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SOME JOINT OPERATIONS IN THE
CIVIL WAR IN THE UNITED STATES
(1861-1865)

HISTORICAL SECTION

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COMMENTS ON SOME OF THE
JOINT OPERATIONS OF THE
CIVIL WAR IN THE UNITED STATES.

By

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FOREWORD.

No one can consider that he is fully equipped to lecture upon any campaign or battle until he has studied everything that has been written upon it, hence I must preface my remarks with an apology for my lack of adequate preparation.

The accounts I shall present are based upon those mines of fact (and fiction):- War of the Rebellion, Official Record of the Union and Confederate Armies, and Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion.

A great deal has likewise been drawn from two Historical Presentations, made at the Naval War College in 1929-1930 - "Naval Operations on the Mississippi and Its Tributaries During the Civil War" by Committee No. 4, of which Captains Glassford and Theobald were two of the members and "Naval and Combined Operations on the Atlantic Coast" and the "Operations of the Gulf Squadron to and Including the Battle of Mobile Bay, Exclusive of Farragut's Operations in the Mississippi River" by Committee No. 3.

Also two papers prepared by the late Commander H.H. Frost, U.S. Navy entitled "Joint Army and Navy Actions in the Upper Mississippi during the Civil War", and "Joint Operations in the Civil War Along the Atlantic Seaboard".

The conclusions herein, however, are my own. Opinions expressed in the before named (and other) studies have been regarded as expert evidence to be duly weighed as all expert testimony should be.

Other publications consulted:-

Steele:-	American Campaigns.
Porter:-	Incidents of the Civil War.
Soley:-	Admiral Porter.
Alden and Earle:-	Makers of Naval Tradition.
Grant:-	Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant.
Dessez:-	Joint Operations in the American Civil War.
Speicher:-	Union Joint Operations in the Civil War (3).
Hoppin:-	Life of Admiral Foote.
Army War College:-	Committee No. 2 (1930), Combined Operations Against Fort Fisher and Wilmington, N.C.
	Committee No. 1 (1932), Joint Operations at Wilmington, N.C. in the Civil War.

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JOINT OPERATIONS

DURING

THE CIVIL WAR

As we know, the so-called "First Joint Board" convened in 1861 visualized two major objectives:

- (1) Isolating the Confederate States west of the Mississippi by means of joint army-navy operations working up from the mouth of the river and similar joint operations working downstream;
- (2) Closing every inlet on the coast through which the products of the South could reach the markets of the world and essential foreign products reach the Confederacy.

SLIDE 1. (36-614) United States in '61.

To the residents of the northern valley of the Mississippi (of whom President Lincoln was one), the importance of securing control of the Mississippi lay in reopening that channel for the exportation of their local products. Strategically, however, its real importance lay in severing the Confederacy; to deny to their armies in the East the supplies, particularly foodstuffs, raised in the West and the foreign products that could come in freely through the neutral ports of Mexico and thence across the Rio Grande to Texas.

The first suggestion for a naval force on the Mississippi (made by a civilian engineer, Mr. John Eads of St. Louis) was endorsed by Secretary of the Navy Welles to the War Department:-

"To whom the subject more properly belongs."

In accordance with a request from the War Department,

SLIDE 2. (29-1249) Commander John Rodgers, U.S.N.

Commander John Rodgers was sent to report to Major General McClellan, then in command in the West. His orders are noticably devoid of any authority to command. In effect, they assigned him as a member of McClellan's technical staff.

SLIDE 3. (29-1253) River Steamboat.

As has been the case the world over throughout the ages local peculiarities of navigational hazards had resulted in the gradual evolution of a type of vessel capable of overcoming the difficulties. Wiser than some of his successors in more recent years, Rodgers, with the approval of McClellan, contracted to purchase three of these, the TYLER (renamed the TAYLOR), LEXINGTON and CONESTOGA, instead of attempting a new design.

SLIDE 4. (29-1265) U.S.S. TAYLOR (TYLER).

