Table Annexed to Article: The Capture of the City of Washington in MR Text Format

Peter J. Aschenbrenner, Purdue University

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TABLE ANNEXED TO ARTICLE:  
The Capture of the City of Washington  
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Peter J. Aschenbrenner  
Department of History, Purdue University  
paschenb@purdue.edu  
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13th Congress.] No. 137. [3d Session.  

CAPTURE OF THE CITY OF WASHINGTON.  

COMMUNICATED TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, ON THE 29TH OF NOVEMBER, 1814.  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES.  

23d of September, 1814.  

Resolved, That a committee he appointed to inquire into the causes of the success of the enemy in his recent enterprises against this metropolis, and the neighboring town of Alexandria; and into the manner in which the public buildings and property were destroyed and the amount thereof, and that they have power to send for persons and papers ...
Mr. Johnson of Kentucky, Mr. Lowndes. Mr. Stockton; Mr. Miller, Mr. Goldsbrugh, Mr. Barbour, and Mr. Pickens, were appointed to the said committee.

Mr. R. M. JOHNSON made the following report:

The committee charged with an inquiry so intimately concerning the character of administration, the sensibility of the nation, and the honor of its arms, as the causes of the success of the enemy in his recent enterprises against this metropolis, &c. have endeavored to combine despatch with effect, in the manner in which they have collected the facts and views presented in the following statement:

Proceedings of the Cabinet: of 1st of June, 1814.

Previous to the 2d of July, this city composed a part of military-district No. 5. Early in June last, the Secretary of War furnished the President, at his request, with a general report of the strength of the regular troops and militia then, in the service of the United States, and their distribution; which was submitted to the heads of departments, by the President, on the 7th of June. The Secretary of the Navy had furnished the President with a similar estimate of our naval forces: that which was applicable to the limits of military district No. 10, will hereafter appear. By a reference to-the estimate of the land forces, it appears, that the aggregate number of troops stationed in district No. 5; on the 7th of June, amounted to two thousand two hundred and eight, of which, there were two thousand one hundred and fifty-four effectives, stationed as follows: At Norfolk, two hundred and twenty-four artillerists; the 20th, 35th, and 1st battalion of the 38th regiment of infantry, amounting to nine hundred and twelve at Baltimore. one hundred and eleven artillerists; 2d battalion of the 38th infantry, amounting to three hundred and sixteen; sea fencibles, one hundred and seventy-three; at Annapolis, forty artillerists; at Fort Washington, eighty-two artillerists: St. Mary's, 6th regiment of infantry, three hundred and fifty. The meeting of the cabinet on the 7th, and the estimates of land and, naval forces had no particular relation to the defence of any part of military district No. 5; but for measures generally, and particularly in regard to the campaign on our territorial frontiers in the North and Northwest. Nor does it appear that this city had excited more than ordinary attention at this time.

"Proceedings of the cabinet the 1st of July.
But, soon after, certain intelligence being received of the complete success of the allies in' the subjugation of France, the President believed that the enemy had the inclination and the power to increase his military and naval forces against the United States; and, in that extent, he believed that a variety of considerations would present this city a one of the prominent subjects of attack. On the 26th of June, despatches were received' from Mr. Gallatin and Mr.
Bayard, confirming the views of the President, which induced him to convene the heads of departments on the 1st of July; at which time he presented a plan of a force immediately to be called into the field, and an additional force to be kept in readiness to march, without delay, in case of necessity. It seemed to be his object that some position should be taken between the Eastern Branch and Patuxent, with two or three thousand men, and that an additional force of ten or twelve thousand militia-and volunteers should be held in readiness in the neighboring States, including the militia of the District of Columbia, and that convenient depots of arms and military equipments should be established. The measures suggested were approved by the heads of departments; or, in other words, it does not appear that any dissent was expressed.

Correspondence of the Secretary of War and General Winder.

The next day, July the 2d, by a general order of the War Department the 10th military district was created, to embrace the State of Maryland, the District of Columbia, and that part of Virginia lying between the Rappahannock and Potomac, under the command of Brigadier General Winder, who, being then in Baltimore, was advised of the fact by a letter from the Secretary of War of the same date. On the 4th of July, a requisition was made on certain States for a corps of ninety-three thousand five hundred men, designating the quota of each, with a request to the Executive of each State to detach, and hold in readiness for immediate service, their respective detachments, recommending the expediency of fixing the places of rendezvous, with a due regard to points, the importance or exposure of which would most likely attract the views of the enemy. Of that requisition, two thousand from the quota of Virginia; five thousand from that of Pennsylvania; six thousand, the whole quota of Maryland; and two thousand, the estimated number of the militia of the District of Columbia, were put at the disposition of the commanding General, as hereafter appears, making the aggregate number of fifteen thousand, exclusive of the regular troops, viz: the 36th regiment, one battalion of the 38th, two troops of dragoons, two companies of the 10th infantry, one company of the 12th, and two companies of sea fencibles, supposed to amount to one thousand men, besides the artillerists composing the garrisons of Forts M'Henry and Washington.

On the 9th of July, General Winder, in a letter to the Secretary of War, on the subject of the duties which devolved upon him as commander of the 10th military district, a previous conversation is alluded to as having taken place between them, in consequence of the request of the Secretary in his letter of the 2d of July. General Winder appears to have understood the intention of the Secretary of War to be, that the militia force proposed for the 10th military district should be draughted and designated, but that no part of it should be called into the field until the hostile squadron in the Chesapeake should be reinforced to such an extent as to render it probable that a serious attack was contemplated. States the difficulty of collecting a force in an emergency sufficient to retard the advance of the
enemy; and suggests the expediency of calling out four thousand of the militia, with a view to station them, in equal proportions, between South river and Washington, and in the vicinity of Baltimore.

On the 12th of July, the Secretary of War, in a letter to General Winder, encloses a circular, addressed to the Governors of certain States, requiring a body of militia to be organized, equipped, and held in readiness for future service, and authorizes him, in case of actual or menaced invasion of the district under his command, to call for a part or the whole of the quota assigned to the State of Maryland; and in another, of the 17th July, the Secretary authorizes General Winder to draw from Virginia two thousand men; from Pennsylvania, five thousand men; and informs him that the whole of the militia of the District of Columbia, amounting to about two thousand, was in a disposable state, and subject to his order; making, together with the six thousand from Maryland, the estimate of fifteen thousand militia.

On the 15th of July, the Secretary of War advised General Winder that General Porter had communicated the fact of the arrival of the van of Cochrane's fleet at Lynhaven bay, and that the agent at Point Look Out had represented that two seventy-fours, two frigates, an armed sloop and brig, ascended the bay at half past 5, post meridian, on the 14th; that he considered it proper to call into service the brigade of militia which had been for some time held in readiness at Baltimore, and not knowing whether General Winder was at Baltimore or Annapolis, he had instructed the Major General, under whose orders they were organized, to call them out.

General Winder, in a letter of the 16th of July, to the Secretary of War, among other things expresses his embarrassment in relation to the situation of Annapolis, and gives it as his opinion that a large force and many additional works would be necessary to defend it against a serious attack by land and water; states its importance to the enemy, and the ease with which it might be maintained by them with the command by water, and an entrenchment of seven or eight hundred yards, protected by batteries; represents Fort Madison as exposed, and unhealthy in the months of August and September, provided with two fifty pound columbiads, two twenty-tours, two eighteens, one twelve, and one ton, which might be turned with success against Fort Severn; that these guns should be removed, and arrangements made to blow up the fort; and represents the importance of defending the town if the means could be obtained; states the Governor of Maryland and Council had taken the necessary steps to comply immediately with the requisition of the General Government. On the 17th July a letter from General Winder to the Secretary of War states that information, that he deemed credible, was received, that the enemy was ascending the river in considerable force; that he had ordered the detachment of regulars to Nottingham, had sent out the alarm to assemble a militia force, and suggests the propriety of sending to that place the marine corps, and all the militia that could be procured from the District of Columbia. The Secretary, on the same day, acknowledges the receipt of the
above letter, and states that the marine corps was not under his command; but had sent the request to the President, and, as the authority to call the militia was vested in the commanding General, he had transmitted his requisition upon the District to General Van Ness; he also reminds him that the two regiments near Baltimore had been called into actual service, and expresses the wish of the President that not less than two, nor more than three thousand of the draughts, under the requisition of the fourth of July, should be embodied and encamped at some middle point between Baltimore and this city.

From the letter of General Winder, of the 20th of July, it appears that the enemy proceeded up the Patuxent to Hunting creek, landed, and committed some depredations in Calvert county, and returned down the river, Three companies of city volunteers had marched from this district, in obedience to the call of General Winder; which he had halted at the Woodyard, and the detachments of the 36th and 38th regiments at Upper Marlborough, while he proceeded to Annapolis, to arrange with the Governor the calling out the Maryland militia; which, he states, will be immediately attended to by the Governor. He states that he had called for the largest number directed by the President, viz: three thousand, expecting thereby to get two thousand, the lowest number, that he forebore to dismantle Fort Madison, as it might alarm the people, and produce disagreeable sensations: preferring rather to risk it in case of attack.

On the 3d of July, General Winder informs the Secretary of War that the Governor of Maryland had issued his order for calling out three thousand of the draughts under the requisition of the 4th July, and had appointed Bladensburg as the place of rendezvous according to his suggestion. In another letter of the same date, General Winder informs the Secretary of War that he had deemed it expedient to direct Captain Davidson, with the city volunteers, to return to the city of Washington; from the two-fold consideration that the facility with which they could turn out and proceed to any point, rendered them nearly as effective as if kept in the field, and the importance to them individually of attending to their private concerns. That the rifles used by Captain Dough’s company were very defective, and that Captain Burch's artillery were without swords.

He recommends that the camp equipage should be left in charge of the company officers to facilitate their march. On the 25th of July, General Winder, in a letter to the Secretary of War, dated at Warburton, near Fort Washington, represents that fort in several respects to be incomplete in its preparation for defence; encloses a representation of Lieutenant Edwards on the subject; makes a requisition of ammunition, and requests that Colonel Wadsworth may cause the platform to be enlarged, so as to make the battery more effectual. The report of Lieutenant Edwards speaks of the necessity of mounting heavy artillery in the block house; states that the eighteen pound columbiads were not mounted, and that the garrison wanted means to mount them, being destitute of gin and tackle; represents the
width of the platform, which ought to be twenty-one feet, to be only fourteen, and that the heavy guns, at their first discharge, would recoil to the hurtoirs, and on being heated would run over it, that five excellent long eighteens were mounted on the water battery, which would be very useful in case of attack; but there was not a single pound of ammunition for them, and that some of the gun carriages in the fort were quite out of order.

This statement of Lieutenant Edwards was referred, upon its receipt, to Colonel Wadsworth, with orders to supply what was wanting at the fort, of which the Secretary advised' General Winder, hearing date 28th July; and Colonel Wadsworth, in a representation, about the same date, states, that two hands had been ordered from Greenleaf's point, on the Monday previous, to execute the necessary repairs of the gun-carriages; that the platform, as well as the parapet, was too narrow, but not so narrow as Lieutenant Edwards had stated, for it was directed to be made twenty or twenty-two feet wide; and that the disadvantage of too narrow a platform could be obviated with no great difficulty, by means of an elastic handspike introduced between the spokes of the wheels, which would prevent them from turning, and thus check the recoil of the piece.

Further states, that two hundred rounds of shot and cartridges for the eighteens could be sent down if ordered; that he had long since directed some grape shot to be prepared for the eighteen pound columbiads; that the tackle and fall to mount the guns in the blockhouse should be prepared; that Captain Marsteller had just informed him that a good tackle and fall were at the fort when he left it; and that the platform was upwards of twenty feet wide. General Winder, in a letter of the 26th of July, from Piscataway, advises the Secretary of War that the enemy had descended both the Potomac and Patuxent rivers; that he expected him up the bay; and should not be surprised to find Annapolis his object; which he feared would fall before five hundred men: and that he should return to Marlborough as soon as he could ascertain the movements of the enemy.

On the 7th of July, General Winder, in two letters to the Secretary of War, from Piscataway, states the force under General Stewart at eight hundred; Colonel Beall's regiment, at Port Tobacco, from three hundred to three hundred and fifty infantry, and forty dragoons; Colonel Bowen's regiment, at Nottingham, at three hundred; and the detachment of regulars, under command of Lieutenant Colonel Scott, was also at Nottingham; and from Gen. Winder's letter to the Secretary of War, of the first of August, from Port Tobacco, it appears that he had the detachment under Lieutenant Colonel Scott, at Piscataway.

Correspondence of General Winder with the Governor of Pennsylvania.
In relation to the quota of Pennsylvania, under the requisition of the 4th of July, and more especially as it records the five thousand men subject to the call of General Winder, and assigned to his command, it appears that General Winder wrote to the Governor of Pennsylvania, on the 6th of August, advising him that the Secretary of War had destined a part of that quota to act under his command, in defending the country, embraced in the 10th military district, and requesting that he might be informed of the place, or places, of rendezvous, which would be fixed for such troops, and recommending places most contiguous to the cities of Washington and Baltimore. On the 8th of August, General Winder writes again to the Governor of Pennsylvania stating that, since his first communication, he had read a letter from the Secretary of War, dated July the 17th, which had not reached him at an earlier period, in consequence of his having been in constant motion since that time; which informed him that, of the quota of militia of Pennsylvania, under the requisition of the 4th of July, five thousand were destined for the 10th military district, subject to his call as commanding officer, and requested that as great a proportion of the detachment as possible should be riflemen. {526}

On the 11th of August Secretary Boileau, under the direction of the Governor of Pennsylvania, in answer to General Winder, states that, in consequence of the deranged state of the militia system, great difficulties occurred to the Executive, in relation to the quota required to be held in readiness for the service of the United States. The only effort that could be made towards a compliance with the requisition, was to have ordered a designation for the service of the requisite troops, under the militia law of 1807, and before the expiration of that law; which order had been issued by the Governor, and was in a course of execution; that the militia law of 1807 expired on the first of August, and that all commissions under it became void, except of such officers as might be in service on that day; and that, by an oversight in the Legislature, no complete organization of the militia could be legally-made in Pennsylvania until the fourth Monday in October, when a classification was to take place.

On the 17th of August, General Winder makes a requisition on the Governor of Pennsylvania for one regiment to march forthwith to the city of Washington; and on the day following, in consequence of large reinforcements of the enemy in the mouth of the Patuxent, he calls for the whole five thousand Pennsylvania militia, by virtue of his previous authority. The five thousand were ordered out, to rendezvous at York, in Pennsylvania; on the fifth of September; of course, not in time to give any aid on the occasion for which they were called; nor was General Winder's letter of the 18th received by the Governor of Pennsylvania until the evening of the twenty-third.

Correspondence of the Secretary of War and General Winder.
On the 13th of August, General Winder, in a letter to the Secretary of War, states that, in consequence of the acceptance of the 2d regiment draughted from General Smith's division, under the requisition of April, for part of
the requisition of the 4th of July, the impracticability, besides impropriety, of calling any portion of the draughted militia from the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and the necessity of leaving all the men, immediately upon the bay, and low down on the rivers of the Western Shore, for local defence; the remaining portion of the Maryland draughts to be assembled at Bladensburg, instead of being three thousand, we could not much exceed as many hundred; yet he would require the Governor to order out all the draughts that could possibly be spared from the three lower brigades, on the Western Shore; but as the whole number draughted on the Western Shore, exclusive of the brigades drawn from General Smith's division, did not amount to fifteen hundred men, he did not expect more than one thousand under the second order of the Government, that of the 4th of July.

The most immediate and convenient resource to supply this deficiency was to take the militia drawn out under the State authority, and assembled at Annapolis, to the amount of one thousand, into the service of the United States, and to call on Pennsylvania for one regiment, which would make his militia between two and three thousand men, besides the two regiments from General Smith's division.

In answer to this letter, the Secretary of War, in a letter of the 16th of August, authorizes General Winder to take into the service of the United States the Maryland militia then at Annapolis, or elsewhere, that had been called out under the State authority, as part of time quota required by the order of the 4th of July.

Correspondence of the Secretary of War -with the Governors of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.
On the 27th of July the Governor of Maryland states, in a letter to the Secretary of War that, in conformity to the request of the President of the United States communicated in the requisition of the 4th, a detachment of five thousand five hundred infantry and six hundred, artillery was directed to be organized and held in readiness to move at the shortest notice; and in order to comply with the requisition of General Winder, for calling into the field three thousand draughts of the Maryland militia, by direction of the President, the whole of the draughts from the Western Shore, about three thousand five hundred infantry, had been ordered to embody. He speaks of the exposed situation of the Western Shore, bordering upon the bay, and presumes that the draughts from that section of the country would not be drawn away; and expects. Baltimore will be unwilling to have any force withdrawn from that place, by which any aid might be expected. These considerations had induced the order for the three thousand five hundred men; this force was to be embodied, and moved on the shortest route to Bladensburg; that the artillery of the State was about nine hundred men, two-thirds in Baltimore; it would create uneasiness to take from that place four hundred, the proportion, and he had suspended that order until General Smith should have some communication with the Secretary of War. In A letter of the 20th of July, General Winder made the requisition on the Governor of Maryland for the three thousand militia, urging the necessity of having them assembled and in
service with the least possible delay; and on the 5th of August, the Governor of Maryland informed General Winder, by letter, that his demand for three-thousand draughts could not be complied with without the brigade in service at Baltimore, from General Smith's division, that the draughts from one brigade alone were under marching orders; the orders for the march of those lying in the Chesapeake and Potomac having been suspended.

On the 14th of July Mr. Boileau, Secretary of State for Pennsylvania, acknowledges the receipt of the communication from the War Department, containing the requisition of the 14th of July, for fourteen thousand Pennsylvania militia, which was forwarded by express to the Governor, who was absent at Selim's Grove with assurances that the Governor would execute, with promptness, the requisition of the General Government. On the 25th the Governor of Pennsylvania directs the Secretary Boileau to inform the Secretary of War that general orders had been issued in compliance with the requisition of the 4th of July; explains, as before, the difficulties resulting from the militia laws of Pennsylvania, and relies on the patriotism and voluntary services of the people.

On the 14th of July the Deputy Adjutant General of Virginia acknowledged the receipt of the communication from the War Department, containing the requisition of the 4th, and enclosed to the Secretary of War the general orders issued by the Governor of Virginia, on the 22d of June placing in readiness a provisional force of fifteen thousand men and upwards, to repel sudden invasions, and, for the purpose of defence, and the points of rendezvous designated, but not organized upon the military establishment of the United States, nor for a longer term than three months; which, with other considerations, prevented the acceptance of any part of those State troops, as a compliance with the requisition of the General Government. The Secretary of War was apprized in this letter, also, that the whole of the Virginia troops then held in readiness, would be furnished with arms and ammunition by the State of Virginia; and on the 18th, the Secretary of War informs the Governor of Virginia that two thousand of the requisition upon the Virginia militia would be placed at the disposition of General Winder, as commander of the 10th military district.

Having presented a condensed view of the measures of the cabinet; the correspondence between the commanding officer and the War Department, the Governors of Pennsylvania and Maryland, and the commanding General; the correspondence with the Governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, and the Secretary of War, in regard to the requisition of the 4th of July; it will now be proper to present some facts connected with the movements and arrangements of the commanding General up to the revocation of his command.
Towards the close of the month of June, the Secretary of War gave to General Winder the first intimation that it was in contemplation to constitute a new military district, embracing the country now composing the 10th military district, and that the President intended to invest him with its command. On the 4th or 5th of July, he received notice of his appointment to the 10th military district, and the order creating it; proceeded to Washington, and called on the Secretary of War, who enumerated the regular force, as before supposed, to amount to one thousand or one thousand two hundred; the residue of his command to be composed of militia to be draughted, and was shown the circular to certain States, making the requisition of the 4th. He then returned to Baltimore, and after writing the letter of the 9th, proceeded to Annapolis to examine it, and to explore the 10th military district generally. The letter of the 12th, from the Secretary of War, was not received until he went to Annapolis, to Upper Marlborough, and back to Annapolis. On the 17th, at Nottingham, received intelligence that the enemy was proceeding up the Patuxent; wrote to the Secretary of War, and to General West, advising him to call out the militia of the county.

The detachment of the 36th and 38th regiments was ordered from South Tiver to Nottingham, and three companies of city militia were despatched to him promptly. On the 25th, visited Fort Washington; and on the 1st of August, fixed his permanent head quarters at the city of Washington; viewed and inspected the District militia. The people of St. Mary's and Charles had become importunate for aid and protection, and in obedience to the wish of the President, the 36th and 38th were ordered down to unite with General, Stewart; but the enemy having retired, this detachment was encamped at Piscataway. He understood by letters from General Smith, of Baltimore, and the Governor of Maryland, that Stansbury's brigade, upon application of General Smith, had been accepted by the Secretary of War as part of the quota of Maryland militia, under requisition of the 4th of July. On the morning of the 18th of August, Thursday, intelligence was received from the observatory at Point Look-out, that, on the morning of the 17th, the enemy's fleet off that place had been reinforced by a formidable squadron of ships and vessels of various sizes. The commanding General immediately made requisitions on the Governors of Pennsylvania and Maryland; various officers of militia, and the militia of the District of Columbia, were ordered out en masse.

On the 19th, General Winder, in a letter to the Secretary of War, submitted several propositions to the President:

1st. Would it be expedient, under the direction of the Navy Department, to have vessels ready to be sunk in the Potomac, at Fort Washington, or other points, at a moment's warning, to obstruct the navigation?

2d. Would it not be proper to put all the boats which can be propelled by oars, that are at the city of Washington, under the control of the navy at Fort Washington, to transport troops as events may require?
3d. Would it not be convenient to put the marine corps into service? at all events, to cause them to be in readiness to reinforce Fort Washington at a moment's notice, or to be applied, as events require, to any point of defence?

4th. That the force under Commodore Barney may co-operate with the commanding General, in case of the abandonment of the flotilla. On the same day, the Secretary of War in a letter states, that the propositions had been submitted to the President, and General Winder is referred to the Navy Department on the subject of the propositions relating to the means in that department. General Winder's call upon the militia en masse is approved; and on the same day, the Secretary of War, in a letter to General Winder, advises that the cavalry be pushed into the neighborhood of the enemy without delay, if he indicated an attack upon the city of Washington, for the purpose of driving off all horses and cattle, and all supplies of forage, &c. in their route. Not a moment was to be lost. Colonel Monroe, with Captain Thornton's troop of horse proceeded to find and reconnoitre the enemy on Friday, the 19th; on the same day the militia of Georgetown and the city of Washington, under General Smith, were mustered. On Saturday, the 20th, this and some other forces commenced their line of march towards Benedict, about one o'clock, and encamped that night about four miles from the Eastern Branch bridge on the road to Upper Marlborough. On this day Colonel Monroe communicated the intelligence of the arrival of the enemy at Benedict in force. Same day, Colonel Tilghman and Captain Caldwell, with their commands of horse, were ordered and despatched to annoy the enemy, impede his march, to remove and destroy forage and provisions before the enemy.

On Sunday morning, the 21st, the troops were mustered and the articles of war read to them. At 12 o'clock, the marines under Captain Miller joined the army; the regulars of the 36th and 38th also joined at the Woodyard, seven miles in advance, to which the main body of our troops were marched and encamped on Sunday night. Two letters from Colonel Monroe, on the 21st, one stating that he had viewed the enemy near Benedict, enumerated twenty-seven square rigged vessels, some bays, craft and barges; the other dated from Nottingham, stating the advance of the enemy upon that place by land and water, and recommending the commanding General to despatch five hundred or six hundred men to fall upon the enemy.

Colonel Monroe and Colonel Beall both joined the army at night, and gave an account that the enemy had been viewed by them. Colonel Beall calculated that he had seen four thousand, without supposing he had seen all. Colonel Monroe estimated the enemy at about six thousand; Captain Herbert joins with his troop; Colonel Lavall had joined with two companies of cavalry on the day previous; the enemy remained at Nottingham, except an advance detachment about three miles from town. Monday, the 22d, early in the morning, a light detachment was ordered to meet the enemy, composed of the 36th and 38th; Lieutenant Colonel Scott Colonel Lavall's cavalry, and three companies from the brigade of General Smith, under command
of Major Peter, viz. his own company of artillery, Captain Stull's rifle corps, and Captain Davidson's light infantry. This detachment marched on the road to Nottingham, about 9 o'clock the remainder of the army marched about one mile in advance, to an elevated position; the commanding General with his staff, accompanied by Colonel Monroe, proceeded in advance to reconnoitre the march of the enemy. Commodore Barney had joined the army with his flotilla men, besides the marines under Captain Miller; the horse preceded the advance detachment of our forces, met the enemy, and retired before them. This induced the advance corps to take a position to impede the march of the enemy; but the advance detachment was ordered to retrograde and join the main body of the army that had remained some hours in line of battle, expecting the enemy to come that route to the city, but who took the road to Upper Marlborough, turning to his right after having come within a few miles of our forces, upon which the commanding General fell back with his whole forces to the Battalion Old Fields, about eight miles from Marlborough, and the same distance from the city of Washington. At this time, heavy explosions in the direction of Marlboro announced the destruction of the flotilla under command of Commodore Barney. The enemy arrived at Upper Marlborough about 2 o'clock, and remained there until late next day, to be joined, it is presumed, by the detachment of the enemy which had been sent against the flotilla.

The commanding General proceeded to Marlborough,' and found the enemy encamped; several prisoners taken; gave information that the enemy would remain in that position until next day; and after making observations of the enemy, till the close of the day. General Winder returned to the army. Late in the evening of this day, the President, with the Secretaries of War and Navy, and the Attorney General, joined General Winder at the Battalion Old Fields, and remained with him till the evening of the 23d. In the morning the troops were drawn up and reviewed by the President. The most contradictory reports prevailed as to the movements and force of the enemy, and it was doubtful in camp, whether Annapolis, Fort Washington, with a view to co-operate with his naval forces, or the city of Washington, was his object. As to numbers, rumors vibrated from four thousand to twelve thousand - the best opinion was from five to seven thousand. Our forces at this time at the Old Fields are variously estimated, with no material difference, at about three thousand men, in the following corps: About four hundred horse, under the command of the following officers: Lieutenant Colonel Lavall, Colonel Tilghman, Captains Caldwell, Thornton, Herbert, Williams &c.; four hundred regular troops, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Scott, viz. 36th, 38th, and Captain Morgan's company of the 12th infantry; six hundred marines and flotilla-men under Commodore Barney and Captain Miller, with five pieces of heavy artillery, two-eighteen pounders and three twelve pounders; one thousand eight hundred, militia and volunteers, General Smith's brigade of Georgetown and city militia, and Maryland militia under Colonel Kramer - of which there were two companies of artillery under Captain Burch and Major Peter, with six six-pounders each, making an aggregate of three thousand' two hundred, with seventeen pieces
of artillery. The enemy was without cavalry, and had two small field pieces and one howitzer, drawn by men; and the whole country well calculated for defence, skirmishing, and to impede the march of an enemy.

The enemy remained at Upper Marlborough till after 12 o'clock, about which time General Winder again ordered the detachment under Lieutenant Colonel Scott and Major Peter to advance and meet the enemy if he should be found advancing, or to attack his positions. About this time, 12 o'clock some prisoners were taken, and from the information given by them, and the observations of the videts, General Winder was induced to believe that the enemy intended to remain stationary for the day, which induced him to think of uniting with him the forces at Bladensburg, and he despatched orders to General Stansbury, and other corps at Bladensburg, to move direct for Upper Marlborough, and proceeded himself towards Bladensburg, to meet and hurry on the forces to form a junction. When General Winder left the command with General Smith, and proceeded towards Bladensburgh with several troops of cavalry, he left orders that the advance corps should march upon the enemy, and annoy him by all possible means if in march, or if not, then in his positions; and if he advanced upon Bladensburg, General Smith, with the main body, should fall upon his flank, or be governed by circumstances in other movements. Captain Caldwell joined the advance corps at 2 o'clock, P. M. An express brought intelligence that the enemy had left Upper Marlborough; that our advance had met the enemy about six miles in advance of our forces, and after a skirmish, in which Captain Stull's company had about four or five rounds, was compelled to retreat, and that the enemy was advancing. One of the Aids of General Smith was despatched for General Winder; the whole army was placed in a favorable attitude of defence, in which position it continued until about sun-set, when General Winder, who had arrived some time previous ordered the army to march to the city of Washington. The enemy was about three miles distant, and remained there that night. Having remained till the going down of the sun, the retreat to the city was induced by several considerations, stated by the commanding General. 1st. To effect a union of his whole forces. 2d. The fear of a night attack, from the superiority of the enemy, and want of discipline in his troops. And, 3d. In a night attack, his superiority in artillery could not be used. The march of our army to the city was extremely rapid and precipitate, and orders occasionally given to captains of companies to hurry on the men, who were extremely fatigued and exhausted before the camping ground was reached, near the Eastern Branch bridge, within the District of Columbia.

General Stansbury had arrived at Bladensburg on the 22d, and the 5th Baltimore regiment, including the artillery and rifle corps, on the evening of the 23d; and of 12 o'clock at night, Colonel Monroe, in passing through Bladensburg to the city of Washington, advised General Stansbury to fall upon the rear of the enemy forthwith, as it was understood that he was in motion for the city. General Stansbury having been ordered to take post at
Bladensburg, did not think he was at liberty to leave it; but independent of this consideration, the fatigue of the troops under Colonel Sterrett made it impracticable.

It is here proper to state, that, on the 22d, the Secretary of War, in a letter to General Winder, which closes their written communications previous to the 04th, except a short note of that morning, states that he had ordered General Douglass to march with his command to the district, without seeking a rendezvous with General Hungerford; that a detachment of the 12th infantry had arrived; that it should be armed, equipped, and march to the Woodyard; that the Baltimore brigade would arrive at Bladensburg that day; and suggests the propriety of throwing Barney's seamen and some other troops on the right of Nottingham - a demonstration which would menace the rear of the enemy, and his communication with his shipping, which would, if not stop, much retard his progress. On the morning of the 24th, in a short note to the Secretary of War, General Winder says, the information up the river is threatening; Barney, or some other force should occupy the batteries at Greenleaf's Point and Navy yard and wishes counsel from the Government or the Secretary of War. Upon this note there is an endorsement in the hand writing of General Armstrong to this effect: "Went to General Winder, saw no necessity for ordering Barney to Greenleaf's Point or Navy Yard, advised the Commodore to join the army at Bladensburg, and ordered Minor's regiment to that place."

On the 21st, late at night, Colonel Taylor arrived in the city from the Northern Neck, where he had been charged with orders in relation to the Virginia draughts, and reported himself to General Armstrong, who issued the following general order:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, d. August 22, 1814.-12 o'clock.  
"GENERAL ORDER.  
"General Douglass will assemble his brigade at Alexandria, and hold it there subject to orders.  
"JOHN ARMSTRONG."

Colonel Taylor executed this order, and Tuesday night, the 23d, again reported himself to General Armstrong, who issued the following orders:  
"WAR DEPARTMENT.  
"GENERAL ORDER."
"Lieutenant Colonel Minor will repair to Washington, with the regiment under his command, with the utmost despatch; he will report on his arrival to Colonel Carbery of the 36th regiment, and make a requisition for arms and ammunition.
"JOHN ARMSTRONG."

"WAR DEPARTMENT, August 23, 1814.
"GENERAL ORDER.

"All the militia now in and marching to Alexandria, besides Colonel Minor, will March immediately to Washington: these orders will be communicated by Colonel Tayloe.
"JOHN ARMSTRONG."

On the 18th of August, General Van Ness ordered General Young to call out, en masse, the brigade under his command, including the Alexandria militia; the same day, two troops of cavalry, attached to the brigade, were ordered to rendezvous at Bladensburg; on the 19th, at four o'clock in the morning, to accompany Colonel Monroe, Secretary of State, and to be subject to his order. On the 20th, in the afternoon,, General Young's brigade was ordered by General Winder to cross the Potomac, opposite Alexandria, and encamp in the best position, and wait further orders, which was effected – the brigade consisting of four hundred and fifty-four men, two brass six pounders and one brass four pounder. On the 22d, early, General Young, by order of General Winder, marched his brigade and took a position on a height near the head of Pilcataway creek, about three miles in the rear of Fort Washington, where the ground was favorable for a small detachment to defend the country against a much greater force and remained in this position until the morning of the 24th, when several orders were given to him; first, to march towards the Eastern Branch bridge; second, to cross the Potomac to the Virginia side, &c. This brigade was intended, in its dispositions, to aid Fort Washington, the town of Alexandria, and to be in a situation to join General Winder.

On the morning of the 24th, General Winder established his head quarters near the Eastern Branch bridge; detachments of horse were out in various directions as videttes, and reconnoitering parties, and arrangements made to destroy the Eastern Branch bridge. Colonel George Minor, with his regiment of Virginia militia composed of six hundred infantry and one hundred cavalry, arrived at the city of Washington in the twilight of the evening of the 23d; he called on the President, who referred him to the Secretary of War for orders; the Secretary informed him that arms could not be had that night, but gave orders to report himself to Colonel Carbery early in the morning, who would furnish him with arms and ammunition, as he was charged with that duty by General Winder. From early in the morning till late in the forenoon Colonel Minor sought Colonel Carbery diligently, but he could not be found.
He rode to head-quarters, and obtained an order from General Winder upon the arsenal for arms, &c. marched to the place with his regiment; and its care he found committed to a young man, whose caution in giving out arms, &c. very much delayed the arming and supplying this regiment. An instance is here given, when the flints were counted out by the officers of the regiment, to expedite business at this crisis, the young man would count them over before they could be obtained.

Colonel Carbery arrived at this moment, apologized for his absence, and informed Colonel Minor that he had the evening previous ridden out to his country seat. Colonel Minor was again delayed some small length of times in having to remain to sign receipts, &c. His men were ordered to Capitol Hill. In the mean time, various reports were brought into head quarters, as to the movements and intentions of the enemy. The President and Heads of Departments collected at head-quarters in the following order: The President, next Secretary of State, next the Attorney General, next the Secretary of the Navy, and last the Secretary of War and Treasury together. Col. Monroe had left head quarters, upon a rumor, that gained ground, that the enemy was marching upon the city by way of Bladensburg, with a view of joining General Stansbury, advising him of the rumor, and to aid him in the formation of a line of battle to meet the enemy. General Stansbury, for reasons given in his report, had marched from his position in advance of Bladensburg, and occupied the ground west of that village, on the banks of the Eastern Branch. Here the front line of battle was formed by General Stansbury and his officers, with the aid of Col. Monroe, on the presumption that General Stansbury's brigade and the command of Colonel Sterret included the command of Major Pinkney and Baltimore artillery.

There is a bridge over the Eastern Branch at Bladensburg, and a large turnpike road leading direct to the city of Washington. About four hundred yards from this bridge, some small distance to the left of the road, the Baltimore artillery, six pieces of six pounders, occupied a temporary breast work of earth, well calculated to command the pass over the bridge. Part of the battalion of riflemen, under Major William Pinkney, and one other company, took position on the right of the artillery, partially protected by a fence and brush; and on the left of the battery, leading to the rear of a barn, two companies, from the regiment under Colonel Shutz, and the other part of the riflemen from Baltimore. Colonel Ragan was posted in the rear of Major Pinkney, his right resting on the road; Colonel Shutz continuing the line on the left, with a small vacancy in the centre of the two regiments; and Colonel Sterret formed the extreme left flank of the infantry. At this moment, Colonels Beall and Hood entered Bladensburg, with the Maryland militia from Annapolis, crossed the bridge, and took a position on a most commanding height, on the right of the turnpike, about three hundred yards from the road, to secure the right flank. In the meantime; (about 11 o'clock) certain intelligence was received at head quarters that the enemy was in-full march towards Bladensburg;
which induced General Winder to put in motion his whole force, except a few men and a piece of artillery left at the Eastern Branch bridge, to destroy it. The day was hot, and the road dusty the march was rapid to Bladensburg.

The cavalry and mounted men arrived, and were placed on the left flank, and some small distance in its rear. General Winder now arrived, and told General Stansbury and Colonel Monroe that his whole force was marching for Bladensburg, and approved the dispositions which had been made of the troops; at which moment, it had become impracticable, in the opinion of the officers, to make any essential change: for the two armies were now coming to the battle ground, in opposite directions; and the enemy appeared on the opposite heights of Bladensburg, about a mile distant, and halted fifteen or twenty minutes. This was about twelve o'clock. The troops from the city were disposed of as they arrived. Captain Burch, with three pieces of artillery, was stationed on the extreme left of the infantry of the first line; and a rifle company, armed with muskets, near the battery, to support it. About this time the Secretary of War arrived, and in a few minutes after, the President and the Attorney General, and proceeded to examine the disposition of the troops. In the mean time, as the enemy advanced into Bladensburg, the officers were forming rapidly the second line. The command of Commodore Barney came up in a trot; and formed his men on the right of the main road, in a line with the command under Colonels Beall and Hood, with a considerable vacancy, owing to the ground. The heavy artillery, Commodore Barney planted in the road; the three twelve pounders to the right, under Captain Miller, who commanded the flotilla men and marines, as infantry, to support the artillery. Lieutenant Colonel Krantor, with a battalion of Maryland militia, was posted in a wood, in advance of the marines and Colonels Beall and Hood's command. The regiment under command of Colonel Magruder, was stationed on the left of Commodore Barney, and in a line with him and Colonel Beall. The regiment under command of Colonel Brent, and Major Warring's battalion, and some other small detachments, formed the left flank of this second line, and in the rear of Major Peter's battery; and Lieutenant Colonel Scott, with the regulars, was placed in advance of Colonel Magruder, and to the left, forming a line towards Major Peter's battery, but in such a manner as not to mask it; other small detachments in various directions.

About half after twelve o'clock, while the second line was thus forming, the enemy approached, and the battle commenced: The Baltimore artillery opened a fire and dispersed the enemy's light troops now advancing along the street of the village, who took a temporary cover behind the houses and trees, in loose order, and presented objects only occasionally for the fire of the cannon. The enemy commenced throwing his rockets, and his light troops began to concentrate near the bridge, and to press across it and the river, which was fordable above. The battalion of riflemen, under Major Pinkney, now united gallantly with the fire from the battery. For some minutes the fire was continued with considerable effect; the enemy's column was not only dispersed while in the street, but while approaching the bridge they were thrown into some confusion, and the British officers were seen exerting
themselves to press the soldiers on. Having now gained the bridge, it was passed rapidly, and as the enemy crossed, flanked, formed the line, and advanced steadily on, which compelled the artillery and battalion of riflemen to give way after which Major Pinkney was severely wounded. He exerted himself to rally his men, and succeeded at a small distance in the rear of his first position, and united with the fifth Baltimore regiment.

It appears from reports of several officers, Stansbury, Pinkney, Law, Sterret, &c., that the command of General Stansbury was three or four hundred yards in the rear of the battery, and Major Pinkney's riflemen and some other small corps to the left of the battery; of course this small party had to fight with the whole force of the enemy until they retired, and the enemy occupied the ground they left without any considerable resistance, as the enemy marched on without halting after the bridge was passed. Captain Burch and Colonel Sterret were about the same distance, when Colonel Sterret was ordered to advance to support the first line. One of the pieces of artillery was abandoned, but spiked previously. The enemy soon took advantage of the trees of an orchard, which was occupied or held by the force which had just retreated, and kept up a galling fire on part of our line. Captain Burch's artillery, and a small detachment near it, now opened a cross fire upon the enemy. Colonel Sterret, with the fifth Baltimore regiment, was ordered to advance, and made a prompt movement, until ordered to halt, as at this moment the rockets assuming a more horizontal direction, and passing near the heads of Colonels Schutz and Ragan's regiments, the right gave way, which was followed in a few minutes by a general flight of the two regiments, in advance of all the exertions of Generals Winder, Stansbury, and other officers. Burch's artillery and the 5th regiment remained with firmness; the orchard obstructed their fire; but notwithstanding the enemy's light troops were, for a moment, driven back by them, the enemy having gained the right flank of the fifth, which exposed it, Burch's artillery and Colonel Sterret, who commanded the 11th, were ordered by General Winder to retreat, with a view of forming at a small distance in the rear; but instead of retiring in order, the fifth, like the other two regiments under General Stansbury, in a very few minutes were retreating in disorder and confusion, notwithstanding the exertions of Colonel Sterret to prevent it. From reports of various officers, exertions were made to rally the men and to bring them again to the battle, which partly succeeded in the first instance, but ultimately, and in a short time, all attempts were vain, and the forces routed; and the first line, together with the horse, were totally routed, and retreated in a road which forked in three directions; one branch led by Rock Creek Church, to Tenley Town and Montgomery Court House, another led to Georgetown, and a third to the city of Washington.

It does not appear that any movement was made or attempted by the cavalry or horsemen, although the enemy to the left were in open and scattered order, as they pursued or pressed upon our lines, and a most fortunate moment presented itself for a charge of cavalry and horsemen.
It may be proper here to observe that General Winder states his exertions to direct the retreating line to the capitol, with a view of rallying. This intention is corroborated by Colonel Sterret; but it appears as if this determination was not generally understood by the officers or men. Colonel Kramer, posted on the right of the road, and in advance of Commodore Barney was next drawn from his position after having maintained his ground with considerable injury to the enemy, and retreated upon the command of Colonels Beall and Hood, on a commanding eminence to the right. After the retreat of the militia under Colonel Kramer, from his first position, the enemy's column in the road was exposed to an animated discharge from Major Peter's artillery, which continued until they came into contact with Commodore Barney; here the enemy met the greatest resistance, and sustained the greatest loss, advancing upon our retreating line. When the enemy came in full view, and in a heavy column in the main road, Commodore Barney ordered an eighteen pounder to be opened upon them, which completely cleared the road, scattered, and repulsed the enemy for a moment. In several attempts to rally and advance, the enemy was repulsed, which induced him to flank to the right of our lines in an open field. Here Captain Miller opened upon him with the three twelve pounders, and the flotilla men, acting as infantry, with considerable effect. The enemy continued flanking to the right, and pressed upon the command or Colonels Beall and Hood, which gave way, after three or four rounds of ineffectual fire, at a considerable distance from the enemy, while Colonel Beall and other officers attempted to rally the men on this high position. The enemy very soon gained the flank and even the rear of the right of the second line. Commodore Barney, Captain Miller, and some other officers of his command, being wounded, his ammunition wagons having gone off in the disorder, and that which the marines and flotilla men had being exhausted; in this situation, a retreat was ordered by Commodore Barney, who fell himself into the hands of the enemy.

The second line was not exactly connected, but posted in advantageous positions in connexion with and supporting each other. The command of General Smith, including the Georgetown and city militia, still remained in order, and firm, without any part of them having given way, as well as the command of Lieutenant Colonel Scott of the regulars, and some other corps. The enemy's light troops had, in the mean time, advanced on the left of the road, and had gained a line parallel with Smith's command, and, in endeavoring to turn the flank, Colonel Brent was placed in a position calculated to prevent it; the enemy also advanced and came within long shot of part of Colonel Magruder's command, which opened a partial fire, but without much effect; and, at this moment, and in this situation, General Winder ordered the whole of the troops, then stationary, to retreat, which was effected with as much order as the nature of the ground and the occasion would permit; these troops, after retreating five or six hundred paces, were halted and formed, but were again ordered to retreat by General Winder. General Winder then gave orders to collect and form the troops on the heights west of the turnpike gate, about one mile and a half from the capitol, which order was in part executed, and the forces formed by General Smith and the other officers, when Colonel George Minor came up with his regiment of Virginia volunteers, and united his forces with General Smith's
command, having been detained, as before stated, in obtaining arms, ammunition, &c.; but, while in the act of forming, General Winder gave orders to retire to the capitol, with an expectation of being united with the troops of the first line. Colonel Minor was ordered to take a certain position and disposition, and cover the retreat of all the forces by remaining until all had marched for the capitol. The troops were again halted at the capitol, while General Winder was in conference with Colonel Monroe and General Armstrong.

The first line and the cavalry, except one troop of Colonel Lavall, had taken a route which did not bring them to the capitol; the most of them had proceeded north of the District of Columbia, and others dispersed and returned home, and sought refreshment in the country. The Commanding General represented the diminution of his force, the dispersion of a large portion of it, the want of discipline, the great fatigue of the troops, and believed that it would be impossible to make effectual resistance to the invasion of the city; nor did he think it would be proper to attempt to defend the capitol, the troops being without provisions, and which would leave every other part of the city to the mercy of the enemy, and the prospect of losing his army. In this consultation, the Secretaries of State and War, it appears, concurred in their views with General Winder, and advised him to retire and rally the troops upon the heights of Georgetown; this produced an order for the whole forces to retreat from Capitol Hill through Georgetown. On receiving this order, the troops evinced the deepest anguish, and that order which had been previously maintained was destroyed. General Smith in his report uses this language: "when the order for a retreat from Capitol Hill was received, the troops evinced an anguish beyond the power of language to express." The troops were halted at Tenleytown, and an attempt was made to collect them together which only partially succeeded. Some returned home, some went in pursuit of refreshments, and those that halted gave themselves up to the uncontrolled feelings which fatigue, exhaustion, privation, and disappointment, produced. The force thus collected were marched about five miles up the Potomac, and, early in the morning, Thursday the 25th, orders were given to assemble the troops at Montgomery court house. General Winder seems to have taken this position with a view to collect his forces, and to interpose for the protection of Baltimore in case the enemy marched upon it as was anticipated by him. On the 23d, General Winder despatched an order to the commanding officer at Fort Washington to place patrols on every road leading to the garrison; and, upon the event of his being taken in the rear of the fort, to blow it up and retire across the river. On the 26th, the army at Montgomery took up the line of march about ten o'clock towards Baltimore: General Winder proceeded on to Baltimore. On the 27th, General Smith's brigade marched to this district.

The distance from Benedict to the city of Washington by Bladensburg, is upwards of fifty miles. The enemy was without baggage wagons or means of transportation; his troops much exhausted with fatigue; many compelled to quit the ranks, and extraordinary exertions used to keep others in motion; and, as if unable to pursue our forces, remained on the battle ground; the enemy's advance reached the city about eight o'clock in the evening, the battle having ended about two o'clock, or before. The main body of the enemy remained on the heights west of the turn
pike gate. Doctor Catlett, the superintending surgeon, who was admitted to attend upon the wounded, and who passed through the enemy's camps and remained at Bladensburg until the city was evacuated, had the best opportunity of estimating the loss on both sides, as well as a good opportunity to ascertain the number and force of the enemy. His estimate is as follows: Of the enemy. On Capitol Hill, seven hundred; turnpike hill, two thousand; wounded at Bladensburgh, three hundred; attendants, three hundred; wounded and attendants in the city of Washington, sixty; killed at Bladensburgh and the city one hundred and eighty; total force, three thousand five hundred and forty. This statement is corroborated by all the information in his power, besides his own observations. Mr. Law estimated the enemy, on its march, at five thousand; but, from the best information, his estimate would be about four thousand five hundred. Colonel Monroe, who viewed the enemy on his march, estimated the number at about six thousand. General Winder states that the best opinion at the wood yard made the enemy from five to seven thousand. Our forces are variously estimated; and, indeed, from the manner of collecting them, and their dispersion, makes it difficult to ascertain the number with perfect accuracy. General Stansbury represents Colonel Ragan's regiment at five hundred and fifty; Colonel Schutz's regiment at eight hundred; Colonels Beall's and Hood's at eight hundred; Colonel Sterret's regiment at five hundred; Major Pinkney's command, including two companies of artillery, three hundred; making two thousand nine hundred and fifty-three; but General Winder estimates Colonel Beal six or seven hundred; deduct one hundred, this leaves two thousand, eight hundred and fifty-three; to which add the command of General Smith, and militia that united with him at the Woodyard, Battalion Old Fields, &c. the regulars under Lieutenant Colonel Scott, Barney's command, the cavalry, &c. three thousand two hundred; making an aggregate number of six thousand and fifty-three. Besides this force, several detachments are spoken of by General Winder's officers, not known, amounting to several hundred. But as a small detachment was left at the Eastern Branch bridge, others, particularly some of the cavalry, were on detachment, reconnoitering, &c. the number of our forces, maybe estimated at at least six thousand including about twenty pieces of artillery, two eighteen pounders, three twelves, and the balance six pounders. Our loss on the field of battle, killed, is estimated by the superintending surgeon at ten or twelve, and the wounded, some of whom died, at about thirty. General Winder's official report estimates our loss at about thirty killed and fifty wounded. The probable estimate of British forces on the 24th of August; total four thousand five hundred; killed at Bladensburgh and in the city, one hundred and fifty; wounded at both places, three hundred. American forces, six thousand; killed, twenty, wounded forty; besides the regiment under command of Colonel Minor, six hundred infantry and one hundred horse, which met the retreat on the west of the turnpike gate; and General Young's brigade about five hundred, which was ordered to remain on the banks of the Potomac about twelve miles from the city of Washington, until the evening of the 24th, when he crossed over to Alexandria, and proceeded to Montgomery Court house, to join the main army.
The enemy, on the evening of the 25th, made the greatest exertions to leave the city of Washington. They had about forty indifferent looking horses, ten or twelve carts and wagons, one ox cart, one coach, and several wagons; these were sent to Bladensburg to move off the wounded: a drove of sixty or seventy cattle preceded this party. {531} Arriving at Bladensburg, the British surgeon was ordered to select the wounded who could walk; the forty horses were mounted by those who could ride; the carts and wagons loaded, and upwards of ninety wounded left behind. About twelve o'clock at night the British army passed through Bladensburg, and parties continued until morning, and stragglers until after mid-day. The retreat of the enemy to his shipping was precipitate, and apparently under an alarm, and, it is supposed, that it was known to him that our forces had marched to Montgomery Court house. The Hon. Richard Rush, Gen Stansbury, Major William Pinkney, Dr. Catlett, and Mr. Law, all remark, that General Winder was active and zealous, encouraged the men, and exposed himself, and acted as a man of firmness during the engagement, and endeavored to rally, with other officers the lines as they gave way.

There seems to be a general concurrence of statement, that our forces were much fatigued and worn down with marching, counter-marching, and their strength much exhausted, during their service, by remaining under arms much of the night, as well as the day, by false alarms, and otherwise. Nor does it appear that it was generally known among the officers and men of the first line, that the forces from the city were formed behind in the second line, to meet the enemy and support them. This statement is made by General Stansbury, Major Win. Pinkney, and some other officers of the first line.

Recapitulation.

This statement of facts has brought the committee to a recapitulation of some of the prominent circumstances in this part of the transaction. Without entering into the consideration of the means in the power of the administration, and the equal claims of every part of the extensive maritime and territorial frontier of the United States, in proportion to its importance and exposure to defensive measures, the committee are of opinion that the means authorized for the security of the 10th military district, by the President of the United States, in a cabinet council of the 1st of July, were ample and sufficient as to the extent of the force, and seasonable as to the time when the measures were authorized. On the 2d of July the 10th military district was constituted, and the command given to General Winder. On the 4th of July the requisition upon the States for ninety-three thousand five hundred men was made. On the 14th of July the Governors of Pennsylvania and Virginia acknowledged the receipt of the requisition of the 4th, and promised promptitude. About the 10th of July the Governor of Maryland was served with the requisition, and took measures to designate a corps of six thousand men, the whole quota from that State.
On the 12th of July General Winder was authorized, in case of menaced or actual invasion, to call into service the whole quota of Maryland. On the 17th General Winder was authorized to call into actual service not less than two, nor more than three thousand of the draughts assigned to his command, to form a permanent force, to be stationed in some central position between Baltimore and the city of Washington. On the same day, 17th of July, General Winder was authorized to call on the State of Pennsylvania for five thousand men; on Virginia, two thousand; on the militia of the District of Columbia, in a disposable state, two thousand; together with the six thousand from Maryland: making an aggregate force of fifteen thousand draughted militia, three thousand of which authorized to be called into actual service, the residue in case of actual or menaced invasion, besides the regular troops, estimated at one thousand – making sixteen thousand independent of marines and flotilla men. This was the measure of defence contemplated for the military district No. 10, and the measures taken by the War Department up to the 17th of July in execution of it.
In relation to the collection of this force, several unfortunate circumstances intervened to produce a great and manifest failure.

