

John W. Kennington, Jr., *Gray Jackets in Savannah The Enlisted Sailor of the Confederate States Navy on the Savannah River 1861 - 1864*, (Under the Direction of Dr. Lawrence E. Babits) Department of History, East Carolina University, April, 1994.

The story of the men who operated, maintained, and defended the ships of the Confederate States Navy has been set aside by many naval historians in favor of ship construction and naval ordnance. By ignoring enlisted men of the navy we sell our history short. These men were no less important than the officers who commanded them. Without the enlisted man, the navy could not exist.

This study examines the history and development of the ordinary sailor of the Confederate States Navy on the Savannah River. These men provided close support for military operations in Savannah and the surrounding areas, naval operations in the Savannah River and coastal Georgia, sentry duties in small boats, and supplemented the land forces in defense of the city. They chose a way of life that was, at the same time, both easier and more difficult than their army brethren's; easier in that they were not under the constant pressure of combat, more difficult in that the conditions aboard armor clad ships were appalling.

Primary documentation on the life of the common sailor of the mid-nineteenth century is scarce at best, but the Savannah River Squadron has more surviving primary documentation than any other Confederate Naval Squadron.

The pay rolls, muster sheets, clothing records and provisions are all conducive to examination. Such questions as: What uniforms were issued? What did they look like? What color was the uniform? How did each vessel provide for each sailor in terms of food and sundry items? How old was the average sailor? Where did he come from? How much did he get paid? These questions can be answered, or at least investigated through analysis of existing records.

This study is arranged topically and deals in turn with the major problems facing the sailors every day: pay, clothing, food, work, shelter, battle, and boredom. An introductory chapter about the history of the Savannah Squadron is included to provide the reader with a background of the naval war around Savannah.

Logically, Savannah, and the other harbor cities, would be the major provider of men for the sea services. But when we look deeper, we find that the majority of the men did not come from this seafaring community. Instead, they were from the fields and farms of the deep South or immigrants new to America. Whether they were rebels or heroes does not matter. What does matter is that they served their country to the end.

Whether drilling at broadside guns or coaling the ship, the

sailors worked in tedious, boring atmosphere. Unlike their brothers in the field, these men rarely saw the enemy and, when they did, barely came within combat range. Well fed, inadequately paid, partially clothed, it is a wonder that they performed at all; yet, when they were called to duty, they performed as seamen of the highest caliber. It does not matter if it was night patrols along the obstructions, or cutting out a enemy ship of war, it was still as dangerous as standing picket in a forest or assaulting the breast works of a well entrenched army.

Throughout the four years of the war, the Savannah Squadron moved from crisis point to crisis point, meeting each with determination to overcome. The men, for the most part, served with honor and pride. Some of them, in fact, were captured at Sayler's Creek on 6 April 1865; the final battle of the war in the Eastern Theater.

Gray Jackets in Savannah
The Enlisted Sailor of the Confederate States Navy
on the Savannah River
1861 - 1864

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department History
East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Maritime History and Nautical Archaeology

by
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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my father, John William Kennington, Sr., who taught me that we can do anything we want, if only we persevere. It is also dedicated to all living historians who strive to bring history alive for us all.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Drs. William N. Still, Jr., Donald Parkerson, and Anthony Papalas, and Mr. Robert Holcombe for reading and their critical analysis of this thesis. He would most especially like to thank Dr. Lawrence E. Babits for his direction and guidance during the writing of this thesis. He also wishes to extend deepest gratitude to Jacqui Belcher, Dr. Janet Stone, Jeff Johnston, and all of those who aided me in my research with their help, encouragement, and kindness. Special gratitude is extended to my wife, Paddy, who kept after me to complete this work and move on to other things.

Table of Contents

Page Number

Abstract

Table of Contents vi

List of Figures viii

List of Tables x

Chapter 1

Introduction 1

Ship Construction in Savannah 1862 -1864 2

Operations 1861 - 1862 10

Operations 1863 - 1864 25

The Beginning of the End 46

Chapter 2

Recruitment 56

Where They Came From 69

Chapter 3

Clothing 79

 Clothing Issue 82

 What they were supposed to look like. 83

 What they really looked like. 94

Rank 99

Economic Matters

 Pay 101

 Provisions And Stores 108

Chapter 4

Arms And Equipment 114

Long Arms 114

Edged Weapons 117

Pole Arms 121

Hand Guns 123

Accoutrements 125

Chapter 5

Introduction 131

Reception 131

Daily Duties 134

Table of Contents, continued . . .

	Page Number
Chapter 5, continued . . .	
The Mess	144
The Watch	147
Work	149
Picket Duty	151
Additional Duties	153
Regulations	156
Chapter 6	
Introduction	160
The Divisions	160
Master's Division	161
Engineer's Division	163
Powder Division	163
Surgeon's Division	165
Gun Division	165
Training and General Quarters	166
Providing a Broadside Gun	168
Boarding	175
Chapter 7	
Conclusions	178
Bibliography	181
Appendix <i>Location Map of Naval Facilities in Savannah 1861-1864.</i>	A

List of Figures

	Page Number
Chapter 1	
Figure 1-1. C.S.S. <i>Georgia</i>	3
Figure 1-2. C.S.S. <i>Atlanta</i>	5
Figure 1-3. C.S.S. <i>Ram Savannah</i>	7
Figure 1-4. Henry Willink	9
Figure 1-5. Josiah Tattnall	12
Figure 1-6. <i>Savannah River and Wassaw Sound, A.D.</i> Bache and B. Pierce.	20
Figure 1-7. Brig. Gen. Quincy A. Gillmore	22
Figure 1-8. Commander Richard L. Page, C.S.N.	33
Figure 1-9. Captain William A. Webb, C.S.N.	34
Figure 1-10. Captain John Rodgers, U.S.N.	36
Chapter 2	
Figure 2-1. Stephen R. Mallory	56
Figure 2-2. C.S. Navy Department Bounty Paid at Charleston, S.C., 30 September 1862.	67
Chapter 3	
Figure 3-1. C.S. Navy Enlisted Rating Badge	83
Figure 3-2. U.S. Navy Pattern Round Jacket	84
Figure 3-3. C.S. Navy Pattern Jumper	87
Figure 3-4. U.S. and C.S. Issue Trousers	89
Figure 3-5. Confederate Round Hat	90
Figure 3-6. Harrington Plate showing Confederate naval prisoner at Fort Norfolk	92
Figure 3-7. Confederate Seamen	97
Figure 3-8. Matthew Pielert	96
Figure 3-9. Account for John Dorsett, O.S. showing his debt to the Confederate Government at the time of his Death.	105
Figure 3-10. Receipt of Funeral Expenses for Moses Dallas.	107
Chapter 4	
Figure 4-1. Wilson Breech Loading Rifle	115
Figure 4-2. Maynard Pattern Rifle	116
Figure 4-3. Enfield Rifle and Bayonets	117
Figure 4-4. Cook and Brother Pattern Cutlass	118
Figure 4-5. Confederate Armory Pattern Cutlass	119
Figure 4-6. Artillery Pattern Naval Cutlass	120
Figure 4-7. Courtney and Tennant Pattern Cutlass	121
Figure 4-8. Griswold and Gunnison's Colt Pattern Revolver	124
Figure 4-9. LeMat Pattern Revolver	125
Figure 4-10. Leather Accoutrements of U.S. Pattern	127

List of Figures, continued . . .

	Page Number
Figure 4-11. Holsters	129
Chapter 6	
Figure 6-1. 6.4 inch Brooke Rifle of the type on which Robert Watson trained	169
Figure 6-2. Gun positions for a 17 man crew on a 6.4 inch broadside gun	170

List of Tables

	Page Number
Chapter 2	
Table 2-1: Frequencies of Age and Birth Among Landsman Recruits	72
Table 2-2: Frequencies of Age and Birth Among Ordinary Seaman Recruits.	73
Table 2-3: Frequencies of Age and Birth Among Seaman Recruits.	75
Table 2-4: Breakdown of Officers and Crew from the vessels of the Savannah River Squadron, 31 August 1864.	77
Chapter 3	
Table 3-1: Issuing Prices of Navy Clothing, 30 April 1863.	85
Table 3-2: Relative Rank Structure of Enlisted Petty Officers, and Seamen, C. S. Navy, 1862.	86
Table 3-3: Pay Scale for Enlisted Personnel.	102
Table 3-4: Ration Table for Enlisted Personnel, C. S. Navy. 1862.	109
Table 3-5: Rations Issued to the Savannah River Squadron 1861 - 1865.	112
Chapter 5	
Table 5-1: Watch Bill for Forecastle and Foretop in a 100 Man Vessel.	149
Chapter 6	
Table 6-1: Quarter Bill for a deck gun with boarding assignments and arms distribution.	171

Preface

Information on the common sailor is scarce at best. Information on the common Confederate sailor is almost non-existent. Dr. William N. Still's article in *Civil War Times Illustrated*, "The Common Sailor, Part II" (April 1985), is the latest attempt to address the question of the life of the common sailor in the civil war era; however, Dr. Still's article dwells more on the men of the commerce raiders than on the river sailor.

Primary documentation about the enlisted sailor in Savannah, or from any squadron, is limited to a few diaries and what can be inferred from officer's letters and government publications. Only one enlisted diary documenting the life of a Savannah Squadron sailor was located. The Thomas Watson Diary, in the collections of the Coastal Heritage Society, Savannah, Georgia, provided valuable insight into the dichotomy between officer's letters and enlisted experience. Officer's diaries, such as Edward C. Anderson's Journal at the Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia; the W. W. Hunter Papers in the Tulane University Special Collections, Baton Rouge, Louisiana; the Charles C. Jones Collection, University of Georgia Library, Athens, Georgia; the Dabney Scales Diary in the Collections of the Coastal Heritage Society; the William W. Webb Letterbook, from the National Archives in record group 45; and Beverly E. Wilson's "Willie Wilson's

War 1861 - 1865 An Account of Some of the Civil War Experiences of Midshipman W. F. Wilson, C. S. Navy," Calhoun Genealogical Society of Lavaca, Texas, give a biased account of the enlisted man's life; but, at the same time, give invaluable information on the daily routine on board of a Confederate vessel of war. Other sources of daily life came from the government publications *Ordnance Instructions for the Confederate States Navy Relating to Preparation of Vessels of War for Battle, to the Duties of Officers and Others when at Quarters, to Ordnance and Ordnance Stores, and to Gunnery*, London: Saunders, Otley & Co. 1864; *Naval Ordnance and Gunnery. The Equipment and Maneuver of Boats and Exercise of Boat Howitzers*, Washington, D. C.: Navy Department, 1860; and *Regulations for the Interior Police of the C. S. Schoolship Patrick Henry*, Richmond: Navy Department, 1861. Some additional information came from the Stephen R. Mallory Diaries located in the Southern Historical Collection at the University of Chapel Hill.

As far as can be determined, there has been no quantitative study about Confederate seamen. The pay rolls, muster sheets, clothing records and provisions produced minimal information on the vital statistics of the Savannah sailors but did provide needed information on clothing and provisions. Primary documentation relating to clothing and food came exclusively from the Record Group 45 of the

National Archives available as Microcopy 1091, rolls 18, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, and subject files PI, BH, OL, XO, and NI. Other primary sources came from the government publications *Regulations for the Army of the Confederate States, 1863*, Richmond, Va.: J. W. Randolph, 1863; *Uniform and Dress of the Army and Navy of the Confederate States*, Richmond: Chas. A. Wynne, 1862; and *Regulations for the Navy of the Confederate States 1862*, Richmond: MacFarlane and Fergusson, 1862.

Additional information on clothing came from the examination of sources in Peter Herrington's "Confederate 'Prisoners' at Fort Norfolk, 1864: Five Contemporary Sketches," in *Military Collector and Historian*, Volume 42, No. 2, Summer, 1990; and Nelson Lankford's, *An Irishman in Dixie Thomas Conolly's Diary of the Fall of the Confederacy*, Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1988.

Secondary sources were by far the most informative. Many letters, diaries, and after-action reports provided glimpses into the history and daily life of the common Savannah seaman. Much information about daily life and shipboard routine came from Edward Barrett's *Advice for Executive Officers, Masters, and Master's Mates with Gunnery Instructions*, Washington, D.C.: U. S. Navy, 1861. Although a federal publication, the information was repeated verbatim in the Confederate Naval Ordnance Manual of 1862. Other

information about equipment came from *Ordnance Instructions for the Confederate States Navy Relating to Preparation of Vessels of War for Battle, to the Duties of Officers and Others when at Quarters, to Ordnance and Ordnance Stores, and to Gunnery*, London: Saunders, Otley & Co. 1864; George S. Knight's "Confederate States Naval Gunner's Pouch Rarest of the Rare," in *Military Collector and Historian*, volume 31, number 1, Spring 1979; George T. Sinclair to Stephen R. Mallory, a letter dated 16 January 1863 in the Charles Perry Collection, Charleston, S. C.; Edward S. Franzosa, "Catalog of Uniforms," in *Camp Chase Gazette*, volume XVI, no. 1, October 1988; and Stephen E. Osman's "Federal Issue Shirt," in *Camp Chase Gazette*, volume XVI, no. 3, Jan-Feb 1989.

Historical sources included Samuel T. Browne, "First Cruise of the Montauk", in *Papers of the Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society of Rhode Island*, Providence, R. I.: The Society, 1879; *Daily Morning News* of Savannah, *Republican* of Savannah, the *Savannah News Press*, and the *Georgia Gazette*. After action reports concerning the Savannah Squadron included Quincy A. Gilmore, *Siege and Reduction of Fort Pulaski*, New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1862; Charles C. Jones, Jr., *The Siege and Evacuation of Savannah Georgia in December 1864*, Augusta, Georgia: Chronicle Publishing Company, 1890; *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, C. C. Marsh,

ed., Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1922; *The War of the Rebellion A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880; and the John Kell McIntosh Papers at Perkins Library of Duke University. Secondary squadron history sources that included contemporary letters and diaries from Edward Harleston's to "Dear Mother," in the Edward Harleston Edwards Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina; Richard Harwell's *A Confederate Marine: A Sketch of Henry Lea Graves With Excerpts from the Graves Family Correspondence, 1861 - 1865*, Tuscaloosa, Al.: Confederate Publishing Co., 1963; Susan Kollock's "Kollock Letters," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, volume XXXIV. September 1950; and George A. Mercer's Diary (No. 1) in the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina.

Tertiary sources contained descriptions of equipment and that provide additional background information, proved valuable for a complete understanding of the sailor's life. By far the most valuable tertiary source was Frederick P. Todd, *American Military Equipage 1851 - 1872*, volume III, Westbrook, Ct.: Company of Military Historians, 1978. Additional sources providing information on equipment included William A. Albaugh's *Confederate Edged Weapons*, New

York: Bonanza Books, 1960; *Confederate Arms*, Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Company, 1960; and, with Hugh Benet, Jr. and Edward N. Simmons, *Confederate Handguns Concerning the guns the men who made them and the times of their use*, York, Pa.: George Shumway, 1967. Rodney H. Brown's *American Polearms 1526-1865. The Lance, Halberd, Spontoon, Pike, and Naval Boarding Weapons*, New Milford, Ct.: N. Flayderman & Co., 1967; Jack Coggins, *Arms and Equipment of the Civil War*, New York: Fairfax Press, 1962; Richard D. Goff, *Confederate Supply*, Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1969; Milton F. Perry, *Infernal Machines The Story of Confederate Submarine and Mine Warfare*, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1965; Colonel Robert H. Rankin, *Small Arms of the Sea Services*, New Milford, Ct.: N. Flayderman & Co., 1972; J. Thomas Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy from its Organization to the Surrender of its Last Vessel*, New York: The Fairfax Press, 1977; and T. H. Wells, *The Confederate Navy A Study in Organization*, University, Al.: University of Alabama Press, 1971.

Sources that provided additional historical, formation, and organization information included T. H. Wells, *The Confederate Navy A Study in Organization*, University, Al.: University of Alabama Press, 1971; Munroe d'Antignac, *Georgia's Navy 1861*, Griffin, Ga.: The Coen Printing Co.,

1945; John S. Bowman, *The Civil War Almanac*, New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1982; James D. Bulloch, *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*, London, 1883; Coastal Heritage Society, "History of Fort James Jackson," Savannah, Ga.: Coastal Heritage Society, n.d.; Mark Coburn, *Terrible Innocence General Sherman at War*, New York: Hippocrene Books, 1993; Burke Davis, *The Civil War: Strange & Fascinating Facts*, New York: The Fairfax Press, 1982; William C. Davis, ed., *The South Besieged Volume Five of The Image of War 1861 - 1865*, Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1983; Ralph Donnelly, *The Confederate States Marine Corps: The Rebel Leathernecks*, Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Publishing Company, 1989; and "Personnel of the Confederate Navy," in *Civil War Times Illustrated*, volume 13, number 9, 26-35; Joseph Durkin, *Confederate Navy Chief Stephen R. Mallory*, Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1954; Patricia A. Faust, ed., *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1986; Joseph A. Gutierrez, Jr., *Confederate Naval Ordnance, 1861 - 1865*, M. A. Thesis, Greenville, N. C.: East Carolina University, 1977; John de Courcy Ireland, "The Confederate States at sea in the American Civil War: The Irish Contribution," in *Irish Sword*, volume XIV, no. 54; Charles C. Jones, Jr., *The Life and Services of Commodore Josiah Tattnall*, Savannah, Ga.:

Morning News Steam Printing House, 1878; Philip Katcher, "Sailors in Gray," in *Campaigns*, April 1983. Alexander A. Lawrence, *A Present for Mr. Lincoln The Story of Savannah from Secession to Sherman*, Macon, Ga.: The Ardican Press, 1961; Samuel J. Lawson, III, *Confederate Naval Facilities in Georgia*. M.A. Thesis, Carrolton, Ga.: Department of History West Georgia College, 1978; John M. Kell, *Recollections of a Naval Life*. Washington, D. C., 1900; Richard McMurry, "On the Road to the Sea Sherman's Savannah Campaign," in *Civil War Times Illustrated*, January 1983, 8-25; Clarence L. Mohr, *On the Threshold of Freedom Masters and Slaves in Civil War Georgia*, Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1986; Charles Nordhoff, "Two Weeks at Port Royal," in *Harpers New Monthly Magazine*, volume XXVII, July 1883; David D. Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War*, Secaucus, N. J.: Castle, Inc., 1984; William H. Russell, "Recollections of the Civil War," in *North American Review*, volume CLXVI, March 1898; Donald G. Shomette, "Shipwrecks of the Civil War," in *Encyclopedia of Union and Confederate Naval Losses*, Washington, D. C.: Donic, Ltd, 1973; William N Still, Jr., *Savannah Squadron*, Savannah, Ga.: Coastal Heritage Press, 1989; *Iron Afloat The Story of the Confederate Armorclads*, Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1985; James H. Tomb, "The Last Obstructions in Charleston Harbor, 1863," in *Confederate Veteran*, volume

XXXII, 1924; and U. S. Navy Department, *Civil War Naval Chronology 1861 -1865*, Edited by Edwin B. Hooper, Washington, D.C.: U. S. Navy Department, 1971.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The City of Savannah rests on high bluffs overlooking surrounding marshes eighteen miles above the mouth of the Savannah River. James Edward Oglethorpe, an English humanitarian, founded Georgia in 1733 as Britain's thirteenth colony. There were several reasons for founding a colony so close to South Carolina. The major justification was to create a military buffer between the English colonies to the north and Spanish colonies further south. The city established on those bluffs remained the most important settlement in Georgia for 150 years.

The safe harbor became a center for merchants, manufacturers, seafarers, international traders, and railroads. In every war, men from the city marched off to defend their property. It began with the Spanish in 1740, continued with the American Revolution, the Seminole Wars, the Creek Wars, the Mexican War, and, finally, the American Civil War.

Savannah, best known for exports of cotton and naval stores (especially lumber), by 1860, had a population of 25,000 inhabitants. This quiet, deeply southern city, known for inaugurating the "age of steam," still relied on wind driven commerce. Savannah also had its ties to the interiors of Georgia and South Carolina. The harbor town boasted five railroads connecting the city to Columbia,

Charleston, Atlanta via Macon, Augusta, Brunswick, and Jacksonville via Waycross. Savannah, as an important rail center, saw a rapid period of growth with the coming of hostilities.¹

Ship Construction in Savannah 1862 -1864

Construction of ironclad warships began in Savannah following the Battle of Hampton Roads on 8 March 1862. The first ironclad constructed in Savannah was the C.S.S. *Georgia*. The *Georgia* is unique in that it was a joint venture of women's organizations, businessmen, the state, and the city. The *Georgia Ladies Gunboat Association* met on 11 March 1862 to begin raising funds for the construction of an ironclad warship. The first plan called for a gunboat ram, but the association later agreed that a floating battery would be more practical.² Major General Henry R.

¹ Charles C. Jones, Sr. to Charles C. Jones Jr., 28 September 1880, Charles C. Jones Collection, University of Georgia Library, Athens, Ga.; and William Howard Russell, "Recollections of the Civil War," In *North American Review*, CLXVI, (March, 1898), 369; and C. C. Jones, *Siege And Evacuation of Savannah Georgia in December 1864*, (Augusta, Ga.: Chronicle Publishing Co., 1890), p 10; and William N. Still, Jr., *Savannah Squadron*, (Savannah, Ga.: Coastal Heritage Press, 1989), p 1, 2, 3. Hereinafter cited as *Still, Squadron*.

² Mrs. E. F. Neufville to G. J. Kollock, 2 September 1862, in Kollock Papers, *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, XXXIV, (September 1950), 242; and Charles Nordhoff, "Two Weeks at Port Royal," in *Harpers New Monthly Magazine*, XXVII, (July 1863), 116; and William N. Still, Jr., *Iron Afloat The Story of the Confederate Armorclads*, (Columbia, (continued...))

Jackson, C. S. A., agreed to supervise construction of the vessel and laid the keel in March 1862, near Miller's Foundry.

By 1 April 1862, there were approximately 200 men working on the vessel and, at 12:30 p.m. on 19 May 1862, the City of Savannah

launched its first ironclad warship and christened it

the C.S.S. *Georgia* (Figure 1-1).³ The actual dimensions of the vessel vary with each source. Most estimations place it between 150 and 250 feet in length and 50 to 60 feet in

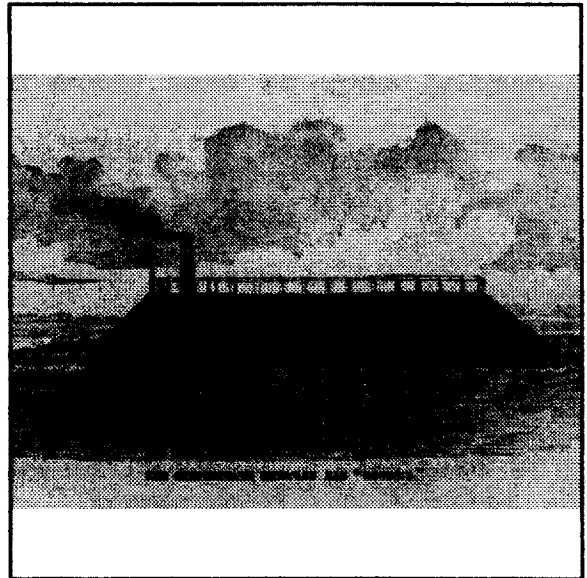


Figure 1-1. C.S.S. *Georgia*. (Harpers Weekly, 1863)

²(...continued)

S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1985), 87. Hereinafter cited as Still, *Iron Afloat*; and George A. Mercer Diary, 15 March 1862, 20 May 1862, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

³ Beverly E. Wilson, ed., "Willie Wilson's War 1861-1865 An Account of Some of the Civil War Experiences of Midshipman W. F. Wilson, C.S. Navy," in *Karankawa Country*, (Lavaca, Tx.: Calhoun Genealogical Society, 1984), Vol. VI, Nos. 3, 4, 19 May 1862. Hereinafter cited as Wilson, "Wilson's War."

beam.⁴ Initially armed with ten guns, eight in broadside with a pivot gun in the bow and stern, and equipped with a steam engine for propulsion, the people of Savannah expected the *Georgia* to be as invincible as the C.S.S. *Virginia*.⁵

As a warship, the *Georgia* was a failure. The drastically underpowered craft required tugs to move. The vessel leaked so badly that the pumps had to be kept running continuously for fear of sinking. The *Georgia*, because of the problems of propulsion, received such sobriquets as the "mud tub" and the "splendid failure" by local citizens.⁶ To the north she was a "monstrous creature" they feared.⁷

She proved more successful as a deterrent than as an actual combat vessel. Barely a day after the ship's

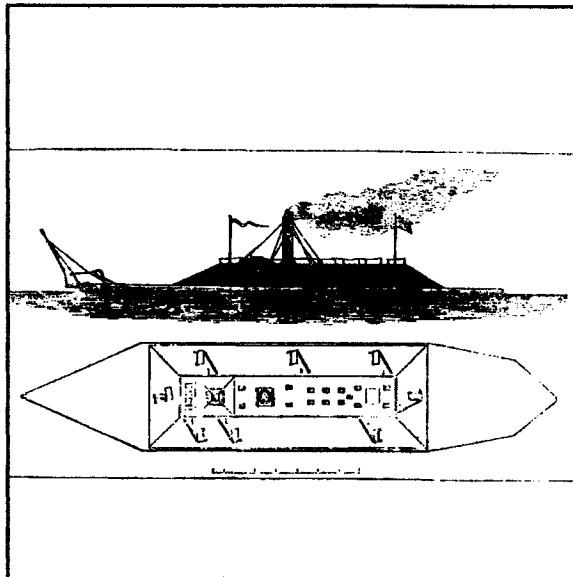
⁴ Donald G. Shomette, "Shipwrecks of the Civil War," in *The Encyclopedia of Union and Confederate Naval Losses*, Washington, D. C.: Donic, Ltd., 282; and William N. Still, Jr., *Iron Afloat*, 187; and U. S. Navy Department, *Dictionary of Fighting Ships*, Volume II, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office; and H. G. Turner to James O. Morton, 3 June 1862, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C. and Maurice Melton, *Confederate Ironclads*, (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1968), 178; and R. W. Scott to Rear Admiral Samuel Du Pont, 21 October 1862, U. S. National Archives, Microcopy 625, Roll 206, Washington, D. C.: National Archives.

⁵ George A. Mercer Diary, 20 May 1862, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; *Daily Morning News*, (Savannah), 20 May 1862.

⁶ Samuel J. Lawson, *Mud Tub: The Story of the Confederate Floating Battery Georgia*, (Unpublished Manuscript, 1978), 17.

⁷ Charles A. Nordhoff, "Two Weeks at Port Royal," *Harpers New Monthly Magazine*, XXVII (June 1863), 116.

launching, observers noted a balloon above Federal-held Fort Pulaski trying to gain information on the new vessel.⁸ The *Georgia* spent the war as a floating battery protecting the approaches to the city at the western tip of Elba Island. Here the vessel was



anchored to the obstructions so that she could warp into either the north or south channel of the Savannah River. For this reason Confederate Engineers built mooring cribs above the obstructions.

Figure 1-2. C.S.S. *Atlanta*. (Scharf, *History*, 632).

At the same time the *Georgia* was under construction, the Confederates were converting the *Fingal* into the *Atlanta* (Figure 1-2). The *Fingal* was turned over to Nelson and Asa Tift, constructors of the C. S. S. *Mississippi*. The Tifts cut down the vessel's bulwarks, added a heavy deck three feet thick over the original decking, and erected a casemate of heavy timber, plated with rail road iron, with the sides

⁸ Wilson, "Wilson's War," 20 May 1862.

inclining at 30 degrees.⁹ The ship, as completed, was 204 feet in length, 41 feet in the beam, with a varying draft of 15 to 17 feet. Her English machinery was relatively new and considered the best in any Confederate ironclad. The addition of her armor and armament reduced her speed of twelve miles per hour to six or seven. Armed with two 7-inch and two 6.4-inch Brooke rifles, a spar torpedo, and a ram, the *Atlanta* was a most formidable craft.¹⁰

Although a forbidding warship, the *Atlanta* had problems similar to the *Georgia*. The freeboard was such that, when fully coaled, water leaked in so rapidly that the wardroom and berth decks were under nearly a foot of water as increased draft allowed water into the vessel at an alarming rate. Other problems persisted. Dabney Scales, a midshipman assigned to the *Atlanta*, recorded in his diary

⁹ J. Thomas Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy from its Organization to the Surrender of its Last Vessel*, (New York: Fairfax Press, 1977), 641. Hereinafter referred to as Scharf, *History*.

¹⁰ Thomas B. Travers to Richard L. Page, 12 May 1863, Armaments of the C. S. S. *Atlanta*, C. C. Marsh, ed. *The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922) Series I, Volume 11, 248; hereinafter referred to as "ORN, Series Number, Volume Number, Pages;" and Report of Rear Admiral Samuel Du Pont, 25 June 1863, ORN, I, 14, 272 to 276.

that:

The officers quarters are the most uncomfortable that I have ever seen. They are so dark as to require lights to be kept burning continually, and there are no staterooms in either cabin, wardroom, or steerage.¹¹

Problems or not, Samuel Du Pont had a healthy respect for the *Atlanta*. In a letter to his wife he wrote "The *Fingal* I think is likely to be formidable." So impressed was he with the *Atlanta* that he decided to send the first of his Passaic class monitors to Savannah.

Henry Willink built the final ironclad completed in Savannah. The C. S. S. ram *Savannah*, not to be confused with the steamer *Savannah*, made its maiden voyage on 4 February 1863 (Figure 1-3).¹² The *Savannah*, menacing in her own right, was unusual in that she was a Richmond class

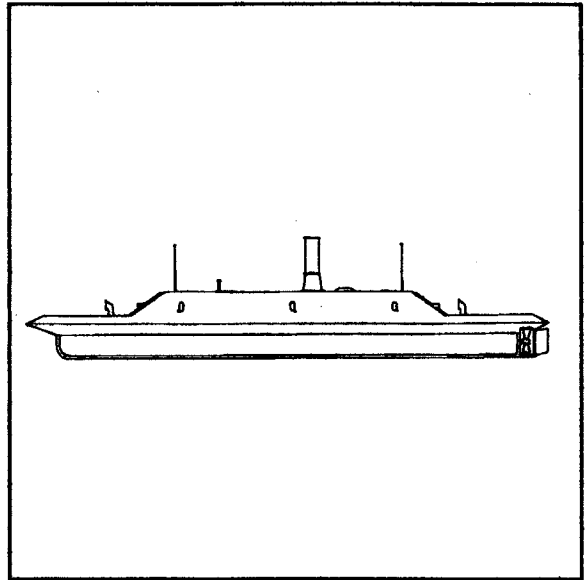


Figure 1-3. C. S. S. Ram *Savannah*. Artist conception from original plans. (Jeff Johnston, 1993).

¹¹ Dabney Scales, Diary, 3 December 1862, (Copy in the Collections of the Coastal Heritage Society). Hereinafter cited as Scales, Diary.

¹² The steamer *Savannah* was renamed the *Oconee*.

ironclad and all of the material in her came from Georgia. Scofield & Markham's foundry of Atlanta rolled her plating. Her boilers and engine came from the Columbus Naval Iron Works of Columbus, Georgia. She was 150 feet long with a 34 foot beam and drew approximately 13 feet of water. Her flat bottom and shallow draft made her an excellent river craft. Willink learned from the mistakes in the *Georgia* and the *Atlanta* and he determined not to repeat them in the *Savannah*. She had flag officer quarters, four ventilators, and he placed her pilot house behind the smoke stack. Her armament consisted of four Brooke rifles (considered the best constructed in the war), a spar torpedo, and an iron ram.¹³

Savannah tried to construct two other ironclads but never finished them. The C. S. S. *Milledgeville*, almost completed and awaiting armor, and an unnamed ram were destroyed when Savannah was evacuated in December 1864. The *Milledgeville* was the sister-ship of the ram *Savannah* and had much the same proportions. The navy contracted for two other rams but they were never completed.¹⁴

¹³ William W. Hunter to Major General J. F. Gilmer, C. S. A., 12 January 1864, ORN, I, 15, 702, 703.

¹⁴ E. H. Edwards to "Dear Mother," 17 March 1862, Edward Harleston Edwards Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S. C.; and George H. Blount, "Reminiscences," *Morning News* (Savannah), 25
(continued...)