They were of "good speed", of 400 to 600 tons displacement, converted from passenger steamers to gunboats by tearing off the upper works and installing a wooden rampart to protect the guns and machinery, and a battery of two to seven guns. But the

purchase of these boats caused no end of trouble. Other owners on the upper Ohio interested their local politicians and Washington was flooded with protests. Among them at least one alleged that the Army could select ships better than the Navy could!*

The Navy Department disavowed Rodgers' actions and reprimanded him severely, stating in so many words that the operations in inland waters "Pertains to the Army, not the Navy. Nor must the two branches become complicated and embarrassed by separate action or any attempt at combined movement."**

Rodgers replied briefly that McClellan had approved the purchase which made him, not Rodgers - the Army, not the Navy - responsible.

SLIDE 5. (29-1272) Building the Eads Gunboats at Carondelet.

In August, 1861, the Quartermaster General of the Army contracted with Mr. Eads for the construction of seven ironclad gunboats (familiarily known as "turtles") to be delivered 10 October. (Eads and the Quartermaster General seem to have been "Wishful Thinkers").

*Moorhead to Cameron;- R.R., Navy, Series I Vol. 22, pp. 281-282.
**Welles to Rodgers;- R.R., Navy, Series I Vol. 22, pp. 284-285.

SLIDE 6. (29-1227) The U.S.S. DE KALB.

They were 175 feet long, 50 foot beam, 6 foot draft. The hull was flat bottomed, with sides inclined at an angle of 45 degrees, projecting only one foot above the water. A wooden casemate 150 feet by 50 feet with inclined sides eight feet high having 2 1/2 inch iron plating on the forward end and abreast the engine was superimposed on this hull. They were single screw capable of making about 9 knots. Their armament consisted of 13 guns, principally 6-inch rifles. They were finally delivered on 5 December (after almost double the contract time), and with the three gunboats mentioned before and two converted ironclads,

SLIDE 7. (36- 997) The U.S.S. BENTON.

the BENTON and the ESSEX formed the backbone of the Flotilla during all of its campaigns.

SLIDE 8. (29-1249) Commander John Rodgers, U.S.N. (Repeat)

The difficulties that Commander Rodgers and the few naval officers who were, from time to time, sent to report to him, had to surmount were enormous. There was, of course, no navy yard at which to base. Ground tackle was hard to obtain. Guns and ammunition, ditto. Those furnished were of doubtful quality. In January, 1862, Captain Dahlgren, Commandant of the Washington Navy Yard called the attention of the Bureau of Ordnance to the

fact that some of the guns that had been sent to the flotilla had been previously rejected for want of strength.* The personnel situation was even more chaotic. The Navy furnished a few, the Army some, others were recruited locally. Again and again, they went for months without pay. Even the provision for their subsistence was of the hand to mouth variety and on occasions was only procured by the willingness of the officers on the spot to assume unauthorized responsibility! The policy of the Navy Department was, to put it mildly, extremely vacillating. The War Department seems to have been chary to expend money on this new stepchild of theirs, but extremely jealous of their right to command it. The command "situation", it cannot rightfully be called a "system", beggars description. Any general officer or colonel within reach of a gunboat was entitled to give it orders and in some cases gave these orders direct to a gunboat that was in company with another on which the senior naval officer present was embarked!

Historians and the country at large seem to have been very remiss in their appreciation of the magnitude and value of the work Rodgers had performed. But it must be admitted that he was lacking in one respect; he failed utterly to take his superiors into his confidence. He seems to have realized this too late,

*Dahlgren to Harwood, Chief of Bureau of Ordnance and Hydrography R.R., Navy; Series I, Vol. 22, pp. 510-511.

for upon being relieved, he wrote "I feel that I have been naturally misunderstood in not asking more advice, in not suggesting more difficulties, and not more frequently reporting progress".*

At any rate, he lost the confidence of Fremont, who in August was guilty of a most improper action, and one which increased the feeling of distrust between the two services, by writing to a Missouri politician, Montgomery Blair, "It would subserve public interest if Commander John Rodgers were removed and an officer directed to report to me to have command of the operations on the Mississippi".** But he subsequently retained Rodgers on his staff; the latter's relief commended the work he had accomplished***, the Department officially commended him**** and gave him excellent employment on the coast.

