~& precision~~ precision which astonished their assailants but they stood till some of them were actually bayonetted, with fuses in their hands; nor was it till their leader was wounded and taken

and they saw themselves deserted on all sides by the soldiers that they quitted the field." — Kaye p. 67 —

Bladensburg was but four miles from Washington and the American forces being scattered the 3d brigade of the British — which had not been engaged pushed forward & occupied the capital.

Genl. Cullum in commenting upon this campaign says after the enemy reached upon Marlboro' Winder should have concentrated at Old fields, a strong position covering one whose base of operations from Alexandria to Bladensburg. Had he fought his battle here where he had 17 pieces of artillery + 3200 men which could have been increased to 5000 in a day his chances would have been better than at Bladensburg, in case of defeat his retreat upon Washington was as easy + he could have placed the unbroken part of the Eastern Branch between him + the enemy —

An English critic after awarding high praise to Genl. Ross states with reservation that if less delay had been shown in determining upon Washington and less haste in making the attack at Bladensburg in face of Barney's guns there would have been much less loss of life. Otherwise of the order for advance and retreat and selection of ground for camping the critic has nothing but praise.

With respect to the Americans, he says, criticism necessarily degenerates into ungalleted censure ×× In the first place they ought on no account to have risked a general action in an open country, however strong + steep + secondly they deserved to suffer much

more severely than they did subsequently for permitting an enemy's army to penetrate beyond Nottingham. In allowing us to land without opposition they were, perhaps, guilty of no great mistake; but having done so, instead of concentrating their forces in one place, they ought to have harassed us with continual skirmishing; felled trees &c &c — Closing with the statement that the Capture of Washington was more owing to the blindness of the Americans themselves than to any other cause.

The most ~~brilliant~~ creditable naval work in connection with the operations about Washington was that done ~~under the command~~ in the Potomac by the forces under Capt J. A. Gordon of the frigate Sea Horse. His forces consisted of a squadron of frigates & a number of ~~with~~ bomb ships and tenders. He entered the Potomac on the 17th of August being delayed at first by the difficulty in getting his vessel over the portion of the river known as the Kettle Bottom Shoals. In fact the Sea Horse bore the ground to such an extent upon the Bilt that her guns had to be taken out & put on board of the tenders, the then floated, her guns were replaced and the squadron stood on up the river. On the 25th the Surprise was struck by a squall off Maryland Point in which she lost her bowsprit the head of her foremast and the head of all her topmasts just as her sails were cleared up; but after only 12 hours of delay she refitted & was again underway up the river — On the 27th of August the squadron arrived off Fort Washington the only river defence of Alexandria

& Washington. On the passage up each ship had been aground not less than 20 times, each time having been obliged to haul off by main strength and for five successive days the squadron was employed in warping - with the exception of a few hours - a distance of more than 50 miles.

Arriving off the fort the bomb ships were placed in position & the bombardment began, but the garrison in the meantime through a misunderstanding of orders, abandoned the fort & destroyed the magazine. By this stupid blunder for which the commanding officer was afterwards dismissed the army the river was ~~opened~~ clear to Alexandria and the capital.

The authorities of Alexandria surrendered with great promptness under humiliating conditions. Twenty one merchant vessels were surrendered having been first restored to a seaworthy condition by the inhabitants.

Ross had evacuated Washington in the mean time, but ~~Washington~~ the capital & Georgetown not yet recovered from his attack were again in a state of panic upon hearing of Gordon's ascent up the Potomac and the surrender of Alexandria.

Reparations were again made for a defence this time under the Secretary of State - Mr. Monroe whose control led to the resignation of the Secy - of - War.

~~These preparations extended to~~ Measures were also taken to oppose the return of the British Squadron by a party of seamen from Baltimore under the command of Commodore Rodgers assisted by Captains Porter, Oliver Perry and Creighton. These preparations caused orders

to be given by Admiral Farragut to Gordon to return at once, these orders were received by Capt. Gordon through the Sloop of War Fairy and were immediately obeyed though head winds compelled him to warp down the river.

Porter and Perry were directed to establish batteries at White House Point and at Indian Head on the Potomac. White Commodore Rodgers followed in the rear of the the descending squadron with boats and fireships. Torpedoes were suggested but not constructed for the Channel way of the river.

The attempts to destroy the vessels by fireships failed as the boats of the squadron kept in rear and towed away the fireships as they came down with the current. The batteries were silenced or passed under cover of some vessels of the squadron though with some loss to the British. The ~~whole~~ manoeuvring in the descent of the river as well as in the ascent reflected great credit upon Captain Gordon. During the entire period in the way of 23 days, he stated, that the hammocks were down but two nights. No vessel of the draught of the Sea Horse had ever before passed so high up the Potomac with her stores and guns on board. The loss of the squadron amounted to seven men killed and 35 wounded. Fort Washington properly defended with a channel obstructed would have saved Alexandria.

The diversion made by Sir Peter Parker in the frigate Menelaus was less fortunate for the British. Landing a force of seamen & marines when lying at Moorbeds not far

from Chestertown, Md. - at eleven o'clock one night in the last of August, Parker started out to attack a party of American militia encamped in the woods about a mile from the beach. The Americans learning of the attack drew farther into the woods & the Englishmen deceived by the withdrawal rushed on meeting with such a heavy fire that they had to retire with a heavy loss of 14 killed including their leader Sir Peter Parker and 27 wounded - ~~This ended the Invasion of the upper Chesapeake~~.