Ironclads were not the only vessels built by the Confederate Navy in

Savannah. In November 1861, Henry Willink signed a contract for two gunboats at the cost of \$36,000 each (Figure 1-4). The contract called for vessels of 150 foot length, 25 foot beam, with a battery of six guns. In July 1863 Willink launched the first gunboat, the *Macon*. Delays in construction, due to lack of



Figure 1-4. Henry Willink.
(Still, *Savannah Squadron*, 2)

qualified labor and materials and the emphasis placed on ironclad construction, prevented completion of the other vessels and they were destroyed when Savannah was evacuated.

At the same time, a second company, Krenson and Hawkes, contracted for three "Maury Class" gunboats. The contract specified screw steamers with no masts or sails, 112 feet in length, 21 feet in beam, and designed for river service. The only vessel completed under this contract was the *Isondiga*. The Navy canceled the contracts for the other two

¹⁴(...continued)
December 1932.

gunboats.¹⁵ The *Isondiga* joined the squadron in the spring of 1863.

Savannah also began construction of the new torpedo boats that became popular in Charleston. Under Captain Frances D. Lee, C. S. A., boat yards in Savannah, Charleston, Wilmington, and Mobile, began building torpedo boats, or *Davids*, in January 1864. One such boat was begun in Savannah in 1864 but never completed by the Confederates.¹⁶

Operations 1861 - 1862

On a tense morning in Charleston, South Carolina at 4:30 A.M. on 12 April 1861, Captain George S. James fired the first shot of the Civil War. Two days later President Abraham Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to quell the rebellion in the south and declared a blockade of the entire southern coastline from North Carolina to Texas. With the secession of Virginia, Lincoln extended the blockade to include coastal Virginia. So began four years of destruction that defined the United States as a single

¹⁵ Josiah Tattnall to S. R. Mallory, 16 July 1862, ORN, I, 14, 231; and Alexander A. Lawrence, *A Present for Mr. Lincoln The Story of Savannah from Secession to Sherman*, (Macon, Ga.: The Ardican Press, 1961), 121, hereinafter referred to as Lawrence, *Mr. Lincoln*.

¹⁶ Milton F. Perry, *Infernal Machines The Story of Confederate Submarine and Mine Warfare*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), 123, and 166, hereinafter referred to as Perry, *Infernal Machines*.

nation.¹⁷

Even before Georgia seceded, Savannah citizens acted. On 1 January 1861, angered by the seizure of Georgia property in New York, Georgia citizens seized the U.S. Revenue Cutter *J. C. Dobbin*.¹⁸ Six days later Governor Joseph Brown ordered Fort Pulaski taken and within a month all Federal property in Georgia was in the hands of the state government.¹⁹ Foreseeing a need to build deep draft war vessels, the city gave \$500 to clear the channel of all obstructions below Willink's Shipyard on 11 January 1861.²⁰

The City of Savannah did not foresee the effectiveness of the Union blockade and the Northern resolve to preserve the Union. Expecting a direct attack on Savannah, the State of Georgia formed the Georgia State Navy on 21 January 1861. Governor Joseph Brown called on "all citizens impelled by patriotic impulses" to resign from the Federal service and

¹⁷ G. A. Mercer, *Diary* (No. 1), 12 and 20 April 1861, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library, Chapel Hill, N. C.

¹⁸ Scharf, *History*, 628; and S. R. Mallory, 1 Jan 1861, ORN, I, 4, 327.

¹⁹ Scharf, *History*, 627; and Report of General J. F. Gilmer, 3-26 January 1861, *The War of the Rebellion A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880), Series I, Volume 1, 318-319, hereinafter referred to as OR.

²⁰ *Daily Morning News* (Savannah), 11 January 1861.

come home to their native state. Brown guaranteed them the rank and pay they received in the Federal army or navy.

The following Friday, 25 January, the Georgia Secession Convention adopted a resolution calling for the procurement of three coastal defense steamers. These vessels were the beginnings of the Georgia State Volunteer Navy.²¹ On 28 February 1861, Josiah Tattnall received his appointment as Captain in the Georgia State Volunteer Navy and with orders to defend the coast of Georgia from all invasions (Figure

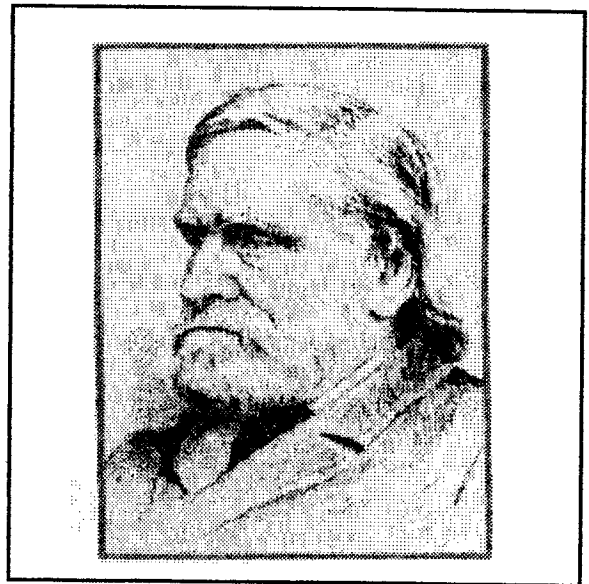


Figure 1-5. Josiah Tattnall.
(Still, *Savannah Squadron*, 2)

1-5).²² John M. Kell,
Commander, C. Manigault

Morris, Lieutenant, and Thomas W. Hooper, Midshipman, joined

²¹ John Kell McIntosh Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N. C.; and Munroe d'Antignac, *Georgia's Navy 1861*, (Griffin, Ga.: The Coen Printing Co., 1945), 7.

²² Josiah Tattnall, a former captain in the United States Navy, was born at Bonaventure in Savannah on 1795. He was a midshipman in the U.S. Navy during the War of 1812, and is best known for aiding an French-English naval force in their attack on Chinese forces. Tattnall cited the famous "Blood is thicker than Water" in his defense of this breach in neutrality.

Tattnall shortly thereafter and began personnel recruitment and arming of the navy's vessels.²³ Kell reported that he had shipped twenty-five men for the Georgia State Naval Steamer *Savannah*, a merchant steamer previously named *Everglade*, on 24 February 1861. Three days later he reported that he had a full complement of men and officers and the vessel would be ready for operations by 7 March.²⁴

The squadron grew rapidly and within a month Tattnall added four more vessels. The *Sampson* and *Resolute* arrived at the same time as the *Savannah*. On 4 March 1861, the Georgia State Volunteer Navy seized the *Bonita*, the new navy's first capture, and added her to the squadron. By 9 March the *Ida* became part of the flotilla.²⁵ Tattnall's small force grew again when the *Lady Davis*, a tug purchased in Charleston, joined the squadron.

Recruitment began in earnest when the fleet began to grow. An advertisement on 21 March 1861 in the *Savannah Daily News* called for able-bodied men for the Georgia Naval Coast Guard. The Georgia State Volunteer Navy, formed on 25 January 1861, lived a short time and was turned over to Confederate Naval Authorities on 30 March 1861, at which

²³ *Daily Morning News* (Savannah), 28 February 1861, 1, col. 1. Hereinafter cited as *DMN*.

²⁴ d'Antignac, *Georgia's Navy*, 8.

²⁵ *DMN*, 4 March 1861, and 9 March 1861.

time Stephen R. Mallory commissioned Tattnall a captain in the Confederate Navy. The new recruits, if any, were absorbed by the Confederate States Navy in nine days.

When Georgia transferred its holdings to the central government it included all Georgia naval property and personnel with the exception of vessels purchased by the State of Georgia prior to the transfer. Georgia sold the purchased vessels to the C.S. Navy Department at the same time the property and personnel transfer occurred. Governor Brown ordered the resignation of all enlisted men and officers from the Georgia State Volunteer Navy and their immediate transfer to the central government. The Confederate Navy absorbed the men.²⁶

With the transfer of ships and personnel to the Confederate government, Tattnall became responsible for the defense of Georgia and South Carolina. Tattnall's "Mosquito Fleet," operated in the Savannah River until 5 November 1861, when a Federal fleet under the command of Samuel F. Du Pont attacked Port Royal. This attack on South Carolina compelled Tattnall to leave the Savannah River and move to Hilton Head.

Tattnall's small force, the steamers *Savannah*,

²⁶ Samuel J. Lawson, III, *Confederate Naval Facilities in Georgia*, (M.A. Thesis, West Georgia College, Carrolton, Ga. 1978) 51. Hereinafter referred to as Lawson, *Naval Facilities*.

Resolute, *Sampson*, *Huntress*, and *Lady Davis*, moved to intercept the Federal fleet at Port Royal on 5 November 1861. They arrived in time to engage Federal warships *Ottawa*, *Pembina*, *Seneca*, and *Pawnee*.²⁷ The Army Transport *St. Marys* arrived on the 6th with fifty men from Captain Read's battery of 12-pounder howitzers as reinforcements for the fortifications.²⁸

The *Savannah Daily Morning News* reported two attacks against Tattnall's fleet. The first attack by the Federals on 5 November 1861, consisted of a seven vessel fleet. The second attack later the same day consisted of eight.²⁹ Greatly outgunned, the "Mosquito Fleet" quickly withdrew to the protection of Skull Creek. After remaining at anchor there throughout the 6th, Tattnall landed C.S. sailors and marines at 11:00 A.M. on the 7th to support Fort Walker.

The Federal fleet of fifteen vessels entered Port Royal on 7 November 1861 and engaged Forts Walker and Beauregard. The Confederates abandoned Fort Walker with the loss of

²⁷ Ralph W. Donnelly, *Confederate States Marine Corps: Rebel Leathernecks*, (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Publishing Company, Inc., 1989), 89. Hereinafter referred to as Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*.

²⁸ *Savannah Morning News*, 6 November 1861, editorial, page 2, column 1, and Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 90.

²⁹ *DMN*, 6 November 1861, editorial, page 2, column 1.

twelve killed and forty wounded.³⁰ Federal losses were slightly less with eight killed and twenty-three wounded.³¹

Before the naval relief force could reach Fort Walker the fort was abandoned and the sailors and marines returned to their vessels on the morning of the 8th.³² The *Savannah*, after receiving two shots on the 7th, returned to the city accompanied by the *Emma* on 8 November to repair damages sustained during the engagement.³³

Federal forces seized Beaufort, South Carolina on 9 November 1861, when the 6th and 7th Connecticut under the command of Brigadier General T. W. Sherman with support of the Federal squadron entered the town.³⁴ In effect, the Federal seizure of Beaufort ended the campaign and gave the United States Navy a much needed base for operations in Georgia and South Carolina.

The capture of Port Royal would affect Charleston and Savannah dramatically. Major General Robert E. Lee,

³⁰ *DMN*, 9 November 1861, page 1, column 1, 2.

³¹ David D. Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War*, (Secaucus, N. J.: Castle Inc., 1984), 59; hereinafter referred to as Porter, *Naval History*.

³² Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, p 89, 90.

³³ *DMN*, 8 November 1861, 3, col. 2.

³⁴ Coastal Heritage Society, *History of Fort James Jackson*, (Savannah, Ga.: Coastal Heritage Society, n. d.), 6.

Confederate Commander, Department of Georgia and South Carolina, wrote Judah P. Benjamin that:

The enemy having complete possession of the water and inland navigation, commands all the islands on the coast and threatens both Savannah and Charleston, and can come in his boats, within 4 miles of this place [Coosawhatchie, South Carolina]. His sloops of war and large steamers can come up Broad River to Mackay's Point, the mouth of the Pocatigo, and his gunboats can ascend some distance up the Coosawhatchie and Tulifinny. We have no guns that can resist their batteries, and have no resources but to prepare to meet them in the field.³⁵

The brief flurry of excitement about Port Royal typified the Civil War in Savannah. From 1861 to the final fall of the city in 1864, the people of Savannah moved from crisis to crisis with periods of intense boredom between.

As the Confederacy licked its wounds over the loss of Port Royal and the Federal fleet occupied itself with Hilton Head and Beaufort, the blockade runner *Fingal* quietly slipped into Savannah on 12 November 1861.³⁶ She was the only vessel to enter the Confederacy with a cargo entirely

³⁵ Robert E. Lee to Judah P. Benjamin, 2 December 1861, *OR*, Series I, Volume 5, 277; and Navy Department, *Civil War Naval Chronology 1861 - 1865*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Navy, 1971), I-34. Hereinafter cited as *Navy Department, Chronology*.

³⁶ James D. Bulloch to Stephen R. Mallory, 12 November 1861, *ORN*, I, 12, 828.

devoted to military needs.³⁷ The vessel was laden with 15,000 Enfield rifles, 1,000,000 cartridges, 2,000,000 percussion caps, 3,000 cavalry sabres, 1,000 short rifles and cutlass bayonets, 100,000 rounds of rifle ammunition, 500 revolvers and ammunition, two 4.5 inch Blakely rifled cannon, two 2.5 inch Blakely rifled cannon, 8,000 shells, 400 barrels of cannon powder, medical stores, and clothing.³⁸

After loading with cotton, the *Fingal* made several attempts to escape the blockade. In one, last desperate attempt on 23 December, Tattnall's fleet and the *Fingal* steamed down the Wilmington River to Wassaw Sound seeking an escape route for the blockade runner. A sharp skirmish occurred when the flotilla approached the Federal blockaders. The *Savannah* received a shot in her pilot house and had to be towed off by the *Resolute*. Since the remaining vessels could not clear the way, the *Fingal* was unable to get out of Savannah. The Confederate Navy purchased the ship in January 1862, for conversion into an armored warship.

³⁷ F. W. Pickens to President Jefferson Davis, 13 November 1861, ORN, I, 12, 828; and Navy Department, *Naval Chronology*, I-37.

³⁸ Scharf, *History*, 639; and W. Stanley Hoole, ed., *Confederate Foreign Agent The European Diary of Major Edward C. Anderson*, (University, Al.: Confederate Publishing Co, 1976), 5.

Shortly after taking Port Royal, The Federal's moved to seize Fort Pulaski.³⁹ Federal forces briefly occupied Tybee Island on 24 November 1861 and found the island abandoned. Captain Read, Irish Volunteers, C. S. A. destroyed cotton and rice stores on the island the night of the 24th and the Federals left on 3 December.

Federal warships made reconnaissances up as many of the waterways around Savannah as was possible. At the same time, a Federal fleet of eight vessels was assembling in Tybee Roads in preparation for an attack on Tybee Island. On 16 December 1861, Tattnall's squadron sailed into Tybee Roads and attempted to engage the fleet. Midshipman W. F. Wilson recorded that:

After all it was only a flash in the pan and no fighting. We went and anchored within a mile of Fort Pulaski and at daylight got ready and went in the direction of the enemy but when we got within good range of their guns we discovered that instead of old merchantmen that was there last night a fine Steam Frigate had taken her place during the night so that it was the best policy to let her alone so the Commodore seemed to think. The confounded yankees thought to play a trick off on us. Supposing that we would attackt [sic] them and then we would have caught Jessie Whiz.⁴⁰

Tattnall remained at Fort Pulaski throughout the rest of the year in hopes of engaging the Federal flotilla. He made

³⁹ For a map showing the operational area of the Savannah River Squadron see Figure 1-6.

⁴⁰ Beverly E. Wilson, ed., "Wilson's War," 19 May 1862.

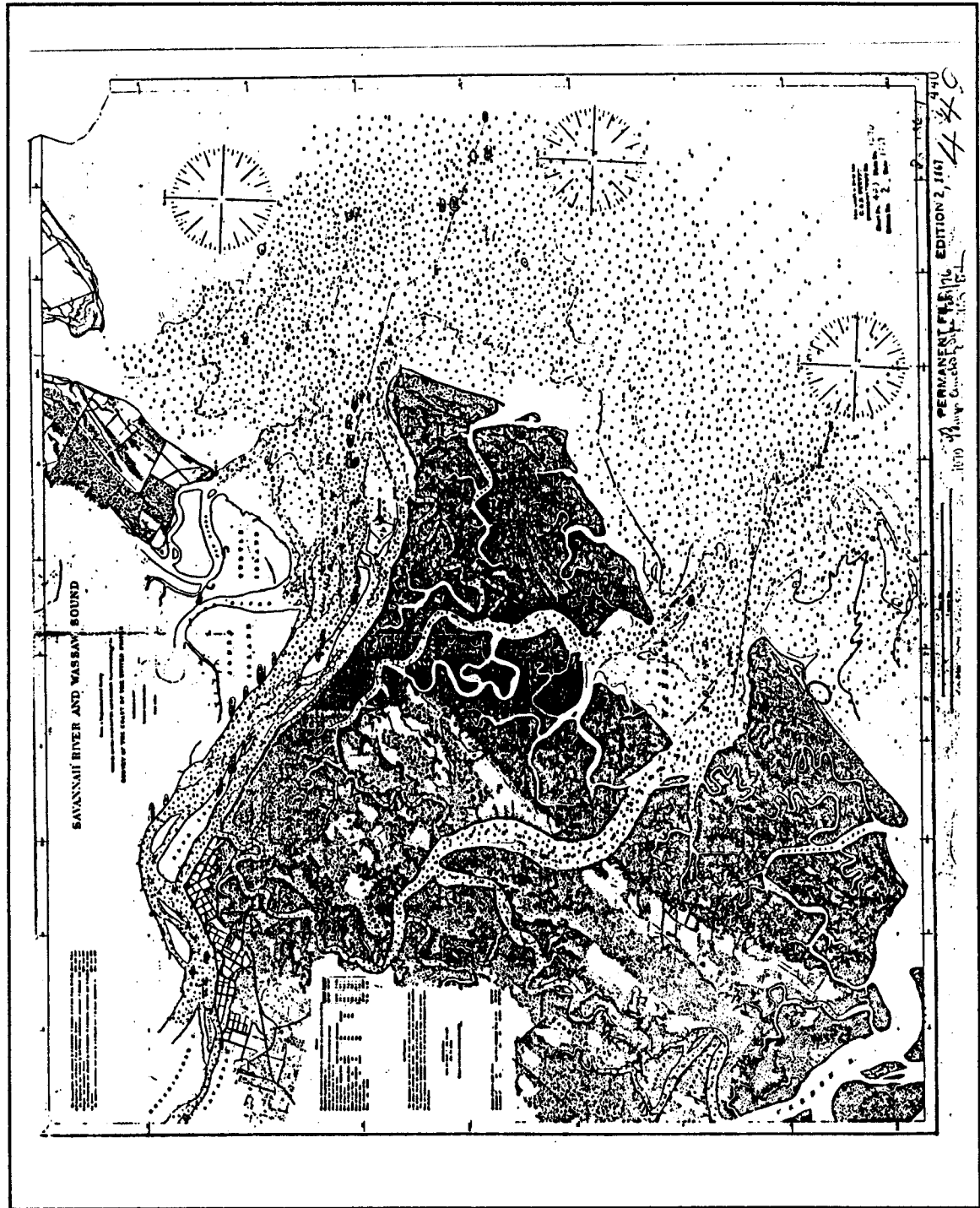


Figure 1-6. Savannah River and Wassaw Sound, A. D. Bache and B. Peirce. (National Archives).

another attempt to draw them into the guns of Pulaski; however, the Federals refused to be caught.⁴¹

The U.S. Navy continued to probe the waters around Savannah. Du Pont located a passage up the Wilmington River to St. Augustine's Creek and sent a reconnaissance up the river. Wilson recorded in his diary that:

Received information this morning that there were three yankee vessels off Skidaway Battery and after going down and looking at them our Capt [sic] came back and got the rest of our vessels and went down there and anchored in sight of the yanks at 1/2 four oclock [sic] they opened fire on us which we returned but were too far away to do any damage at dark ceased to fire upon us and we anchored above Skidaway Battery when we were ordered from there back to Thunderbolt.⁴²

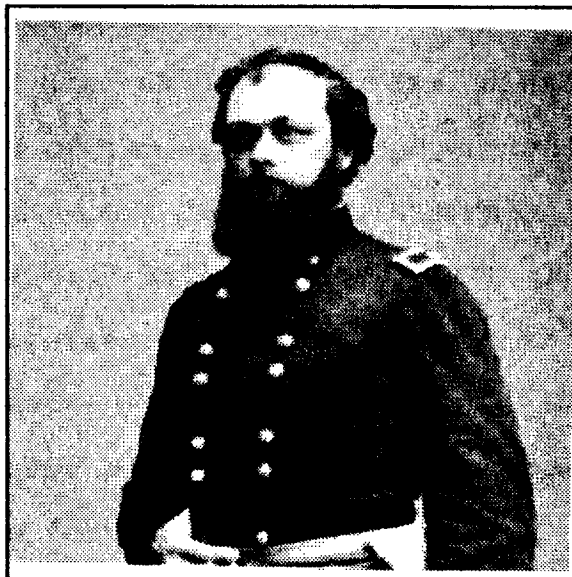
A reconnaissance of the Savannah River was also necessary and Federal vessels moved on 23 December 1861, into New River, to Wall's Cut. Confederate engineers had placed obstructions, an old hulk and numerous heavy pilings, in the Cut to prohibit passage and when the Federals tried to remove them, Tattnall's squadron drove them off.⁴³ The Federal navy finally removed the obstructions on 14 January 1862 and made their first reconnaissance of the Savannah

⁴¹ Scharf, *History*, 631.

⁴² Wilson, *Wilson's War*, 23 December 1861.

⁴³ Scharf, *History*, 632, and Q. A. Gillmore, *Siege and Reduction of Fort Pulaski*, (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1862), 11, hereinafter referred to as Gillmore, *Siege*.

River above Fort Pulaski on 28 January 1862. Eleven Federal vessels lay in Mud River above Cockspur Island. When a Confederate relief force, consisting of the *Ida*, *Bartow*, *Sampson*, *Savannah*, and a barge loaded with provisions for Fort Pulaski passed, the Federals



opened fire. Wilson records that the U.S. forces fired 101 shots at the *Sampson* as

Figure 1-7. Brig. Gen. Quincy A. Gillmore. (William C. Davis, ed., *The South Besieged*)

it passed. Although there were no casualties, the "Mosquito Fleet" was under fire for forty minutes and the *Sampson* received five shot.⁴⁴

Quincy A. Gillmore (Figure 1-7), commander of Federal forces in the district, decided that a battery should be erected on Venus Point and across the river on Bird Island to close the Savannah to Confederate shipping and prohibit resupply of Fort Pulaski.⁴⁵ The battery, completed on 12 February 1862, saw its first action on 13 February. The

⁴⁴ Wilson, *Wilson's War*, 28 January 1862.

⁴⁵ Gillmore, *Siege*, 13.

Confederates discovered the Venus Point battery as the *Ida* steamed past. The battery fired nine shots at the *Ida* doing minimal damage.⁴⁶ The remainder of the squadron engaged the Venus Point battery on 14 February and retired to Savannah after doing no appreciable damage.⁴⁷ With the completion of Venus Point and Bird Island batteries, the first step in the reduction of Fort Pulaski ended.

The Confederate Navy had also been busy trying to stop the Federals from advancing too far into the interior. Although the closure of the Savannah River created some problems for Savannah, Fort Pulaski was still approachable via Wilmington Narrows and Lazaretto Creek. Using new technology from Richmond, Confederates placed torpedoes in the mouth of the Wright River sometime in early February. J. P. Bankhead, U.S.N., discovered the torpedoes, used for the first time in the waters around Savannah, while on a routine patrol in the Wright River. Ignited by cannon friction primers, the torpedoes were cylindrical in shape and wired together so that all five would explode in unison. The torpedoes caused some consternation, however, there was no problem removing and destroying them.⁴⁸ On 22 February

⁴⁶ Gilmore, *Siege*, 13.

⁴⁷ Wilson, *Wilson's War*, 15 February 1862.

⁴⁸ Perry, *Infernal Machines*, 30.

the Federal navy closed Lazaretto Creek by obstructing it with an old hulk armed with a battery. This halted all communication with Fort Pulaski.⁴⁹

Tattnall and Lee discussed the feasibility of relieving the fort. They decided that the only way a naval force could hope to reach Fort Pulaski was to attack the Federal Battery on Bird Island. The number of Federal warships and troops in the immediate area would make the assault bloody and almost futile.

Stung by a public outcry at the navy's inefficiency and a supposed censure by Lee, Tattnall resolved to attempt the assault. It was only after a council of war by army and navy officers that Tattnall decided the attack would be fruitless. The only success possible would be to capture a few guns. There was still the battery at Venus Point and the Federal squadron to contend with. Any attempt at relieving the fort was sure to meet with disaster.⁵⁰

Federal forces reoccupied Tybee Island in December and began constructing batteries on that island and other surrounding islands in January 1862. When Fort Pulaski fell 11 April 1862, the Savannah River was closed and blockade

⁴⁹ Gillmore, *Siege*, 22.

⁵⁰ Scharf, *History*, 636.

running reduced to a trickle.⁵¹ Very few vessels were able to enter Savannah after April 1862. The only routes open to the city entered through Ossabaw or Wassaw Sounds. Both rivers were shallow and traffic to the city was restricted.

Confederate naval authorities in Savannah busied themselves with construction of casemated ironclads and shore defense batteries that could support a naval squadron. Construction of defenses around Savannah to prevent a Federal invasion continued and increased. Construction began at Battery Cheeves, Battery Lee, and Fort Bartow. Early in 1862, Confederates also began erecting a fort at Genesis Point, on the lower Ogeechee River near Ossabaw Sound.

Operations 1863 - 1864

On 24 January 1863, the U. S. S. *Montauk* dropped anchor off Ossabaw bar, the first of four monitors to be sent to the area. The *Passaic*, *Weehawken*, and *Nahant* quickly followed the *Montauk* and took up positions in Wassaw Sound, Tybee Roads, and Ossabaw Sound.⁵²

To prevent the U.S. Navy from advancing up the Ogeechee River and destroying Savannah, the Confederate engineers had been busy on Fort McAllister on Genesis Point. The fort,

⁵¹ Gilmore, *Siege*, 36.

⁵² S. F. Du Pont to Captain John Rodgers, 10 January 1863, ORN, I, 14, 250; and Still, *Iron Afloat*, 131, et seq.

named for James McAllister, owner of Strathy Hall and the surrounding plantation, was on a prominent point of land about fifteen miles south of Savannah and six miles up stream from Ossabaw Sound. Considered a key to Savannah, the fort was an earth and timber battery which eventually mounted twenty-two guns.

Control of the Ogeechee River and waters around the city depended heavily upon this fortification.⁵³ Du Pont recognized the importance of this fort and sent the U. S. S. *Montauk*, on 28 January 1863, to engage the batteries there. Supporting the *Montauk* were the *Seneca*, *Wissahickon*, and *Dawn*. The first excursion up the Ogeechee led the monitor to an engagement with the fort at a range of 1100 yards. Firing forty pounds of powder from its 11-inch and 15-inch guns, the *Montauk* expected to severely damage the fort. Three hours of combat revealed that damage to the fort was minimal and damage to the monitor was even less. John L. Worden, commander of the *Montauk*, recognized that

Though the work might have been blown into worthlessness by us, or abandoned by the rebels, still with no cooperating land force, it could not be occupied. . .⁵⁴

⁵³ Porter, *Naval History*, 371.

⁵⁴ Samuel T. Browne, "First Cruise of the *Montauk*," in *Papers of the Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society of Rhode Island*, Providence, R. I.: The Society, 1879), 44. Hereinafter cited as Browne, *Montauk*.

The Federal navy repeated the attack on 1 February 1863, with the same result. The Confederates repaired the fort and placed it in fighting trim in less than forty-eight hours. Worden was never able to take Fort McAllister and it would not be until December 1864, that the fort would fall to Sherman's land forces after a brief, desperate fight.⁵⁵

Three weeks after the second assault on McAllister, the *Rattlesnake*, formerly the *C. S. S. Nashville*, came down the Ogeechee looking for an opportunity to escape through the blockade. One of the few blockade runners to make it into Savannah after the fall of Fort Pulaski, the *Nashville* began her career as a commerce raider for the Confederacy. After entering Savannah she made several attempts run the blockade with cotton but was unable to slip past the sentry vessels. The vigilance of the blockaders forced the *Rattlesnake* to remain under the guns of the fort until 27 February.

The *Rattlesnake*, under the command of Thomas H. Baker, C. S. N., made an attempt on the 27th to get through Hardee's Cut into the Little Ogeechee but was sighted by the U. S. S. *Wissahickon*. The U. S. S. *Seneca* moved to within 1200 yards of the *Rattlesnake* and began shelling it. In an attempt to escape up river, the *Rattlesnake* ran aground and was unable to pull herself off. The following morning, 28

⁵⁵ Report of Captain John Worden to Admiral S. F. Du Pont, 28 February 1863, ORN, I, 13, 697, 700

February 1863, the *Montauk* steamed to within 850 yards of Fort McAllister and opened fire on the *Rattlesnake*; lying 1100 yards distant. In one hour the *Rattlesnake*, unable to return fire and hard aground, began burning from the bombardment of the *Montauk*. At 9:35 A.M., the *Rattlesnake* exploded.⁵⁶ Worden, pleased with results at last, was returning the *Montauk* to her anchorage at the mouth of the Ogeechee when she struck an underwater torpedo and suffered slight damage. The pilot quickly ran the vessel aground and the carpenters repaired the hull damage.⁵⁷ Although elated at the final destruction of the *Rattlesnake*, the U. S. Navy soon had other problems.

Ironclad construction to supplement fortifications around Savannah continued throughout 1863. With the *Georgia* and the *Atlanta*, Tattnall had a formidable defensive fleet. However, defensive measures did not interest the populace. As far as Savannah was concerned the blockade was strangling trade.

The earlier commissioning of the *Atlanta* occasioned

⁵⁶ Abstract from logs of the U. S. S. *Dawn*, U. S. S. *Seneca*, and U. S. S. *Wissahickon*, 28 February 1863, ORN, I, 13, 704; Report of Captain John Worden to Admiral S. F. Du Pont, 28 February 1863, ORN, I, 13, 697, 700; and Report of Samuel T. Browne to Admiral S. F. Du Pont, 28 February 1863, ORN, I, 13, 698.

⁵⁷ Browne, *Montauk*, 46, et seq.

some concern from the Federals at Fort Pulaski.⁵⁸ While the *Atlanta* looked much like other casemated ironclads, her iron, sea-going hull and her English built machinery made the *Atlanta* different from her sister craft.⁵⁹ On her maiden voyage, the *Atlanta* steamed slowly down the Savannah River to show herself to the batteries on Bird Island and at Venus Point. Believing her to be very formidable, Du Pont kept monitors close to Fort Pulaski and the nearby sounds while communications with the U.S. Navy Department continued as he sought advice on combatting this new vessel.⁶⁰

The blockading squadron had a strangle hold on Savannah and the city demanded relief. Commerce vessels entered the Confederacy through the easier passages at Charleston and Wilmington and avoided Savannah. Tattnall made a decision to use the *Atlanta* to clear Wassaw and Ossabaw sounds but obstructions preventing the Federals from coming upstream also kept the *Atlanta* from leaving. On 5 January 1863, the

⁵⁸ Charles C. Jones, Jr., *The Life and Services of Commodore Josiah Tattnall*, Savannah, Ga.: Morning News Steam Printing House, 1878, 224, hereinafter referred to as Jones, *Josiah Tattnall*; and G. J. Kollock to his wife, 5 April 1863, Kollock Papers, *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, XXXIV, (Sept 1950), 256; and Faust, *Encyclopedia*, 28.

⁵⁹ Report of Josiah Tattnall, 9 May 1863, ORN, I, 14, 695; and Still, *Iron Afloat*, 129.

⁶⁰ Order of S. F. Du Pont, 10 June 1863, ORN, I, 14, 249 and 250; and Scharf, *History*, 642; and Still, *Iron Afloat*, 131.

Atlanta steamed down to the obstructions, but was unable to pass over them. Although the army engineers promised the obstructions could be removed given twelve hours notice, it took a month of constant work to create a passage large and deep enough for the *Atlanta* to steam through.⁶¹

Dabney Scales recorded in his diary that "all on board had the mortification to see the anchor again dropped in the Savannah River with the certainty of remaining here till the next spring tide, and probably much longer."⁶² He also noted, somewhat sarcastically, that "Our Cmdg. General certainly does not appreciate the sharpness of Yankee eyesight if he expects them to over look the fact that we are working at the obstructions, and he must think them dull of comprehension if he thinks they will fail to divine [sic] its cause."⁶³ Scales was correct in his assessment of the situation. Reinforced by two new monitors, the *Montauk* and the *Passaic*, the Federal navy was able to respond to the *Atlanta* before a passage through the obstructions could be opened.