SLIDE 9. (30-157) Flag Officer Foote.

Captain A.H. Foote, who relieved Commander Rodgers on 5 September, 1861, was 55 years old. He had entered the Military Academy at West Point in 1822, but in December of the same year transferred as Acting Midshipman to the Navy, for which service he had always had a preference. He was of a studious and religious

*Rodgers to Welles;-R.R., Navy, Series I Vol. 22, pp. 318-320.

**Fremont to Blair;-R.R., Navy, Series I Vol. 22, page 297.

***Foote to Fox;-R.R., Navy, Series I Vol. 22, pp. 320-322.

****Welles to Rodgers;-R.R., Navy, Series I Vol. 22, pp. 349-350.

turn of mind, implicitly obedient as a subaltern, exceedingly zealous in all that pertained to his profession, personally courageous and willing to accept responsibility. He was somewhat jealous of his own perogatives and at the same time scrupulous in giving due praise and credit to his subordinates. He appears to have habitually weighed the risks involved in any proposed course of action and balanced the value of the results to be obtained against these with extreme care, but once convinced that the latter outweighed the former, he was fearless in leading his forces into danger. His relations with Fremont and Grant (except in the one instance when Grant forgot his promise to advise Foote before sending some of his gunboats on an expedition and thereby deprived Foote of an opportunity to take part in the action) were of the best. With Halleck he was constantly at odds, but the fault seems to have lain with Halleck.

While there was still much to be done, many difficulties to be overcome, Foote was in a much better position than Rodgers. In the first place, he was there at the suggestion (although not of the selection) of Fremont. More important, he was in a command status, not a staff officer, and his status was soon (13 November) further improved by his promotion to the rank of "Flag Officer". He had the confidence of the Assistant Secretary, Mr. Fox, with whom he corresponded informally, and he had a line open through

his friend Lieutenant Wise at Washington leading directly to the President, which on several occasions effectually short circuited the dilatory tactics of Meigs and Halleck. His close friendship with Captain Dahlgren at the Washington Navy Yard was also helpful. (It may be noted that it was not until after Foote had taken command that Dahlgren bethought himself to protest the quality of the guns furnished the Flotilla). Foote's principal difficulties were the failure of needed supplies - particularly ordnance of all kinds - to arrive as fast as the vessels were ready and the lack of personnel. The command situation was still somewhat of a hodgepodge, and we find Halleck, Grant, Foote and Walke all ordering the gunboats about, but the courtesy of Grant and Foote did much to obviate possible conflicts of authority.

SLIDE 10. (36-614) Map, United States in '61. (Repeat)

The Confederate line in the West extended from the border of West Virginia to the southern boundary of Kansas with three strong positions in the center:- Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River, Fort Henry on the Tennessee River, and Columbus, Ky. on the Mississippi River. It would seem better to have sited the two forts farther downstream, but at the time the locations were chosen Confederate Policy was still hoping that Kentucky could be kept neutral, which necessitated placing them in Tennessee.

Several minor operations down the Mississippi and up the Cumberland and Tennessee were carried out by detachments of the Flotilla from August '61 to January '62. Of these, the most important was the affair at Belmont, 10 November, where the TAYLOR and the LEXINGTON supported the attack and covered the withdrawal of the troops.

SLIDE 11. (36-1005) Map, Capture of Forts Henry and Donelson.