On the 10th of September the British fleet stood up the Chesapeake towards the mouth of the Patapsco with a view to an attack upon Baltimore. As they proceeded up the bay at every lighthouse & signal station guns were fired to announce their approach. On Sunday the 11th they ~~entered~~ reached the Patapsco the whole force consisting of 50 sails of various kind and a landing force estimated to be in the vicinity of 6000 men -

Baltimore was at that time a city of 40 000 inhabitants - one fifth negroes - and was third city in population & fourth in wealth & commerce in the United States. It had been one of the principal ports for fitting out privateers as well as vessels of the Navy. Its capture was advocated in England as a future base for operations up the Susquehanna to be extended to join those proceeding South from the Canadian border -

But the fortification of the city had been underway for some time. All of those exempt from active military service and the free men of color had been constructing a long line of breastworks

with semi-circular batteries placed at regular intervals on elevated positions, with guns mounted manned ~~by~~ chiefly by men-of-war's men numbering over 1000 and commanded by Commodore Rodgers himself a Marylander. The spaces between the batteries were occupied by the militia. Fort McHenry at the entrance to the harbor was garrisoned by a force of 1000 men volunteers & regulars. To the right of the fort guarding the approaches to the city by the Ferry Branch were two redoubts manned by seamen from Barney's command. Other batteries opposite Fort McHenry and in its immediate vicinity were manned also by seamen & commanded by naval officers. At 2 Am on the 12th of Sept. the British landed from their fleet anchored 2 miles off shore, at North Point - 12 miles from Baltimore by water & 15 by land. Naval gun boats were anchored with a cable length of the beach to cover the landing & all the preparations in boats were made in case the landing was opposed - the landing boat of each division being armed with a carronade ready for action. The landing however was unopposed & by 7 Am. Genl. Ross & Admiral Cockburn were on shore with a force of about 5000 men, soldiers, seamen, marines and armed negro slaves. The men had 3 days provisions & 80 rounds of ammunition. ~~At the same time at H~~ While the disembarkation was going on a number of vessels, frigates & bomb vessels ~~tried to enter~~ endeavored with considerable difficulty (the Patapsco not being then navigable for vessels drawing more than 18 feet) to take position near Fort McHenry. At 9 PM on the 13th. however the bomb

vessels and rocket ships came to anchor near Fort M'Henry and the batteries at the entrance to the harbor the frigates taking station outside of all. The entrance was obstructed by a number of sunken vessels and defended inside by gunboats.

The force defending Baltimore was commanded by Genl. Samuel Smith, an old Revolutionary soldier and numbered about 10,000 men. After the arrival of the British fleet Genl. Smith sent a detachment under General Strieker to watch the enemy and after his landing to oppose his march. Some small detachments had been sent in advance to the mouth of Bear Creek and towards North Point

Genl. Ross marched with his forces from North Point towards Baltimore; he went to the front with a small advanced guard in company with Admiral Cockburn, while thus detached from his main command he was fired upon by a small force of Americans and mortally wounded & killed.

Col. Brooke at once assumed the command of the British and advancing in advance came in sight of the Americans at 2 Pm on the 12th. The position of the Americans was well chosen lying across a neck of land between Bear Creek & the Back River. No attempt however had been made to entrench or throw breastworks. No skirmishers were thrown out nor the cover afforded by the neighboring woods availed taken. A severe fire of infantry & artillery was opened on both sides until a regiment of the British outflanking the American left caused a stampede of the militia men. But little pursuit was

given and the Americans formed outside of the intrenchments where they were joined by reinforcements under General Winder. The British rested that night upon the battlefield. The Americans had been outnumbered somewhat but had not done so badly, considering that the force was new militia and that the portion ~~had~~ that had been under fire before had been routed at Bladensburg only two weeks before. Strikers mistake was to have attempted a pitched battle with a part only of the army without falling back for reinforcements and especially without cover. The loss was not great on either side. 319 killed & wounded on the British side, 163 killed & wounded on the American side.

The next day the British resumed their march that time finding the roads so obstructed that it was nearly dark before they came in sight of Baltimore, at the same time the long line of Earthworks was seen. Halting they awaited the result of a reconnaissance that Col. Brooke had been making during the day with the advanced guard. Finding the Earthworks stronger than he anticipated he awaited the support of the fleet, contemplating a night attack.

The bombardment by the fleet commenced on the same morning – the 13th – directed towards Fort McHenry and the various batteries in the vicinity. As the British vessels were out of range of the guns of the fort they received no damage until 3 P.M. five of them standing in close & within

range of the fort the most advanced were compelled to retire towed by the boats of the other vessels. On the night of the 13th a boat expedition was sent up the Ferry Branch, the night was dark & rainy and a number of the boats pulled into the harbor undetected & retired in time to avoid discovery; those entering Ferry Branch were compelled to ~~take~~ return by the fire of Fort ~~Covington~~ Covington and the adjacent works manned by the Navy. Owing to the failure of the naval attack which had accomplished practically nothing, and the fact that the point proposed for attack by the army was out of supporting distance from the fleet and also that the approaches had been made difficult by the rain ~~caused~~ the ~~other~~ proposed attack after consultation was given up and at 1.30 AM on the 14th of Sept. the British retired without pursuit, re-embarked on the 15th and thus ended the attempt upon Baltimore and the operations of the British ~~in~~ the Chesapeake.