The Savannah City Council requested Tattnell to send

⁶¹ The obstructions were large pens of heavy timber filled with brick or stone. They were connected together by chains and sunk across the shipping channel.

⁶² Scales, Diary, 5 January 1863.

⁶³ Scales, Diary, 12 January 1863.

the *Atlanta* to support Fort McAllister for they considered the vessel "competent to almost any achievement," but Tattnall knew better. Tattnall's experience with the *Virginia*, which he commanded in 1862 and his knowledge of the *Atlanta*'s problems convinced him that the *Atlanta* would not survive the guns of the *Montauk*. He agreed, however; to try to run past the monitor. Tattnall thought that the *Atlanta*'s superior speed should negate the ordnance advantage of the *Montauk*. Before the plan could be put into effect, however, the *Passaic* arrived on 30 January 1863. He abandoned the plan after deciding the *Atlanta* could not elude two monitors.⁶⁴

Tattnall made two more attempts to get the *Atlanta* out to sea. On 3 February Tattnall tried to get out but a gale was blowing and the tide would not cooperate. Scales recorded

So we are again disappointed and I fear we will be unable to get out on this spring tide. . . Of course we will be branded as cowards by the unthinking portion of the citizens of Savannah for not going down and destroying the enemy's iron clad off Genesse's Point.[sic] These people never stop to enquire into the cause of these delays, but stigmatize the Navy generally, because we did not go down and sink the enemy's fleet even before the obstructions had been removed from the river. But we must blame ourselves for having attached

⁶⁴ Tattnall to S. R. Mallory, 2 February 1863, ORN, I, 13, 417; and Still, *Iron Afloat*, 131.

any importance to the promise of the Army to remove the obstructions for us on twelve hours notice.⁶⁵

Tattnall again went through the obstructions on 19 March 1863. At last everything looked well. Intelligence indicated that the monitors had returned to Port Royal in preparation for an attack on Charleston. Tattnall planned to strike Port Royal, destroy any of the enemy that might be there, clear the sounds around the Savannah and Wilmington Rivers, and move on Key West.⁶⁶

While the *Atlanta* was anchored at the head of Wassaw Sound waiting for an opportunity to attack, the crew of a Confederate picket boat in the Savannah River under the command of Master's Mate Beville mutinied and escaped to Fort Pulaski. The deserting sailors told Federal officers of the impending attack and Du Pont ordered the *Passaic* and two additional monitors back to Ossabaw Sound.⁶⁷

Following Tattnall's last attempt to get the *Atlanta* out of Savannah, Mallory removed him from command afloat and replaced him with Commander Richard L. Page, C. S. N., on 31

⁶⁵ Scales, *Diary*, 3 February 1863.

⁶⁶ Jones, *Josiah Tattnall*, 278; and W. W. Webb to S. R. Mallory, 22 May 1863, ORN, I, 14, 698, 699.

⁶⁷ William Duncan to Godfrey Barnsley, 26 June 1864, Pickens Library, Duke University, Chapel Hill, N.C.; and James D. Bullock, *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*, (London, 1883), 146; and Scharf, *History*, 643.

March 1863 (Figure 1-8).
 The actual transfer of
 command occurred at 8:00
 A.M. on 5 April 1863.
 Scales noted in his diary
 that "Old Commodore Tattnall
 is at last laid on the
 shelf."⁶⁸ Tattnall retained
 command of naval facilities
 ashore, but never again
 commanded a combat force.
 Tattnall and Page discussed
 the prospects of engaging



Figure 1-8. Commander
 Richard L. Page, C.S.N.
 (Author's Collection)

two monitors and Page decided that the *Atlanta* could not
 survive the combat. Page realized that the *Atlanta's* deep
 draft would not allow her to operate in the confined waters
 of the Ogeechee against a monitor. John K. Mitchell,
 director of the Bureau of Orders and Detail, was responsible
 for changes in command. He received a letter from
 Lieutenant George T. Sinclair requesting a transfer from
 Savannah. Sinclair stated despondently that "nothing would
 induce me to leave here so long as there is the slightest
 prospect of a fight, which by the way, I now think is very

⁶⁸ Scales, Diary, 5 April 1863; and Abstract of
 Statement of Deserters, 19 March 1863, ORN, I, 13, 767, 768.

remote." Unable to respond quickly enough for Secretary Mallory and because of constant complaints, Mallory removed Page from command in early May 1863 and replaced him with William A. Webb; a junior officer who would "at once do something (Figure 1-9)."⁶⁹



Figure 1-9. Captain William A. Webb, C.S.N. (Davis, *South Besieged*).

Webb was a reckless young officer and just what the Navy needed to boost its image. A week after taking command, he wrote Mallory that he would attack the enemy with the next spring tide. On 30 May he got the *Atlanta* under way and safely steamed through the obstructions. Webb planned to raise the blockade between Savannah and Charleston, attack Port Royal, and then blockade Fort Pulaski. What Webb intended to do about the monitors patrolling the area is unclear. Nevertheless, Webb made his first attempt to destroy the "abolitionist

⁶⁹ Journal of Edward C. Anderson, 4 May 1863, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah; and Lawrence, *Mr. Lincoln*, 125.

fleet."⁷⁰

As the *Atlanta* moved into the narrow south channel of the Savannah River, the forward engine broke down and forced the ship aground. Webb postponed the attack. Mallory suggested to Webb that he should wait until the ironclad *Savannah*, nearing completion, was ready and attack the Federal fleet together. Webb demurred saying "I assure you the whole abolition fleet has no terror for me, though the cooperation of the *Savannah* would be of great assistance."⁷¹ Webb decided to wait on the C. S. S. *Savannah* before attacking the blockading fleet between Savannah and Charleston. In the mean time, he would attack the two monitors in Wassaw Sound. On the morning of 17 June 1863, the *Atlanta* left her anchorage and entered the sound.

The monitors *Weehawken* and *Nahant* were waiting for just such a chance. Webb determined that the best course of action was to close with the *Weehawken*, strike the vessel with the *Atlanta's* spar torpedo, and run by the *Nahant* into open water. At 4:10 A.M., a lookout on the *Weehawken* sighted the *Atlanta* in the Wilmington River and notified the officer of the deck. The *Weehawken* sounded general quarters

⁷⁰ W. W. Webb to S. R. Mallory, 22 May 1863, ORN, I, 14, 698, 699.

⁷¹ William A. Webb Letterbook, National Archives, Record Group 45, 10 June 1863.

and made a signal to *Nahant* to follow in her wake. At the distance of approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile the *Atlanta* fired the first shot. It passed over the *Weehawken* and landed just short of *Nahant*.

John Rodgers, captain of the *Weehawken*, noticed that the *Atlanta* had stopped and seemed to be lying across the channel inviting attack (Figure 1-10). In reality the *Atlanta* had run aground. Upon entering the sound Webb ordered full ahead. In his enthusiasm

Webb may have left the channel to press the attack.

Within minutes the *Atlanta* had struck hard aground and no amount of exertion could remove her.

The *Weehawken* approached to within 300 yards and began firing. The first shot from the 15-inch shell gun struck the starboard side of the *Atlanta's* casemate shattering the armor and wood backing. The concussion from the shell sent splinters across the gun deck and caused between forty and fifty casualties. The second shot hit and slightly damaged

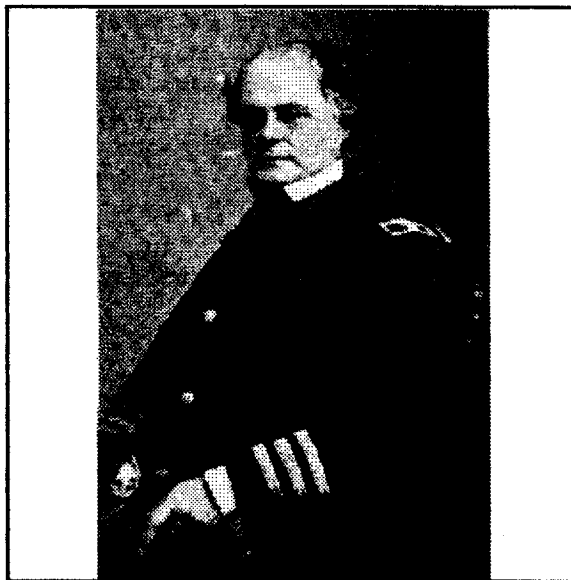


Figure 1-10. Captain John Rodgers, U.S.N. (Davis, *South Besieged*).

the knuckle. The third shot glanced off a port shutter of the starboard battery just as a gun crew was preparing to fire. Over half of the gun crew (8-10 men) received wounds. The fourth and last shot carried away the top of the pilot house and wounded two of the four pilots. The fight lasted only fifteen minutes. Because he was unable to return effective fire, Webb could only endure the *Weehawken's* assault.

Return fire from the *Atlanta*, although rapid, missed the *Weehawken* completely. When the *Atlanta* ran aground it developed a list, heeled over and exposed her hull. The *Atlanta's* guns, because of the list, were unable to bear on her attacker and, after firing seven shots, Webb yielded. The *Atlanta's* 165 men, officers and crew including 28 marines, were transported to Fort Lafayette in New York Harbor and from there to Fort Warren in Boston. The *Atlanta*, towed to Fort Monroe, received repairs and was put in service on the James River as the U. S. S. *Atlanta*.⁷² With the surrender of the *Atlanta* and the loss of William A. Webb, William Wallace Hunter received command the

⁷² Scharf, *History*, 644, 645; and B. J. Cromwell to Gideon Wells, 2 October 1863, ORN; I, 15, 5, 6.

squadron.⁷³

The *Atlanta's* failed operations ended offensive maneuvers for the Savannah Squadron. The fallout of the surrender reached as far as Richmond. One naval officer remarked that "our ship struck her colors. If this be so, the people will wish that the Secretary had been on the boat that surrendered."⁷⁴ Excuses grew like wildfire. Some talked of mutiny, others of blatant cowardice. The newspapers reported that "two shots from the *Atlanta* failed because the cartridges did not fit."⁷⁵ W. N. Still, Jr., in *Iron Afloat*, points out H. W. Wilson's emphasis on a lack of training as a possible cause but noted that Dabney Scales's diary included records of routine training at the guns. It is apparent that, if the cartridges did not fit, there was a lack of training somewhere.⁷⁶ Cartridges were

⁷³ W. W. Hunter received his commission of Captain in the C.S. Navy in 1861, making him one of the senior officers in the Navy. As a U.S. naval officer he invented the "Horizontal Wheel" propulsion system that was installed in the U. S. S. *Allegheny*. During the early years of the war he was stationed in New Orleans and on the Rappahanock in Virginia. He was 60 years old when he assumed command in Savannah.

⁷⁴ *Republican* (Savannah), 19 June 1863; and Joel S. Kennard to Stephen R. Mallory, 17 June 1863, *ORN*, I, 14, 288; and C. Lucian Jones to Joel S. Kennard, 17 June 1863, *ORN*, I, 14, 289.

⁷⁵ *Morning News* (Savannah), 9 July 1863.

⁷⁶ Still, *Iron Afloat*, footnote, 138.

sewn by the gunner and the gunner's mates on board the ship. If sized wrong, then the gunner was at fault. If cartridges for the 7-inch guns were taken to the 6.4-inch guns by mistake, then it was the powder division's fault. Either inefficiency or inadequate training caused the problem.

By August 1863, the Savannah Squadron consisted of the ironclads *Georgia* and *Savannah*, the Maury Gunboat *Isondiga*, and the tenders *Firefly* and *Resolute*. When Tattnall requested of Hunter that the *Sampson* be turned over to him as a receiving ship, Hunter transferred the *Sampson* to Tattnall's command temporarily but regained command of the ship in November 1863. The *Macon* became active in the summer of 1864.⁷⁷

Savannahians abandoned talk of going out to destroy the blockading squadrons and the squadron's responsibilities shifted from offensive operations to aiding the Army in defending the port. The *Georgia* remained stationed at Elba Island. The ironclad *Savannah's* station was at the eastern tip of Fig Island opposite Fort Jackson. The smaller vessels, when not doing picket duty off Causton's Bluff, saw service as transports and supply ships, rarely seeing action and enduring the extended periods of boring duty as best they could. During the summer, the ironclad's crews

⁷⁷ W. W. Hunter to S. S. Lee, 4 July 1864, ORN, I, 15, 749.

remained housed on shore or, as in the case of the *Savannah's* crew, slept on shore in warehouses. The *Savannah* usually returned to the city at night and maintained her picket station at Fig Island during daylight hours.

During cooler months, the squadron stayed around Fort Jackson and only went into town in small boats or on the *Firefly*. The squadron routine was such that W. W. Hunter's "General Order Number 2" established a time schedule for the *Firefly's* arrivals and departures.⁷⁸

Following their January 1864, attack on Charleston, Federal forces made a feint toward the railroad at Pocatiglo, South Carolina. Hunter ordered the squadron's vessels to be ready to transport the Army to South Carolina but the attackers withdrew ending the threat to Savannah.⁷⁹

Beginning in February 1864, increased Federal activity around Savannah necessitated a clarification of picket duties. J. Hunter, C. S. A. and adjutant, issued a statement that:

No naval boats, if recognized, will be hailed or molested during the day.

Sentinels with doubt will hail three times and then fire at the boat.

⁷⁸ W. W. Hunter, General Order No. 2, W. W. Hunter Papers, Tulane University.

⁷⁹ Hunter to Maj. General Jeremy S. Gilmer, 12 January 1864, ORN, I, 15, 702, 703.

All boats must pass the countersign at night or be fired upon.⁸⁰

On 22 February 1864, Federal forces made another reconnaissance near Savannah when a small detachment landed on Whitemarsh Island near Savannah. Henry Lea Graves recorded in a letter home that "the enemy landed on one of the islands and had a small fight with some of our troops. They retired after losing several men killed and prisoner without accomplishing anything . . ."⁸¹ Such was the routine until June of 1864.

As early as 3 January 1863 Dabney Scales noted in his diary that a boat expedition was organized for the purpose of "cutting out" or capturing a Federal vessel of war. The expedition, under the command of Lieutenant Thomas P. Pelot, C. S. N., required extensive preparations and Pelot set in motion plans to train squadron sailors in boarding tactics. Each squadron vessel provided boats, crew, and supplies for the venture.⁸² Throughout 1863 and early 1864 the crews practiced boarding the *Sampson* and other vessels of the

⁸⁰ Proclamation by J. Hunter, C. S. A., 15 February 1864, ORN, I, 15, 711.

⁸¹ Richard Harwell, ed., *A Confederate Marine: A Sketch of Henry Lea Graves with Excerpts from the Graves Family Correspondence, 1861 - 1865*, (Tuscaloosa, Al.: Confederate Publishing Co., 1963), 115.

⁸² Scales, *Diary*, 6 January 1863; and H. H. Dalton to W. W. Hunter, 12 May 1864, ORN, I, 15, 735.

squadron.⁸³

On 31 May 1864, Pelot received an order from Captain Hunter that assigned him "to the command of an expedition designed to surprise & capture a vessel of the enemy now at anchor at the mouth of the Little Ogeechee River. . ." ⁸⁴ The officers and men would come from the *Savannah, Georgia*, and *Sampson* and the written orders instructed the officers of those vessels to supply Pelot with all possible assistance. The expedition left Savannah on 31 May 1864, at 3:00 P.M., towed by the *Firefly*. Seven boats with 120 - 130 men arrived at Beaulieu Battery; south of Thunderbolt at 10:30 P.M.⁸⁵ After hauling their boats up into the marsh, they made camp. Early the next morning Lt. Pelot reconnoitered Ossabaw sound and found, apparently anchored near Raccoon Key, the U. S. S. *Waterwitch*. Determined to capture the *Waterwitch* that night, Pelot returned to the campsite at 2:00 P.M., and got the boats ready.

The expedition shoved off at 8:00 P.M. and went down the Vernon River until they could hear the ship blowing off

⁸³ Scales, Diary, 9 January 1863, 15 January 1863, 19 March 1863,

⁸⁴ W. W. Hunter to Thomas P. Pelot, 31 May 1864, W. W. Hunter Papers, Tulane University.

⁸⁵ Watson recorded in his diary that they stopped at Beulah. Native Savannahians know this as Beaulieu (pronounced Bewlee) battery. Robert Watson, Diary, (Copy in Collections of the Coastal Heritage Society), 7 June 1864.

steam. The night was calm and clear, not the best of conditions for a boarding, so Pelot called off the assault until the next night. They returned to Beaulieu, arriving at 6 A.M., and waited during the day. In preparation for the attack, and to give the men something to do, Pelot ordered the boats white washed.⁸⁶ Pelot telegraphed Hunter to send rations for the men and said that he expected to make the attack that night. Hunter sent rations for one day and asked Pelot, if the attack was not possible, to return his command to Savannah the next day.⁸⁷

The weather turned foul as evening approached but Pelot's expedition left Beaulieu at 9:00 P.M. The boats moved slowly down the river until they reached Raccoon Key. They waited until 12:00 P.M., and then rowed toward the vessel. The storm had turned into a gale and, between lightning flashes, Pelot could make out the ship. At 1:00 A.M., they found themselves within 150 yards of the *Waterwitch*. A lookout from the ship hailed the boats and Pelot answered "Rebels! Give way boys!" The boats approached the ship and began boarding so rapidly that the

⁸⁶ White-washing of boats was a very common practice. Most blockade runners were painted either a light, mist gray, or white. The theory was that white, seen on the water at night, looks like reflecting moonlight. A dark color looks like empty space and raised suspicions.

⁸⁷ Hunter to Pelot, 2 June 1864, Hunter Papers, Tulane University; and Watson, Diary, 7 June 1864.

watch was unable to fire their deck howitzer. Shots from the sentinels were the first alarm to alert the *Waterwitch's* crew that something was amiss. The engineer quickly forwarded and reversed the engines in an effort to thwart, or at least slow, the assault.

The boats came along either side, two boarding on the port and starboard bow, and the remainder on the port and starboard quarters. Pelot was in command of the port section, Lieutenant Joseph Price had command of the starboard section. As they tried to board, several men in the boats were wounded or killed. After cutting their way through the boarding netting, rope nets hung over the side to inhibit boarding, the men scrambled aboard and a general melee ensued. In a desperate hand to hand combat, the men all the time "yelling like fiends," the Confederates moved aft to seize control of the vessel. Austin Pendergrast, captain of the *Waterwitch*, came on deck only to find his vessel almost completely in control of the Confederates.⁸⁸

Pelot and Pendergrast engaged in hand-to-hand combat with swords until Pendergrast received an incapacitating wound on the head and fell to the deck. Paymaster Billings

⁸⁸ Pendergrast may have the dubious honor of being the only U.S. Naval officer to have lost two ships to the Confederates. Pendergrast was commander of the U. S. S. *Cumberland* when that ship was destroyed by the C. S. S. *Virginia* on 8 March 1862.

of the *Waterwitch* then fired at Pelot, killing him instantly. The fight for possession lasted only five minutes from the time of boarding until the ship's captain surrendered the vessel.

Lt. Joseph Price, C. S. N., took possession of the vessel and moved it to Raccoon Key. The Confederate pilot, Moses Dallas, received a mortal wound and died in the fight so Price "requisitioned" the quartermaster from the *Waterwitch* to pilot the ship.⁸⁹ The following morning, after removing two guns, some chain, and hemp rope, Price was able to get the ship safely under the guns at Battery Beaulieu.⁹⁰ Lieutenant W. W. Carnes assumed command after the *Water Witch* arrived at Beaulieu, and he began stripping the ship of any equipment or supplies the squadron might need.

Following capture of the *Waterwitch*, the major concern of the navy in Savannah was how to get the ship to the city. Carnes made an attempt to navigate the creeks from the Vernon River to the Wilmington River, but, without help from the Confederate engineers, the process was impossible. The *Waterwitch* remained at Isle of Hope until her destruction by

⁸⁹ For an explanation of the Moses Dallas controversy see Chapter 3, pages 104 to 107.

⁹⁰ Watson, Diary, 7 June 1864; and Scharf, *History*, 647.

the C.S. Navy to prevent it from falling into Federal hands.⁹¹

Beginning of the End

On 10 November 1864, Federal Forces under John M. Corse destroyed the mills, shops, and factories around Rome, Georgia. At this point William T. Sherman had committed himself and his entire army to the famous "March to the Sea." Sherman and 62,000 men left Atlanta on 15 November 1864.⁹² His force consisted of infantry, cavalry, and field artillery, divided into two wings.⁹³ Major General Henry W. Slocum's wing consisted of the XIV Corps, and the XX Corps. Slocum would take a northern route and feint for Augusta, Georgia. Major General O. O. Howard's Corps consisted of the XV Corps and the XVII Corps. Howard would take the southern route and feint towards Macon. The design was to draw Confederate defense forces to those places while

⁹¹ W. W. Hunter to Hugh McCrady, C.S. Engineers. Letter requesting aid in clearing a channel for the *Water Witch*. W. W. Hunter Papers, Tulane University.

⁹² Mark Coburn, *Terrible Innocence General Sherman at War*, (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1993), 160. Hereinafter cited as Coburn, *Sherman*.

⁹³ Richard McMurry, "On the Road to the Sea Sherman's Savannah Campaign," in *Civil War Times Illustrated*, January 1983, 10. Hereinafter cited as McMurry, "Savannah Campaign."

keeping the real target, Savannah, hidden.⁹⁴

Opposing Sherman were roughly 8,000 militia and cavalry under the command of Major General Gustavus W. Smith and Major General Joseph Wheeler. Near Griswoldville, Georgia, the militia collided with the rear guard of the XV Corps in a bloody battle that left 51 Confederate killed and 472 wounded with fewer than 100 Federal casualties.⁹⁵

Hoping to confuse the military in Savannah, Federals at Port Royal arranged a "prisoner exchange" for the latter part of November. Whether planned in conjunction with Sherman's march or not is a matter of conjecture. The Federal authorities certainly knew of Sherman's advance; it was in all of the newspapers. It is all but certain that the Federals devised this "exchange" as a diversion. It apparently worked because Lafayette McLaws, commander of the Savannah City Defense Forces, asked Hunter on 18 November to position the *Savannah* near the obstructions as a show of force.

The first indication that Sherman was approaching Savannah came on 24 November when Sherman moved eastward toward the Ogeechee River.⁹⁶ Major General William J.

⁹⁴ Coburn, *Sherman*, 166, et seq.

⁹⁵ McMurry, "Savannah Campaign," 11.

⁹⁶ McMurry, "Savannah Campaign," 11.

Hardee, C. S. A., requested Hunter, on the 29th, to place a ship at the Savannah-Charleston railroad bridge to defend it against a Federal attack.⁹⁷ Hunter sent the *Macon* to the bridge and also ordered it to patrol as "far as safety permits" to prevent U.S. forces from crossing the river.⁹⁸ Lieutenant J. S. Kennard reported to Hunter that the *Macon* would not be able to patrol above the bridge to Sister's Ferry due to low water.⁹⁹

Before Sherman left Atlanta, he requested that Federal forces cut the railroad between Savannah and Charleston sometime in early December. A Federal force under the command of Major General John P. Hatch left Port Royal on 29 November to fulfill Sherman's request by seizing the railroad at Grahamville. Hatch took 5,500 men and moved to Boyd's Neck on the 29th; placing him ten miles from Grahamville. Smith's Georgia Militia, just arriving in Savannah from the fight at Griswoldville, and South Carolina troops moved into Grahamville on the 30th and engaged Hatch. The militia moved into some light defensive works three miles south of Grahamville at Honey Hill and succeeded in

⁹⁷ Hardee to Hunter, 27 November 1864, ORN, I, 16, 465.

⁹⁸ Hunter to J. S. Kennard, 29 November 1864, ORN, I, 16, 467.

⁹⁹ Kennard to Hunter, 29 November 1864, ORN, I, 16, 468.

repelling the Federal attack.

By 3 December 1864 Sherman had reached Millen; seventy miles from Savannah. Hardee began in earnest to strengthen the city's defenses. He knew that his 18,000 men could not stop Sherman but he hoped that by creating a fortress, Sherman would bypass Savannah for some other city. The major complication was the railroad. Hardee's plan called for protecting this avenue of escape. Hardee designed an outer defense line that began on the river above the railroad bridge and extended south to the Great Ogeechee, just north of Fort McAllister.¹⁰⁰

Sherman left Millen on 4 December 1864, advancing with three corps between the Ogeechee and Savannah Rivers. The XV Corps, by moving along the Ogeechee, outflanked Hardee's outer defense line and forced his withdrawal into the inner defenses. This resulted in the loss of the railroad and an important means of escape. The only avenue open was the Union (Confederate) causeway that led from Savannah to Hardeeville. The withdrawal into the inner defense lines also isolated Fort McAllister.

On 29 November Tattall ordered the evacuation of the C. S. S. *Milledgeville* to Augusta. He suggested to Hunter that all vessels have one month's supply of rations on

¹⁰⁰ McMurry, "Savannah Campaign", 17.

board.¹⁰¹ The next day, 30 November 1864, Hunter called a meeting of his squadron commanding officers. Hunter announced the evacuation plan and ordered the small ships to tow the *Milledgeville* to Augusta. The *Savannah* would remain in the city with the *Georgia* and, if possible, escape and make her way to Charleston. He detailed the *Isondiga* to guard the bridge at Causton's Bluff, while he sent the *Resolute* to obtain fuel. Hunter also ordered Thomas Brent, captain of the *Savannah*, to place his ship in a position to protect the Ogeechee Canal.¹⁰²

As Sherman drew closer to Savannah, Hardee called upon the squadron more and more to help the Army. On 3 December Hardee requested that Hunter order the *Savannah* to the railroad bridge. The deep draft of the *Savannah* prohibited her from doing so, but the *Macon* was able to ascend the river to Sister's Ferry and Hunter ordered her to patrol from there to Boston Ferry. Because she could not ascend the river, Hunter ordered the *Savannah* to protect the obstructions at Fort Jackson on 6 December 1864. On the 8th, Hunter ordered the *Georgia* to the Savannah-Charleston

¹⁰¹ Josiah Tattnall to William W. Hunter, 29 November 1864, ORN, I, 16, 468.

¹⁰² William W. Hunter to Josiah Tattnall, 30 November 1864, ORN, I, 16, 469; and William W. Hunter to Thomas Brent, 30 November 1864, I, 16, 469.

Railroad bridge.¹⁰³ The *Georgia* was perfect for the job. It had little or no motive power but it could be anchored in the river to protect the bridge. Hunter ordered the *Beauregard* and the *Ida* to tow the *Georgia* to her new anchorage. High winds and a swift tide prohibited the *Georgia* from proceeding past the obstructions at Fort Jackson. The vessel remained at anchor there until she was scuttled on 20 December 1864.

On 10 December 1864, Hunter received the long awaited message from the Navy Department. Secretary Mallory ordered Hunter to "not allow any vessels or stores to fall into enemy hands should Savannah fall."¹⁰⁴ This was tantamount to ordering the destruction of the fleet.

That same day Hardee asked Hunter to destroy the Savannah-Charleston rail road bridge. That night Hunter, in the *Sampson*, and with the *Macon*, and *Resolute*, proceeded up river to the bridge. When he reached the bridge Hunter sent small boats and men with combustible materials and burned the bridge on 11 December. While returning to Savannah, the group encountered Federal forces near Broad River north of Savannah. The vessels were fired on by Federal field

¹⁰³ William W. Hunter to George Washington Gwathmey, 8 December 1864, ORN, I, 16, 473.

¹⁰⁴ Stephen R. Mallory to William W. Hunter, 10 December 1864, ORN, I, 16, 476.

artillery and Hunter returned fire. The *Resolute* received a shot that disabled her and she drifted ashore. Federal forces quickly captured the unarmed vessel. The *Macon* and *Sampson* narrowly escaped the same fate. Realizing that he could not pass the batteries, Hunter ordered the vessels to withdraw upstream to Augusta. Hunter sent word to Hardee that "the enemy is all along our front" on the 12th and that he could not return to Savannah. Hunter busied himself with transporting Confederate cavalry, under Wheeler, to South Carolina.¹⁰⁵

Federal cavalry under Kilpatrick reconnoitered Fort McAllister on 12 December and determined there were only about 200 defenders. William B. Hazen's division of the XV Corps crossed the Ogeechee River at King's Bridge on the 13th and advanced on the Fort. Federal artillery began shelling the fort from across the Ogeechee as Hazen moved to attack. As the attack was forming, a federal steamer, the tug *Dandelion*, signaled "Who are you?" Sherman's signal officer replied "General Sherman." Then followed the question "Is Fort McAllister taken?" to which Sherman

¹⁰⁵ William W. Hunter to William J. Hardee, 11 December 1864, ORN, I, 16, 490; Hunter to Hardee, 12 December 1864, ORN, I, 16, 477; Joseph Wheeler to Hunter, 13 December 1864, ORN, I, 16, 478.

replied "Not yet, but it will be in a minute!"¹⁰⁶ Hazen distributed his division with 47th and 54th Ohio and the 11th Illinois on the left, the 48th and 90th Illinois and the 70th Ohio in the center, and the 30th Ohio, 6th Missouri, and 116th Illinois on the right. At 4:30 P.M. Hazen began his assault and at 4:40 P.M. Hazen captured the fort. The fall of Fort McAllister opened communications with the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and allowed supplies and heavy ordnance to be brought in. Later that evening Sherman received word of the failure to seize the rail road at Grahamville so he began preparations to surrounding and laying siege to Savannah.¹⁰⁷

On the 14th of December, Mallory forwarded another message to Hunter, ordering him to "dispose of the squadron to the greatest injury to him [the enemy] and the greatest benefit to our country." Captain Sidney Smith Lee, chief of the Bureau of Orders and Detail, suggested to Hunter that the vessels should die fighting rather than to suffer the indignity of being destroyed by their own officers.¹⁰⁸

Hardee evacuated Savannah on the night of the 20th.

¹⁰⁶ Coburn, *Sherman*, 181.

¹⁰⁷ McMurry, "Savannah Campaign," 20.

¹⁰⁸ Stephen R. Mallory to William W. Hunter, 14 December 1864, ORN, I, 16, 479; Sidney S. Lee to William W. Hunter, 18 December 1864, ORN, I, 16, 481.

The squadron, out of Hunter's command control while he was in Augusta, was under the command of the individual vessel officers. Robert Watson, a seaman on the *Savannah* recorded in his diary

At 3 AM the two new rams and the Navy Yards and Fort Jackson were set on fire, also the gunboat *Isondigger* [*Isondiga*] was fired at 7 AM and the pontoon bridge destroyed. The Yankee flag was hoisted on the Marine Barracks at 7 AM and shortly afterwards they hoisted one on Fort Jackson. At 9 AM the steamer *Swan* was fired, at 10 ½ AM the Yankees opened fire on us from the city. We were not slow in returning the compliment but with what effect I cannot say. The Yankees made excellent shots, nearly everyone struck our sides or smoke stack. One shell went down the smoke stack and rested on the grating but did not explode. . . . At dark the crew were armed with rifles and all the guns loaded, run in, depressed, and spiked. The crew then left in boats by divisions and landed at Screven's Ferry [Union Causeway]. . . The ram was then set on fire. . . The steamer *Firefly* was then fired and we took up our lines of march.¹⁰⁹

The men marched along the causeway to Hardeeville, South Carolina. Sherman had possession of Savannah; the Confederate fleet existed as a small inconsequential force at Augusta, Georgia; the great iron warships were destroyed, and the C.S. Navy's operations around Savannah ended. Watson said that at 11:20 P.M. about eight miles out from the city the ram *Savannah* exploded and "it lit up the

¹⁰⁹ Charles C. Jones, Jr., *The Siege and Evacuation of Savannah, Georgia in December 1864*, (Augusta, Ga.: Chronicle Publishing Co., 1890), np.; and Watson, *Diary*, 21 December 1864.

heavens for miles, we could see to pick up a pin . . ." ¹¹⁰

The sailors reached Hardeeville at 7:00 A.M. on the 22nd. They went on to Charleston that day and from there the crew was split up among the remaining Confederate squadrons. Watson went to Wilmington where he served at Battery Buchanan during the second attack on Fort Fisher. He was present when Fort Fisher and Wilmington fell and then went to Drewry's Bluff, Virginia. When Lee evacuated Richmond, Watson took up the march with Commander John R. Tucker's Naval Brigade, Ewell's Corps, Army of Northern Virginia. Because he was ill, Federal forces captured Watson before the Battle of Sayler's Creek - 6 April 1865 - where the remnants of the James River, Savannah River, and the Cape Fear squadrons made their last stand. A few men and officers surrendered with Lee at Appomattox.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 21 December 1864.