On 28 January, Foote* and Grant** requested authority to capture Fort Henry. On 30 January, Halleck** ordered the movement. Their plan was to move the army contingent up the river by water to a convenient point below Fort Henry, land and isolate Fort Henry from Fort Donelson, and carry Fort Henry by assault. A second force was to land on the west bank and capture the uncompleted work - Fort Heinman - on the high ground opposite Fort Henry. The ironclad gunboats CINCINNATI, ESSEX, CARONDELET and ST. LOUIS supported by the unarmored gunboats CONESTOGA, TYLER and LEXINGTON were to bombard Fort Henry commencing their bombardment at 1100. Owing to the very bad condition of the dirt roads, the army did not get up in time to assault Fort Henry, but the attack on Fort Heinman went off as planned. After a seventy-five minute

*R.R. Navy; Series I, Vol. 22, p. 524.

**R.R. Army; Series I, Vol. 7, pp. 120-121.

bombardment by the ironclads at ranges from 1700 to 600 yards during which the gunboats were repeatedly hit, the Confederates (some eighty strong) surrendered to Flag Officer Foote.

SLIDE 12. (29-1268) Gun Bursting at Fort Henry.

Before the action, the Confederate commander had sent the bulk of his force to Fort Donelson. The batteries seem to have been poorly located and the guns of poor quality. Most of the Confederate casualties appear to have been the result of the bursting of their own guns.

Fifty-nine hits were made on the four gunboats. One of these penetrated the boiler of the ESSEX, causing 28 of the 39 casualties sustained and putting the ESSEX out of action. Foote reported* that - "The armed gunboats resisted effectually the shot of the enemy when striking the casemate".

SLIDE 13. (36-1045) Capture of Forts Henry and Donelson. (Repeat)

The unarmored gunboats under Lieutenant Phelps immediately executed a very successful raid up the river as far as Muscle Shoals. The army took over the fort which they renamed Fort Foote. The ESSEX and the CINCINNATI had been so badly damaged that extensive repairs were required.

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*R.R. Navy; Series I, Vol. 22, pp. 537-539.

The capture of Fort Henry opened the Tennessee River to the Unionists and forced the Confederates to evacuate Bowling Green and Columbus.

It greatly increased the morale and the prestige of the Flotilla, but it led to the false conclusions - shared alike by civil and military officials of both sides - that the gunboats were invulnerable to artillery fire and that they could destroy land fortifications. (Another example of basing a conclusion on an insufficient premise).

Attention was now turned to Fort Donelson. While Grant's army, impeded by mud and bad weather, moved slowly overland to invest Fort Donelson, the CARONDELET moved around to the Cumberland and on 13 February shelled the fort. That evening, Foote, with the armored gunboats ST. LOUIS (F), LOUISVILLE and PITTSBURG and the wooden gunboats TYLER and CONESTOGA, escorting another army division in transports, arrived. Foote considered that his command was unprepared for the operation, but yielded to the representations of Halleck and Grant that it was an urgent military necessity.

SLIDE 14. (29-1286) The Gunboats at Fort Donelson.

On 14 February he bombarded the fort for an hour and a half, closing the range to 400 yards, but was defeated with severe loss. Two of the armored gunboats were disabled, and the other two greatly damaged between wind and water. One gun on the CARONDELET blew up. There were 59 casualties, Foote himself being wounded - the wound that eventually caused his death.

On 15 February the Confederates, with about two-thirds of their infantry, almost succeeded in breaking through the Union right but were unable to exploit their success, and a counter attack by the Union troops supported by gunfire from the LOUISVILLE and ST. LOUIS drove them back into their works.

On 16 February, the fort surrendered.

The surrender of Fort Donelson opened the Cumberland River to the navigation of Union gunboats and supply vessels and forced the evacuation of Nashville.

There is some indication that Foote felt that he had been pushed into action before he was prepared and that this feeling tinged his subsequent actions, and he seems to have been convinced that he could not engage shore batteries at close range.*

SLIDE 15. (29-1315) Mortar Boats.

*See letter, Foote to his Wife - R.R., Navy; Series I, Vol. 22, page 626.