1st. On the 17th of July General Winder was authorized, in consequence of his own suggestions and in conformity to the wishes of the President, to call-into actual service as many as three thousand, and not less than two thousand of the draughts, under the requisition of the 4th of July, assigned for the operations of his district, as a permanent corps and rallying point with his other forces, in a central position as before stated, to protect Baltimore, the city of Washington, &c. in case of invasion. General Winder, upon the receipt of this authority, proceeded direct to Annapolis, and made this requisition upon the Governor of Maryland for the actual service of three thousand men; and on the 23d of July, thirty-two days previous to the battle at Bladensburg, General Winder informs the Secretary of War that the arrangements for this force had been made, orders had issued, and Bladensburg fixed as the place of rendezvous; and encourages expectation that the collection of the force would be prompt and certain.

On the 27th the Governor of Maryland informs the Secretary of War that measures had been taken to comply with the requisition of the 4th of July, and his orders had issued, calling into actual service three thousand five hundred men, to rendezvous at Bladensburg, to comply with the demand of General Winder, in conformity to the wishes of the President. In the mean time Stansbury's brigade had been called into service at Baltimore, on account of the alarm about the 15th of July, by the Secretary of War; and although this force constituted a part of the Maryland quota of six thousand, by the consent of the Secretary of War it was to make no part of the three thousand to be called into actual service for the purposes mentioned.

To form a correct estimate of this failure, which did not bring as many hundred men into the field, in the words of General Winder, it may be proper to state, that at all times the marines, flotilla men, and regular troops, including the different garrisons, amounted to upwards of one thousand men. The militia of the District of Columbia amounted to two thousand men. These were always in a disposable state, and acknowledged by General Winder, in his letter of the 23d to be almost as efficient as if in actual service, and the event proved this to be correct.

The disposable force at Baltimore, including Stansbury's brigade, amounted to upwards of two thousand men, as the event proved, making an efficient force of at least eight thousand men, if the call for three thousand had been complied with. To this add the designated force assigned to the 10th military district, and the force to be raised on the spur of the occasion by calls upon the militia and population of the country en masse, and whose disposition is always operated upon more or less in proportion to the prospect of success. On the 13th of August, twenty-one days
after the Secretary of War was informed that this arrangement had been made, General Winder advises him that there would be almost a total failure in relation to the call for the three thousand men, and, as a temporary remedy, proposes the acceptance of certain State troops, supposed to be about one thousand, under Colonels Beall and Hood, then in service at Annapolis, which was authorized; and these troops came to the battle ground, as before stated, about one half hour before the action on the 24th of August. The reasons which operated to produce this failure have been detailed, and there can be no object in having them repeated, as the committee do not consider it a duty to discuss the merit of those considerations.

2dly. On the 17th of July, the Secretary of War, by letter, authorized the commanding general to call on Pennsylvania for five thousand men; on Virginia for two-thousand men, &c. as before stated. This letter was not received by General Winder until about the 8th of August, as appears by his correspondence with the Governor of Pennsylvania, after a lapse of about twenty-three days. In explaining the delay in the receipt of this letter. General Winder says it originated from his being in constant motion in traversing and examining the situation and various military positions of his command, and the letter had gone the circuit with him without having received it.

It is impossible for the committee to say what particular influence this circumstance had upon the collection of the troops: and it may be proper here to state, that the difficulties explained in relation to the militia laws of Pennsylvania had no bearing upon the failure of our arms, as no specific call was made upon that State till the 17th of August, when one regiment was demanded, and on the 18th, the whole five thousand were demanded; but this requisition was not received by the Governor of Pennsylvania until the evening of the 3d, at which time the Pennsylvania detachment had been designated under the requisition of the 4th, and ready for the call which was made upon it.

3dly. The unfortunate circumstances which delayed the arming of a Virginia regiment under Colonel George Minor, consisting of six hundred infantry and one hundred horse, who arrived in the city of Washington late on the evening of the 23d. Colonel Minor called on the Secretary of War, after early candle light, for orders. Col. Carbery had been charged with supplying the various corps with arms, ammunition, &c. Colonel Minor was directed to report himself to Colonel Carbery early next morning, who would furnish him. Colonel Minor was in pursuit of Colonel Carbery from very early in the morning until fate in the forenoon, without finding him, and, after obtaining an order from General Winder, marched his regiment to Greenleaf's Point to the arsenal and magazine, where he again met with difficulties as before stated, which delayed his march and prevented him from being in the action.
Having made this recapitulation of facts, the military question is presented for consideration: and having furnished the most ample means to the House to form correct opinions on this part of the inquiry, and as most of the communications from military characters enter more or less into this military view, the committee take it for granted that they have discharged their duty by the view they have taken, and submit this question to the consideration of the House.

The Navy Department.
As it regards the part taken by the Secretary of the Navy, including the destruction of the navy yard, &c. the solicitude of the President, in anticipation of the probable designs of the enemy against this city and the adjacent country, induced the Secretary of the Navy to cause three twelve pounders to be mounted on field carriages, and completely furnished for field service, in the month of May last, and the marines trained to act as infantry or artillery. Previous to the reinforcement of the enemy in the Patuxent, he caused to be mounted two long eighteen pounders on field carriages, and prepared for field service, to be given to Commodore Barney, in case of emergency, to co-operate with the land forces; and Commodore Barney was instructed to prepare for this eventual service in case he had to abandon his flotilla. On the 18th of August the Secretary received the first intelligence of the reinforcement of the enemy; the day on which they landed at Menedict. Commodore Barney was ordered to destroy his flotilla whenever it appeared certain that it would otherwise be captured, and to unite and co-operate with the forces under command of General Winder.

Letters were despatched to Commodore Rodgers and Captain Porter, with orders to repair with their forces towards the city of Washington with the utmost expedition. With every exertion, Commodore Rodgers was unable to reach the city by the 24th. The enemy entered our waters on the 16th; it was known in this city on the 18th; marched from Benedict on the 20th; and entered this city on the 24th; and left it precipitately on the evening of the 25th. The Secretary of the Navy called on General Winder on the 20th; pointed out the volunteer mechanics of the navy yard, then in his army, who were good axe-men, and would act with effect as pioneers. It was understood that a large squadron of the enemy's fleet had passed the principal obstacle in the navigation of the Potomac, and was ascending to co-operate with their land forces. The Secretary of the Navy expressed solicitude for Fort Washington, and proposed to throw into that fort the marines and part of the seamen for its defence: the commanding general did not think it expedient to lessen his force by the abstraction of a part so efficient as the marines and seamen.

The Secretary of the Navy visited the navy yard on the 21st; inquired the means of transportation and the assistance left in the yard. The mechanics of the yard had been with the army from the first alarm: four officers and a few of the ordinary, chiefly blacks, remained: two of the old gunboats, the only craft for transportation. The wagons of this
district had been pressed for the army; and the blacks usually in the market for hire, were employed at the works at Bladensburg. Orders were given for every means of transportation to be used. The public vessels afloat were, the new sloop of war Argus, the new schooner Lynx, three barges, and two gunboats. On the slip, the frigate Columbia, of the largest class, nearly ready for launching; her equipments generally made and ready, or in great forwardness. Besides the buildings, engines, fixtures, sop furniture, of the several mechanical branches in the navy yard, there were about one hundred tons of cordage, some canvass, considerable quantity of salt petre, copper iron, lead, block tin, naval and military stores, implements, and fixed ammunition, with a variety of manufactured articles in all the branches; seventeen hundred and forty three barrels of beef and pork, two hundred and seventy-nine barrels of whiskey, some plank and timber.

The Secretary states that he had no means left to transport the sloop Argus, nor place of safety, in his opinion, if the enemy took possession of the city. He ordered the barges to the Little Falls. On the morning of the 24th the Secretary visited the head quarters of General Winder, near the Eastern Branch bridge. The President and some of the Heads of Departments were present. The Secretary of the Navy presented to the President the consideration of the navy yard, in the presence of the Secretaries of War and Treasury. The public vessels and public property were described; the importance of the supplies and shipping to the enemy; and no doubt seemed to be entertained of the union of the squadron and the land forces, should the enemy succeed in the capture of the city of Washington, General Winder having distinctly stated that morning that Fort Washington could not be defended. In this event, nothing could be more clear than the plunder and destruction of the public buildings and property of the navy yard; and whether a junction was formed, or the land forces alone took the city, the loss of the navy yard and public property was certain. Upon this representation, the Secretary of the Navy in his report, says, it was distinctly understood, as the result of the conversation, that the public shipping, naval and military stores and provisions at the navy yard, should be destroyed in the event of the enemy's obtaining possession of the city. It appears that the articles to be destroyed were in store, and could not be separated from those establishments which might have been left; one of the barges was sent to Alexandria, and remained there until taken by the enemy; one gunboat, with salt provisions, has been recovered, the other was laden with provisions and gunpowder, but run aground, and was plundered by the inhabitants about the navy yard. The powder and part of the provisions have been recovered. The new schooner Lynx escaped the flames, and remains without much injury. The metallic articles are chiefly all saved, and the timber in dock, and that which is partially consumed, will be useful.

The machinery of the steam engine is not much injured; the boiler is perfect. The buildings, with the exception of the house of the commandant, the lieutenant of the guards, the guard houses, the gateway, and one other building, are all destroyed; the walls of some appear entire. The monument to perpetuate the memory of the naval heroes who fell in the attack upon Tripoli, is a little defaced. The issuing store of the yard and its contents, which escaped the original conflagration, were destroyed by the enemy on the 25th.
The following estimate of the public property and buildings is the most accurate that the committee have been able to obtain, and which to them is as satisfactory and as accurate as the nature of the inquiry would admit, viz:
The capitol, from its foundation to its destruction, including original cost, alterations, repairs, &c.  
$787,163 28
The President's house, including all costs, - . . . . . - 334,334 00
Public offices, treasury, state, war, and navy, " 93,613 82
                    $1,215,611 10

The buildings have been examined by order of a committee of the Senate. The walls of the capitol and President's house are good, and require repairs only. The walls of the public offices are not sufficient. It is supposed that the sum of four hundred and sixty thousand dollars will be sufficient to place the buildings in the situation they were in previous to their destruction, - $460,000 00
Loss sustained at the navy yard,
In moveable property, ... . . 417,745 51
In buildings and fixtures, - - 91,425 53

To this sum must be added the public library, estimated at $969,171 04
An estimate of the expense of rebuilding, in a plain and substantial manner, the navy yard, so as to carry on all the public works with as much advantage and convenience as previous to its destruction, $2- - - 62,370 00
Capture of Alexandria.
In relation to the conduct of the corporation of Alexandria; and its capture by the enemy in his recent enterprise, the committee have been furnished with various documents and information, and to which the committee refer; but, in justice to the town and to the public, a brief retrospect may not be deemed improper, as connecting certain events with the surrender of the town, on the 29th of August. October, 1812, a volunteer company was raised in Alexandria, amounting to about seventy, including officers, 'clothed by voluntary aid and donation from the citizens of Alexandria, intended for the lines, but stationed at Fort Washington; remained in garrison till December; ordered to Annapolis, and there discharged. March, 1813, Captain Marsteller's company of artillery, stationed at Fort Washington for upwards of three months. 21st of March, 1813, corporation, by committee, called on the Secretary of War for arms, &c. for the defence of Alexandria. 8th of May, corporation, by committee, waited upon the President to apprize him of the defenceless state of the town. President acknowledged that attention was due to the representations of respectable men, and the proper attention should be given; and, at the same time, apprized the committee of the impossibility, in the nature of things, to give complete protection to every assailable point of the country. 11th of May, committee of vigilance appointed to co-operate with the committees of Georgetown and city of Washington: a deputation from the three committees waited upon General Armstrong; and represented the necessity of additional fortifications at Fort Washington. Colonel Wadsworth was ordered to attend the committee, examine, and report upon their suggestions. The examination was made, and Colonel Wadsworth reported that the battery at Fort Washington was in such a state, and it so effectually commanded the channel of the Potomac, that it was not to be apprehended that the enemy would attempt to pass it while its present defences remained entire. Its elevated situation should prevent dread of a cannonading from ships; that, in case of designs against the District of Columbia, an assault by land was most probable.

To guard against this, some inconsiderable work on the land was recommended; an additional fort, in the same neighborhood, was considered unnecessary. On the 5th and 13th of August, 1814, the corporation loaned to the United States thirty-five thousand dollars, upon condition that it should be expended south of Alexandria.

After the defeat of General Winder at Bladensburg, the corporation, by committee, waited upon the British commander, at this city, to know what treatment was to be expected, provided Alexandria should fall into his hands. Admiral Cockburn assured the deputation that private property would be respected; that probably some fresh
provisions and flour might be wanted, but they should be paid for. Without firing a gun, on the 97th, Fort Washington was blown up and abandoned by the commanding officer Captain Dyson, who has been dismissed from the service of the United States, by the sentence of a court martial, in consequence of it.

On the 28th, after the enemy's squadron passed the fort, the corporation, by deputation, proceeded to the ship commanded by Captain Gordon, who commanded, and requested to know his intentions in regard to Alexandria; which he proposed to communicate when he should come opposite the town, but promised that the persons, houses, and furniture, of the citizens, should be unmolested, if he met with no opposition. Next day, the 29th, the British squadron was drawn up in line of battle so as to command the whole town. There were two frigates, the Seahorse, thirty-eight guns, and Euryalus, thirty-six guns, two rocket ships of eighteen guns each, two bomb ships of eight guns each, and a schooner of two guns, arranged along the town. The committee will not attempt to condense the correspondence and terms of surrender, but refer to it as a part of the report. One hour was allowed the corporation to decide. It was stated to the British officer that the common council had no power to compel the return of merchandise carried to the country, nor to compel the citizens to aid in raising the sunken vessels: these two points were yielded by the enemy. The enemy was requested to explain what was included in the term merchandise, which was to be taken; and, in answer, it was stated that it would embrace such as was intended for exportation, such as tobacco, cotton, flour, bale goods, &c. The plunder of the enemy was indiscriminate, and not confined to any particular class of individuals, and included alike non-residents and inhabitants. The plunder of the enemy was confined principally to flour, cotton, and tobacco.

Estimate of the loss. Three ships, three brigs, several bay and river craft, some vessels burned, sixteen thousand barrels of flour taken, one thousand hogsheads of tobacco, one hundred and fifty bales of cotton, five thousand dollars' worth of wines, sugar, &c. In relation to a letter written by Admiral Codrington to Captain Gordon, the committee will refer to the entire letter of General John Mason, who gives a satisfactory history of this transaction; and, to complete this part of the subject, reference is had to the statement of General Hungerford, giving the movements of his troops, and explains the interviews he had with the deputation from Alexandria, on his march to the city of Washington.

Conclusion.

In the inquiry into the causes of the success of the enemy, in his recent enterprises against this metropolis, the neighboring town of Alexandria &c the committee consulted a mode of investigation least embarrassing to themselves and to others. They determined that, as it was indispensable to resort to some of the parties for information not derivable from other sources it would be equally their duty to hear, as far as practicable, those who were deeply concerned as to character and reputation, from the agency they had in this unfortunate transaction, with a determination that, in the event of any contradictions in material circumstances, to resort to impartial sources
for explanation or correction. In the meantime, the committee called upon those who may be considered as impartial observers, for statements, that a just comparison might be made of different allegations and representations. If, therefore, the committee have failed to call upon persons in possession of any additional facts and views not submitted, it has not been through a want of inclination to receive all that could be important, but from a want of a knowledge of such persons and such facts. It was a question with the committee, at its earliest meeting, whether personal examinations before the committee should be adopted, or whether resort should be had, in the first instance to call for written communications to views and interrogatories submitted by the committee, and best calculated to extract every important fact. Several considerations induced the adoption of the latter mode. It gave the committee command of part of their time to attend to other public duties equally imperious and obligatory. It incurred no expense to Government or individuals, who were not interrupted in either their private concerns or public duties. The committee knew the anxiety of the House to have this inquiry closed as soon as possible, and which, by a different course, would have taken up the whole of the session, and encumbered with more useless and irrelevant matter and views than will be found in the communications. The committee feel therefore confident, that the House will be satisfied with the manner in which the subject has been developed; and to correct any possible error, and to receive any important fact or additional matter, although it is not very probable that much can remain, the committee will ask leave to report, with a reservation of a right to make any other communication that may be found necessary to an impartial examination of this subject.

APPENDIX.
In addition to the report of the committee, in order to give a more satisfactory view and detail upon the main subjects of inquiry, and a variety of incidental matter which has arisen from the investigation, the following communications are referred to as an appendix:

1. In relation to the measures adopted by administration, and the part taken by the President and the Heads of Departments, the committee refer to the letters from the Secretaries of State, War, Navy, and the Attorney General: one is also expected from the Secretary of the Treasury, which shall be communicated when, received.

2. In relation to the steps taken and measures adopted by the Secretary of War, the committee refer to the correspondence with the commanding general, the Governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, the letter of Colonel Tayloe, two reports from the ordnance office, as to arms military stores, &c.
3. The conduct of the commanding general, the collection and dispositions of the forces, and the conduct and
movements of different corps the committee refer to the narrative of General Winder, his correspondence with the
States of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, the War Department, and various officers, the reports of General
Smith, General Young, General Stansbury, Colonel Sterret, Major William Pinkney, General Douglas, Colonel Minor,
Colonel Beall, and Commodore Barney's official letter.

4. In relation to the measures and arrangements and acts of the Navy Department, including the destruction of the
navy yard and the public property, as well as the destruction of the public buildings in the city the committee refer to
a report from the Secretary of the Navy, a report from Commodore Tingey, and a report from Mr. Munroe,
superintendent of the public buildings.

5. In relation to the capture and capitulation of Alexandria, the committee refer to the proceedings of the
court martial upon Captain Dyson, the correspondence between him and the Secretary of War, as to the
abandonment of the fort, the report of the corporation of Alexandria, including the terms of surrender, &c. and the
letter from General Mason, relating to a letter from Admiral Codrington.

6. In relation to general information and incidental topics, the committee refer to Mr. Law, General Van Ness, and
Doctor Catlett.

A LIST OF THE DOCUMENTS.
1. A report of the army, its strength and distribution, previous to the first of July, 1814.
2. Letter of Colonel Monroe, then Secretary of State.
3. Letter of General Armstrong, late Secretary of War.
4. Letter from the Honorable William Jones, Secretary of the Navy.
6. Communication from the War Department, including the orders in relation to the tenth military district, the
requisition of the fourth of July, and the correspondence with the Governors of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and
Maryland and with General Winder.
7. The narrative of General Winder.
8. Reports of Generals Stansbury, Smith, Young Douglas, and Hungerford; Colonels Sterret, Minor, Tayloe, Lavall,
and Beall; Major Pinkney, and Captains Burch and Caldwell.
9. Report from the Navy Department, including the official report of Commodore Barney.
11. Reports from the Ordnance Department.
12. Sentence of the court martial in relation to Captain Dyson, and the correspondence between him and the Secretary of War.
15. William Simmons's letter.

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[Insert Table B titled “A Report of the Army, its strength and distribution, previous to the 1st of July, 1814.” This is No. 1 in the List of Documents, above.]
No. 2.

Letter of Colonel Monroe, then Secretary of State.
WASHINGTON CITY, November 13, 1814.
The events in France having greatly augmented the disposable force of the enemy, and his disposition to employ it against the United States being well known, the safety of this metropolis was thought to require particular attention.

On or about the first of July last, the President convened the Heads of Departments and the Attorney General, to consult them on the measures which it would be proper to adopt for the safety of this city and district. He appeared to have digested a plan of the force to be called immediately into the field; the additional force to be kept under orders to march at a moment’s notice; its composition, and necessary equipment. It seemed to be his object, that some position should be taken between the Eastern Branch and the Patuxent, with two or three thousand men, and that an additional force of ten or twelve thousand, including the militia of the district, should be held in readiness in the neighboring States, to march when called on. The whole force to be put under the command of an officer of the regular army.

The measures suggested by the President were approved by all the members of the administration. The Secretaries of War and Navy gave the information required of them, incident to their respective departments. The former stated the regular force which he could draw together at an early day, infantry and cavalry; the amount of the militia of the district, and the States from which he should draw the remaining force in contemplation, and in what proportions. The latter stated the aid which he could afford, from the officers and seamen of the flotilla on the Patuxent, and the marines at the navy yard on the Eastern Branch. The result of the meeting promised prompt and efficacious measures for carrying these objects into execution. The command of this whole force, with that of the district No. 5, was given to Brigadier General Winder.

On the 5th of July I went to Virginia, whence I returned on or about the 25th. After my return I was much engaged in the affairs of my own Department.

Calling on the President on the morning of the 18th of August he informed me that the enemy had entered the Patuxent in considerable force, and were landing at Benedict. I remarked that this city was their object. He concurred in the opinion. I offered to proceed immediately to Benedict, with a troop of horse, to observe their force,
report it, with my opinion of their objects, and, should they advance on this city to retire before them, communicating regularly their movements to the Government. This proposal was acceded to. Captain Thornton, of Alexandria, was ordered to accompany me, with a detachment of twenty-five or thirty of the dragoons of the district. I set out at about 1 P. M. on the 19th, and arrived at 10 next morning in sight of the enemy's squadron, lying before Benedict, and continued to be a spectator of their movements until after the action at Bladensburg on the 24th.

The annexed notes contain information which I communicated to the Government, of the force and designs of the enemy.

In retiring from Nottingham, late the evening of the 21st, after writing a note to the President, I observed a column of the enemy in the rear of the town, which I concluded had passed from Benedict by a road near the river, moving in concert with the barges. The number I could not ascertain, having seen its head only. I went immediately to Mr. Oden's, where I met Colonel Beall, whom I had before seen at Nottingham. He had taken a view of the enemy's column from a commanding height contiguous to the town. From his statement we both concluded that it must have amounted to between four and five thousand men. The force in the barges was supposed to exceed one thousand: so that the whole force of the enemy might be estimated at about six, thousand. Hearing that General Winder was at the Woodyard, I hastened to him. He had there about two thousand two hundred men consisting of the marines, Colonel Lavall's cavalry, and the city and Georgetown militia. I understood that he either then gave orders, or repeated those he had before given, to a part of the militia at Baltimore, and to Colonel Beall, who commanded six or seven hundred at Annapolis, to move towards Bladensburg to his support.

On the morning of the 22d General Winder put his force in motion from the Woodyard towards Wettiuldh. At 5 Lavall's cavalry met the enemy a mile in advance of Mr. Oden's. They were in full march, as was inferred for Washington, with intention to attack General Winder. Our cavalry retired before the enemy, and General Winder, after reconnoitering his force as well as the nature of the ground would admit, retired the head of his column towards the Woodyard, with intention to concentrate his force, and form it in line. It was soon perceived that the enemy had taken a road to his right in a direction to Upper Marlborough, at which place they arrived about 2 P. M. on that day. General Winder retired by the Woodyard to a place called the Old Fields, which covered equally Bladensburg, the bridges on the Eastern Branch, and Fort Washington. Commodore Barney joined there with the flotilla men, amounting to about five hundred.

Late on the evening of the 22d, the President, with the Secretaries of War, Navy, and Attorney General, joined General Winder at the Old Fields, and remained with him until the afternoon of the 23d. After mid-day on the 23d, General Winder detached Major Peter with some field pieces, and Captains Davidson and Stull's companies, to skirmish with the enemy near Marlborough, who advanced on him, and took a position near the camp at the Old Fields, menacing it with attack, either that night, or early the next morning. General Winder retired, and passed the
Eastern Branch into the city that night. Colonel Tilghman, with his cavalry, remained on the road between Marlborough and Bladensburg. General Stansbury, with a part of his brigade, arrived at Bladensburg on the evening of the 22d, and the remainder arrived there on the evening of the 23d. This brigade amounted to between two thousand two hundred and two thousand three hundred men.

In the afternoon of the 23d, the President, with the Secretaries of War and Navy, returned to Washington, The Attorney General, and several respectable friends from the city, proceeded with me to the road leading from Marlborough to Bladensburg. Late that evening I heard of the advance of the enemy on the party under Major Peter, and against General Winder.

Not knowing the result, I hastened to General Stansbury's quarters at Bladensburg, and found him encamped on the height beyond the village on the road leading to Marlborough. He had just heard of the enemy's movement, but was likewise unacquainted with the result. I had the pleasure to meet there Colonel Sterret and Major Pinkney. I advised the General to fall forthwith on the enemy's rear, although it was then 12 o'clock at night. He observed that he had been ordered to take post at Bladensburg, and did not think himself at liberty to leave it - but, had it been otherwise, as a considerable portion of his force had just arrived, after a very fatiguing march, that it would not be in his power to march that night. I proceeded to the city, where I heard that General Winder had crossed the Eastern Branch, and taken post near the navy yard.

In the morning of the 24th, I met the President at General Winder's quarters. Among other rumors of the enemy's movements, the General had just heard that he was marching towards Bladensburg. I asked if General Stansbury was apprised of it. He presumed that he was. I offered to join him. The President and General Winder both expressed a wish that I would. I lost not a moment in complying with their desire. Between 11 and 1 I joined General Stansbury, who had moved his brigade on this side of the Eastern Branch, near the bridge.

I inquired where were the enemy. He replied, advancing, not more than three miles distant. I advised the General to form his troops to receive them, which he immediately commenced. The order of battle was formed on the presumption that his brigade would alone have to meet the enemy in the first instance. Major Pinkney, with a battalion of riflemen, was placed to the right of the battery to support it; another corps was placed to the left, for the same purpose, and the fifth Baltimore regiment in the rear. On forming the line on the brow of the hill, and extending the right to cover the road leading to Washington, it was found that the left would be much exposed, as it scarcely extended to the rear of the battery. If the battery should be forced, which seemed probable, the enemy's column would turn our left, and ascending the heights and commanding the most advantageous grounds, force us towards the city. This induced, at a late period, the removal of the fifth Baltimore regiment from the rear of the
battery, to the left of the line, a measure taken with reluctance, and in haste. Colonel Beall's corps had entered Bladenshurg from another route, and was at that moment approaching the bridge. Captain Thornton was sent to lead it to the height to the right of the road, which commanded the whole of the ground held by General Stansbury's brigade. It was deemed important to occupy that height to protect the line to the left, and likewise to impede the enemy's movement by the road towards the city. The cavalry were placed to the left, somewhat in the rear of the line. After General Stansbury had made this disposition, Mr. Walter Jones, junior, set out, at my request, for the city, to communicate it to the President, the Secretary of War, and General Winder, with the near approach of the enemy.

Immediately after this General Winder arrived, and informed us that his whole force was in full march to Bladensburg. On taking a view of the order which had been formed, he approved of it. This was the more satisfactory, because it had then become impossible to make any essential change. The General proceeded promptly, for the enemy were getting in sight, to make a disposition of such of his troops as had arrived. He placed one corps near the battery, to support it, and some pieces of artillery on the left of General Stansbury's line. We then passed to the right along the Vine. Near the road, leading from Bladensburg to Washington, we met the Secretary of War, and immediately afterwards, at the road, I met the President and Mr. Rush, who had just arrived and who; joining with me, the Secretary of War, and General Winder, proceeded together towards the left of the line. Mr. Rush informed me that the President intended, when every arrangement should be completed, to take a position with the members of the administration in the rear of the line, that, looking to all the functions of the Government, he might be able to act with their counsel according to circumstances. Shortly afterwards the President gave me the same intimation. The action may be said to have commenced, when we had arrived in the rear of the battery near the bridge. The enemy had saluted us with their rockets, and, attempting to pass the bridge, our little batteries had begun to play on them. After some pause, the President remarked to the Secretary of War and myself, that it would now be proper for us to retire in the rear, leaving the military movement to military men, which we did. The Attorney General followed us. After our little batteries were carried and the left of out line broken, the President, with the members of the administration present, retired along the eminence on which the left of the line had been formed, viewing the progress of the action to the right. On, or near the summit of this ground. I separated from the President, and the other gentlemen of the administration with him; they continuing to move slowly towards the city, I remaining to view the enemy's progress. At this moment I fell in again with Mr. W. Jones, jun. who had been charged, as already mentioned, after the line was first formed, with a communication to the President, the Secretary of War, and to General Winder. Hearing on the road that the General had passed him, he had immediately returned and delivered to him the message in my presence, and afterwards remained with the Baltimore troops during the action. Inclining to the left, we hastened to the capitol, where we met the Secretary of War and General Winder. The General consulted the Secretary of War and me, on the propriety of making an attempt to rally the troops on the Capitol Hill.
We both advised him to rally and form them on the heights above Georgetown, believing, as I did, that much would be hazarded by an attempt near the capitol. I knew that a column of the enemy had advanced from the high ground which had been held by our troops, and meeting, as they would, with no opposition might take possession of the heights above the city, and thus force our troops, in case of a new disaster, to the plain between the capitol, the Eastern branch, and the Potomac; whereas, by occupying the heights above Georgetown, the enemy must either attack us to disadvantage, or, entering the city, expose his right flank and rear to an attack from us.

JAMES MONROE.

Copy of a letter from James Monroe to the President of the United States, dated Acquasco Mills, seven miles from Benedict, August 20, 1814, one o'clock, P. M.

I arrived here this morning at eight o'clock, and have been since within four miles of Benedict, at Butler's mill, where it was reported the enemy, on their march, had arrived. The report was unfounded. The enemy landed yesterday at Benedict, and had advanced their pickets within a mile and a half of that mill, for security only. From a height between that mill and the Patuxent, I had a view of their shipping; but being at the distance of three miles, and having no glass, we could not count them. We shall take better views in the course of the evening, and should anything be seen, material, I will immediately advise you of it. The general idea is, that they are still debarking their troops, the number of which I have not obtained any satisfactory information of. The general idea also is, that Washington is their object, but of this I can form no opinion at this time. The best security against this attempt is an adequate preparation to repel it.

Respectfully, your friend and servant,

JAMES MONROE.

Copy of a letter from James Monroe to the President of the United States, dated Horse Head, August 21st, 1814.

DEAR SIR:

I quartered last night near Charlotte Hall, and took a view this morning, at eight o'clock from a commanding height below Benedict creek, of all the enemy's shipping near the town and down the river, to the distance, at least, of eight or ten miles. I counted twenty-three square rigged vessels; few others were to be seen, and very few barges, I inferred, from the latter circumstance, that the enemy had moved up the river, either against Commodore Barney's flotilla at Nottingham, confining their views to that object, or taking that in their way, and aiming at the city, in combination with the force on the Potomac, of which I have no correct information. I had, when I left Acquasco mills last night, intended to have passed over to the Potomac, after giving you an account of their vessels from the height below Benedict; but, on observing the very tranquil scene which I have mentioned, I was led, by the inference I drew
from it, to hasten back to take a view of the enemy's movements in this quarter, which it might be more important for the Government to be made acquainted with. I am now on the main road from Washington to Benedict, twelve miles front the latter, and find that no troops have passed in this direction. The reports make it probable that a force by land and water has been sent against the flotilla. I shall proceed with Captain Thornton's troop immediately to Nottingham, and write thence whatever may be deserving of notice. The enemy have plundered the country, to the distance of three or four miles, of all their stock, &c. The intelligence of the enemy's force in the Potomac varies here as much as in Washington. I have had no means of forming a correct estimate of it.

JAMES MONROE.

Copy of a letter from James Monroe to Brigadier General Wander, dated August 21, 1814

Nottingham

SIR:
The enemy are now within four hundred yards of the shore. There are but three barges at hand, and the force in view is not considerable. If you send five or six hundred men, if you could not save the town, you may, perhaps, cut off their retreat or rear.

J. M.

P. S. Ten or twelve more barges in view. There are but two muskets in town, and a few scattering militia.

Five o'clock: Thirty or forty barges are in view.  {538} J. M.

Copy of a letter from James Monroe to the President of the United States.
The enemy are advanced six miles on the road to the Woodyard, and our troops retiring. Our troops were on the march to meet them, but in too small a body to engage. General Winder proposes to retire till he can collect them in a body. 'The enemy are in full march for Washington. Have the materials prepared to destroy the bridges.

J. MONROE.

Monday, nine, o'clock. You had better remove the records.

No. 3.
Letter of General Armstrong, late Secretary of War.

Labergorie, October 17, 1814.

An occasional absence from the place of my usual residence prevented me from receiving the letter you did me the honor to write to me on the third instant, until this morning. I now hasten to fulfil the injunctions of the committee, in giving to them "such information, views, and remarks, as are deemed pertinent to the subject of their inquiry, and
best calculated for an impartial investigation of the causes of the success of the enemy in his recent enterprises against the metropolis, 'and the neighboring town of Alexandria."

"Of the manner in which the public buildings, and other property, were destroyed, and of the amount thereof," I know nothing personally, nor have I recourse to any documents which would enable me to make a satisfactory communication on these points. The enemy's success in his late enterprise against the city of Washington, &c. must necessarily be traced to one of two causes: the incompetency of the means projected and employed to repel his attack, or, the mismanagement or misconduct of these.

Under the first head may be noticed, what was the force contemplated and ordered by the Government as competent? What was that actually assembled and employed? And what other, or additional, means were at the disposal of the Government?

The second head would furnish an inquiry strictly military, viz: Whether all was done, that was necessary and practicable, by the commanding General and the troops under his direction? For such an inquiry I am not prepared, and what, under either head, I may be able to offer, will but be a detail of facts coming within my official cognizance, without any admixture of opinions.

Early in the month of June last, a call was made on the War Department for a general report of the numbers of regular troops and militia employed by the United States, and the distribution which had been made of these for the service of the present campaign. This statement was promptly rendered, and submitted by the President to the Heads of Departments. It is not recollected that any alteration of the provisions exhibited by this document was either made or suggested. A reference to it will show what was the force then deemed competent for the defence of military district No. 5, of which the city of Washington made part.

The better to secure the seat of Government, &c. from the attacks of the enemy, and to relieve the War Department from details, not making part of its regular duties, and incident to district No. 5, as then constituted, a new military district, comprehending that portion of country lying between the Rappahannock and Potomac rivers, the District of Columbia, and the State of Maryland, was created, on the second of July last, and placed under the command of Brigadier General Winder, who had been specially assigned by the President to that service.

In an interview with this officer, soon after his appointment, his attention was invited to the state of the existing defences within the limits of his command; to an examination of the different routes by which the enemy might approach the capital; to the selection of points best calculated to retard and to stop his movements, if directed thereto; and to the indication of such new defences, field or permanent, as he might deem necessary or practicable.
The better to enable him to discharge these, and other duties, a military staff, composed of an Assistant Adjutant General, an Assistant Inspector General, and two assistant Topographical Engineers, were assigned to the district. On the first of July a consultation of the Heads of Departments was had. The questions proposed for discussion were two:

1st. By what means can the seat of Government and Baltimore be defended, in case the enemy should make these cities objects of attack?

2d. Should he select the former, will his approach be made by way of the Potomac, or by that of the Patuxent?

On these questions I took the liberty of offering the following statements and opinions:

1st. That the principal defence to be relied upon, for either place, was militia; that, besides the artillerists, composing the garrisons of Forts McHenry and Washington, about one thousand regular troops only could be collected, viz: the thirty-sixth regiment, one battalion of the thirty-eighth, two troops of dragoons, two companies of the tenth, ordered from North Carolina, and believed to be on their march, one company of the twelfth, and two companies of sea fencibles; that the number of militia called into service, should be proportioned to the known or probable strength of the enemy, and be taken from the States of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania; that it is not believed that the enemy will hazard a blow at either place, with a force less than five thousand men; that, to repel one of this extent, we should require at least double that number of militia; that these should be assembled at some intermediate point between Baltimore and the District of Columbia, leaving the sedentary, or undrafted militia of both places, an auxiliary force at the disposition of the commanding General, and that arms and ammunition were in depot and ready for their supply.

[Under this head the Secretary of the Navy stated, that the removal or destruction of the flotilla, would put at his disposition between six and eight hundred seamen, and that the-marines then in barracks exceeded one hundred.]

2d. That the navigation of the Potomac is long and sinuous; and, if not doubtful, as to practicability by large ships, is at least uncertain in relation to the time its ascent may occupy; while that of the Patuxent is short and safe, and may be calculated with sufficient precision for military purposes; that, should the enemy ascend the former, his object is unmasked; heat once declares his destination, and of course leaves us at liberty to concentrate our whole force against him; that, on the other hand, should he ascend the Patuxent, (or South river) his object is uncertain; it may be the flotilla, or Baltimore, or Washington: and that, as long as his point of attack is unknown, so long must our force remain divided. That these considerations suggest the preference he will probably give to the Patuxent, but that this route is not without objections; that a separation from his fleet, and a land march of twenty miles, through a country covered with wood, and offering, at every step, strong positions for defence, becomes inevitable; that if these
circumstances be turned to proper account against him, if he be not absolutely stopped; his march will be much retarded; that this state of things, on which every wise general will calculate, renders necessary a provision train, or the establishment of small intermediate posts, to keep open his communication with his shipping; that the loss of these, would make his situation perilous; and that, should the main battle be given near Washington, and be to him disastrous or even doubtful, his destruction is complete that after all, believing he will not hazard the movement but with a very superior force, or one he thinks such, it is also believed that he will prefer this route.

Conformably to these opinions, an order was taken to assemble a corps and form a camp, at such point between the city of Washington and Baltimore, as might be selected by the commanding general.

This document is in the possession of the President. No copy of it was retained by me. {539}

On the 4th of July, the militia requisition of that date was issued, and of that requisition, two thousand effective from the quota of Virginia; five thousand from that of Pennsylvania; six thousand, the whole quota of Maryland; and two thousand, the estimated number of the militia of the District, were put at the disposition of the commanding general. General Stewart's brigade was already in service, under the authority of the State, and had been supplied with arms, ammunition, tents, &c. by the War Department.

At a later period, when discovered that the draughts could not be brought together, but slowly, and with difficulty, a call upon the militia en masse was suggested by the General, and immediately authorized.

Of the force actually assembled and employed, I cannot speak with precision, as no return of these troops had been made to the War Department during my connexion with it. In the letter of the commanding general, of the 27th of August, he states the whole force assembled at Bladensburg, on the 24th of that month, at five thousand men; a number less by two-thirds than that which had been required. This amazing deficiency is thus accounted for by him:

"The slow progress of draught, and the imperfect organization, with the ineffectiveness of the laws to compel them to turn out, rendered it impossible to procure more. The militia of this State, and of the contiguous parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania, were called, en masse; but the former militia law of Pennsylvania had expired on the 1st of June or July, and the one adopted in its place is not to take effect, in organizing the militia, before October. No aid, therefore, has been received from that State."

The third and last point of inquiry under this head is, what other or additional means of defence were within the reach of Government?
Of naval means I am not a competent judge, nor do I know what, of this description, were actually employed, nor what it was possible to have superadded; but of those strictly military, I know none within the view of this question that were omitted. It may be supposed that permanent fortifications should have been multiplied; yet of works of this character, but one was suggested, from any quarter entitled to respect, and this was a committee of bankers, who thought a new work on the Potomac, and below Fort Washington, desirable. To this suggestion it was answered, that a small work would be unavailing, and that, to erect one of sufficient size and strength, was impracticable, for want of money. An offer was then made to supply that want by loaning to the United States $200,000, on condition that this sum should be devoted to the special object of defending the District. An agreement to this effect was made, and the money promised to be paid into the treasury on the 24th of August. The events of that day put an end to the business, and at the same time furnished evidence of the fallibility of the plan, had it even been executed, by showing that no works on the Potomac will, of themselves, be a sufficient defence for the seat of Government. The considerations which governed my own opinion on this subject, and which may have governed that of others were, that to put Washington hors d'insutte, by means of fortifications, would, from physical causes, among which is the remoteness from each other of the several points to be defended, have exhausted the treasury; that bayonets are known to form the most efficient barriers and that there was no reason, in this case, to doubt beforehand the willingness of the country to defend itself.

In this brief statement you are presented with a view of the force contemplated and ordered by the Government; of the means taken to assemble that force through the usual medium of the commanding general; of that actually assembled and employed; and lastly, of my impressions in relation to any other or additional means of defence. I now proceed to the second subject of inquiry, the employment of the means we bad, and the conduct of the Troops.

On the ___ of August was received the first notice of the arrival of Admiral Cochrane in the bay, and on the same day advices were brought, that he was entering and ascending the Patuxent. These facts were communirated to the General, and he was instructed to take a position near the enemy. On the 22d he was advised to hang on their rear and flank a heavy corps, while he opposed to them another in their front. My reasons for thus advising him were three: if Baltimore was the object of the enemy, this disposition interposed a corps between them and that city; if they aimed at Washington, it menaced their communication with their fleet, and the security of their return, and was, therefore, most likely to hold them in check; and lastly, it did not forbid a concentration of force in their front at a later period and by a forced march. On the evening of the 22d, I repaired to tie army, and found it at the Old Fields, six or eight miles distant from the enemy. A part of the corps contemplated for the service mentioned in the preceding article had joined Gen. Winder, and of the other part (under Gen. Stansbury) no cor rect account could be
given. I took this occasion to urge the necessity of a speedy concentration of our force, and of the usefulness of
pushing our pickets frequently and freely upon those of the enemy, as the best means of circumscribing his supplies;
of gaining a knowledge of his strength, (of which the accounts were various) and of preventing a stolen march, which
was to be suspected. I was glad to find the General entertained similar views, and that they were in a train of
execution. In the afternoon of the 29d, I returned to Washington, and during the night of that day the President
transmitted to me the letter of which that which follows is a copy:

"The PRESIDENT of the United States:
"The enemy are advanced six miles on the road to the Woodyard, and out troops retiring. Our troops were on the
march to meet them, but in too small a body to engage Gen. Winder proposes to retire till he can collect them in a
body. The enemy are in full march for Washington. Have the materials prepared to destroy the bridges.
JAMES MONROE.
"Tuesday, 9 o'clock. You had better remove the records."

On the morning of the 24th, I received a note from Gen. Winder, informing me of his retreat and the approach of the
enemy, and" asking counsel from me, or from the Government." This letter was late in reaching me. It had been
opened, and passed through other hands. The moment I received it I hastened, with the late Secretary of the
Treasury, to the General's quarters. We found there, the President, the Secretary of the Navy, and the Attorney
General. Gen. Winder was on the point of joining the troops at Bladensburg, whither, it was now understood, the
enemy was also marching. I took for granted, that he had received the counsel he required: for, to me, he neither
stated doubt nor difficulty, nor plan of attack or of defence. This state of things gave occasion to a conversation,
principally conducted by the President and the Secretary of the Treasury, which terminated in an understanding that
I should repair to the troops, and give such directions as were required by the urgency of the case. I lost not a
moment in fulfilling this intention, and had barely time to reconnoitre the march of the enemy, and to inform myself
of our own arrangements, when I again met the President, who told me that he had come to a new determination.
and that the military functionaries should be left to the discharge of their own duties, on their own responsibilities. I
now became, of course, a mere spectator of the combat.

If our field combinations were not the most scientific, it ought to be recollected that many of our troops were
incapable of receiving those of the best form. It and that circumstances had rendered the order of battle, on our part,
only fortuitous. " Much the largest portion of our force," says the General, in his letter of the 27th of August,
"arrived on the ground when the enemy were in sight, and were disposed of to support, in the best manner, the
position which Gen. Stansbury had taken. They had barely reached the ground before the action commenced."
These facts may also explain why we had no guns in battery in the line of the bridge over which the enemy passed? why a brick house, which enfiladed that bridge, and was partially fortified, should not have been unroofed and occupied? and why a frame store house should have been left to cover the head of the enemy's column, and its subsequent display? &c. &c.

His exertions were occasionally aided, and his authority enforced, by the War Department. See Colonel Tayloe's letter enclosed; and let me pray that this gentleman may be examined on the subject of it by the committee.

Upon my inquiring why the dragoons had not been embodied, masked, and made to charge the right flank of the enemy, the General replied that an officer of that corps had assured him that his men could not be brought to a charge. {540}

If, also, the most efficient corps of the army was left out of the original arrangement, and but got into the line when other parts of it ' were retreating, and apparently in much disorder," it will not be forgotten that this corps was distinct and independent, and that the General had no authority, of right, to command it. I witnessed the disquietude of the gallant officer who led this corps, at having been assigned to a duty which, in his own strong language, "but required a corporal and six men." The lateness with which he got into a post of more distinction, I consider as one of the causes of the disasters of the day: but, without all doubt, the determining cause of these is to be found in that love of life which, in many of the corps, predominated over a love of country and of honor. In illustration of this fact, I refer to the official reports of Gen. Winder and of Com. Barney, and shall close this letter by adopting the opinion of the former, "that the contest was not maintained as obstinately as could have been desired, but was, by parts of the troops, sustained with great spirit and prodigious effect; and, had the whole of our force been equally firm, I am induced to believe that the enemy would have been repulsed, notwithstanding all the disadvantages under which we fought."

I have the honor to be, sir, with very great respect, your most obedient servant,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

P. S. On what may particularly relate to Alexandria, I beg leave to refer to my official letter to Gen. Young, of the 24th of August, and to my note to Captain Dyson, and his reply, of the 29th. It may be, that no copy of the first was kept; in which case the original may be called for.

J. A.

Hon. Col. Johnson, Chairman &c.
Letter from the Honorableable William Jones, Secretary of the Navy.
NAVY DEPARTMENT, October 31, 1814.

In compliance with the request, contained in your letter of the 24th instant, to state to the committee of inquiry "any thing that may be within my knowledge, as to the measures taken and adopted by the administration, and more especially those proposed and adopted at the cabinet council on the first of July last, in relation to the defence of the District of Columbia, with such other views and things as may be deemed in my estimation, pertinent to an inquiry," I have the honor to reply: That, as the information required involves the confidential proceedings of a cabinet council, I deemed it expedient and respectful to ascertain, from the proper source, whether any obstacles existed to the development of what passed upon that occasion; and being freed from all restraint: upon that question, I proceed to state, briefly, from memory, my general recollection upon the subject of the inquiry.

The serious apprehensions of invasion and devastation, which succeeded the knowledge of those extraordinary events, which liberated the powerful naval and military forces of the enemy from European hostility, and the temper of the British nation, as displayed in the language of its journals and conduct of its Government, in relation to the pacific mission which it had invited, were deeply felt, and, frequently discussed, in occasional conversations between the individual members of the administration, prior to the cabinet meeting on the first of July last, in which the probable points of attack were variously considered. My own impressions inclined to the opinion that there were some points more exposed, less difficult of access, and more inviting to the enemy, upon the system of warfare he had adopted, than the metropolis; the only important objects which it presented, according to my view, being the naval depot and public shipping.

I recollect, on one of those occasions, that time President expressed very great solicitude for the safety of the metropolis; his belief that the enemy would attempt its invasion, and urged the expediency of immediate defensive preparations, with all the disposable force that could be conveniently collected. I accorded in the expediency of the preparation, but must confess I was not equally impressed with the apprehension of immediate danger, as well from the reasons I have before assigned, as from the then existing fact, that the force of the enemy, in the waters of the Chesapeake, was entirely naval, and apparently very satisfactorily engaged in conflagrating farm houses, and depredating upon slaves and tobacco, on the shores of the Patuxent. In this sentiment I was not alone.

On the 30th day of June, the members of the cabinet were invited to attend a meeting, at the President's mansion, on the following day at noon.
At or near the time appointed, the Secretaries of State, Treasury, War, and Navy, and the Attorney General, assembled.

The President stated the object of the meeting to be the consideration of the menacing aspect of things, in consequence of the augmented power of the enemy by the great political changes which had taken place in Europe, and the disposition manifested by the Government and people of Great Britain, to prosecute the war with the most vindictive and devastating spirit; represented the motives and inducements, which, he conceived, the enemy had, to prefer the invasion of the capital rather than any other immediate enterprise; and urged the, necessity of speedy and efficient preparation for the defence of the district and capital; inquired into the existing state of its military and naval defences, and the extent of the disposable force which it would be practicable to concentrate in the District.

The Secretary of War estimated the disposable regular force, applicable to the intended purpose, to the best of my recollection, about twelve hundred, including about two hundred cavalry at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, who, I think he said, were not all mounted, but would probably be so in a short time. He brought into view the volunteer corps of the city and District, the particulars of which I do not recollect; and estimated the depot at Harper's Ferry, I think, to contain, at that time, about thirty-six thousand stands of arms.

The Secretary of the Navy enumerated the naval force, within immediate reach, as follows:

The marines, at head quarters, about 120.
The force attached to the flotilla under the command of Commodore :Barney, on the Patuxent, about 500 (Total 620)

To the regular force, the :President proposed to add ten thousand militia; to be designated, and held in readiness, in such neighboring districts as should, be found most convenient. He also suggested the propriety of depositing, at a suitable place, contiguous to the metropolis, a supply of arms, ammunition, and camp equipage.

These propositions produced very little discussion, the propriety and expediency of the measures appeared to he admitted, though no formal question was taken, nor any dissent expressed. The meeting separated, with an understanding, on my part, that the measures proposed were to be carried into effect; but what order took place thereon, other than in the department of the navy, I know not; nor do I know any thing further material to the inquiry, except what is embraced in the communication which I had the honor to make to the committee on the 3d instant.

The officers of the navy yard are closely engaged in making, out the estimates of the loss sustained by the
conflagration at that establishment, but the loss of books and papers has retarded their operations. It shall be completed as soon as possible, and transmitted without delay.

I have the honor to be, sir, with great respect, your obedient servant,

W. JONES

Chairman of the Committee of Inquiry, House of Representatives

NAVY DEPARTMENT, November 12, 1814.

I have now the honor to transmit the reports and statements of the commandant of the navy yard, showing the actual loss of public property by the conflagration at the navy yard on the 24th of August last.

Exhibit A shows the loss sustained in moveable property, viz: the estimated value previous to the fire; the value preserved or recovered; and the actual loss sustained; as condensed in the recapitulation on the last page.

Net loss, $417,745.51

Exhibit B shows the loss sustained in buildings and fixtures, in like manner showing the estimated cost and real loss sustained. Net, $91,425.53

Total loss, $509,171.04

To which is annexed an estimate (believed to be founded upon such data as may be relied upon) of the "expenses of rebuilding, in a plain substantial manner," so as to carry on all the public work with as much advantage and convenience as before the fire; amount, $62,370.14

I am, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

W. JONES.

The Honorable RICHARD M. JOHNSON,
Chairman of the Committee of Investigation relative to the incursion of the enemy.

No. 5.

LETTERS FROM THE HONORABLE RICHARD RUSH, Attorney General.

Narrative by Richard Rush, Attorney General of the United States, of such facts and circumstances as are within his knowledge, relative to the capture of Washington on the 24th of August, 1814; and of measures adopted by the Government in relation to that event, previous to, or on that day; delivered on the requisition of a committee of the House of Representatives, appointed to investigate the causes which led to the capture.