Chapter 2

Recruitment

The 20th of February, 1861 saw a busy day for the poplace in Montgomery, Alabama. The fledgling Confederate States Congress was meeting to decide how the government could best defend the new country. On 21 February 1861 the Confederate Congress created the Confederate States Navy Department and congress granted the Secretary of the Navy, Stephen Russell Mallory, "charge of all matters and things connected with the Navy of the Confederacy" (Figure 2-1).¹¹¹ The same act also provided for a Marine Corps to be established within the Navy Department.

The new department was to be directly under the control of President Jefferson Davis. Davis directed Mallory to "perform such duties appertaining to the Navy as shall, from time to time, be assigned to him [by the President]." So began four long years of frustration that led, ultimately, to Appomattox



Figure 2-1: Stephen R. Mallory, Secretary of the Navy, 1861 - 1865. (Author's Collection)

¹¹¹ Scharf, History, 28.

Courthouse. Frustration but not failure. Under Mallory, the Confederate States Navy Department surpassed all expectations and actually fulfilled most of its obligations.

On 16 March 1861, congress divided the department into four offices, or bureaus: The Office of Ordnance and Hydrography; the Office of Medicine; the Office of Orders and Detail; and the Office of Provisions and Clothing. The act empowered the president to appoint personnel to fill all necessary positions from captain to seaman, and that the total aggregate strength of the Navy should not exceed three thousand men. The final organization was hardly distinguishable from its Federal predecessor. This led one Confederate officer to write that "the only way he could tell the difference was by the color of the uniform."¹¹²

Between 1861 and 1865, the Confederate States Navy enlisted an aggregate strength of approximately 6000 men. Only a small percentage of these 6000 were trained seamen. Many factors influenced the inability of the Navy Department to acquire the necessary trained men. Competition with the army, the greatest obstacle for naval recruitment, deprived the navy of much needed manpower. As the war progressed, many trained seamen resisted enlisting in the Navy so that

¹¹² Scharf, *History*, 29, and Joseph A. Gutierrez, Jr., *Confederate Naval Ordnance, 1861 - 1865*, (Greenville, N.C.: M.A. Thesis, East Carolina University, 1977), 2. Hereinafter referred to as Gutierrez, *Naval Ordnance*.

they could take part in the more lucrative trade of blockade running.¹¹³ The lack of a maritime heritage in the South created a great shortage of experienced sailors for Confederate naval service. The pre-war agrarian southern society depended heavily on northern shipping to move its goods.

The antebellum U.S. Navy recruited most of its seamen from the northern maritime states or foreign ports and none of these "enlisted men" could resign as the officers did and come South.¹¹⁴ As in the North, the southern Navy recruited seamen and marines at "naval rendezvous," military camps, and at conscription camps. Sailors recruited at "camps of instruction," conscription camps, were frequently the "runts of the litter." The navy acquired far better sailors by active recruiting at local naval rendezvous but few seamen were available to volunteer for the sea services.¹¹⁵ A fifty dollar bounty, better pay, and better living conditions prompted many soldiers to request transfer to the Navy rather than stay in the army; yet, army officers, reluctant to lose trained soldiers, frequently refused to allow

¹¹³ Gutierrez, *Naval Ordnance*, 6.

¹¹⁴ Ralph W. Donnelly, "Personnel of the Confederate Navy", in *Civil War Times Illustrated*, vol. 13, no. 9, 26, 27. Hereinafter referred to as Donnelly, "Personnel".

¹¹⁵ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 25.

transfers to proceed.¹¹⁶

Naval enlistments were usually very enticing. Landsmen, the lowest rate for an adult, could expect to be paid \$16 a month, \$5 more than the army private. The navy also offered excellent medical officers (the service required doctors to pass an examining board), good food (twice that of the army), and adequate clothing. Enlistments for seamen were for three years or the war. For marines, a regular service, the enlistment was for four years.¹¹⁷

The Confederate Navy set up rendezvous in key cities throughout the South, especially in sea ports. Naval officers, usually one line officer and one surgeon, interviewed prospective recruits and, if they found the men fit for duty, enrolled them. Surgeons examined each applicant to certify his general fitness and look for any physical handicaps or intoxication. The regulations forbid the enlistment of intoxicated recruits. Applicants with handicaps who had special qualifications could be shipped with the approval of the recruiting officer and surgeon;

¹¹⁶ Stephen R. Mallory Diary, 1 August 1862, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C.; and T. H. Wells, *The Confederate Navy A Study in Organization*, (Birmingham, Al.: University of Alabama Press, 1971), 88, hereinafter referred to as Wells, *Confederate Navy*.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 119.

however, the reason for the waiver had to be noted on the shipping articles.¹¹⁸

The recruiting officer read the shipping articles to the applicants and, once enlisted, immediately transferred them to the local receiving ship. At recruiting stations not located in a port officers detained enlistees until they enrolled several recruits and then transported them to their duty station. Conscription camps were treated as though from a naval rendezvous.¹¹⁹

To enter the navy required an applicant to be at least fourteen years of age and four feet eight inches tall. If he was under twenty-one years of age the navy required parental consent. The Confederate Navy also enlisted free blacks, with the permission of the Navy Department or the local squadron commander, but no more than one-twentieth of the draft, the enlistment party, could be black.¹²⁰

Enlisted men's ratings below the rate of petty officer, were seamen, ordinary seamen, coal heaver, fireman second class, landsman, and boy. No applicant could be accepted above the rate of seaman. Former petty officers received a

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 25.

¹¹⁹ C. S. Navy Department, *Regulations for the Navy of the Confederate States*, (Richmond: McFarlane and Fergusson, 1862), 113; and Donnelly, "Personnel", 27.

¹²⁰ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 27.

reduced rating but the enrolling officer noted the applicant's previous experience. Applicants between the ages of fourteen and seventeen shipped as boys. Landsmen and coal heavers could not be any older than twenty-five unless the landsman recruit had a needed trade, in which case the minimum age was thirty-five. The rate of ordinary seamen required at least one year of sea service and the rate of seamen required the applicant to have at least two.

Naval recruitment in Savannah began in early 1861 with the secession of Georgia. On 21 January 1861, the State Of Georgia called on "all citizens impelled by patriotic impulses" to resign from the federal service and come home to their native state. Governor Brown guaranteed officers the same rank and pay as they received in the federal army or navy. The following Friday, 25 January, a State Convention adopted a resolution calling for the procurement of three steamers for the coastal defense of Georgia. This was to be the beginning of the Georgia State Volunteer Navy.¹²¹

The first seamen recruited into the Georgia State

¹²¹ John Kell McIntosh, *Recollections of a Naval Life*, (Washington: 1900), 37; and John Kell McIntosh Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C.; and d'Antignac, *Georgia's Navy*, 7.

Volunteer Navy occurred in January, 1961.¹²² John M. Kell, Commander, G. V. N., reported that he had shipped twenty-five men for the Georgia State Naval Steamer *Savannah*, a merchant steamer previously named *Everglade*, on 24 February 1861.¹²³ Three days later he reported that he had a full complement of men and officers and the vessel would be ready for operations by 7 March.¹²⁴

An advertisement in the 21 March 1861 *Savannah Daily News* called for able-bodied men for the Georgia Naval Coast Guard. A pay rate of \$18 per month for seamen and \$12 per month for landsmen far surpassed that of the land forces.¹²⁵ The ad also directed the prospective seamen to report to C. Manigault Morris, Commander, at "75 Bay Street (up stairs) office hours 12 to 3 pm."

All Georgia naval property and personnel were turned over to Confederate naval authorities on 30 March 1861. The transfer included all Georgia naval property and personnel.

¹²² *Savannah Daily News* (Savannah), 21 March 1861, adv.

¹²³ The Steamer *Savannah* was renamed the *Oconee* after construction was completed on the *Ram Savannah* in 1863.

¹²⁴ d'Antignac, *Georgia's Navy*, 8.

¹²⁵ Confederate State of America, War Department, *Regulations for the Army of the Confederate States, 1863*, (Richmond: J. W. Randolph, 1863), 177. Pay for privates, infantry and artillery was \$11.00 per month. Pay for cavalry privates was \$12.00 per month.

Brown sold the Georgia vessels to the Confederate States Navy Department at the same time as the property and personnel transfer. Brown ordered all enlisted men and officers to resign from the Georgia State Volunteer Navy and accept service in the fledgling Confederate States Navy.¹²⁶

As the station and its squadron grew, recruitment targeted specific sectors of the maritime community. Trained seamen were especially hard to recruit. In late 1861 Stephen R. Mallory, Secretary of the Navy, requested the War Department to allow qualified seamen to transfer to the Navy. The War Department approved the request in December, 1861.¹²⁷

After the transfer of the Georgia Navy the most immediate concern of the Confederate Naval Authorities in Savannah was, again, the recruitment of sailors to man the ships and the new naval station. Recruiting officer Lieutenant Charles Manigault Morris, C. S. N., began running advertisements in the *Savannah Daily Morning News* on 8 February 1862 seeking able bodied men and offering a \$50.00 bounty. Prospective recruits reported to the recruiting office located in the Custom House at the corner of Bull and

¹²⁶ Lawson, *Naval Facilities*, 51.

¹²⁷ C. S. War Department, *General Order 77*, 16 April 1862, OR, IV, 1, 1095-1097; and Donnelly, *Personnel*, 29.

Bay Streets.¹²⁸ In the spring of 1862, an English traveler described the sailors as "truly magnificent specimens of bone and muscle - mostly foreign born, from the merchant navy."¹²⁹

The Confederate Congress enacted the first Conscription Act on 16 April 1862. The act provided that all seamen and ordinary seamen in the army would be transferred to the navy on application by the Secretary of the Navy. New conscripts could request the navy or marines before assignment to the army. A further act of 2 October 1862, allowed those subject to conscription to enlist voluntarily in the Navy or Marines.¹³⁰

On 21 April 1862, an advertisement appeared in the *Savannah Daily News* offering a \$50 bounty for 100 able-bodied men. The advertisement was a follow up of one started in the *Daily Morning News* on 8 February 1862 that stated:

Wanted Immediately, 100 able bodied men for service in the Confederate States Navy. Applications will be received at the Naval Rendezvous and \$50 bounty will be paid to men enlisting for 3 years or the war. C. Manigault

¹²⁸ Lawson, *Naval Facilities*, 52, and *DMN*, 2 February 1862) advertisement, 2, col. 4.

¹²⁹ Donnelly, "Personnel," 30.

¹³⁰ Donnelly, *Personnel*, 30.

Morris, Lt. Cmdg. C. S. N.¹³¹

On 3 December 1862 the Confederate States Navy Office of Orders and Detail sent all squadron commanders a copy of War Department General Order 77. It stated that:

All cases of application for transfer from the army to the navy, must be forwarded through superior officers, who will certify whether the party whose transfer is sought is or is not a seafaring person.¹³²

On 1 May 1863 the Confederate Congress passed into law an amendment to the 1862 Conscript Act providing that

all persons serving in the land forces of the Confederate States who shall desire to be transferred to the naval service, and whose transfer as seamen or ordinary seamen shall be applied for by the Secretary of the Navy, shall be transferred from the land to the naval service.¹³³

This act was difficult to enforce. Most army commanders were reluctant to transfer trained soldiers to the navy. On 17 February 1864, the Confederate Congress compounded the problem when it enacted a new conscript law that placed all men between the ages of seventeen and fifty in the C.S. Army. With this act the transfer act of 1863 was almost

¹³¹ *DMN*, adv. 21 April 1862 and 8 February 1862.

¹³² *DMN*, 3 December 1862, advertisement, col. 2, 2.

¹³³ Stephen R. Mallory Diary, 1 August 1863, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N. C.; and Joseph T. Durkin, S. J., *Confederate Navy Chief: Stephen R. Mallory*, (Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 290. Hereinafter referred to as Durkin, *Mallory*.

entirely disregarded.¹³⁴

The receiving ship, *C. S. S. Sampson*, an obsolete vessel that was unsuitable as a man-of-war, processed many of the new recruits.¹³⁵ A surgeon examined each applicant to determine their general health and each recruit got a set of clothing. The paymaster entered their names, the rendezvous site, period of enlistment, date of enlistment, place of birth, and age on a descriptive list. He then forwarded copies of the descriptive list to the Navy Department. These records were updated throughout the sailor's service.¹³⁶

At the receiving ship, recruits received training in the basic skills needed to run a ship of war. Serious training to become a sailor began when the enlistee was transferred to the vessel that would be his home. Most sailors wanted to assignment to their squadron vessel quickly because liberty was not allowed on a receiving ship.¹³⁷

Throughout 1863, the navy actively recruited pilots,

¹³⁴ Stephen R. Mallory, 22 March 1864, *ORN*, I, 15, 222, 725; and Durkin, *Mallory*, 297.

¹³⁵ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 25.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

27
1091
NA

Charleston. Sept 30 1862

C. S. NAVY DEPARTMENT.

For Bounty.

To

Dr.

We acknowledge to have received from
Paymaster Geo. H. Ritchie, the sum
of Fifty dollars each on account
of Bounty, having enlisted for 3 years
in the war.

W. Thompson
Geo. Johnson
Geo. Almeida
Patrick Carr
L. a. Russard



50
50
50
50
50
250

Witness

J. H. Ingraham
Lieut. Col. May

Figure 2-2. C.S. Navy Department Bounty Paid at Charleston, S. C., 30 September 1862. (M1091, roll 17).

seamen, and marines.¹³⁸ W. W. Hunter, commander of forces afloat, sent Lieutenant William W. Carnes, C. S. N. to Camp Randolph near Atlanta to obtain recruits from the conscript camp there.¹³⁹ Carnes offered prospective seamen a bounty of \$50.00 for voluntary enlistments of three years or the war (Figure 2-2).¹⁴⁰ If the enlistee was reenlisting in naval or military service, Carnes offered a bounty of \$40.00 and allowed them to retain their old rating.¹⁴¹ Carnes obtained fifty men for the navy, all of them landsmen.¹⁴² Lieutenant Henry Lea Graves, C. S. M. C., had already visited the camp, but was able to ship only twelve recruits. Captain William W. Hunter, C. S. N., in a report filed to the Navy Department on 12 January 1863 described his seamen as follows:

¹³⁸ *DMN*, 15 June 1863, advertisement, 2, col 4.

¹³⁹ Donnelly, *Personnel*, 32.

¹⁴⁰ Lieutenant John. H. Ingraham to C.S. Navy Department, 30 Sept 1862, National Archives, Microcopy 1091, roll 17. Hereinafter cited as M1091.

¹⁴¹ Scharf, *History*, 769.

¹⁴² Harwell, ed., *A Confederate Marine: A Sketch of Henry Lea Graves with Excerpts from the Graves Family Correspondence 1861- 1865*, (Tuscaloosa, Al.: Confederate Publishing Co., Inc. 1963), 99. Hereinafter referred to as Harwell, *Graves Letters*; and Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 93; and Donnelly, "Personnel," 32.

On the *Savannah*: "She is manned with conscripts who are as well trained as artillerists as it has been possible in the period of time which they have been in service."

On the *Georgia*: "She is manned with conscripts, who are well drilled at her battery."

On the *Isondiga*: "She is manned with conscripts, well trained."¹⁴³

In 1864, the Navy Department pressed the Army of Tennessee to turn over men who had requested transfer to the navy as early as 1862.¹⁴⁴ On 3 March 1864, the Army of Tennessee sent 100 men to the Savannah Squadron.¹⁴⁵ These men were so desperately needed that the enrolling officers shipped them directly aboard the squadron's vessels on 9 March 1864. The monthly return of enlistments from 1 May 1864 shows that all enlistees shipped on 8 April 1864, came from Dalton, Georgia and the Army of Tennessee.

Where They Came From¹⁴⁶

It is estimated that as many as 1000 officers, sailors, and marines, 16.67% of the navy, were of Irish birth,

¹⁴³ Donnelly, *Personnel*, 33.

¹⁴⁴ Watson, *Diary*, 3 March 1864.

¹⁴⁵ William W. Hunter to William W. Carnes, 3 February 1864, ORN, I, 15, 720.

¹⁴⁶ Statistics in this section were performed using S.A.S. Statistical Software. Statistical data was compiled from transfer, enlistment, and shipping data from M1091, RG 45, National Archives.

descent, or nationality.¹⁴⁷ Existing muster rolls tend to support this conclusion. Of the one hundred men transferred from Dalton, Georgia to the Savannah Squadron, 17.5% of the recruits gave their birth place as Ireland. The Irish recruits made up the largest group acquired at the Dalton conscription camp followed by 12.3% from Florida and 10.5% from Kentucky. The total composition of the recruits shows that 38.7% of the recruits were foreign born from countries such as England, Ireland, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, and Nova Scotia. The remainder, 61.3%, were of American birth. Interestingly, 8.9% of the recruits came from the northern states of Ohio, New York, New Jersey, and Illinois.

The greatest percentage of ordinary seamen (29.6%) came from Ireland (Table 2-1 & 2-2), while those rated as seamen were foreign born (75%) with the majority from England. It is interesting that most enlistees with superior ratings were foreign, while most enlistees of native birth were rated as landsmen. Though the sample was very small, it does support the general thesis on Irish ethnicity.

All these men shipped as either seamen, ordinary seamen, or landsmen. The majority of landsmen (27.2%) came from Kentucky and Louisiana. Only 18% of the landsmen were

¹⁴⁷ John de Courcy Ireland, "The Confederate States at sea in the American Civil War: The Irish Contribution, in *Irish Sword*, vol. XIV, no. 54, 74.

from countries other than the United States or the Confederacy. Some enlistees listed their homes in Kentucky and Louisiana. Both states had major river trade centers at Louisville and New Orleans. The men quite possibly had extensive training on river vessels. Apparently the C.S. naval officers preferred foreign training, which was mainly sea duty and could in fact have been Royal Navy training, to that given to river bound, domestic, commercial, sailors (Tables 2-1, 2-2, & 2-3).¹⁴⁸

A comparison of sailor's ages to that of the land services produces an interesting difference in recruit age. The greater majority (74%) of soldiers in the army were twenty years of age or less.¹⁴⁹ The men shipped at Dalton were aged from sixteen to fifty-one. Twenty-two percent of the enlistees were between thirty and thirty-three years of age while the majority of the recruits fell between the ages of twenty and thirty years with a mean age of twenty-nine years and a median age of twenty-eight. Although late in the war, it must be remembered that many of these men had applied for transfer to the Navy as early as 1862.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Monthly Return of Enlistments, March 1865, M1091, roll 17.

¹⁴⁹ Burke Davis, *The Civil War: Strange & Fascinating Facts*, (New York, N.Y.: The Fairfax Press, 1982), 63.

¹⁵⁰ Watson, Diary, 3 February 1864.

Table 2-1: Frequencies of Age and Birth Among Landsman Recruits.

Frequency of AGE among recruits rated as Landsman
RATING Landsman

AGE	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
16	1	4.5	1	4.5
18	1	4.5	2	9.1
20	1	4.5	3	13.6
21	1	4.5	4	18.2
22	3	13.6	7	31.8
23	1	4.5	8	36.4
25	2	9.1	10	45.5
27	1	4.5	11	50.0
28	1	4.5	12	54.5
30	2	9.1	14	63.6
31	1	4.5	15	68.2
32	1	4.5	16	72.7
34	1	4.5	17	77.3
35	3	13.6	20	90.9
36	1	4.5	21	95.5
48	1	4.5	22	100.0

N = 22

Frequency of Birth Places among Recruits Rated as Landsman
RATING Landsman

BORN	Frequency	Percent
England	1	4.5
Florida	2	9.1
Georgia	2	9.1
Germany	1	4.5
Ireland	1	4.5
Kentucky	4	18.2
Louisiana	4	18.2
Maryland	1	4.5
Mississippi	1	4.5
New York	1	4.5
Nova Scotia	1	4.5
South Carolina	3	13.6

N = 22

Table 2-2: Frequencies of Age and Birth Among Ordinary Seaman Recruits.

Frequency of AGE among recruits rated as Ordinary Seaman
 RATING Ordinary Seaman

AGE	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
17	1	3.7	1	3.7
19	1	3.7	2	7.4
20	3	11.1	5	18.5
23	2	7.4	7	25.9
24	2	7.4	9	33.3
25	2	7.4	11	40.7
27	2	7.4	13	48.1
28	1	3.7	14	51.9
30	3	11.1	17	63.0
31	1	3.7	18	66.7
33	3	11.1	21	77.8
34	1	3.7	22	81.5
35	1	3.7	23	85.2
37	1	3.7	24	88.9
38	1	3.7	25	92.6
42	1	3.7	26	96.3
50	1	3.7	27	100.0

N = 27

Frequency of Birth Places among Recruits Rated as Ordinary Seaman

RATING Ordinary Seaman

BORN	Frequency	Percent
Alabama	2	7.4
Belgium	1	3.7
England	1	3.7
Florida	4	14.8
Garrott Parish	1	3.7
Georgia	1	3.7
Illinois	1	3.7
Ireland	8	29.6
Kentucky	1	3.7
Mississippi	1	3.7
New Jersey	2	7.4
Norway	1	3.7
Nova Scotia	1	3.7
Ohio	1	3.7
South Carolina	1	3.7

N = 27

Landsmen, by far the largest group shipped, were between the ages of twenty-two and thirty-five (Table 2-1). Ordinary Seamen ranged in age from seventeen to fifty with the greatest majority between the ages of thirty and thirty-three (Table 2-2). Seamen, the smallest group, were between the ages of twenty-seven and forty (Table 2-3). It was not a matter of the army dumping older men on the navy. Surgeons examined the men as they shipped and found them suitable for naval service.¹⁵¹ The nature of the sea services and the extended time an enlisted man needed to advance in grade dictated older, more experienced, men.

Whatever the needs of the navy, transfers from the army were usually inadequate and slow. Enlistments continued and, when needed, the Department transferred men from other commands such as the Mobile, James River, or the Charleston Squadrons.¹⁵² On 6 October 1863, William W. Hunter, Commander of Forces Afloat at Savannah, notified Secretary Mallory and the Office of Orders and Detail that, because of naval operations in the Charleston area, the C. S. S. *Isondiga* was without a crew.¹⁵³ Hunter reported again on 21

¹⁵¹ Donnelly, "Personnel," 30.

¹⁵² Captain John K. Mitchell to Lieutenant Commanding J. M. Gardner, P. N. C. S., 24 June 1864, M1091, roll 17.

¹⁵³ William W. Hunter to Stephen R. Mallory, 6 October 1863, ORN, I, 15, 691.

Table 2-3: Frequencies of Age and Birth Among Seaman Recruits.

Frequency of AGE among recruits rated as Seaman

RATING Seaman				
AGE	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
20	1	12.5	1	12.5
27	2	25.0	3	37.5
32	1	12.5	4	50.0
36	1	12.5	5	62.5
39	1	12.5	6	75.0
40	1	12.5	7	87.5
51	1	12.5	8	100.0

N = 8

Frequency of Birth Places among Recruits Rated as Seaman

RATING Seaman		
BORN	Frequency	Percent
England	2	25.0
Florida	1	12.5
Germany	1	12.5
Ireland	1	12.5
Kentucky	1	12.5
Scotland	1	12.5
Sweden	1	12.5

N = 8

April 1864 that there were not enough men to supply patrol boats for monitoring the obstructions.

Recruiting and transfers continued until, on 29 April 1864, just eight days later, Hunter reported that he now had enough men to maintain effectiveness of the squadron.¹⁵⁴ Conscripts deserted to Fort Pulaski and the Federal naval warships so frequently that Confederate authorities required two officers to accompany each boat.¹⁵⁵ Desertions escalated during the last quarter of 1863 and throughout 1864. Tattnall offered rewards, ranging from \$40 to \$60 for the return of men who had deserted. It became so bad that Hunter and Colonel Edward C. Anderson, commander of the shore batteries at Savannah, issued a joint order "to be especially vigilant for *draft dodgers* and *deserters* trying to get to Fort Pulaski."¹⁵⁶

On 31 August 1864 Hunter submitted his second quarter report to the Navy Department detailing the vessels and their crews under his command.¹⁵⁷ The report showed six

¹⁵⁴ William W. Hunter to John K. Mitchell, 29 April 1864, ORN, I, 15, 731.

¹⁵⁵ William W. Hunter to Hugh W. Mercer, 21 April 1864, ORN, I, 15, 727 & 728.

¹⁵⁶ Edward C. Anderson to William W. Hunter, 4 August 1864, ORN, I, 15, 762.

¹⁵⁷ William W. Hunter to John K. Mitchell, 31 August 1864, ORN, I, 15, 767.

vessels available for duty in the Savannah vicinity. These vessels required sixty-eight officers and three-hundred and sixty-eight enlisted men to maintain river operations (Table 2-4).

Table 2-4: Breakdown of Officers and Crew from the vessels of the Savannah River Squadron, 31 August 1864.

Vessel	Guns	Officers	Crew
<i>Savannah</i>	4	27	154
<i>Georgia</i>	5	12	82
<i>Isondiga</i>	2	10	50
<i>Sampson</i>	2	9	40
<i>Resolute</i>		7	28
<i>Firefly</i>		3	14
Total	13	68	368

Other squadron vessels, the C. S. S. *Water Witch*, C. S. S. *Milledgeville*, and C. S. S. *Macon*, had not been commissioned at the time of the report, nor assigned any crew.¹⁵⁸ The *Macon*, a gunboat similar to the *Isondiga*, would require a crew of fifty to sixty men. The *Milledgeville*, a Richmond class ironclad, would require a crew comparable to the *Savannah*. The *Water Witch* also would require a crew comparable to the *Isondiga*. Only the *Macon* would receive a crew before the evacuation of Savannah.

On 30 November 1864, twenty days before the final evacuation of Savannah and the destruction of the fleet, Hunter again reported that there were insufficient men to

¹⁵⁸ William W. Hunter to Sidney S. Lee, 31 August 1864, ORN, I, 15, 767.

maintain the guard. Demands for Hunter's men came from all quarters. Commodore Josiah Tattnall, Commander of the Naval Station at Savannah, requested aid in removing the uncompleted *Milledgeville* from the ship yard and towing the vessel to Augusta. Major General William J. Hardee, the Commander of the Department of Georgia and South Carolina, requested naval vessels at strategic points to aid the withdrawal of land forces. In the event Savannah were abandoned, the Navy Department required destruction of the fleet. These duties severely taxed the personnel afloat, especially after Hunter was cut off from his command by Federal forces and was not present to take personal control of the squadron.

Recruiting in the face of defeat can never be easy. It is amazing that the Confederate navy obtained the minimum manpower necessary to maintain its fleets. Recruiters often used the ploy of "you will serve near your family and home" when they tried to ship new seamen. It apparently did not work. The greater majority of sailors came from outside Savannah, Georgia, and, sometimes, the South. By far the greatest majority of experienced men came from abroad. Maintaining a viable, working force consumed much of the time of the squadron commanders and led to conflict among the squadrons.

Chapter 3

Clothing

Two able, professional paymasters operated the Office of Provisions and Clothing, the bureau responsible for paying, clothing, and feeding the navy: John De Bree and James A. Semple. As paymasters they were responsible for paying, requisitioning, storing, issuing, maintaining, and accounting for food, clothing, small stores, and other items a sailor might need for personal use.¹⁵⁸ Under their control the navy never wanted for food and, most of the time, had adequate clothing. Their only failure, if indeed it was their fault, was that they could never provide adequate pay.

John De Bree, Chief of Bureau from 1861 to April 1864, had forty-four years service as a paymaster in the U.S. Navy. James A. Semple, Chief of Bureau from April 1864 until the end of the war, had eleven years service in the "old navy." These two men, in the face of overwhelming adversity from the blockading U.S. Navy, the invading U.S. Army and the ever competitive C.S. Army, provided clothing to each squadron, ship, sailor, and, after January 1865, each officer of the navy. It is just short of miraculous that they functioned as well as they did.

The Savannah Squadron had eight paymasters from 1861 to 1864. The chief station paymaster, C. Lucian Jones,

¹⁵⁸ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 75.

Assistant Paymaster, C.S.N., served from 1861 to 1863. Jones was responsible for all provisions, stores, pay, and records at the Savannah station. Charles W. Keim, assistant paymaster, replaced Jones in 1863. Dewitt C. Seymour, assistant paymaster, was the squadron purser from 1862 to December 1864. All other squadron paymasters were under his direction.¹⁵⁹

The task of clothing and feeding the new navy was daunting. The need to maintain the navy's personnel grew as quickly as the navy grew. Initially congress authorized the C.S. Navy only 500 men. The Bureau clothed these men by using existing stores captured at Norfolk and Pensacola in 1861.¹⁶⁰ By late 1861 congress authorized the navy to increase its strength to 3000 and the need to find other sources of supply was increasingly paramount.¹⁶¹

Stephen R. Mallory, Secretary of the Navy, sent naval purchasing agents throughout Europe to acquire the necessary

¹⁵⁹ John M. Carroll, *Register of Officers of the Confederate States Navy 1861 - 1865*, (Mattituck, N. Y.: J. M. Carroll & Company, 1983), 11, 48, 102, 106, 133, 145, 176, 186.

¹⁶⁰ Norfolk was a major supply center for the U.S. Navy prior to the Civil War. Although burned when Virginia seceded, the clothing, ordnance, and small arms stores remained virtually intact. The Confederate navy made good use of the remaining supplies and, when Norfolk was recaptured, the Navy Department created a depot at Charlotte in 1862.

¹⁶¹ Scharf, *History*, 29.

supplies. James D. Bullock, Commander, C.S.N., was the chief procurement officer in Europe. Under his guidance the navy never wanted for adequate equipment and clothing; however, supplying the necessary clothing to vessels of the Savannah squadron was a different matter.

The Navy Department instructed Bulloch, in May 1861, to purchase, without insignia, "cloth or cassinette pants, shoes, cloth jumpers, woolen socks, cloth round jackets, blankets, duck pants, blue cloth caps, blue flannel overshirts, pea jackets, blue flannel undershirts, barnsley sheeting frocks, blue flannel underdrawers, and black silk neckerchiefs." Some of these items made it through the blockade, several did not.¹⁶²

Apparently much British uniform material reached the Confederacy.¹⁶³ Supplies reaching Savannah, Georgia, on the *Fingal* were issued to Savannah squadron crews. Evidence of this is the issue of "blue pea jackets," "English clothing," and "blue satinette trousers."¹⁶⁴ The "Gray Navy" that Secretary Mallory and Commander John M. Brooke envisioned

¹⁶² Frederick P. Todd, *American Military Equipage 1851-1872*, Three Volumes. Volume III, (Westbrook, Ct.: Company of Military Historians, 1978), 588. Hereinafter referred to as Todd, III, *Equipage*; and James D. Bulloch to S. R. Mallory, August 1861, ORN, II, 2, 379.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 589; Clothing Issue, 18 December 1861, M1091, Roll 51.

was slow to come about because the army utilized most of the gray cloth and the Department continued to issue blue clothing captured at Norfolk.