During the latter part of 1861 the army had undertaken the provision of a number of mortar-boats - rafts each carrying a single mortar and designed to be towed to positions close to the river bank from which they could fire on their objectives. In October, Fremont turned over the responsibility for their completion and operation to Foote. Overcoming the delays and difficulties incident to getting them into commission added much to the burden Foote was already carrying. Their first employment seems to have been when six of them accompanied the CONESTOGA and the CAIRO under Foote's personal command to Clarksville, shortly after the fall of Donelson. Higher authority overruled the recommendation of Foote and Grant that they go farther, much to Foote's disgust.

SLIDE 16. (29-1222) Island No. 10 and New Madrid.

The next step in the campaign was to drive the Confederates from New Madrid and Island No. 10. General Pope moved down the West bank of the Mississippi below Madrid, which he compelled to surrender. But to cross the river he needed, not only his transports which were above the Confederate defenses, but naval support to neutralize the Confederate batteries on the east bank. Neither was immediately available to him.

During the whole of the operations against Island No. 10, there was a noticeable lack of cooperation and of mutual understanding between the military and naval commanders. McClellan, Halleck and Pope showed a total lack of understanding of the naval needs and the time involved in effecting necessary repairs. McClellan went so far as to wire General Cullum* at Cairo:-

"Ten days- to prepare boats is inadmissible; they must be ready by Monday, if you have to take charge of the affair yourself."

Pope's attitude was even more remarkable. He wired Halleck**

"As Commodore Foote is unable to reduce and unwilling to run his gunboats past it, I would ask, as they belong to the United States, that he be directed to remove his crews from two of them and turn over the boats to me."

"Strangely enough General Shafter is reported to have made a very similar proposal to Admiral Sampson at Santiago."***

Perhaps the most amusing example of military (?) self-confidence is the suggestion made by the Quartermaster General (Meigs) -

"General Meigs desires me to say to Flag-Officer Foote that he advises him to disregard all points on the river, to destroy all rebel gunboats, and push on direct to New Orleans!"

*R.R. Navy; Series I, Vol. 22, p. 622.

**R.R. Navy; Series I, Vol. 22, p. 703.

***This is stated in a paper prepared at the Army War College by the late Comdr. H.H. Frost, U.S.N. I have not verified it from original sources.

****Wise to S.N.O. Cairo, R.R. Navy, Series I, Vol. 22, p. 666.

But on the other hand, Foote, suffering from a serious wound, deeply chagrined over his recent defeat at Donelson, resentful of Halleck's refusal to allow him to move on Nashville (which he attributed to professional jealousy) and holding a grievance against the army for forcing him into action at Donelson when he was unprepared;- backed too by the opinions of Phelps, Walke and Pennock, steadfastly refused to move until he was ready and showed little inclination to even make a demonstration with those ships ready for service. Some of the reasons he offered appear to have been merely dilatory motions designed to gain time, not seriously considered reasons for not acting. Some of his communications border upon, if they do not traverse, the limits of insubordination.

SLIDE 17. (29-1269) Method of Cutting Canal.

A canal 6 miles long, 50 feet wide and 4 1/2 feet deep was cut through the peninsula north of Island No. 10. This permitted the transports to get down to Pope but not the gunboats, and they were needed to subdue the hostile batteries on the east bank.

While the canal was being cut, Foote with seven gunboats and ten mortars finally went down to Island No. 10, and for several days hammered away at the defenses without appreciable result. At Henry and Donelson the ships were working upstream, presenting their bows - their best protected and most heavily armed parts - to the enemy. If disabled, they would soon drift out of range.

Here the reverse was true;- they could not maintain position by backing against the current, nor anchor by the stern, a disabled engine meant drifting by all of the hostile batteries in succession. For this reason and because of the lesson learned at Donelson, Foote kept the range opened to about 2,000 yards. After the fruitless bombardment had lasted several days

SLIDE 18. (29-1267) Commander Walke.

Commander Walke volunteered to run the batteries in his ironclad gunboat, the CARONDELET. Foote considered the operation too dangerous but, as all other means at his disposal had proved unavailing, consented to Walke making the attempt.