WASHINGTON CITY, October 15, 1814.
As my official place in the Government embraces no connexion with the duties of either of the four Departments, farther than as I am liable to be consulted on legal questions growing out of the business of either of them, it is not to be expected that I can give information relative to the subject-matter of the committee's inquiries, except-1st. Such as I may have derived from being present at the deliberations of the cabinet, when thereto summoned by the Executive, supposing any to be derivable from that source; or, 2dly. Such as I may have derived from my personal presence at Washington, and the opportunities thence furnished of becoming acquainted with acts or measures of Government, or other events transpiring at its seat.

In regard to the former capacity, I would beg leave to premise, that, as these deliberations imply an intercourse of confidence amongst those who participate in them, I hope I do not misapprehend the true nature of the connexion between the Executive and those whom he may invite to his consultations, or fail in my respect to the committee, when I state that I do not hold myself bound to make a public disclosure of matters which may, in this mode, have been the subject of Executive advisement or consideration. The exceptions belonging to such a rule, if any do belong to it, I forbear to advert to, inasmuch as I would be understood to have waived upon this occasion the objections which might otherwise be interposed against the development of transactions from this peculiar source of information. Upon a subject of such delicacy and one involving future fights, I would beg to be further understood, that, in waiving all objection, I act under the full belief that it is not desired to restrain the freedom of such a course on my part, by any prohibitory injunctions from the quarter whence alone they could issue.

As introductory, then, to what I may have to disclose under this head, and to meet, as far as in my power, the inquiry made as to my knowledge of any preparatory measures adopted for the defence of the metropolis, I proceed to state –

That, in the month of June, of the past summer, when the momentous changes in Europe had become revealed to us, I had the honor of holding, individually, occasional interviews with the President. In dwelling upon our public affairs, he expressed his strong belief of the inauspicious results which these changes held out every likelihood of superinducing upon them. That the entire liberation of British military power from European conflicts, created a corresponding probability that portions of it, unexpectedly formidable, would be thrown upon our shores, In one, at least, of the conversations, he also dwelt upon the probability of an attack upon Washington; enforcing his opinion on the grounds, among others, of its own weakness, and the eclat that would attend a successful inroad upon the capital, beyond the intrinsic magnitude of the achievement. He spoke of the immediate necessity of preparing for its defence. His impressions of the danger appeared to acquire new force from the 26th of the month,
upon which day despatches were received from two of our ministers abroad, Mr. Gallatin and Mr. Bayard, dated early in May. Upon the 30th of June, the Heads of Departments were desired to meet at the President's House on the following day at 12 o'clock.

They accordingly assembled. All were present. I, also, in pursuance of the President's request, attended. Our public affairs were brought into discussion; their altered, and more menacing character; the probable reluctance of the Northern Powers of Europe to regard favorably at such a moment of European homage to the British name, the just rights for which we were contending; the fierce aspect which British military power now had the means, and probably would not want the disposition to put on towards us; the parts of our country most vulnerable to its immediate irruptions, as well as the general trials before us, were brought into view. The President mentioned what I had heard him, individually, express before, relative to Washington; stating his impression, unequivocally, to be, that, if it fell within the plans of the enemy to send out troops for operations upon the Atlantic frontier this season, he thought the capital would be marked as the most inviting object of a speedy attack. That it would be right, forthwith, to put in train measures of precaution and defence. He then declared that, to him, it appeared that a force of ten thousand men should be got in readiness for the city and District. That it would be desirable to have as large a portion of it as practicable regular troops; but that, at the least, there should be a thousand of this description and more if more could be obtained. That the residue should be made up of the volunteers and militia of the District of Columbia, combined with that from the parts nearest adjacent of the States of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. That convenient depots of arms and military equipage should also be established. No dissent was expressed to these opinions of the President. The Secretary of War made some verbal estimate of the regiments, or parts of regiments, near at hand. By this, it appeared that, either with, or independent of, the marines at the navy yard, (for of this I am not certain) the portion of regular force mentioned could readily be had. I recollect nothing farther to have passed at the meeting about the defence of Washington. What measures were subsequently taken; how far those proposed were carried into effect; or by what causes they have been retarded or frustrated; I have not had the means of knowing with any certainty, and therefore cannot speak. In regard to what I have said, I am disposed to entertain the less distrust of its general accuracy from the habit of keeping occasional written memorandums connected with our public history, and from having refreshed my memory by a reference to some, in the present instance, made at the time. \{542\}

As it appears to come within the scope of the committee's inquiries that I should also disclose such facts as I may possess a knowledge of, relative to any participation, by the Government, in the immediate events of the 24th of August, I have to state that my knowledge herein is merely incidental. As far as it extends, or may appear to have any bearing upon the interrogatories of the committee, I will proceed to unfold it.
On the morning of that day, probably at about 9 o'clock, I called at the lodgings of the Secretary of War to ask him for his latest intelligence respecting the enemy's movements. He was good enough to hand me a note he had received from General Winder, written from his head quarters, then established within the city limits, near the Eastern Branch bridge. It was dated, I think, the same morning. It was short, and stated the accounts from the river below to be more and more serious. It also expressed a wish to receive counsel either from the Secretary individually, or the Executive, as to the operations proper to be adopted in an emergency so critical. Other things may have been in it, but, reading it hastily, I would not be understood to speak with accuracy of its contents. Leaving the Secretary of War, I proceeded to the President's. Arriving there, I learned that the President had gone to the head quarters of General Winder. Thither I also next went. I there found the President, General Winder, Commodore Tingey, and two or three military officers. The Secretary of State, I understood, had previously been there, but had gone on to Bladensburg. The Secretary of the Navy came into the room not long afterwards. Of Commodore Tingey's presence I am not certain. The conversation turned upon the route by which it was thought most likely the enemy would make his approach. It was interrupted by dragoons, who had been on scouts, coming in every few minutes with their reports. The preponderance of opinion, at this period, I took to be that he would be most likely to move in a direction towards the Potomac, with a view to possess himself of Fort Warburton in the first instance. By this course, he would secure the passage of his ships, then supposed to be in the river below, and thus their ulterior co-operation, whether in the attack or retreat of his land troops. This way of thinking induced as I supposed, General Winder to retain a large portion of his force in the neighborhood of the Eastern Branch bridge, in preference to moving it on, under the existing state of intelligence, towards Bladensburg. In anticipation of success to the enemy's attempts by water or land, or both, some conversation was had as to the proper precautions for blowing up, or otherwise rendering useless, the vessels and public property at the navy yard. After the lapse of probably an hour from the time I reached head quarters, an express arrived from General Stansbury, commanding the Baltimore troops, at Baldensburg, rendering it at length certain that the British army was advancing in that direction. General Winder immediately put his troops in motion, and marched off with them for Bladensburg.

When he had left the house, the Secretary of War, in company with the Secretary of the Treasury, arrived there. The President mentioned to the former the information which had just been received, at the same time asking him whether, as it was probable a battle would soon be brought on, he had any advice or plan to offer upon the occasion. He replied that he had not. He added, that, as it was to be between regulars and militia, the latter would be beaten. All who were in the house then came out; the Secretary of War getting on his horse to go to Bladensburg, and the Secretary of the Navy going to the marine barracks close by. Commodore Barney, with his seamen and marines,
who were still remaining in or near the barracks, were ordered to push on with all despatch to Bladensburg, an order their anxiety stood anticipating. The President first went to the barracks, inviting me to accompany him. He then observed that he would ride to Bladensburg, with a view to join the two Heads of Departments, already gone there, and be of any use in his power. I proceeded on with him. Before we could reach the town the forces of the enemy had possession of it. General Winder, as it struck my eye in riding along, had formed the troops he marched out with him on each side of the road, stretching a mile from Bladensburg, in such way as the few moments left him would allow. But, according to what particular plan they were drawn up, or by whose order, I cannot say. The President met with the Secretary of War and the Secretary of State upon the field near the front ranks. The former had arrived just before him. When the President arrived, the arrangement for the battle, whatever it may have been, was apparently made. It commenced in a very few minutes, and, in not many more, some of our troops began to break. The President and two Secretaries, at about this period, retired together. I joined them very shortly afterwards, and rode into Washington with the President.

It does not, at present, occur to me that I can state any thing further relevant to the inquiries of the committee. I shall be ready to answer any questions it may think fit to propound, with a view to recall any explanatory or additional circumstances or facts, not recollected above, or which I have not deemed it material to state.

RICHARD RUSH.

Washington, November 3, 1814.

SIR:

I have had the honor to receive your note, of the 29th of last month, requesting of me such information as I may possess relative to a report made early in June, from the War Department to the President, of the amount of regular and militia force, and its distribution throughout the country; which report was submitted by the President to the Heads of Departments; and requesting, also, that I will add any further matter to my former narrative, which may have since occurred to my recollection, that I may deem material, particularly as to the part taken by the President, or any, of the members of the Government, on the day of the battle of Bladensburg.

With the same reservation which I before took the liberty to make of the privilege of being at my option as to the disclosure of facts of which I may have derived the knowledge through any confidential medium whilst engaged in public duties, I have to state—

That, at a meeting which took place of the Heads of Departments, at the President’s, on the 7th of June, at which I also was present, I do remember that a paper was read by the President, which had been furnished by the Secretary
of War, containing an estimate of all our land force, as well as its distribution. A similar one was exhibited of the naval force, prepared by the Secretary of the Navy. This, too, was read by the President. I remember the aggregate amount of the land force, but not the portions of it as then distributed through the respective military districts; or, at least, not that falling within district No. 5. The meeting was called, and the estimate of force submitted, for purposes quite distinct from the defence of district No. 5. The latter object being excluded, renders it, I presume, unnecessary that I should trouble the committee with any detail of the deliberations or resolutions that were had upon the occasion.

As regards the other branch of inquiry I feel at some loss. I am not sure that I do remember any supplemental facts, which the committee might think material to be stated, relative to what took place on the day of the battle. Upon this subject I would, with the most entire deference, beg leave to suggest, that perhaps the most eligible course would be for me to answer (as I should ever be ready to do) to such interrogatories as the committee might find it in their discretion or convenience to put, rather than leave in my own hands the choice of topics. I venture upon the freedom of the remark from the fear that I may omit, or introduce, matter which, in other eyes, might wear a different aspect of relationship to the investigation, to what it had done in mine. When the President expressed his intention of going to Bladensburg, lie observed, while on the road that one motive with him was, that, as the Secretary of War, who had just gone on, might be able to render useful assistance towards arrangements in the field, it would be best that the requisite sanction to it should be at hand, preventing thereby, at a moment so important, any possible embarrassment, arising from the claims or duties of the commanding general. 'But when we reached the field we found the troops formed, and waiting in their stations, the onset of the battle. The British army was already in full sight, and advancing in full march through Bladensburg. At this juncture the President joined the Secretary of State and the Secretary of War, and all approached to the spot where General Winder was. Some words of conversation seemed to pass between the President and the two latter. I was not near enough to overhear it. General Winder rode forward a few yards, exhorting the troops to be firm. The firing began almost immediately afterwards. Results took place that are known. Itibad been the wish of the President, as signified to me, on the ride out, that, after every military arrangement for the battle had been made, on the best advice attainable, the civil functionaries should join him, and retire to the rear of the army, with a view to any ulterior deliberations which events might render necessary. I took it to be in conformity with this wish that the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, and himself, retired at the time, and in the manner, I have stated, and it was in pursuance of it that I accompanied them. Whilst still on the field, encompassed by part of our troops, I think I understood the two Secretaries to unite in opinion, that the mode in which they had been drawn up was as judicious as the time and circumstances allowed. But of this I do not speak with confidence, as my attention was partly taken up in viewing,
from hill to hill, the contending movements. To me it appeared plain that entire ranks of our men, in front, were dispersed by the shock of the enemy, before any order for retreat was given by the commanding general.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your obedient servant,

RICHARD RUSH.
The Honorable R. M. JOHNSON,
Chairman of the Committee of Investigation.

No.6.

Communication from the War Department, including the orders in relation to the tenth military district, the requisition of the 4th of July, and the correspondence with the Governors of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland, and with General Winder.

BALTIMORE, July 9, 1814.
SIR:
The objects of the command which has been conferred upon me have consequently, since I received it, occupied my serious consideration.

The utmost regular force which it is probable can, in the present state of affairs, be placed at my command, including the force necessary for garrisoning the several forts, will not exceed one thousand men, and some weeks will necessarily elapse before the detachments from Virginia and Carlisle will reach my district: the detachments of the 36th and 38th are, therefore, the only troops that I can expect to have in the field in the mean time; and when those other detachments join, the utmost field force will be seven to eight hundred.

In conversation with you at Washington, I understood the idea, at present entertained, relative to the auxiliary militia force, proposed for the District, to be, that it shall be draughted and designated, but that no part of it is to be called into the field until the hostile force, now in the Chesapeake, shall be reinforced to such an extent as to render it probable that a serious attack is contemplated.

The enemy's fleet has now spent more than a twelvemonth in the waters of the Chesapeake, and, during that time, has visited almost every river falling into the bay; and must be presumed to have such accurate information, that, whatever expedition may be destined to these waters will have a definite object, to the execution of which, on its arrival, it will proceed with the utmost promptitude and despatch. Should Washington, Baltimore, or Annapolis, be
their object, what possible chance will there be of collecting a force, after the arrival of the enemy, to interpose between them and either of those places? They can proceed, without dropping anchor, to within three hours' rowing and marching of Baltimore; within less of Annapolis; and upon arriving off South river, can debark, and be in Washington in a day and h half. This celerity of movement on their part, is not probable, owing to adverse weather and other causes; but if the enemy has been active, while in our waters, to acquire a knowledge of our country, of which there can be no doubt, and should be favored with weather, on the arrival of reinforcements, he can be in Washington, Baltimore, or Annapolis, in four days from entering the Capes. But allowing, liberally, for all causes of detention, he can be in either of those places in ten days from his arrival. What time will this allow us to hear of his arrival, to disseminate through the intricate and winding channels the various orders to the militia, for them to assemble, have their officers designated, their arms, accoutrements, and ammunition, delivered, the necessary supplies provided, or for the commanding officer to learn the different-corps and detachments, so as to issue orders with the promptitude and certainty so necessary in active operations? If the enemy's force should be strong, which, if it come at all, it will be, sufficient numbers of militia could not be warned and run together, even as a disorderly crowd, without arms, ammunition, or organization, before the enemy would already have given his blow.

Would it not then be expedient to increase the force of my command, by immediately calling out a portion of militia; so that, by previously selecting the best positions for defence, and increasing, as far as possible, the natural advantages of these positions, the advance of the enemy might be retarded, his force crippled, and time and opportunity thus gained for drawing together whatever other resources of defence might be competent to resist the enemy?

The small force of regulars will be incompetent to accomplish any material works at favorable positions, for strengthening the defences, and to supply the various vidette parties, which it will be necessary to station, on the prominent points of the bay', to watch the enemy, and communicate his movements with the greatest possible despatch.

Allow me, sir, respectfully to propose that four thousand militia, be called out without delay. I propose to station these in equal proportions, in the most eligible positions between South river and Washington, and in the vicinity of Baltimore. Baltimore could not be aided by a force stationed between South river and Washington, unless a force were on the spot to retard the advance of the enemy until it could arrive, and so with respect to the force at Baltimore in co-operating with that intended to defend Washington. Each could assist the other if of this magnitude, and it appears to me that, with materially less means actually in the field and ready for instant action, no hope can be entertained of opposing the enemy in assailing either of those places.
I shall proceed to Annapolis to-morrow, and have but little doubt that the Executive of Maryland will cordially cooperate in affording such means as it may be deemed advisable to call for; and I beg you will permit me to procure this, or such other militia force as the President may think proper immediately to be called out.

I sent an order from Washington for the detachments of the thirty-sixth 'and thirty-eighth to move up to the head of South river, where I propose to meet them, and fix upon the most eligible spot for the camp intended to defend Washington.

You will please, therefore, to direct any communications to me, to Annapolis, which will enable me to make the requisite arrangements with the Executive of Maryland at once.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, sir, your obedient servant,

W. H. WINDER,
Brigadier General, commanding the 10th military district.

Hon. JOHN ARMSTRONG, Secretary of War.

UPPER MARLBOROUGH, July 16, 1814.

I reached this place last evening, in my toor of examining the country. From what I have seen and learned it appears to me that there cannot be found a place of tolerable convenience with reference to the objects of defence for an encampment, except in this neighborhood. Two places near here offer many conveniences: the one, two and a half miles on the Western branch and the road to Bladensburg, which I have seen; the other, about five miles on the road to Washington and Piscataway, near the Woodyard, which I shall examine to-day. The former is represented as unhealthy during August and September, but possesses all other requisites; the latter is said to be healthy, and unless there should be some considerable deficiency towards the comfort and convenience of a camp, I presume will be preferable; and if, upon examination, I shall find it eligible, I shall order the thirty-sixth and thirty-eighth immediately to proceed thither. I am much embarrassed about the situation of Annapolis: it cannot be defended against a serious attack by land and water, without a large force and many additional works; and yet it appears to me that, should the enemy contemplate serious operations in this quarter, with any considerable force, it will be of the utmost importance to him to occupy it. With the command of the water, an entrenchment of seven or eight hundred yards, properly protected by batteries, renders it secure against any attack by land. It furnishes a position in every respect desirable and useful to him for making enterprises against any other point, and a safe retreat against every calamity; in short, it appears to me to be the door to Washington, and it is not possible for us to shut it with
our present means. Fort Madison, besides its exposed and defenceless situation, except from an approach direct by water, is so very unhealthy during the months of August and September, that it is not possible to keep a garrison in it. It is provided with two fifty pound columbiads two twenty-four pounders, two eighteen pounders, one twelve and one six pounder. These guns will be exposed to certain capture if they are left there, and will be turned against the town and Fort Severn, with decisive effect, unless we can find the means of making a substantial defence of the place.

It appears to me that these guns should be removed, and the post mined ready to be blown up whenever an attack of the town may be contemplated. I cannot, however, but again remark that the importance of the place to the enemy, in every point of view, renders it of the last importance to be defended, if the means can be obtained. But a considerable force ought to be instantly sent there to prepare the works necessary to give a chance of successful defence. On my arrival here last evening, I learned that an express had passed through this place to the Governor of Maryland, who stated that he was the bearer of information that two seventy-fours, with a number of small vessels, had made their appearance near the mouth of the Potomac. It is of importance that I obtain the earliest intelligence, if this be true; and I beg, if you have any intelligence worthy of attention, that you would communicate it to me here without delay. By the return of the express to Point Lookout, I shall write to the person employed, there to give intelligence, and direct him to transmit me by-express, intelligence of all the movements of the enemy.

I shall also establish express lines from all the prominent points of observation on the bay, unless these may be already established, of which I beg you to inform me. The Governor and Council of Maryland have taken steps immediately to comply with the requisition of the General Government; but I fear, from my recent experience, it will be in vain to look for any efficient aid upon a sudden call upon the militia.
WM. H. WINDER,
Brig. Gen. commanding 10th Military District.
Hon. JOHN ARMSTRONG, Secretary of War.

Nottingham, July 17, 1814.
We have information, deemed credible here, that the enemy are advancing up this river in considerable force. I have called the detachment of regulars to this place, who will be here to-morrow. The alarm is going out to assemble what militia force can be collected; and I take the liberty of suggesting the propriety of sending to this point, with the utmost expedition, the marine corps, and all the militia force that can be procured from the district.
Yours, respectfully,
WM. H. WINDER,
Brig. Gen. commanding 10th Military District.
Hon. SECRETARY OF WAR.

SIR.

ANNAPOLIS, July 20, 1814.

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As I do not know whether only the quota of the District militia is to be draughted and placed at my disposal, or whether, on occasion, they are all considered as liable to requisition, I would thank you for information on that subject. As that part of the Pennsylvania militia, assigned for my district, are remote, and could not be called out upon emergency, might it not be expedient to draw from remotest points, leaving that portion of the militia nearest the probable scene of action, to be called out on the spur of the occasion? A deserter from the British, whose examination I have seen says they talk of attacking Annapolis. If they know their own interest and our weakness, in fact incapacity, to Mend that point, they certainly will possess it.

I have the honor to be, with very great respect, sir, your obedient servant,
W. H. WINDER,
Brig. Gen. commanding 10th Military District.
Hon. JOHN ARMSTRONG, Secretary of War.

WOODYARD, July 23d, 1814.

Sir:
Since I wrote you this morning, I have, under all circumstances, deemed it expedient to direct Captain Davidson to return to Washington with his detachment of volunteers.

The facility with which they can turn out and proceed to any point, renders them nearly as effective as if actually kept in the field; and the importance to them individually of attending to their private affairs, decides me, even in the doubt of the enemy's probable movements, to give this order.

I take the liberty of suggesting, upon the information of Captain Doughty, that the rifles they have are very defective for service; and it would be useful, especially at the present moment, if they could be supplied with better, Captain Burch's artillery are also without swords. Whether both those articles are supplied to the militia of the District by the Government, I know not; but if they are and can be, the probable demand for the services of the militia of the District, and their importance in the scale of our force, would render it desirable they should be supplied.
I beg leave also to suggest, upon the information of the commanding officers of companies, that, if the tents and camp equipage were respectively left under their charge, it would enable them to march when called upon with much greater promptitude.

I have the honor to be, with very great respect, sir, your obedient servant,
WM. H. WINDER,
Brigadier General, commanding 10th M. D.
Hon. JOHN ARMSTRONG, Secretary of War, Washington City.

WARBURTON, NEAR FORT WASHINGTON, July 25th, 1814.
From the enclosed representation of Lieutenant Edwards, and my own observation in confirmation thereof, Fort Washington is, in several respects, incomplete in its state of preparation for defence. If the eighteen pound columbiads are not mounted even in the block house, ammunition ought to be sent down for them and the eighteen pounders on the water battery. Lieutenant Edwards will send a requisition for the quantity and kind of ammunition necessary. Can Colonel Wadsworth, or the proper department at Washington, have the platform enlarged, which will be necessary to render the battery of the fort effectual?

I shall proceed down as far as Port Tobacco to-day.
I am, with very great respect, sir, your obedient servant,

Captain Marsteller, whom I have just seen, informs me there was a good tackle and fall at Fort Washington when he left there. He says the platform was made above twenty feet wide.
D. WADSWORTH.

Port Tobacco, July 26, 1814.
Sir:
From the uniform train of information yesterday, the enemy are descending both the Potomac and the Patuxent. I cannot, however, rely implicitly on the intelligence. I expect more certain intelligence this morning. I expect the enemy will move up the bay next, and I shall not be surprised to find Annapolis his object, which I fear would fall before five hundred men. As soon as I am certain of the movements of the enemy, I shall return to Marlborough, and thence as circumstances may require.
What prospect of the cavalry from Carlisle, and the detachment from Virginia? I have received intelligence of neither.

I am, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,
WM. H. WINDER,
Brigadier Genera4 commanding 10th M. D.
Honorable JOHN ARMSTRONG, Secretary of War.

SIR:  PISCATAWAY, July 27th, 1814.
I returned to this place from Port Tobacco' this morning.

One of the enemy's frigates, the Loire, it is said passed through the Kettle Bottoms, but returned the day before yesterday to Clement's bay, where two seventy-four's still remain. I have not obtained information where the remainder of the fleet are. If there are any of their vessels in the Patuxent, they are at or near the mouth of the river. I expect to hear of them next up the bay. I shall go on immediately to Marlborough, where, or near it, I shall remain until the movements of the enemy may call me away.

General Stewart has a very considerable force at or near Cedar Point; Colonel Beall has his regiment and a troop of cavalry at Port Tobacco; and Colonel Bowie with his regiment is at Nottingham; the regulars under my command are at Marlborough, between the enemy and any possible approach to Washington. The Governor is exerting himself to collect a force at Annapolis.

I have employed myself without intermission in examining the country, and have acquired a knowledge of its topography, which will be extremely useful to me.

I should have proceeded lower down had the enemy's force up the rivers Potomac or Patuxent; but the retrograde movements on both the rivers induces me to suppose they will proceed to some other point, and I return to Marlborough to be ready whenever he may appear.

I have heard nothing as yet of the dragoons from Carlisle, or the detachments of infantry from Virginia. Are there not enough recruits of the thirty-sixth and thirty-eighth, to form a company each? If either have fifty men, would it not be advisable to organize and order them to join?
This will be delivered you by Major Stewart, who goes by the way of Washington, will join me at Marlborough, and take any commands you may have for me.

I am, with very great respect, sir, your obedient servant,
WM. H. WINDER

{546}
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I am, with very great respect, sir, your obedient servant,
WM. H. WINDER,
Brigadier General, commanding 10th M. D.
Hon. JOHN ARMSFROiG, Secretary of War, Washington City.

SIR: PISCATAWAY, July 27th, 1814.
In the third paragraph of my letter, just finished, and which will accompany this, I have used general expressions relative to the force, in order that, should it be deemed advisable to use any information I have communicated to tranquilize the morbid sensibility of the people of the District, no injurious disclosure may be made; and I add a more specific account of the force in a separate letter, for your information.
General Stewart states his force at eight hundred; Colonel Beall has three hundred to three hundred and fifty, and forty dragoons; Colonel Bowie has, I presume, three hundred. The Governor has been, in vain, endeavoring to assemble the neighboring militia at Annapolis; he had called on Frederick county, and some militia were coming in from thence, when I last was at Annapolis. All this force is, however, called out by the authority of the State laws, and is not under my command. But they do and will co-operate toward the general defence.

I am, &c.
WM. H. WINDER, Brigadier General.
Honorable J. ARMSTRONG, Secretary of War.

Port Tobacco, August 1, 1814.
I learn this morning, in a manner which leaves me no doubt of the fact, that the enemy have retired down near to the mouth of the river, if he has not left it, with all his ships. A rumor, not so well authenticated, but very probable, states the force in the Patuxent to be increased and ascending that river.

I have halted the detachment under Lieutenant Colonel Scott at Piscataway, where they will wait until some ascertained movement of the enemy shall render it necessary for them to move to some other point. I shall see General Stewart, of the militia, this morning, and then be able to speak more decidedly.

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,
WM. H. WINDER,
Brigadier General commanding.
Honorable J. ARMSTRONG, Secretary of War.

Baltimore, August 13, 1814.
Sir:
In consequence of the two regiments which were draughted from General Smith's division, under the requisition of April last, being accepted as part of the quota of Maryland, under the requisition of the 4th of July last, of the impracticability, besides impropriety of calling any portion of those draughted from the Eastern Shore, and the necessity of leaving all the men immediately upon the bay, and low down upon the rivers, for local defence on the Western Shore, the remaining portion of the Maryland draughts to be assembled at Bladensburg, instead of being three thousand, will not much exceed as many hundred. I shall require the Governor to order out all the draughts that can possibly be spared from the three lower brigades on the Western Shore; but since the whole number
draughted on the Western Shore, exclusive of those drawn from General Smith's division, do not amount to fifteen hundred, I apprehend that, after all shall be assembled, under this second order from the Governor of Maryland, they will not exceed one thousand men. The most convenient and immediate resource to supply this deficiency, which occurs to me, will be to take the militia drawn out under the State authority, and now assembled at Annapolis, to the amount of one thousand men into the service of the United States, and to call on the Governor of Pennsylvania for one regiment. This would make the militia force (independent of the two regiments near this place) under my command between two and three thousand men, and would complete the views of the President in the order communicated to me by you, to call for not more than three not less than two thousand over and above the two regiments here.

The objects for which the militia, were called to Annapolis, were such as to make it proper that the force should be under the direction of the commander of the 10th military district. Some force ought and must be kept at Annapolis, and if it should be deemed proper to authorize me to accept them, I should leave them there until some necessity occurred requiring them elsewhere; and the trouble and expense of advancing a detachment there, would be avoided.

These men are only called out for sixty days, which may, perhaps, be long enough, and will, at all events, afford sufficient time to ascertain whether a further force will be necessary. They are already in the field, equipped in all respects, and organized. A saving of their equipments will be gained by the United States, and all the time and trouble of calling a force in their place.

I shall proceed for Bladensburg and Washington to-morrow, or the day following.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, sir, your obedient servant,
W. H. WINDER,  
Brigadier General, commanding 10th Military District.  
Hon. J. ARMSTRONG, Secretary of War.

Dear General:  
Your letter of the 21st is received.  

WAR DEPARTMENT, August 22, 1814.
Of the force in the Potomac we do not know as much as we ought. Their fleet is said to consist of six frigates, one of which had got aground on the Kettle Bottoms. They have on board some troops or marines which had been previously encamped on St. George's island. General Parker is observing them on the Virginia Side of the river, at the head of a small brigade of militia, about fourteen or fifteen hundred.

Enclosed is a letter from General Douglas, of Loudoun. I have ordered him to come on directly, without seeking a rendezvous with General Hungerlbrd.

HEAD QUARTERS, COMBS'S, NEAR THE EASTERN BRANCu BRIDGE,

SIR: Wednesday morning, 24th of August, 1814.

I have found it necessary to establish my head quarters here, the most advanced position convenient to the troops, and nearest information. I shall remain stationary as much as possible, that I may be the more readily found, to issue orders, and collect together the various detachments of militia, and give them as rapid a consolidation and organization as possible. With great respect, your obedient servant,

WM. H. WINDEr, Brigadier General, commanding loth I. A1.

Hon. SECRETARY OF WAR.

P. S.-The news up the river is very threatening. Barney's, or some other force, should occupy the batteries at Greenleaf's Point and the Navy Yard. I should be glad of the assistance of counsel from yourself and the Government. If more convenient, I should make an exertion to go to you the first opportunity.

Note.-The following memorandum was endorsed on the back of the foregoing letter, in the hand writing of Secretary Armstrong:

"Went to General Winder; found there the President; Mr. Monroe had also been there, but had set out to Bladensburg to arrange the troops, and give them an order of battle, as I understood; saw no necessity for ordering Barney to Greenleaf's Point or Navy Yard. Advised the Commodore to join the army at Bladensburg, and ordered Minor's regiment to that place. Advised General Winder to leave Barney and the Baltimore brigade upon the enemy's rear and right flank, while he put himself in front with all the rest of his force. Repeated this idea in my letter to him of the 22d."
SIR: BALTIMORE, August 27, 1814.

When the enemy arrived at the mouth of the Potomac, of all the militia which I had been authorized to assemble, there were but about one thousand seven hundred in the field; from thirteen to fourteen hundred under General Stansbury, near this place, and about two hundred and fifty at Bladensburg, under Lieutenant Colonel Kramer; the slow progress of draught, and the imperfect organization, with the ineffectiveness of the laws to compel them to turn out rendered it impossible to have procured more.

The militia of this State, and of the contiguous parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania, were called on en masse, but the former militia law of Pennsylvania had expired on the first of June or July, and the one adopted in its place is not to take effect in organizing the militia, before October. No aid, therefore, has been received from that State.

After all the force that could be put at my disposal in that short time, and making such dispositions as I deemed best calculated to present the most respectable force at whatever point the enemy might strike, I was enabled, by the most active and harassing movements of the troops, to interpose before the enemy at Bladensburg about five thousand men, including three hundred and fifty regulars and Commodore Barney's command. Much the largest portion of this force arrived on the ground when the enemy were in sight, and were disposed to support in the best manner the position which General Stansbury had taken. They had barely reached the ground before the action commenced, which was about one o'clock, P. M. of the 24th instant, and continued about an hour.

The contest was not as obstinately maintained as could have been desired, but was by parts of the troops sustained with great spirit, and with prodigious effect; and had the whole of our force been equally firm, I am induced to believe that the enemy would have been repulsed, notwithstanding all the disadvantages under which we fought. The artillery from Baltimore, supported by Major Pinkney's rifle battalion, and a part of Captain Doughty's from the navy yard, were in advance to command the pass of the bridge at Bladensburg, and played upon the enemy, as I have since learned, with very destructive effect; but the rifle troops were obliged, after some time, to retire, and, of course, the artillery. Superior numbers, however, rushed upon them, and made their retreat necessary, not, however, without great loss on the part of the enemy. Major Pinkney received a severe wound in his right arm, after he had retired to the left flank of Stansbury's brigade. The right and centre of Stansbury's brigade, consisting of Lieutenant Colonel Ragan's and Shutz's regiments generally gave way very soon afterwards, with the exception of about forty rallied by Colonel Ragan, after having lost his horse and a whole or a part of Captain Trower's company, both of whom General Stansbury represents to have made, even thus deserted, a gallant stand. The fall which Lieutenant Colonel Ragan received from his horse, together with his great efforts to sustain his position, rendered him unable to follow the retreat; we have, therefore, to lament that this gallant and excellent officer has been taken prisoner: he has, however, been paroled, and I met him here recovering from the bruises occasioned by his fall. The loss of his services at this moment is serious. The 5th Baltimore regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel Sterrett, being
the left of Brigadier General Stansbury's brigade, still, however, stood their ground, and except for a moment, when part of them recoiled a few steps, remained firm, and stood until ordered to retreat with a view to prevent them from being outflanked.

The reserve under Brigadier General Smith, of the District of Columbia, with the militia of the city and Georgetown, with the regulars, and some detachments of Maryland militia, flanked on their right by Commodore Barney and his brave fellows, and Lieutenant Colonel Beall, Still were to the right on the hill, and maintained the contest for some time with great effect.

It is not with me to report the conduct of Commodore Barney and his command, nor can I speak from observation, being too remote; but the concurrent testimony of all who did observe them, does them the highest justice for their brave resistance, and the destructive effect they produced on the enemy. Commodore Barney, after having lost his horse, took post near one of his guns, and there unfortunately received a severe wound in the thigh, and he also fell into the hands of the enemy.

Captain Miller, of marines, was wounded in the arm fighting bravely. From the best intelligence, there remains but little doubt that the enemy lost at least four hundred killed- and wounded, and of these a very unusual portion killed. Our loss cannot, I think, be estimated at more than from thirty to forty killed, and fifty or sixty wounded.

You will readily understand that it is impossible for me to speak minutely of the merit or demerit of particular troops so little known to me from their recent and hasty assemblage. My subsequent movements, for the purpose of preserving as much of my force as possible, gaining reinforcements, and protecting this place, you already know.

I am, with very great respect, sir, your obedient servant,

WM. H. WINDER, Brigadier General, commanding 10th M. D.

P. S.-We have to lament that Captain Sterrett, of the fifth Baltimore regiment, has also been wounded, but is doing well; other officers no doubt deserve notice, but I am as yet unable to particularize.

Ron. J. AMISTroXG, Secretary of War.

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General Order erecting the Tenth Military District, and letters from the Secretary of War to General Winder.

WAR DEPARTMENT

ADUTANT AND INSPECTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE, July 2, 1814.

GENERAL ORDERS:

The State of Maryland, the District of Columbia; and that part of Virginia lying between the Rappahannock and Potomac rivers, will constitute a separate military district (No. 10) under the command of Brigadier General Winder.

By order: J No. R. BELL,
Assistant Inspector General.

SIR: "WAR DEPARTMENT, JULY 2, 1814.
Your letters of the 30th instant have been received. Enclosed is an order constituting a new military district, and assigning you to the command thereof. Major Stewart has permission to serve in your staff. It would be desirable to see you here as soon as it may be convenient for you to come.

I affi, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,
JOHN ARMSTRONG.


WAR DEPARTMENT, July 1814.
In addition to my circular letter of the 4th instant, which subjects to your call the quota of Maryland militia, you are also authorized to draw, from that of Virginia, two thousand men, and from the quota of Pennsylvania, five thousand. The whole of the militia of the District of Columbia, amounting to about two thousand, is kept in a disposable state, and subject to your orders.

NOTE.-The detached militia of Maryland amounted to six thousand.

I am, very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,
JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Brigadier General WINDER.

SIR: "WAR DEPARTMENT, July 28, 1814.
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letters of the 25th and 27th instant. Lieutenant Edwards's representation is referred to Colonel Wadsworth, with orders to supply what may be wanting at Fort Washington. Lieutenant Colonel Lavafli states that he is waiting the arrival of horses. The detachment of the loth is in march, and the recruits of the 386th and 38th ordered to join their corps: they, I fear, are very few.

I am, very respectfully,' your obedient servant,
Brigadier General WINDER,
Commanding 10th Military District.

WAR-DEPARTMENT, August 19th, 1814.

SIR: Your letter of this date has been received, and submitted to the President. On the two first subjects, you are referred to the Navy Department. The marines are ordered to move. Orders have been given to Commodore Barney.
You will adjust, with the Secretary of the Navy, what relates to guard and vidette duty at Baltimore.

The call you propose making on volunteers is approved. It will be so worded as to guard against interfering with the legal draught, and putting it in the election of the militia-to fulfil, or not to fulfil, their public engagements.

The calls you have actually made are also approved.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Brigadier General Winder

- WAR DEPARTMENT, July 19, 1814.

Sir:

If the enemy's movements indicate an attack on this place, means should be taken to drive off all horses and cattle, and remove all supplies of forage, &c. on their route; a moment is not to be lost in doing but for this purpose, the whole of your cavalry may be pushed into the neighborhood of the enemy, without delay.

Colonel M'Lean could be usefully employed with them. Lavall will be at Montgomery Court House to-day: he has with him one hundred and thirty mounted dragoons, under excellent officers.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Brigadier General Winder

Correspondence with the Governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia.

CIRCULAR TO THE GOVERNORS OF STATES.

WAR DEPARTMENT, July 4, 1814.

SIR:

The late pacification in Europe offers to the enemy a large disposable force, both naval and military, and with it, the means of giving to the war here, a character of new and increased activity and extent.

Without knowing, with certainty, that such will be its application, and still less that any particular point or points will become objects of attack, the President has deemed it advisable, as a measure of precaution, to strengthen ourselves on the line of the Atlantic, and (as the principal means of doing this will be found in the militia) to invite the Executives of certain States to organize, and hold in readiness, for immediate service, a corps of ninety-three thousand five hundred men, under the laws of the 28th of February, 1795, and 18th of April, 1814.

The enclosed detail will show your Excellency what, under this requisition, will be the quota of . . As far as volunteer uniform companies can be found, they will be preferred.

The expediency of regarding (as well in the designations of the militia as of their places of rendezvous the points, the importance or exposure of which will be most likely to attract the views of the enemy, need but be suggested.
A report of the organization of your quota, when completed, and of its place or places of rendezvous, will be acceptable.

I have the honor to be, with very great respect, your Excellency's most obedient and very humble servant.

His Excellency the Governor of

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Insert Table C titled “General Staff”

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SECRETARY'S OFFICE, Jdy 14, 1814.

In the absence of the Governor. I deem it my duty to inform you, that your communication containing a requisition for a detachment of fourteen thousand Pennsylvania militia came to the office this morning, and was immediately forwarded by express to the Governor, at, Selin's Grove. Be assured the requisition will be met with all the promptness the circumstances possibly will permit.

With high considerations of respect, I am, sir, your obedient servant,

N. B. BOILEAU, Secretary.

JOHN Armstrong, Esq. Secretary of War.

SECRETARY'S OFFICE, July 25, 1814.

Sir:

The Governor has directed me to enclose to you copies of general orders issued by him in compliance with a late requisition for a military force from Pennsylvania, by the President, communicated by yours under date of the 4th instant. He has not, as you will perceive, designated places of rendezvous: he thinks it will be in time to do so in subsequent orders, which must issue before the troops can march: the threatened point of attack by the enemy will, it is probable, then be better ascertained, and a more prudent selection of place can be made. The repeal of our militia law of 1807, and its several supplements, on the 1st of August next; the disannulling of all militia commissions on that day, by a new law of the last session, granted under the old law, except the commissions of such officers as may then be in actual service; the ordering by the new law; the holding of elections of officers by the militia, after the said 1st of August; the notice of election; returns to be made; and the protracting to the 4th Monday of October next, the classification of the militia; causes an almost total disorganization of our militia system,
between the 1st of August and the 4th of October, and presents difficulties, in yielding perfect compliance with the requisition of the President, insurmountable. It is hoped, however, that the patriotism of the people will obviate the difficulty by a voluntary tender of services, which the Governor has invited, growing out of the unaccountable oversight of the Legislature. It is strongly doubted whether any orders can be enforced under the present state of affairs.

The requisition refers to the act of Congress, passed 28th February, 1795; under which 'militia can be held in service three months only; and to the law of 1814, which authorized the President to keep them six months in service. The law of Pennsylvania, passed at the last session of the Legislature, requires the Governor to mention, in general orders, the period for which any militia ordered into service is to remain on duty. It is desirable, therefore, to know whether the requisition is intended for three or six months' service. The offices of Deputy Quarter-Master General, and Assistants, and Assistant Adjutant Generals; are not recognized by our State laws.

I have taken the liberty of enclosing to you a copy of the militia law of this State, passed at the last session of the Legislature; from a perusal of which you will perceive the difficulties under which the Executive at present labors, in attempting to comply with the requisition.

With high considerations of respect, sir, your obedient servant, N. B. BOILEAU, Secretary.

JOHN Aou isaoCo, Esq. Secretary of War.

SIR SECRETARY, August 27, 1814.

I am directed by the Governor to enclose to you a copy of general orders, issued yesterday. The letter of General Winder, containing the requisition, under date of the 18th instant, was not received until the evening of the twenty-third. The deranged state of our militia system prevented a more prompt compliance with the demand. To obviate as far as practicable the inconvenience of delay, the Governor has directed the flank and volunteer companies to push on as rapidly as possible, without any regard to the time fixed on for the general rendezvous of the ordinary drafts. The commanding officers of the companies or detachments are instructed to report themselves, and the number of their men, to General Winder, as the officer who may have command of the troops in the service of the United States, in the 1st military district.

The tents, camp-equipage, as well as arms and 'accoutrements, belonging to the State being insufficient to accommodate the troops called into service, the Governor relies on the deficiency being supplied by the United States as promptly as practicable, to render the men comfortable and efficient.

With high respect and esteem, sir, your obedient servant,

N. B. BOILEAU, Secretary.

JOHN ARMSTRONG, Esq. Secretary of War.

IncofamANNAXPOLIS, July 29, 1814.
In conformity to the request of the President of the United States, signified in your communication of the 4th instant, a detachment of five thousand four hundred infantry, and six hundred artillery, was directed to be organized and held in readiness to march—at the shortest notice, and in consequence of General Winder having, by direction of the President, requested three thousand of the draughts of the militia of this State maybe called into the field, and in order to comply as fully as practicable with the request, the whole of the draughts of the militia from the Western Shore, being about three thousand five hundred infantry, have been ordered to be embodied. You will observe by the map and line drawn from Washington to Baltimore (not far east of which I presume these men will be encamped) will have a very considerable portion of the militia between that line and the bay shore; and consequently, I presume the draughts from this section of the country would not be drawn back from that part most exposed. Baltimore, I fear, will be unwilling that any part of that force from which they expected to derive aid, should be withdrawn from them. Under these circumstances, it was thought most prudent to order the whole

They have been directed to be embodied in their several brigade districts, and move on the shortest route to Bladensburg, where, I presume, on the receipt of this information, arrangements will be made (under your directions) for their accommodation. What number will arrive there in any given time, I am not yet advised of. The whole artillery of the State does not amount to more than nine hundred; and more than two-thirds of that number are in Baltimore; consequently the proportion from thence would be more than four hundred. So great a proportion or any thing like it, being taken from what is their most efficient force, would create great uneasiness. The order, therefore, with respect to them, is suspended, until General Smith can have some communication with you.

I am, sir, with great respect, yours, &c.

LEVIN' WINDER.

Honorable SECRETARY OF WAR.

Sir: ADJUTANT GENERAL'S Office, Remion, 14th July, 1814.

Your requisition on the militia of this State, bearing date the 4th instant, has been received.

Apprehending that the object of this measure is to have in readiness a provisional force to repel a sudden invasion, I have enclosed the general orders from this department, of the 22d ultimo, placing in a state of preparation for such an event upwards of fifteen thousand men. They are not organized, other than on the plan of the militia generally; but you will perceive that the points of rendezvous are designated. In addition to this force, the 8th, and a greater part of the 9th brigade, (amounting to seven thousand, and all convenient to Norfolk) are placed in the same situation, and directed to co-operate with General Potter in resisting an attack on Norfolk.
MILITARY AFFAIRS.

Arms, ammunition, &c. will be placed in the hands of the whole. Should these arrangements meet your views, it will be necessary to make a detail on all the regiments in the State for the twelve thousand called for; unless it is desirable that this number be set apart to perform a regular tour of duty. But, as the troops now in readiness are adequate to the emergency contemplated, and the requisitions for those that are to perform regular duty will be made in future in time for every preparation to be made, it is believed that the object of your requisition has been anticipated. If this is the fact, his Excellency the Governor is desirous that the regiments now held in requisition, and subject to be called out en masse, be considered by you as a provisional force only, and not subject to perform service beyond the continuance of the emergency which may call them into the field.

As concert in the measures of the General and State Governments is all important, permit me earnestly to solicit your earliest attention to this subject. In the mean time, arrangements will be made to take our quota from the militia, generally, as that measure cannot be avoided, under existing circumstances, unless the force required be provisional. Rest assured, sir, that nothing will be wanting on the part of this State to co-operate cordially and effectually with the General Government.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

CLAIBORNE W. GOCH, Deputy Adjutant General.

The Honorable Joan ARMSTRONG, Secretary of War.

SIR,

" ,WAR DEPARTMENT, July 18th, 1814.

A letter of the 14th instant, from Deputy Adjutant General Gooch, enclosing a copy of your general orders of the 22d ultimo, and requesting to know whether the corps put into requisition by these orders would not supply the call of the 4th instant made through this Department on the State of Virginia, has been received and submitted to the President. In reply thereto, I am instructed to state, that, inasmuch as the service of the militia required, by your Excellency is declared to be provisional, limited, in point of time, to the emergency that calls it forth, and, in point of place, to the State of Virginia, and not subjected to the direction of any officer of the United States, it cannot be considered as fulfilling the views of the President.

Permit me to take this occasion to state to your Excellency that two thousand, of the quota of Virginia will be put at the disposition of General Winder, as commanding officer of this district.

I have the honor to be, Your Excellency's most obedient servant;

His Excellency the Governor or VIRNOHN AR MSTRONG.
No. 7.

NARRATIVE OF GENERAL WINDER.

Sa: 'O s, September 26, 1814.

SIR:,

The readiest mode in which I can meet the inquiries which you have made, on behalf of the committee of which you are the chairman, will be to give a narrative of my agency as commander of the loth military district, and to accompany it with, the correspondence hich I have had, by letter, with the General and State Governments, and their respective officers, while in that command.

Within the few last days of June, and before it was known that my exchange was perfect although intelligence to that effect was momently expected, I was at the city of Washington, and the Secretary of War informed me that it was in contemplation to create another military district, to embrace the country from the Rappahannock, northward, to include the State of Maryland; and that the President intended to vest me with the command of it.

On my return to Baltimore I addressed to the Secretary of War copies of the letters herewith transmitted, marked IA, 2A.

About the 4th or 5th of July, I received a letter, a copy of which, marked 1B, accompanies this, which enclosed an order constituting the 10th military district, a copy of which is annexed to the letter above referred to.

In obedience to the requisition of the letter, I immediately went to Washington, and waited on the Secretary of War. He stated to me that, in addition to the garrisons of the several forts within my district, and-the detachments of the 36th and 38th infantry, then at Benedict, it was contemplated to order a detachment of cavalry, then at Carlisle, under orders to be mounted, amounting to about one hundred and fifty, a company of the 12th, and from one or two companies of the loth regular infantry, which would be ordered to be collected from their several recruiting rendezvous and to march to the city of Washington, and that the whole regular force, thus to be collected, might amount to one thousand or twelve hundred, and that the balance of my command would be composed of militia. That a requisition was about to be made upon certain States for upwards of ninety thousand militia intended, for the defence or the maritime frontier of the country, and showed me a blank circular which had been printed but not filled up, nor sent to the respective Governors of the States.

I took the liberty of suggesting to the Secretary of War; at that time, my idea of the propriety of calling immediately into the field at least a portion of the militia intended for my district, and encamping them in the best positions for protecting the probable points at which the enemy would strike if he should invade the district of my command, The Secretary was of opinion that the most advantageous mode of using militia was upon the spur of the occasion, and to bring them to fight as soon as called out. I returned within a day or two, to Baltimore, [to prepare myself for visiting the different parts of my district, and to explore it generally, and particularly those parts of it
which ight be considered as the approaches to the three principal points of it, to wit: Washington, Baltimore, and Annapolis.

My impressions of the necessity of having a respectable force immediately called into the field were strengthened instead of diminished by subsequent reflection, and, in consequence, on the 9th of July, addressed the letter to the Secretary of War, a copy of which is herewith sent, marked 3 A;

Agreeably to the suggestion contained in that letter, I proceeded to Annapolis to visit the military posts there, and to be ready on the spot, when the Governor should receive the requisition, and myself such instructions as might be thought proper to be given me, to take the most immediate steps to accomplish them if the Governor received the requisition, and immediately issued the necessary orders to have the quota required draughted. I

On the 12th July, the Secretary addressed me a letter, (the copy of which is herewith marked 2 B,) but which, being directed to Baltimore, did not reach me until after I had been to Upper Marlborough and again returned to Annapolis, where it followed me. I proceeded from Annapolis to Upper Marlborough, and on the 16th addressed two letters to the Secretary of War, of which copies are sent, marked 4 A, 5 A.

The apprehension that the enemy would proceed up the Patuxent and attack the flotilla at Nottingham, in consequence of the reinforcement he had just received, gaining strength, I proceeded immediately to Nottingham, instead of going to the Woodyard as I intended. During the 16th we received no information of a movement of the enemy up the river, but on the 17th, about 9 o'clock, Mr. Fitzhugh arrived, express from the mouth of the Patuxent, and stated that about twenty barges, several frigates and some small armed vessels, were proceeding up the river. I, in consequence, wrote a letter to the Secretary of War, a copy of which is herewith sent, marked 6 A; and wrote a note to Brigadier General West, of the Maryland militia, advising him to call out the militia of the county.

I ordered the detachments of the 36th and 38th to hasten from the head of South river, by forced marches, to Nottingham. Three companies of the city militia were promptly despatched, in consequence of my letter of the 17th.

But, by the time, these latter had reached the Woodyard, and the regulars Marlborough, the enemy had entered Hunting creek, on the Calvert side of the river, had proceeded to Huntingtown, burned the tobacco warehouse, after having taken off the principal part of the tobacco, and were retiring down the river. I halted the city militia at the Woodyard, and the regulars at Marlborough.

In answer to my letter of the 17th from Nottingham, I received the following answer from the Secretary of War, marked 3 B. As soon, therefore, as I ascertained that the enemy had retired to the mouth of the Patuxent, I proceeded to Annapolis, to make the requisition upon the Governor, as directed by the Secretary of War; and thence to Baltimore, to lend my aid and power to draw out the force authorized there.
While at Annapolis, I addressed to the Secretary of War the letter dated 20th of July, a copy of which is sent, marked 7 A and at the same time made the requisition on the Governor, herewith sent, marked 1 C. After remaining at Baltimore a day, and leaving orders to Brigadier General Stansbury, who had been called on to command the militia to be assembled there, relative to their muster and inspection, under the laws of Congress, I returned to Marlborough, to fix upon an encampment for the militia I had required from the Governor, and to be more at hand to be informed of the enemy's movements. From Upper Marlborough, on the 23d of July, I wrote the Secretary of War the accompanying letter, marked 8 A; and then proceeded to the Woodyard, from whence, on the same day, I wrote to the Secretary of War the following letter, marked 9 A.

The enemy still remaining inactive, or rather confining himself to depredations upon the lower parts of the rivers Patuxent and Potomac, I seized the opportunity of visiting Fort Washington, and on the 25th required from Lieutenant Edwards, the commanding officer, a representation of what he deemed necessary to complete the equipment of the fort, with its then works, and received from him a representation, which I enclosed in a letter to the Secretary of War on the 25th, of which copies are sent, marked 10 A. A copy of his answer, marked 4 B, is herewith sent.