By late 1862 gray began to seep into the enlisted ranks. The cost of importing the traditional "navy blue" was prohibitive. One English visitor remarked that "the cultivation of indigo to make blue dye is now entirely discontinued . . . they were not able to make the naval uniform of the Confederacy blue as everyone knows a naval uniform ought to be. It is now the same color as the military uniform."¹⁶⁵

Clothing Issue

The riverine sailor may not have been as well dressed as his "deep water" counterparts, but he was much better off than his army comrades. The paymaster issued uniforms to sailors upon induction and promised them a substantial clothing allowance to maintain their kit, but the pressing need for funds elsewhere in the Confederacy deprived the enlisted men of their much needed allowance. Robert Watson, wrote in his diary that "we are not allowed any clothing money but have to pay for everything we draw out of our

¹⁶⁵ Nelson D. Lankford, Nelson D. ed. *An Irishman in Dixie Thomas Conolly's Diary of the Fall of the Confederacy*. (Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1988) 61; hereinafter cited as Lankford, *Conolly*; and Philip Katcher, "Sailors in Gray", in *Campaigns*, April 1983, 44.

wages."¹⁶⁶

Deficiencies resulted in the issue of new clothing to the sailor and the cost was deducted from his pay account. Clothing prices could range from as high as fifteen dollars to as little as ninety-five cents. A landsman's (raw recruit) pay was \$16.00 a month. The cost of the initial uniform was

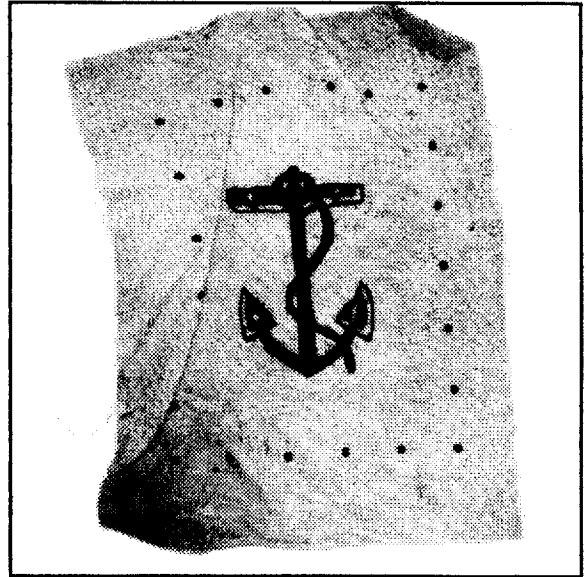


Figure 3-1. Rating Badge. Author's collection.

\$100.12 (Table 3-1). It would take a new sailor, barring any other expenses and devoting his entire pay to the task, a little over six months to pay for his uniform. After deducting the clothing issue from their pay and forwarding any allotments to their families, many sailors were without money and would probably not see any for the entire war. **What they were supposed to look like.**

Regulations established in 1862 for the enlisted personnel of the Confederate States Navy were the same regulations adopted by the U.S. navy in 1859, except that the Confederates replaced all references to blue with *steel*

¹⁶⁶ Watson, *Diary*, 10 May 1864.

gray and changed the U. S. Navy's rating badge, the eagle and anchor surmounted by a five pointed star, to a fouled anchor (Figure 3-1) (For the rank structure see Table 3-2).¹⁶⁷

The regulations described clothing for petty officers, firemen, coal-

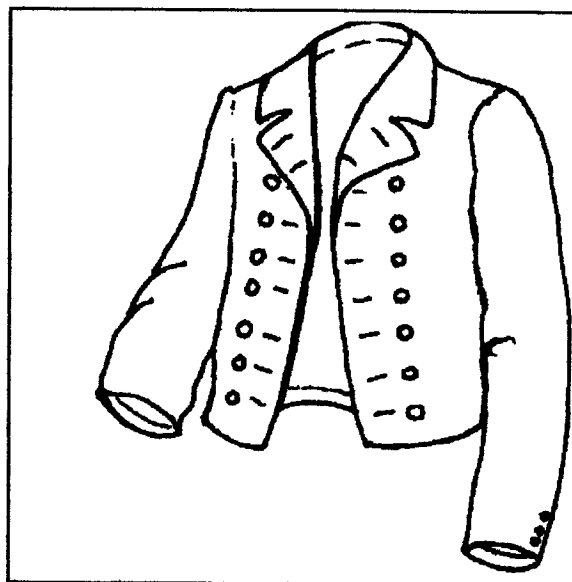


Figure 3-2. U.S. Navy pattern round jacket. Jeff Johnstone Collection.

heavers, seamen, ordinary seamen, landsmen, and boys at muster as steel gray cloth jackets (round jackets) and trousers, or steel gray wool frocks (jumpers) with white duck collars and cuffs, black hats, black silk neckerchiefs and shoes, or boots in cold weather. In warm weather, the uniform was to consist of white jumpers - collars and cuffs to be lined with blue cloth - white trousers, black or white hats as the commander may direct, black silk neckerchiefs, and black shoes. Thick gray hats without visors could be worn at sea when not at muster.

The gray jacket, known as the *round jacket* or *monkey jacket*, was a waist length, eighteen button, shell jacket

¹⁶⁷ Todd, III, *Equipage*, 594.

Table 3-1: Issuing Prices of Navy Clothing, 30 April 1863.
(Wells, Confederate Navy, 161.)

I n Y e T a h r s e	P Y e e r r	Articles of Issue	E S t V i a m l a u t e d	Issuing Price With 10% Added	Total Cost
1		Pea Jackets	\$13.70	\$15.07	\$15.07
	1	Round Jackets	9.45	10.40	10.40
		Flannel Jumpers	1.92	2.12	2.12
	2	Cloth Trousers	5.40	5.94	11.88
		Satinet Trousers	3.45	3.80	3.80
	3	Canvas Trousers	1.65	1.82	5.46
	3	Barnsley Sheeting Frock	1.68	1.85	5.55
	3	Flannel Overshirts	2.75	3.03	9.09
	3	Flannel Undershirts	1.62	1.79	5.37
	2	Flannel Drawers	1.56	1.72	3.44
	4	Shoes, pair,	2.63	2.90	11.60
	4	Socks, pair,	.86	.95	3.80
	2	Caps	1.37	1.51	3.02
	2	Silk Neckerchiefs	1.50	1.65	3.30
2		Blankets	2.82	3.11	6.22
		Total Cost	\$53.36	\$57.66	\$100.12

Table 3-2: Relative Rank Structure of Enlisted Petty Officers, and Seamen, C.S. Navy, 1862.

Petty Officer Rating System, C.S.N.¹⁶⁸
1862-1865

Chief Petty Officer [Master's Mate]

Master At Arms

Line Petty Officers

Boatswain's Mate
Gunner's Mate
Cockswain to the
fleet Commander
Quartermaster
Quarter Gunner
Cockswain
Captain of the Forecastle
Captain of the Main Top
Captain of the Fore Top
Carpenter's Mate
Captain of the Afterguard
Captain of the Hold
Captain of the Mizzen Top

Staff Officers

Yeoman
Schoolmaster
Surgeon's Steward

Ship's Steward
Ship's Corporal
Armorer
Cooper
Ship's Cook

Sailmaker's Mate
First Class Fireman
Painter
Band Master
Squadron Commander's
Steward
Armorer's Mate
Cabin Steward
Ward Room Steward
Cabin Cook
Ward Room Cook

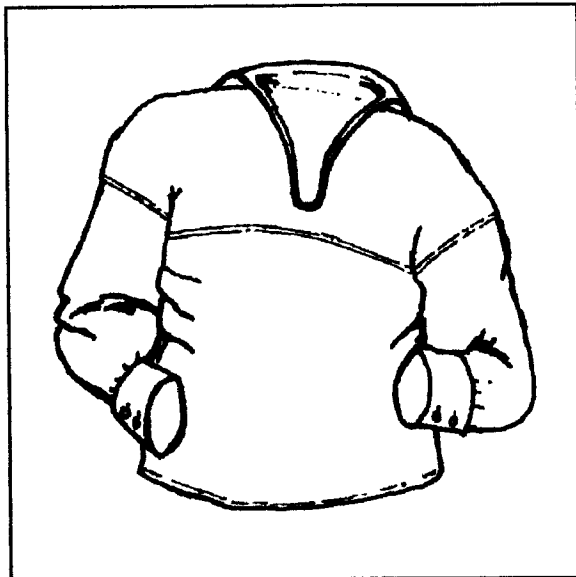
Enlisted Rating System:

Seamen
Ordinary Seamen
Landsmen
Boys

First Class Firemen
Second Class Firemen
Coal-Heavers

¹⁶⁸ C. S. Navy Department, *Regulations for the Navy of the Confederate States 1862*, (Richmond, Va.: MacFarlane & Fergusson, 1862), p 6,7. Hereinafter cited as *Regulations*.

with a rolling collar (Figure 3-2). There were usually three buttons on the cuff. Button styles and types varied. The blue jacket worn by Lt. Robert D. Minor of the C.S.S. Virginia had U.S. artillery buttons. The blue jacket worn by C. Lucien Jones, paymaster, had



Confederate naval buttons. Both of these jackets were

Figure 3-3. C.S. Navy pattern jumper. (Jeff Johnston).

officer's clothing and reflect superior workmanship an officer could afford. Enlisted men were not expected to maintain their uniforms to the standards of the officers and the color and button styles could vary radically.¹⁶⁹

The frock, or jumper, resembled the modern naval jumper with a few minor exceptions (Figure 3-3). Shoulder seams dropped off the shoulder, giving a more bloused appearance. The yoke - the joining of the upper part of the jumper to the lower - was of no set pattern or non-existent. The collar varied in length but was usually less than six and a

¹⁶⁹ Todd, III, *Equipage*, 586, and Edward S. Franzosa, "Catalog of Uniforms," in *Camp Chase Gazette*, Vol. 16, No. 1, October 1988, 25-26, hereafter cited as Franzosa, "Uniforms."

half inches.¹⁷⁰ Contemporary drawings and photographs showing jumpers are extremely rare. One drawing of a prisoner at Fort Norfolk in 1864 shows the seaman wearing a jumper with a five-button neck closure and two-button cuffs. The body is very full and the sleeves appear tapered to fit the arm. The collar is unlined and appears to be of the same material as the rest of the jumper.¹⁷¹

The trousers of the enlisted sailor varied in pattern as much as the other articles of clothing. Clothing records indicate that the squadron issued blue trousers throughout the war. Gray trousers did not become an item for issue until 1863.¹⁷² The Confederate government issued trousers in three different patterns: fall front, seam pocket, and mule ear.

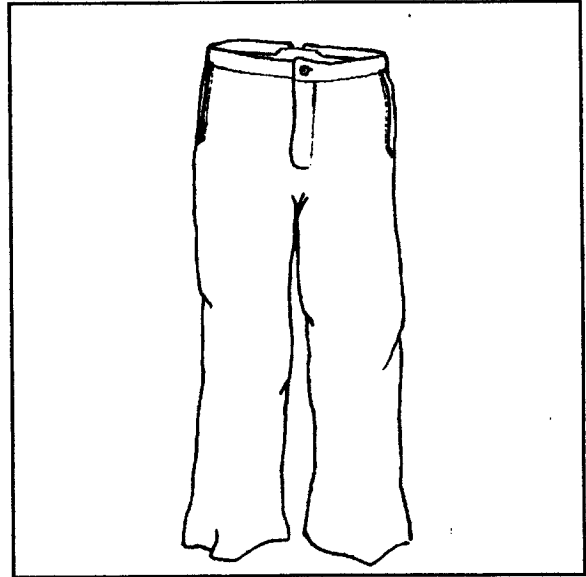
Government records did not distinguish which type of trouser was issued. Fall front trousers were the "traditional" sailor pants with a seven to thirteen button, bib front closure. The legs and seat were full to allow

¹⁷⁰ Todd, III, *Equipage*, 531.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 531; and Peter Herrington, "Confederate 'Prisoners' at Fort Norfolk, 1864: Five Contemporary Sketches," in *Military Collector and Historian*, XLII, No. 2, p. 76, Summer, 1990; hereinafter cited as Herrington, "Prisoners."

¹⁷² Ibid., 589; and M1091, *Clothing Issues*, roll 51, 30 June 1863, roll 53, 30 June 1863. Roll 54, 31 March 1863, 28 September 1863, 30 December 1863.

free movement and the leg cuffs were open so that the pants could be rolled to the knee. Located on the waist band seam was a drawstring for size adjustment. There are no existing records, photographs, or drawings indicating Confederate sailors wore this type of



trousers. It is unclear if this type of trouser was part

Figure 3-4. U.S. and C.S. issue trousers. Jeff Johnston Collection.

of the captured stores from Norfolk. Clothing manifests do not identify the trouser type.

Seam pocket trousers appear to be the most common trouser type. These trousers are characterized by a four button fly and seam pockets. The trouser cuff covers the top of the shoe and the waist had the same style drawstring adjustment as fall front trousers. Existing photographs of Confederate seamen show this style of trousers (Figure 3-4).

Mule ear pocket trousers resemble the button fly trousers in every way except that the pockets, closed with a button, are sewn into the front of the trouser leg, much like modern blue jeans pockets. Land forces favored this

type of trouser and they were a very common issue. The navy may have issued these trousers as well. Of the three types of trousers issued, most photographs show the seam pocket style of trouser.

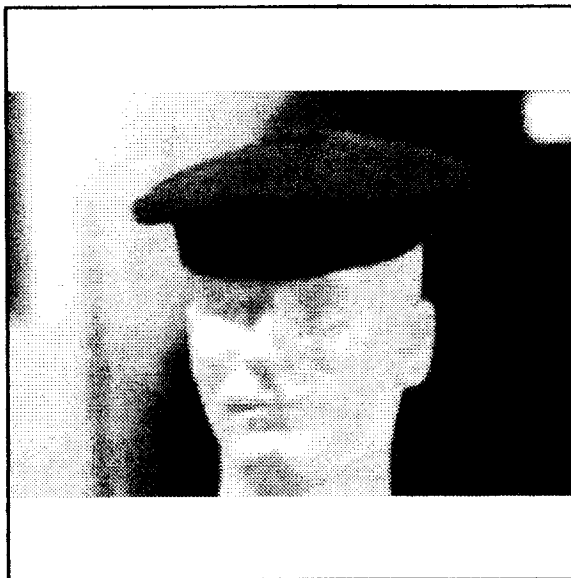


Figure 3-5. Confederate round hat. (Columbus Naval Museum).

The drawing of a prisoner at Fort Norfolk is interesting because it illustrates a pair of

trousers with no fly and apparently closed by a draw string.¹⁷³ There is an existing federal navy uniform in the Smithsonian Institute's Museum of American History of a similar pattern. The Smithsonian trousers were made of white cotton duck and closed with a drawstring; much like modern sweat pants.

The round hat, or *pork pie*, a blue or gray cloth cap, was the common hat style for the mid-nineteenth century sailor. Regulations called for sennet hats - white or japanned black, straw hats - for dress wear; however, there are no records of sennet hat issue. There is one example of

¹⁷³ Herrington, "Prisoners" 76.

a seaman's cloth hat at the Columbus Confederate Naval Museum (Figure 3-5). The hat is constructed of heavy, dark gray wool.¹⁷⁴ It has no visor and is lined with muslin. The hat band is adjusted in the back using a draw string. The Herrington plate of the Confederate sailor prisoner of war shows a hat of similar design. The Herrington hat also has a ribbon, with the word *Merrimac* painted or embroidered, tied around the hat band with a bow (Figure 3-6). This illustration is unusual in that most contemporary photographs of Union and Confederate sailors do not show a painted hat ribbon. Instead, the hat ribbon was left plain.

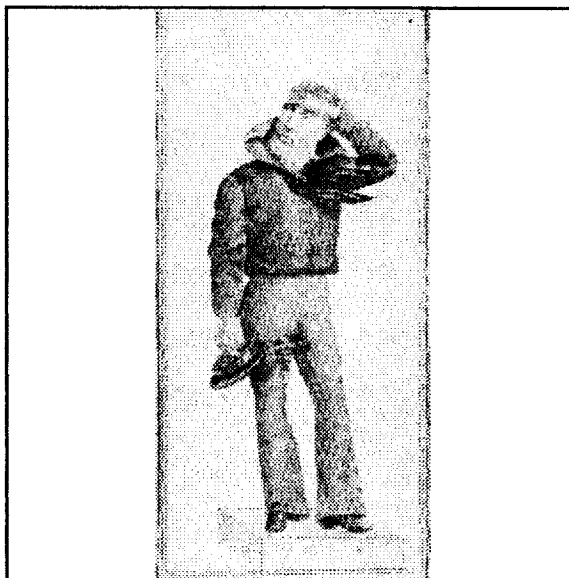
Dress hats (sennet hats) normally carried the painted ribbon bearing the ship's name. The cloth hat, considered a work or fatigue hat, had traditionally been left plain. Federal forces adopted the round hat as the dress hat later in the war and the practice may have spread to the South. A photograph of William Gilmore, pilot of the C.S.S. *Arkansas*, shows him wearing a military style forage cap with a naval device attached.¹⁷⁵ It is possible that caps issued from 1862 to 1864 were of the army pattern. An indication of military cap may be identified by the word "cap."

The naval and army issue shirts were identical and came

¹⁷⁴ The color is known today as "Richmond Gray."

¹⁷⁵ Donnelly, "Personnel," 31.

in an assortment of patterns that changed minimally over the war years. The shirt, as issued from 1861 to 1865 was an off white, or cream, color flannel with reinforced shoulders and slit head opening. The shirt had a square collar closed with a metal button, tapered



sleeves, closed with a single button, and a full cut body. Confederates issued this type of shirt, in wool and cotton, throughout the war.¹⁷⁶

Figure 3-6. Herrington Plate showing Confederate naval prisoner at Fort Norfolk. (*Military Collector and Historian*).

of shirt, in wool and cotton, throughout the war.¹⁷⁶

Confederate sailors supplemented their shirt issue with civilian clothing from home adding various color and style differences. In a study by Dr. Edward S. Franzosa of eight existing Confederate military shirts, three were white, three were brown, one purple, and one blue. One shirt had no collar, four had turn down collars, and 3 had stand up (square) collars. Five shirts had no pockets, one had one pocket, and two had two pockets. Button holes on the head opening slit were either three or four, with one shirt

¹⁷⁶ Stephen E. Osman, "Federal Issue Shirt," in *Camp Chase Gazette*, Volume 16, Number 3, Jan-Feb 1989, 17.

having no button holes. Four shirts had glass buttons, one had mother of pearl, one bone, and one metal. Only one shirt had ruffs, possibly indicating an officers shirt.¹⁷⁷

Shoes were the hardest items to acquire. Sailors who climbed rigging and worked sails could go barefoot; however, standing watch on ironclads and steam ships required shoes. Non-insulated decks adjacent to the fire and engine rooms became very hot and in winter a thin layer of ice covered the iron armor and upper decks.

Shoes were the most serious problem for sailors. The Navy Department set up a shoe factory in Graniteville, South Carolina, but the army seized the factory when the War Department thought that the army's needs far outweighed the navy's. Naval agents had to scramble to fill their shoe orders and, as a result, most shoes purchased by the navy came from England.¹⁷⁸ The Office of Provisions and Clothing sent each squadron a pattern for canvas shoes and asked them to try to get them produced locally. Shoes, however, remained a problem throughout the war and the navy continued to import most from abroad.¹⁷⁹ The C.S. Navy apparently never solved the "shoe problem." In November 1864, the men

¹⁷⁷ Franzosa, "Uniforms," 26.

¹⁷⁸ John De Bree to Stephen R. Mallory, 14 November 1863, ORN, II, 2, 555.

¹⁷⁹ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 86.

of the James River Squadron stood watch on freezing decks without shoes, coats, or blankets.¹⁸⁰

What they really looked like.

Early clothing issues to Savannah sailors were almost entirely blue in color. The uniform consisted of a blue cloth hat, blue jumper, blue trousers, blue shirt, blue round jacket, a black silk neckerchief, and shoes. Issues of gray overshirts occurred regularly in 1861, and by 1863, the Department issued gray cloth, gray jackets and gray trousers to most squadrons.¹⁸¹

Paymaster John De Bree set up clothing manufacturing centers in Richmond, Savannah, and Mobile using mainly domestic materials. Despite the zeal of De Bree and paymaster Semple, the Confederate sailor looked more like a merchant seaman than a naval sailor. The few surviving photographs of Confederate sailors indicate a varied uniform consisting of many different colored shirts, blue, white, or gray trousers, black silk neckerchief and a gray or blue round hat. Frederick Todd shows a photograph of possible Confederate seamen in white shirts and trousers. The only indication they may be Confederate sailors is the fact that they are wearing neckerchiefs and reversed U.S. Navy belt

¹⁸⁰ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 84.

¹⁸¹ Todd, III, *Equipage*, 588.

buckles (Figure 3-7).¹⁸²

There were times when the Confederate sailor looked the part. The uniform of Matthew Pielert, captain-of-the-hold of the C.S.S.

Torpedo, shows what appears to be a totally gray uniform

including round jacket, round

hat, shirt, and trousers

(Figure 3-8). The date of

the photograph is unknown but gray cloth availability and issue dates (middle to late 1864) suggests 1864 as most

probable. Pielert's photograph, although from the James River Squadron, is a good example of the Confederate

enlisted naval uniform and illustrates that the navy was at least trying to meet the uniform regulations.

After reporting on board the C.S.S. *Savannah Watson*



Figure 3-7. Confederate seamen. (Todd, III, *Equipage*, 589).

¹⁸² Todd, III, *Equipage*, 589. The practice of reversing the U.S. buckle was common. Many period photographs show the U.S. belt plate inverted. Brass was needed elsewhere and the over supply of U.S. ordnance stores captured from the Norfolk Navy Yard in 1861 gave the Confederacy all the U.S. pattern buckles it could use. Whether the type worn by these two seamen was common or not is a matter of conjecture. Belts and buckles were not an issue item.

drew a hammock, clothes bag, two flannel shirts, one pair of pants, one cap, and one mattress from the paymaster. A month later he drew a pair of shoes from the naval store. Dissatisfied with his cap, he "made [himself] a cap during the day."¹⁸³

Whether the cap issued to Watson was naval or not is questionable. The style of cap might have prompted

Watson to replace it with a more naval looking hat.



Figure 3-8. Matthew Pielert. Columbus Naval Museum.

Watson also wrote that, while on parole in New York after the war, the provost marshal ordered him out of his "Confederate uniform" by the next day or he would be subject to arrest. It is apparent that the Confederate enlisted naval uniform was easily identified by the northern populace.¹⁸⁴ What type of uniform was Watson wearing in New York? His last clothing issue was at Wilmington, N.C., in

¹⁸³ Watson, Diary, 15 March, 19 March, 13 April, 25 April, 1864.

¹⁸⁴ Watson, Diary, 22 April 1865.

March 1865. He drew one pair of pants, two pair cotton drawers, and two cotton shirts.¹⁸⁵ The cotton drawers he promptly sold in Wilmington for food.¹⁸⁶

Clothing records for the C.S.S. *Georgia* in 1863, show issues totaling ninety-nine white jumpers and ninety-three grey trousers.¹⁸⁷ Supplementing this were 45 blue trousers, (6 Oct 1863), and 17 blue jumpers, (1 July 1863).¹⁸⁸ Records also show as late as 1864, blue and white uniforms were common on the river squadrons. On 20 January 1864, six blue wool caps, twenty-four pair of blue wool trousers, and 12 dozen flannel shirts were issued to the men on the C.S.S. ram *Savannah*.¹⁸⁹ Seven days later, seamen stationed at Drewry's Bluff, Virginia, were issued "gray pea jackets." This in itself would not be remarkable except that 16 days later the paymasters at Savannah issued the entire squadron eighty pea-jackets along with three-hundred pair of English

¹⁸⁵ Watson, Diary, 6 March 1865.

¹⁸⁶ Watson, Diary, 9 March 1865.

¹⁸⁷ M1091, Clothing Issues, roll 51, 30 June 1863, roll 53, 30 June 1863. roll 54, 31 March 1863, 28 September 1863, 30 December 1863.

¹⁸⁸ M1091, Clothing Issues, roll 54, 1 July 1863, 6 Oct 1863.

¹⁸⁹ M1091, Clothing Issues, roll 56, 20 January 1864.

shoes and gray flannel shirts.¹⁹⁰

Thomas Conolly's diary recorded sailors of the C.S.S. *Virginia II* as "men all standing round at attention & all neatly clad in confed:[sic] grey shirts."¹⁹¹ Although these men were in the James River Squadron, clothing issues appear to be the same as the Savannah squadron. Officers in Savannah noted the uniformity and demeanor of sailors from the *Chattahoochee*, dressed in gray cassenette, when they arrived in Savannah to join the Savannah Squadron in 1864.¹⁹² Routine issues of gray shirts continued in Savannah from 1863 until the evacuation of the city in December 1864.¹⁹³

James H. Tomb, of the Torpedo Bureau, recorded that, in 1865, seamen laying torpedoes at Shell Bluff below Augusta found two soldiers sleeping by a fire. The soldiers "surrendered" because "when they saw our men, who had on blue uniforms - clothes taken from the *Water Witch* - they thought we were Yanks, and said they were tired of war and

¹⁹⁰ M1091, Clothing Issues, James River Squadron, roll 56, 27 January 1864; and M1091, Clothing Issues, Savannah River Squadron, roll 56, 12 February 1864.

¹⁹¹ Lankford, *Conolly*, 66.

¹⁹² Watson, *Diary*, 5 June 1864.

¹⁹³ M1091, Clothing Issues, roll 53, 1 November 1863, roll 54, 30 March 1864, 28 June 1864, 7 August 1864, 12 November 1864.

going home."¹⁹⁴

The Confederate sailor began the war wearing Federal blue because that was all that was available, and by the end of the war, he was again in blue. The height of the gray period in Savannah was 1863 and returned to blue in late 1864. As the blockade tightened the navy depended on existing stores of cloth that the army did not need (blue) and the few expensive imports from England.

Rank

Two basic branches existed for seamen; those who could assume command (line) and those who could not (staff) (See Table 3-2). The regulations called for "boatswain's mates, gunner's mates, carpenter's mates, sailmaker's mates, ship's stewards and ship's cooks to wear a black silk-embroidered fouled anchor on their right sleeve above the elbow in front" (See Figure 3-1).¹⁹⁵ All other petty officers were to wear the same device on their left sleeves. It is unknown how many sailors, if any, actually wore this device. There are neither existing issue records nor photographs of Confederate sailors wearing any type of device to denote

¹⁹⁴ James H. Tomb, "The Last Obstructions in Charleston Harbor, 1863", in *Confederate Veteran*, Volume XXXII, 1924, 99.

¹⁹⁵ Confederate States Navy Department, *Uniform and Dress of the Army and Navy of the Confederate States*, (Richmond: Chas. H. Wynne, Printer), 1861.

rank. Although Pielert was rated a petty officer, his photograph does not show any rank indication. The lack of rating devices in the naval service may be due to a rapid personnel turnover normal for a fledgling navy or the small number of men assigned to Confederate vessels.¹⁹⁶

All sailors enlisted as either seamen, ordinary seamen, or landsmen. Civilian experience and the amount of time in service affected a sailor's rating. Sailors with previous experience advanced faster in grade. Advancement to a petty officer rate came from the ship's captain and was non-transferrable. Seniority dictated a sailor's relative rank aboard a vessel. For example: seaman Jones, with two years prior experience in the navy or merchant service, shipped aboard the *Savannah* in May 1863. As the 100th sailor to ship, he would receive the number 100. His relative rank was his muster roll number even if the next lower number had shipped the day before and had less experience. His chances for advancement depended upon his greater experience being brought to the attention of the captain.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

Economic Matters

Pay

The sailor's pay rate depended upon his relative rank. A sailor's pay account reflected his rating, location, and the vessels he had served on since his induction. His pay record consisted of enlistment papers (shipping articles), advancements in grade, previous payments (including clothing and provisions), commutation of the spirit ration, and any pay advances.¹⁹⁷ This pay record, endorsed by the sailor and the paymaster, followed the seaman wherever he went, except on short trips to the naval hospital.

The Confederate Congress determined the rate of pay for each enlisted grade in 1862 (Table 3-3). The three basic enlisted rates (seaman, ordinary seaman, and landsman) earned twenty-two dollars, eighteen dollars, and sixteen dollars per month, respectively.¹⁹⁸ Sailors could have allotments sent home but had to retain six dollars for themselves. They used this money to repay the government for anything due for clothing, pay advances, or small stores the sailor purchased.

A sailor could supplement his pay by commuting any unused spirit ration at the paltry rate of three cents per

¹⁹⁷ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 88.

¹⁹⁸ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, Appendix.

Table 3-3: Pay Scale for Enlisted Personnel.¹⁹⁹

Pay Scale for Enlisted Personnel of the Confederate States Navy 1864	
Grades	Pay Per Month
<i>Petty Officers:</i>	
Mates	
Master's Not Warranted	\$29.00
Boatswain's	\$29.00
Gunner's	\$29.00
Carpenter's	\$29.00
Sailmaker's	\$24.00
Armorer's	\$24.00
Master At Arms	\$29.00
Ship's Corporal	\$24.00
Coxswains	\$28.00
Quartermasters	\$28.00
Quarter Gunners	\$24.00
Captains	
Of Forecastle	\$28.00
Of Tops	\$24.00
Of Afterguard	\$24.00
Of Hold	\$24.00
Coopers	\$24.00
Painters	\$24.00
Stewards	
Ship's	\$34.00
Officer's	\$24.00
Surgeon's	\$24.00
Cooks	
Ship's	\$34.00
Officer's	\$24.00
Masters of the Band	\$24.00
Musicians	
1st Class	\$19.00
2nd Class	\$16.00
Enlisted Personnel:	
Seamen	\$22.00
Ordinary Seamen	\$18.00
Landsmen	\$16.00
Boys	\$12, \$13, & \$14.
Firemen	
First Class	\$34.00
Second Class	\$29.00
Coal-heavers	\$22.00

¹⁹⁹ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, Appendix.

day. In 1864, the Navy Department raised the commutation rate to twenty-two cents but it was too late. To make matters worse, as a preventative measure against desertion, the commander of a squadron or the ship's captain could order up to three months pay withheld.²⁰⁰ It became so bad that in 1864, the Navy Department warned officers not to let the men sell their clothing. To alleviate price gouging, the Confederate Congress enacted a law restricting the amount that could be charged for clothing.²⁰¹ The measures taken by the Congress did not help and, to supplement their income, sailors often sold parts of their clothing to civilians. Watson wrote in his diary that

I went to town and sold 15 undershirts and drawers for \$180.00 and bought 100 lbs. corn meal at \$1.00 per lb and 1 lb soda for 15.00. There are 15 men in our mess and each man put in a garment, for we are short of breadstuff.²⁰²

Pay for Confederate sailors was infrequent and usually inadequate. Families of seamen often had insufficient funds and faced much hardship.²⁰³ When a crew did get paid it was

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 89.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 86, 87.

²⁰² Watson, Diary, 9 March 1865.

²⁰³ John De Bree to W. W. Hunter, 3 November 1863, Hunter Collection, Tulane University Library, Tulane University; and Thomas Brent to W. W. Hunter, 29 December 1864, Savannah Squadron Papers, Emory Special Collections, Emory University, Atlanta.

usually a very small amount, usually ten percent of the total due.²⁰⁴ Seamen who needed money for their families had to depend on Richmond for their allotments, and Richmond seldom paid.²⁰⁵

The paymaster, usually Seymour or Keim, would issue pay to the enlisted men on board each vessel. Watson recorded on 10 May 1864 that

"The crew was paid off during the day but I got no money and don't expect to get any for the next six months for it takes nearly all my wages to pay for my soap and tobacco . . . Some of the men have been on board over a year and this is the first time they have drawn any money and none of them drew over \$30.00. Some did not draw a cent."²⁰⁶

When a sailor died in service, his possessions remained the property of the navy until the paymaster received approval from the Treasury Department to release them to his executor or representative (Figure 3-9).²⁰⁷ If he were in debt to the government his clothing might be seized by the navy and sold at auction. Otherwise the paymaster held the sailor's possessions until they could be delivered to the deceased's agent.

Under certain circumstances, the Navy Department would

²⁰⁴ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 88.

²⁰⁵ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 89.

²⁰⁶ Watson, *Diary*, 10 May 1864.

²⁰⁷ Invoice, 13 September 1864, M1091, roll 16.

No. *11* *John W Dorsett "Sea"*
 In account with C. S. Steamer "Georgia."