The operation was carefully planned. The night before the attempt was to be made, a joint boat expedition assaulted the upper battery and spiked its guns. On 4 April, the floating battery was so vigorously bombarded that it was cut away from its moorings and drifted down stream. Thus, two powerful Confederate batteries were put out of commission.

The CARONDELET was carefully prepared. The boilers, engine and other vulnerable parts were given the added protection of planks, chains and coils of heavy rope. The escape steam was led aft through the wheel housing instead of being allowed to escape noisily through the smoke-pipe. Preparations were made to scuttle her rather than let her fall into the hands of the enemy.

A barge laden with hay was lashed abreast the magazine, the guns run in, ports closed, and the crew armed with pistol and cutlass stood by to repel boarders. Walke said she looked for all the world like a farmer's wagon on the way to market.

SLIDE 19. (29-1284) CARONDELET Running the Batteries.

With the darkness intensified by a gathering storm, the attempt was made on the night of 4-5 April. Just as the ship got abreast the ^{island} ~~gunboat~~, her presence was disclosed by the torching from the smoke-pipe. She passed the forts unharmed, whereupon, so it is said, at the suggestion of the paymaster, all hands "Spliced the Main Brace".*

General Pope then decided that he must have two gunboats, and two nights later Lieutenant Thompson in the PITTSBURG duplicated Walke's exploit and joined the CARONDELET in silencing the Confederate batteries on the east bank, while Pope's army crossed the river and cut off the retreat of the garrison. Hemmed in on all sides, Island No. 10 surrendered to Foote. It is noteworthy that there were no casualties on the Union side.

It should be remembered that Walke's exploit was undertaken some three weeks before Farragut ran the batteries below New Orleans, and at a time when prevailing naval opinion held that such a feat was impossible. He blazed the trail, but History has been strangely loathe to accord him the credit due.

*This account is mainly from the report of Committee No. 4, U.S. Naval War College dated March 1930.

SLIDE 20. (29-1256) Flag Officer Foote.

Time does not permit us to follow the fortunes of the Western Flotilla further, important, interesting and instructive though they are. Foote was relieved due to physical disability resulting from his wound and died as the direct result of that wound.

Turning now to the coast, where, as we know, one of the tasks envisioned was:-

"Closing every inlet on the Coast through which the products of the South could reach the markets of the world and essential foreign products reach the Confederacy." we find a series of Joint Operations undertaken, most of which Commander Hoogewerff has so ably described. The most interesting and probably the one containing the most food for thought was, in point of time, among the last - the attacks on Fort Fisher.

SLIDE 21. () Defenses of Cape Fear River.

The Navy Department had long urged upon the War Department, the necessity of capturing Wilmington as being the only means of effectively closing this vital avenue of communications to the Confederacy. How vital it was, may be seen from the fact that in the latter part of 1864 General Lee informed Colonel Lamb, the commanding officer of Fort Fisher, that the fort must be held at

all costs, as the closing of Wilmington would deny him supplies necessary to maintain his army.*

SLIDE 22. (29-1216) Fort Fisher.

Fort Fisher, at the mouth of the Cape Fear River, was a well constructed earthwork embodying the most advanced military engineering ideas of the time. Its walls were twenty-five feet thick, the gun emplacements were protected from enfilade fire by heavy traverses, underground shelters were provided for its gun crews and a heavy palisade of logs with subterranean torpedoes outside the works further strengthened the defense against an attack on the land side. It mounted forty-four heavy guns ranging from 6 inch to 10 inch rifles, besides mortars and a 150 pounder Armstrong gun. About half of the armament covered the land approaches and the remainder the sea area. The ammunition supply was limited; the garrison numbered about 1900.

SLIDE 23. (36-) Major General B.F. Butler.

In November 1864, Grant learned that the Confederate forces about Wilmington had been defeated, and issued verbal orders (to ensure secrecy) to organize the military component of the expedition. He selected Major General Weitzel to command, but issued his orders through Major General Butler because:-

*Report of Committee No. 1, A.W.C., 1932.