Learning that some of the enemy's ships were proceeding up the Potomac, I proceeded down to Port Tobacco with a view of ascertaining more precisely his views; and of informing myself of the country; and on the 26th wrote the Secretary of War the following letter, marked 11 A.

Having ascertained, the next morning, that the enemy's ships had descended the river, I returned to Marlborough, and availed myself of the first opportunity I had, to review and inspect the detachment of the 36th and 38th; and thence proceeded to Washington city, where I established permanent head quarters of the district, on the 1st of August. I availed myself of a day, at this time, to review and inspect the two brigades of District militia, in Alexandria and this place, and reported the result to Major General Van Ness, commanding the District militia, in the letter herewith, marked No. 1.

The people of St. Mary's and Charles's had become extremely sore under the harassing service, to which they had been subjected, and the devastation and plunder which the enemy had been so long committing on their shores; and the remonstrances of Brigadier General Stewart, commanding the militia there, under the State authority, had become extremely importunate with both the Secretary of War and the President, to receive aid and protection from the General Government. The danger of throwing a force so far down into that neck of land which exposed them to the danger of being cut off, besides that they would be lost for the defence of Washington, Baltimore, or Annapolis,
had hitherto prevented me from pushing any part of my command so low down. But the President, in coaversation, told me, that their situation required aid, and directed me to move the detachments of the 36th and 38th down to unite with, and aid, General Stewart. Accordingly ordered Lieutenant Colonel Scott to move from Marlborough to Piscataway, and I proceeded directly down myself on the 3d. On the morning of the 4th of August I wrote the following letter from Port Tobacco, marked 13 A, to the Secretary of War, and agreeably to the intention therein expressed, proceeded twelve miles below, to General Stewart's camp. I there learned, beyond doubt, that the enemy had returned down the river; and after assuring the General of support, if they again advanced up the river, I returned back again to the city of Washington, directing Lieutenant Colonel Scott, commanding the regulars, to take up his encampment at a very convenient place, two miles from Piscataway, on the road to the Woodyard and Marlborough.

On my arrival at Washington I found that the requisition, made upon the Governor of Maryland for three thousand men, to be assembled at Bladensburg, had brought to that place only one company; but I learned that other detachments were about marching to that place, and, in order that no delay might occur in organizing and equipping them; I ordered Major Keyser, of the 38th regular infantry, to proceed to Bladensburg, to muster, inspect, and drill the detachments as they arrived.

I thence proceeded to Baltimore, to ascertain more precisely the effect of the requisition made on Major General Smith for two thousand from his division; when arrived, I found about one thousand two hundred only assembled. I reviewed and inspected them, and gave Brigadier General Slansbury orders to endeavor, by the most speedy means, to get in time delinquents and absentees.

I had just learned, by a letter from the Governor of Maryland, and also from General Smith, that, upon General Smith's application to the Secretary of War, he had determined that the two thousand men, now called to Baltimore, and which had been detached, under a requisition of the Secretary of War, directly on General Smith, of the 20th of April, were to be considered as part of the quota of Maryland; under the requisition of the 4th of July. I had drawn a different conclusion, and had so informed both the Governor and General Smith, in the visits I made to Annapolis and Baltimore, about the 20th of July. Immediately after receiving the letter from the Secretary of War of the 17th of July, above exhibited. In order to supply the deficit, in my calculation upon this force, I addressed the letter of the 13th of August to the Secretary of War, of which a copy, marked 14 A, is here presented; proceeded the same or the following day to Washington, by the way of Annapolis, and on the 17th, at Washington, the day following my arrival, received the letter from the Secretary of War, of which a copy, marked 5-B, is sent.
I should have stated that, two days after my return to the city of Washington, about the 6th of August, I received two letters from the Secretary of War, the one dated the 15th, the other the 17th of July, which, having been addressed to me at Baltimore, had followed me backward and forward from place to place, and unfortunately only reached me at this late period; copies of them are herewith sent, marked 6 J and 7 B.

I had, in the mean time, addressed the letter of the 6th of August to the Governor of Pennsylvania, a copy of which is sent, marked 1 D, and upon the 8th, on the receiving the letter of the Secretary of War of the 15th, I wrote another letter to the Governor of Pennsylvania, of which, from haste or much occupation, I did not take a copy, or have mislaid it; it substantially, however, informed him of the number of militia I was authorized to call from him, requesting him to hasten their drafting and organization, and to transmit a list of the officers, who would command. Should this letter be deemed material, a copy can be obtained from the Governor, and I have written to procure it.

I addressed, on the 16th, also, a similar letter to the Governor of Virginia. On the 16th or 17th of August, I received from the Secretary of State of Pennsylvania an answer, dated the 11th, of which a copy, marked 2 D, is herewith sent; and from the Adjutant General of Virginia, the answer and enclosure herewith sent, marked E.

On the morning of Thursday the 18th, intelligence was received, from the observatory on Point Lookout that, on the morning of the 17th, the enemy's fleet of that place had been reinforced by a formidable squadron of ships and vessels, of various sizes.

I immediately made requisitions upon the Governors of Maryland and Pennsylvania, and to various militia officers copies of which are herewith sent, marked as follows: to the Governor of Pennsylvania, 3 D; to the Governor of Maryland, 2 C; to Major General Smith of Baltimore, I F; to Brigadier General, West, of Prince George's, Maryland, No. 18; to Major General Van Ness, No. 4; to Brigadier General Hungerford, Virginia, No. 14; to Brigadier General Douglas and Colonel Chilton, of Virginia, and Brigadier Generals Ringgold, Swearingen, Barrack, and Foreman, of Maryland, No. 5.

Besides the letters and correspondence here referred to particularly, a mass of correspondence occurred with various persons, relative to my command, and which, as far as I suppose they can have any influence on the investigation, are herewith sent.
That with the Governor of Maryland' will be found in bundle 0, and numbered, in addition to those already mentioned, from 3 C to 11 C, both inclusive. That with General Smith in bundle F; and that with other persons, not before referred to, with the numbers before referred to, are exhibited from No. I to number 53, inclusive. Much other correspondence, necessary to be carried on, and which occupied much time, took place; which, however, is not sent, as I deemed them not calculated to illustrate the inquiry, and only calculated uselessly to encumber and embarrass the inquiry. They will be furnished, if thought requisite.

I will state as nearly as possible the forces which were in the field under these various demands and requisitions, the time of their assembling, their condition, and subsequent movements.

The returns first made; when I came into command, gave me, Fort McHenry, under the command of Major' Armistead, non-commissioned officers, musicians, and privates, for duty. 194
At Annapolis, in Forts Severn and Madison, under Lieutenant Fay, 39
At Fort Washington, under Lieutenant Edwards, 49
The detachments of the 36th and 38th, and a small detachment of artillery under Lieutenant Colonel Scott, 330
(Total) 612

These corps received no addition, but were gradually diminishing by the ordinary causes which always operate to this effect.

The two thousand Maryland militia, Who were ordered to assemble at Baltimore, had been draughted in pursuance of a requisition, made by the Secretary of War on General 'Smith, of the 20th of April, and, as full time had been allowed to make the draught deliberately, they were, as far as practicable, ready to come without delay; notwithstanding Brigadier General Stansbury was unable to bring to Bladensburg more than one thousand four hundred, including officers, and arrived at Bladensburg on the evening of the 22d of August.

From General Stricker's brigade in the city of Baltimore, which had been called out en masse, I required a regiment of infantry, the battalion of riflemen, and two companies of artillery – not deeming it practicable to reconcile the people of Baltimore to march a greater number, and leave it without any force, and being strongly persuaded that the exigency would have drawn in time a greater force from the adjacent country. The detachment from Stricker's brigade, under Colonel Sterett. arrived at Bladensburg in the night of the 23d of August, and the total amount was nine hundred and it-y-six.
The detachment which had been stationed at Annapolis, under Colonel Hood, and which had been at the moment transferred by the Governor of Maryland to my command, arrived at the bridge at Bladensburg about fifteen minutes before the enemy appeared, and I suppose was six to seven hundred strong. I have never had any return of it.

The brigade of General Smith, consisting of the militia of the District of Columbia on this side the Potomac, were called out on Thursday, the 18th of August; on Friday were assembled, and on Saturday, the 20th they crossed the Eastern Bridge, and advanced about five miles towards the Woodard. They amounted, I suppose, to about twelve hundred; a return was never obtained, and an interval of sufficient rest to have obtained, before they separated from my command, as there was not General Young's brigade, from Alexandria, between five and six hundred strong crossed the Potomac, Saturday or Sunday, the 19th or 20th, and took post near Piscataway.

The call for three thousand militia, under the requisition of the 4th July had produced only two hundred and fifty ran at the moment the enemy landed at Benedict. In addition to the causes herein before mentioned, the inefficacy of this call is to be attributed to the incredulity of the People on the danger of invasion; the perplexed, broken, and harassed state of the militia in St. Mary's, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, and a part of Ann Arundel counties, which had rendered it impossible to make the draught in some of them, or to call them for those exposed situations where they had been on duty two months, under local calls for Maryland.

Several other small detachments of Maryland militia, either as volunteers, or under the calls on the brigadiers, joined about the day before the action, whose numbers or commanding officers I did not know. They may have amounted to some four or five hundred.

Lieutenant Colonel Tilghman, of the Maryland cavalry, under an order of the Governor of Maryland, with about eighty dragoons, arrived at the city of Washington on the 16th of August, on his way to General Stewart, in the lower part of Charles or St. Mary's county.

Under the permission I just then received, to accept all the militia, then in the field, under the State of Maryland informed Colonel Tilghman that there was no doubt of the Governor's sanction, for which I had applied, and recommended him to halt here", he agreed not only to this, but, by the consent of General Stewart, who happened then to be in the city, sick, agreed to take my orders.
Lieutenant Colonel Lavall, of the United States' light dragoons, with a small squadron of about one hundred and twenty, who had been mountvd at Carlisle the preceding Monday, arrived at -ontgomery Courthouse on the evening of the 19th, of August, reported himself to the War Office, and received' orders to report to me. moved on the next morning and crossed the Eastern Branch.

Captain Morgan, with a company of about- eighty of the 12th United States' infantry, oin t the Long Old Fields on the evening of- the 92d Colonel Minor, from Virginia, arrived at the city on the evening of the 23d, with about five hundred men, wholly unarmed and without equipments. Under the direction of Cblonel Carbery, who bad been charged with tis subject, they received arms, ammunition, &c. next morning, but not until after te action t Bladensburg. -

No part of the 10th had yet arrived.

There had been no Adjutant or Inspector General attached to my command, from its commencement Major Hite, Assistant. Adjutant General, 'joined me, on the 16th of August, at Washington, and Major Smith, Assistant Inspector General, on the 19t. ,

This was the situation, condition, and amount, of my force and'command.

It will be observed that this detail is continued up to the momedt of the battle of Bladensburg; but, as the tine at which the different corps respectively joined is stated, it will be readily see what troops were concerned in the different movements which will now be detailed.

The innumerably multiplied orders, letters, consultations, and demands, which crowded upon me at the moment of such an alarm, can more easily be conceived than described, and occupied me nearly day and night, of Thursday, the 18th of August till Sunday, the 21st, and had nearly broken down myself and assistants in preparing, diTensing, and attenaing to them,

On Thursday evening, .Colonel Monroe proposed, if I would detach a troop of cavalry with him, to proceed in the most probable direction to find the enemy, and reconnoitre him. Captain Thornto h troop, from Alexandria, was detailepd on this service, and, on Friday morning, the Colonel departed ith them,. At this time, it was supposed the enemy intended up the bay, as one-of his ships was already in .iew from Annapolis, aid his boats were sounding South river. It was Colonel Monroe's intetion to -have proceeded direct to Annapolis; but, before he had got without
the city, he received intelligence that the enemy had proceeded up the Patuxent, and were debarking at Benedict. He therefore bent his course to that place. By his first letter, on Saturday, which reached the President that evening, he was unable to give any precise intelligence except that the enemy were at Benedict in force.

On Saturday, Lieutenant Colonel Tilghman, with his squadron of dragoons, was despatched by way of the Woodyard to fall down upon the enemy, to annoy, harass, and impede their march, by every possible means, to remove or destroy forage and provision from before the enemy, and gain intelligence. Captain Cadell, with his troop of city cavalry, was despatched with the same views towards Benedict, by Piscataway, it being wholly uncertain what route the enemy would take, if it was his intention to come to Washington.

On Sunday, I crossed the Eastern Branch, and joined Brigadier General Smith, at the Woodyard, where Lieutenant Colonel Scott, with the 36th and 38th, and Lieutenant Colonel Kramer, with the militia from Bladensburg had arrived by previous orders. On the road to the Woodyard, I received a letter from Colonel Monroe, of which a copy is sent, marked; and, at about eight o'clock in the evening, I received another letter from him, of which a copy is sent, marked; and, in a very short time after, he arrived himself, and, immediately after. Colonel Boalt, who had seen a body of the enemy, which he estimated at four thousand, (without supposing he had seen the whole) enter Nottingham, on Sunday evening. Colonel Monroe, being much exhausted retired to rest. I gave Colonel Beall, on account of his experience, orders to proceed and join Colonel Hood, of his march from Anapolis, and take command of the detachment. I occupied the night, in writing letters and orders to variotis officers and persons, and, at day-light, ordered a light detachment from General Smith's brigade, under Major Peter, the regulars, under Lieutenant Colonel Scott, and Lavall's cavalry, to proceed immediately towards Nottingham, to meet the enemy.

I proceeded immediately in advance myself, accompanied by Colonel Monroe, and the gentlemen of my staff. I had learned that Colonel Tilghman, with his cavalry, on the advance of the enemy, had fallen back upon Marlborough, the evening before, and had, during the night, sent him an order to proceed upon the road from Marlborough to Nottingham, and meet me at the Chapel. Having got considerably in advance of Lieutenant Colonel Scott's and Major-Peter's detachments, and also to obtain intelligence, I halted at Mr. Oden's, within half a mile of the junction of the roads from Marlborough and the "AWoodyard to Nottingham, directing Lavall to gain the Marlborough road, post himself at the Chapel, and push forward patrols upon all the roads towards Nottingham. In less than half an hour, and before the detachments of Scott and Peter had come up, intelligence was brought that the enemy was moving on from Nottingham in Jibice towards the Chapel. I immediately proceeded, with the
gentlemen who were with me, to gain an observation of the enemy, and came within view of the enemy's advance about two miles below the Chapel. The observation was continued until the enemy reached the Chapel, and Scott and Peter being then near two miles distant from that point, and it being therefore impossible for them to reach the junction of the Marlborough and Woodyard road before the enemy, I sent orders for them to post themselves in the most advantageous position, and, wait for me with the body of the cavalry. I turned into the road to the Woodyard, and detached a small party, under Adjutant General Hite, on the Marlborough road, to watch the enemy's movements on that road, and give information. Upon arriving at Odefl's, himself, or some other person of the neighborhood whom I knew, and on whom I could rely, informed me that there was a more direct road, but not so much frequented, leading from Nottingham to the Woodyard, and joining that on which I then was, two miles nearer the Woodyard.

A doubt, at that time, was not entertained by any body of "the intention of the enemy to proceed direct to Washington, and the advantage of dividing their force, and proceeding on two roads running so near each other, to the same point, so obvious, that I gave orders to Scott and Peter to retire, and occupy the first eligible position between the junction of that road and the one we were on, and the Woodyard; despatched a patrol of cavalry to observe that road, and give the earliest notice of any advance of the "enemy upon it. I still continued the observation of the enemy myself, and he turned a part of his column into the road to the Woodyard, and penetrated a skirt of wood, which hid the junction of the Marlborough and Woodyard road from view, and there halted it within a quarter of a mile of Odefl's house. I hesitated for some time whether to attribute his delay to a view which he may have had of Scott's and Peter's detachment, or to a design to conceal his movement towards Marlborough, the road to that place being concealed by woods from any point of observation which could be gained.

It appeared afterwards that his whole force halted here for an hour or upwards, and thus continued it an uncertainty as to his intended route. I had, in the mean time, rode back and assisted Peter and Scott to post their detachments in a favorable position, from whence I entertained a hope to have given the enemy a serious check, without much risk to this detachment. Orders had been previously sent to General Smith to post his whole detachment in conjunction with Commodore Barney, who had by this time joined him from Marlborough, with about four hundred sailors and marines, and had taken also command of the marines, under Captain Miller, who had arrived from the city the night before. I presumed, from the appearance of his force, it was about one hundred or one hundred and twenty. As soon as I had satisfied myself as to the position and disposition of Scott's and Peter's detachments, I advanced again towards the enemy, to ascertain his situation and intentions. It had now become certain that he had taken the road to Marlborough; and Colonel Monroe crossed over to that place, to join Lieutenant Colonel Tilghman, and observe his movements.
I sent an order immediately to Scott and Peter, to retire back to General Smith, and the latter to take post at the points where the roads from Washington city and the Woodyard, to Marlborough, unite. This order was incorrectly delivered, or misunderstood, and he took post, instead, at the point where the roads from the 'Woodyard and Marlborough, to the city of Washington, unite. The mistake, however, produced no inconvenience, but, on the contrary, was perhaps better than the position to which I had directed; because it threw my force more between Marlborough and Bladensburg, and also in command of the road by which the enemy did finally advance, which the other position would not have done. Its inconvenience was, that it left open the road to Fort Washington, and rendered General Young's junction, if it should become proper to advance him, hazardous on that road. It further became necessary to retire still further back, and the only position where the troops, could be tolerably accommodated, or posted to advantage, was at Dunlap's, or, as it is generally called, the Long, or Battalion Old Fields.

General Smith was therefore ordered to retire to that point; with the whole of the troops, except the cavalry. Lieutenant Colonel Tilghman, and Captain Herbert, were charged with hovering union the enemy on all the roads leading from Bladensburg, from the north, and from Annapolis to Marlborough. With Lavall's cavalry, I advanced to the nearest and most convenient positions between the 'Woodyard and Marlborough, and found the enemy quietly halted at Marlborough. Tilghmal,'s cavalry picked up one or two prisoners, who had straggled beyond the enemy's pickets, and my examination of the that confirmed me that the enemy did not contemplate leaving Marlborough that day.

After remaining near Marlborough, in observation, till toward the latter part of the afternoon I returned to General Smith, where I arrived toward the close of the day. About dark I learned that the President and Heads of Departments had arrived at a house about a mile in the east of the camp. I detached a Captain's guard to his quarters; advanced the cavalry of Lavall on the roads towards Marlborough with orders to patrol as close upon the enemy as possible during the course of the night; and after having waded through the infinite applications, consultations, and calls, necessarily arising from a body of two thousand five hundred men, not three 'days from their homes, without organization, or any practical knowledge of service on the part of their officers, and being obliged to listen to the officious but well intended information and advice of the crowd, who, at such a time, would he full of both, I lay down to snatch a moment of rest.

A causeless alarm from one of the sentinels placed the whole force under arms about three o'clock, in the rooning. A short time after sunrise, I rode over to the quarters of the President, to inform him and the Secretary of War of the state of things. Upon my return, rumors prevailed that the 'enemy had taken the road to Queen Ann,
which was directly leading to Annapolis. I could not, however, suppose that Lieutenant Colonel Tilghman and Captain Herbert—would fail to advise me if the fact were so. The rumor, however, gained ground; and just at this time, Mr. Luffborough, of this city, with some fifteen or twenty mounted men, offered himself ready to perform any duties on which I could employ them. I immediately despatched him to ascertain the truth of this report, by penetrating to that road, and also to obtain whatever information he could relative to the enemy. About twelve o'clock I sent me decisive information that the enemy were not on the Annapolis road.

I received constant intelligence that the enemy still remained in Marlborough; and, therefore, I felt no doubt that, if he intended to take the road to Annapolis, any movement upon that road was only an advance party for observation, and preparatory to a general movement; and as the morning advanced, and the information brought still confirmed the impression that the enemy intended no movement from Upper Marlborough, I resolved to endeavor to concentrate the force (which I hoped had now considerably accumulated within my reach) down upon the enemy's lines near Marlborough.

I accordingly ordered a light detachment to be sent forward by General Smith under Major Peter, and having also learned by Major Woodyear, of General Stansbury's staff, that he had arrived the evening before at Bladensburg, I sent orders to him to advance toward Marlborough, and to take post at the point where the Old Fields to Queen Ann crosses the road from Bladensburg to Marlborough, which brought him within four miles of the Old Fields and within from six to eight of the enemy. I was anxiously waiting to hear of Lieutenant Colonel Beal's progress with the detachment for Annapolis, and of Lieutenant Colonel Sterett's, from Baltimore.

The President and Heads of Department had been upon the field since about eight o'clock. I communicated my views and intentions, as above detailed, and informed them that I proposed myself to pass over the road from Bladensburg to Marlborough, to meet General Stansbury, to make closer observations upon the road direct from the enemy to Bladensburg, and to establish more thoroughly a concert between Stansbury and Smith's command; to be also nearer to Beall, to give him also a direction towards the enemy on the road leading into Marlborough from the north, if my intelligence should continue to justify it, and to draw down Lieutenant Colonel Sterett, with his force as soon as I could ascertain where it was. I accordingly, with a troop of Lavall's cavalry, proceeded about 12 o'clock: upon arriving at the Bladensburg road I halted, and pushed a patrol of cavalry down toward Marlborough.

In a few minutes after, three of Captain Herbert's troop, who were observing down the same road arrived, with two prisoners, who they had just seized in a very bold and dexterous manner. The information of these prisoners confirmed the impression that the enemy did not intend to move from Marlborough that day, and as it was now one
o'clock, I felt little doubt of it. After remaining some time for intelligence from the United States' dragoons, that I had sent down with orders to press down as closely as possible upon the enemy, a slight firing was heard in the direction of the enemy, which I concluded, was from the enemy's picket upon this party; a few moments confirmed this conjecture by the return of a dragoon with this intelligence. A more considerable firing was then, however, heard; which I concluded to be a skirmishing by Peter's detachment with the enemy, put upon the alert and advance by the firing at the dragoons.

The firing soon after ceased, and after having sent for the purpose of ascertaining the fact, with directions to follow with intelligence onward toward Bladensburg, in which direction I proceeded with the expectation of, meeting General Stansbury, and with the intention to halt him until my intelligence should decide my further proceedings. I had proceeded within four or five miles of Bladensburg, without meeting General Stansbury, when I was overtaken by Major McKenney, a volunteer aid with General Smith, who informed me that Peter had skirmished with the advancing enemy who had driven him back. (n General Smith, and that the enemy had halted within three miles of the Old Fids; that agreeably to my directions upon the probability of an attack, General Smith had sent off the baggage across the Eastern Branch; and that himself and Commodore Barney had drawn up the forces ready to receive the enemy, should they advance. On my way toward Bladensburg I had left orders with Lieutenant Colonel Tilghman's cavalry to continue their observation on the Bladensburg and Marlborough roads, and in case the enemy should move on that road, to give General Stansbury immediate notice, and fall back on him. In proceeding to the Old Field§ I met Lieutenant Colonel Tilghman himself, and renewed these directions. Captain Herbert was also between General Stansbury and the enemy, with the same instructions.

When Major McKenney gave me the intelligence of the advance of the enemy, I despatched an aid to General Stansbury with directions to him to fall back, and take the best position in advance of Bladensburg and unite Lieutenant Colonel Sterett with him, should he arrive at Bladensburg, as I expected, that evening; and should he be attacked, to resist as long as possible, and if obliged to retire, to retreat toward the city.

I reached the Old Fields about five o'clock in the afternoon, and found General Smith and Commodore Barney had judiciously posted their men in expectation of the enemy, and were expecting his approach. The head of the enemy's column was about three miles from our position, and five miles from Marlborough. He must have reached that point by or before three o'clock, and his halt there, at that period of the day, so short a distance from Marlborough, and apparently, only drawn out by my parties pressing upon him, and at the point from whence he could take the road to Bladensburg, to the Eastern Branch-bridge, or Fort Washington, indifferently, or it might be to cover his march upon Annapolis; to which place he had strong temptations to proceed. His force was very
imperfectly known, the opinions and representations varying from our to twelve thousand; the better opinion fixed it from five to seven thousand. If he supposed his force insufficient to proceed to Washington and further reinforcements were expected, which all affirmation concurred to state, the natural conclusion was, that he would seek some place where he could in secridity refresh his men, and place them in comfortable quarters, near a convenient port for his ships, and whence, upon receiving reinforcements, he would be ready to act against the important points of the county.

Having, therefore, already accomplished one great object of the expedition the destruction of Commodore Barney's fiotilla-if he was not in a condition to proceed further into the country, Annapolis offered him a place in all respects such as he would desire. It brought him to a fine port, where his ships could lie in safety; it afforded abundant and comfortable quarters for his men; magazines and store houses for all his stores and munitions of every description; was capable, with very little labor, of beingrendered impregnable by land, and he commanded the water; it was the nearest point of debarkation to the city of Washington, without entering a narrow river, liable to great uncertainty in its navigation from adverse winds; and was at hand to Baltimore; equally threatening these two great points, and rendering it absolutely necessary to keep a force doubly sufficient to resist him—one for the protection of Washington, the other for Baltimore. The squadron which was ascending the Potomac and had now passed the Kettle Bottoms, the only obstruction in the navigation of the river, might be only a feint, the more effectively to conceal their intentions against Annapolis; or, what was more probable, was intended to finite with the land force, and cooperate in a joint attack on Washington. It was, therefore, strongly believed, that the land force was destined to proceed, and take Fort Washington in the rear, where it was wholly defenceless, while it was capable of offering a very formidable resistance to the ascent of ships up the river, and imperfect as it was, perhaps capable of repulsing them altogether. And it was therefore that I sent to General Young when the force under General Smith fell back to the Old Fields, to take a position so as to protect Fort Washington, and avoid being taken in the rear by the enemy.

If the object of the enemy was to proceed direct to Washington, the road by Bladensburg offered fewer obstructions than that over the Eastern Branch bridge, although it was six miles further; and yet, if I had retired toward Bladensburg, I should have been removed so much further from annoying or impeding the enemy if he proceeded to Fort Washington; and I should have left the road to Washington city, by the Easter Branch bridge, open to him, which, although I had, as I supposed, left a secure arrangement for its destruction, yet the impatience of leaving that bridge as long as possible, on account of its great value to us, and the danger that, in the multitude of business which was accumulated on every person during such alarm, confusion and disorder, arising at such a moment, with such
raw, undisciplined, inexperienced and unknown officers and men, rendered it hazardous to trust this direct and important pass unguarded.

It was under all these circumstances, that, after waiting for the enemy at the Old Fields till sun-down, that determined to retire over the Eastern Branch bridge, in which Commodore Barney concurred, and, his force with mine proceeded accordingly.

My reasons for not remaining at the Old Fields during the night wasy that, if an attack should be made in the night, our own superiority, which lay in artillery, was lost, and the inexperience of the troops would subject, them to certain, infallible and irremediable disorder, and probably destruction, and thereby occasion the loss of a full half of the force which I could hope to oppose, under more favorable circumstances, to the enemy.

The reasons for retiring by the Eastern Branch bridge, were, the absolute 'security it gave to that pass, the greater facility of joining General Young, and aiding in the protection of Fort Washington, the greater facility of pursuing the enemy should he recede and proceed to Annapolis, and the certainty that I could draw General Stansbury and Lientenatit Colonel Sterett to me if the enemy advanced too rapidly for me to advance and unite to support them.

Under the harassing and perplexing embarrassments, arising from having a mass of men suddenly assembled, without organization, discipline, or officers of any, the least, knowledge of service, except in the case of Major Peter, or, if possessing it, unknown to me as such, and the wearied and exhausted state in which incessant application and exertion, for nearly five uninterrupted days and nights, had left me, these views offered themselves to my mind, and determined me to fall back, on Tuesday evening, to the bridge, instead of Bladensburg. Since the event has passed, and if a movement to Bladensburg, had it been made, would not have induced the enemy to pursue another course, it is easy to determine that a retreat to Bladensburg might have been better; but those who undertake to pass a judgment, should place themselves back to the moment and situation I was in when I formed the resolution, and it will be very difficult to find it an error; or if one, it is of that sort which is supported, when viewed in perspective, by stronger reasons than those which oppose it; and is only found to be an error by experience, which so often confounds all reason and calculation.

Upon arriving at the bridge, about eight o'clock, I directed General Smith to halt his men in the most convenient position near the bridge on this side; and I passed over and rode directly to the President's, and informed him of the then state of things. I had expected I should probably have found the Secretary of War and other Heads of Departments there, but they had respectively retired to their homes. I returned towards the bridge, leaving at
M’Keowin’s hotel the borrowed horse on which I rode. Both those I had with me being exhausted and worn down, and as I knew no one who had a horse in a different situation, I proceeded on foot to the camp. General Smith was not at the moment there. I proceeded on to the bridge, where I found about thirty men with axes, for the purpose of cutting the bridge down, and no other preparation for destroying it made. I proceeded again to the camp; detached a party of volunteers to burn the upper bridge at once; detached a party of regular infantry across the bridge, in advance toward the enemy about half a mile, to prevent him from seizing it by surprise, and posted Burch’s artillery to command the pass of the bridge on this side. I learned at the bridge that some persons from the navy yard had been to the bridge to take some steps for destroying it, and knowing that this was the nearest and the only place indeed from whence I could draw the powder, boats, and combustibles, for the purpose of rendering its destruction sure at any moment, I proceeded, accompanied by Major Cox, of Georgetown, to ascertain what preparations had been made. I arrived there about twelve or one o’clock, saw Colonel Wharton, who referred me to Commodore Tingey, to whom I then proceeded, and roused him from bed. He informed me that several casks of powder were ready in boats to be sent from the navy yard to blow up the bridge when necessary. I begged him to increase the quantity of powder, to furnish a quantity of combustibles, also to be laid upon the bridge, that its destruction, when necessary, in one way or other, might be put beyond doubt. Commodore Tingey undertook to have what I requested provided, sent without delay to the bridge. I returned to the bridge to see that the different detachments which I had stationed there were upon the alert, and understood the objects for which they were detached. And I thence returned to the camp, between three and four o’clock, much exhausted, and considerably hurt in the right arm and ankle from a severe fall which I had into a gully or ditch on my way to the navy yard. I snatched about an hour or two of sleep, rose, and proceeded to gather my attendants and horses, much exhausted and worn down by the incessant action of the three preceding days, and proceeded to establish my headquarters at a house near the bridge.

My patrols and videttes not having yet brought me any intelligence of a movement of the enemy, and being still doubtful whether he might not move upon Annapolis, Fort Warburton, or toward the bridge, rather than Bladensburg, I held the position near the bridge, as that which, under all circumstances, would enable me best to act against the enemy in any alternative. I learned, about this time, with considerable mortification, that Gen. Stansbury, from misunderstanding or some other cause, instead of holding a position during the night, in advance of Bladensburg, had taken one about a mile in its rear; and that his men, from a causeless alarm had been under arms the greater part of the night, and moved once or twice, and that he was at that moment on his march into the city. I instantly sent him an order to resume his position at Bladensburg; to post himself to the best advantage; make the utmost resistance, and to rely upon my supporting him if the enemy should move upon that road. I had, at a very early hour in the morning, detached Captain Graham, with his troop of Virginia cavalry, to proceed by Bladensburg
down upon the road toward the enemy, and ensure, by that means, timely notice to General Stansbury and myself, should the enemy turn that way. With this addition to the cavalry, already on those roads, it became impossible for the enemy to take any steps unobserved. Additional cavalry patrols and videttes were also detached upon all the roads across the bridge, to ensure the certainty of intelligence, let the enemy move as he might.

Colonel Minor had also arrived in the city the evening before, with five or six hundred militia from Virginia, but they were without arms, accoutrements, or ammunition. I urged him to hasten his equipment which I learn was delayed by some difficulty in finding Colonel Carbery, charged with that business; and he had not received his arms, &c.; when, about 10 o'clock, I received intelligence that the enemy had turned the head of his column towards Bladensburg. Commodore Barney had, upon my suggestion, posted his artillery to command the bridge, early in the morning.

As soon as I learned the enemy were moving toward Bladensburg, I ordered General Smith, with the whole of the troops, to move immediately to that point.

The necessary detention arising from orders to issue, interrogations and applications to be answered from all points being past, I proceeded on to Bladensburg, leaving the President and some of the Heads of Departments at my quarters, where they had been for an hour or more. I arrived at the bridge at Bladensburg about 12 o'clock, where I found Lieutenant Colonel Beall had that moment passed with his command, having just arrived from Annapolis. I had passed the line of Stansbury's brigade, formed in the field upon the left of the road at about a quarter of a mile in the rear of the bridge; and, on the road, a short distance in the rear of Stansbury's line, I met several gentlemen; and, among the others, I think Mr. Francis Key, of Georgetown, who informed me that he had thought that the troops coining from the city could be most advantageously posted on the right and left of the road near that point. General Smith being present, Mr. Key undertook, I believe, being sent for that purpose, to show the positions proposed. I left General Smith to make a disposition of these troops, and proceeded to the bridge, where I found Lieutenant Colonel Beall as before stated.* I inquired whether he had any directions as to his position; he replied he had been shown a high hill upon the right of the road, ranging with the proposed second line. It being a commanding position, and necessary to be occupied by some corps, I directed him to proceed agreeably to the instructions he had received. I then rode up to a battery which had been thrown up to command the street which entered Bladensburg from the side of the enemy and the bridge, where I found the Baltimore artillery posted, with the Baltimore riflemen to support them. Upon inquiry, I learned that General Stansbury was on a rising round upon the left of his line. I rode immediately thither, and found him and Colonel Monroe together. The latter gentleman informed me that he had been aiding General Stansbury to post his command, and wished me to proceed to examine
it with them, to see how far I approved of it. We were just proceeding with this view, when some person rode up and stated that news had just been received of a signal victory obtained by General Izard over the enemy, in which one thousand of the enemy were slain and many prisoners taken. I ordered the news to be immediately communicated to the troops, for the purpose of giving additional impulse to their spirits and courage. The columnn'of the enemy at this moment appeared in view, about a mile distant, nioving up the Eastern Branch, parallel to our position. From the left, where I was, I perceived that, if the position of the advanced artillery were forced, that two or three pieces upon the left of Stansbury would be necessary to scour an orchard, which lay between his line and his artillery, and for another rifle company to increase the support of this artillery. These were promptly sent forward by General Smith, and posted'as hastily as possible, and it was barely accomplished before was obliged to give orders to the advanced artillery to open upon the enemy, who was descending the street toward the bridge. All further examination or movement was now impossible, and the position where I then was, immediately in rear of the left of Stansbury's line, being the most advanced position from which I could have any commanding view, I remained there. The fire of our advanced artillery occasioned the enemy, who were ad-

* Since writing the above, I have seen General Smith, who informs me that Mr. Key had been examining the grounds with him, and that it was his views that Mr. Key had been stating. He came up at the moment Mr. Key had given me the information. I have been under the impression, till thus corrected, that it was the suggestion of Colonel Monroe and General Stansbury, that had suggested that position. The circumstance is immaterial, except for the purpose of literal accuracy when necessary.

vancing, and who were light troops, to leave the street, and they crept down, under the cover of houses and trees, in loose order, so as not to expose them to risk from the shot: it was therefore only occasionally that an object presented at which the artillery could fire.

In this sort of suspension, the enemy began to throw his rockets, and his light troops began to accumulate down in the lower parts of the town, and near the bridge, but principally covered from view by the houses. Their light troops, however, soon began to issue out and press across the creek, which was every where fordable, and in most places lined with bushes or trees, which were suicient, however, to conceal the movements of light troops, who act in the manner of theirs, singly. The advanced riflemen now began to fire, and continued it for a half a dozen rounds, when I observed them to run back to the skirts of the orchard on the left, where they became visible, the boughs of the orchard trees concealing their original position, as also that of the artillery, from view. A retreat of twenty or thirty yards from their original position toward the left brought them in view on the edge of the orchard: they halted there,
and seemed for a moment returning to their position, but in a few minutes entirely broke, and retired to the left of Stansbury's line. I immediately ordered the fifth Baltimore regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Sterett, being the left of Stansbury's line, to advance and sustain the artillery. They promptly commenced this movement; but the rockets, which had, for the first three or four, passed very high above the heads of the line, now received a more horizontal direction, and passed very close above the heads of Shutz's and Ragan's regiments, composing the centre and left of Stansbury's line. A universal flight of these two regiments was the consequence. This leaving the right of the fifth wholly unsupported I ordered it to halt; rode swiftly across the field toward those who had so shamefully fled, and exerted my voice to the utmost to arrest them. They halted; began to collect; and seemed to be returning to their places. An ill-founded reliance that their officers would succeed in rallying them, when I had thus succeeded in stopping the greatest part of them, induced me immediately to return to the fifth, the situation of which was likely to become very critical, and that position 'gave me the best command of view. To my astonishment and mortification, however, when I had regained my position, I found the whole of these regiments (except a few of Ragan's, not more than forty, rallied by himself, and as many perhaps of Shutz's rallied, I learn by Captain Shower and! Captain - , whose name I do not recollect) were flying in the utmost precipitation and disorder.

The advanced artillery had immediately followed the riflemen and retired by the left of the fifth. I directed them to take post on a rising ground which I pointed out in the rear. The fifth, and the artillery on its left, still remained, and I hoped that their fire, notwithstanding the obstruction of the boughs of the orchard, which, being below, covered the enemy, would have been enabled to scour this approach and prevent his advance. The enemy's light troops, by single men, showed themselves on the lower edge of the left of the orchard, and received the fire of this artillery and the fifth, which, made them draw back. The cover to them was, however, so complete, that they were enabled to advance singly and take positions from which their fire annoyed the fifth considerably, without either that regiment or the artillery being able to return the fire with any probability of effect. In this situation I had actually given an order to the fifth and artillery to retire up to the hill, toward a wood more to the left and a little in the rear, for the purpose of drawing them further from the orchard, and out of reach of the enemy's fire. while he was sheltered by the orchard. An aversion, however, to retire before the necessity became stronger, and the hope that the enemy would issue in a body from the left of the orchard, and enable us to act upon him on terms of equality, and the fear that a movement of retreat might, in raw troops, produce some confusion,'and lose us this chance, induced me instantly to countermand the order, and direct the artillery to fire into a wooden barn on the lower end of the orchard, behind which I supposed the enemy might be sheltered in considerable numbers. The fire of the enemy now began, however, to annoy the fifth still more in wounding several of them, and a strong column of the enemy having passed up the road as high as the right of the fifth, and beginning to deploy into the field to take them in flank, I directed the
artillery to retire to the hill, to which I had directed the Baltimore artillery to proceed and halt, and ordered the fifth regiment also to retire. This corps, which had heretofore acted so firmly, evinced the usual incapacity of raw troops to make orderly movements in the face of the enemy, and their retreat in a very few moments became a flight of absolute and total disorder.

The direct line of retreat to the whole of this first line being to the hill on which I had directed the artillery to halt, and immediately in connexion with the positions of General Smith's corps, which were not arrayed in line, but posted on advantageous positions in connexion with and supporting each other, according as the nature of the ground admitted and required; I had not for a moment, dispersed and disordered as was the whole of Stansbury's command, supposed that their retreat would have taken a different direction. But it soon became apparent that the whole mass were throwing themselves off to the right on the retreat toward Montgomery Court House, and flying wide of this point; the whole of the cavalry, probably, from the pressure of the infantry that way, were also thrown wide of the line of retreat toward the right. After making every effort to turn the current more toward General Smith's command and the city, in vain, and finding that it was impossible to collect any force to support the artillery, which I had directed to halt, and finding also that the enemy's light troops were extending themselves in that direction, and pressing the pursuit, I directed the artillery to continue their retreat, on the road they then were, toward the capitol, it being impossible for them to get across to the turnpike road or unite with General Smith's brigade.

The hope of again forming the first line at this point, and there renewing the retreat, or, at all events, of being able to rally them between the capitol and that point, and renewing the contest, induced me at the moment I directed the fifth regiment to retreat, to request Mr. Riggs, of Georgetown, to proceed to the President, and inform him that we had been driven back, but that it was my hope and intention to form and renew the contest between that place and the capitol.

As soon as I found it vain longer to endeavor to turn the tide of retreat toward the left, I turned toward the positions occupied by Lieutenant Colonel Beall, Commodore Barney, and General Smith. By this time the enemy had advanced up the road, had driven back Lieutenant Colonel Kramers' command, posted on the right of the road, and in advance of Commodore Barney, after having well maintained his position and much hurt the enemy and also continued to fire during his retreat. He had come under the destructive fire of Commodore Barney, which had turned him up the hill toward Lieutenant Colonel Beall, whose detachment gave one or two ineffective fires and fled. Their position was known to me, was very conspicuous, and the extreme right. The enemy, therefore, had gained this commanding position, and was passing our right flank; his force pursuing on the left, had also advanced
to a line with our left, and there was nothing there to oppose him. To preserve Smith's command from being pressed in front by fresh troops of the enemy, who were coming on at the same time, while they were under the certainty of being assailed on both flanks and the rear by the enemy, who respectively gained them; in which circumstances their destruction or surrender would have been inevitable, I sent (my horse being unable to move with the rapidity I wished) to General Smith, to retreat. I am not acquainted with the relative position of the different corps composing his command, and cannot therefore determine who of them engaged the enemy, nor could I see how they acted; but when I arrived in succession at his different corps, which I did as soon as practicable, I do not recollect to have found any of them that were not in order, and retreating with as little confusion as could have been expected. When I reached the road I found Commodore Barney's men also retiring on the road, he having been overpowered by those who drove off Beall's regiment about the time I sent the order to retreat.

I still had no doubt but that Stansbur's command, and the cavalry, would have fallen down upon the capitol, by the roads which enter that part of the city from the north, and still solaced myself with the persuasion that I should be able there to rally them, upon the city and Georgetown troops, who were retreating in order; and make another effort in advance of the capitol to repulse the enemy.

After accompanying the retreating army within two miles of the capitol, I rode forward for the purpose of selecting a position, and endeavoring to collect those whom I supposed, from the rapidity of their flight, might have reached that point. A halfa mile in advance of the capitol I met Colonel Minor with his detachment, and directed him to form his men, wait until the retreating army passed, and protect them if necessary.

When I arrived at the capitol I found not a man had passed that way, and notwithstanding the commanding view, which is there afforded to the north, I could see no appearance of the troops. I despatched an order to call in the cavalry to me there.

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to have sufficiently filled the two wing, which would have left the enemy masters of every other part of the city, and
given him the opportunity, without risk, in twenty-four hours, to have starved them into a surrender. The samd
objection equally applied to the occupation of any particular part of the city.'

Both these gentleme concurred that it would subject the whole of my force to certain capture or destruction; and in
its reduced and exhasted condition it was wise and proper to retire through Georgetown, and take post in the rear of
it, on the heights, to collect my force. I accordingly pursued this course, and halted at Tenley town, two miles north
of Georgetown, on the Frederick road. Here was evinced one of the great defects/ of all undisciplined and
unorganized troops; no effort could rouse officers and men to the exertion necessary to place themselves in such a
state of comfort and security as is attainable, even under very disadvantageous circumstances. Such of them as could
be halted, instead of making those efforts, gave themselves up to the uncontrolled feelings which fatigue, exhaustion,
and privation produced, and many hundreds, in spite of all precautions and efforts, passed on and pursued their
way, either towards home or in search of refreshments and quarters. After waiting in this position until I supposed I
collected all the force that could be gathered, I proceeded about five miles further on the river road, which leads a
little wide to the left of Montgomery court house, and in the morning gave orders for the whole to assemble at
Montgomery court house.

This position promised us shelter from the rain thatbegan to fall an hour before day; was the most probable place for
the supply of provisions, which the troops very much needed; and was a position from which we could best interpose
between the enemy and Baltimore, and to which place, at that time, nobody doubted he intended to go by land from
Washington.

In pursuance of this view among the first acts after my arrival at Montgomery Court House, was to direct a letter to
General Stricker, who commanded at Baltimore, informing him that it was my intention to gather my force together
there, receive what reinforcements I could, show myself to the enemy as strong as possible, hang on his flank, should
he move to Baltimore, intimidate and harass him as much as possible in his movements, and endeavor always to
preserve the power of interposing between him and Baltimore; directing him to re-establish the dispersed command
of Lieutenant Colonel Sterett, multiply his means as much as possible, stop all reinforcements of militia from
Maryland, Pennsylvania, or elsewhere, and present himself to the enemy at the crossing of the Patapsco, in as
imposing a form as possible.

This letter I sent by Captain Aisquith, whom I found at Montgomery, with fifteen or twenty others, the only part of
the Baltimore detachment which had not returned home.
The first object was, in the absence of quartermaster and contractor, to make efforts to provide quarters and refreshments for my men; a few provisions were found there, belonging to the contractor, and a person temporarily appointed to issue, and the most active men of the place called upon, and authorized to get in provisions.

The next object was to obtain a return of the different corps, which, from causes that can easily be understood among undisciplined men and unskilful officers, proved abortive before we moved next day. The arrival of several detachments of reinforcements, the reports of officers bringing on detachments who wanted orders and instructions and the multiplied complaints and wants of men and officers, crowded together in small quarters, or entirely out of doors in a rainy, tempestuous day; the calculations and arrangements necessary for ulterior operations, and to meet the demands and wants of the great force which my calls were likely to produce, may be supposed to have been as much as could be borne by the attention and efforts of one man, which he was obliged to encounter, for the want of a skilful, or even organized staff of any kind.

No regular details for service of any kind could be performed, and all the duties of this description were necessarily performed by the voluntary zeal of those corps who could not be borne down or discouraged by difficulties. My efforts were devoted to endeavor to prepare the detachment to move down toward the city, and hang upon and strike at the enemy whenever an opportunity occurred. The next morning, however, before a return of the corps could be had, and their situation known, I received intelligence that the enemy had moved from Washington the preceding night, and was in full march for Baltimore. I instantly put my command under arms, multiplied and strengthened my patrols to gain intelligence, and advanced as rapidly as was practicable to Baltimore. When the forces arrived at hell's bridge, on the upper branch of the Patuxent, I had concluded that, if the enemy was, as we had still reason to believe, proceeding to Baltimore, that it would be most advisable for me to proceed directly thither, to lend the whole force of my power, as commander of the district, to call out and bring into activity the resources of the place, and also because it was likely to become the most important station of the command. I accordingly left the command with General Stansbury, senior brigadier, and proceeded that night to Baltimore. On the road i met an express from Major General S. Smith, who delivered me a letter, in which he informed me he had assumed the command, according to his rank; and by the time I reached Baltimore, I also learned that the enemy was proceeding to Marlborough, and not toward Baltimore.

If I had had longer time, or to repeat the action of Bladensburg, I could correct several errors which might materially have affected the issue of that battle. The advanced force ought to have been nearer to the creek along the edge of the low ground, where they would have been skirted 'with bushes, and have avoided the inconvenience of the cover
which the orchard afforded the enemy. The edge of the low-rounds on the right of the road ought to have been lined with musketry, and a battery of cannon also planted in the field, on the right of the road, directly fronting the bridge; and if Commodore Barney's heavy artillery, with his more expert artillerists, had occupied the position which the advanced artillerists did, and these posts been obstinately defended, the enemy would not have crossed the river at that point, but would have been obliged to make a circuit round to his right, and have crossed above, and at the upper end of the town; or, if the whole force had been posted at the position of the second line, with all the advantage which it afforded, and have acted with tolerable firmness and courage, the event might have been different; but no advantage of position is proof against groundless panic and a total want of discipline, skill, and experience.

On the night of my retreat to the city, I sent Assistant Adjutant General Hite down to General Young, to inform him of the movement, and to direct him to take the best position to secure Fort Washington, and his junction with me; or, in case the enemy should interpose between him and me, to have his boats ready to transport his men across the river; or, if he could not do that, to fall down the river, and unite with General Stewart, and harass the enemy in the rear; and, above all, to be alert, and keep a vigilant guard upon every avenue of approach, to prevent a surprise. I also sent, by Major Hite, directions to the commanding officer of Fort Washington, to advance guard up to the main road, upon all the roads leading to the fort; and, in the event of his being taken in the rear of the fort by the enemy, to blow up the fort, and retire across the river.

The distance of General Young, and the necessity of retaining a position near the fort as long as the designs of the enemy remained uncertain, rendered it impossible to have the assistance of his force at Bladensburg.

There was not a bridge on the road which the enemy pursued, from his debarkation to Washington, the destruction of which would have retarded his advance ten minutes. I believe, in fact, that the bridge at Bladensburg is the only one, and the facility with which that stream is everywhere fordable above the bridge rendered useless the destroying it. Indeed, I believe that, had artillery been posted as advantageously as it might have been, and well served, the bridge would have acted as a decoy to the enemy to lead him into danger, and have been useful to us.

Those who have that happy intrepidity of assurance in their own capacity to see with certainty, in all cases, the means by which they could have avoided the errors of others, and by which past calamities might always have been averted, will find my condemnation easy. Those who are disposed to measure difficulties by the limits of human capacity, and who will impartially place themselves in my situation, will find it difficult to decide that any errors
have been committed -which might not have been equalled or surpassed by any other commander, or that the calamities which have followed could have been averted or mitigated.

This narrative is accompanied by a map, with explanations, which will facilitate the understanding of it.

No. 8.

REPORTS OF GENERALS STANSBURY, SMITH, YOUNG, DOUGLAS, AND HUNGERFORD; COLONELS STERETT, MINOR, TAYLOE, LAVALL, AND BEALL; MAJOR PINKNEY, AND CAPTAINS BURCH AND CALDWELL.

General Stansbury's Report.
Baltimore, November 15, 1814.

By general orders from the War Department, of the 20th April. 1814, Major General S. Smith was directed to draught from his division; and hold in readiness to march at a moment's warning, two thousand men officers included.

By Major General Smith's division orders, of the 29th of April, I was directed to furnish, by draught, from my brigade as its quota, one thousand of this requisition, and hold them in readiness to march, at a moment's warning, to Baltimore, for its defence. The first of May those orders were complied with, agreeably to a detail accompanying said orders.

On the 18th of July, Major General Smith issued division orders, requiring the quota from my brigade, the lth, and that from the 2d and 9th, to march, and rendezvous at Baltimore. My orders were issued on the 19th; the troops began to assemble on the 24th, and were encamped about one and a half miles northward of the city, at a place called Camp Fairfield.

On the 21st of July, by Major General Smith, I was directed to take charge of this brigade and commenced preparing for their reception. Early in August, General Winder being vested with the command of the tenth military district, superseded General Smith in the command.

On Saturday, August the 20th, about one o'clock P. M., I received, by express, letter No. 1, directing me to move down with my whole force for Washington.
By this morning's regimental reports, the force of my brigade, then in camp, appeared as follows:

The first regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel Ragan, officers included, 550; second regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel Shutz, officers also included, fit for duty, 803.

I immediately issued orders for wagons to be procured, provisions served out, tents struck' and every thing prepared to march that evening. But the difficulty of obtaining wagons to transport tents and camp equipage prevented my moving more than part of the brigade this evening. The residue followed on the morning of the 21st. The advance party encamped at the Stag Tavern; the rear three miles short of it, on the evening of the 21st."

About 10 o'clock P. M. I received from General Winder, by express, letter No. 2, dated the 21st, directing me to halt until further orders.