<i>Cr.</i>	
By pay as <i>1st</i> class from <i>12th</i> Oct. to <i>4th</i> Nov. inclusive <i>22</i> days at <i>8</i> per <i>mo</i>	<i>20 00</i>
By pay as from to Inclusive days at \$ per	
By pay as from to Inclusive days at \$ per	
By Rations <i>30</i> drawn at <i>1</i> Cents each	<i>1 00</i>
By <i>Am. Med. from 2nd Quarter</i>	<i>19 53</i>
By Transfer from	<i>11 55</i>
<i>Dr.</i>	
To Amount Advanced by	
To Amount Checked on Account of Pay	
To Amount of Allotment of Pay in <i>this</i> settlement	
To Amount overpaid from	
To Amount paid in Clothing	<i>23 50</i>
To Amount paid in Small Stores	<i>3 72</i>
To Amount paid in Money	<i>22 10</i>
To Amount of D. M. & D's Clothes	
To Amount of Hospital Fund <i>1</i> mos. <i>4</i> days at 20 Cts.	<i>2 10 4/6</i>
Balance <i>Remaining</i> <i>Eight 57</i>	

has an allotment of Pay for Dollars per month
 months in favor of payable at
 Number of Payments charged Remaining
 unpaid

I acknowledge this statement to be correct.

Witness,

APPROVED: *Continued to be correct by*
J. C. Ferguson
1st Lt. Baymire
P. H. ...
 COMMANDING.

VED A COPY.

Figure 3-9: Account for John Dorsett, O. S. showing his indebtedness to the Confederate Government at the time of his Death. (M1091, roll MN, 13 September 1864).

bear the funeral expenses for those who fell in action or while on duty. The navy also extended this honor to free blacks who served with the Confederate Navy. Such was the case when Moses Dallas, a free black pilot with the Savannah Squadron was killed in action while boarding the U. S. S. *Waterwitch*. The Navy Department paid the entire expense for his funeral (Figure 3-10).²⁰⁸

An interesting aside about Moses Dallas is that his funeral may have been premature. Moses Dallas initially entered the U.S. Navy as a pilot in 1863 and deserted to the Confederate Navy on 31 May 1863. Commander William A. Webb rated him as a pilot and set his pay at \$100 per month because he was the "best inland pilot on the coast." Clarence L. Mohr cites Dallas as appearing on the muster rolls of the 128th U. S. Colored Infantry three months after the *Water Witch* incident. Dallas was from Duval County, Florida and the Dallas who enlisted in the U.S. Army returned to Jacksonville after the war. It is possible there were two men named Moses Dallas, but it is unlikely that they hailed from the same place. It is also interesting that the receipt for his funeral expenses includes a coffin (Figure 3-10). It is strange that, if they were unable to recover Dallas's body after the fight,

²⁰⁸ Invoice, 22 June 1864, M1091, Subject file NH.

U. S. Navy Department.

For Coffin & Hearse for General, Paymaster Moses Dallas Pilot

To G. M. Cairn

Dr.

1864

To furnishing Coffin for Moses Dallas, Captain Pilot, C. S. N.

Saravak	65 00
To Drago of Corps from Hospital	3 00
Hearse Hire for funeral	15 00

The distinguished and useful services of Pilot Moses Dallas, deceased, mostly at the cost of his General, Captain Paymaster C. S. N. will pay this bill.

Wm. W. A. Martin
Flag Officer Commanding

\$ 83 00

Approved for Eighty Three Dollars, 00 Cents, ordered to be paid by Capt. Paymaster C. S. N.

Wm. W. A. Martin
Flag Officer Commanding

Received June 22^d 1864, from Capt. C. S. N., the sum of Eighty Three Dollars,

Cents, in full of the above Bill, and have signed duplicate receipts.

\$ 83 00

G. M. Cairn

Figure 3-10. Receipt of Funeral Expenses for Moses Dallas. (M1091, roll NH, 22 June 1864).

the Navy Department would bury an empty coffin. Someone was in the coffin, and the C.S. Navy thought it was Moses Dallas.²⁰⁹

Provisions And Stores

The primary responsibility of the paymaster was to issue food and small stores (jackknives, needles, tobacco, mustard, and other items) to each sailor.²¹⁰ The Confederate Congress ordered that all laws enacted under United States jurisdiction and not inconsistent with the Confederacy would remain in effect. By this act the Confederate Congress adopted the Naval Provision Act of 1842 (Table 3-4).²¹¹ The law established the quantity and type of food for issue, but it did not specify the quality of that food.

The Office of Provisions and Clothing placed dietary emphasis on salt pork, salt beef, fresh pork, fresh beef, bacon, rice, and dried peas or beans. Local paymasters furnished fresh fruit and vegetables to vessels when they were available. Watson wrote that his first receipt of fresh food was on 10 May 1864, two months after reporting on

²⁰⁹ Clarence L. Mohr, *On the Threshold of Freedom Masters and Slaves in Civil War Georgia*, (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 289, 290.

²¹⁰ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 75.

²¹¹ Scharf, *History*, 27.

Table 3-4: Ration Table for Enlisted Personnel, C.S. Navy. 1862.

Weekly Rations - Provisional Navy of the Confederate States 1864																			
	Pounds							Ounces					Pints						
	BEEF	PORK	FLOUR	RICE	DRUIDT	FRUIT	BERRIES	PICKLES	BISCUIT	SUGAR	TEA	COFFEE	COCOA	BUTTER	CHEESE	BEANS	MOLASSAS	VINEGAR	SPIRITS
Sunday	1		.5		.25			14	2	.25	1	1							.25
Monday		1						14	2	.25	1	1			.5				.25
Tuesday	1			.5				14	2	.25	1	1	2	2					.25
Wednesday		1				.25		14	2	.25	1	1			.5				.25
Thursday	1		.5		.25			14	2	.25	1	1							.25
Friday	1			.5				14	2	.25	1	1	2	2			.5		.25
Saturday		1				.25		14	2	.25	1	1			.5			.5	.25
Weekly	4	3	1	1	.5	.5	.5	98	14	1.75	7	7	4	4	1.5	.5	.5	.5	1.75

board.²¹² In Savannah the diet revolved around fresh bread and rice. When corn meal and flour became scarce in 1864, rice became the main substitute.

Many items on the rations list (cheese, butter, and raisins) were obtainable only in small quantities and at exorbitant prices. Tea and coffee, easily obtainable early in the war, later became scarce and prohibitively expensive.²¹³ However scant the variety of food, the quantity was never in question. When one of his friends deserted Watson wrote that "I. . . am greatly surprised at his desertion from the navy where he had plenty to eat and little to do."²¹⁴

The squadron was issued salt beef, salt pork, or bacon at least four days a week. Home squadrons could expect fresh meat and vegetables at least three days a week and fresh bread was delivered weekly. Existing records indicate that from October 1861, to November 1864, naval agents delivered 191,670 pounds of meat of all types to the vessels

²¹² Watson, *Diary*, 10 May 1864.

²¹³ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 80; and Scales, *Diary*, 18 December 1862.

²¹⁴ Watson, *Diary*, 20 April 1864.

of the Savannah squadron.²¹⁵ Fresh beef made up eighty-seven percent of the meat issued; salt beef (6%); salt pork (3%); and fresh pork and bacon (2%); however, the exact amount of meat issued is difficult to ascertain because of the scarcity of accurate records.²¹⁶ The weight of fresh vegetables was never recorded so quantification is not possible. Dried vegetables, the main staple of the sailor, were quantified and the results are listed in Table 3-5. Fresh beef, rice, and bread was the main staples of the common sailor in Savannah.

In 1863, the bureau ordered paymaster W. W. J. Kelly to set up a meat packing plant in Albany, Georgia for processing pork for the Savannah Squadron. The navy was eating so well that in April 1864, De Bree requested, in the interest of inter-service harmony, to have a review board appointed to examine the navy ration and reduce it. Instead, in the summer of 1864, the Army Commissary

²¹⁵ Provision Receipts, M1091, roll 51, 6 December 1861, 30 December 1861, roll 52, 12 February 1862, 10 March 1862, 3 December 1862, 19 December 1862, 19 February 1863, roll 53, 4 February 1862, 1 June 1862, 31 July 1862, 31 August 1862, 1 September 1862, 30 September 1862, 1 November 1862, 1 December 1862, 31 December 1862, 15 November 1864, roll 54, 1 March 1863, 2 March 1863, 12 March 1863, 31 March 1863, roll 57, 1 July 1864, 6 July 1864, 13 July 1864, 31 July 1864, 1 August 1864.

²¹⁶ Percentages of the total were taken from Total Meat issued during 1861, 1862, 1863, and 1864 Provision Issue statements in M1091.

Department received the responsibility for furnishing rations to the navy.²¹⁷ Still, as late as October 1864, the navy had six to eight months supply of bread on hand and loaned the army 620 barrels of

Table 3-5: Rations Issued to the Savannah River Squadron 1861 - 1865.²¹⁸

Issue	Amount
Fresh Beef	168,592 pds.
Fresh Pork	485 pds.
Salt Beef	12,144 pds.
Salt Pork	6,672 pds.
Bacon	3,777 pds.
Total	191,670 pds.
Rice	7,145 pds.
Beans	1,449 pds.
Total	8,594 pds.
Sugar	12,325 pds.
Molasses	380 pds.
Total	12,705 pds.
Fresh Bread	21,115 pds.
Ship's Biscuit	70,216 pds.
Flour	3,454 pds.
Total	94,785 pds.

²¹⁷ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 80.

²¹⁸ Provision Receipts, M1091, roll 51, 3 December 1861, 6 December 1861, 30 December 1861, roll 52, 26 October 1861, 3 December 1861, 4 December 1861, 13 December 1861, 14 January 1862, 16 January 1862, 24 January 1862, 28 January 1862, 7 February 1862, 11 February 1862, 12 February 1862, 15 February 1862, 19 February 1862, 26 February 1862, 2 March 1862, 10 March 1862, 3 December 1862, 19 December 1862, 19 February 1863, roll 53, 4 February 1862, 1 June 1862, 1 July 1862, 3 July 1862, 26 July 1862, 30 July 1862, 31 July 1862, 31 August 1862, 1 September 1862, 29 September 1862, 30 September 1862, 1 November 1862, 11 November 1862, 1 December 1862, 31 December 1862, 3 January 1863, 9 January 1863, 15 November 1864, roll 54, 23 February 1863, 1 March 1863, 2 March 1863, 12 March 1863, 31 March 1863, roll 57, 1 July 1864, 6 July 1864, 13 July 1864, 31 July 1864, 1 August 1864.

flour. By December 1864, the navy had set up a flour, grist mill and bakery in Albany, Georgia that supplied the forces in Savannah, Charleston, and Columbus.²¹⁹

The most controversial issue was the spirit ration. The naval custom of issuing a spirit ration was upheld by the surgeons of the navy and the regulations. Surgeons thought it should be served as a stimulant with breakfast. Most officers; however, opposed the issue on disciplinary grounds. De Bree opposed the spirit ration on the basis of cost alone. Nevertheless, the navy set up a distillery in Augusta, Georgia solely for production of spirits (corn liquor) and naval agents continued purchasing much needed grain and corn.²²⁰

The "pay department's" responsibilities included pay, procuring provisions and issuing clothing. Under the direction of John De Bree and James A. Semple the Office of Provisions and Clothing, failed in issuing pay, but was able to provide ample food and adequate clothing for each enlisted man in the navy. The Confederate sailor had a difficult job to do. Not only had he to contend with no pay and long, tedious days but he also had to combat disease and invasion.

²¹⁹ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 81.

²²⁰ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 82.

Chapter 4

Arms And Equipment

Gunnery was just one aspect of the sailor's daily life. Watson received training in small arms and "single stick" or cutlass. Regulations required that sailors receive training as light infantry and never be used as regular infantry. Ashore sailors assumed the role of skirmishers and advanced with the support of naval artillery on field carriages.²²²

It is unknown which small arms drill was used by the naval forces in Savannah. In early 1863, advertisements for Hardee's *Light Infantry Tactics* appeared in the Savannah newspapers and this manual could have been used.²²³ Gillam's *Heavy Infantry Drill*, very similar to the U.S. Navy's 1855 *Small Arms Drill*, was another candidate. In fact, the 1855 U. S. Navy drill may have been the manual of choice; however, none of these manuals address the use of breech loading weapons.

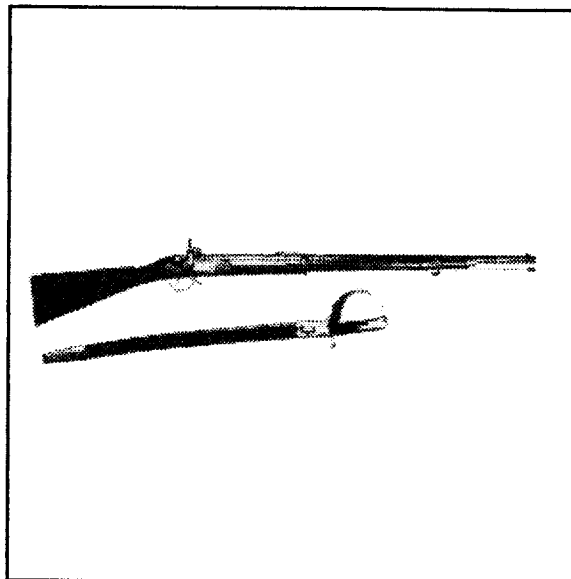
Long Arms

In 1861, Secretary Mallory ordered Commander James D. Bulloch to purchase 1000 revolvers and 1000 "navy carbines" with fixed ammunition and caps, and a supply of cutlasses

²²² United States Navy Department, *Naval Ordnance and Gunnery. The Equipment and Maneuver of Boats and Exercise of Boat Howitzers*, (Washington: Navy Department, 1860), 25; and C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 108, 109, 110.

²²³ DMN, 23 March 1863, adv.

from manufacturers in England. Mallory wanted breech loading rifles because they had a rapid rate of fire and were easier to handle in the confines of a ship-of-war. Frederick Todd says that the carbines were probably the Enfield rifle-musketoons



pattern; however, the Enfield rifle does not have fixed ammunition. Instead it uses a rolled paper cartridge.²²⁴

Figure 4-1. Wilson breech loading rifle. Mallory wanted this type of rifle but it was replaced by the short Enfield. (Albaugh, *Confederate Arms*).

The rifle that Mallory envisioned was the British manufactured Wilson breech loading rifle (Figure 4-1). It was a sea service rifle fitted to mount the Enfield cutlass bayonet. The weapon was .54 caliber with all brass furniture except for iron barrel bands. The British Royal Crown and date was stamped on the lock plate.

Bulloch was unable to purchase Wilson rifles and, instead, brought Enfield muskets and short rifles into Savannah in 1862. It is possible the Navy Department began

²²⁴ Todd, *III*, *Equipage*, 595.

replacing this muzzle-loading small arm with more advanced Maynard style weapons as they became available. Ordnance returns show that, by 1864, Maynards were common among Savannah Squadron ships.²²⁵

Robert Watson cites training with a Maynard carbine, a breech loading weapon with semi-fixed ammunition. This means the

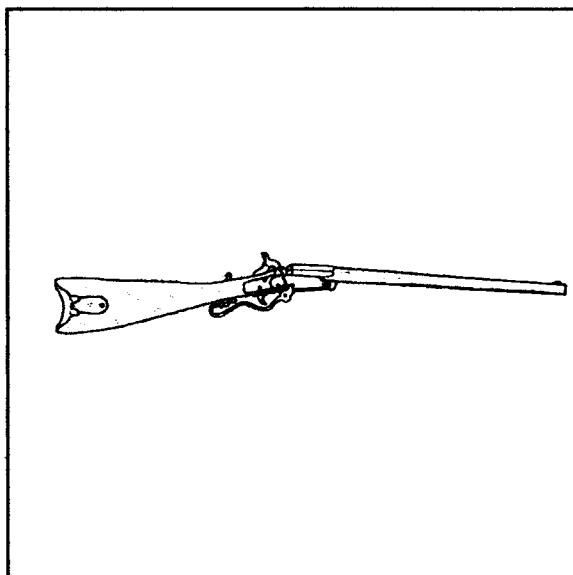


Figure 4-2. Maynard pattern rifle. (Jeff Johnston Collection).

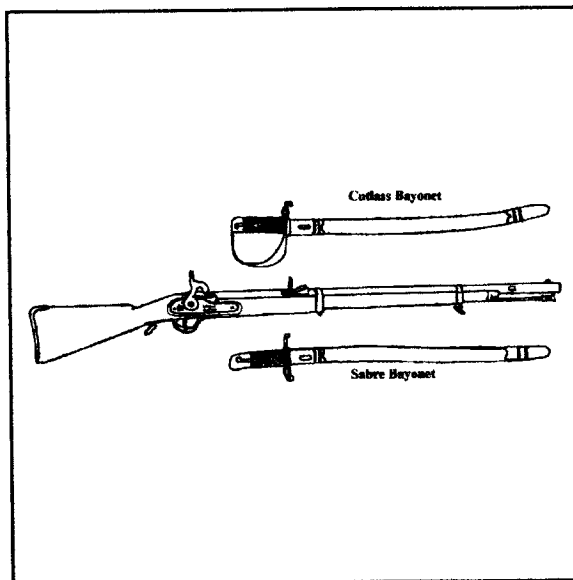
cartridge was brass without a primer cap. In order to fire the rifle, a percussion cap had to be manually placed on the weapon. The Maynard pattern rifle, manufactured by Keen, Walker & Company in Danville, Virginia, was very popular throughout the South, especially with cavalrymen (Figure 4-2).²²⁶

Ordnance returns, for the *Georgia*, include nineteen Maynard rifles and thirty Enfield rifles with sabre bayonet

²²⁵ Archibald B. Fairfax to John M. Brooke, Ordnance Returns for the Savannah Squadron, Record Group 45, 28 October 1864; and Thomas P. Travers to Richard L. Page, 12 May 1863, ORN, I, 11, 248.

²²⁶ William A. Albaugh and Edward N. Simmons, *Confederate Arms*, (Harrisburg, Pa.: The Stackpole Co., 1957), 68. Hereinafter referred to as Albaugh, *Arms*.

and, for the Atlanta, thirty-two Maynard rifles.²²⁷ The inclusion of sabre bayonets identifies the weapon as an Enfield two band rifle. These weapons were .577 caliber, 1853 pattern 2-band rifles. The 2-band Enfield was the Confederacy's second most commonly imported weapon



(Figure 4-3). A favorite among the sea services because of its short barrel and durability, this type of weapon was widely used throughout the Savannah Squadron.²²⁸

Figure 4-3. Enfield rifle and bayonets. Top = cutlass bayonet. Bottom = sabre bayonet. (Jeff Johnston Collection).

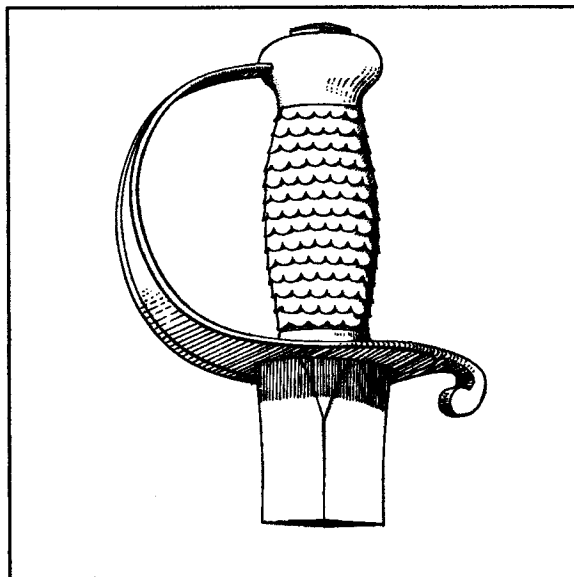
Edged Weapons

Small arms include swords or cutlasses. Ordnance returns for the Savannah Squadron do not specify the precise type of cutlass issued to squadron vessels. Cutlasses came

²²⁷ Thomas P. Pelot to William W. Hunter, 17 July 1863. Savannah Squadron Papers, item number 105, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia; and Thomas P. Travers to Richard L. Page, 12 May 1863, ORN, I, 11, 248.

²²⁸ Archibald B. Fairfax to John M. Brooke, Ordnance Returns for the Savannah Squadron, Record Group 45, 28 October 1864.

in a variety of patterns and types, the most common of which was the 1841 U.S. Navy pattern. The Confederates imitated the 1841 pattern cutlass by producing the 1861 Confederate Navy cutlass manufactured by Thomas, Griswold & Company and Cook & Bro., both of New Orleans.



The cutlass was twenty-seven inches long with a cast brass Figure 4-4. Cook and Brother pattern cutlass. (Albaugh, *Edged Weapons*).

grip and guard. The blade style was similar to the artillery short sword. A variant of this type made by an unknown maker was similar to the Thomas, Griswold & Company cutlass. The guard and grip were two pieces and the pommel bore the indented letters C S N. The blade was 22 inches in length and was attached to the grip by peening.²²⁹

Cook & Brother also made a second pattern cutlass based on the 1861 U.S.N. pattern cutlass. The guard and grip resemble the U.S.N. pattern, but the double edged blade was 21 3/4 inches long and resembles the Confederate pattern

²²⁹ Albaugh, *Edged Weapons*, 142, 143.

(Figure 4-4).²³⁰

A third pattern, the Confederate States Armory naval cutlass, resembles the 1841 U.S.N. cutlass. Froelich & Co., of Kenansville, North Carolina, began production of this cutlass as early as February 1862,. It was distinguished from other types because of its steel guard and a wooden handle (Figure 4-5).²³¹

A variant of the artillery short sword pattern emerged during the war; however, its maker is unknown. The sword resembles one in the photograph of Matthew Pielert. The guard and grip were brass with the raised letters C S N on one side of the cross guard and a raised anchor on the other (Figure 4-6).

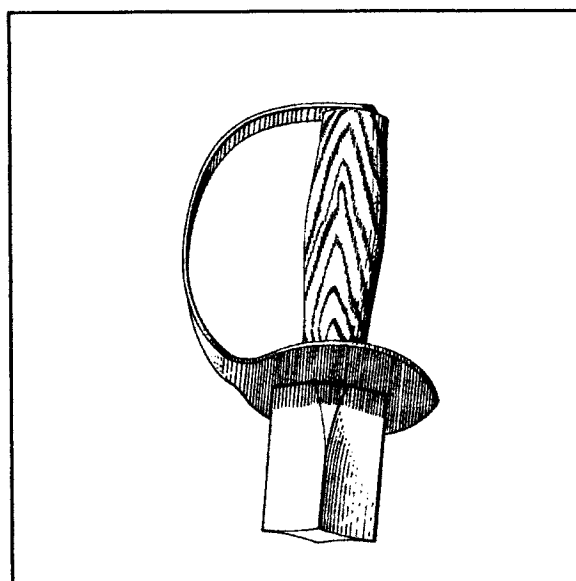


Figure 4-5. Confederate Armory pattern cutlass. (Albaugh, *Edged Weapons*).

Union Car Works of Portsmouth, Virginia also produced cutlasses for the Confederate Navy. These weapons differed radically from the previous swords; primarily in the grip

²³⁰ Albaugh, *Edged Weapons*, 37.

²³¹ Albaugh, *Edged Weapons*, 94, 95; also Todd, *III, Equipage*, 596.

and guard. The grip, made of turned walnut and attached by peening the blade tang over a copper washer, or penny, was attached to an 18 1/2 inch, double edged blade. The guard was "S" shaped and made of brass or iron. The C.S.S. *Chattahoochee*, stationed south of Columbus, Georgia, received this type of sword.²³²

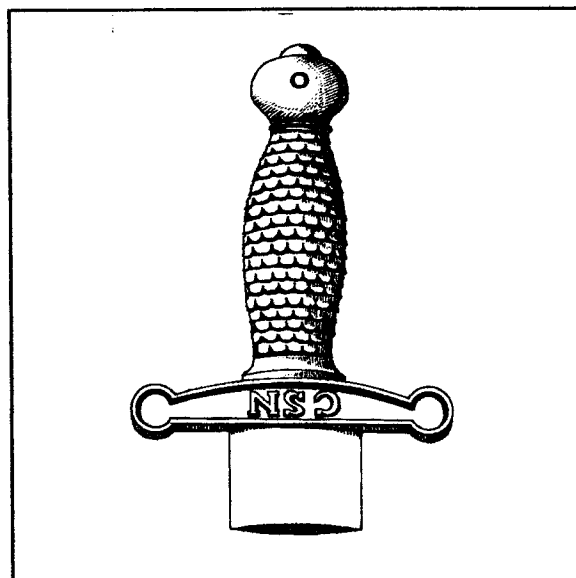


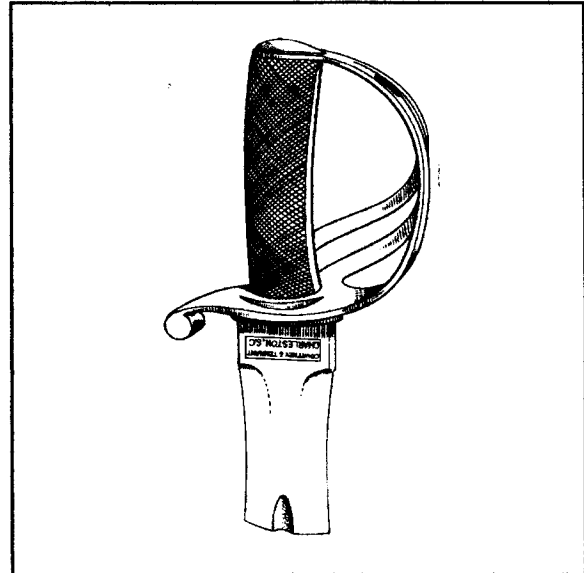
Figure 4-6. Artillery Pattern Cutlass. (Albaugh, *Edged Weapons*).

G. B. Tennant acted as a naval purchasing agent in England throughout the war and procured much of the material purchased by the Confederate States Navy. Through him, Courtney and Tennant Company, of Charleston, S. C., imported cutlasses from Robert Mole of England. The Courtney and Tennant pattern was based on the 1853 pattern English cavalry sabre. It was virtually identical to the sabre in the hilt and grip. The blade was 20 inches long and double

²³² Albaugh, *Edged Weapons*, 144.

edged (Figure 4-7).²³³

British Enfield cutlass-bayonets for the Enfield rifle were also very common. The cutlasses were "identical with those used in the British Navy and can be shipped upon the end of the rifle as a bayonet."²³⁴ The Enfield



cutlass-bayonet resembled the **Figure 4-7. Courtney and Tennant pattern cutlass.** model 1861 U.S. Navy cutlass. (Albaugh, *Edged Weapons*).

It had a slightly curved blade and was thirty-three inches in length. It had a spring catch embedded in the pommel for fastening to the Enfield or Wilson rifles.²³⁵

Pole Arms

The use of naval boarding pikes began to decline just before the American Civil War. Traditionally used as defensive weapons against boarders, the advent of the Colt revolver and the rifle musket with an attachable bayonet led

²³³ Albaugh, *Edged Weapons*, 39; also Todd, *III, Equipage*, 597.

²³⁴ Todd, *III, Equipage*, 595.

²³⁵ Todd, *III, Equipage*, 597.

to the abandonment of the weapon by the 1880's.²³⁶ The naval pike differed from that of the land service in two areas: the butt was not covered in iron and the butt was rounded or turned into a ball. By the Civil War the pike had standardized at the length of twelve feet. The blades were either flat or triangular and usually eight inches long. Ferrule and side straps were usually one piece and riveted to the shaft.²³⁷

At the fall of Norfolk, the Confederates captured 2,111 pikes.²³⁸ Recognizing the need for more, Paymaster J. E. Armor of Mobile, contracted with John I. Boniffee for the construction of thirty pikes at \$5.00 each. Boniffee shipped the pikes on 26 November 1861, to the C.S.S. *Alert*.²³⁹ The use of pikes by Confederate seamen was first noted by James E. Jouett, U.S.N. Jouett received a wound from a Confederate sailor while he participated in the attack on

²³⁶ Robert H. Rankin, *Small Arms of the Sea Services*, (New Milford, Ct.: N. Flayderman & Co., 1972), 5; and Rodney Hilton Brown, *American Pole Arms 1526-1865 The Lance, Halberd, Spontoon, Pike, and Naval Boarding Weapons*, (New Milford, Ct.: N. Flayderman & Co., 1967), 154.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 5, 6.

²³⁸ Virginia Convention, *Documents Submitted to the Convention of 1861*, Museum of the Confederacy Collections, (Richmond: Virginia Convention, 1861), 36.

²³⁹ J. E. Armor to John F. Boniffee, 26 November 1861, Record Group 45, Subject File BH, roll 11.

the privateer *Royal Yacht* in November, 1861.²⁴⁰

Another instance of Confederate use of pikes occurred during the engagement on 8 March 1862 when the *Virginia* attacked the Federal squadron at Hampton Roads. The flag staff of the *Virginia* was shot away during the battle and Lieutenant Robert D. Minor, C. S. N., replaced it with a boarding pike.²⁴¹

Although other instances of pike use were rare, Confederate vessels usually carried a small number of pikes and, when the C.S.S. *Atlanta* was captured, there were twenty pikes on board.²⁴²

Handguns

Revolvers became standard issue on vessels during the war. When the navy pistol, a single shot .54 caliber muzzle

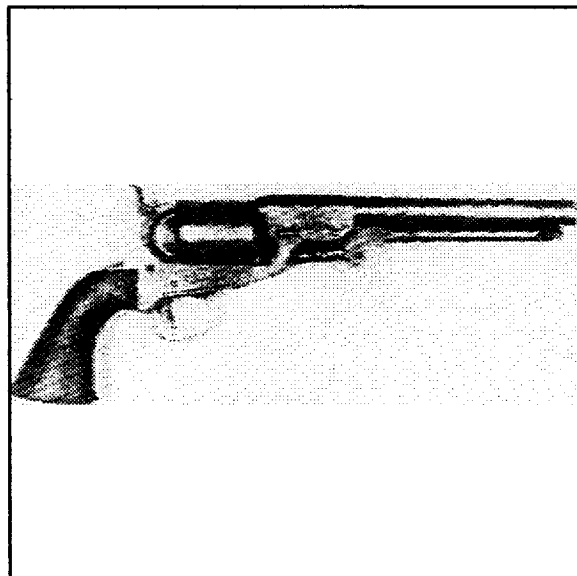


Figure 4-8. Griswold and Gunnison's Colt pattern revolver. (Albaugh, *Confederate Arms*).

²⁴⁰ Brown, *American Polearms*, 154.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 155.

²⁴² Ibid.

loader, proved too expensive to manufacture, the revolver replaced it in the Confederate navy.²⁴³ Revolver types varied throughout the war. The Colt pattern revolver, especially the 1851 model, was probably the most common handgun. It was a simple, rugged weapon that used powder and ball ammunition (Figure 4-8).²⁴⁴ L. Haiman and Brother, of Columbus, Georgia, and Griswold and Gunnison, of Griswoldville, Georgia, became major suppliers to the Confederate Navy in 1862 and 1863.²⁴⁵ Many of the Savannah River Squadron revolvers were probably of this type.²⁴⁶

Ordnance returns show that officers were usually issued the LeMat pattern revolver (Figure 4-9). The LeMat was a French-made, nine shot, .40 caliber revolver with an under-barrel for a shotgun load. There were other foreign revolvers used for sea service. The Kerr (English),

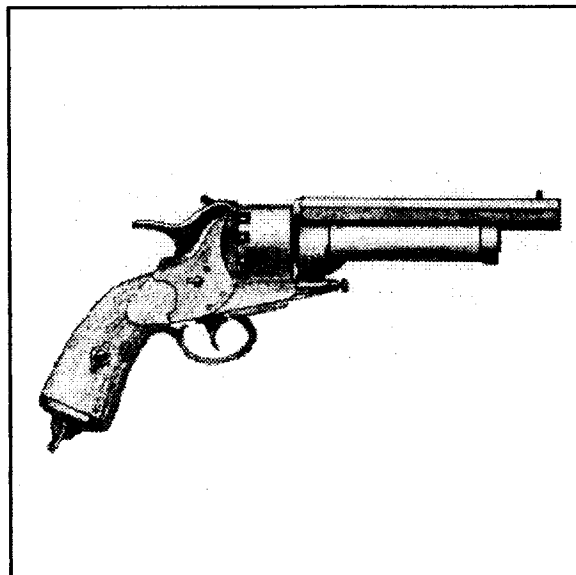
²⁴³ William A. Albaugh, III, Hugh Benet, Jr., and Edward N. Simmons, *Confederate Handguns Concerning the Guns the Men who made them and the times of their use*, (York, Pa.: George Shumway, 1967), 28.

²⁴⁴ Jack Coggins, *Arms and Equipment of the Civil War*, (New York: Fairfax Press, 1962), 41. Hereinafter referred to as Coggins, *Arms*.