"He commanded the department in whose geographical limits Fort Fisher was situated ----- he was therefore entitled to the right of fitting out the expedition."*

But in approving Butler's orders organizing the expedition, Grant stated explicitly to Butler:-**

"The first object of the expedition under General Weitzel is to close to the enemy the port of Wilmington" and in the same letter:-

"The object of the expedition will be gained by effecting a landing on the mainland between Cape Fear River and the Atlantic, north of the entrance to the river. Should such landing be effected whilst the enemy still hold Fort Fisher and the batteries guarding the entrance to the river, then the troops should entrench themselves, and by cooperating with the Navy, effect the reduction and capture of those places."

and furthermore, one of his two criticisms of Butler's order was that too few entrenching tools were provided.

The force consisted of about 6500 infantry hand picked from the XXIV and XXV Corps, 2 batteries of artillery, a

*Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, Vol. II, page 388.

company of engineers and 50 cavalrymen. Their morale was high.

SLIDE 24. (34-24) Rear Admiral David D. Porter.

Rear Admiral David D. Porter was selected to command the naval contingent after Admiral Farragut declined the command on account of ill health. He was then 51 years old, the son of Commodore Porter of the Frigate ESSEX fame, and had served some time under his father in the Mexican Navy. He seems to have been the "Stormy Petrel" of his time and frequently at loggerheads with his seniors and contemporaries. During the Mexican War, he had a row with his squadron commander, Commodore Conner, regarding his (Porter's) beard. (It is said that Porter never shaved in his life and had his beard trimmed only twice). General W.T. Sherman seems to have been the only officer of rank with whom he operated without friction, although in the main his relations with Grant, founded on mutual respect, were of the best, and Grant, recognizing his ability overlooked Porter's one outburst against him. Farragut, who was his foster brother, knew his worth and was tolerant of his combative tendency.

But he had clashed with Butler in the West - the feud commenced there continued until both were in their graves - and there could be no real cooperation between the two. On the other hand, Porter's relations with his subordinates were always of the best,

his treatment of them inspired their best efforts and he had little difficulty in maintaining a high state of discipline and efficiency.

SLIDE 25. () U.S.S. WABASH.

His force consisted of about 60 naval vessels, including the New Ironsides, four Monitors and three of the largest steam frigates, the MINNESOTA, COLORADO and WABASH. A proposal made by Butler and approved in Washington to precede the attack by exploding a large quantity of powder in an old ship close to the walls of the fort was accepted by Porter and carried out the night of 23-24 December, but no appreciable damage done to the defenses.

SLIDE 26. (29-1216) Fort Fisher (Repeat).

The plan was for the Army to land on the ATLANTIC side of the Cape Fear Peninsula out of range of the guns of Fort Fisher. The Navy was to bombard the fort prior to the landing and preparatory to the assault. A part of the Army was to hold a line across the peninsula to cut off Confederate reinforcements from the mainland. The rest of the troops were to assault the fort when it had been sufficiently reduced by the gunfire of the ships.

At the outset, there was a total lack of coordination in regard to the date all components would be prepared to deliver the attack. Bad weather added to the delay and logistic requirements took more time.

SLIDE 27. () Bombardment of Fort Fisher, 1864.

On 24 December, the fleet bombarded the fort from 1130 to sunset, completely neutralizing the batteries but doing little material damage. On the following day, the bombardment was repeated with similar results. On this day the army landed unopposed and while a portion established a line across the peninsula to prevent interference from the rear, about 500 advanced close to the fort. General Weitzel reported to General Butler, who was present and had assumed command, that the defenses were little damaged by the naval fire and could not be taken by assault. General Butler concurred in this view and ordered the troops to reembark and the transports to return to Hampton Roads.

Admiral Porter was indignant and very outspoken in his condemnation of General Butler on whom he placed all of the blame.