August 22d, at ten o'clock A. M. received from General Winder letter No. 3, dated at the Woodyard, the 21st, ten o'clock P. M. directing me to advance with all speed to Bladensburg. In consequence 'thereof, the line of march was taken up immediately, and at seven o'clock P. M. we arrived at Bladensburg. The first regiment encamped on the hill southeast, the second, on the northwest of the town; and, on Tuesday morning, the 23d, joined the first regiment on Lowndes' Hill, near Bladensburg. About ten o'clock A. M. received from General Winder letter No. 4, dated at Head Quarters, Battalion Old Fields, August 22, containing orders to march my bri-ade (with the troops under Colonel Sterett, if they had joined me) slowly towards Marlborough, and take a position on the road not far from that place, and that he would join me some time that day.

The troops under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Sterett had not joined me, nor was I certain at what time they would arrive. The brigade was instantly put in motion, and the march commenced towards Marlborough, with a view of complying with General Winder's orders. I immediately despatched my aid-de-camp, Major Woodyear, to General Winder, to communicate all the information which hemight require as to my force; to receive particular orders as to the position I should take in the vicinity of Marlborough; and to obtain a knowledge of the country, and of the situation of the enemy. After proceeding about one mile on the road to Marlborough, I met Captain Moses Tabbs riding express to inform me that the enemy, with their whole force, had left Marlborough and were on their march toward me, distant about six miles. This information made me determine to avail myself of the high grounds I occupied in the morning, to which I immediately returned, and 'made the necessary preparations to receive the enemy. I directed Captain Tabbs to return and reconnoitre the enemy, and give me every information.
About four o'clock P. M. he returned; and informed me that the enemy, on leaving Marlborough, had taken a different route. Soon after, my aid-de-camp, Major Woodyear, returned from General Winder, and informed me that the intelligence I had received of the movements of the enemy were, in part, incorrect, and that General Winder wished me to encamp on the direct road from Bladensburg to Marlborough, at about seven miles distant from the latter place. The Assistant Adjutant General, Major Hite, accompanied Major Woodyear. By letter No. 4, I was first informed that Lieutenant Colonel Sterett's detachment, consisting of the fifth regiment, about five hundred strong; Major Pinkney's rifle battalion, about one hundred and fifty; and Captains Myer's and Magruder's companies of artillery, about one hundred and fifty, were attached to my command. These troops had not joined me, but were on their march. I despatched an express with this letter to Lieutenant Colonel Sterett, as soon as received, requesting him to move on with all possible expedition.

About sunset, on the 23d, he arrived with his command, and encamped near my brigade. The fatigued situation of his troops induced me, to halt for the night, on the hill near Bladensburg, with the intention of moving towards Marlborough at reveille, on the 24th. At about eight o'clock P. M. a militia captain, who resided near Bladensburg, came into camp, attended by one of my sentinels, and informed me he was from General Winder's camp, at the Battalion Old Fields; that General Winder was not in camp when he left it; and that it was apprehended he had been taken prisoner; as he had gone out to reconnoitre the enemy, and had not returned: that a detachment from the army had skirmished that day with the British; and that Brigadier General Smith, of the District of Columbia, had taken the command of the army, and would certainly join me in the course of the night. About eleven o'clock P. M., the Secretary of State Colonel Monroe, with several gentlemen, came to my tent; and, as well as I recollect, Colonel Monroe observed that he was from Washington; that he had been at, or heard from, the camp of Gen. Winder; that there was an alarming silence with respect to General Winder, who had one out to reconnoitre the enemy, and had not been heard of; and it was feared he was taken: that General Smith had, by persuasion, taken the command; and that they would move towards, and join me before morning, he expected, from the Battalion Old Fields; and advised vigilance to prevent surprise. Soon after the departure of Colonel Monroe, the advance pickets, on the road by which we expected the enemy, and which was the direct one from Marlborough, fired; and, in a few moments, my whole command were under arms, and prepared for action. The cavalry under Colonel Tilghman, who had come into town a little after dark for refreshments, were ordered down the Marlborough road, except Captain Herbert, with his troop, who was directed to push down the road, toward the Battalion Old Fields, until lie should fall in with General Winder's army, which I was confident would join me that night.

The troops were under arms until after two o'clock A. M. of the 24th, when being advised by the cavalry that the enemy were not near, I ordered them to retire to their tents but to be ready to turn out at a moment's warning; and
strong picket guards were placed on the road in every direction. Supposing my right and rear covered by General Winder's force, I felt no apprehensions of surprise there; and no expectation that the enemy, without first beating General Winder, could approach me, either by the Battalion or, river road. But, about half after two o'clock A.M. Major Bates. Assistant Adjutant General of militia, came to me from Washington, with a message from General Winder, informing me that General Winder had retreated from the Battalion Old Fields into the city of Washington, across the bridge; which he had ordered to be burnt; and that the General expected I would resist the enemy as long as possible, should lie move against me in that direction. Thus was my expectation of security from the Battalion and river roads cut off, my right flank and rear uncovered, and liable to be attacked and turned, without the possibility of securing it, in the position I then lay.

I instantly sent for Lieutenant Colonel Sterett, of the 5th, Major Pinkney, of the rifle corps, and Lieutenant Colonel Ragan. Lieutenant Colonel Shuts being present, officers in whom I placed the highest confidence, and stated to them the information and orders I had just received from General Winder, and our situation with respect to the enemy; they were unanimous in opinion that our situation on that hill could not be defended with the force then under my command, worn down with hunger and fatigue as they were, and that it was indispensably necessary, for the security of the army, that we should immediately retire across the bridge of Bladensburg, and take a position on the road between Bladensburg and the city, which we could defend. Colonel Tilghman of the cavalry observed he thought we had no time to lose. In this opinion I perfectly coincided. Orders were instantly given to strike tents, and prepare to march, and in about thirty minutes, without noise or confusion, the whole were in motion, and about half past three o'clock in the morning, passed the bridge at Bladensburg leading to the city of Washington. Securing our rear from surprise, we halted in the road until the approach of day, with a view of finding some place where water could be had, in order that the men might cook their provisions, and refresh themselves for a few moments. The provisions consisted of salt beef of an inferior quality, the flour old and musty. At day-light. I moved on to the loot of a hill near a brick-yard, and there ordered the troops to refresh themselves. This was about one and a half miles from Bladensburg.

Early in the morning, I had despatched Major Woodyear to Washington, to inform General Winder of my movements and situation; of the exhausted state of the troops, and the impracticability of their meeting the enemy, in their present fatigued state, with any prospect of success, unless reinforced. I rode to the top of the hill to examine the country. On my descending it again, a note was presented to me, by an express from General Winder, dated at Washington, (written I presume without a knowledge of my movements) directing me to oppose the enemy, as long as I could, should lie attempt a passage by the way of Bladensburg. This note I have mislaid.
I called a council of war, consisting of Lieutenant Colonel Sterett, Lieutenant Colonel Ragan, and Major Pinkney. I laid the letter before them. Colonel Sterett observed, that he marched from Baltimore with a determination to defend the city; that his men, the day before, by a forced march from the Buck tavern, or Snowden's, reached Bladensburg without halting to cook; that they had been under arms nearly the whole of the night, without any sleep or food; that Major Pinkney's riflemen, and the two companies of artillery, were in the same situation; and that they were so completely worn down and exhausted, that he should consider it a sacrifice of both officers and men, to seek the enemy at any considerable distance from General Winder's force, as no good could result therefrom.

Major Pinkney and Colonel Ragan expressed themselves to the same effect; and, with Colonel Sterett, urged the propriety of moving further on the road towards the city, with a view of taking a stand on some more favorable ground for defence, with a better prospect of being joined by the forces under General Winder; and expressed their willingness to give their opinions in writing. I could not but admit the correctness of their views, and ordered the wagons to move on slowly towards the city; intending to follow on with the troops.

At this moment Major Woodyear returned from Washington with positive orders from General Winder, to give the enemy battle at Bladensburg, should he move that way, and that he would join me if necessary.

I immediately ordered the troops to retrace their steps to Bladensburg, determined to maintain, if possible, the ground, at all hazards.

On arriving in the orchard near the mill, I directed the artillery to post themselves behind a small breastwork of dirt, that lately had been thrown up by Colonel Wadsworth. This battery commanded the pass into Bladensburg and the bridge southwesterly of the town. Our artillery consisted of six six pounders; Major Pinkney's battalion of riflemen on their right, under cover of the town and hedges, also commanding the pass by the bridge; two companies from Lieutenant Colonel Shutz's regiment, under the command of Captains Ducker and Gorsuch, acting as riflemen, although principally armed with muskets, on the left of the artillery, near, and protected by, the barn, intended to defend the road leading by the mill on the left of the battery into the field; Colonel Sterett's regiment was halted in the orchard, on the right and in the rear, and the regiments of Colonels Ragan and Shutz were also halted in the orchard in the rear, and on the left flank near the creek. My intentions were, that they should remain here to refresh themselves as long as possible, and as soon as the enemy appeared, to form Colonel Sterett's regiment (in whom I placed great confidence) on the right, their left resting on, and supporting, the right of Major Pinkney's riflemen, in view of the bridge, and fronting the road, along which ran a fence, and act as occasion should require. Colonels Ragan's and Shutz's regiments were to be drawn up in echelon, their right resting on the left of Captains Ducker's and Gorsuch's rifle companies, in order to prevent the enemy from pressing and turning our left,
hoping that General Winder would join me before the battle would commence, and occupy the ground in my rear, as a second line.

About eleven o'clock, A. M. I was informed by a dragoon from Lieutenant Colonel Beall, that he was on the road from Annapolis to Bladensburg, with about eight hundred men, distant from me about five miles, and wished to know the distance and situation of the enemy. I directed the dragoon to return and inform him, that I had at that moment received information, that the British, with their whole force, were approaching Bladensburg by the river road, and that they were only three and a half miles distant; and advised the Colonel to file off to his right, and cross above Bladensburg, to fall into an old road, which I understood led to our left towards Washington; and take a position on the high grounds, N. and N. W. of Bladensburg, which would completely protect my left by preventing the enemy from out-flanking us that way, and force their main body across the bridge, in the face of rifle art and riflemen on the main road, and expose them to the fire of the fifth regiment, under Colonel Sterett, who would be protected by the fence.

This advice it appeared Colonel Beall only took in part, I presume from an anxious wish to place himself between the enemy and the city. He sent his baggage off to the right, and with his troops passed the bridge at Bladensburg, about thirty minutes before the enemy appeared on Mr. Lowndes' hill, and took his station on the hill, as I was informed, near the brick kiln where we halted in the morning, about one and a half miles in my rear, and on the left of the road leading to the city. About meridian, the enemy could clearly be seen making towards us by the river road.

While I was giving some directions to the artillery, I found Lieutenant Colonels Ragan's and Shutzz's regiments had been moved from the place where I had stationed them, and marched out of the orchard up the hill, and formed in order of battle about two hundred and fifty yards above the orchard, and upwards of five hundred yards in the rear of the artillery and riflemen. Thus uncovered by the trees of the orchard, their situation and numbers were clearly seen by the enemy from Lowndes' hill, and the flanks of the artillery and riflemen unprotected, and laid liable to be turned, our main body being placed too far off to render them any aid. On riding up the hill to know who had ordered this movement, I was informed that General Winder was on the ground. At this time I met with Brigadier General Smith, of the District of Columbia, and some conversation took place between us respecting the order of battle, and seniority; the particulars I do not recollect. I immediately rode to the mill, where I understood General Winder was, and found him reconnoitering the position of the enemy. While in conversation with him, the fifth regiment was taken out of the orchard, marched up the hill; and stationed on the left of Col. Shutzz's regiment, that of Colonel Ragan's being on the right, its right resting on the main road; but, as I before observed, the whole at so great a distance from the artillery and riflemen, that they had to contend with the whole British force, and so much
exposed, that it has been a cause of astonishment they preserved their round so long, and ultimately succeeded in retreating. Whose plan this was, I know not; it was not mine; nor did it meet with my approbation; but finding a superior officer on the ground, I concluded he liad ordered it, consequently did not interfere. General Winder asked me where I meant to take my station? I answered, about the centre of my brigade. He said he would take his on the left of the fifth regiment. General Winder was extremely active in giving directions and in encouraging the men. I took my station in the centre of Colonels Ragan's and Shutz's regiments, but {562} occasionally rode along the line, encouraging the men, and giving orders to the officers. Major Woodyear I directed to keep with the left of Colonel Shutz's regiment, to cheer up the men, and assist the officers. Major Randall rode with me. Soon after, the action commenced by the artillery and riflemen at the battery. The fire of the artillery had great effect, and evidently produced confusion in the ranks of the enemy, who took shelter behind a warehouse, from whence they fired rockets; but a few well directed shots drove them from this position. A flanking party, concealed by the banks and bushes, pushed up the river to turn our left, whilst a strong force attempted the bridge; but the incessant and well directed fire from our artillery and riflemen at the battery occasioned evident confusion amongst their ranks, so much so, that their officers could be seen actively engaged preventing their retreating, and pushing them on to the bridge; and here I think the enemy suffered considerably. At length they succeeded in passing the bridge in small parties, at full speed, which formed after crossing. I had ordered forty horsemen with axes, to cut away this bridge before the near approach of the enemy, and saw them with their axes. Why this order was not executed, I never could learn. It is certain the enemy could have forded the stream above; but I considered it would, in some degree, impede their progress, and give our artillery and riflemen more time and opportunity to act with effect against them.

The artillery under the' command of Captains Myer and Magruder, and the riflemen, the whole under tie command of Major Pinkney, behaved in the most gallant manner; (this gallant officer in the course of the action was severely wounded) but the superior force of the enemy, and the rapidity with which he moved, compelled them to refire ,but one of the pieces was lost, and this was rendered harmless before it was abandoned.

The enemy took every advantage of the cover afforded them by the trees of the orchard, and their light troops from thence kept up a galling fire on our line. On this party, when advanced nearer, the fifth regiment, under Colonel Strett, opened a steady and well directed fire, which was followed by the fire from the right, and ultimately from our centre, when the firing on both sides became general. After a few rounds, the troops on the right began to break. I rode along the line, and gave orders to the officers to cut down those who attempted to fly, and suffer no man to leave the lines. On arriving at the left of the centre regiment, I found ,Lieutenant Colonel Shutz's men giving way, and that brave officer, with Major Kemp, aided by my aid-de-camp, Major Woodyear, exerting themselves in rallying
and forming them again. Captain Gallaway's company, and part of Captains RandaIl's and Shower's companies were rallied and formed again, and behaved gallantly. The rest of Colonels Shutz's and Ragan's regiments fled in disorder, notwithstanding the extraordinary exertions of their officers to prevent it. On the left, I soon after discovered a part of the fifth regiment giving way, and that excellent officer Lieutenant Colonel Sterett, with those under him, most actively engaged forming them again. Soon after, the retreat became general, and all attempts to rally them, and make a second stand, were fruitless. with a body of United States' cavalry, I endeavored to protect the rear and right of the retreating men, so as to prevent their falling into the enemy's possession.

The men under my command were worn down and nearly exhausted from long and forced marches, want of food, and watching. They had been, with very little intermission, under arms and marching from the time of their departure from Baltimore, with but little sleep, bad provisions, and but little opportunity to cook. They certainly were not in a situation to go into battle; but my orders were positive, and I was determined to obey them.

Before and during the action, I did not see any of the force I was led to expect would support me. I understood since, they were on their way to my assistance, and I presume exertions 'were made to bring them up.

Before and during the retreat, I heard the thunder of Commodore Barney's artillery; but till then I did not know he was near. I believe there were few if any other troops in the field when the action commenced, than the three regiments of infantry, under Lieutenant Colonels Sterett, Ragan, and Shutz, Major Pinkney's battalion of riflemen, Captains Myer's and Magruder's companies of artillery, amounting to about two thousand one hundred and fifty, exclusive of two regiments of cavalry, who did not act.

General Winder, on the field of battle, displayed all possible zeal, activity, and personal bravery, in encouraging the men to fight, and after they broke, in his exertions to rally them.

I saw the President and some of the Heads of Departments in the field, but did not perceive that any of them took any part in the arrangement made for battle. Colonel Monroe, the then Secretary of State, appeared extremely active in his efforts to aid the officers in the discharge of their duties, and exposed himself to much danger.

To my aid-de-camp, Major Edward G. Woodyear, and my acting Brigade Major, Major Beall Randall, I am much indebted for their unremitting exertions in encouraging the men before and during the action, and the zeal displayed by them in their attempts to keep the ranks unbroken; and to rally the men, in which they in some degree succeeded;
for the company of Captain Gallaway, and part of Shower's and Randal's were rallied, and were among the last troops who left the field, and did not retreat until directed: some of them were killed, and several severely wounded.

On arriving at the city, with part of Colonel Lavall's United States' cavalry covering the retreat and collecting the rea' of our scattered troops, I found General Winder's command had passed through it towards Georgetown. I proceeded there, and then followed to a village a few miles beyond it, where I overtook him with troops collecting under his command, and some of those of my brigade. The army thence proceeded to Montgomery Court House on the 25th of August, where it was hourly reinforced by those who fled from the field.

As there had been no place assigned by the Commanding General, previous to the action, to which the men should retreat in case of a defeat, many of those under my immediate command had fled from the field towards Baltimore.

On the 25th I directed my aid, Major Woodyear, to push on from Montgomery Court House to that place, organize the draughted men, and bring them on to any point that General Winder should direct.

On Friday, August 26th, at about 1 a. m. we took up the line of march from Montgomery Court House on the road leading to Baltimore, with the United States' infantry, under Lieutenant Colonel Scott; Major Peter's corps of artillery; General Smith's brigade of District troops; the regiment of militia from Annapolis and Ann Arundel county, commanded by Lieutenant Colonels Beall and Hood; some riflemen from Frederick, Alleghany, and other places; a large body of cavalry and part of my brigadVe of draughted militia—a force respectable as to numbers and appearance; and that night encamped about half way between Montgomery Court House and Ellicott's upper mills. General Winder having received some information respecting the enemy, indicating intentions of moving against Baltimore, concluded his presence there was indispensable. He set out for that place, leaving me in command of the army, with directions to follow him in the morning. Colonel Monroe was with us.

During this night several expresses arrived from the city of Washington, by whom I was informed of the retreat of the enemy, said to be in such haste and confusion that many of their soldiers were straggling about in every direction; that the main army, after reaching Bladensburg, had taken the road to Marlborough, leaving their wounded. I ordered the cavalry to follow them harass their rear, and pick up the stra-lers. Reports from Georgetown and the city reached me, that the arms omany of the enemy had fallen into the hands of the blacks, and it was apprehended that they would take advantage of the absence of the men to insult the females, and complete the work of destruction commenced by the enemy; and at the earnest solicitation of Brigadier General Smith and Major Peter,
who expressed much anxiety respecting their families, and considering it all important to prevent further injury to the city, I ordered the troops of the District of Columbia to move thither for its protection.

Having ascertained that the enemy had retreated to their shipping, I ordered the Prince George's troops down to Bladensburg, and those under the command of Lieutenant Colonels Beall and Hood, to remain encamped on the ground then occupied, until they had orders from General Winder; and in the morning of the 27th, with the United States' infantry, my brigade, and part of Colonel Lavall's cavalry, marched for Baltimore in a very heavy rain. On my arrival there in the evening, I waited on General Winder, and detailed to him what I had done since he left me, with which he appeared well pleased.

Before I conclude, I must observe that Major Pinkney, with most of his battalion, and part of the two companies of artillery, retired from their advanced position to the left of the fifth regiment, and with that regiment continued to behave with that gallantry which had distinguished them in the onset, and only retired when pressed by superior numbers, and then, as I am informed, by orders from the Commanding General.

TOBIAS E. STANSBURY.

Hon. R. M. Johnson, Chairman, &c. &c.

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General W. Smith's statement.
CAMP, WASHINGTON, October 6, 1814.
Sir:
In compliance with the request contained in your favor of the 26th ult. enclosing a copy of a resolution of the Honorable the House of Representatives of the United States, appointing a committee to investigate the causes which led to the success of the enemy in his late enterprise against this city, I have the honor respectfully to submit, for the consideration of the committee, the following detailed report, as connected with the inquiry, and embracing, as you wish, a view of the numbers, the movements, the conduct, and disposition of the troops of Washington and Georgetown, under my command, from the period they were called into service, until the 24th of August, the disastrous day of battle at Bladensburg, together with such facts and circumstances relative to the subject as present themselves.
Late at night on the 18th August, I received orders to call out the whole of the brigade under my command, to rendezvous on the evening of the following day on the banks of the Tiber, in Washington, and to report to General Winder. The troops assembled according to orders, but being deficient in many essential supplies for actual service, were, after an inspection; dismissed until the ensuing morning, the 20th, when every exertion on the part of the officers being made to perfect their equipment, they moved off from the capitol about 3 P. M. crossed the Eastern Branch, and halted four miles therefrom, on the road leading to Nottingham. They were here overtaken by the baggage, when it was ascertained there was a great deficiency of necessary camp equipage, the public stores being exhausted; many of the troops were compelled to lay out in the open field; and of the essential article or flints, upon a requisition of one thousand, only two hundred could be had. Means were immediately adopted to supply, the latter defect from private resources; the former was never accomplished. On the following morning, the 21st, the militia companies deficient in numbers were consolidated, and the supernumerary officers detached to bring up delinquents. The force on the ground amounted to about one thousand and seventy, comprised into two regiments, commanded by Colonels Magruder and Brent, and consisting of the following description of troops; two companies of artillery, twelve six pounders, and two hundred and ten men; two companies of riflemen, nominally, but armed with muskets, the Secretary of War having declined or refused to furnish rifles, one hundred and seventy men; one company of grenadiers, forty men; and five companies of light infantry, about two hundred and fifty men, in all about six hundred and seventy of volunteers, the residue common militia. Having here done all that could be done for the organization of the troops, and to enable them to move with celerity, they were, according to previous orders from General Winder, put in motion, and after a hot and fatiguing march, encamped that evening after dusk near the Woodyard. At this place I found the United States' 36th regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Scott, about three hundred and fifty strong, and a squadron of cavalry, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Tilghman; the latter soon after moved off to reconnoitre on the different roads between the Woodyard, Marlborough, and Nottingham.

Whilst the troops were occupying the ground, I received a message from General Winder, then at the Woodyard, requesting an interview at his quarters; after which I returned to camp at 9 o'clock, and again, at his request, joined him at 12, where Colonel Monroe soon after arriv'd with the intelligence of the arrival at Nottingham, (distant about twelve miles) of the enemy, in considerable force, both by land and-water. I received orders immediately to return to camp and hold the troops in readiness to march at the shortest notice, and was instructed by General Winder to direct Lieutenant Colonel Scott, of the 36th United States' regiment, to get his men immediately under arms, and to march according to orders previously given him. I reached the camp about two o'clock A. M. the troops were roused, the tents struck, the baggage wagons loaded, and the men got immediately under arms, and so remained until sunrise the 22d, when General Winder arrived and directed an advanced corps to be formed and march immediately, to consist of about three hundred men, artillerists and infantry. This was promptly done, and placed under the direction of Major Peter consisting of his own artillery, Captain Davidson's light infantry, and Captain Stull's rifle
corps, armed with muskets. They moved immediately on the road to Nottingham, and were soon after followed by
the main body to support them. Major Peter with the advance corps moved on for four or five miles, when he fell in
with Colonel Lavall's cavalry, a part of Colonel Tilghman's, and the 36th United States' regiment, retiring. The troops
were halted, and a position taken to repel the enemy, now rapidly approaching. General Winder here joined our
troops, and soon after, orders were given to fall back, which was done. The main body had meanwhile arrived at a
position within two miles of the advance, where they found the marine corps, under the command of Captain Miller,
with five pieces of heavy artillery, judiciously posted.

This position not being deemed favorable for the infantry, they were directed to rest on their arms, whilst I rode
briskly forward to discover one more adapted to them; but none presented, except for light troops, a body of which
was thrown in advance into the woods, and the residue of the troops disposed of to act according to circumstances.
Here we received advice, about 11 o'clock, of the advance of the enemy and of the retiring of our troops, and
immediately after, orders from General Winder to send off the baggage from where it had been left in the morning, to
the "Long Old Fields," and for the troops to retire slowly upon the same road.' About this time, successive heavy
explosions from the direction of Marlborough, announced the destruction of Commodore Barney's flotilla, which
was known to be in that vicinity, and also that this course would be adopted, should the enemy approach in such
force, by land and water, as to render resistance availing. It was hence inferred, that the enemy had ascended the
Patuxent in force, that a column of troops 'had co-operated, by taking the road in that direction, which was soon
afterwards confirmed; and with the advices subsequently, that the whole of their army had filed off on that road, and
taken possession of Marlborough. Our troops halted, and assembled at the fork of the roads, on this side of the
Woodyard, one of which leads to Marlborough, the other to this place. We here tell in with Commodore Barney and
his sailors, and after a short rest the whole moved on, and about 4 P. M. arrived at the Long Old Fields. Here,
pursuant to directions from General Winder, I assumed the command of the assembled forces, those of Commodore
Barney excepted, consisting now of the following troops, viz: District volunteers and militia, one thousand and
seventy; Lieutenant Colonel Scott's 36th United States' regiment, three hundred and fifty; Lieutenant Colonel
Kramer's battalion of draughted militia, two hundred and twenty; and Major Waring's battalion of Prince George's
militia, about one hundred and fifty; total about eighteen hundred men. An encampment was formed for the night,
and such positions taken as were best calculated to resist a night attack; the cavalry being already stationed in
advance, on the different roads leading to Marlborough, with orders to keep patrolling parties constantly upon the
enemy's quarters, and to advise of all his movements. The troops being greatly fatigued, sought in sleep that repose
they so much wanted; in this they were disappointed: an alarm gun aroused them about 2 o'clock in the morning of
the 23d; the were quickly formed in front of their encampment, and dispositions made to meet and repel the
expected attack, but in a short time it was ascertained to be a false alarm, and the troops were dismissed, but with orders to hold themselves ready for their posts at a moment's warning.

At daylight General Winder gave orders to have the tents struck, and the baggage wagons loaded, and that the whole should be ready to move in one hour. Those orders were complied with, with all possible expedition. Shortly after, the troops were got under arms, and were joined by another small detachment of Prince George's militia, under the command of Major Maynard, about one hundred and fifty. The whole were held ready to move according to orders.

About this time I received directions from General Winder to have formed an advance corps, constructed as the one of the preceding day, and to be prepared to move as his subsequent orders should designate. Peter's, Davidson's, and Stull's companies were again selected for this purpose, and formed accordingly. The President of the United States, accompanied by the Secretary of War, and others of his cabinet, now came upon the ground and reviewed the troops. About 10 o'clock, General Winder left the camp, accompanied by, and having under his command or direction, several troops of cavalry, intending to reconnoitre on the road leading from Marlborough to Bladensburg, as well as to be situated in a position where he might more conveniently communicate with the troops expected from Baltimore, leaving directions that I should report to him at the Cross Roads, it being the intersection of a road, proceeding from the Old Fields, and crossing the before mentioned road, about five miles distant. His orders were, that the advance troops should move forward in the direction of Marlborough, reconnoitre the enemy, approach him as near as possible, without running too much risk, and to annoy him, either in his position or in his movements, by all the means in their power, and that I should remain with the main body at the Old Fields, and act according to the intelligence I should receive of the movements of the enemy. If they moved upon Bladensburg, by the road before mentioned, that I should approach them by the intersecting road from the Old Fields, and attack their left flank, or, if upon the road we now occupied, that we should make the best possible dispositions in our power, and receive him there, unless circumstances imperiously forbade; otherwise, to retire by a road in our rear to Bladensburg or to Washington, as, at the time, should seem most advisable.

In conformity with this arrangement, Major Peter, with the advance corps, and with Captain Caldwell's cavalry, which had joined us, marched about 11 o'clock. About a quarter of a mile in front of our then camp, the road forks, both leading to Marlborough, one, on the main stage road, by which the distance was about eight miles, the other turning to the left, a more direct route, but not so good a road, about six miles. This last mentioned road was taken by our advancing troops. The commander was instructed to report every
hour. The residue of our troops were dismissed to refresh. From this period until 2 o'clock, several deserters and prisoners were brought into camp, and I was engaged in examining them, when intelligence was received from Major Peter that the enemy had left Marlborough, and were advancing rapidly upon the road which we then occupied, in great force; that, according to his estimation of their column, and the best information he could obtain their force was not less than six thousand men; that he had had a skirmish with them, in which they had endeavored to outflank him; and that he was then retiring before them. A part of Colonel Lavall's cavalry having then joined us, were immediately detached to cover the retreat, and the whole of our troops ordered under arms. Conferring with Commodore Barney on the subject, I proposed making a stand in our then position, with which, with his characteristic gallantry, he promptly acquiesced, professing his willingness to co-operate in any measures that might he deemed most advisable: The troops were immediately formed in order of battle, extending nearly a quarter of a mile on each side of the road; those of Commodore Barney, with his heavy artillery, the marines under Captain Miller, and the 36th United States' regiment, being posted on the right of the road; the District troops, and the residue of those attached to them, on the left—our advanced troops, as they arrived, taking their stations in the line, and the artillery, in which it was ascertained we were greatly their superior, and for which the ground was admirably adapted, so posted as to have the best effect; indeed, so strong did we deem our position in front, that we were apprehensive that the enemy, upon viewing us, would forbear to assail us by day-light, or that, availing of his numbers, he would endeavor to outflank us. To guard against this last, parties of light troops and cavalry were detached to cover both flanks. We remained thus, two or three hours, calmly awaiting the approach of the enemy, our vidette successfully announcing his continued progress. About 5 P. M. General Winder, who had been apprised of the approach of the enemy, arrived in camp. He examined the different positions, and approved of them, but the day being now nearly spent, and it being ascertained that the enemy had not arrived within a distance in which he would now, probably, be able to make his attack, whilst it lasted, and it being deemed unadvisable to receive a night attack there, when our advantage of artillery would be unavailing he gave the orders to retire about sunset, and the whole of the troops, much wearied and exhausted, encamped. Thus in the night, within this city.

Thus terminated the four days of service of the troops of this District, preceding the affair at Bladensburg. They had been under arms, with but little intermission, the whole of the time, both night and day; had traversed, during their different marches in advance and retreat, a considerable tract of country exposed to the burning heat of a sultry sun by day, and many of them to the cold dews of the night, uncovered. They had, in this period, drawn but two rations, the requisition therefor, in the first instance, having been but partially complied with, and it being afterwards almost impossible to procure the means of transportation, the wagons employed by our quarter-master for that purpose...
being constantly impressed by the Government agents, for the purpose of removing the public records, when the enemy's approach was known, and some of them thus seized whilst proceeding to take in provisions for the army.

Those hardships and privations could not but be severely distressing to men, the greater part of whom possessed and enjoyed at home the means of comfortable living, and from their usual habits and pursuits in life but ill qualified to endure them. They, however, submitted without murmuring, evincing by their patience, their zeal, and the promptitude with which they obeyed every order, a magnanimity highly honorable to their character. Great as was their merit in this respect, it was no less so in the spirit manifested whenever an order was given to march to meet the foe; and, at the ' Lotig Old Fields,' where his attack was jointly expected in overwhelming force. They displayed, in presence of many spectators, although scarce any of them had ever been in action, a firmness, a resolution, and an intrepidity, which, whatever might have been the result, did honor to their country.

On Wednesday morning, the 24th August, at I A. M. I received orders from General Winder to detach one piece of artillery and one company of infantry, to repair to the Eastern Branch Bridge', and there report to Colonel Wadsworth; and to proceed with the residue of the troops to Bladensburg and take a position to support General Stansbury. This order was put in immediate execution, and the troops for Bladensburg moved off with all the expedition of which they were capable. Having put them in motion I passed on ahead, in order that I might select my position against their arrival. I found General Stansbury posted on the west side of the Eastern Branch, his right resting on the main road, distant from the bridge at Bladensburg five or six hundred yards, and extending north-easterly, his left approaching nearer to the creek. An extensive apple orchard was in his front, and one hundred to two hundred yards in advance, a work thrown up, commanding the bridge, occupied by a corps of artillerists, with five or six pieces, and appeared to be supported by some rifle and light companies. In his rear, on the right, was a thick undergrowth of wood, and directly behind that a deep hollow or ravine, open in cleat-edc, of about sixty yards in width, which the main road crosses. The ravine terminates on the left in a bold acclivity, about two hundred yards from the road; the rest of the ground in his rear was open, unbroken, and gradually ascending fields. Having hastily examined the grounds, and concluded on the dispositions I should make, I apprised General Stansbury of my views, as to the troops under my command, suggesting, that if his line should be forced, and he could again form on my left, that the nature of the ground there would be favorable for a renewal of the action, which might then become general. By this time we received advice that the enemy were near Bladensburg, and I left him, to hasten the arrival of My troops. They moved rapidly on, notwithstanding the excessive heat of the day, covered with clouds of dust, and were promptly disposed of as follows:
Lieutenant Colonel Scott, with the 36th United States' regiment, was posted in a field on the left of the road, his right resting upon it, and commanding the road descending into the ravine before mentioned, in the rear of General Stamsbury's right, and the rest of his line commanding the ascent from the ravine. This position was about one hundred and fifty yards in the rear of the front line, but extending to the right. In the same field, about one hundred yards in the rear of the 36th regiment, Colonel Magruder was posted with a part of the 1st regiment of District militia, his right also resting upon the road, the left advanced, presenting a front obliquely to the road, and situated to cover and to co-operate with the 36th regiment; Major Peter, with his artillery, six six pounders; Captain Davidson's light infantry, and Captain Stull's rife corps, armed with muskets, all of the same regiment, were ordered to take possession of the abrupt acclivity before mentioned, terminating the ravine. This was deemed a desirable position, because it commanded completely the ravine and the road crossing it, and a considerable extent of the ground over which the front line would necessarily retire if forced back; but, after a short space of time, report was made to me, that broken grounds interrupted the approach to it with artillery, but by a circuitous route that would consume much time, and that, in case of retreat, the ground in the rear was such as might endanger the safety of the guns. It was mentioned at the same time, that near to it was a commanding position for artillery, and easy of access from and to the road. I yielded with reluctance to the abandonment of the position first ordered, but time did not admit of hesitation. Meanwhile I had posted Lieutenant Colonel Kramer, with his battalion of Maryland drafted militia, in the woods, on the right of the road, and commanding the ravine which continued in that direction, with orders that, if forced, he should retire by his right, through a body of woods in that direction, and rally and form with the troops stationed in the rear, on the extreme right. Upon examining the position taken by Major Peter's battery, it was found that the range of his guns was principally through that part of the field occupied by the 36th regiment. To remove one or the other became necessary, and the difficulty of the ground for moving artillery, and the exigency of the movement left no alternative. The 36th fell back about one hundred yards, losing, in some measure, the advantage of its elevated grounds and leaving the road. The position of the 1st regiment District militia, from this circumstance, was also necessarily changed. It fell back about the same distance, its right still resting on the road, and now formed, nearly in line with the 36th. Of the 2d regiment District militia, two pieces of artillery and one company of riflemen, armed with muskets, were, by directions of General Winder, sent on to the front; with those he flanked the extreme left of the front line; two pieces more of artillery were posted in the road near the bridge at Bladensburg; the residue of that regiment, about three hundred and fifty strong, under the command of Colonel Brent, was formed as a reserve a short distance in the rear of Major Peter's battery, and so disposed as to act on the right, or left, or in front, as occasion might require. Near them was posted in the same manner, Major Waring's Prince George's battalion of militia, about one hundred and fifty. Colonel William D. Beall, with a regiment of troops from Annapolis, passed through Bladensburg as our troops arrived, and took a position on the right of the road and nearly fronting it a distance about two hundred and fifty yards. Previous to the arrival of
the troops on the ground, General Winder came up from the city, and being made acquainted with the intended dispositions of the troops, as well as the ground reserved for Commodore Barney and the marines, approved of and confirmed them.

About half past twelve o'clock and whilst the troops were yet taking their atifferent positions, innumerable rockets thrown from the heights of Bladensburg announced the arrival of the enemy there— and, at this period, Commodore Barney's sailors and marines, in quick march, arrived, and, took possession of the ground previously assigned them his artillery being posted in and near the road upon its right, commanding the road and open field in front, and his infantry; together with the marines under Captain Miller, extending to the right, thus occupying the interval, of ground between Colonel Magruder's first regiment District militia, and Colonel Beall's Maryland regiment.

The firing of artillery in front soon commenced, and immediately after, that of musketry, in quick and rapid succession. In a few minutes the whole right and center of the front line, with some small exceptions, were seen retiring in disorder and confusion. The firing still continued on the extreme left, but shortly after, it also broke, and although it retired in more order, yet none could be rallied so as to resume the action with effect, and also soon entirely quitted the field.

I mean while the left of the enemy, in heavy column, passed along the road crossing the ravine. They were here encountered by the troop of Colonel Kramer, posted in the woods on the edge of the ravine. These, after a short conflict, were compelled to retire; which they aid principally under cover of the adjacent woods, and formed with the troops of Colonel Beall on the right. The enemy's column now displayed in the field on the right of the road. They here became exposed to the oblique fire of Major Peter's battery which was kept up with great animation. Still pressing on to the front of our right, they came in contact with the heavy artillery of Commodore Barney, and of the troops posted there.: Here the firing became tremendous. They were repulsed, again returned to the charge, succeeded in forcing the troops on the right, and finally carried the position of Commodore Barney.

The dispersion of the front line caused a dangerous opening on our left; of which the enemy in that quarter promptly availed. He advanced rapidly, then, wheeling on his left, soon gained, and was turning our left flank. To oppose this alarming movement, I directed Colonel Brent, with the second regiment of District militia, to take a position still more to the left; and he was proceeding in the execution of this order when orders came from General Winder for the whole of the troops to retreat. The efforts of the enemy had hitherto been directed principally against the right and left of our whole line of battle. The troops of this District, and a part of those attached to them, occupying positions mostly in the centre, and some of them difficult of access, were consequently but partially engaged, and
this principally with light troops and skirmishers, now pressing forward, supported by a column of infantry.

I here beg leave to refer to the reports of Colonels Brent and Thompson,*.Nos. '1 and ', showing the positions, and "the part taken by their respective commands during the action.

The order to retreat was executed by 'regiments and corps, as they had bedu formed, and with as much order as the nature of the ground would permit. The first and second regiments halted and formed, after retreating five or six hundred paces, but were again ordered by General Winder to retire.. At this moment I fell in with Gxeneral Winder, and, after a short conference' with him, was directed to move.on, and collect the troops, and prepare to make a stand on the heights westward of the turnpike gate. This Was done as fast as the troops came up. A front was again presented towards the enemy. consisting principally of the'troops of this District, a part of those who had beenattached to them in the action, and a Virginia regiment of about four hundred men, under Colonel Mior, which met us at this place. Whilst the line was yet, forming, I received orders from General Winder to fall back to the capitol, and there form for battle. I took the liberty of suggesting my impression of the preferable situation we then occupied; but expecting that he might be-joined there by some of the dispersed troops of the front line, he chose to make the, stand there. Approaching the capitol, I halted the troopg, and 'requested his orders as to the formation of the line. We found no auxiliaries there. He then conferred ftra few momentsslwith General Armstrong, who Was a short distance fromh us, and then gave orders that the whole should retreat through Washington and Georgetown. It is impossible to do justice to the anguish evinced.by the troops of Washington and Georgetown on the receiving of this order. The idea of leaving their families, their houes, and 'their homes, at the mercy of an enraged enemy, was insupportable.' To preserve that order which, was maintained during the retreat, was now no longer practicable. As they retired thrugh Washington and Georgetown, numbers were obtainin, and taking leave to visit their homes, and again rejoining; and with ranks thus broken and scattered, they halet at night on the heights near Tenlytown,'and, on the ensuing day, assembled at Montgomery Court House.

I have thus, sir, given a detailed, and what Will, 1 apprehend, in many respects, be deemed too minute an account, of the short tour of service of the District troops under my command, which preceded the capture of this capital. I fear its length may trespass'toomiuch on the patence.of your honorable committee. I thought it, however, due to the occasion, and confomable to the spirit and purport of your inquiries. I had another object. The troops of Washington and Georgetown have been ass.ailed, in the public prints and elsewhere, with cal'tmnies as unmerited, as they are cruel and wanton. They have heard of them with indignant astonishment. Conscious that in no instance havethey been wau iugin the duty they owed to their country or to themselves, but, onthe contrary, in obedience to the call of
their Government, have, with alacrity; obeyed its orders, and intrepidly fronted an enemy vastly their superior in force, and never yielded the ground to him, but by orders emanating from superior authority, they cannot restrain the feelings excited by such manifest, such unprovoked injustice. They have seen with satisfaction the resolution of Congress to inquire into this subject; and persuaded of the justice and impartiality of your honorable committee, entertain a confident assurance that the result of your investigation will afford relief to their injured feelings. Connected with this subject, I beg leave to refer to a letter of General Winder, No. 3, in answer to an inquiry made of him, as to the general conduct of the brigade whilst under his command.

I have the honor to be, &c.

W. SMITH - Brigadier General, First Columbian Brigade.

Hon. R. M. Johnson

P. S. I ought to have mentioned that parts of two companies of the United States' twelfth and thirty-eighth regiments were attached to the thirty-sixth regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel Scott. Previous to the march to Bladensburg, eighty men of his command had been stationed near the Eastern Branch bridge, and did not join until after the action. His force then was less than three hundred men.

ALEXANDRIA, October 3, 1814.

In compliance with your letter of the 28th of September, written in pursuance of a resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the United States, requiring such information as may be in my power to give, more especially the part assigned my command, my numbers, orders, movements, and dispositions, previous and subsequent to the 14th of August last, and on that day; as also the conduct of my officers and men, their ideas upon the subject of the enemy’s numbers, their confidence in success, and whether any thing like a panic prevailed; with such other views as it may be in my power to communicate, pertinent to an impartial investigation of the subject; I have the honor respectfully to report, that, since the declaration of war, I am enabled, with great truth, to say, that the officers and a great portion of the privates of my command have manifested to me every disposition to defend the District of Columbia from the approach of the enemy; and this disposition has been communicated to the
Secretary of war, requesting to be furnished with the necessary means of enabling the militia under tny command to do so with effect.

On or about the 25th of July, 1814, Geneal Winde: visited the town of Alexandria, and was made acquainted with most of the officers'of my brigade, and at'that interview mentioned his intention of having a general inspection of the brigade.' The men 'were accordingly assembled,' on'the first day 6f August, under, an order of General Van Ness, when General Winder attended, and' inspected the brigade, minutely, in person And I beg leave here to remark, that,'on General Winder's lirst visit to the town of Alexandria, he was furnshed, by an officer of my brigade, with a topographical sketch of the river Potomac, from a place called Indian Head, about twenty-three miles below Alexandria, containing the course of the river, the depth of the water, width of the channel at particular places, and pointing out Indian Head as the first proper point- of defence against the approach of the enemy by water; the White' House as the second point of defence -and sugesting a plan of increasing the defence at Fort Warburton. This was done'with an understanding that General Winder would receive any communication upon that subject, in writing, from any of the inhabitants of Alexandria.

On the 18th day of August last, I received orders from General Van Ness to order'out immediately the whole of my brigade, to encamp at some convenient place, and report myself to General Winder; which order was obeyed. See No. 1.

On the same day.I received orders from the same officer, to detach two troops of cavahy attached to my brigade, to rendezvous at Bladensburg thi next day, at four, o'clock in the morning, to attend Coloneil Monroe, Secretary of State, and be'subject to his particular ilrdera; which was complied with, as will appear by document No. 2.

On the twentieth of August I was directed by General Winder'to hold my brigade ready to move at a moment's warning, with anmmunition, and a supply of three days' provisions, as will appear by No. 3; and, on the same day, about four o'clock; P. M. I received orders from the same-officer tor cross the Potomac, without delay, at Rozier's ferry, and take a position on -the most convenient spot adjacent thereto, encamp, and there await further orders. See No. 4.                         "

I accordingly the same evening took up my line of march, with the reainingpart of my brigade, containing, in the whole, officers and privates included,bur hundred and fifty -foir strong. .I had with me two brass six pounders, one brass four pounder, anti attempted tp take two long twelve pounders; belonging to the corporation of Alexandria, but found them too unwieldy to move, with our means, acrossthe river, and retui'ned them. I was, at first,
accompanied by a company of Marine artillery, composed of volunteers from the seafaring persons in Alexandria, but the difficulty of transporting the twelve pounders occasioned several of them to return; the others remained with a brass four pounder, and joined the artillery commanded by Captain Griffith. On the twenty-first of August I received orders, to move with my detachment, at jeveille-next morning, and pitch my tents at the most convenient spot, nigh Piscataway, between that place and the Woodyard, and there await further orders, which was complied with. See No. 5.

On the twenty-second of August I received orders to fall back with my detachment, and take the most convenient position on the road from Piscataway to Washington, to defend the approach from below to Fort Warburton. This order was complied with, see No. 6; and here we received information of the approach of the enemy from the Patuxent towards Washington, and also of the approach of the fleet coming up the Potomac, and of their having passed the Kettle Bottoms. I accordingly took a strong position on a height called Hatton's Hill, rear the head of Piscataway creek, about three miles in the rear of Fort Warburton, reviewed the ground of the fort, which is favorable for a small number to defend against a greater, and made a disposition of the brigade in case of an attack, and communicated the information, and marked the ground, and made known to the troops their respective posts in the line, in case of an attack, in doing, which both officers and privates exhibited to me the strongest and most determined resolution to make a proper and successful resistance. I saw no wavering or want of confidence, nor any symptoms of panic.

On the twenty-third of August I received information from Colonel Taylor, of the cavalry, that he had in charge to inform me, that General Smith's brigadd was retreating to Washington, and the enemy pursuing raidly, and in case we were compelled to retreat, the mayor of Alexandria would send, every boat that could be had to Fort Washington, or Roziers ferry for the purpose of transporting the troops across the Potomac. -See. No. 7.

On the receipt of this letter I addressed one to General Wiider, by my Brigade Major, informing him of its contents, and observed, that as Colonel Tayloe did not say from whom he had the charge, I requested that he would please give Major Triplett his orders on the subject. See No. 8. On the morning of the 24th August I received a message from General Winder, by Assistant Adjutant General Hite, directing me to take up my line of march, and move on the road from Piscataway to the Eastern Branch bridge, and take a position at the cross roads, and send out videttes towards Marlborough and the diy, to watch the movements of the enemy, then on their march, about miles on our flank. Our position was 'n Oxen Hill, where Major Hite again visited us, on his return from Fort Warburton.
On our march, and when the brigade had advanced about three miles, Major Triplett returned with orders from General Winder, directing the brigade to cross to the Virginia shore, in the boats which were directed to be left at the fort, for the purpose of crossing troops, and if the boats were not there to retire on to 'W'ashington; but, in case we could cross the river, to fall into the road through which the Virginia troops would pass, and co-operate with them, unless the advance of the enemy up the river should make it necessary to retire on Alexandria; and if there should be no Virginia troops retiring, to fall back immediately to Alexandria, and act in the best manner for the defence of that place, or, retreating to Washington, if necessary; and leaving a latitude, in case of events, to pursue such measures as would best secure us from disaster. See No. 9. Soon after the receipt of this letter, we were advised of the approach of the enemy up the river, above Port Tobacco, and I was also advised that the enemy were, that morning, advanced of Marlborough about five miles; and, without perceiving any wants of steadiness in my men, I determined, in obedience to orders, to cross the Potomac to the town of Alexandria, at Rozier's ferry, and sent for the boats left at the fort, And also for boats from Alexandria, which were immediately sent in a great abundance; and, after some part of the brigade had embarked and left the shore, I received orders from General Armstrong, dated the 24th of August, but whether written before or subsequent to that of General Winder I was unable to ascertain, informing me that the most that the enemy did the day before, was to move about two miles in advance of Marlborough, and that the ships in the Potomac had no troops; and directing me to hold my present position until assured that the enemy was in force and about to attack me, or until I should receive further orders; and to keep my videttes well posted on every road. See No. 10.

I accordingly recalled the troops embarked, and resumed my position back of Oxen Hill, on the road leading to the Eastern Branch bridge, and near its junction with the road leading to Marlborough, and sent out my videttes on each road. 'We were at this moment apprised of the enemy's being on his march to Bladensburg, and soon after, by the commencement of the action,' which was distinctly heard; the videttes soon returned, and gave me information of the Eastern Branch bridge being blown up, and others, of the retreat of our troops through, Washington. I had, in this interval, despatched the trooper who brought me, General AToistweg's letter, with an answer, informing him that I had, in obedience to his letter, returned to my position on the heights back of Oxen Hill, and should there wait further orders.

The trooper, with great despatch, returned, and informed me that he could not see General Armstrong, but had inquired of the President and General Winder, both of whom he met with the army, retreating through "Washington city, and they being unable to give any information of him, General Winder despatched the same trooper back, with verbal orders for my brigade to cross the Potomac, and form a junction with his army in Montgomery county, Maryland. I accordingly crossed the troops over to Alexandria, on the night of the twentieth-fourth of August, and took
a position a small distance in the rear of Alexandria, and during the night and next morning crossed 'my artillery and baggage. I had sent a vidette into the city of Washington, and learnt that the enemy were in possession, and were firing the public buildings. I took up my line of march for Conns' ferry, a small distance above the Great Falls of the Potomac, and immediately opposite Montgomery Court House, where I was informed General Winder's army then were. The troops were, on the twenty-sixth, delayed on their march, near Carper's mills, opposite the Great Falls of the Potomac, by an alarm of a domestic nature, which I was credulous enough to give credence to, from the respectability of the country people who came to me for protection, and I accordingly halted my brigade, and sent out my light troops, and one troop of cavalry, which had joined me from Fauquier, to ascertain the fact, which finally proved erroneous. See letter No. 12, from the mayor of Alexandria.

On my passing the road which led to the Little Falls bridge, I was apprised by avidette that the enemy's pickets were still in view from Georgetown, and by several persons from the city, that I was in danger of being cut off; should the enemy make a sally out across the Little Falls bridge, which determined me to pursue my original intention, and not pass the bridge.

On the evening of the twenty-seventh of August I crossed my troops over the Potomac, at Conns' ferry, and the river being rocky, and but one boat, and owing to high winds, I was unable to pass the artillery and baggage across until late in the evening of the twenty-eighth of August, when I immediately despatched a vidette to General Winder, informing him of my movements, and that I should, continue my march to reach his camp, unless otherwise ordered. See No. 12.

About one o'clock of the night of the twenty-eighth, I received an order from, Col. Monroe, Secretary of State, informing me that the British squadron had passed the fort, and was approaching the city; that the fort surrendered without opposition; and that the President of the United States desired that I should move with all possible despatch for Georgetown, to be in a situation, to aid either Alexandria or the city, as circumstances might require, See No. 13. I soon after took-up my line of march, and reached Georgetown, distant about twenty miles, at half past twelve o'clock, and were marched to the city, and encamped near the President's house, in full view of the enemy's fleet lying at the town of Alexandria.