²⁴⁵ William A. Albaugh, III, Hugh Benet, Jr., and Edward N. Simmons, *Confederate Handguns Concerning the Guns the Men who made them and the times of their use*, (York, Pa.: George Shumway, 1967), 9, 28.

²⁴⁶ Archibald B. Fairfax to John M. Brooke, Ordnance Returns for the Savannah Squadron, Record Group 45, 28 October 1864.

Lafeaucheaux (French-Belgium), and the Deane and Adams (English) were imports also used in Confederate service. American made Remingtons or, a Confederate made copy, the Spiller and Burr, also saw service in the Confederate Navy.



Accoutrements

Leather accoutrements provided an easy way for the

Figure 4-9. LeMat pattern revolver. (Albaugh, *Confederate Arms*).

men to carry ammunition. Three basic pouches, the musket cartridge box, the pistol cartridge box, and the cap box, carried the sailors' forty rounds of rifle ammunition, 60 rounds of pistol ammunition, and percussion caps. Additional ammunition was carried in large canvas bags called haversacks. Leather equipment purporting to be of Confederate naval manufacture creates interpretive problems. Examples of Confederate navy leather accoutrements are extremely scarce today. Those that did survive resemble U.S. Navy patterns.

It is reasonable to assume the Confederate Navy utilized the equipment captured from the Norfolk, Pensacola, and New Orleans naval shipyards. It is unknown just how

much Union equipment did make it into Confederate hands. Any leather goods captured at Norfolk should have U.S. Navy markings and possibly C. S. Navy markings. The only identified Confederate naval leather work exemplifies the problem. Identified as a "gunner's pouch," it is actually a U. S. Navy pattern .69 caliber musket cartridge box. The Confederate naval emblem of the crossed cannon and fouled anchor is embossed on the outer flap of the box. No other markings are on the box. If this were a Federal box there should be U.S. Navy markings. If this is an original piece of equipment, the box is entirely of Confederate manufacture.

There are several questions that arise. The box might be of Confederate manufacture and not surplus capture from Norfolk.²⁴⁷ The Confederate naval emblem, developed in 1863, probably did not become wide spread until later that year or

²⁴⁷ George Knight, owner of the box, described it as made of 1/8 inch black bridle leather. It had a front flap 7 5/16 inches wide with a depth of 7 inches. The overall dimension from a side view was 2 3/16 inches thick. The box had a tin liner 6 1/4 inches long, 2 3/4 inches deep, and 1 1/2 inches wide. On the inner facing was a cap pouch 2 1/2 inches deep by 4 inches wide. Along either side the pouch were two 4 1/2 inch deep by 1 inch wide leather receptacles. The box was made to wear on a belt and was closed with a 1/2 inch finial. Todd, in *Military Equipage*, described this same design as a .69 caliber musket cartridge box. Todd gives the dimensions 7.2 inches wide by 5.8 inches deep and an overall thickness of 1.6 inches. The box acted as an all purpose box. Todd describes the same cap pouch and leather receptacles noted by Knight; however, the box illustrated by Todd was stamped "U. S. N. Y. Boston."

early 1864.²⁴⁸ By 1864, the standard weapon for the C.S. Navy was either the .577 caliber Enfield rifle or the .52 caliber Maynard carbine.²⁴⁹ Why make an obsolete style box that would require retooling of the manufacturer's facilities?

It would be better to use existing facilities and make the common style musket box, the .58 caliber rifle box. Naval purchasing agents did procure "army style"

cartridge boxes more fitted to the .58 or .577 caliber weapons. The box could be an import, but, it is not an Enfield style box.

Rifle Cartridge Box

In the top left of Figure 4-10 is the U.S. Navy pattern musket cartridge box. Made of black bridle leather, the

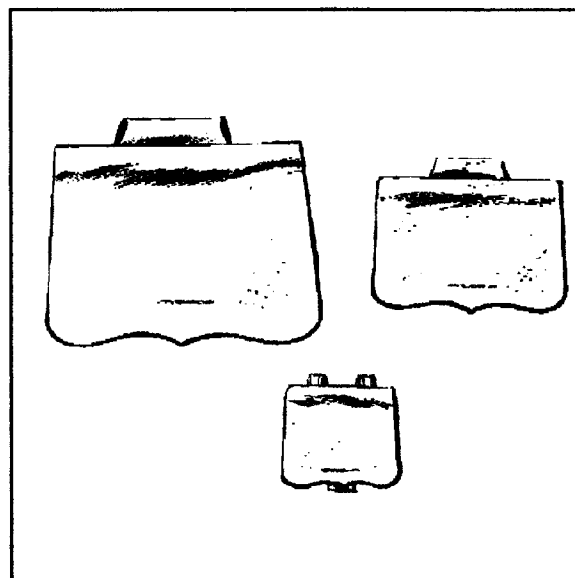


Figure 4-10. U.S. Pattern leather accoutrements. Top Left: 1861 pattern .58 caliber rifle cartridge box. Top Right: 1855 pattern pistol cartridge box. Bottom: 1861 Pattern cap box. (Todd, *III*, *Equipage*).

²⁴⁸ George T. Sinclair to S. R. Mallory, 16 January 1863, Charles Perry Collection, Charleston, S. C.

²⁴⁹ Archibald B. Fairfax to John M. Brooke, Ordnance Returns for the Savannah Squadron, Record Group 45, 28 October 1864.

inside dimensions measured 7 1/4 inches in width, 1 1/2 inches in depth, and 5 3/4 inches in length. Attached to the back of the box were straps to facilitate mounting on the waist belt. It could hold forty .69 caliber paper cartridges.²⁵⁰

Pistol Cartridge Box

In the top right of Figure 4-10 is the U.S. Navy pattern pistol/revolver cartridge box. Made of black bridle leather, the inside dimensions measured 5 inches in width, one inch in depth, and 2 1/2 inches in length. It could hold sixty rounds of pistol ammunition.²⁵¹

Cap Box

In the bottom of Figure 4-10 is the U.S. Navy pattern cap box. Also made of black bridle leather, inside dimensions are 2 1/2 inches wide by 2 1/4 inches in length. It was fitted with sheep's wool to prevent the caps from falling out and supplied with a vent pick.²⁵²

Holsters

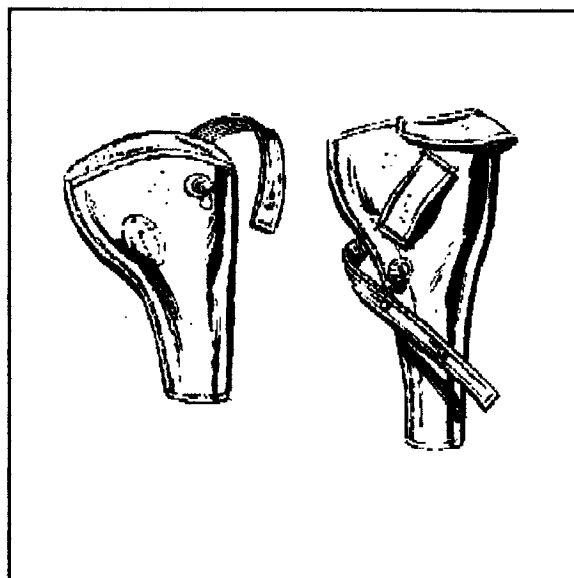
Revolver holsters, or "frogs," were made of the same black leather material as the cartridge boxes. Because each revolver type required a separate holster there were four

²⁵⁰ Todd, *III*, *Equipage*, 560.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 563.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 563.

different revolver holster patterns. There were some features in common. All were bottomless scabbards with a single strap for attachment to the waist belt. Figure 4-11 illustrates the two most common types of revolver holsters: Colt and Remington. Most revolvers



fit easily into either style. **Figure 4-11. Holsters.**
 Right: Remington pattern.
 Left: Colt pattern. (Todd, III, *Equipage*).

The Remington pattern holster was the longest

holster measuring almost eight inches. A pouch is fitted in the reverse for pistol percussion caps (**Not Shown**). The Colt pattern navy holster measured 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length and did not have any pouches or pockets. The Starr and Whitney patterns were similar to the Colt pattern with minor variations.²⁵³

Edged Weapon Scabbards

All bayonet and cutlass scabbards were made of black bridle leather or japanned canvas and fitted with a brass or leather ferrule at the tip. Attached two inches from the

²⁵³ Ibid., 563, 564.

mouth of the scabbard, was a brass stud for mounting in the frog. Frogs secured the cutlass or bayonet scabbard to the belt. These were made of black bridle leather looped over to form a belt slide, and sewn to a pocket for receiving the brass stud of the scabbard. This type was the most common, but some scabbards had frogs already attached.²⁵⁴

The sailor's equipment was directed toward battle. Training in all types of weapons required versatile and adaptive men. The every day aspects of running a vessel of war were complicated enough. Add to that the many weapons and their variants and chaos was liable to occur. Discipline and training kept the men in readiness. Although Watson complained often about "nothing to do," daily training kept him busy.

Training in gunnery, small arms, boarding tactics, and shore tactics filled the sailors day with busy work. It is said that a sailor is the jack of all trades and the master of none. Considering the amount of information that a sailor must possess, it is no wonder that they were older and more experienced.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 564.

Chapter 5

Introduction

Life aboard a Civil War warship differed in many ways from the merchant marine. The rigid discipline of a man-of-war required absolute attention to orders. The watch system was the same as the merchant service; however, most sailors at the Savannah station stood their watch in small boats; sometimes within rifle shot of their enemy. At least three times a day sailors stood for a roll call and they spent the remainder of the day drilling in the arts of sea combat. Service aboard an armored ship created its own peculiarities. Engine room temperatures could make life aboard the vessel during the summer unbearable, and possibly deadly. The heat was sometimes welcome in the winter when the entire vessel might be covered with a thin layer of ice. Vessels lacked proper ventilation for a steam ship and could not rely on the ventilation of a sea going vessel, the wind. Despite the cold, heat, constant wetness, and claustrophobic ships, these men performed their duties. When called to duty, they performed as seamen of the highest caliber. Night patrols along the obstructions or cutting out an enemy ship of war was as dangerous as standing picket in a forest or assaulting the breastworks of a well entrenched army.

Reception

After induction the Savannah Squadron recruiting officers sent new recruits to the receiving ship C. S. S. *Sampson*.²⁵⁵ A receiving ship acted as the "clearing house" for new or transferred sailors. Training new recruits in the rudiments of seamanship began here and the vessel acted as a temporary berth for experienced sailors until they received their permanent assignment.²⁵⁶ Receiving ships remained important for housing large numbers of transferred men until assigned to a permanent vessel.

Naval Regulations stated that only those men with proper training could be transferred to a "sea going" vessel; however, under certain circumstances, enlisting officers sent sailors with previous experience directly where they were most needed.²⁵⁷ After transferring from the Army of Tennessee on 3 March 1864, Robert Watson received a rating of ordinary seaman and reported directly on board the ram *Savannah* where he began his duties.²⁵⁸ Such was the case with many of those rated higher than landsman.

Under certain conditions men requested to stay

²⁵⁵ Donnelly, "Personnel," 28.

²⁵⁶ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 89; *Regulations*, 176.

²⁵⁷ *Regulations*, 174.

²⁵⁸ Watson, *Diary*, 9 March 1864.

together. As a deterrent to desertion, the Navy encouraged a "buddy system" of sorts. When Commander Isaac N. Brown, Captain of the ram *Charleston*, came looking for men, Watson wrote that

My chum Alfred Lowe was among the number but I went to Lieut. [William E.] Hudgins and asked him to send me in another man's place as I did not wish to be separated from my friend as we had left home together and I had never been separated since. He said that he wanted me to go with him but that he would not separate us so he sent another man in Alf's place.

Watson and Alfred Lowe remained together until the end of hostilities.²⁵⁹

The surgeon and executive officer examined the sailors and, depending on the sailor's experience and vessel needs, rated them at a higher grade.²⁶⁰ The surgeon's inspection determined if the sailor could perform normal duties and, if not, mustered men out as "unfit for naval service." Such was the case with Jack Mason, O. S. After shipping with Watson, Mason became too ill to travel. After recovering at a hospital in Marietta, Georgia, he reported on board the ram *Savannah* on 23 June 1864. The surgeon examined him, pronounced him unfit for service, and immediately discharged him. Watson wrote that he would miss him because he was a

²⁵⁹ Watson, *Diary*, 3 March 1864, 27 January 1865; and 22 April 1865.

²⁶⁰ Thomas P. Pelot to Paymaster Dewitt C. Seymour, 1 May 1863, M1091, roll 18; and *Regulations*, 173.

good seaman and a "great drunkard."²⁶¹

After the surgeon's inspection, the enrolling paymaster completed the sailor's shipping ticket. The shipping ticket, similar to the army's descriptive roll, was passed to the vessel, or station, paymaster, who then prepared the sailor's papers for pay, rations, and clothing. The paymaster forwarded copies of the recruit's papers to the Office of Orders and Detail in Richmond.²⁶²

Daily Duties

The boatswain sounded reveille aboard ship at 7:00 A.M., (Six bells of the morning watch).²⁶³ The boatswain's mates called all hands to scrub and clean the ship. The men scrubbed the decks, stowed their hammocks, and prepared the vessel to get under way. After cleaning the ship, the boatswain piped the men to breakfast, usually by 7:30 A.M. After breakfast, the men began washing clothing and clearing the ship for inspection.

The guns received inspection twice daily and the gunner and the gunner's mates made any necessary repairs. The ship

²⁶¹ Watson, Diary, 23 June 1864.

²⁶² Lieutenant Commanding Thomas P. Pelot to Paymaster Dewitt C. Seymour, 8 July 1863, M1091, roll 17; Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 26.

²⁶³ C.S. Navy Department, *Regulations for the Interior Police of the C.S. Schoolship Patrick Henry*, (Richmond, Va.: Navy Department, 1861), 5.

received a visual inspection by the carpenter's and boatswain's mates who made reports to their superiors. The gunner, carpenter, and boatswain, after receiving reports on the ship's condition, reported to the executive officer on the quarterdeck at 7:30 A.M.. The boatswain's mate then lowered the small boats and made them ready for service.²⁶⁴

The boatswain sounded "colors" - hoisting of the national ensign - each day at 9:00 A.M. All hands attended the ceremony and then division officers announced the work plan, uniform, and news for the day. Piping to quarters at 9:30 A.M. signaled the first roll call and inspection of the entire crew. It was easier for the officers to see if anyone was missing when they were at their "action" stations.²⁶⁵

The executive officer recorded any abnormalities in the ship's "Conduct and Department" book. The executive officer then inspected the berth and mess decks while division officers examined the men for sickness, cleanliness, and clothing deficiencies and then reported their findings to

²⁶⁴ Edward Barrett, *Advice for Executive Officers, Masters, and Master's Mates with Gunnery Instructions*, (Washington, D.C.: Navy Department, 1861), 68, 69. Hereinafter referred to as Barrett, *Advice*.

²⁶⁵ Barrett, *Advice*, 68.

the Executive Officer.²⁶⁶ Division officers required men to make up deficiencies with the ship's Paymaster or see the Ship's Surgeon at sick call at 11:00 A.M. After the daily roll call the captain inspected the men at 10:00 A.M., and the division officers required the men to look their best. Clothes must be clean and the sailor's entire kit received close inspection.²⁶⁷

Formal duties began at 11:00 A.M. The division not on watch began its daily drill on heavy artillery or small arms. Spirited drills proved necessary to keep the men in fighting trim; however, officers adjusted the intensity of the drill as the men became more proficient.²⁶⁸ Because each man had to know all battle stations each division received training in all types of ordnance on board the vessel. Watson recorded that he received broadside gun instruction on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and small arms instruction on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.²⁶⁹ At times, the men were moved to other areas for training. The officer commanding the forward pivot on the *Savannah* transferred Watson to his section and instructed him on the

²⁶⁶ Barrett, *Advice*, 67, 68.

²⁶⁷ Watson, *Diary*, 13 March 1864.

²⁶⁸ Barrett, *Advice*, 69.

²⁶⁹ Watson, *Diary*, 18 March 1864, 23 March 1864, and 28 April 1864, and 17 July 1864.

pivot gun when his crew was reduced and there were not enough men to drill the broadside guns.²⁷⁰ Drill could become tedious and when a new midshipman was assigned to the ship the men expected more work. This was the case when Midshipman John D. Trimble came on board the ram *Savannah* during the summer of 1864. His duty station was gunnery officer for the broadside guns but Watson wrote "he [Trimble] knows no more about the drill than my old grandmother, yet he drills us twice as long as any other officer ever had and makes a regular humbug out of it."²⁷¹

Small arms drill was informal and quite different from the land service exercise. Sailors did not receive a weapons issue, instead, they drew them from the ship's weapons locker under the watchful eye of the armorer's mate. Recruited from the land service and accustomed to the longer rifle-musket of the soldier, Watson's first exposure to the short Maynard rifle, a favorite of the Savannah squadron, caused him some discomfort.²⁷² After his first small arms drill he wrote that "they came very awkward to us at first

²⁷⁰ Watson, Diary, 15 September 1864.

²⁷¹ Watson, Diary, 25 August 1864.

²⁷² Whether this weapon is the Maynard "rifle" or the short rifled "carbine" is not clear. Ordnance returns list the weapon as a "rifle." Watson's reference to the weapons shortness suggests that it might be the shorter carbine. The Confederate Navy preferred a breech loading weapon. See Chapter 3 for a discussion on weapon types.

for they are very short, but soon got used to them and drilled very well."²⁷³

Sick call, promptly at 11:00 A.M., required a visit to the ship's surgeon for those who reported "ill" at morning roll call. Disease was a constant companion of the sailors in the Savannah Squadron. Watson, hailing from Florida, already was infected with malaria and the doctors treated him regularly with quinine and "a dose of pills."²⁷⁴ The common complaint, fever and chills, received the same treatment. Sailors who were truly sick received a "sick ticket", were placed on the sick list, and excused from duty. If the illness persisted, and the surgeon thought it necessary, he directed the sailor to the naval hospital for further treatment.

The navy doctors advocated a spirit ration issued at breakfast. They considered alcohol a "stimulant" and thought it a preventive measure against fever and chills. Naval officers, most notably Admiral Franklin Buchanan, saw alcohol as the cause of most disciplinary problems and suggested an issue of quinine in its place. Buchanan went so far as to have quinine issued as a "ration", although, this might have been an effort to enforce his "temperance"

²⁷³ Watson, *Diary*, 18 March 1864.

²⁷⁴ Watson, *Diary*, 25 August 1864.

views.²⁷⁵

At 12:30 P.M. the boatswain piped the crew to dinner; the largest meal of the day. Dinner was the only hot meal served aboard ship. It was usually a semi-liquid meal consisting of meat, rice, beans, and bread. Sailors in the river squadrons could expect fresh meat and vegetables two or three times a week. Watson wrote on 5 August 1864, ". . . got fresh beef every day except Sunday, no more pork to be had."²⁷⁶ The James River Squadron, even in 1864 and located in the center of the theater of war, received fresh meat three times a week.

Exercise of the morning watch divisions on ordnance occurred during the afternoons while the afternoon watch finished work begun in the morning. Free time allowed a sailor came after the 4 P.M., dog watch. This was traditional free time in the navy and the only time sailors could talk freely, smoke, sing, or otherwise entertain themselves as they did on the *Savannah* in early 1864. Watson recorded that the sailors enjoyed music and dancing. As the year progressed and Sherman approached Savannah,

²⁷⁵ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 81.

²⁷⁶ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 80; and Watson, *Diary*, 5 August 1864.

Watson's records of "fiddling and dancing" diminished.²⁷⁷ Watson spent his free time recording daily duties in his diary and writing letters home. He also wrote letters for illiterate shipmates.²⁷⁸

Ships in port or on rivers usually allowed off duty sailors to go ashore on a four hour liberty. The regulations allowed only one-sixth to one-quarter of the crew to be on liberty.²⁷⁹ Liberty involved anything from visiting a neighboring ship to a night on the town.²⁸⁰ Most often sailors visited Savannah for a "cruise about town," visited playhouses, taverns, and other centers of entertainment. Sailors who did not return to their vessels by the 11:00 P.M., could be punished for being late.²⁸¹

Taverns were a favorite public attraction and Watson wrote of attending "watering holes" around the city. When his friend, blockade runner Captain Coste, came to Savannah they "took a cruise about the city and the consequences was that we got gloriously drunk."²⁸² He recorded in his diary

²⁷⁷ Watson, Diary, 28 and 30 January 1864.

²⁷⁸ Watson, Diary, 27 March 1864.

²⁷⁹ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 147.

²⁸⁰ Scales, Diary, 25 January 1863.

²⁸¹ Watson, Diary, 17 March 1864.

²⁸² Watson, Diary, 20 August 1864.

"I spent \$55.00 which was all the money I had and the others spent as much each or more than I did, for liquor is \$2.00 per drink, measured out at that, a little over half a gill to a drink." and his sailor's pay quickly brought these cruises to an end.²⁸³ After that Watson and other sailors depended on the generosity of friends for drink. Watson also recorded that he visited the local "houses" during the "cruises about town."²⁸⁴ After a bout with malaria and hangover, Watson took the pledge of temperance.

Local playhouses also attracted sailors. Watson often attended plays and became quite a critic.²⁸⁵ After attending a play on 4 July 1864, he remarked, "a miserable affair, but it does very well for these times."²⁸⁶ Watson also visited friends at the Naval Hospital after the *Water Witch* expedition. While visiting friends guarding Federal prisoners he expressed disgust at the poor condition of the prisoners.²⁸⁷

Several times, liberty abruptly ended when fires broke out in the city. Sailors from the squadron volunteered to

²⁸³ Watson, Diary, 16 March 1864.

²⁸⁴ Watson, Diary, 8 March 1864.

²⁸⁵ Watson, Diary, 4 July 1864, 9 July 1864, 11 July 1864, 23 July 1864, 5 August 1864.

²⁸⁶ Watson, Diary, 4 July 1864.

²⁸⁷ Watson, Diary, 4 June 1864, 18 September 1864.

support the city fire department and responded whenever possible.²⁸⁸ Watson reported one such fire at the naval ordnance store. The *Savannah* crew ran to the fire and removed "a large number of loaded shell and succeeded in stopping the fire."²⁸⁹

At 6:00 P.M. the boatswain piped the men to supper; their last meal of the day. Bread, cheese, and grog were the standard evening repast. The boatswain sounded lights out at 8:00 P.M. and extinguished all non-essential lights. Ward room lights were to be out by 10:00 P.M. The Master-At-Arms inspected the ship to insure observance of the regulations.²⁹⁰ Sailors below decks and not on duty could continue in quiet conversation, but, all men not working were to be in their hammocks or bunks by 10:00 P.M.²⁹¹ During the hot months of the year, June through August, the men slept in warehouses purchased by the Navy to be used as barracks. The surgeon also ordered that a gymnasium be built on shore next to the barracks for the

²⁸⁸ Watson Diary, 9 July 1864, 11 July 1864, 16 August 1864.

²⁸⁹ Watson, Diary, 9 July 1864.

²⁹⁰ Barrett, *Advice*, 68.

²⁹¹ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 144, et seq.; and Barrett, *Advice*, 69, 70.

benefit of the men.²⁹²

Whether drilling at the broadside gun or coaling ship, the sailors worked in a tedious, boring atmosphere. Watson liked to keep busy because " . . . it keeps my mind occupied. When I am idle I am always thinking of home which makes me sad for I don't know anything about my family."²⁹³ The greatest morale booster of all, mail from home, rarely made it to Savannah. Watson often wrote home by "flag of truce" but recorded only once that he received news from home.²⁹⁴ On his twenty-ninth birthday Watson recorded in his journal

My birthday, 29 years old today, not a cent in my pocket, my health gone forever, far away from home and but slim prospects of ever getting there again. This is encouraging, certainly.

The same day in his journal he wrote "General quarters at 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ A.M. but I am on the sick list did not attend. Scrubbing spar deck and clothes in the morning."²⁹⁵

²⁹² Watson, Diary, 18 July 1864.

²⁹³ Watson, Diary, 19 July 1864.

²⁹⁴ Watson, Diary, 20 July 1864.

²⁹⁵ Watson, Diary, 9 September 1864.

The Mess

After initial assignment to his work station, a sailor was introduced to his mess mates.²⁹⁶ Messes, composed of eight to fourteen men, were tight-knit groups that worked, ate, and slept together. Responsibility for cleaning the cooking equipment (mess chests contained all the plates, bowls, pots, pans, utensils, and condiments for the mess), getting prepared rations from the ship's cook, drawing rations for the mess from the yeoman, and keeping the mess and berth decks clean fell on the mess cook.²⁹⁷ The duty rotated through the mess so that each sailor had "mess duty" once every eight to fourteen weeks.

Sailors were wary of strangers trying to enter their mess and "mess mates" were your closest friends. Harmony demanded a disciplined and happy crew. For this reason division officers often formed new men into new messes. Sailors unhappy with their messmates could transfer to a different mess but regulations forbid transferring from one mess to another more than once a month.²⁹⁸ When the crew of the *Chattahoochee* arrived on the ram *Savannah Watson* and his mess mates became uneasy. Loaning out the mess's equipment

²⁹⁶ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 146.

²⁹⁷ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 79.

²⁹⁸ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 79.

caused problems and Watson wrote "the new comers are formed in messes and as they have no cooking things they must use ours which gives the mess cooks twice as much work as usual."²⁹⁹

The captain designated the menu each day and passed it to the paymaster. The paymaster authorized the yeoman or steward to issue rations to the ship's cook. The mess cook, after receiving the rations, could specify how a meal was prepared as long as it fit within the confines of the menu. Any extra dishes were prepared by the mess cook under the supervision of the ship's cook.³⁰⁰

The food proportions of the meals for sailors were established by the Confederate Navy Department as 1 pound of meat, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of rice or beans, and 6 pounds of biscuit or bread a day.³⁰¹ Meals were supplemented by fresh vegetables, fowl, oysters, fish, molasses, spirits and condiments. By pooling their rations, the men made a rather large meal.

Although the navy tried to supply the recommended ration it was not always possible. The scarcity of corn and wheat meant rice became the staple vegetable for Savannah Squadron sailors. Much grumbling occurred when these seamen

²⁹⁹ Watson, *Diary*, 16 April 1864.

³⁰⁰ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 79.

³⁰¹ See Table 3-4, page 109.

on the thought they were getting too much rice. Watson wrote on 31 January 1864 that "nearly all hands are growling and saying that the rice is making them blind . . ." Watson did not seem to mind the rice. The food he got in Savannah far surpassed his army rations. On 14 January 1864, Watson wrote " . . . got dinner, pork, peas, and hard bread, good living to what we've been used to in the army." Concerning the "growling" about rice, Watson remarked, "I have not yet forgotten the hard times that I've had in the army."³⁰²

Scavenging the country side also supplemented the sailor's diet and the officers encouraged fishing and oystering. There were many inferences to seamen oystering in the Savannah River. The practice ceased in April 1864, because of an increase in desertions. Watson recorded in his diary that

One of our boats went down the river in the morning after oysters, two midshipmen and four men went with her. They got a boat load and went on shore and built a fire and while they were opening and eating Robert Bryson and another man sneaked off and deserted . . .³⁰³

Monies not used by the mess could purchase pepper, salt, mustard, and other spices and small stores from the Paymaster.

³⁰² Watson, Diary, 14 January 1864, and 31 January 1864.

³⁰³ Watson, Diary, 20 April 1864.

After preparation, the Captain, as a matter of tradition, tasted the meal before serving. By late 1864, the sailors were getting fat and the Navy Department thought, for the sake of morale, it was better to get more in line with the Army ration. In September 1864 they cut the daily ration and, eventually, the navy commissary was placed under the direction of the army.³⁰⁴

The Watch

In addition to his mess, the sailor received assignment to a watch division. The executive officer listed the sailor's name and muster roll number on watch, quarter, and station bills and posted it in a prominent place aboard the ship. The "bills" told the men where they slept, worked, and where their duty stations were during battle (Figure 5-1).

Two standard watch divisions served each vessel: port and starboard. Each division was subdivided into two or more watch sections (also called divisions); each capable of keeping watch while in port. When Watson arrived on the ram *Savannah* he and his mates received assignment to the third watch division and formed part of the broadside gun crew.³⁰⁵

The "watch bill" listed a sailor's name, relative rank,

³⁰⁴ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 80.

³⁰⁵ Watson, *Diary*, 10 March 1864.

watch, division, and berth number. Figure 5-1 illustrates a watch bill for a one hundred man vessel. The first column is the sailor's relative rank (his number in the muster roll); column two shows his name and division; column three is his rate; and column four is his berth number.³⁰⁶

"Watches" separated the sailor's day and the ship's bell regulated the "watches." There were seven watches aboard ship beginning with the morning watch (4:00 to 8:00 A.M.), the forenoon watch (8:00 to 12:00 P.M.), the noon, or afternoon watch (12:00 to 4:00 P.M.), the first dog watch (4:00 to 6:00 P.M.), the second dog watch (6:00 to 8:00 P.M.), the evening watch (8:00 to 12:00 A.M.), and the mid, or night, watch (12:00 to 4:00 P.M.). The first bell of a watch struck after the first half hour and a bell strike added for each half hour until eight bells completed the four hour watch.³⁰⁷

The division on watch worked the vessel and conducted a visual inspection of every line, sheet, sail, and seam to

³⁰⁶ Wells, *Confederate Navy*, 147.

³⁰⁷ An exception to this rule occurred during the first and second dog watches. Tradition, dating back to the Royal Navy mutinies at Spithead and the Nore, had the fifth bell of the first dog watch symbolizing rebellion.

Table 5-1: Watch Bill for the Forecastle and Foretop in a 100 man vessel. (*Ordnance Instructions for the Confederate States Navy, 1864, appendix*).

FORECASTLE							
Port.				Starboard.			
Ship's Nos.	Names	Rates	Nos.	Nos.	Names	Rates	Ship's Nos.
	1st. Part.	Seaman....	2	1	1st. Part.	Coxswain..	
		do.	4	3		Seaman....	
		O. Seaman.	6	5		Landsman..	
		Landsman..	8	7		do.	
	2nd. Part.	Seaman....	10	9	2nd. Part.	Seaman...	
		O. Seaman.	12	11		O. Seaman.	
		do.	14	13		do.	
		Landsman..	16	15		Landsman..	

[Column: (1) (2) (3) (4)]

ensure that the vessel was in operating condition. The boatswain, carpenter, sailmaker, and master reported any problems to the captain and modified the daily schedule to correct and deficiencies. The gunner, a warrant officer, inspected all guns and gun carriages for any defects and repaired them.

Work

Men on watch were divided into work gangs which performed most jobs aboard ship. Each warrant officer had a gang of men working for him. The carpenter's gang repaired the wooden parts of the vessel, including masts and spars. The gunner's gang inspected all the ship's gun powder, cartridges, small arms ammunition, and signaling flares to assure their serviceability. They also inspected the ship's cannon and kept them in good working order. The boatswain's gang saw to the maintenance of the ropes and rigging on the

vessel. The sailmaker's gang repaired the ship's sails and awnings. The armorer's gang inspected the ship's small arms (rifles, pistols, revolvers, cutlasses, pikes, and swords) and kept them in good condition.

Each petty officer oversaw specific areas of work or tasks and some had gangs. For example the master-at-arms, the ship's police officer, and his gang enforced ship regulations, maintained a record of punishments, and enforced any penalties. The captain-of-the-hold, a seaman or petty officer, and his gang saw to the proper stowage of ship supplies and the rotation of empty casks and containers. Improper stowage could cause loss in vessel speed, poor handling, and possibly loss of life. The captain-of-the-tops, another seaman or petty officer, and his gang inspected the topmasts of the vessel and performed any necessary repairs under the direction of the boatswain.

Some duties required the whole crew and the work schedule could be abandoned to get a job done. On 23 March 1864, the entire crew of the ram *Savannah* removed the bow pivot gun so the carpenter could repair the gun deck. Watson recorded in his diary that the weight of the gun had damaged the deck and, for the gun to run out smoothly, the deck had to be leveled.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁸ Watson, Diary, 23 March 1864.