General Grant was more restrained in his expression, but nevertheless, emphatic in his criticisms. In forwarding General Butler's report to the War Department*, he pointed out that he had never intended General Butler to command the expedition, having designated General Weitzel by name to command, that General Butler was "in error" in stating he returned to Hampton Roads in obedience to his (Grant's) orders; and finally with reference to statements

*R.R. Army; Series I, Vol. 42, page 970.

obtained by Grant's aide from certain of Butler's subordinates who were in the front lines in the advance against the fort, he says:-*

"General Butler, before ordering the reembarkation and return of the expedition he assumed to command, might have had within information, and it was his duty, before giving such orders, to have known the results of the reconnaissance which could have been most satisfactorily learned from those most in advance."

But most damning of all was the comment of Major General Whiting, C.S.A., commanding the district of Wilmington, who concluded his chronicle of the engagement with these words:-**

"Thus ended this extraordinary movement - extraordinary in the magnitude of the preparation, the formidable character of the fleet, the severity of the fire, and the feebleness of the enemy's effort on land."

*R.R. Army; Series I, Vol. 42, page 977.

**Idem, page 996.

On 26 December, Porter reported to the Navy Department:-*

"Until further orders, I shall go on hammering away at the Forts."

and on 30 December, Grant wrote Proter:-**

"Please hold on where you are for a few days longer and I will endeavor to be back again with an increased force and without the former commander."

SLIDE 28. () Major General Terry.

He selected Major General Terry - who had participated in the Port Royal Expedition, the taking of Fort Pulaski and the operations against Charleston - to command and assigned the same troops Butler had misdirected plus another picked infantry brigade (1400 strong). In his orders to Terry*** he plainly told him that once ashore he would not abandon the seige until the fort was captured or he (Grant) ordered the adoption of a different plan. Even if he failed to get ashore, he was distinctly forbidden to slink back to Hampton Roads and told to keep his troops on board their transports at Beaufort.

*R.R. Navy; Series I, Vol. II, page 259.

**Idem, page 394.

***Idem, page 404.

He was, in effect, placed under Admiral Porter's command, for while phrased as "suggestions" the following clauses coming from the lieutenant general commanding the armies could hardly be construed otherwise than as orders:-

"I suggest.....get from him (Porter) the part to be performed by each branch....."

".....defer to him as much as is consistent with your own responsibilities."

SLIDE 28. (29-1214) Map Attack on Fort Fisher, 1865.

The plan was similar to that for the first attack but modified in several important particulars.

a. The Navy was to destroy by gunfire, the palisades on the western face of the fort..

b. The bombardment was to continue up to the time of the assault and longer if it did not endanger the assaulting columns. (Provision was made for signals from shore to ship to control the fire).

c. A landing party of about 2000 sailors and marines was to assault from the northeast (sea side) while the army assaulted from the northwest (river side).

SLIDE 29. (29-1215) Bombardment of Fort Fisher.

On 13 and 14 January, the troops, artillery and supplies were landed without opposition and entrenchments to protect the rear thrown up.

The bombardment commenced on the 14th and was continued throughout the night and on the 15th until the fort was captured. The fire was very effective (Porter had issued a special order directing all commanding officers to refrain from wasting their ammunition firing at the flagstaff - as they had in the first attack - and to direct their fire at the hostile guns).

The assault was made on the afternoon of the 15th.

SLIDE 30. () Sailors assaulting Fort Fisher.

The Naval Landing Force was poorly organized; the sailors armed only with cutlasses were expected to carry the fort "by boarding on the run", while the marines kept the defenders down by musket fire. Unfortunately, at the crucial moment the marines were ordered to change position. The sailors swept forward unsupported and lost heavily in their unsuccessful efforts. However, Colonel Lamb, believing this to be the main effort, concentrated his force to oppose it, with the result that the army column reached the works practically unopposed. The fighting was severe inside the fort but by nightfall the Union forces were in possession

This operation is an outstanding example of excellent cooperation between all ranks of the Army and Navy. This cooperation was founded on the mutual admiration and understanding existing between Grant and Porter.

We may well close on this note of harmony!

Ithankyou.