On the thirty-first of August I was ordered to march across the Potomac and join General Hungerford, from whence the brigade was marched to the White House. See No. 14. It may be proper for me here to remark, that, on my route to Conns' ferry, I gave directions for moving two twelve pounders, belonging to the corporation of Alexandria, out of the enemy's reach, and on my march to the White House I carried them with me, and caused to be removed from the
gun house in Alexandria, and while it was in possession of the enemy, the screws, sponges; rammers, and apparatus, belonging to the guns, as also the powder—from the powder house, and, as facts are better than opinions, permit me to bring in view the artillery so handsomely mentioned by Captain Porter, Two of the infantry killed, and two wounded, that had been detailed under the command of Captain Janny show the materials of the brigade from which they were drawn; the rifle corps were also on the flank of battery, and did their duty, and more to their honor, from knowing that their arms had previously been condemned. Whilst the troops lay at the White House, some opportunity was afforded me during the bombardment of that fort, as well as on the day the enemy's fleet passed it, from the quantity of large and grape shot and rockets which fell among them, of forming a correct judgment of their firmness, as well as from the circumstance of the defence of a particular spot having been previously assigned to me and my command, to which, on the first notice of the action, the remainder of the brigade repaired, with a cheerful serenity of mind free from agitation or appearance of pain, which warranted the highest expectations from them: and, considering that the brigade was called into service en masse, drawing persons from all, situations in life, on so short a notice, I am happy to say that they endured fatigue and privation without a murmur; and I most sincerely lament, both for them and myself, that so fair an opportunity should have passed by—an opportunity above all others—which could have presented itself to the mind of an American freeman, the most desirable; that such an opportunity, from circumstances beyond their control, should have passed, without all the officers and privates of the brigade being brought to a more earnest test of their professions and dispositions, both for the honor of their town, themselves, and beloved country.

I have the honor to be, &c.
ROBERT YOUNG, Brigadier General second brigade, M.D.O.
The Hon. RICHARD M. JOHNSON, Chairman, &c.

Note: Fort Warburton and Fort Washington is the same place, it being differently called in the different despatches received.

Brigadier General Hugh Douglas's statement.

Ellicott's Mills, November 20, 1814.
DEAR Sir.
In answer to the inquiry contained in your letter of the fifteenth, I liasten to inform you, that I received the order calling me to 'Alexandria, and thence to the city of Washington, on the Monday immediately preceding the destruction of the public buildings. This was on the twenty-second of August. It directed me to march my brigade immediately to Washington. In pursuance of these orders, my brigade, or rather the greater part of it, marched on the next day, the twenty-third; the residue overtook them on their march.

In relation to the arms, I will add, that the Loudoun-regiments under my command brought on some arms from Virginia, which were partly deposited at Ellicott's Mills, and partly delivered up, to be brought to this place from Baltimore, the troops having met with Harper's Perry arms, with which those were supplied whose muskets were out of order.

The Fairfax regiment, under Coloiel Minor's command, was armed at Washington, when he was detached from me. From him you may learn when he arrived in Washington; at what hour after his arrival he applied for arms, how long he was delayed, and what were the causes of delay.

It is not in my power to give further information that I deem material; but, as the committee have demanded of me all the information I possess, I feel it my duty to refer them to Colonel Minor, whose information, in relation to the arming the regiment under his command, and the delays attending it, may be perhaps important.

I have the honor to be, dear sir, &c.
HUGH DOUGLAS, Brigadier General sixth brigade, V. M.

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Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Sterett's statement.

Baltimore, November 22, 1814.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th instant, and will, with pleasure give such information as I possess, relative to the unfortunate affair of Bladensburg.

On the 19th of August last, the 3d brigade of Maryland militia was called into the service of the United States.
On the 20th, the 5th regiment, the rifle battalion, under Maj. Pinkney, and two companies of artillery, under Captains Myer and Magruder, making, together, about eight hundred men, were ordered by General Stricker to proceed to Bladensburg, under my command, where I was to report myself to General Winder. On the 21st, the whole took up the line of march. At Elk Ridge Landing, I received a communication from General Winder, directing me to proceed to Snowden's by convenient marches, and there await his further orders. As the detachment set out without being completely equipped, I halted at the landing, to give an opportunity for the further supplies to come on. However, on Monday, the 22d, about 2 o'clock, P.M., I received an order from General AVinder, by express, to advance by forced marches to Bladensburg. The whole of my detachment instantly struck their tents; and, with the greatest alacrity, took up the line of March. We arrived at the Buck, or Snowden's, at a late hour, and encamped for the night. Early the next morning we were in motion, and that evening arrived at Bladensburg, where, by order of General Winder, I was placed under the command of General Stansbury. The whole encampment was alarmed about 9 o'clock that night; soon after my detachment had pitched their tents, and before the men could refresh themselves, they, however, formed with cheerfulness and alacrity, and remained under arms until about 1 o'clock. We were scarcely dismissed before we were again called to arms, and about 2 o'clock were ordered to strike our tents; and, finally, before daylight, we marched, and crossed the bridge at Bladensburg, and took the road to Washington. We were occasionally halted and advanced, until about 11 o'clock, when we were counter-marched, and formed in the orchard on the west side of Bladensburg bridge, to await the enemy, who, we were informed, was advancing in full force. I knew nothing of any second line or reserve being formed to support us, and no man of any judgment, acquainted with the fatigued, undisciplined, and inexperienced troops, under the command of General Stansbury, could, for a moment, suppose them capable of making a successful resistance to a superior, brave, and veteran enemy, conducted by officers of great experience and high reputation. In this situation, I concurred in opinion with Colonel Ragan and Major Pinkney, that we ought to fall back, and, by uniting with the other troops under General Winder which were supposed to be between us and Washington, enable the General to make a better disposition of his whole force; and so advised General Stansbury, who, in reply, observed that the order was positive; that he must make his stand where he was; to which, of course, we submitted.

The two companies of artillery and the riflemen, under Major Pinkney, were detached from me, and stationed near the bridge at Bladensburg. The 5th was formed under the directions of Colonel Monroe, the present Secretary of Var, on the left, and in line with General Stansbury's brigade, from which period my attention was principally confined to this regiment. The men beheld the gradually approaching dangers of battle with a firm and undaunted countenance. The action commenced about one, by an attack on the redoubt, where the riflemen and artillery were placed. These soon retired, and the 5th covered their retreat, and kept up a lively fire, and supported their place in line with firmness, until the enemy had gained both flanks, and the order to retreat was given by General Winder.
himself. I was directed to take a road to the right, as we retired, leading to the city of Washington; but we were so annoyed by the enemy's flankers, followed by his whole force, and finding no reserve to support us, or upon which to form, it became impossible for me; though ably assisted by my field and other officers, to preserve order. On my arrival at Washington, I was informed that General Winder had passed through Georgetown, and taken the Fredericktown road. We followed, and came up with him about three miles from Georgetown, and reported ourselves. By this time it was nearly dark. General Winder here informed me that he should retire upon Montgomery Court House. I obtained his permission to seek for refreshment and quarters, and discretionary orders to endeavor to turn the course of the retreat towards him. This night I had the mortification of witnessing the Conflagration of the city of Washington, being only distant about four miles. Early the next morning, with my field officers, I crossed the country to the Baltimore road, with a view of turning the troops we might meet or overtaken towards Montgomery. We soon fell in with numbers of General Stanbury's brigade, and those who marched from Baltimore under my command. But our exertions were again ineffectual, from the knowledge all possessed of the destruction of the public buildings in the city, and that our baggage wagons had passed into Virginia. In fine, I concluded that it would be impossible to collect any force short of this place, and so came on. General Winder soon after arrived here, and seemed satisfied with what I had done.

I ought to notice, that the first line, formed on the battle ground, was changed under the direction of Colonel Monroe. On this occasion he observed to me, "Although you see that I am active, you will please to bear in mind that this is not my plan," or words to this effect.

The fall of the capital must be ascribed chiefly to the insufficiency in point of numbers, and total inadequacy in point of discipline of the troops assembled for its defence. No general, however great his talents or exertions, with such means, against such a force, could have saved it. The imposing front of the enemy was never disconcerted by the fire of the artillery or riflemen; and the brigade of General Stanbury was seen, to fly as soon as the action became serious. No second line or reserve appeared to advance or support us, and we were 'outflanked and defeated in as short a time as such an operation could well be performed.

I have the honor to be, &c.
JOSEPH STERETT.
Lieutenant Colonel 5th Regiment M. Md.
The Hon. RICHARD. M. JOHNSON, in Congress, Washington.

Colonel George Alnor's statement.
In answer to the several interrogatories made by Colonel R. M. Johnson chairman, of the committee of inquiry into the causes of the destruction of the public buildings ifa the city of Washington, as hereunto annexed, state- as follows, viz:

On Friday the 19th of August last, was informed (not officially) of the collecting of the enemy's forces in our waters, namely, the Potomac and Patuxent. Immediately issued orders for the regiment under my command to assemble at Wren's tavern on the Tuesday following, it being the nearest point of the bounty of Fairliax to the city; and, on Sunday the 21st, received orders, through Brigadier General Dougla, to repair with a detachment of ninety men, that had been previously placed in detail, to march at a moment's warning to the aid of General Hungerford, whose head quarters were either in the counties of "Westhoreland, King George, or Northumberland; and to make one other requisition of one hundred and forty men, exclusive of officers, and order them to the aid of General Winder, city of Washington. And on Monday evening the 22d, received a verbal message from the President, by Mr. John Graham, to hasten on the troops which had been ordered from my regiment, which will more fully appear by said Graham's letter to General Winder4 to which I beg leave to refer the committee; and, after informing Mr. Graham the purport of the orders I had received, we both concluded it would be propert for him to return to Washington, and have the orders, first alluded to, countermanded; so as to justify me in marching with my whole force to the city- which' consisted, as well as I can recollect, of six hundred infantry and about one hundred cavalry; and the said Graham returned to Wren's tavern on Tuesday evening, the 23d, with General Winder's orders, written on the same letter to which I have referred the committee. On the receipt of which, I took up my line of march immediately, and arrived at the capitol between sunset and dark, and immediately made my way to the President and reported my arrival, when he referred me to General Armstrong, to whom I repaired, and informed him

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as to the strength of the troops, as well as to the want of arms, ammunition, &c. which made- it fts late as early candle light, when I was informed by that gentleman the arms, &c. could not be had that night, and directed me to report myself next morning to Colonel Carber, who would furnish me with arms, &c.; which gentleman, from *early next morning, I diligently sauit for, until a late hour of the forenoon', without beinir able to find him, and, then went in search of General NN inder, whom I found near the Eastern Branch; -when Te gave. an order to the armorer for the munitions wanting, with orders to return to the capitol, there to await further orders.
On my arrival at the armory, found that department in the care of a very young man, who dealt out the stores cautiously, which went greatly to consume time: as, for instance, when flints were once counted by my officers, who showed every disposition to expedite the furnishing the men, the young man had to count them over again, before they could be obtained, and at which place I met with Colonel Carbery, who introduced himself to me, and apologized for not being found when I was in search of him, stating he had left town the evening before, and had gone to his seat in the country. After getting the men equipped; I ordered them to the capitol, and waited myself to sign the receipts for the munitions furnished, and, on my arrival, was informed by Major Hunter, who commanded in my absence, orders had been given to march to Bladensburg when we took up our march for that place, and met the retreating army on this side the turnpike gate, and was ordered by one of General Winder's aids to form the line of battle on a height near that place, and was soon after ordered by the General in person to throw back my regiment from that position into septions, and to wait until the retreating army had passed, and cover their retreat; and immediately after sent his aid to direct me to countermarch immediately, and come on to the capitol.

After returning there, halted the troops, to wait further orders, until General Winder directed me to march them on, without telling me where; of course I marched with the other troops until I came to the six buildings, where I took the left hand road, leading to the thurnery, and there occupied the nearest height to that place, and sent the adjutant to find where the General had made his rallying point, and was informed at Tenlytown, where I marched that evening, and found the troops moving off to encamp at some convenient place on the river road, where I followed on until I saw two barns, where I made to, and rested for the night. Next morning sought for General Winder; met him on the road leading from Tenlytown, to where my troops lay, when he ordered me to Montgomery Court House, and from thence to Baltimore. Given under my hand, city of Washington, 30th of October, 1814.

GEORGE MINOR,
Colonel Commandant 60th Regiment Virginia Militia.

Lieutenant Colonel John Tayloe's statement.

Franklin House, WASHINGTON, November 4, 1814.
SIR:
In obedience to your request, as chairman of the committee of investigation, &c. I have the honor to make to you the following statement: on my return from the Northern Neck-army, commanded by Major General Parker, of the Virginia militia, which I left on the 20th August, with despatches from that officer, in reply to a communication I had been charged with, concerning the Virginia draughts, I arrived' at Washington on Sunday night late, (thu 21st,)
and reported myself early the next morning to General Armstrong, who ordered me to meet him at the War Office at 12 o'clock, from whom I received the following order:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, August 22, 1814. 12 o'clock."
"GENERAL ORDER.
"General Douglas will assemble his brigade at Alexandria, and hold it there, subject to orders.
"J. ARMSTRONG."

I immediately proceeded with all speed, and executed the above order. Having received General Douglas's communication, I hastened to Washington and handed it to General Armstrong on Tuesday night, the 23, when he instantly sent me back to Virginia, charged with the following orders, and with verbal directions to forward on the Virginia draughts with all possible speed.

"WAR DEPARTMENT, August 23, 1814."
GENERAL ORDER.
"Lieutenant Colonel, Minor will repair to Washington with the regiment under his command, with the utmost despatch. He will report, on his arrival at Washington, to Colonel Carbery, of the 36th regiment of United States' infantry, and make a requisition for arms and ammunition.
"J. ARMSTRONG."
"WAR DEPARTMENT, August 23, 1814."
"GENERAL ORDER."
"All militia now in, and marching to, Alexandria, (besides that of Colonel-Minor) will march immediately to Washington.
"J. ARMSTRONG."
"These orders will be communicated by Colonel Tayloe.

For the purpose of executing these orders without loss of time, and after communicating, by a dragoon, with Col. Minor, I proceeded down the Northern Neck, to General Hungertord's brigade, then encamped at camp Selden, near Potomac creek. On the 27th August, I moved from the brigade at Occoquan, on its march to Washington, and came on with a despatch from the General to Colonel Monroe, which I delivered at two o'clock in the morning, at Washington.
General Armstrong manifested much zeal and earnest solicitation for the defence of Washington, and instructed me to use my best exertions in hastening the troops for the attainment of that desirable object.

I have thus made you acquainted with the orders I received from the late Secretary of War, previous to the capture of Washington by the enemy, and stated to you, as concisely and accurately as I can recollect, at this distant period, the manner in which these orders were executed.

I am, very respectfully, &c..

JOHN TAYLOE,
Lieutenant Colonel of Cavalry, M. D. C.

Lieutenant Colonel J. Lavall’s statement.

WASHINGTON City October 31, 1814.

Sir:
I have been honored with your letter of the 26th instant, in behalf of the committee appointed to inquire into the causes which gave success to the enemy in his late enterprise against this city, desiring to know the part taken by my command; my orders, positions, and duties; number of cavalry under my command, and the different corps of cavalry, &c.; in answer to which, I have the honor to inform you as follows:

It is necessary, first, I should beg leave to commence my narrative from Carlisle, the place which had been assigned me by the Secretary of War, to collect, equip; mount, and instruct, the dragoons, for whom that place was selected as a depot, and at which I received my orders for this city; this is the more necessary, as it is highly important to me to exhibit the true state in which I set out, and thus redress the erroneous opinion the public had formed of my command, both in point of strength and capacity as dragoons.

I took command early in March last, of the depot at Carlisle, and as fast as the recruits arrived, they were instructed in the sword exercise, marched through the drilling movements, and received all other instructions that could be given them, without horses, having none then. After a few months, one troop was completed, mounted, equipped, and trained, but it was ordered to Buffalo, under command of Captain Hopkins, who carried with him all the horses, except the lame and sick. Thus I had to begin again and wait for men arriving from the different rendezvous; and patiently wait also for horses, which came on slowly, until about the 25th of July, when I received
the following orders from the War Department, to which letter I must call your particular attention, it being an essential document to prove the state I was in, and the condition in which I left Oatliisle to meet the enemy, as it happened in ten days:

"ADJUTANT AND INSPECTOR GENERAL’S OFFICE, Washington, July 20, 1814.

SIR: 

"As soon as you have assembled the recruits for the light diagoons, arrange them into two troops, with the requisite number of officers, if within your command, and as soon as Lieutenant Darrah has furnished you with a sufficient number of horses to mount them, you will, without delay, move to Montgomery Court House, Maryland' taking the nearest and best road to that place, &c.

"The equipment, complete, cannot probably be furnished in time at Carlisle; you will, in that case, order them to Baltimore.

"On your arrival at Montgomery, you will report to Brigadier General Winder for orders.

"By order of the Secretary of War.
"JOHN R. BELL, 
Assistant Inspector General.
"Lieutenant Colonel LAVaLL, of the Light -Dragoons."

The above orders were executed with the utmost activity and punctuality. I despatched, immediately, an express to the officer mentioned, as purchaser of the horses, (Lieutenant Darrah) who was then at Pittsburg, upwards of two hundred miles from Carlisle; I enclosed the tenor of my orders, in return of which, as soon as practicable, he sent what horses he had, being about twenty, and came himself some time after, with about the same number: and then, with all reasonable despatch, purchased what was wanted to mount what number of men, fit for duty, I then had bring about one hundred and forty, arranged as directed, into two troops, the one commanded by Captain Burd and two lieutenants, and the other by Captain Littlejohn and two lieutenants, The purchase of horses was completed on Saturday, the 13th of August, and I marched off with the squadron the Monday following, 15th. I arrived at Montgomery on Thursday, the 18th. On Fridhy, the 19th, I cam e to Washington for orders, and returned to Montgomery same day.) And on Saturday, the 20th', about ten o'clock in the morning, I marched my troops through the city. I crossed, according to orders, the Eastern Branch bridge, and encamped nearly opposite the navy yard.
There we remained until Sunday afternoon, 21st,' when we were ordered to the Woodyard, between which place and Nottingham, and Marlborough, and the Old Fields, we were kept on constant duty, in reconnoitering, in patrol jug, in escorting, furnishing videttes, to and fro, 'until Tuesday, the 23d,-when -we recrossed the Eastern Branch bridge, about eleven o'plock at night, both men and horses hungry, and harassed with fatigue. We remained in that situation until about ten o'clock in the morning, Wednesday, 24th. A stack of hay had just been discovered and directed' to be purhased, when I received the following order, to wit:

"HEAD QUARTERS, WASHINGTON, August 24.
"Lieutenant Colonel Lavall will proceed immediately with his detachment to Bladensburg, and report to Brigadier General Stausbury.
"WM. WINDER, Brigadier General," &c.

The men, extremely anxious to feed their horses, were in the act of fetching the hay on their heads, and it was with much difficulty they could be persuaded to drop it before they reached their horses. The trumpet sounded, the men ran to their horses, and in a few minutes I was under way for Bladensburg. A number of the horses were unable to proceed; several of the men sick; and from other casualties, my command was reduced to about one hundred and twenty-five. This, sir, was the total amount of the dragoons under my command. The report which has circulated, of my having on that day, from four to five hundred dragoons, is erroneous. There were several other troops of volunteer cavalry, but, sir, I had no command nor control over them. What might have been their orders I know not; they did not join me, nor did I receive, at any time, any orders to take command of them, or any of them.

I have, in compliance with your request, sir, procured the names and probable strength of each troop, which, as near as I have been able to obtain, is herewith subjoined.

I proceeded to Bladensburg; I had never been there before; the enemy was in sight; my orders were to report to General Stansbury; I stopped my troops in the ravine near the river; I looked for the General; I could not come up with him -he was visiting his troops. Our horses being much in want of water, we marched to the river. The enemy was then advancing rapidly towards it; I retired without having met the General, whom I had never seen. On my retiring from the river, I was met by Colonel Monroe, (then Secretary of State-) I informed him I was in want of orders, and being totally unacquainted with the place, I was indebted to him for the place he pointed out, which I occupied immediately with the squadron. At the moment of my entering the ravine, General Stansbury passed by and approved of it. I was then satisfied tha, the General knew my position: the action began immediately, and the front of the ravine being too high for me to observe the movements of the enemy, I advanced in front with one of my
officers, Lieutenant Brakin, to judge better of the opportunity which might offer, Our being elevated, and in a conspicuous situation, the balls and rockets soon showered around us. I had no other chance to form any idea, having never been at the place before. We were too late to form any judicious arrangements, not knowing how the troops and batteries were disposed in Bladensburg, and we arrived too much before our own troops from Washington, to know the disposal of them in the rear.

The engagement was but short. I will not enter into the details of it, as you have, no doubt, 'sir, been furnished by a better authority, nor is it your desire. I will only state what leads to any reference to my share. All of a sudden our army seemed routed; a confused retreat appeared to be about in every corner of the battle ground, and the place we were occupying seemed to have been the one by which it was to be effected. They poured in torrents by us; my right wing being outside of the ravine, covered, unfortunately a gate which it appeared was much wanted. An artillery company drove through before we could clear it; several of my men were crushed down, horses and all, and myself narrowly escaped having my thigh broken by one of the wheels which nearly took me off my horse. All this created much confusion in the right wing of the squadron; they, however, soon got in order, and the stream of the running phalanx considerably abated.

In the midst of a confusion, the like of which I had never seen in a field of battle, one of my troops was carried of the field, either through some mistaken or improper orders, as it was unknown to me, who ought to have been first directed or consulted: the moment that so important a point of discipline is trampled upon, a commanding officer loses all responsibility as well as credit, and risks his honor for the name of having a command.

Captain Burd's troop, which then did not consist of more than fifty-five men, was all the command I was then left with, hardly half of a captain's command. Yet it has been wondered at why I did not cut to pieces four or five thousand of the British veteran troops with fifty-five men, and upon raw horses; the most of them had not yet been purchased two weeks; the consequences are so obvious, that I did not think myself justifiable to make so certain, so inevitable a sacrifice without a hope of doing any good! there is a distinction between madness and bravery.

Regular troops never act or retreat without orders- I had no other orders than those I have stated above, I therefore remained as long as I could.' I consulted with Captain Burd before we left the field, who had no more desire to leave
it than I had, but it was high time; when we saw all going, I could no longer doubt of the order being general; I could not account for its not being more generally communicated. The enemy was then advancing rapidly under a shower of fire, besides a column of about seven or eight hundred which had gained considerably on our right; we then, and only then, sit-marched off on a walk between the flanking column and our disordered army. We continued in that order, walking our horses as slow as horses could walk, when we were again met by Colonel Monroe, who walked his horse with us better than a mile, until he was satisfied that the enemy on our right required to be kept in observation. He left us and advised to proceed in the order we then were, and we did so.

The pleasing hope to meet all our forces collected at Washington, and that there we would be better able to receive the enemy, from various motives and resources which we could not have had at Bladensburg, filled my mind with anxiety, and helped to comfort me in our retreat; for it was not in the power of imagination to have indulged itself with a moment of doubt, whether we should fight or not at Washington, and defend the capitol to the last man. I have not met a man who was not of the same opinion with me on that score; by what fatality we were made to pass through the city and leave it unprotected I know not, nor is it within the reach of my comprehension,

Having arrived at the capitol, I formed my troop. It had been rumored or ordered (I do not remember which) that we were all to form near it; but, after remaining there half an hour, I saw no troops in the neighborhood. I was then informed that the President's house was the place before which the army was to be formed. I then marched through the avenue, and soon arrived before the President's house, but saw no army nor symptoms of any, which would indicate a probability of resistance. After remaining in that situation for about three quarters of an hour, I could not, nor would not, believe that the city was to be given up without a fight. When I received orders to follow the army, which it appeared had passed through Georgetown two hours before us, I then, sir, with a heart full of sorrow, grief, and indignation, ordered my troop to follow the army, and met it about three or four miles above Georgetown. What follows that period, 'I presume, sir' is of little importance to you and the Committee of Inquiry; I therefore, will close by saying that, from that day to this, I have not ceased to lament the event, without being able to penetrate into the cause.

I have now given you, sir, all the information in my power, relative to the several points, the subject of your request in the letter you have honored me with in behalf of the committee, of whom

I have the honor to be, 'sir,
Lieutenant Gloie'" J. LAVA. LL

    Lieutenant Colonel Commandant-Squadron U.S. L. D.
The Honorable R. M. JOHNSON.

Strength and names of the several Mounted Volunteer Corps on the ground at Bladensburg.

Lieutenant Colonel Tilghman, about 70
Major Ridgely, 110
Captain Graham, 35
Lieutenant Williams, 20
Captain Ierber, 255
Total, 260

XXXX

Colond William D. Beall's statement.

GEo1iGTowN, Novemnber 2:, 1814..

I have the honor to reply to your request, directed by the lionorable committee "appointed to inquire into the causes of the success of the enemy in his recent enterprises against this city," . &c. that, on my march to Bladensburg, on tie 24th August, I received General Winder's order, in reply to a letter I had written him the day before, to join General Stansbury at Bladensburg; that, on-my arrival at the mill, I was met by gentleman (General Winder's aid I supposed) who informed me my -round was VVitch's Hill; he conducted me to the -round, where I formed and received the enemy, after he had done with the army below the hill. On our retreat, at the Capitol Hill, I received an order to march through Georgetown to the heights above it; but we reached Tenlytvri, and, from thence, about twelve o'clock at night, were ordered to move on the river road, no point designated- the next day, we arrived at Montgomery Court House; the next day we encamped at Gaither's heights, thence to blicott's- Mills thence to the two Tuile stone towards Baltimore.

I have been informed by a gentleman, who acted as one of General Winder's aids, that he brought me an order to retreat; but I do not remember it.

This is as short a statement as I can nmake, to comprehend the design of the committee.

I have the honor _to be, &c.
WM. D. BEALL.

N. B. Having marched about sixteen miles that morning, before the battle, my men were fatigued and exhausted. Although it is not my impression that my command gave way as early as is represented by some, I must acknowledge that the contest with the enemy was not of a character orresponding with my wishes in defending the capi-
tal of the United States, and, therefore, made every exertion to rally the men, and partially succeeded; but they ultimately gave way, in despite of exertions, like the other troops. My command consisted of about seven or eight hundred men.'

Major William Pinkney's statement.

n BAr, wraoea, November' 16, 1814.

SIR:

I have the honor to make the following communication, in compliance with the request contained in your letter of the 17th of last month.

The detachment, of which my battalion of riflemen (or rather three companies of it) formed a part, marched from Baltimore on the 21st of August, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Sterett of the 5th regiment, and arrived at Bladensburg about sunset on the 23d, where it encamped below, and at a short distance from, the brigade of General Stansbury, who had fixed his encampment on Lowndes' Hill, by the side of the road from Marlborough, and between that road and the river road. The detachment was wholly from the third brigade of Maryland Militia, and consisted of the 5th regiment, between four and five hundred strong; of two companies of artillery, (with six six pounders) commanded by Captains Myer and Magruder, amounting to about one hundred and fifty men; and of three companies of my battalion, commanded by Captains Dyer, Aisquith, and Baden, amounting to about one hundred and eighty rank and file.

I4 the night of the 23d, (about eleven o'clock) we were called to, arms by several discharges of single muskets, in quick succession, by General Stansbury's pickets. Our detachment, of which only I had much opportunity to observe the conduct, turned out with alacrity, and exhibited, during the alarm, great spirit and firmness. The dispositions made by General Stansbury to meet the enemy, who was supposed to be advancing by the upper road, appeared to be prompt and judicious. It was a false alarm, however, and, after a few hours, we were permitted to return to quarters.

We had scarcely reached our encampment, before Colonel Storett and myself were summoned to the tent of General Stansbury, where we found his principal officers assembled. The General stated to us that he had just received intelligence from General Winder that he had retired upon 'Washington, across the Eastern Branch; and he asked our advice as to the course which, in consequence of that movement, it was proper for him to pursue apprising us, at the same time, (as I think) that General Winder expected him to fight the enemy, if he should take the route of Bladensburg. It appeared to be certain that the enemy would take that route, without loss of
time, and that General Stansbury's force, fatigued and exhausted as a portion of it was, consisting altogether of militia unused to service, amounting to little more than two thousand men, and deprived of all prospect of support from any quarter, was in a condition to withstand nearly thrice its number of regular troops, in a position which presented no peculiar facilities for defence, especially when it was considered that General 'Vinder's force, more numerous than General Stansbury's, consisting partly of regulars, high in character and discipline, furnished with more and heavier artillery, and with a powerful body of horse, had just been compelled to place the Eastern Branch between it and those troops.' For these, and other reasons, the officers present were of opinion that General Stansbury ought immediately to break-up his encampment, and, by drawing nearer to Washington, consult the safety of the force under his command, and put it in a situation to cooperate with that of General Winder, add to receive and execute the orders of that General, whatever they might be, for the protection of the capital. General Stansbury was himself of that opinion; and, in conformity with it we retired across the bridge, in good order, to a high ground, on the edge of the main road, about a mile and a half from Bladensburg, from whence the enemy could be reconnoitered, if he should advance, as had been anticipated. We halted at this place about sunrise on the 24th, after General Stansbury had (as he informed me) despatched his aid-de-camp (Major Woodyear) to General Winder, to give him notice of his march, and take his orders upon it. While he remained here, General Stansbury mentioned, or showed to me, (I forget which) a letter just received by him from General Winder, written, I believe, before General Winder knew of his late march, from which it appeared that General Winder still calculated on his engaging the enemy, if he should attempt to approach by Bladensburg. I was still of opinion, and expressed myself to General Stansbury, that, although it seemed to be his duty to prepare his troops to dispute, alone, and to the last extremity, the enemy's passage to the city, and it was possible the military views of his superiors might impose such an undertaking upon him, he ought not, unless his orders were peremptory, (and they were not yet understood to be so) to seek the enemy at a distance from General 'Winder, without whose immediate aid, he could not fail to sacrifice his men, already broken down by toil and fasting, and want of sleep; and thus to produce the destruction of the capital; that Major Woodyear would soon return with precise orders from General Winder; founded upon & knowledge of his situation and the designs of the enemy; and that, even if Major 'Woodyear's return should be unexpectedly retarded, and a removal from his actual position should become necessary, it would be far more prudent that General Stansbury should proceed to occupy one of the strophih grounds yet nearer to Washington, with which the road abounded, where he might not only encounter the enemy to advantage, but readily be succored by the Commander in Chief', than that he should go back to his old encampment, or its neighborhood, while General Winder's co-operation continued to be precarious. I believe that Colonel Sterett and Colonel Ragan gave to General Stansbury the same opinion, in substance, and that General Stansbury concurred in it. (e did pot, however, move nearer to Washington, for Major Woodyear shortly afterwards (about 9 o'clock)
brought him verbal orders from General Winder to retrace his steps, and contest with the enemy the pass at Bladensburg, together with an-assurance that he would join him without delay: These orders were immediately obeyed, and, between ten and eleven o'clock, A. M. the troops were halted in a field, where there is an orchard, on the left of the road as you approach Bladensburg from Washington, not far from the bridge. The passage at Bladensburg may be effected, as I comprehend, by two routes: by the bridge, and deep ford just above it, and by the 'more shallow ford in the old Baltimore road, a little Above the the for at made by the northeast and northwest branches;

which ford is reached from Bladensburg, by first crossing the idir the east branch in the present Baltimore road, and then turning to the left; and we halted at the point from which a passage by either, or bot of those routes, might best be opposed.'.

While the enemy was expected, a cloud of dust announced, The advance of a body of troops upon the upper road, and they soon showed themselves upon Lowndes' Hill, which they descended, rapidly. As General Winder had not yet appeared, preparations were made to receive them by General Stansbury, assisted by Colonel Ionrio. At the bottom of the field, between four and five hundred yards from the bridge, as I conjecture, was a sort of a battery, en barbette, which had been hastily constructed for heavy artillery, under the direction of Colonel Wadsworth. - The Baltimore companies had- been employed, from their first arrival in the field, (with such 'tools as they could get) in cutting embrasures through the parapet, which was much too lofty for their six pounders, and which there was not time to reduce through its whole extent, and in -masking them with brush wood. In the battery they were now stationed. I was ordered to place my companies in ambush on its right, with a view to afford protection to it, and to annoy the enemy in his approach, ii le 'should succeed in crossing the bridge, or in fording the stream in. its neighborhood. I conducted my battalion accordingly to the place prescribed, and there distributed them behind a fence, and among the bushes, upon the slope of the bank which terminates the field, and itso beyond the slope, as near to the bridge and ford as was practicable, taking my own station some yards in the rear, (with the Adjutant and Sergeant Major) on the top of the bank in the field, where there was nothing to interrupt my view of an advancing enemy. The 5th regiment was posted' about fifty yards in our rear (outstretching us of course) and gave confidence to my companies and the artillery. Two companies of General Stansby's brigade (acting as riflemen, but principally-armed with muskets) were posted near the barn, behind the battery, at a small distance from us. The residue of that brigade was, (I think) stationed to the left of the battery, near to and beyond the road which flanks it, called the Mill Road, to watch, as I suppose, that road and the upper ford, and to march, or to supply detachments, as occasion might require, to sustain the, other parts of our force. A few horse paraded on the main road, sometimes as far as the bridge, Such appeared to be 'our means of resistance, and such the distribution of them. It was soon ascertained, hoe-ver, that the troops, whom we had believed to be foes, were a regiment of Maryland militia, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Beall and my battalion was consequently
withdrawn into the field, where it rested upon its arms. The newly arrived regiment passed on to the rear, and took post out of my view, and (as I have since heard) on the opposite side of the main road, where we had halted in the morning, as before stated. It is but justice to the mer under my command to observe, in this place, that they went to their posts with cheerfulness, although they were about to contend, as they supposed, with veteran troops, greatly superior in numbers. 

Soon after the arrival of Colonel Beall's regiment, the enemy was discovered in full march for Bladenisburg, along the river road, and We once more prepared for battle. I had now from General Winder (who had recently come upon the field) the same orders I had before received for the employment of my 'men; with this difference only, that General Winder's orders imported, that it might be proper to place a portion of them upon the left of the battery, which it was undoubtedly of great importance to protect, and which the new order of battle, hereinafter explained, seemed to leave without protection, unless a detachment from my battalion should be so applied. In consequence, I detached Captain Aisquith, with the whole of his company, with directions to take, and maintain, as long as possible, the most advantageous position there, for the objects indicated by General Winder's orders. I remanded the other two companies to their former stations among the bushes; and, after visiting the battery, and remaining there until the first and second shots were fired from it, I resumed my own station (with the battalion officers before mentioned) upon the top of the bank, in the field. A company of militia, under the command of Captain Doughty, (having muskets only, but acting as riflemen) placed itself, at my instance, on our right, near the main road under cover of some bushes and a fence. The fifth regiment, which had been moved from its first position, (where it might have contributed to repulse the enemy in his attempts to leave the vicinity of the bridge) had now, to the great discouragement of my companies and of the artillery, been made to retire to a hill several hundred yards in our rear, but visible, nevertheless, to the enemy, where it could do little more than display its gallantry. The two companies of General Stansbury's brigade, acting as riflemen, had changed their station, so that I no longer perceived them; but I have heard that they still continued at no great distance from their old ground, although concealed from me by the barn or by trees; my impression, however, is, that they did not, and could not, come into action there. The residue of General Stansbury's brigade had been moved from the left, and made to take ground (invisible to us by reason of the intervening orchard) on the right of the fifth regiment with its own right resting upon the main road, and disclosed to the enemy. A small body of troops (but under whose command I am uninformed) were drawn up in advance of the left flank of the fifth regiment, and nearly at right angles with it, but, on account of the barn, I did not see it until the two companies of my battalion, which were stationed on the right of the battery, retreated, as will hereafter be mentioned. Of Colonel Beall's very distant station I have
already spoken from hearsay, but, at the time of the action, I knew only that it must be considerably in the tear. Of some artillery in the rear of our right, I had no knowledge, until, during the engagement, I heard its fire, apparently well maintained.

I did not know that Brigadier General Smith's brigade was in or near the field, until the action had ceased; nor was I aware that the artillery of Commodore Barney, Major Peter, Captain Barch, and others, (which, if it had been brought up in time to act upon the bridge, and tie road at each of its ends, could not well have failed to ensure a triumph over the enemy, especially if supported by a part of the infantry, of which no use was made, and if sufficient care had also been taken to observe the upper ford, to which, perhaps, the enemy might have had recourse, if beaten at the bridge) was at any time near to us. In a word, I was ignorant of any reinforcements which either preceded accompanied, or followed General Winder, except only, that I supposed that Captain Doughty's company, and the few troops in advance of the left flank of the fifth regiment, (just before mentioned) and a large body of horse, which was kept idle, had come from Washington.

The enemy having reached Bladensburg, descended the hill about twelve o'clock, in a very fine style, and soon showed his intention to force his way by the bridge. Assisted by some discharges of rockets, (which were afterwards industriously continued) he made an effort to throw across the bridge a strong body of infantry, but he was driven back at the very commencement of it, with evident loss, by the artillery in the battery, which principally acted upon the street or road near the bridge, and he literally disappeared behind the houses. The effort was not immediately repeated; but the artillery continued its fire with a view, as it seemed, to interrupt the discharge of rockets, as in some degree it did, and otherwise to check the enemy's operations.

After a long pause, during which I conjectured (erroneously, as I have since been told) that the enemy, less confident than before of the passage of the bridge, detached a corps of some strength to make its way by the Lord, in the old Baltimore road, a second attempt was made to cross the bridge, with increased numbers and greater celerity of movement. This, too, was encountered by the artillery in the battery, but not with its former success although it was served with great spirit, and commanded by officers of acknowledged skill and courage. In consequence, a large column of the enemy— which was every moment reinforced, either by the way of the bridge or by the ford immediately above it, was able to form on the Washington ide, and to menace the battery, and the inadequate force by which it was to be supported. While the enemy was yet at a distance, the company on our right (commanded by Captain Doughty) discharged their pieces and fled, although he appeared to do all in his power to restrain them, as I myself did. My two companies were now (without other known aid than the other company on the left) to protect the artillery, and to receive the whole force of the enemy, which was rapidly accumulating. Following the example which had been set them by the company on their right, they too began to fire somewhat too soon; but in its progress, their fire was manifestly destructive, and for a short time seemed to produce disorder and hesitation in the enemy's ranks. The enemy, however, soon pressed forward again, and was close at hand when the artillery,
discontinued its fire. Its danger had become imminent, and it was apparent that it could do nothing more in its actual 'station to retard the enemy's progress. His advance, which threatened the right of my position, and had almost reached it, was probably out of the line of any fire which the half formed embrasures of the battery would admit; and I should presume that it would have been difficult, if not impracticable, to depress the guns in those embrasures (the ground of the battery being considerably elevated) so as to touch the enemy after his near approach.

My companies were now in that situation that their right was on the point of being turned; and, as the battery was evidently about to be evacuated, and Captain Aisquith's company was too weak to keep the enemy in check on the left, it followed that they were in that quarter exposed to the same peril. Our small force, moreover, (somewhat more than one hundred men) could not hope to make an effectual stand against the enemy, even if he should attack it only in front, where there was very little in the shape of natural obstructions to break his column or impede his march. The line of our retreat, too, to the fifth regiment (the nearest visible rallying point) was of necessity across the open field in our rear, and only one of my companies had bayonets. Under these circumstances of urgent peril, both the companies began at the same instant to move towards the artillery, now in the act of limbering its guns. The retreat of my men and of the artillery appeared, to be simultaneous. The whole fell back upon the fifth regiment, (on the left flank of which part of my two companies were halted, and formed by Captain Dyer, by the adjutant, and sergeant-major) and the enemy succeeded instantly to their places. I followed in the rear of this retreat, narrowly escaping capture, and, found my men in the situation above described, ready once more to act against the enemy. It is here my duty to say, that, although the predicament in which my two companies were placed, when they moved from the right of the battery, was almost as desperate as it could be, I had in no orders to retire, and did not at that moment intend to do so. I cannot, and certainly do not, blame them for anticipating such orders, when they saw their desolate condition, and discovered that the artillery, with which they had been connected as a supporting force, could not continue its fire, or hope to maintain its ground. My justification for withholding my orders to retreat, is, that I had none myself, and further, that having found that the enemy had neither artillery nor cavalry, I thought we might venture upon another fire, which could not be otherwise than deadly, now that the enemy was at a small distance from our muzzles. I have this other justification, (which I hope I shall be pardoned for mentioning) that as I was myself on foot, and had no horse near me, I incurred my full share of the hazard of too long a delay. It is not improbable, however, that I was wrong, and that I owed it to these brave men to withdraw them, even at an earlier period, from a post where, beyond all question, if they had remained much longer, they must have been taken prisoners or cut to pieces; at any rate, I take pride in bearing my testimony to their bravery and skill, of which I had many proofs during the severe trial to which they were exposed on that most disastrous occasion, amidst such privations, discouragements, and hardships, as might have subdued the spirit, and beaten down the strength of veteran soldiers.

The fifth regiment had now to receive the enemy; and, with slight exceptions, it kept its ground with exem-
plary steadiness, and maintained a regular and spirited fire, until after it was ordered by Generat Winder to retreat, and after the necessity of retreat was perfectly obvious. My men adhered to its left, and did their duty there, and finally retired with it, the whole in considerable disorder. The troops of which I have spoken, (in advance of its left) appeared to behave well, but were sool withdrawn or driven from their station, which the enemy could, indeed, reach with his shot without being seen by them.'

Nothing could be more critical than the situation of the fifth regiment when it began to retire. Its right had been thrown open to the enemy by the precipitate retreat of the greater part if not the whole, of General Stansbury's brigade. Its left had nothing to protect it; and, even if the enemy had sent no force by the ford, on the old Baltimore road to gain its rear, that which he had pushed on by the mill road, and the ground adjacent, was sufficiently formidable. Its front was singularly liable to be galled with impunity from the orchard, from the barn, and from other covers, within striking distance of which it had been posted, while itself was not covered by any thing, and could hardly act upon any thing. I speak with the more confidence of the good behavior of this regiment, because I was constantly with my men while they acted with it, except only for two or three minutes, when I was employed in going to, and returning from, the mill road, immediately on their left, from whence I expected an attack. I was, during all this time, too, on horseback, (having obtained a horse after we were driven from our first position) and had thus the best opportunities of observation. During a part of this time I saw General Winder zealously engaged in the discharge of his very anxious and arduous duties, and manifesting the courage which becomes a gentleman and a soldier.

Of the conduct of Captain Aisquith's company I know no more than he and others have told me. I feel assured that it did well, and that the enemy felt the effect of the activity and resolution which distinguished it. My battalion sustained some small loss in wounded; and Captain Baden was made prisoner.

A wound inflicted in the field, (from which the 5th regiment and my men retreated, as above stated) by a musket ball, which struck my right arm in front, a little above the elbow, and passing through it broke the bone, disabled me from further service, and made it necessary that I should not long delay to obtain surgical assistance. In this state Ileft the field, with (or a little after) the last of our friends, about five or six in number, among whom, I believe, was Mr. Meredith of the 5th. The enemy was then very close, and his fire was incessant but inaccurate. I have no further knowledge of the transaction to which your letter relates.

I have the honor to be, &c.

WM., PINKNEY.

(The Hon. R. M. JOHNSON, &c.

Captain Burch's statement.

SIR: CITY OF WASHINGTON, October 12, 1814. -
In answer to your request, I make the following statement-

On the 19th of August last, early in the day, I was ordered to call out my company for actual service, being, at the time, informed that the whole body of the militia were ordered into actual service, as it was ascertained that the enemy had landed near Benedict, and were about to proceed to this city. In the evening of that day, the first brigade was paraded, and about one o'clock, P. M. on the 20th, we marched from the city in the direction of Benedict, and encamped, for that night, about three miles beyond the Eastern Branch, when General Winder took the command. On Sunday, the 21st, we marched on, and encamped that night at the Woodyard, about fourteen miles from this place. On Monday morning it was understood in camp, that the enemy had, by rapid marches, got within a short distance of our encampment; upon which the commanding General detached Major Peter, with his company of artillery, Captain Davidson's infantry, and Captain Stull's riflemen, as an advanced party, to reconnoitre and hold the enemy in check. They advanced some distance, and were soon after followed by the brigade, for two miles, when it was halted, and partially formed in order of battle. Major Peter met the enemy, who immediately filed off on the left, and took the road to Upper Marlborough. Major Peter having returned with his command, the whole of the troops were immediately marched back to the Old Fields, where we encamped that night. On Tuesday morning, the same party, under the command of Major Peter, was again sent out to reconnoitre and skirmish with the enemy, and between four and five o'clock of that evening, we learned that they were actually engaged with the British forces. The line of battle was then formed without delay, and we remained so until Major Peter came up and took his position in the line. In a few minutes orders were carried through the line, for an immediate retreat to Washington, as it was said the enemy was too strong for us. I received orders to remain on the ground upon which we were formed, until all the troops had marched, and then, every fifteen minutes, to send off two of my pieces, with the proper number of men, until I had despatched all six of them. That, if the enemy appeared in tire mean time, (and his appearance was every moment expected) to open my battery upon him, and continue to fire as long as I could do so in safety, and then retreat as fast as possible, and join the main body. Just as I had despatched the second division of my guns, the aid-de-camp of Brigadier Smith, of the District militia, gave me orders to move off with the whole as fast as possible. As the main body had, by this time, got a considerable distance ahead, I was unable to get up with the rear until they arrived at the Eastern Branch bridge, when my men were so greatly fatigued, that they could scarcely stand by their guns. After we had crossed the bridge into the city, and pitched our tents, between twelve and one o'clock at night, General Winder came to my tent and called me out: he observed, that he knew my men were worn down with fatigue and from the loss of rest; but that, in all probability, one of the last good acts which it might ever be in my power to do for my country, would be that night. He wished me to take thirty of my men, with three of my guns, and defend the passage of the lower Eastern Branch bridge, as he had reason to believe that the enemy would attempt the passage of it that night. General Winder further observed, that he had some time before left directions at the navy yard, for a boat to be sent to the bride,
wth combustibles to blow it up, in case it became necessary, but that his orders had not ben atended to, and tat he should not o to rest until he had sent me th boat. I took my thirty men and three guns, and proceeded to the foot of tle bridge, with orders to open upon the enemy, if he aVpeared, as soon as our rear gard had come over, od that if theenemy succeeded in getting upon the bridge, to set tire to the boat and blow it up, and then to resume my position and recommence may fire. A little before day break the boat arrived, and was placed under the arch next the draw. I kept this position without rest or refreshment,util ten o'clock on Wednesday morning, the 24th, when I was relieved by Commodore Barney. I' was then ordered to leave one of my pieces and fifteen men at the bridge, under the direction of Colonel Wadsworth, and proceed on with the balance immediately to Bladensburg. I didI so, and when I had arrived near the latter place, I was again ordered to leave two of my guns and a party of men if the mainroad andt push on wh the remaining three and the residue of my men, and to report myself at Bladensburg to General Winder. I proceee until I arrived within a short distance of Bladensburg, when I found much difficulty in finding the Geferal I rode up'and down the whole line in search of him, aid when [returned, I found that my guns ha been moved offto the left I followed on and overtook them just. as they were formed in battery, near the extreme left of the line. [. there .discovered the General and applied to him for directions; he re- plied, ""Captain, there is the enemy, (pointing to the British who were thien in plain view) take charge of your piees." I dismounted, and to.ok charge of my pieces, and in a few momendts we opened our fire, which proved to be very galling to the enemy, and after firing about fifteen rounds, the 5th reiment of Baltimore advanced and hommenced their fire. By the advance of this rment one of my guns was masked, which rendered it useless; the other two continued the fire ,ith much effect. 'the inmnt, whO were posted on my right as a protection to my pieces, havin gien way, General Winder, in person, ordered me .to limber" and retreat. I did not do so imme- diately, but tired two or three rounds, when, the Genera repeated his order in a peremptory manner. We retreated a few yards when he observed to me that he thought I might venture to unlimber one of my pieces and give them anodher fire. I was in the act of doing so, but as theenemy advanced so rapidly, he countermanded it, and again ordered me on. I saw no more of the General thtda:te reason was, that after retreating a mile or two, I was so exhausted from fatigue, fasting, and heat, that I was unable to keep up with my guns, and fell behind them some yards. I fainted by the side of a fence unobserved by my men. After missing ne.,they supposed I had yeen taken prisoner. When I came to my recollection, I found myself ill of a fever, notwithstanding which, I procured a horse, and found and joined my company on the route from Montgomery Court House to Baltimore, and marched, with them to Snell's bride, where e were halted and afterwards countermarched to this place.

BENJ. BUIRCH,

p, -t, ,aptain of the Washington.rtility.

Ho'n. R. M. Jouresoa.
Captain Caldwell statement.

The following is believed to be nearly a correct estimate of the cavalry on the ground, at the battle of Bladensburg, 24th August last:

- Colonel Lavall's United States' troops, about - - - 120
- A squadron of Colonel Tilghman's regiment M. M. about - - - 75
- Do. command of Major Ridgely, do. about - - - 100 "
- Captain Herbert's troop, , do. about - - - 40
- Captain Graham's troop, Virginia, about - 40

Total, - 375

The Alexandria troop, under Captain Thornton, and the Georgetown troop, under Lieutenant Williams, (both small) accompanied Colonel Monroe on the first day of the alarm to reconnoitre the enemy, and had so many detached on different duties, as left but a few scattering ones on the field.

Part of the Washington troop were attached to General Winder, and had been generally detached in carrying expresses or conveying orders. The remainder were on vidette duty. On the morning of the 24th, 'they were sent to patrol the road between the Eastern Branch bridge and the enemy, and did not leave the rear of the enemy in time to cross the bridge and join the army till the army was on the retreat, except three or four, who were employed in conveying orders, &c. or wherever they could be useful.

E. B. CALDWELL.

Statement of General-Hungerford.

On the 23d of July was called on by the Executive of Virginia, to take command of the militia in the Northern Neck. After which General Madison was called into service and Major General Parker, to take the command of the two brigades under Hungerford and Madison. On the eighteenth of August, General Winder wrote to General Hungerford to march with expedition to the city, with the forces under his command. This letter was received on the 21st, at camp Nominy Hall, in the Northern Neck, about one hundred and twenty-five miles from Washington. His force consisted of three regiments, under Colonels Boyd, Branlham,'and Parker. About fourteen hundred men, effectives, marched on towards the city; and Colonels Downey and Chawning, who were in the counties of Northumberland and Lancaster, were directed to follow with their regiments.

A letter was received from Colonel John, Tayloe on the 24th, dated the 13d, stating that the Secretary of War
required despatch, and directed the troops to march on by regiments, or even companies, if necessary. On Sunday, the 28th was at Neabsco, about twenty-four miles from Alexandria; was waited upon by a committee from Alexandria about two o'clock, who delivered a communication from the corporation of Alexandria, stating that the town had no artillery or military force to protect it, and they intended to surrender at discretion to the enemy; and that the town being under the control of the civil authority, it would be injurious to the town for any military forces to march to Alexandria. General Hungerford informed the committee that he should move on, and be governed by circumstances. He received a line on the same day from Colonel Monroe, directing him to march with all possible despatch to Alexandria, and if the enemy had passed Alexandria, to march on to the city.

On the morning of the 29th, about ten miles from Alexandria, another deputation waited on General Hungerford with a printed order of the corporation, amounting to a request that he should not proceed on to Alexandria, and interrupt the arrangement entered into with the enemy. To this communication General Hungerford replied, that he was acting under the orders of the Government, and should execute those orders, and accordingly proceeded on his march. When within three miles of Alexandria, he was met by Walter Jones, Esquire, who informed him that the President and Colonel Monroe desired him to station his forces in the rear of Alexandria; detach five hundred men to the height just below Mason's Island, and send one hundred and fifty or two hundred to Aquia to co-operate against the enemy. A written order was received from Colonel Monroe to the same effect that evening. General Hungerford arrived with the three first mentioned remits in the rear of Alexandria, on the 29th, about five o'clock in the evening, where he remained till the first day of September. He was then ordered to the White House, with a part of his Forces, to co-operate with the naval forces under Commodore Porter.

No. 9.