If the gunner found a defect in a gun carriage, or the carpenter found a defect in the gun deck, or the boatswain needed to replace a mast or yard, the entire crew could work until completion of the job. One of Watson's first duties after he arrived aboard the *Ram Savannah* was to help get out a gun that burst at the muzzle.³⁰⁹ Maintaining the vessel also might require the entire crew. Watson noted that, on 27 April 1864, the boatswain called the entire crew to blacken the ship with "coal tar."³¹⁰

Picket Duty

As evening approached, the watch officer posted lookouts to watch for enemy warships, signals from the commander of the squadron, or approaching boats or vessels. Patrolling the river obstructions was the responsibility of the navy. The Army had pickets, or lookouts, posted on land near the obstructions, but the Navy patrolled the river.

Beginning in February 1864, increased military activity made clarification of picket duties necessary. Lt. J. Hunter, C. S. A., issued a statement that:

No naval boats, if recognized, will be hailed or molested during the day.

Sentinels with doubt will hail three times and then fire at the boat.

³⁰⁹ Watson, Diary, 10 March 1864.

³¹⁰ Watson, Diary, 27 April 1864.

All boats must pass the countersign at night or be fired upon.³¹¹

River squadron sailors often stood their evening and night watches by patrolling in picket boats along remote areas of rivers and streams. They left the ship at nightfall and returned at day break. There were some close encounters. Willie Wilson relates a contact with Federal sailors in June 1862. Wilson had just relieved Midshipman Augustus O. Wright and

I started for the obstructions. When I got nearly there I look [sic] behind me and found that a boat of the enemy had cut me off and was within fifty or a hundred yards of my boat not having but four men and only three of them in fighting trim I considered that discretion was the better part of Valor and so I made for the Carolina shore intending to run my boat into the Marsh and escape in that way. . .³¹²

Wilson escaped into the marsh on the South Carolina side. He later encountered two more Federal boats and tried to draw them into an ambush. The boats exchanged shots but there were no casualties.³¹³

Additional Duties

Besides the routine, daily work on the vessel, sailors

³¹¹ Proclamation by J. Hunter, C. S. A., 15 February 1864, ORN, I, 15, 711.

³¹² Wilson, "Wilson's War," 5 June 1862.

³¹³ Wilson, "Wilson's War," 5 June 1862.

had weekly duties to perform. Cleanliness, as a deterrent to disease, became almost fanatical. Surgeons made suggestions to the commanding officers of vessels about how to keep the men healthy. Each day the decks were "swabbed", mopped, and "squillgeed", or dried. Officers of the navy knew "idle hands were the devil's workshop" and planned the days so that the men kept busy.

Sailors washed their clothing twice a week, bathed once a week, holystoned the gun deck once a week, and continually polished the bright work of the vessel. If an officer thought a sailor was "idle" or a "skulker" he would put him to work spinning yarn, tarring the standing rigging, building sea chests, or any number of menial jobs.

The captain might specify certain days for specific duties. On the ram *Savannah* washing clothes and hammocks consumed most of Monday and Friday mornings. To keep the decks from being cluttered, sailors were allowed access to their seabags only during meal hours or when they needed clean clothes. On washing days each sailor retrieved his seabag from storage, had his clothing inspected, and then washed and dried the clothes.³¹⁴ After the clothes dried, the sailors returned them to the hold.³¹⁵ Holystoning the

³¹⁴ Barrett, *Advice*, 67.

³¹⁵ Watson, *Diary*, 28 September 1864.

gun and berth decks occurred Saturday. This chore required most of the day and Watson rarely recorded any other occurrences during "holystoning."

The captain reserved the first Sunday of the month for a general muster and reading the Articles of War. A muster required the men to dress in their best uniform and have their seabags and hammocks ready for inspection.³¹⁶ The "articles" enumerated the rights of each sailor and the punishments that followed conviction of serious infractions. The "articles," read to each recruit at enlistment, were the basis of all naval discipline and documented the captain's right to command.

The sailors used the other three Sundays of the month for relaxation and to catch up on clothes maintenance. Occasionally an officer read the church service or a visiting clergyman preached to the crews, but men allowed liberty on Sunday most often went to the local churches.³¹⁷

Sailors spent much of their time coaling the ship, getting firewood and provisions on board, pulling officers to visit the commander of the fleet in the ship's launch, and, especially during the summer months, taking visitors on

³¹⁶ Watson, Diary, 2 October 1864.

³¹⁷ Wilson, "Wilson's War," 12 January 1862; and Scales, Diary, 24 December 1862; and Watson, Diary, 25 March 1864, 4 September 1864.

trips in the ship's small boats. The latter duty caused some animosity among the men. Watson's first experience with "entertaining" happened on 11 April 1864. He recorded in his diary that

In the afternoon manned two boats and stood in a lot of ladies and pulled them about the harbor and down to the floating battery [Georgia]. Got back to the Ram at 7 ½ PM feeling very tired for we were pulling from 2 AM till 7 PM. It may be fine sport for them to be pulled about but not very pleasant to us.³¹⁸

Watson's next experience gave him more satisfaction. He again was called on to man a boat to pull some visitors around the harbor. Watson wrote that

. . .in the afternoon our two boats were manned and took a lot of ladies out pulling. It began to rain soon after we started and all hands got a good ducking. I was glad of it and I hope it will sicken the ladies of boating for a while at least. It is very fine sport for them to be pulled for miles but very hard work for us.³¹⁹

The "ducking" must have worked because there were no further entries in Watson's diary of this type. Small boats from the fleet constantly moved in, and around, the river.

When there were not enough men to carry on normal duties, as happened when the sailors of the squadron took over guarding exchange prisoners, making spun yarn was an old standby. The division officers put all available men to

³¹⁸ Watson, Diary, 11 April 1864.

³¹⁹ Watson, Diary, 28 April 1864.

work knotting manilla yarn to spin into stronger line. Watson considered this a poor substitute for hemp.³²⁰

Regulations

Aboard a ship-of-war, regulations pertaining to the behavior of sailors and marines could be strict. To ensure that each sailor knew all the rules and regulations, officers posted them next to the "bills" and read them to the crew on the first Sunday of each month. Punishment for an infraction of the rules ranged from a simple fine to a court-martial. Serious offenses, such as striking an officer or desertion, was punishable by death; however, the president commuted most sentences of this type.³²¹

It was the duty of the master-at-arms and/or the ship's corporal and his gang to enforce ship regulations. Sailors were not permitted to talk during duty hours unless it related to the work at hand.³²² The master-at-arms dealt with unauthorized talking quickly by placing the offending sailor's name in the "Conduct and Department" book. Those who had their names listed in this book faced their commander at the weekly captain's mast and lost their liberty privileges. Neither standing on the quarter deck or

³²⁰ Watson, *Diary*, 15 August 1864.

³²¹ Barrett, *Advice*, 69, 70.

³²² Barrett, *Advice*, 70.

bridge, unless performing a specific duty, nor entering officer's country, usually the stern of the vessel, was permitted. Sailors of high rank, petty officers and warrant officers, messed separately from the rest of the crew. Their quarters were either forward of the main mast or in the forecastle. Sailors of lower rank quartered aft of the main mast.³²³

Serious offenses required that the captain address the guilty party directly or that they be turned over to the military for prosecution.³²⁴ The most interesting case involving the ram *Savannah* concerned Jacob Mill; a former soldier in the Confederate 7th Florida and an acquaintance of Watson. Mill deserted from the Federal army in 1862 and moved to Tampa. While in Tampa he joined the 7th Florida. While the 7th Florida was campaigning in Kentucky in 1862, he deserted to the Federals. He was later captured by the Confederates and sent to Andersonville. When Sherman made a feint toward Macon, several hundred prisoners were sent to Savannah for safe keeping. Mill, one of those transferred, recognized Watson and told him he wanted to rejoin the Confederates. Watson reported him and Mill was arrested for desertion and treason and sent to the city jail until he

³²³ Barrett, *Advice*, 71.

³²⁴ Scales, *Diary*, 16 January 1863.

could be transported to Richmond. Watson wrote "I expect he will be shot, he certainly deserves it."³²⁵

Surgeons sometimes had to cope with disciplinary actions of line officers. One such incident occurred during Christmas 1863. Several sailors on the ram *Savannah* broke into the liquor locker and began a party. The officers tried to quell the disturbance and, during the ensuing struggle, Quartermaster Harry Burns struck one of the officers. Captain Robert F. Pinkney, commander of the *Savannah*, ordered Burns and his accomplices placed in irons and kept on the spar deck, the upper deck of the ship, for several days and nights. Watson recorded that "At last the doctor interfered and told the captain that it would kill them if they were kept there any longer. They were sent on shore to jail."³²⁶ Quartermaster Harry Burns received a sentence of death for striking an officer. The president, Jefferson Davis, commuted the sentence and reduced him to landsman.³²⁷ Watson said that when Pinkney left, none of the crew were sorry to see him go.³²⁸

Simple offenses could also bring swift retribution.

³²⁵ Watson, Diary, 28 September 1864.

³²⁶ Watson, Diary, 26 March 1864.

³²⁷ Watson, Diary, 26 March 1864.

³²⁸ Watson, Diary, 13 April 1864.

Watson recorded one seaman was punished for "walking in a swaggering manner" and Captain Pinkney ordered him into double irons. Watson tempered his view of the subject by noting that "he is a bad man and all the officers are down on him."³²⁹

Theft was the most common crime. Watson reported that "It is a common thing now to lose our things in this manner and I do hope the thieves will be caught." Thievery was the bane of all sailors. Theft of clothing or personal items meant your shipmates could not be trusted. Discipline quickly evaporated when no one felt safe. The master-at-arms searched the entire ship trying to catch the thieves but the evidence was not found.³³⁰

³²⁹ Watson, Diary, 3 April 1864.

³³⁰ Watson, Diary, 24 September 1864.

Chapter 6

Introduction

All of the preparation, training, discipline, medical care, clothing, and pay men received was for one object: battle. These provided sailors with the tools and the means to combat the enemy. Unlike their predecessors, Civil War sailors faced innovations more deadly and destructive than in any war before 1860. Sailless, iron warships ruled the rivers and sounds. Rifled cannon could hit targets three miles away beyond line of sight. The men had to receive training in this new type of warfare.

This chapter is a discussion of the service of great guns, field artillery, and boarding tactics employed by the Confederate Navy and the training necessary to achieve positive results. Savannah Squadron sailors saw almost continuous action over the four years of the war. Most of the time the men never saw their enemy. Instead, they constantly moved in support of the land forces or provided transport. When they did come into contact with the enemy, the fight was quick, and sometimes deadly.

The Divisions

The confusion created by combat required a separation of duties. Each crew member was assigned to one of five divisions: the master's division, the engineer's division, the powder division, the surgeon's division, or the gun

division.³³¹ The five combat divisions aboard ship worked together, sometimes with overlapping responsibilities, to get the ship ready in the shortest length of time. Men received training in their division duties daily and the officers routinely rotated them through quarter stations or duties.

In order to understand the training required for each man, the duties at general quarters must be examined. The captain controlled all aspects of combat through these divisions. Each commissioned, warrant, and petty officer had a specific area or task to insure that the vessel was ready for action.

Master's Division

The master's division contained men responsible for rigging and steering the ship and keeping the vessel under way. Assigned to the master's division were the boatswain, boatswain's mates, quartermasters, the captain of the afterguard, the captain of the forecastle, and the ship's cook. These men cleared the ship for action by stowing hammocks and battening all hatches to prevent water leakage.

³³¹ Confederate States Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions for the Confederate States Navy Relating to Preparation of Vessels of War for Battle, to the Duties of Officers and Others when at Quarters, of Ordnance and Ordnance Stores, and to Gunnery*, third edition, (London: Saunders, Otley, & Company, 1864), 26, et seq. Hereinafter referred to as C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*.

If the ship was a sailing vessel this division passed small arms to men in the rigging, prepared fresh drinking water, and filled the fire buckets. The boatswain and the boatswain's mates kept the rigging clear and repaired any damage that occurred. The boatswain slung the topsail yards and gaffs, placed preventer braces, distributed fighting stoppers and jiggers, stoppered the clews of the topsails, put whips on the lower masts for tricing up the pendant tackles, and secured fishes and mast bands for repairing, or securing, a crippled mast.³³²

The master dropped the boats astern and made the ground tackle ready for use. In river vessels where there was no pilot, the master had soundings made at the bow throughout an engagement. The master made preparations for using grapnels, set hauling lines to send small arms up to the tops, brought up and stowed hammocks, hooked and moused the retrieving tackles, placed the spare tiller and compass nearby, put the chronometers and navigation instruments out of reach of shot, and distributed the small arms. The master's division supplied fresh drinking water to all stations and replenished it as necessary.³³³

³³² C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 39.

³³³ C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 28, 29.

Engineer's Division

The engineer, firemen, and coal-heavers had the responsibility of maintaining the vessel's engines and repairing any damages. Engine rooms became very hot during the summer. With temperatures rising to 150°F, a five minute rotation schedule was implemented during battle. Additional men could be drafted from sail trimmers or the powder division with the approval of the executive officer.³³⁴

Powder Division

When general quarters sounded, the officer in charge of the powder division obtained keys to the magazines from the captain. The master-at-arms lit the magazine lanterns and let down the fire screens (wet blankets) over the magazine hatch. The powder division handled the greatest majority of work getting the ship ready for combat. This division provided ammunition and supplies to each gun, supervised the carpenter and his gang in removing wardroom bulkheads and other encumbrances to free movement of ammunition, repaired hull damage, assisted the surgeon with men to move the wounded, supplied men to the boatswain to handle sails and rigging, supplied men for boarding enemy vessels, and provided a division of marines to repel boarders.

³³⁴ C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 28, 29.

The carpenter and the carpenter's mates rigged the pumps and, if not assigned to a gun, manned them during combat. Any additional men needed during the engagement came from the gun crews and were designated as pump men. The carpenter sounded the hold routinely and reported any suspected sub-waterline damage directly to the captain.³³⁵ After the carpenters covered all hatches, air ports, and gratings the gunnery officer opened the magazine.³³⁶

The powder division made preparations for issuing shot, shell, and powder. The powder division made preparations for fighting fire, medical evacuation, and issued all gun implements. The quarter gunners obtained fire and fresh water buckets from the master's division and placed them along the decks for powder men and boys. The gunner's mates directed the laying of shot tracks and issued ten shot and one shell to each gun of the battery engaged.

The quarter gunners obtained a fire tub and placed it at the bottom of the return shuttle for the used pass

³³⁵ C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 29, 30, 32.

³³⁶ Some larger vessels had two or more magazines. In that case the gunner opened the after magazine, nearest to the quarterdeck, and the ranking gunner's mate opened the forward magazine.

boxes.³³⁷ The final step was attaching a fire hose to the force pumps and making it ready for use. Once the order was given the men divested themselves of any metal and put on their magazine dress (all cotton smocks, pants, and foot wear).

Surgeon's Division

The surgeon directed setting up the surgery for the reception and treatment of wounded. He issued a sufficient number of tourniquets to each quarter gunner for emergency treatment until he, or his assistants, could attend the wounded men. The captain directed placement of the surgery, usually in the ward room.³³⁸

Gun Division

At general quarters the men attached to the gun division, washed the gun deck down with water and, to improve traction and absorb blood, spread sand on the deck. The officer commanding the division checked for the presence of proper equipment and had the quarter gunner place the

³³⁷ Pass boxes were tin lined containers holding the requisite charge of black powder. Powder bags, made of wool cloth, leaked and the pass boxes had to be immersed in water. Once used, pass boxes could not be brought into the magazine until properly cleaned and dried. Reloading a used pass box was forbidden.

³³⁸ C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 32.

equipment "supply" and "reserve" boxes nearby.³³⁹

The quarter gunner, a sailor, was in charge of the "supply" and "reserve" boxes. These boxes contained a waist belt for each sailor with the proper leather accoutrements. It also contained candles for the battle lanterns (for night fighting), a thumbstall, a vent guard, and primers for the gun.³⁴⁰ After all departments reported their readiness for action to the executive officer, the captain issued the order "cast loose and provide!"³⁴¹

Training and General Quarters

A drum announced the call to general quarters. The drummer, following the command from the captain, played the "ordinary beat." The boatswain and his mates went through the ship passing the order verbally so there was no

³³⁹ C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 35. Each division had one rattle for calling away boarders, one tub of fresh drinking water, one spare bed and quoin, two spare gun trucks (carriages), four spare handspikes, one worm, one ladle, one scraper, one bristle sponge, two spare breechings (heavy ropes), four swabs, and, if a slide carriage, a spare pivot bolt. All of these were kept near at hand except for the spare bed, quoin, and trucks. They were stored nearby until needed.

³⁴⁰ C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 35, 36. The "reserve" box contained a drill brace with bits, a spare gun lock and lanyard, two boring bits, three priming wires, two thumbstalls, four boxes of percussion primers, one box of friction primers, a spare lock lanyard, and a fuse wrench.

³⁴¹ C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 39, 40.

misunderstanding. The men assembled at their guns according to their watch. The starboard watch attended and cast loose the starboard guns while the port watch dealt with the port guns.³⁴² If the action occurred at night, the quarter gunner lit the battle lanterns, with red lenses, on the main gun deck (the spar deck remained in darkness) and eight men from the watch secured all hammocks which were stored in nettings along the gunnels of the ship to provide a some protection from splinters.

Sometimes the men were specially mustered as boarders, firemen, sail trimmers, and pike men. The captain issued the general quarters order as usual with the codicil that the men muster at different positions. Division officers announced the assembly of boarders by "springing" a rattle and passing the verbal order for boarders. The first call designated the first division of boarders to assemble on the spar deck on the opposite side of the ship from the enemy. The second call assembled the second division of boarders in the same location. Two divisions of boarders reduced gun crews but a steady rate of firing could be maintained.

Firemen were called by a rapid ringing of the ship's

³⁴² C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 38; and C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 41. The regulations state that the numbering of guns was from the bow to the stern beginning at one on the starboard side, two on the port side, and so on. Pivot guns, numbered separately, were the exception to the rule.

bell while the call for pike men to repel boarders was by ringing the gong. Sail trimmers assembled by a verbal order.³⁴³ All hands could be summoned to repel boarders by springing the rattle and sounding the gong together. In this case only the powder boys and powder men remained at the guns. The armorer provided each with a pike, stored on an overhead beam, to defend their position. At the end of the drill the officers passed the order "to your quarters" and the men returned to the guns.³⁴⁴

Providing a Broadside Gun

When he arrived aboard the ram *Savannah*, Watson received assignment to the third watch division and his superior officer assigned him to the broadside guns. The gun he received training on, and crewed in combat, was a 6.4 inch, double-banded Brooke rifle, probably the best gun made during the war (Figure 6-1).³⁴⁵ This type of gun required a

³⁴³ C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 38.

³⁴⁴ C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 38, 39.

³⁴⁵ Gutierrez, *Naval Ordnance*, 111.

crew of seventeen men but could be worked with a reduced crew of eight. Table 6-1 illustrates a quarter bill for a broadside deck gun. The bill distributed the men evenly and designated men as boarders, pike men (to repel boarders), firemen (fire fighters), and sail trimmers. The bill listed the weapons for each position and the total arms on hand.

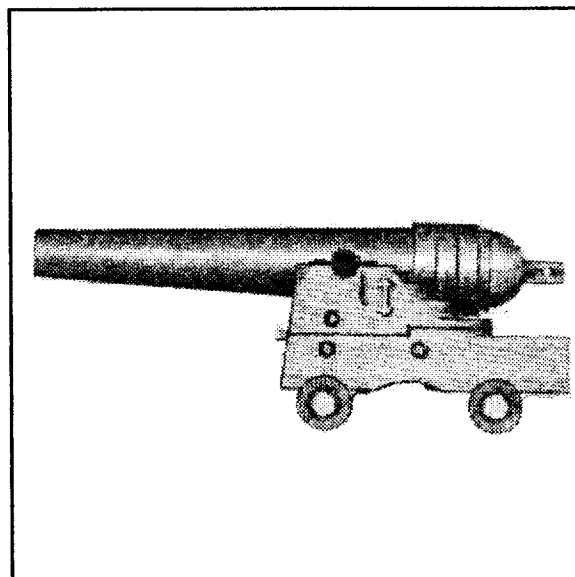


Figure 6-1. 6.4 inch Brooke Rifle of the type Robert Watson trained on. (Still, Savannah Squadron)

Figure 6-2 illustrates the positions of men at quarters. Note that the positions are numbered and that the odd numbers are to the left of the gun and the even numbers to the right. The quarter bill correspondingly gives the numbers in the relative position to the men's station at the gun. When called to quarters the men moved immediately to their positions, broke out the implements, removed the tompion, and attached the side, train, and port tackle. The implements were stored above the gun on deck beams or along the bulkhead in front of the gun.

The gun captain (number one) issued all orders for loading, aiming, and firing the gun. The quarter gunner gave primers, priming wires, and thumbstalls to the gun captain and the second captain (number two). The gun captain removed the lanyard and pulled back the hammer of the piece. The division officers, or the ship's captain, decided the type projectile for firing, the range and issued orders verbally to the gun captains.

The gun captain's first order was "serve vent and sponge." Number two placed his thumb, covered by a thumbstall, over the vent to seal it. Number four, the first sponger, assisted by number three, the first loader, rammed the sponge (a rod covered with sheep's wool and slightly dampened) down the barrel of the cannon to clean it.

When the gun captain ordered "charge with cartridge," the powder man placed a woolen bag with the powder charge in the hands of the first loader. There were three types of

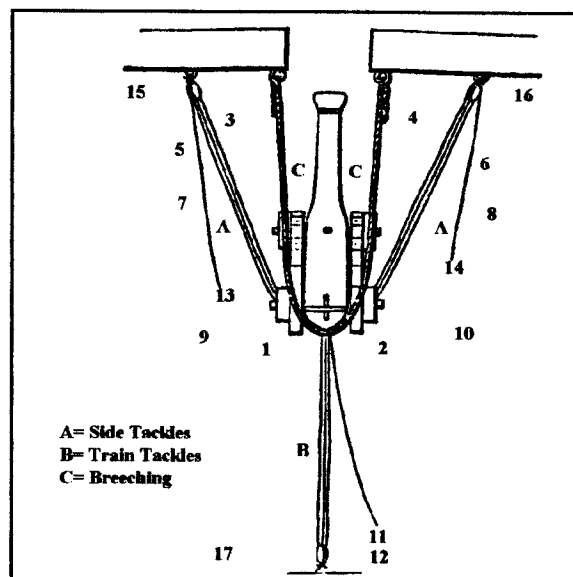


Figure 6-2. Gun positions for a 17 man crew on a 6.4 inch broadside gun. (Barrett, Advice).

Table 6-1. Quarter Bill for a DECK gun with boarding assignments and arms distribution. (C.S. Navy Department, Ordnance Instructions, Appendix.)

Titles of Gun's Crew On Left Side of Gun	Gun Nos.	Titles of Gun's Crew On Right Side of Gun	ARMS							
			Sword s	Revolvers	Pistols	Pikes	Muskets	Battle Axe		
1st Loader, 2 B.....	3	1st Sponger, 2 B.....	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
2nd Loader, 1 B.....	5	2nd Sponger, 1 B.....	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
1st Showman, 2nd Pump....	7	2nd Showman, 2nd Pump..	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
1st Side Tackle & Pike...	13	2nd Side Tackle & Pike.	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	-
1st Port Tackle & Pike...	15	2nd Port Tackle & Pike.	-	-	-	1	1	1	1	-
1st Train Tackle & Fire..	11	2nd Train Tk&Sailtrim.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1st Handspike, 1 B.....	9	2nd Handspike, 2 B.....	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
1st Captain, 2 B.....	1	2nd Captain, 1 B.....	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Powderman.....	17		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Number of Arms.....			8	4	4	4	5	4	4	4

N.B.--On other than lower decks, for Port Tackle Men substitute 3rd and 4th Side Tackle Men

cartridges used in combat: short range cartridges, made of red wool cloth; medium range cartridges, made of white wool cloth; and long range cartridges made of blue wool cloth.³⁴⁶ The division officer, or the ship's captain, determined the cartridge size and projectile type and passed the order to the gunner. Powder men carried the cartridges in pass boxes painted the color of the cartridge. The first loader inserted the bag into the gun's muzzle and assisted the first sponger in ramming the cartridge to the breech. The rammer was marked with paint at the proper depth for cartridge and shot. To insure that the charge was properly seated, the gun captain inserted his priming wire into the vent. If his wire touched the cartridge the gun captain said "home" and the rammer was removed. If he did not feel the cartridge, the loader and sponger continued ramming until the cartridge reached the breech.

With the next order, "charge with shot," numbers 7 and 8 (first and second shot men) brought the shot, or shell, to the muzzle and inserted it. The loader and sponger rammed the shot to a premarked line on the rammer. The loader then said "home" to let the gun captain know that the charge was in place.

On the command "run out," numbers fifteen and sixteen,

³⁴⁶ C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 40.

the port tackle men, opened the port shutters while the side tackle men, numbers thirteen and fourteen, heaved on their lines until the gun reached stops on the deck. The side tackle men then took a half-hitch around the blocks to temporarily hold the gun in place.

The gun captain then ordered "point" and numbers nine and ten (the first and second handspike men) moved to the rear of the gun carriage. If the gun truck needed to be shifted, the gun captain ordered "right" or "left" and slapped that side of the breech. The handspike men shifted the rear of the truck until the gun captain ordered "well!"

On the command "prime," the second captain stepped to the breech, inserted his priming wire into the vent and punched a hole in the powder bag. Number one then inserted a primer into the vent and extended the lanyard to the rear of the piece so that he could sight along the barrel.

When the gun captain ordered "Ready!" he held his left hand above his head with his fist clinched as a signal to every one that the gun was loaded and ready to fire. The side tackle men then pulled loose the half hitches holding the gun in place and dropped the lines. The train tackle men took up all slack in their lines and the handspike men laid their handspikes on the deck. All the crew, except the

gun captain, covered their ears.³⁴⁷ Numbers three and four placed their backs against the bulkhead and looked away from the muzzle.

The officer in command of the division could, at this point, take direct command of the gun. If the officer thought the gun captain proficient in his duties, he gave the command "commence firing." The gun captain commanded "fire" and pulled the lanyard. If everything was done correctly, the gun fired and recoiled to the stop position determined by the length of the breeching lines. The train and side tackle man "chocked the luffs," or seized their lines to hold the gun in battery.

Loading and firing took approximately five minutes and continued until the division officer commanded "secure." The gun was then cleaned and all implements returned to their proper places. After firing, the gunner and the gunner's mates oiled the muzzle and barrel with tallow.

If the enemy was near, the division officers ordered "quick fire." Instead of ramming cartridge and shot separately, they were rammed together in one motion.³⁴⁸ The guns could be fired by broadside, both sides, or just the

³⁴⁷ The gun captains received cotton wool for their ears.

³⁴⁸ C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 44 et seq.; and Barrett, *Advice*, 33 et seq.

pivots. The pivot gun crews loaded and fired using the same commands and much the same drill except that the pivot truck could be turned 90° to port or starboard. The officers organized the crew so that half could work the port battery while the other half worked the starboard. Reduction of gun crews occurred when boarders, fire fighters, or pike men were called. Reduced crews could shift positions to accommodate changes and still fight effectively.

Boarding

The few times the Confederate Navy boarded Union vessels they came away with positive results. The Confederate cutting out (capturing) expedition of the U.S.S. *Waterwitch* in 1864 at Ossabaw Sound, Georgia, ended with the seizure of a federal warship and is one of the rare attempts at boarding an enemy vessel by Confederate forces during the war. In the age of ironclads and rifled cannon, the importance of boarding parties decreased. The threat of significant loss far outweighed any need to board an enemy ship. On ironclads, the only personnel exposed to direct enemy fire were the pilot and the captain. Iron armor protected all other men. For this reason boarding became an extremely hazardous proposition. When armored vessels were in danger of being boarded, supporting vessels of the squadron turned their guns on that vessel and fired grape

shot or canister until the boarding attempt was defeated.³⁴⁹

Springing the rattle called boarders. The men assembled on the side opposite the enemy to await the captain's command to board. With the command "prepare to board," the men moved to the bulwarks nearest the enemy. Training in hand-to-hand combat stressed mutual support so when the captain ordered "board the enemy," the men moved quickly onto the enemy vessel and formed a tight fighting unit.

Marines and riflemen supported their boarders by taking positions which allowed direct fire on the enemy. The afterguard manned the boat howitzers (on field carriages), loaded them with canister, and fired on the enemy to disrupt any attempt at repelling the boarding attempt. The gun batteries depressed their muzzles and continued firing until the vessel surrendered or was destroyed.³⁵⁰

Pike men for repelling boarders, were called by sounding a gong. The order "prepare to repel boarders" also specified the position aboard ship where the pike men formed

³⁴⁹ Grape shot, or a stand of grape, was a three tiered stack of nine one to two inch solid shot held together by iron plates and fastened with an iron bolt. The bolt was cut half through so that it would twist apart when fired. Canister shot was a large can of thirty, one inch solid shot or .69 caliber musket balls. Its effect was much like a giant shotgun.

³⁵⁰ C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 77.

their resistance. The captain called marines and riflemen to support the pike men and the afterguard manned the howitzers. Recognizing that the best time to board an enemy was when their boarding force was driven back, the captain called boarders and prepared to counter-attack the ship.³⁵¹

Training with boat howitzers and boat tactics continued throughout the war. The *Ordnance Instructions* stated that for a small boat action the men should be proficient in embarking, firing, disembarking and maintenance of howitzers. Watson never noted training with boat howitzers in his diary. It is unknown if the sailors in Savannah received training of this kind; however, ordnance returns show boat howitzers were issued to each Savannah River Squadron vessel.³⁵²

³⁵¹ C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, 78, 79.

³⁵² C.S. Navy Department, *Ordnance Instructions*, LXXXII; and Archibald B. Fairfax to John M. Brooke, Ordnance Returns for the Savannah Squadron, Record Group 45, 28 October 1864.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

The Navy was changing. The introduction of steam had caused sweeping changes in the sea services. With the introduction of ironclad warships, the Navy changed forever. Sailors no longer needed to be seamen. Engineers and coal-heavers began to replace sailing masters. Sailmakers and boatswains, the men responsible for the ship's sails and rigging, found little to do in a sailless steam vessel.

Manpower was the major problem of the squadron. Severely undermanned, the navy at Savannah searched in vain for seamen to fill its ships. Although Hunter reported in 1864, that he had enough to maintain effectiveness, he lost many to desertion. Recruitment continued throughout the war and personnel never reached the levels necessary to run the squadron at full capacity. To aggravate the matter, the army often called on the navy to guard prisoners, supply depots, or picket duty.

Another major problem was paying and provisioning the men. Pay was inadequate and rare. Sailors sold their clothing to make ends meet. Although the Office of Provisions and Clothing tried to pay the men, the war caused skyrocketing inflation and Confederate currency became worthless. Feeding the men was easier. The squadron never wanted for adequate food even if the variety was slight. Watson saw navy rations as much improved over the army

rations and he was content with the issue. It was not until after he left Savannah that he complained about the rations he received.

Confederate sailors, primarily restricted to the rivers and bays of the South, contended with malaria, typhus, yellow fever, the blazing heat, freezing cold, and boredom. Yet they performed their duty. Their lives were no less hard than their comrades in the army. Although they were few in number, their role was vital to the war effort. By keeping the ports open for much needed supplies, the sailors enabled the Army to fight.

The sailor at Savannah began the war in blue and looked much like his Federal counterpart. As the war progressed he eventually became the "gray tar" Stephen Mallory envisioned. As the blockade tightened and the war took its toll on the South, the "gray tar" became a blue jacket. His greatest challenge was the boredom of land-locked duty.

Cooperation with the army was the squadron's greatest glory. In every instance when the military called on the navy, it was met with enthusiastic support. Strapped for men and ships, Hunter supplied what ever Gilmer or Hardee asked. If the request was impossible, Hunter went to extremes to explain why. Complaints abounded throughout the Confederacy about the friction between the services, but there were few instances in Savannah. Even in the middle of

evacuation, the navy found the men to help the C.S. engineers place torpedoes and build pontoons. The navy, and marines, covered the withdrawal of the army from Savannah and remained in place for twenty-four hours after Hardee left just to insure that Sherman would not follow. Although the war was lost, the men continued fighting, first at Charleston, then at Wilmington, at Drewry's Bluff, and finally at Sayler's Creek.

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Appendix

Location Map of Naval Facilities in Savannah 1861 - 1864.
(Lawson, Naval Facilities).