REPORT FROM THE NAVY DEPARTMENT, INCLUDING THE OFFICIAL REPORT OF COMMODORE BARNEY.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, October 3, 1814.

Sir:

In compliance with your letter of the 26th instant 's chairman of the committee appointed by the Honorable House of Representatives, "to inquire into the causes of the success of the enemy in his enterprises against this metropolis, and the neighboring town of Alexandria; and into the manner in which the public buildings and property were destroyed, and the amount thereof; and with your request "for such information on the subject, as may be in my power, and more particularly in relation to the destruction of the navy yard, and the amount of public property destroyed p I have the honor to present the following report of the measures adopted by this department, and of the facts within my knowledge, in relation to the objects of the inquiry:
in ooeiance to the general instructions and early solicitude of the President in anticipation of the probable de-
sgrs of the enemy to harass the country in this vicinity, and to attempt the invasion of this metropolis as dece..
in the month of May last, three twelve pounders to be mounted on fieldcarrages, by themechanmcs ofthenavvy ard,
and completely equipped and furnished for field service. To these the marines at head quarters were trained.
under the command of Captain Miller, and prepared to act either as artillerists or infantry, as the service might re-
quire. A short time previous to the reinforcement of the enemy in the Patuxent, I caused two long eighteen pound-
ers to be mounted on field carriages, and prepared in like manner for field service, ready to be attached to the com-
mand of Commodore Barney, should the enemy at any time compel him to abandon the flotilla under his command
on the Patuxent, and the emergency call for the aid of his force in defence of the capital or of Baltimore.

For this eventual service that officer was instructed to prepare- and by his zeal and activity his men acquired
the expert use of their muskets, and a capacity, as well as an ardent disposition, to be useful to their country on
either element.

On the 26th of July, in consequence of the menacing movements of the enemy near the Kettle Bottoms, in the
Potomac, which it was said they were sounding and buying off the letter A was written; but, on account of
informa-
tion received on the same day, the letter B, countermanding the former, was written.

The enemy in the Patuxent was occupied in depredating upon its shores, until large reinforcements arrived at
the mouth of that river on the 18th of August, the account of which was communicated on the 19th to the Depart-
ment, by Commodore Barney, in the letter C, with a list of the naval force of the enemy annexed.

On the morning of the 19th, information was received at the Department from Captain Gordon, commanding the
United States' naval force at Norfolk, that, on the morning of the 16th, came in from sea, and proceeded up the bay,
twenty-two sail of enemy's vessels, viz: two seventy-fours, one sixty-four, one razee, seven frigates, seven trans-
ports, and two or three brigs or schooners; which, it appears by the letter C, joined the force at the mouth of the
Patuxent on the 18th; the whole of which ascended the Patuxent near to Benedict, on the 18th and 19th, and
commenced debarking the troops. The letter marked D was immediately written to Commodore Barney; and the let-
ter E to Commodore Rodgers; and the letter F to Captain Porter, urging the two latter to repair with their forces
towards this city with the utmost expedition.

Commodore Rodgers had previously made the most judicious arrangements to transport, with celerity, the mar-
ines and the principal part of the seamen under his command on the Delaware station to the head waters of the
Chesapeake, or to Baltimore, upon any sudden emergency; and had organized and disciplined his men with a view
to such service. It appears, however, by his letters G and H, that, with every possible exertion, he did not reach
Baltimore until the 25th, consequently too late to participate in the defence of the metropolis, against a force, the
greater part of which came in from sea on the 16th, was first known to the Department to have arrived on the 19th,
marched from Benedict on the 20th, and entered the capital on the 24th.

Having sent to General Winder on the 19th a copy of letter C, on the 20th I called on him at his quarters, at
M'Keowin's, to show him the letter I had just received from Commodore Barney, and my order to that officer to join
and co-operate with the force under his command (see letter K) also, to point out those volunteer corps in his army
that comprised the mechanics of the navy yard, who, being excellent axemen, would act with great effect as
pioneers.

As it was understood that a strong squadron of the enemy's ships, in co-operation with his land force, had

principal obstacle in the Potomac, and was only retarded in its ascent by contrary winds, against which it was warping with great exertion, I expressed to him my solicitude for the defence of Fort Washington, and proposed to
throw the marines, who had been trained to artillery exercise, and a part of the seamen, into that fort, for its
defence.

The General did not conceive the state of his force such as to warrant the abstraction of so efficient a part as
that of the marines and seamen, from the main body, which was to oppose the direct advance of the enemy's army
on the city; and, indeed, his objection appeared to have weight. He did not, however, consider Fort Washington
as tenable.

On the 21st the letter L was received from Commodore Barney, and a detachment of about one hundred and ten
marines, with three twelves and two eighteen pounders, under the command of Captain Miller, marched from the
head quarters to join Commodore Barney, and reached the Woodyard that evening.

In the course of this day and the following, I visited the navy-yard, and inquired of the commandant what were
the means of transportation; and what assistance he had in the yard? He stated that all the mechanics of the yard
were, and had been, with the army, from the first alarm; that no persons remained but the officers of the yard, three
besides himself, and a very few of the ordinary, chiefly blacks; that two of the old gunboats were the only craft for
transportation; that all the wagons in the district had been hired or impressed for the army; and that those blacks
who were usually to be had for hire, were employed on the works at Bladensburg.

I directed him to employ all the means be had or could procure; to load the gunboats with provisions and powder, and send them to the Little Falls; employ as many wagons as could be either hired or impressed, and convey as much of the navy powder as possible from the magazine, on the Eastern Branch, to Air. Dulany's barn, on the Virginia side of the Potomac, about nine miles above the city; to direct Messrs. Grayson, Stull, and Williams, to transport the public powder from their works to the same place; and to continue transporting the most valuable and portable articles from the yard to any place of safety, with all the means he could command.

The public vessels afloat at the navy yard were the new sloop of war Argus, with her guns mounted, her top-
masts launched, and her sails and detached equipments complete on shore in store; the new schooner Lynx, and three new barges; one of the first and two of the second class, completely equipped; with the two gunboats before mentioned.

On the slip was the new frigate Columbia, of the largest class, caulked, ready for coppering, and nearly so for launching. Her masts, spars, tops, &c. almost finished in the mast house; gun carriages nearly completed—her sails made, and in the loft her rigging-fitted; blocks all made; and her equipments, generally, in great forwardness.

Besides the buildings, engines, fixtures, and shop furniture, of the several mechanical branches in the navy yard, there were about one hundred tons of cordage, some canvas, a considerable quantity of saltpetre, copper, iron lead, block tin, blocks, ship chandlery, naval and ordnance stores, implements, and fixed ammunition, with a variety of manufactured articles in all the branches; seventeen hundred and forty-three barrels of beef and pork, two hundred and seventy-nine barrels of whiskey, and a moderate stock of plank and timber.

Had there been a prospect of transporting the sloop of war Argus to a place of safety, the representations of the commandant will show that he had not the means of transporting her, and there appeared to be no situation in which she could be placed in which she would not fall into the hands of the enemy, in the event of his getting possession of the city. It, therefore, only remained to endeavor to save all the stores that could be transported, and the small vessels, particularly the barges, if practicable, by running them up to the Little Falls. This was directed to be done.

On the 22d the letter M was received from Commodore Barney. In the evening of that day I accompanied the President to General Winder's camp at the Old Fields, and passed the night in commodore Barney's tent; the army of the enemy at Upper Marlborough, eight miles distant. On the morning of the 23d, reviewed the seamen and marines, whose appearance and preparations for battle promised all that could be expected from cool intrepidity, and a high state of discipline.

In die hope that Commodore Rodgers might arrive that evening at Baltimore and not doubting that the enemy would be retarded on his march by obstacles and annoyance, until the seamen from Baltimore could reach Bladensburg, I wrote to Commodore Rodgers the letter marked N, and sent it by a vidette.

About 2 o'clock, P. M. I accompanied the President on his return to the city, and, in the course of the evening, was informed of the sudden retreat of our army from the Old Fields to the city, over the Eastern Branch bridge.

On the morning of the 24th, I proceeded to General Winder's quarters, at Doctor Hunter's house, near the Eastern Branch bridge, where the President, and the Secretaries of War, State, and Treasury, soon after arrived. I found Commodore Barney employed, by order of the General, in planting his battery on the hill, near the head of the bridge. 'He was charged to defend that pass, and to destroy the bridge on the approach of the enemy; for
which purpose, scows and boats, with combustible materials, were placed under the bridge, ready to explode. At this time the enemy was apparently advancing on the road to the bride; but, shortly after, advice was received that he had turned off on the road towards Bladensburg, about six miles from that place. General Winder set off for Bladensburg, leaving Commodore Barney, with his seamen and marines, in charge of the bridge.

It was soon observed that a very efficient part of the force had been left to destroy the Eastern Branch bridge, which could as well be done by half a dozen men, as by five hundred. The subject was discussed by the President, Heads of Departments, and Commodore Barney, which resulted in the order for his immediate and rapid march, to join the army near Bladensburg, which he reached just in time to form his men for battle. Captain Creighton was left in charge of the bridge, to destroy it on the near approach of the enemy.

There presented, for consideration, the subject of the navy yard, to the view of the President and Secretary of War, in the presence of the Secretaries of State and of the Treasury. I described the situation of the public vessels and the nature of the public property, at that establishment; the vast importance of the supplies, and of the shipping, to the enemy, particularly as there appeared to be no doubt of his-squadron forming a junction with his army, should it succeed in the conquest of the capital; (General Winder having distinctly stated on the same morning that Fort Washington could not be defended:) and as, in this event, nothing could be more clear than that he would first plunder, and then destroy the buildings and improvements, or, if unable to carry off the plunder and the shipping, he would destroy the whole; and if the junction should be formed, it would be a strong inducement to the enemy to remain, in order to launch the new frigate, which the force at his command would accomplish in four or five days. He would then carry off the whole of the public stores and shipping, and destroy the establishment, and, in the mean time, greatly extend the field of his plunder and devastation. Thus? in either case whether the junction was formed, or whether the army alone entered the city, the loss or destruction of the whole of the public property at the navy yard was certain.

It was, therefore, distinctly agreed and determined, as the result of this consultation, that the public shipping, and naval and military stores, and provisions at the navy yard, should be destroyed, in the event of the enemy's obtaining possession of the city.

I went to the navy yard about two o'clock, and ordered the commandant to prepare the necessary trains for the destruction of the public shipping, and of the naval and military stores, and provisions, in the navy yard, and to destroy the same, so soon as he should ascertain that the enemy had taken possession of the city; first removing such articles of most value, as might be found practicable, particularly the new barges, if possible, and then retire in his .4g.
Subsequent events prove the justness of these conclusions, if, indeed, further evidence had been at all wanting. The only legitimate objects of the enterprise of the enemy to this place, were the public shipping and the naval and military establishments: and none can believe that these would have escaped the torch of the destroyer of our civil edifices, of private rope-walks, and every thing in the most remote degree connected with navigation; but, above all, with the American navy.

The order for the destruction of the public shipping and property at the navy yard was not issued without serious deliberation and great pain by him, under whose auspices and direction those noble ships had been constructed, and a degree of activity, usefulness, and reputation, imparted to the establishment, which it had never known before. It was given under the strongest obligations of duty. It is conceived that no military maxim is better established, nor duty better understood, than that which enjoins the destruction of public ships, arsenals, naval and military stores, and provisions, when they can be no longer defended, or prevented from falling into the hands of the enemy; and that this duty becomes the more imperative, as the ratio of the value of the objects is enhanced to the enemy. To defend the shipping or navy yard was out of the question; all the mechanics and laborers of the yard, as well as all the seamen and marines in the District, were with the army.

The commandant of the navy yard is a captain in the navy; the vessels and property were under his charge and command; and if no special order from the Department had been issued, and he had suffered the public shipping and property to have fallen into the hands of the enemy, he would have committed a high military crime, for which he would have been amenable before a court martial. The objects which it was proper to destroy, in order to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy, could not be separated from those which might have been left for his destruction. They were in store, or in the midst of other combustible materials, and the fire from one would necessarily communicate to the other. Indeed, the whole surface of the yard was covered with ships, timber, pitch, tar, and other combustible matter, so that to set fire to any one object, must produce the successive conflagration of the whole.

I

On returning from the navy yard, towards the western part of the city, I learned that our army had retreated by the road to Tenlytown, and that of the enemy was rapidly advancing towards the city. I soon after received a message from the President, by Mr. Tench Ringgold, at Mr. Charles Carroll's, informing me that he had proceeded to cross the river, and requested that I would follow and meet him on the other side.

I returned to the city on the morning of the 28th, immediately on hearing of the retreat of the enemy, and wrote the letter to Commodore Rodgers.

The paper P is a copy of the detailed report of the commandant of the navy yard, of the manner in which he
carried into execution the order I had given.

The barge lie states to have been saved was sent to Alexandria, and, it appears, remained there until the enemy took possession of her.

One gun boat was sunk near Foxall's, laden with salted provisions, and has since been recovered. The other was laden with provisions and gunpowder, but ran aground in the Eastern Branch, in attempting to transport her to the Little Falls, and was plundered by the inhabitants near the navy yard, the powder and part of the provisions have since been recovered.

The new schooner Lynx escaped the flames in an extraordinary manner, and remains entire.

The metallic articles have nearly all been saved, including a vast quantity of iron work, which, with little labor, will answer the original purpose.

The timber that was in the dock is saved; and a great deal of that which was partially consumed, will still be useful.

Almost the whole of the machinery of the steam engine is reported to be in good condition; the boiler is perfect.

The buildings, with the exception of the houses of the commandant and lieutenant of the yard, the guard-houses, and gateway, and one other building, have been destroyed. The walls of some appear to be entire, and but little injured; of others they are destroyed.

The monument was but slightly injured.

Paper Q is a list of the cannon remaining perfect in the yard, and of those which were injured by the enemy.

The issuing store of the yard, and its contents, which had escaped the original conflagration, were totally destroyed by the enemy.

Orders have been issued to the officers of the yard to prepare their statements and estimates of the value of the public property destroyed, which shall be furnished as soon as possible.

With the circumstances attending the abandonment and destruction of Fort Washington, and the fate of Alexandria, I am no otherwise acquainted than by the accounts which have been published.

After the capitulation of Alexandria to the enemy's squadron, a considerable force, in seamen, was ordered from Baltimore, (see letter R) under the command of Commodore Rodgers, with Captains Porter, Perry, and Creighton. The former attacked and annoyed the enemy in his rear, in boats and with fire vessels, whilst, the other commanders planted their batteries on White House Point and Indian Head,

Those measures precipitated the departure of the enemy, and greatly annoyed him in descending the river; but there was not time sufficient to prepare the means to render that annoyance effectual. All that the limited means employed could possibly effect, was accomplished, by the gallantry, skill, and patriotism, of those distinguished offi-
cers, and the brave seamen, marines, and volunteers under their command.

The measures pursued by this Department, in order to co-operate in the defence of the metropolis, were not, in their nature, strictly sanctioned by the regulations and usages of the naval service, but were adopted with an ardent desire that they might prove effectual; with a certain knowledge that the zeal and patriotism of the naval corps would induce them to seek the enemy, with equal vigor and cheerfulness, in the field as on the main; and a conviction that the emergency fully justified any step which could contribute to the defence of the national capital.

Whether more or less has been done than duty required, is cheerfully and respectfully submitted.

have the honor to be, &c

W. JONES.

The Hon. RICHARD M. JOHNSON, Chairman.

NAvy YAD, WAsSHiNGTox, October 18, 1814.

SM:

On a review of the consequences which emanated from the retreat of our army, and the entrance of that of the enemy into this city, on the twenty-fourth August last, so far as relates to this establishment, I respectfully submit the following general statement:

After receiving repeated contradictory reports, relative to the strength and position of the enemy, during the afternoon and evening of that day, at twenty minutes past eight, P. M. I received incontestable proof (by Captain Creighton, and Mr. M. Booth, my clerk, both of whom had been voluntarily active to obtain me positive information) that the enemy was in complete possession of the city, having themselves been within the range of, and exposed to, the fire of his musketry.

The boats for our conveyance from the yard being stationed according to order, we immediately repaired down the yard, applying fire to the trains leading to the store houses, the principal of which were almost instantly in irresistible flames.

Advancing towards the boats, those to the new frigate Essex, and to the sloop of war Argus, were touched, and they also immediately enveloped in a sheet of inextinguishable fire.

From a momentary impulse, and faint hope of recovering the new schooner Lynx, I directed her not to be fired, and have the satisfaction to say, that, by an almost miraculous escape, she is still "ours."

The frigate Essex's hull, in the shipwright's department, was very near complete, her bottom ready for coppering, and she could have been launched in ten days; her masts and spars were nearly finished, with timber sufficient on the wharf to complete them; all her blocks, dead-eyes, and the major part of her gun carriages, ready; two suits
of her heavy sails, and nearly the same quantity of her others, were finished in the sail loft, ready for bending; her standing rigging, &c. fitted in the rigging loft and sufficient running rigging in store for her complete equipment; her largest boats nearly ready for launching; all her water casks, and every material of coopers work, ready to go on board.

The sloop of war Argus lay at the wharf, with all her armament and equipment on board, except her sails, which were in time sail loft, ana her provisions in the stores, and therein consumed; and except her powder, which had not been shipped.

A large quantity of timber, plank, knees, &c. were in different parts of the yard, and the seventy-four gun ship timber, stored in the appropriate sheds, all fell a prey to the devouring element; also one large and one smaller row galley, both armed, rigged, and prepared for service; and three heavy armed scows, with their guns, &c. on board, also ready.

The buildings destroyed by the fire from the frigate, &c. were, the mast shed and timber shed; the joiners' and boat builders' stops, and mould loft; all the offices; the medical store; the plumbers' and smiths' shops, and block-makers' shop; the saw mill and block mill, with their whole apparatus, tools, and machinery; the building for the steam engines, and all the combustible parts of its machinery and materials; the rigging lot; the apartments for the master and the boatswain of the yard, with all their furniture; the gun-carriage makers' and painters' shops, with all the materials and tools therein at the time; also, the bulls of the old frigates Boston, New York, and General Greene.

The storehouses first fired were the provision stores, gunner's and ordnance store, cordage store, and sail loft; which, 'with all their perishable contents, were consumed.

The navy storekeeper's detail issuing store, containing in its different departments, a large quantity of new canvass, twine, lines, bunting, and colors; together with all our stocks of mathematical instruments, and nautical apparatus, appertaining to navigation; ship chandlery, tools, nails, oils, paints, &c. had escaped through the night the effet of the fire, but was fired by the enemy on the succeeding morning, the twenty-fifth, and entirely consumed, with all its contents- as were also the coopers' shop, two small frame timber sheds, and that in which our tar, pitch, rosin, &o. were deposited.

The general loss of our papers prevents the possibility of forming a just estimate of the loss in the mechanical departments heretofore enumerated. Of that relative to the stores onhand, in the navy storekeeper's peculiar charge,

it is presumed a tolerable accurate estimate may be formed, and will be the subject of a future communication, which shall be transmitted as soon as it is possible to effect.

On my return to the yard on the twenty-sixth, I had the mortification to observe, that the provisions which had been laded on board the old gunboat, JNo. 140, (and with which she had grounded in endeavor to get out of the
branch, on the twenty fourth) had become a prey to numerous unauthorized persons, some of whom, however, instantly-offered to deliver u a.l in their possession, which was subsequently done, but several barrels are yet to be accounted for.

A subject of still greater regret is the loss of upwards of two hundred barrels of powder which were wantonly and unauthorizedly taken out of the magazine, and chiefly thrown into the water, the cause of which, however, being under investigation by a court martial, on the corporal of the marine guard then there, I forbear to enlarge on the subject as my feelings would dictate.

I have the honor to be, THOMAS TINGEY.

Honorable WILLIAM JONES.

NAVY YARD, WASHINGTON, August 27, 1814.

After receiving your orders of the twenty-fourth, directing the public shipping, stores, &c. at this establishment to be destroyed, in case of the success of the enemy over our army, no time was lost in making the necessary arrangements for firing the whole, and preparing boats for departing from the yard, as you had suggested.

About four P. M. I received a message by an officer, from the Secretary of War, with information that he "could protect me no longer." Soon after this I was informed that the conflagration of the Eastern Branch bridge had commenced; and, in a few minutes, the explosion announced the blowing up of that part near the "draw," is had been arranged in the morning. It had been promulgated, as much as in my power, among the inhabitants of the vicinity, the intended fate of the yard, in order that they might take every possible precaution for the safety of themselves, families, and property. Immediately several individuals came, in succession, endeavoring to prevail on me to deviate from my instructions, which they were invariably informed was unavailing, unless they could bring me your instructions in writing, countermanding those previously given. A deputation also of the most respectable women came on the same errand, when I found myself painfully necessitated to inform them, that any further importunities would cause the matches to be instantly applied to the trains; with assurance, however, that, if left at peace, I would delay the execution of the orders as long as I could feel the least shadow of justification.

Captain Creighton's arrival at the yard, with the men who had been with him at the bridge, (probably about five o'clock) would have justified me in instant operation, and volunteered to ride out and intended destruction, and volunteered to ride out and
under the hope that our army might have rallied and repulsed them. I was myself, indeed, desirous of delay, for the reason that the wind was then blowing fresh from the south southwest, which would most probably have paused the east of the yard, in its neighborhood. I was of opinion, also, that the close of the evening would bring with it a calm, in which happily we were not disappointed. Other gentlemen, well mounted, volunteered, as Captain Creighton had done, to go out and bring me positive intelligence of the enemy's situation, if possible to obtain it. Captain Creighton, having almost continual intelligence of the enemy's situation, if possible to obtain it,

the Capitol Hill; and that their "advance" was near Georgetown. I therefore determined to wait only until half past eight o'clock, to commence the execution of my orders, becoming apprehensive that Captain Creighton had, from his long stay, fallen into the hands of the enemy. During this delay ordered a few marines, and other persons who were then near me, to go off in one of the small galleys, which was done, and the boat is saved. Colonel Wharton had been furnished with a light boat, with which he left the yard between seven and eight o'clock. At twenty minutes past eight Captain Creighton returned; he was still extramely averse to the destruction of the property, but having informed him that your orders to me were imperative, the proper disposition of the boats being made, the matches were applied, and in a few moments the whole was in a state of irretrievable conflagration. The Columbia, as designated in my report of the third instant, but called the Essex, by the commandant, upon the presumption that her name was to have been changed.

When about leaving the wharf I observed the fire had also commenced at the works at Greenleaf's Point, and in the way out of the Branch we observed the capitol on fire. It had been my intention not to leave the vicinity of the navy yard with my boat, during the night; but, having Captain Creighton and other gentlemen with me, she was too much encumbered and overladen to render that determination proper. We therefore proceeded to Alexandria, in the vicinity of which I rested till the morning of the 25th, when, having also refreshed the gig's crew, we left Alexandria at half past seven o'clock, and proceeded again up to the yard, where I landed, un molested, about a quarter before nine.

The schooner Lynx had laid alongside the burning wharf, still unhurt; hoping, therefore, to save her; we hauled her to the quarter of the hulk of the New York, which had also escaped the ravages of the flames. The detail of the store of the Navy Storekeeper had remained safe from the fire during the night, which the enemy, (being in force in the yard) about eight o'clock, set fire to, and it was speedily consumed.

It appeared that they had left the yard about half an hour when we arrived. I found my dwelling house, and that of Lieutenant Haradan, untouched by fire; but some of the people of the neighborhood had commenced plundering them; therefore, hastily collecting a few persons known to me, I got some of my most valuable materials moved to neighbors' houses, out of the yard, who tendered me their offers to receive them; the enemy's officer hav-
Could I have staid another hour, I had probably saved all my furniture and stores; but being advised by some friends, that I was not safe, they believing that the admiral was, by that time, or would very speedily be, informed of my being in the yard; he having expressed an anxious desire to make me captive- but had said that the officers' dwellings in the yard should not be destroyed. I

I f, therefore, again embarked in the gig, taking along, out of the Branch, one of the new launches, which lay safe, although alongside of a floating stage enveloped in flai-es. I had no sooner gone than such a scene of devastation and plunder took place, in the houses, (by the people of the neighborhood) as is disgraceful to relate; not a moveable article from the cellars to the garrets has been left us, and even some of the fixtures, and the locks of the doors, have been shamefully pillaged. Some of the perpetrators, however, have been made known to me.

From the number and movements of the enemy, it would have appeared rash temerity to have attempted returning again that day, though my inclination strongly urged it; therefore, reconnoitering their motions,, as well as could be effected at a convenient distance, in the gig, until evening, I again proceeded to Alexandria for the night.

Yesterday morning, the 26th, it was impossible to form (from the various and contradictory reports at Alexandria) any sort of probable conjecture, either of the proceedings or situation of our army, or that of the enemy.

Determining, therefore, to have a positive knowledge of some part thereof, from ocular demonstration, I again embarked in the gig, proceeding with due caution to the yard, where I learned with chagrin the devastation and pillage before mentioned, and found, also, to my surprise, that the old gunboat, which had been loaded with provisions, and had grounded, in endeavoring to get out of the Branch, on the evening of the 24th, was nearly discharged of her cargo, by a number of our people, without connexion with each other.

Having landed in the yard, I soon ascertained that the enemy had left the city, excepting only a sergeant's guard, for the security of the sick and wounded. Finding it impracticable to stop the scene of plunder that had commenced, I determined instantly on repossessing the yard with all the force at my command; repairing, therefore, immediately to Alexandria, Lieutenant Haradan, the ordinary men, and a few marines there, were ordered directly up, following myself, all got full possession again at evening.

I am now collecting the scattered purloined provisions, ready for your orders, presuming they will now become very scarce indeed; the quantity saved, you shall be informed of; when known to me.

The Lynx is safe, except her foremast being carried away, in the storm of the 25th, about four P.M. We have also another of the gunboats, with about one hundred barrels of powder, and one of the large yard cutters, nearly full with the filled cylinders, for our different guns, previously mounted; the powder of those, however, is probably much wetted by the storm. It would most willingly have an interview with you, but deem it improper to leave my station without some justifiable cause, or in pursuance of your instructions, under which I am ready to proceed, wherever my services may be thought useful.
I have the honor to be, &c.

Honorable W. Jones

P. S. Sunday morning, 28th.-After terminating the foregoing, last evening, I had scarcely laid down my pen, when a smart cannonading commenced at, or from, N'ort Washington; which continued from heavy cannon, until after seven o'clock, during which it appeared as if two or three severe explosions had taken place. No doubt that it was between the enemy's frigates and the fort; but as to the result; I am entirely without information; nor have I at command the means of obtaining it. the wind blowing too fresh up the river, to a light boat to make any progress down. I shall hire sufficient hands, as soon as practicable, and collect all the materials unhurt by the fire; which shall be suitably deposited and protected.

T. T.

FARM AT ELF RmwE, $ugut 29, 1814.

SIR:

This is the first moment I have had it in my power to make a report of the proceedings of the forces under my command, since I had the honor of seeing you at the camp at the "Old Fields." On the afternoon of that day, we were informed that the enemy was advancing upon us. The army was put under arms, and our positions taken; many forces on the right, flanked by the two battalions of the 36th and 38th, where we remained some hours; the enemy did not make his appearance. A little before sunset, General Winder came to me, and recommended that the heavy artillery should be withdrawn, with the exception of one twelve pounder to cover the retreat. We took up our line of march; and, in the night, entered Washington, by the Eastern Branch bridge. I marched my men, &c. to the Marine barracks, and took up quarters for the night myself sleeping at Commodore Tingey's, in the navy yard. About two o'clock General Winder came to my quarters; and we made some arrangements for the morning. In the morning I received a note from General Winder, and waited upon him: he requested me to take command, and place my artillery to defend the passage of the bridge, on the Eastern Branch, as the enemy was approaching the city in that direction. I immediately put my guns in position, leaving the marines and the rest of my men at the barracks, to wait further orders. I was in this situation when I had the honor to meet you, with the President and Heads of Departments; when it was determined I should draw off my guns and men, and proceed towards Bladensburg, which was immediately put into execution; on our way, I was informed the enemy was within a mile of Bladensburg; we hurried on. The day was hot; and my men very much crippled from the severe marches we had experienced the days before; many of them being without shoes; which I had replaced that morning. I preceded the men; and when I arrived at the line, which separates the District from Maryland, the battle began. I sent an officer back to hurry on my men; they came up in a trot; we took our position on the rising ground; put the pieces
in battery; posted the marines, under Captain Miller; and the flotilla men, who were to act as infantry, under their own officers, on my right, to support the pieces; and waited the approach of the enemy. During this period the engagement continued, and the enemy advancing; our own army retreating before them, apparently in much disorder.

At length the enemy made his appearance on the main road, in force, and in front of my battery, and on seeing us, made a halt. I reserved our fire. In a few minutes the enemy again advanced, when I ordered an eighteen pounder to be fired, which completely cleared the road; shortly after, a second and a third attempt was made, by the enemy, to come forward, but all were destroyed. 'They then crossed over into an open field, and attempted to flank our right; he was there met by three twelve pounders, the marines under Captain Miller,' and my men, acting as infantry; and again was totally cut up. By this time not a vestige of the American army remained, except a body of five or six hundred, posted on a height, on my right, from whom I expected much support, from their fine situation.

The enemy from this period never appeared, in force, in front of us; they pushed forward their sharp shooters; one of which shot my horse under me; who fell dead between two of my guns. 'Elie enemy, who had been kept in check by our fire, for nearly half an hour, now began to out-flank us on the right: our guns were turned that way; he pushed up the hill, about two or three hundred, towards the corps of Americans stationed as above described; who to my great mortification, made no resistance, giving a fire or two, and retired. In this situation we had the whole army, of the enemy to contend with. Our ammunition was expended; and, unfortunately, the drivers of my ammunition wagons had gone off in the general panic. At this time, I received a severe wound in my thigh; Captain Miller was wounded- Sailingmaster Warner killed; Acting Sailingmaster Martin killed; and Sailingmaster Martin wounded; but, to the honor of my officers and men, as fast as their companions and messmates fell at the guns, they were instantly replaced from the infantry.

Finding the enemy now completely in our rear, and no means of defence, I gave orders to my officers and men to retire. Three of my officers assisted me to get off a short distance, but the great loss of blood occasioned such a weakness that I was compelled to lie down. I requested my officers to leave me, which they obstinately refused; but, upon being ordered, they obeyed; one only remained. In a short time I observed a British soldier, and had him called, and directed him to seek an officer; in a few minutes an officer came, and, on learning who I was, brought General Ross and Admiral Cockburn to me. Those officers behaved to me with the most marked attention, respect, and politeness, had a surgeon brought, and my wound dressed immediately. After a few minutes' conversation the General informed me (after paying me a handsome compliment) that I was paroled, and at liberty to proceed to Washington or Bladensburg; as, also, Mr. Huffington, who had remained with me, offering me every
assistance in his power, giving orders for a litter to be brought, in which I was carried to Bladensburg. Captain Wainwright, first Captain to Admiral Cockmenie remained with me, and behaved to me as if I was a brother. During the stay of the enemy at Bladensburg, I received every marked attention possible from the officers of the navy and army.

My wound is deep, but I flatter myself not dangerous; the ball is not yet extracted. I fondly hope a few weeks will restore me to health, and that an exchange will take place; that I may resume my command, or any other that you and the President may think proper to honor me with.

Yours, respectfully,

JOSHUA B ARNEY.

Hon. W. Jones.

No. 10.


General Van Ness's statement.

WASHINGTON, -November 23, 1814.

Sir:

To your request to me to "report to the committee appointed to inquire into the causes which led to the success of the enemy against this city, &c. such information, facts, and views, as are in my power," I would have answered sooner, making such report, but for a very severe and protracted nervous attack, and a consequent considerable accumulation of indispensable private business. In the narrative which I have now the honor to transmit you, I shall, from the very nature of the case, be drawn into an egotism, which, I trust, the committee will be good enough to excuse.

In the campaign of 1813 we had a call from the War Department, produced by the approach of the enemy in the Potomac, for a part of the militia of the District of Columbia, which was promptly attended to on our part; but, owing to the great want of preparation by the Government, in respect to arms, ammunition, camp equipage, provisions and the consequent delays and confusion, the troops would have been inadequate to an efficient resistance, until after they had been out some days: that fact, and those circumstances, were then evident to all. The incompetency of Fort Washington, on the East bank of the river, a few miles below Alexandria, and the necessity of its improvement, were then seen, and freely spoken of by Secretary Armstrong. Indeed, the importance and necessity of erecting a new-fortification or battery, at some one of the several favorable sites on the river, so as com-
pletely to shut out from the upper part of it, or repel, a hostile fleet, was strongly, and repeatedly suggested and admitted by the Secretary. He frequently told me, then and, afterwards, substantially, that he had "such a project, and was about to execute it; that he was only balancing between several different points which had been proposed or presented to his view, and he believed he must go down himself to reconnoitre and select." After the lapse of some time, not seeing or hearing of any step towards the execution of this project, I several times reminded him of it, and he, as often, still encouraged me, by words, to expect it, whilst he, generally otherwise, appeared rather indifferent, and expressed an opinion that the enemy would not come, or even seriously attempt to come, to this District.

About the opening of the present campaign, I pressed again upon the Secretary the subject generally of our defence; suggesting, in addition to the occlusion of the river, the convenience and importance of a central camp, intermediate between Baltimore, Annapolis, Washington, Alexandria, Georgetown, and the neighboring towns and country. And in frequent interviews, (in number, to be sure, very much increased by the importunate applications and solicitations to me, of both the civil and the military branches of the community whose confidence in the Secretary appeared, at an early period, at best wavering, it not declining,) sometimes official, at other times not so, which I had with him, as the campaign progressed, I did not fail to repeat the suggestion. I still received assurances, generally verbally, favorable, accompanied by an otherwise apparent indifference, and confidence in our security. In April last, Colonel Clinch, with about one hundred men, (I believe recruits) arrived in this city, where he, with those troops, together with a few hundred who had been garrisoned through the winter at Greenleaf's Point, remained encamped for a few weeks. This was the only force of a regular character, excepting a small marine corps attached to the navy yard, which I recollect had been at all stationary in the place; and even the greater part of that was here only at a season when there was no actual danger, or even apprehension of it, and the whole was presently sent to the Northern frontiers.

Sometime in June last, the enemy appearing in or about the mouth of the Patuxent the Secretary of War called on me for a detachment of militia. Several companies of light troops were immediately, in conformity with his instructions, ordered and marched to that river. After a short period of service, and the departure of the enemy, they were discharged.

Thus had the campaign progressed, without any visible steps towards works of defence, either permanent or temporary, either on the Tand, or the water side, (I never having heard of a spade or an axe being struck in any such operation) or towards forming a rendezvous or camp of regular troops in the neighborhood, to the great anxiety, inquietude, and alarm, of the District and surrounding country; the Secretary generally treating with indifference, at least, if hot with levity, the idea of an attack by the enemy.
When the conclusion of European hostilities, and the rumors and accounts of expeditions fitting out for this country by England, excited apprehensions more general and more serious than before, again renewed the subject of our defense, and it was still treated by him as before. I had occasionally, though seldom, introduced it personally to the President himself, who, without going much into particulars, referred me, generally, on that subject to the War Department, on which he seemed fully to rely for the proper arrangements. In my anxiety and solicitude, I also occasionally mentioned this business to Secretary Monroe, who always appeared to take a warm interest in it, and gave me strong assurances that he would do "every thing that he could with propriety do." At length, nothing visible having yet been done, and the danger being supposed constantly to increase, about the latter end of June, or beginning of July last, I inquired of Secretary Monroe whether it was the intention of Government to abandon and sacrifice the District or not, adding, that if it were so, it would be well for us, at least, to know it. He answered me, that, so far from that, every inch of ground about it was determined to be contested, and the last drop of blood to be spilt in its defence. He said it was decided (I then understood, or inferred, that there had been a recent cabinet consultation on the subject) to form a camp of regular troops, say between two and three thousand, at a central position, such as I have before spoken of; who, together with the local troops, would constitute an adequate defense for the surrounding points, to either of which they might be promptly and conveniently, drawn. When I saw Secretary Armstrong again, soon afterwards, I expressed my satisfaction at what I had thus understood. He confirmed the information, and added that there would also be drawn from Carlisle, about two hundred cavalry, commanded by Colonel Lavall. In answer to my inquiry, when we might expect them, he said the troops were ordered on, and would begin to assemble in a few days' time, and that orders had been given to procure horses for those of the cavalry corps who were not yet mounted. This period, however, elapsed without the arrival of any of them. There appeared not to be taken into the calculation, a small detachment, or fragment or two, of a regiment or two of the regular army, who were in some part of the neighboring country, and who, at best, were supposed to be very inefficient. I afterwards, several times, reminded Secretary Armstrong of our disappointment, considering the strong assurances given us, &c.; and I suggested the utility and propriety of ordering out our militia in successive or alternate detachments. I further informed him (which I was authorized to do, by the pressing, voluntary offers of many of my fellow-citizens) that both the citizens and troops of the District of Columbia were ready and anxious to be made use of; in any way that the Government might prescribe or direct, for the public good. He continued to tell me that the troops would soon be on. To my inquiries about the cavalry, more than once, he replied that lie had sent orders for purchasing horses to mount the corps, and that it would soon be here. Colonel Lavall did not, however, arrive here until a day or two after the enemy had landed at Benedict.*

Some time in July last, the Secretary of War told me that General Winder who was in the neighborhood of the Patuxent) had informed him that the enemy were ascending that river in force, and that lie (General Winder) re-
quired that as many of the militia of the District of Columbia as could be procured should be immediately sent to him; and the Secretary directed me to order out three companies to satisfy this call, which was immediately done. After having been in service nine days, they were discharged.

A few weeks before the incursion of the enemy here, a project was originated among tire banks, generally, or the District, to offer the Government a loan for its defence. The Secretary was informed of it in its progress, and appeared to approve it, observing that the arrangement must be made with the Treasury Department. Although, owing to the necessity of some formalities at the offices, and the tedious delays in collecting the general sentiment of the different banks, as to certain arrangements and terms among themselves, this project was not matured until about a week before the capture of the city, the Secretary of War was before informed that the money would certainly be raised. This was done without any intimation or suggestion from any branch of the Government, of the want of means for an adequate defence, although I recollect the Secretary of War had, some time before, in a conversation I introduced relative to the purchase of some more ground about Fort 'Washington, for an extension of the works, observed, substantially, that the proprietor asked too much for it, considering how poor the Government was, and that, if we found it was really wanted in any pressing emergency, it would, of course, be taken and used.

At length, in August last, when the increased and reinforced fleet, with the troops, ascended the Chesapeake, and were known, from authentic information, to have entered the Patuxent, I called on Secretary Armstrong again, and expressed, as usual, my apprehensions, arising from want of means and preparations, adding that, from the known naval and reputed land force of the enemy, he probably meant to strike a serious blow. His reply was, "oh yes! by G-d, they would not come with such a fleet without meaning to strike somewhere, but they certainly will not come here; what the devil will they do here," &c., After remarking that I differed very much from him, as to the probable interest they felt in destroying or capturing our seat of Government, and that I believed a visit to this place would, for several reasons, be a favorite object with them, lie observed, "no, no! Baltimore is the place, sir; that is of so much more consequence."

The public confidence in the Secretary of War had, for some time, been evidently rapidly declining, and the frequent and unreserved expressions by individuals to that effect, sometimes temperate, and sometimes otherwise, were really disagreeable and troublesome to me. The President must, I presume, have been aware of the fact of this want or decline of confidence, as well from the ordinary sources of information, as from that which I have understood (from one of the members themselves) lie received from a joint committee or deputation of the municipal authorities of the city and Georgetown, who had, sometime before, a formal interview with him, relative to the general state of the District.

On the Mth of August last, I furnished Secretary Monroe, at his request, and by instructions of Secretary Armstrong, with two small troops of horse to accompany him to the Patuxent. On the same day, General Win-
der (after a conference with me, in which he was hesitating and undecided as to the force he might require from the District of Columbia, and in which I advised him, unequivocally, to call for all its militia) required my whole division of troops. They were accordingly immediately ordered out. Beginning to suspect, from circumstances, that some difficulty might arise between General Winder and myself, on the score of command, and hot meaning to create any not absolutely necessary, I determined not to raise the point until it should become certain that my troops were to go into actual operation. It soon became so, by the near and direct approach of the enemy to the city. I then called on General Winder, and, after observing to him that, all his troops being in service. I considered myself so also, (as I was a part of, or inseparably connected, with, the division). I informed him that I should of course, expect to take the command the law had assigned to me of the whole—which I was prepared to do. He replied that I would certainly be entitled to the commands if I were really in service; and that he would, in such case, yield it to me cheerfully, and without hesitation: but he said he did not consider me necessarily in service, because the two brigades (which composed the whole) of my division had been required, and were in the field; and, inasmuch as this military district had been committed to him, he was compelled to retain the command, until he should be regularly notified by the Government that an officer of superior rank was actually in service within the district. General Winder, in a conversation of some minutes between us, made a distinction (which I could not comprehend) between calling or having the two brigades of my division in service, and calling or having the division itself, which consisted wholly of those two brigades. In support of this claim to the command of my division, lie instanced the case of General Smith, of Baltimore, who, although a considerable part of his troops were in requisition and service, had not claimed the command, although he said he had, at first, made some intimation to that effect. I observed, that General Smith's conduct might be explained by the circumstance of his whole division not being in service. I concluded my interview with General Winder by informing him that I would immediately apply to the Secretary of War to determine the principal fact on which the case rested—whether I was or was not in service, and thus to decide the question between us, in which he appeared cordially to concur. Had there been as little confidence then in that gentleman's generalship as there is now, My course would have been different. I accordingly instantly called on the Secretary of War, who expressly declared it was "an embarrassing case;" and, after some minutes' general and indecisive conversation on the subject, concluded by assuring me that he would immediately state it to the President for his decision, and would, without delay, advise me of the result. This was early in the morning of (I think) Saturday, immediately preceding the Wednesday of the affair of Bladensburg. I After leaving Secretary Armstrong, dissatisfied as I was with the general tenor of his language and conduct, relative to the business, during the interview, I also called on the President, stating to him substantially the case, and adding, as I had before done to both the other gentlemen, that, if it were the particular wish and determination of the Executive (which I began to think not improbable) that General Winder should have the principal
Colonel Lavall has since informed me, that no effectual means were taken to mount his men, notwithstanding his frequent applications to the War Department for that purpose; and that, learning that the enemy was actually approaching us, he, on his own responsibility, adopted means for procurin horses, on the spur of the occasion, or he could not have been on at all for the particular service.

command, in meeting the column of the enemy marching directly on the city from the Patuxent, that probably some separate station or command might be assigned me, as there were said to be other menaces and approaches. The President declined a decision until after the Secretary of War should have been consulted. I returned to my house, where I waited impatiently with my aids, Majors Brent and M'Kenny, who were ready and anxious to accompany me to camp, until half after twelve o'clock; and, although, upon reflecting on what had passed between the Secretary, General Winder, and myself I was suspicious that it was predetermined, and arranged or understood between them, that I was not to have the command, or, at least, that an attempt should be made to withhold it from me, still, not hearing from the Secretary, I sent a messenger to him requesting a decision. After detaining the servant about two hours, he sent me, by him, a written communication, giving me to understand that I was not considered in command or service. I determined not to attempt to create any discordance or schism at a moment of imminent peril, and when the cordial co-operation of all was so important; and, at the same time, whilst I held my commission of Major General, not being able to serve under General Winder, I instantly sent my resignation to the Secretary, taking an early opportunity of assuring General Winder that, although I felt the injury done me, there was nothing personal in my motive, and, farther, offering and pledging myself to him for any service in my power, either civil or military, which the public exigencies might require.* I continued to see General Winder occasionally, as before, and to be astonished at the apparent sluggishness or procrastination in the preparation for the reception of the enemy, who was on his advance. I recollect well that, even after he had, according to authentic and undoubted information, ascended to the head of the ship navigation of the Patuxent, and had, for about twenty-four hours been debarking on the hither bank of that river, and marching his troops to their encampment on the heights of Benedict, (about forty miles from this, on the usual route) General Winder, in answer to an inquiry of mine, whether he had ordered on any troops from Baltimore, and whether he thought they would be here in time, said that they were ordered on, and that all his fear was, that they would be here too soon. Expressing to him my astonishment at the apprehension, he said he thought it very probable that the enemy would suddenly turn about, and make a blow at Baltimore. Having been surprised, for several days, at not having seen or heard of any actual attempt or movement towards throwing up works, of any description, in this vicinity, from behind which
he enemy might be resisted with great advantage and effect, I proposed, at a meeting of our citizens, on the Satur-
lay evening (after I had resigned) next preceding the day of the affair at Bladensburg, that a committee should be
appointed to wait on General-inder, and suggest to him the importance of some such works at Bladensburg, through
which village the enemy would certainly pass; and, in case the General should approve the proposition, to request
him to assign an engineer or officer to prescribe or superintend the work the citizens furnishing the laborers, &c.
grats. A committee accordingly waited on him: he approved the idea, assigned or procured Colonel Wadsworth,
of the ordnance department, to locate,"superintend, &c. and, 'according to that offi6er's project and directions,
(after having -econnoitered nearly a day, an operation in which, at his request, I accompanied him) were the works
completed by the citizens, although, to the universal astonishment, not a man occupied, during the action, the
principal one; and most advantageous parts of the ground, also, which had been reconnoitered, (and where the
enemy might have been cut up and slain by hundreds) were not ever occupied by our troops! Owing to accident and
misinformation; I was not in the commencement of the action; but the whole scene, during -my advance towards
the right front, where Commodore Barney, With his men and the marine corps, did themselves so much honor,
whilst I continued there, and afterwards, in retiring from one point to another as far as Georgetown, contained dis-
gusting and inglorious circumstances. How what was called the first line of our troops on their left generally
was formed, I do not know. In that part of the field on which I moved, and afterwards, during the -etreat, I
could discover Or learn nothing like a system or an order of battle, of 'retreat; or of rallying or reforming; and se-
veral of the officers of the militia of the city and Georgetown, (General IV. Smith's brigade) whom I met with in
the c ourse of the aflir, (and who, with their men, were generally in good order, and deeply regretted the want of
,opportunity to act efficiently) appeared, in this respect, to be in the same predicament with myself.

A cardinal error in this whole business was, in my opinion, that the great body or mass of the Baltimore force
was not ordered on'this way so soon.as the direction of the enemy's movement was ascertained, with instructions,
whilst they (the Baltimore force) were advancing, always to keep themselves between Baltimore and the enemy,
so that they might, and would, have been readt, as the two branches of our army and the enemy approached each
other, always to to-operate, either before or after a junction; with the troops assembling here, (who would, of
course, have followed the enemy had he wheeled towards.Baltimore) in case of an attempt either on this place or
Baltimore; and thus an overwhelming and operative force would have been collected. Another very great error, I
think, was, that the enemy were suffered undisturbedly to encamp on the heights of Benedict, where the local
circumstances are well calculated for resistance, and to advance f roh, thence to Bleadeusburg, without having been
harassed or annoyed in their progress; this was probably, in part, and perhaps principally, owing to the want of a
central camp, and, generally, of means and preparations, on our part, when the enemy landed.
Another error was, that our men were, for a short period before the action, unnecessarily harasssed and worn down by fatiguing and ill-timed marches; which, in addition to the fatigue - many of them underwent from running, as it were, from their homes, (from which they were hurried and dragged at the moment instead of having been ordered out in proper season) to this city, almost exhausted them. Another, a want of attention and promptness in having the reinforcements, as they arrived in the city, supplied with arms, ammunition, provisions, &c. and in accustomed them to the familiar use of the former. Another, that the enemy were suffered to advance too far, even at Bladensburg, before they were met; owing, doubtless, to the absence of our troops, who had been encamped the preceding night within about three or four miles only of the field of battle. Another, a want of the most advantageous order or arrangement in the battle itself; one of the causes of which doubtless was, that the enemy were suffered really to anticipate us in the occupation of the ground intended for ourselves. Another; the evident want of a concerted plan of retreat to, or rallying at, some one or more of the advantageous positions between the battle ground and the capitol. Another, a premature order (as generally understood) of retreat. Another, that a respectable body of apparemly excellent troops, (the Fairfax regiment of militia) who had been in the city since a late period of the preceding day, were not in the action. I understand, from a gentleman who was present, that,'early in the evening of the preceding day, after the arrival of those troops in the city, their commander made application to the Secretary of War, for arms and ammunition for them; and that, owing to objections made by the Secretary, he did not obtain them until the morning, which probably was a principal cause of his detention from the engagement. Another error I think, was, that General Young's brigade of Alexandria, which was encamped on the east side of the Potomac, opposite to Alexandria, within a few miles of the Eastern Branch bridge, was not sent for immediately (if not before) when it was ascertained that the enemy was rapidly approaching Bladensburg.

If this had been done, General Young might either have marched towards that place by the road South of the Eastern Branch, where he might have distracted and annoyed the enemy in flank or rear, or he might, (crossing the Eastern Branch bridge) if he could not have reached the field of battle, have met our retreating troops at some point in the city, and might thus have been very instrumental in restoring the fortune of the day; and in either case, - he might, in a few hours' time, have returned to his former station: whereas, he remained, in obedience to an order (as he has himself informed me) that day given by the Secretary of War, at his position, not an enemy near him, or in sight, whilst his men distinctly heard the affir at Bladensburg, and were mortified at their absence from it. Another error was, that the woods, fences, ravines, &c. by the sides of the turnpike road were not lined with our light troops, to annoy the enemy in his advance from the battle ground. At all events, on the rising ground southwest of the turnpike gate, if not before, our troops ought to have made another stand. By the extraordinary exertions of private gentlemen,
as well as officers, and by the opportune arrival at this favorable spot of the Fairfax troops, (I think about six hundred) who had not yet been engaged, a body of about ten or twelve hundred men—was already formed, including several pieces of artillery, well planted, and their number was rapidly increasing, by the rallying of fugitives, the

*Annexed are copies of my resignation, a subsequent letter from the War Department, and my answer thereto.

A part only of the Baltimore force came this way.

{583} arrival of fresh troops, &c.; and I am confident that, had they remained there, (in a position as well covering the navy yard as the city generally) the British would not have advanced that night, they being at least two or three miles off; wearied, and, partially severely handled; and, by the morning, such advantages of system, arrangement, rest, increase of numbers, confidence, &c. might have been improved by us, as would have led to the discomfiture and defeat of the enemy; but, unfortunately, even from here those troops were ordered to retreat towards the Capitol Square, and thence to a more distant place; against both of which movements I took the liberty at the time, of remonstrating to General Winder. Another unfortunate error was, that our troops, after it was determined to abandon the city itself, were not halted on some of the commanding heights around it, from which they might constantly have operated with effect, either by detachment, or otherwise, on the enemy, during his continuance here: and from which, if it had become necessary to retire, we might, at all times, have retired with safety. Another error was, that a considerable and unnecessary number of wagons and carts were in the field, or its immediate vicinity, from which, at an early period of the engagement, they fled, and in their flight contributed much to the dismay and confusion of the day. Another error was, that the enemy was not pursued and annoyed, in his precipitate departure to his ships. Many of those errors, doubtless, arose from the want of correct information relative to the enemy; which, in itself, was an extraordinary circumstance, as, for some days before they (the enemy) entered the city, there were several hundred cavalry among our troops. Many of the evils of the day also, unquestionably, arose from the rawness of a considerable part of our militia force; indeed, considering what the description of the great mass of our troops was, and that they had to contend with about an equal number of veterans, nothing but judicious and skilful management, added to our decided superiority of artillery and cavalry, the native valor of our men, fighting for all they held dear, and the local advantages within our reach, could authorize the expectation of Success.

Although I cannot think the means we had, on the spot were used to the best advantage, still I think General Winder was by no means furnished with sufficient or timely means; which I always considered it the special duty of the War Department to have attended to.

From a certain degree of delicacy, sir, in my situation, as regards both the late Secretary of War and General Winder, it is not without some reluctance that I have, even the committee the above view; but, considering you call as imperative, and having always been of opinion that it was due to the American people that the facts and
circumstances connected with the fil of the capital should be fully developed, I transmit, it to you, after having necessarily prepared it in great, haste. Possibly other circumstances relative to the subject may hereafter occur to me; should that be the case, I will take the liberty of communicating them. I presume, also, that I shall have the privilege hereafter of correcting any errors, either in form or substance, that may have crept into the statement.

JOHN P. VAN NESS.

Honorable R. M. JOHNson, &c
City of WASHINGTON, ________ 20, 1814.

Give me leave hereby to resign the command which I have for soie time past had the honor to hold, as Major General of the militia of the District of Columbia. My commission would have been enclosed, had I been able to lay my hands upon it. A principal regret which I feel upon this occasion, is, that my resignation occurs at a moment when I would have been happy to have been permitted to participate in the defence of my country, and particularly of the District.

I have the honor to be, &c.O

Honorable JOHN ARMSTRONG, Secretary of War.
WAR DEPART MNT', November 12, 1814.

I am instructed to state, that your resignation of the command of the militia of this District, as Major General, has not been accepted, and that it would be satisfactory to the President that you should resume it.

That you were not called into service with the troops of the District did not proceed from a want of respect for your merit, which is acknowledged, but from the impossibility of doing it, at the time, without displeasing the corn'-mander of the district, from which the most serious injury was apprehended, the enemy having just landea at Ben- dict, and being on his march for this city. Great confidence is entertained in your patriotism, zeal in support of the cause- of your country, and fitness for the trust, regarding your comparative experience, with that of others of our fellow-citizens, in active service. I add, with pleasure, that your conduct, after presenting your resignation, and particularly at Bladensburg, after joining our troops as a-volunteer on the preceding day, has increased these favor-able impressions.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JAMES MONROE.

Major General JoHri P. VAN, NESS, City qf Washington. J

WASHINGTON, November 14, 1814.

SIR:

On my return to the city, after a few days' absence, I had the' honor of receiving your communication of the
twelfth instant, advising me that my resignation of the command of the militia of this District, offered some time since, has not been accepted, and that it would be satisfactory to the President that I should resume it.

Injured as I felt by the treatment I received, in relation to my military command, I adopted, as a proper expression of that feeling, what I considered the only course which, whilst it was just to myself was not inconsistent with the public service—a course which I am gratified that my friends, both public and private, have universally approved. At the same time, sir, without at present hazarding an opinion, or going into any argument as to the sufficiency of the reason for disregarding my claim to the command, or to service, on the approach of the enemy to the metropolis, permit me to state, that I am perfectly satisfied that the President was actuated solely by a regard for the public good.

For the general politeness of your letter, for acknowledging the correctness of my conduct subsequent to my resignation, and particularly in the unfortunate affair at Bladensburg, although I have due sensibility, and fully appreciate the honor done me by the intimation of the President's wishes, it is out of my power to comply with them upon this occasion; which, I presume, cannot be regretted, inasmuch as other gentlemen, better qualified for the purpose, must be within the view of the Government.

I have the honor to be, &c.

- JOHN P. VAN NESS.

To the Hon. JAMES MONROE, Esq. Secretary of War.

- Doctor Catlett's statement.

In compliance with your request I will endeavor to make as concise and correct a statement of the circumstances, which came within my view, of the late campaign in this neighborhood, as is in my power.

On the evening of the 21st, (being attached to the suite of General Winder, as staff surgeon) we were met by Colonel Monroe at the Woodyard, who had left Nottingham about sunset, where he saw the advance of the enemy with their barges and small vessels. Next morning Colonel Monroe, General Winder, and suite, proceeded down and net them within three or four miles of Nottingham. After taking such positions as would afford the best view of the enemy and remaining under cover of the woods until they advanced within three or four hundred yards of us, those gentlemen retired with Colonel Lavall's troop, which was also in advance, until we met an advanced detachment of our troops, about four—or five hundred, which were immediately ordered to retreat to the main body at the Woodyard. Major Hite had been ordered to remain near the barks of the road, to observe whether the enemy took that leading to Marlborough, or the other we were on to the Woodyard. The country here, from the heights and
fields, was admirably calculated to afford observations of the enemy. Their entire want of cavalhy was observable, from their being none with their advance, to which we had been so near. Videttes were placed in our rear. General Winder proceeded towards the Woodyard: Colonel Monroe took a direction across the country towards Marlborough; I accompanied him. We soon (about twelve o'clock) began to hear the explosion and see the smoke from the flotilla. We were overtaken by some of the videttes, who stated that there were fifteen or twenty horsemen on our left, supposed to be of the enemy, attempting to cut us off. We immediately shaped our course towards the Woodyard; met General Winder, who returned; passed a number of our troops, and, arriving at the Woodyard, found the main body moving off towards the Long Old Fields, where the army encamped in the evening. Next morning, 23d, the President and all the Heads of Departments were in camp, having (I understood) come down that night. The President reviewed the troops, supposed about three thousand five hundred, having been joined at the Woodyard by Commodore Barney's men, and other corps, at this place. About two thousand five hundred Baltimore troops were at Bladensburg. This day an advanced detachment, I believe under the command of Major Peter, met the advance of the enemy in the neighborhood of Marlborough, some firing took place, and our troops retreated. General Winder was some miles over to the left, observing on the direct road from Marlborough to Bladensburg. Towards evening we returned to the Old Fields, and found our army advantageously posted to receive the enemy. A retreat was soon after ordered to this city, leaving some flour and whiskey destroyed on the camping ground. This night I slept within a mile of the field, and at daylight sent a man over in that direction to learn whether the enemy were there. He reported in the negative, and I went directly into the road and came on to the city before eight o'clock, believing that the enemy could not reach Bladensburg until late in the day. The upper bridge was on fire, and the other prepared to be blown up as I crossed it. The first news I heard on entering the city, was that the enemy were within two and a half miles, coming towards the bridge, and there appeared to be a continual succession and industrious circulation of false reports and false alarms. The enemy were pertinaciously represented to be at least nine thousand, and many were disposed to believe their number greater, although several prisoners taken yesterday could only enumerate four regiments, and name but one General, and one Colonel, acting as Brigadier. I examined several myself, with all the address I could, and would certainly have risked my life upon their almost entire want of artillery and their want of cavalry. There appeared to be an impression with our troops, generally, that the enemy were much more formidable than appearances could justify. About 11 o'clock the main body of our troops moved off from near the Eastern Branch bridge towards Bladensburg, and, by a necessarily extraordinary effort, for men immediately from ship board, the British reached the opposite side of the 'village nearly at the same time with our troops, about 1 o'clock. They halted in front about twenty minutes, until their rear got up. Some officers were seen observing us from the opposite heights. The two armies were about three fourths of a mile apart, pretty much in view of each other. The position of our troops will be better described to you by others. A few minutes before the action commenced, by request of General Winder I delivered an order to Major
Pinkney, in ti-ont, to take the mostjudicious position with his riflemen to protect the artillery at the battery, within two hundred yards of the Bladensburg bridge, and free or four hundred in advance of our first line. The enemy were now coming down a street in the village, in thick column. This battery, of about seven pieces, commenced a destructive fire upon them, which immediately threw their advance out of the street, among the houses, but they were very soon crossing the bridge in great numbers, notwithstanding an additional cross fire from several pieces from our right. They advanced with great steadiness towards the battery. The artillery retreated; the rifles received them handsomely, but soon retreated also. They began by firing a few rockets about the time that our fire commenced, which passed a considerable distance over our first line, immediately in the rear of which were time President, and several other gentlemen of the cabinet. It was suggested to them, I think by General Winder, to take a more iexpectful distance, and they did so. General Winder rode along the line, encouraging the men to disregard the rockets. The enemy having carried the battery in front of us, began to flank irregularly, but a considerable number, also, advancing directly upon this line, (through an orchard) which soon commenced a fire upon them, from an elevated position, and too soon after, before they came within point blank shot, retreated. They were, however, a number of them, easily rallied by another officer and myself; but on part of the line giving way, which had stood fast, further on the left, they all broke off again. The fire now became very hot in the centre, from our musketry and artillery: the musketry too distant, although with great advantage of position, but the artillery evidently with great execution. The musketry continually, and successively (without being rallied) retreated as the enemy advanced upon them; and as soon as they closer up with Commodore Barney's command, a general retreat took place, before they had reached a considerable portion of our infantry. Being in the rear, I observed that the enemy seemed to halt when the firing ceased, about a mile and a half on this side of Bladensburg; there was nothing like pursuit. When I got to Capitol Hill, there were no troops formed there. As I passed through the city, it was reported that the enemy were coming in from towards the race ground. I observed that it was false, and only intended to produce panic. The few citizens I saw at their houses, appeared as if resigned to meet an awful fate. The main body of our army were now retreating through Georgetown, where I met a deputation, the Mayor and several others, going out to meet the enemy. They can best tell, but I do not think it probable that the enemy were advancing. oe- knew the extent of our retreat before this deputation met them, for I had seen them halting; and the next day, when I came in with a flag, to attend our wounded, I learned from some of their officers that they suspected our troops were still on tire heights above Georgetown, though they were at Montgomery Court House, from which place General Winder had ordered me back to Bladensburg, with permission of the British commander, for the purpose mentioned. I met the advance of the British army on Capitol Hill, supposed to he about seven hundred, and passed their main body, supposed about two thousand, on the hill this side the turnpike. They appeared to be preparing to move; had about forty miserable looking horses haltered up, ten or twelve carts and waons, one ox cart, one coachee, and several gigs, which tie officers were industriously assisting to tackle up,
and which were immediately sent to Bladensburg, to move off their wounded. A drove of sixty or seventy cattle preceded this cavalcade. 'On our arrival at Bladensburg, the surgeons were ordered to select all the wounded who could walk, (those with broken arms and the like) and send them off immediately. The forty horses were mounted with such as could ride, the carts and wagons loaded, and ninety odd wounded left behind. I estimated their wounded at three or four hundred, besides forty or fifty left in this city. One of the British surgeons informed me they had buried that day about one hundred on the field; and the men who were sent out next day after the retreat of the enemy, to bury three or four Americans, reported that they also buried fifty or sixty red-coats, or British. I found at Bladensburg Commodore Barney, Captain Miller, of marines, and seventeen other Americans, badly wounded. I estimate our whole loss at ten or twelve killed on the field, and thirty odd wounded: though others, who had less opportunity of judging, estimate it at more than double. About midnight (being up all night) I heard the sound of a bugle, and was informed that the whole British army were passing through the lower end of the village. In the morning, early, I saw them still going off in small squads, and some stragglers were moving off till noon, about which time we learned that their main body were halted about eight miles on the road to Marlborough. About sunset Captain Burd came down from Montgomery Court House, and informed Commodore Barney and myself, that our troops were marching on to Baltimore, and about the same time we were informed by several persons, that the British were within a few miles of Marlborough. The Commodore expressed a wish that General Winder could be immediately informed of the certainty and manner of their retreat; and, not being able to find any one else, to be depended on, to go for one hundred dollars, having engaged Doctors Martin and M’Culloch to attend to our wounded until my return, with the advice of Commodore Earney, I set out, about dark, with one dragoon, and reached our camp, beyond Snel's bridge, twenty-eight miles, about one o'clock. The troops were intended, about this hour, to march on to Baltimore. General Winder was gone on; Generals Smith, Stanbury, and others, held a council on my information, and it was determined to send the principal part of the cavalry in pursuit of the enemy, immediately; the troops to remain until daylight, and the militia of the District of Columbia to return to the District. I have never been able to learn what cavalry were actually sent off, or the success of their enterprises. After this I was, and have ever since been, confined to the attendance of a hospital, and can relate little further from my own observation.

I have the honor to be, &c.

HANSON CATLETT,
Surgeon 1st Regiment Infantry.

Respecting the condition of the enemy’s troops, I was informed by several of the British officers, that just previous to their reaching Bladensburg, (with excessive fatigue or entire exhaustion) they were dropping off in considerable numbers; that, in the action, it was only by the most extraordinary exertions that the main body could be goaded on. Although I observed some of their flankers at times advance on the run a small distance, these were
said to be only the most active of their light companies of, and attached- to, their 85th regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Thornton, acting as Brigadier; they appeared to me to halt, as if exhausted with fatigue, at or near the place where the firing ceased on our part, about a mile and a half on this side of Bladensburg, about two o'clock, P. M. Their advance, however, reached the capitol about dark or eight o'clock; the main body, I am informed, never came further than the height on this side the turnpike. You ask further for information as to their numbers. Although I had a better opportunity of observation after the battle than any other of our officers, I cannot pretend to state, with any degree of confidence, on this subject; but my estimate was, on Capitol Square, 700; Turnpike Hill, 2,000; wounded at Bladensburg, 300; attendants and guards 300; wounded and attendants in the city, 60; and from intimation, killed at Bladensburg and city, 180; total, 3,540. However incorrect these estimates may be in the detail, they are corroborated, in the aggregate, by the best information I could get from the surgeons, sergeants, and men left in hospital.

Respectfully,

H. CATLETT.

M. John Law's statement.

Sir: WASHINGTON, November 10, 1814.

In compliance with your request, I beg leave to submit to you the following statement of the movements and operations of the troops to whom I was attached, from the period of their march against the enemy, who had landed at Benedict, until their return on the 27th of August.

On Friday, the 19th of August, the militia of this county were mulstered near Mr. Ringgold's rope-walk, and, on being dismissed, were ordered to equip and hold themselves in readiness to march the next morning. The second regiment, under Colonel Brent, accordingly assembled near the capitol; and, by nine o'clock, A. M., were prepared to take up the line of march. About one o'clock, the first regiment, under Colonel Magruder, arrived at the Capitol Hill. Shortly after, the whole force - collected from this county, commenced its march; and, after proceeding about five miles from the Eastern Branch bridge, encamped that night on the road to Upper Marborough. The next morning the troops were again mustered, and the artifices of war read to them. About twelve o'clock, the detachment of marines, under the command of Captain Miller, passed our encampment with five pieces of artillery, and shortly after, our two regiments of militia again took up the line of march, and, after advancing about seven miles, encamped on a field belonging to the Woodyard estate. We here joined the regulars of the 36th and 38th regiments. The main body of the enemy stayed that night at or near Nottingham, having an advance, party stationed at a church about three miles this side of that town. About one o'clock the same night, our troops were beat up and ordered to strike their tents; although the principal part of the force did not move until nine or ten
o'clock the next morning. About sunrise the regulars, together with a small detachment of about three hundred men, consisting of Captain Peter's company of artillery. Captain Stull's rifle 'corps, and Captain Davidson's light infantry, were sent in advance on the road to Nottingham. About nine or ten o'clock the same day, the remainder of our force marched about a mile, to an elevated position near the dwelling house of Mrs. West and remained there about two hours, under the expectation that the enemy would take that road on his way from Nottingham to Washington. It was, however, ascertained that the enemy had taken the road to Upper Marlborough, and that the detachment of our troops, who had been sent that morning in advance, were retreating. All the troops were then ordered to retreat; and, instead of being marched towards Upper Marlborough, where the enemy remained that night, (waiting, it is presumed, to be joined by the detachment which had been sent against Commodore Barney's flotilla) we were marched, to the Battalion Old Fields, about eight miles distant from Upper Marlborough, and about the same distance from Washington. The same day we were joined by the crews of Commodore Barney's flotilla. On Tuesday, the 23d of August, the troops were drawn up in three or four lines, and reviewed by the President of the United States.' The most contradictory reports prevailed at this time in our camp, respecting the strength and 'movements of the enemy. Our force at this place, from the best information I could collect, consisted of about four hundred horse, the flotilla men amounting to about four hundred and fifty, one hundred and ten marines, about four hundred regulars of the 36th and 38th regiments, and about eighteen hundred militia from Maryland and the county of Washington. The militia of Alexandria county never joined us. About 12 o'clock the same day, the detachment of three hundred militia, which had been sent on that day before, were again ordered to advance towards the enemy. They met him on his march, about six miles in advance of our encampment, but with so great a disparity of force, that it was impossible for them to make a stand. After Captain Stull's rifle company had fired about four rounds, the detachment, was compelled to retreat, to prevent being surrounded by the enemy. About five o'clock, P. M., after having remained some time in line of battle, we were ordered to retreat to Washington, and, although our march on the retreat was extremely rapid, yet orders were occasionally given to the captains of companies to hurry on their men.

The march, therefore, literally became a run of eight miles, and the propriety of this rapid movement, which unnecessarily fatigued and dispirited the men, may be tested by the fact, that the main body of the enemy bivouacked that night on the Melwood estate, more than three miles distant from the ground we had left.

On our arrival at the city, we encamped about half a mile from the Eastern Branch bridge. About midnight, a detachment of Captain Butch's company, to which I was attached, was called up and ordered to move with three pieces of artillery to an eminence near the bridge, which was done, During the night, a boat, containing eight barrels of powder, was stationed underneath the bridge, under the charge of Mr. Forrest, of the navy, with orders to
blow it up on the approach of the enemy. About sunrise, the remainder of our company joined us. We were shortly after ordered to pull down the rails of a neighboring fence, and place them on the bridge, in order that it might be effectually burnt, in case the explosion of gunpowder should not succeed in preventing the enemy from passing it. For the same purpose, the toll house was ordered to be pulled down, and the planks placed on the bridge. About ten o'clock the same day, our company was ordered to give up its position to Commodore Barney, 'who had a number of heavier guns with him, and who immediately after took possession of the eminence we had occupied. About eleven o'clock, we were ordered to march, and on arriving at the boundary line of the city, we halted a short time, until we were joined by the remainder of the troops, when we continued our march to Bladensburg.

At the distance of about a mile and a quarter from that town, the troops were halted, and shortly after Captain Burch, with three of his pieces of artillery, was ordered to advance and report himself to General Winder. Captain Burch immediately advanced with three of his pieces; and, on reaching the left of the line of Baltimore militia, halted the men in the road, in order that he might look for General Winder and receive his orders. At this time the advance of the British was just entering the outskirts of Bladensburg, and the arms of a large body of them were seen glittering in the sun, about a mile from the town. Finding that Captain Burch did not return as soon as might have been reasonably expected, and healing that General Winder was a short distance from us, I marched our detachment of artillery towards the spot where he was, and, on coming up to him, inquired what position I should take with our artillery. he addressed me as Captain, and ordered me to place our pieces in battery on the left of the Baltimore line of infantry, which was immediately done. Shortly after he came up to us, and again addressing me, said, "When you retreat, take notice you must retreat by the Georgetown road;" at the same time he pointed to a road which led from Digges's mill into the country, and passed near the position we had taken. Captain Burch soon after joined us. The time occupied in taking our position was sufficient to have enabled us, and also the troops that marched from the city, to take any position on the fields this side of Bladensburg. About a quarter of an hour after we had taken our position, the Baltimore artillery, which was posted in advance near the mill, (and shortly after, the Baltimore riflemen) commenced firing on the enemy. The artillery fired about ten rounds, as far as I could judge, and then retreated, with some of the Baltimore riflemen, towards our left. A few scattering British soldiers were soon after visible in the orchard before us, and they appeared to be forming behind a barn, which was about three hundred and fifty yards from our guns. We immediately commenced our re upon them; and, shortly after, General Winder came behind our guns, and ordered us to direct our shot at the barn. We had scarcely fired three rounds, when the line of the Baltimore militia began to break; several of the 5th Baltimore regiment also fled. After we had fired about five rounds from our pieces, General Winder ordered us to retreat; in consequence, I presume, of thd. flight of the militia on our ight. The British column had just then be-
gan to advance from the barn. Not a man of our company had been touched by the fire of the enemy, and I thought that the battle was only then seriously commencing. After retreating about a hundred yards, we were again ordered to unlimber our pieces; but this order was immediately after countermanded, and we were directed to continue our retreat. Our pieces were never after ordered into action; nor were we, at any time, told where to rally. The road, by which we had been directed to retreat, and by which the principal part of the Baltimore troops also retreated, forked some miles from the battle ground, in three directions; one branch led by Rock Creek Church to Tenlytown and Montgomery Court House; another branch led to Georgetown; and the third to the city of Washington. Each individual, on the retreat, took the road that suited his inclination. For myself, having been separated, together with several of Capt. Burch's company, from our guns, which were before us, and presuming that the principal part of the force had gone to Washington, I took the road leading to this place. On arriving at the capitol, I understood that the city had been abandoned by our troops, without further struggle, to the enemy. Our forces encamped that night at Tenlytown, about three miles back of Georgetown. The next day they marched to Montgomery Court House; and, on the 26th of August, to Shell's bridge, on the road to Baltimore, where I joined them, having never had it in my power before to ao so. On Saturday, the 27th, the troops belonging to this District returned here. The enemy left the city on the night of the 25th.

From what I could discern of the line of the enemy's march on his entrance into Bladensburg, before the battle, I conjectured that his force amounted to about five thousand men. I afterwards collected, from conversations with British prisoners, and from comparing together the several accounts they gave me, that it did not exceed four thousand four hundred men, including about one hundred or one hundred and fifty sailors, who were armed only with cutlasses. The enemy's artillery consisted of one howitzer, and two small pieces, drawn by men; and his whole force actually engaged in the battle did not exceed twelve hundred men, as I was informed by two British officers and some prisoners. Our force, on the other hand, consisted of the troops that were with us in the Battalion Old Fields, amounting, in my opinion, to about three thousand one hundred and sixty men, together with about two thousand troops from Baltimore, and about five hundred militia under Colonel Beall, who joined us on the field of battle. Our artillery consisted of eighteen six pounders, under Captains Peter, Burch, and Magruder, and two eighteen pounders and three twelves under Commodore Barney. The enumeration which I have given of our troops 'may, in some instances, be incorrect, as it is merely the result of general observation and inquiry. I would beg leave further to state, that the distance between Benedict and Washington, by the way of Bladensburg, is at least fifty miles, and that the whole of the intervening country is admirably calculated for every species of military operation. I shall refrain, sir, from expressing any opinion on the manner in which our force was conducted and employed: but, in justice to General Winder, I will add, that he evinced no deficiency of personal courage or military coolness during the action.

With respect, I am, &c. JOHN LAW,
SIR:
In addition to the information which I have had the honor to give to the committee of investigation upon the subject of the late intimation, of this District by the enemy, I have to state:
That I have perused letters recently written by Colonel D. Wadsworth to Daniel Carroll, Esq. of this District, respecting the burning of the Potomac bridge, and the destruction of the military stores deposited on the Virginia side thereof; which in substance contain a specific denial of either circumstance having taken place by his orders or advice. He explicitly states, that the latter was occasioned by the corporal or non-commissioned officer commanding the guard, who, on the draws of the bridge having been broken by a violent tornado, and perceiving a body of the British ready to pass over, concluded the surest and best measure to prevent it, was to destroy, by fire, that end and part where he was posted; and that the other end, on the Washington side, was fired by the enemy.
The military stores which had been placed at the end of the bridge were destroyed by the event of firing that end.
I beg leave to take this occasion to repeat what I had the honor to state to you verbally, that, having been personally conversant with Colonel Wadsworth on the evening of the day of the battle of Bladensburg, and on the subsequent invasion of the city, the colonel at no time suggested to me (though the next officer in command) the necessity or expediency of firing the Potomac bridge; and I have, consequently, no belief that such was his intention or order.
Lieutenant Baden, who was directed to post the guard at the Virginia end of the bridge, and for the protection of the military stores, Unequivocally and explicitly denies having given any similar order.
I beg leave to transmit here a more particular account of the stores furnished to Fort Washington; rendered, however, by the late decision of a court martial, less necessary than before.

I have the honor to be, &c.,

JOHN MORTON,
Captain and Deputy Commissary, acting for the Commissary General.

Hon. Col. R. M. JOHNSON.

ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, October 1, 1814.

SIR:
In the absence of the Commissary General, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter to this
department, of the 15th current, requesting, in behalf of the committee of which you are chairman, "all the information in its power on the subject of their inquiry; more especially to state what was the quantity and situation of the munitions of war within the District of Columbia, previous to, and at the time of, the invasion of the enemy in his recent enterprises against this metropolis.

The hurry with which many of those munitions were distributed, previous to, and at the time of, the invasion, and the dispersion and loss of some papers which gave some details thereof, necessarily render the reports from the several persons having charge of them, somewhat imperfect, and will render it difficult to give from this department more than (as follows) a general statement. This statement, however, will be substantially correct; and will, perhaps, tend to answer or satisfy the committee on the leading objects of the inquiry made of this office.

Presuming that the expression, "munitions of war," was intended to include the ordnance within the District, I shall commence therewith, by stating, that there were, at the period alluded to, the following mounted cannon, viz:

Eight 24 pounders, cannon, mounted on garrison carriages, and forming the battery, Greenleaf's Point.
One 50    ditto, columbiad,    do.             do.            do.            do.
One 18    ditto,     do.            do.          do.            do.
Two 18 pounders, cannon, complete for the field, on travelling carriages,
Five 12  ditto,  do.        do.        do.            do.
Six   6  ditto,   do.        do.        do.            do.
Three 24 howitzers, do.          do.            do.            do.

These last were in charge at the United States' arsenal, Greenleaf's Point; but occasionally distributed previous to the actual invasion of the city, as ordered; for instance, two eighteen pounders, on travelling carriages, were placed in front of the capitol, for its defence; two twelve pounders in front of the President's House, and two near the General Post Office, for the same purposes.

In addition to the foregoing, there were twelve six pounders, field artillery, furnished by the order of the late Secretary of War, and in the advice of, the District corps of artillery; and two twelve pounders loaned to the marine corps of the United States.

The number of field artillery attached to the brigade of Alexandria, is not known to me; but it is presumed to have been four or six pieces.

Of ordnance stores, there were on hand at the United States' laboratory, exclusive, of course, of what had before been distributed, viz:

  140 bbls. (14,000 lbs.) gun powder of different kinds,
  5 tons lead,
7,180 canton cartridges, filled and empty (the empty are soon filled.)
8,650 rounds of round grape and canister shot.
150 ten inch shells, with other stores of ordinary consumption, or expenditure, too numerous to detail.

In the military store and laboratory, viz:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stands of arms complete</td>
<td>2,993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartridge boxes and belts</td>
<td>1,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bayonets scabbards and belts</td>
<td>2,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flints</td>
<td>13,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musket cartridges of different kinds</td>
<td>271,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The foregoing were on hand immediately preceding the invasion after considerable distributions had been occasionally made to the regular troops and the militia, employed in different situations or parts of this section of the country- and equal, it is believed by me, to all their requisitions.

Of rifles it was impossible, though every exertion was made by this department, to procure a seasonable supply.
What is here offered to the honorable committee embraces, perhaps, all which is expected from this department; but, if any additional objects of inquiry should occur, the undersigned will hold himself in readiness to furnish, either personally or in writing whatsoever may be required and remain further within his means of information.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JOHN MORTON,

ORDNANCE DEPARTMENT, November 4, 1814.

SIR:

In compliance with your verbal request, I have the honor to state to you that, by an ordnance return, bearing date the 30th June, ultimo, received at this office, there were at Fort Washington, on the Potomac:

- Two 32 pounders on fixed carriages (cannon.)
- Eight 24 pounders do. do.
- Two 50 pounders (columbiads) on fixed carriages, do.
- Three 6 pounders on travelling carriages, do.

Of ordnance stores there were--

- 132 rounds, 32 pounders, round shot.
- 432 do. 24 pounders, do.
- 564 i-ound shot.
99 flannel cartridges, 32 pounders, filled.
86 - do. 24 pounders, do.-
88 do. 32 pounders, empty.
405 do. 24 pounders, soon filled.,
44 paper cartridges, 32 pounders, empty.
177 - do. 24 pounders, do.
899 cartridges, filled and empty. -
3,100 pounds cannon powder.
246 pounds musket powder. -.
100 musket cartridges.
291 pounds lead.
200 pounds junk. -
137 musket balls.
31 stand small arms.

From the 30th June to August 27, there were furnished at Fort Washington the following:
Four 18 pounders (columbiads) July 16.
Forty-eight stands of arms, complete.
117 rounds ammunition for 18 pounders, columbiads.
205 do. 18 pounders, cannon.
48 do. 18 pounders, grape shot. /
200 do. 18 pounders, round shot.
240 do. 6 pounders, strapped shot.
- 60 do. 6 pounders, case shot.,
48 do. 18 pounders, case shot.
232 tubes.
34 portfires.
33 pounds slow match.

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The number of men stationed at Fort Washington is not precisely known at this office, but it is supposed by me not to have exceeded sixty.
I regret that circumstances have delayed your receipt of this communication; but, as your former written request confined my report to the District, more time has been required to ascertain the facts here stated, (particularly the supplies since the 30th June), than would otherwise have occurred.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JNO. MORTON,

H C Captain, and Dc. Com. United States' Ordnance,
Hon. Colonel Johnson.

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Insert Table D titled “Return of Fixed Ammunition and Ordnance Stores delivered to Fort Washington, in the month of August, 1814.”

N. BAD&e, Lieut Corn. at Greenlea’s Point.
GREENLEA’S OIre, i em er 4, 1814.

No' 12.

Sentence of the Court Martial in relation to Captain -Dyson, and the correspondence between him and the Secretary of War.
WAR DEPARTMENT, August 29, 1814.

I send Captain Manialult with orders to receive your written or verbal report of the' causes under which you left the post committed to your charge. In this you will state the orders under which you acted, and from whom received.

I. have the honor to be, &c.
Captain DYSON, Corps of artillery.

CAMP AT MAO' ISLAND, August 29, 1814.

SIR:
I had the honor to receive your communication of the 29th instant. The orders received from Brigadier General Winder, through Major Hite, verbally, on the 24th instant were in case I was oppressed by, or heard of, an enemy im my rear, to spike our guns, and make my escape over the river. The enemy approached by water on the 27th, and we had learnt on that day, through several, channels, that the enemy had been reinforced at Benedict
two thousand strong, and that they were on their march to co-operate with the fleet in addition to the force which left the city. Under all these circumstances, the officers under my command dereconsulted, and agreed it was best to abandon the fort, and effect a retreat. The force under my command was thought not equal to a defence of the place.

I have the _____ - aid SAM. T. DYSON,' Captain Corps of artillery.
Hon. Johnson, Secretary of War, Washington,

HEAD QUARTERS, Tzl-ri MILiTAny DISTRICT, BALTIMORE, Nov. 17, 1814.
GENERAL ORDERS.
At a general court martial, whereof Brigadier General Smith, of the militia of the District of Columbia, was president, which met at Washington city, and continued its sittings, by divers adjournments, until the 12th instant, Captain Samuel T. Dyson, of the United States' corps of artillery, was tried on the following charges and specifications:

Charge First. Violating the fifty-second article of the rules and articles for the government of the armies of the United States. Specification First. In that the said Samuel T. Dyson, being commanding officer of the United States' Fort Washington, did, on or about the 27th of August, 1814 when an enemy was approaching said fort, misbehave himself before the enemy, run away, and shamefully abandon the fort, post, and guard, which he then and there commanded, and which it was his bounden duty to defend, and speak words inducing others to do the like.

'Specification Second. In that the said Samuel T. Dyson did, on or about the 27th day of August, aforesaid, at the post called Fort Washington, aforesaid, cast away and destroy his arms and ammunition, contrary to the said fifty-second article of the rules and articles of war, aforesaid, and to his duty as commanding officer of the fort.

Charge Second. Conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. Specification First. In that the said Captain Samuel T. Dyson, being commanding officer of the United States' fort and garrison, at a place called Fort Washington, did, on or about the 27th day of August, 1814, misbehave himself, by dismantling and destroying said fort, which it was his bounden duty to preserve and defend.

Specification Second. In that the said Captain Samuel T. Dyson did, on or about the 27th day of August aforesaid, quit his post, called Fort Washington, without any attempt to defend the same; and, without any necessity therefor, from the presence of an enemy did march oft the garrison of the same, in violation of his duty, and contrary to his orders.

Specification Third. In that the said Captain Samuel T. Dyson, on or about the 27th day of August, 1814, being commanding officer of the garrison at Fort Washington, and an enemy being then in his vicinity, was so drunk and intoxicated, while on duty, that he abandoned and destroyed the fort which had been entrusted to his defence, and suffered the garrison of the same to disperse, without being pressed to the measure for the safety of himself and the garrison aforesaid.

R. H. WINDER, Army Judge Advocate. The court having heard all the evidence adduced, whether on the part of
the prosecution or the defence, and after due deliberation thpreon, pronounce the following sentence: On the first specification of the first charge, the court find that Captain Samuel, T. Dyson, of the United States’ corps of artillery, being commanding officer of the United States' fort, Fort Washington, did, on or'about the 27th day of Augst, 1814, when an enemy was approaching said fort, misbehave himself before the enemy, and shamefully abandon the fort and post which he then and there commanded, and which it was his bounden duty to defend. The court find the said Captain Samuel, T. Dyson guilty of the second specification of the first charge. The court find the said Captain Samuel T. Dyson guilty of the first specification of tie second charge. The court find the said Captain Samuel T. Dyson guilty of the second 8pecification of the second charge. The court acquit the said Captain Samuel T. Dyson of the third specification of the second charge. On the second charge the court find the said, Captain Samuel T. Dyson guilty of conduct unbecoming an officer, but do not find him guilty of conduct unbecoming a gentleman. The court do sentence the said Captain Samuel T. Dyson to be dismissed the service of the United States. The Major General commanding the district approves of the proceedings and sentence of the general court martial in the foregoing case, and accordingly pronounces Samuel T. Dyson, dismissed the service of the United States. The general court martial, whereof Brigadier-General Smith is President, is hereby dissolved.

W. SCOTT.
By command.
FRANCIS S. BELTON,
Assistant Adjutant General oth Military District.

Report from the Corporation of Alexandria, including the capitulation, and letter from General John Mason.

ALEXANDRIA, September 28, 1814. I had the honor of receiving your letter of the 26th instant, by this 'day's, mail, and hasten to comply with your request therein contained. The enclosed printed statement is an official act of the Common Council of Alexandria, and contains a full and true account of the occupation of this town by the enemy, and of the circumstances connected with that event, and a copy of the terms imposed by Captain Gordon, the commander of the British squadron, on the town of Alexandria. There was no correspondence between the Common Council and the enemy, other than that mentioned in the statement. As you request a statement of any other proceedings of the town of Alexandria, in a corporate capacity, touching the inquiry embraced in the resolution enclosed in your letter, I think it proper to state that, on the 8th of May, 1813, the Common Council appointed a deputation to wait on the President of the United States, and apprise him of the defenceless state of the town of Alexandria: accordingly, the persons appointed waited on the President, and represented to him the defenceless state of the town, and the fears of the citizens that the navy yard, public buildings, and cannon foundry would tempt the enemy to make an attack on the District. He observed, that the representation of any respectable body of men was entitled to attention; and that the subject should be taken under consideration, or words to that effect. On the 11th of May, in the same year, the Common Council appointed a committee to confer and co-operate
with committees appointed by the constituted authorities of the city of Washington and Georgetown, relative to the defence of the District. Those several committees soon afterwards met in the city of Washington, and appointed a sub-committee to wait on the Secretary of War, and on the Secretary of the Navy, and to solicit them to take measures for the defence of the District, and application on that subject was accordingly made to them by the sub-committees. The common council of Alexandria has appointed a committee to attend the committee of Congress, appointed to inquire into the causes of the success of the enemy in his recent enterprises against the metropolis and Alexandria, who will give every information which may be required, of the proceedings of the Common Council, and of the citizens of Alexandria, in relation to the enemy.

I have the honor to be, &c. CHARLES SIMMS.

Report of the Committee of Council on the late occupation of Alexandria, by a British squadron, under the command of Captain James A. Gordon. IN Committee, September 7, 1814. Present: Thomas Herbert, President, John Gird, Andrew Fleming, Henry Nicholson, J. B. Paton, John Cohiagen, James Millan, John Hunter, Reuben Johnston, R. I. Taylor, William Veitch, Anthony Rhodes. The following narrative of the occupation of this town by the enemy, and of the circumstances connected with that unfortunate transaction, having been submitted to council, and duly considered and examined, the council do unanimously concur therein; and it is thereupon ordered, that it be published in both of the papers printed in this town.

THOMAS HERBERT, President.

At a meeting of the committee of vigilance, this 7th of September, 1814, Present: Charles Simms, Mayor, Joseph Dean, Matthew Robinson, Jonah' Thompson,' William Herbert, Thos. Vowell, Edmund I. Lee. The following narrative of the occupation of the town of Alexandria by the British squadron, was submitted to the committee, who, upon examining the same, unanimously concur in it.

CHARLES SIMMS, Chairman.

Thomas Vowell, Secretary. {590} A respect for the opinions of others, and a due regard for the character of the citizens of Alexandria, have induced the municipal authorities of the town to exhibit to the public a faithful narrative of the occupation of Alexandria by the British squadron, under the command of Captain Gordon, together with the causes which led to that distressing event. To those who are unacquainted with the situation and condition of Alexandria, in regard to its means of defence, it will be proper to state that it is Situate in the District of Columbia upon the west bank of the river Potomac, about six miles below the city of Washington, the depth of water admitting large frigates to come to the very wharves of the town. It is totally destitute of fortifications of any kind, and its protection against invasion by water depended entirely upon a fort about six miles below the town, commonly known by the name of Fort Warburton, which was exclusively under the control of the Government of the United States. About the month of July last, it was announced that General Winder was appointed to the command of the 10th military district of the United States, comprehending the District of Columbia, and a portion of the adjoining States of Virginia and Maryland, including the city of Baltimore. In consequence of reports that the enemy contemplated an attack upon the city of Washington, the municipal authority of Alexandria thought it
advisable to appoint a committee of vigilance, for the purpose of procuring information of the approaches of the enemy, and of obtaining assistance and advice as to the measures which it might be proper to pursue for protection and defence. As soon as this committee was appointed, they caused representations to be made to General Winder, of the defenceless condition of the town, and earnestly entreated that some measures should be taken for its protection. General Winder was called on, because it had been distinctly understood that the Secretary of War would receive our communications through this channel only. From General Winder every assurance was made that could have been wished, that every thing in his power should be done for the protection of the town. His means, however, were very inconsiderable: he had no money to expend in fortifications, or even in the erection of batteries; and unless some defence of this sort could be obtained, the town would be exposed to the mercy of the enemy if he should approach by water, and should succeed in passing the fort. The committee of vigilance was duly impressed with the necessity of providing some adequate defence against an attack by water, and some of its members, under the authority of the committee had repeated interviews with General Winder on this subject; in one of them, the President of the United States was present, and he was distinctly given to understand that, unless there was provided an adequate defence for the town, it would be at the mercy of the enemy, and would be compelled to make the best terms in its power. These representations and requests produced no other effect than the repetition of the assurance of the earnest desire, on the part of General Winder, to afford every assistance in his power.

On the 19th of August a levy en masse was made of the militia of the town and county of Alexandria, and on the 20th and 21st they were ordered to cross the Potomac, and stationed between Piscataway and Fort Warburton. They took with them all the artillery which had been mounted at the expense of the corporation, except two twelve pounders, which were left without ammunition, and nearly all the arms belonging to the town. They left no men but the exempt from age and other causes, and a few who had not reported themselves, or had found substitutes, and it is not believed that, after their departure, one hundred effective armed men could have been mustered in town. The two iron twelve pounders remained until the 25th, when Alexandria being open to the enemy, then in full possession of Washington, they were removed at some distance from the town, by orders received from General Young. On the night of the 24th the Alexandria militia were ordered to recross the Potomac; they did so, and were marched through town, without halting, into the country, and without giving information to the authorities or inhabitants of the place of their destination and on the evening of the 27th, when the fleet approached, the municipal authorities of the town 'knew not where they were. It has since appeared, that they were then stationed about nineteen miles from town, by the orders of General Winder. It is here proper to state, that General Winder, on the morning of the 24th, informed the members of the committee of vigilance, who waited on him, that he could send no part of the forces with him to Alexandria, but that he had ordered General Young to cross over to Alexandria, if practicable, if not, to fall down the river: The committee of vigilance, on receiving this information, sent boats over to the Maryland shore, sufficient, in number to bring over the whole of
General Young's force at once; but when the boats reached him, he had received orders from the Secretary of War to retain his position, as General Young, in a communication to the Mayor, stated. The committee of vigilance, desiring of obtaining any assistance from the General Government, and having information of the rapid approach of the enemy toward the capital by land, and that their squadron was approaching Alexandria by water, deemed it their duty to recommend to the common council a resolution to the following effect: "That, in case the British vessels should pass the fort, or their forces approach the town by land, and there should be no sufficient force, on our part, to oppose them, with any reasonable prospect of success, they should appoint flag the officer commanding the enemy's force, about to attack the town, and to procure the best terms for the safety of persons, houses, and property, in their powers. This recommendation was made on the day of the battle at Bladensburg, and, on the same day, was unanimously adopted by the Common Council. The battle of Bladensburg having terminated in the defeat of our troops, and General Winder having been obliged to retreat from the capital towards Montomery Court House, about fifteen miles to the west of it, the city of Washington was left in the entire possession of the enemy. The citizens of Alexandria saw nothing to impede the march of their British to their town; saw nothing to restrain them from committing the most brutal outrages upon the female portion of the society, having neither arms nor men to make defence with. The President of the United States and the Heads of the Departments were absent, and it was not known where they were to be found; no military commander or officer of the General Government was present to direct or advise. In this state of things, it was considered by the Common Council as their duty to send a flag to the British commander at Washington, to know what treatment might be expected from him, in case, his troops should approach in obtaining possession of the town... Admiral Cockburn, to whom the communication was made, assured the very respectable gentlemen who bore that flag, that private property, of all descriptions, should be respected; that it was probable that fresh provisions and some flour might be wanted, but that, whatever they did take, should be paid for. While these things were going on in the city of Washington, the British squadron had been gradually ascending the Potomac, and on the 27th of August, three days after the battle at Bladensburg, it reached Fort Warburton. No change had taken place in relation to the means of the defence of the town of Alexandria. Upon the fort and the safety of Alexandria now entirely depend. The citizens looked with great anxiety to this point for protection; but, to their great surprise and mortification, and without the concurrence or the wish of the municipal authority of the town, or of any member of it, the fort was abandoned, and the magazine blown up, by the United States garrison on the evening of the 27th, without firing a single gun. The following correspondence between the Secretary of War and the commander at the fort, shows by what authority he acted:

Copy of the letter from the Secretary of War to Captain Dyson, dated "AUGUST 29th, 1814. I send Captain Mtnigault with orders to receive your written or verbal report of the causes under which you left the post committed to your charge. In this you will state the orders under Which you acted, and from whom received.
I am, sir, your most obedient servant, Capt. DYSON, Corps of Artillery.

At MACONS ISLAND, August 29, 1814. Sir: I have the honor to receive your communication of the 29th instant. The orders received from Brigadier General Winder, through Major Hite, verbally on the 24th instant, were, in case I was oppressed by, or heard of, an enemy in my rear, to spike our guns and make my escape over the river. The enemy approached by water on the 27th, and we had learned that they were on their march to co-operate with the fleet, in addition to the force which left the city. Under all these circumstances the officers under my command were consulted, and agreed it was best to abandon the fort and effect a retreat. The force under my command was thought not equal to a defense of the place. I have the honor to be, with great consideration, your obedient servant, SAM. T. DYSON, Captain Corps of Artillery.

The Hon. JOHN ARMSTRONG Secretary of War, Washington. This relinquishment of the fort decided the fate of Alexandria. Nothing was left to oppose the progress of the squadron, and on the morning of the 28th it passed the ruins of the fort on its way to the town; their barges had sounded a considerable distance above. About ten o'clock of the morning of the 28th, after the squadron was above the fort, the committee appointed by the Council to bear the flag to the enemy, in case they should pass the fort, set out upon their mission, and proceeded to the ship commanded by Captain Gordon. They rettested to know what his intentions were in regard to the town of Alexandria. They were informed by Captain Gordon that he would communicate his terms when he came opposite the town. But he assured them that, in the mean time, if the squadron was not molested by the inhabitants, the persons, houses, and furniture, of the citizens, should not be injured. One of the gentlemen who attended the flag was the mayor. Upon his return from the squadron, he was informed that a small detachment of cavalry, from the army of General Hungerford, had been in town, probably for the purpose of reconnoitering the enemy; that it had remained but a short time. Upon inquiry, it was understood that the army of General Hungerford was at that time about sixteen miles from Alexandria, on its march to that place having followed the British squadron along the shores of the Potomac a great part of its way up. The force of General Hungerford was composed of infantry and cavalry, with two or three small pieces of artillery, not calculated to afford any protection to the town. The municipal authority of the town had received no advice of the approach of this army; and after the return of the flag, it was too late to enter into any arrangement with General Hungerford for defence: he was too distant to afford relief. The squadron having suspended its approach to the town, did not reach it until the evening of this day. On the morning of the next day, to wit, the 29th of August, it arranged itself along the town, so as to command it from one extremity to the other. The force consisted of two frigates, to wit: the Seahorse, rating thirty-eight guns, and Euryalus, rating thirty-six guns; two rocket-ships, of eighteen guns each; two bomb-ships, of eight puns each; and a schooner, of two guns, which were but a few hundred yards from the wharves, and the houses so situated that they might have been laid in ashes in a few minutes. About ten o'clock in the morning of the 29th, Captain Gordon sent to the Mayor the following terms:
HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP SEAHORSE,

City of Alexandria, August 29, 1814.

In consequence of a deputation yesterday received from the city of Alexandria, requesting favorable terms for the safety of their city, the undermentioned are the only conditions in my power to offer:

The town of Alexandria, with the exception of public works, shall not be destroyed, unless hostilities are commenced on the part of the Americans; nor shall the inhabitants be molested in any manner whatever, or their dwelling houses entered, if the following articles are complied with:

Article 1. All naval and ordnance stores, public ad private, must be immediately delivered up.

Article 2. Possession will be immediately taken of all the shipping, and their furniture must be sent on board by the owners, without delay.

Article 3. The vessels that have been sunk must be delivered up in the state they were in on the 19th of August, the day of the squadron passing the Kettle Bottoms.

Article 4. Merchandise of every description must be instantly delivered up; and, to prevent any irregularities that might be committed in its embarkation, the merchants have it in their option to load the vessels generally employed for that purpose, when they will be towed off by us.

Article 5. All merchandise that has been removed from Alexandria, since the 19th instant, is to be included in the above articles.

Article 6. Refreshments of every description to be supplied the ships, and paid for at the market price by bills on the British Government.

Article 7. Officers will be appointed to see that the Articles Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 5, are strictly complied with; and any deviation or non-compliance, on the part of the inhabitants of Alexandria, will render this treaty null and void.

I have the honor to be, &c.

JAMES A. GORDON,

Captain of his Majesty's ship Seahorse, and Senior Officer of his Majesty's ships before Alexandria.

To the Council of the town of Alexandria.

Upon the mayor's receiving them, he sent for the members of the committee of vigilance. These terms were borne by one of the officers of Captain Gordon's frigate, who stated but one hour was allowed him to wait for a reply to them. Upon their being read by the mayor and the committee, it was observed to the officer by the mayor and one of the committee, that it would be impossible that the Common Council could accede to several of them; that the municipal authority of the town had no power to recall the merchandise that had been sent out subsequent to the 19th of August. The reply of the officer was in that case it would not be expected. He was further intimated, that it would not be in the power of the Common Council to compel the citizens to assist in getting up the sunken vessels. The officer answered, that their sailors would then do it. He was required to explain what was intended by the term merchandise, as used in the fourth article. He answered, that it was intended to embrace that species of merchandise only which was intended for exportation, such as tobacco, flour, cotton, bale goods, &c.

The Mayor, and one of the committee, requested to know whether the Commodore intended to require a delivery of any more of the merchandise than he could take away with him. He answered, it would not be required. This explanation was afterwards reconized by Captain Gordon. With these verbal explanations, the preceding terms were submitted to the Common Council. It will be here proper to remark, that, when these terms were proposed...
and submitted to the Common Council, General Hungerford had not arrived with his army, nor did it reach the suburbs of the town until the night of that day. The town was still without any means of defence, and it was evident that no defence could avail; but that species of force which would be cactulated to drive the ships from their moorings. No communication had been received from the officers of the General Government, and the town appeared to be abandoned to its fate. Under these circumstances the Common Council could have no hesitation as to the course to be pursued. The citizens of the town, of all descriptions, with an immense value of property, were entirely in the power of the enemy, whose naval commander, according to the proclamation of the President of the United States, dated on the first of September, has declared his "purpose to be to employ the force under his direction in destroying and laying waste such towns and districts upon the coast as may be found assailable." A similar declaration had been made by Captain Gordon to the committee who bore the flag. Against the attack of such an enemy was the town of Alexandria without any means of defence whatever. The people of the town were at his mercy, and compelled to yield to such terms as the "victor" might think fit to prescribe. If the members of the municipal authority, and citizens of the town, had given loose to the feelings of indignation which the occasion had excited, and had sacrificed the town, and exposed their wives and daughters to the wanton insults of an unrestrained enemy, they would have betrayed their trusts, and have deplored the consequences. The Common Council, therefore, were obliged to yield submission to the terms as explained, and did, thereupon, pass and publish the following resolution: "Resolved, That the Common Council of Alexandria, in assenting to the conditions offered by the commander of the British squadron, how off the town, has acted from the impulse of irresistible necessity, and solely from a regard to the welfare of the town; that it considers the assent by it given as only formal, inasmuch as the enemy had it already in their power to enforce a compliance with their demand by a seizure of the property required from us; and believing the safety of the persons of the inhabitants, of their dwellings, and of such property as is not comprehended within the requisition, to depend entirely on the observance of the terms of it, the Common Council recommends to the inhabitants an acquiescence, at the same time that it does expressly disclaim the power of doing any act on its part to enforce cot ipsum, its authority, it this particular, being limited to recommendation only." In the exception of the terms imposed by the enemy, it is proper to state, that the verbal explanations made by the officer to the Mayor, were generally adhered to. No merchandise was required to be brought back to the town; no assistance was required of, or offered by, the citizens, in getting up the sunken vessels. The depredations of the enemy, with a few exceptions, were confined to flour, cotton, and tobacco, which they carried off in some of the vessels then at the town. Only one vessel was burnt; no private dwelling was visited or entered in a rude or hostile manner, nor were citizens personally exposed to insult. The loss sustained from the enemy it is believed, will not exceed the following: three ships, three brigs, several bay and river craft, the number of which has not been ascertained; all of which were carried away, and one ship burnt. The quantity of flour carried away, it is believed will not exceed sixteen thousand bairels; about one thousand hogsheads of
tobacco, and one hundred and fifty bales of cotton; and of wine, sugar, and other articles, not more than five thousand dollars' worth. I, Israel P. Thompson, clerk of the Common Council of Alexandria, do certify that the above is a true copy from the original.

I, Israel P. Thompson, C.C. October 6, 1814. ALEXANDRIA, October 7, 1814.

In pursuance of the enclosed resolutions of the Common Council of Alexandria, dated the 27th September, 1814, marked A, appointing a committee, on the part of the town, for the purpose therein mentioned, we beg leave to lay before the committee of Congress the following statement and accompanying documents. Misrepresentations of the conduct of the citizens of Alexandria, when the British squadron approached this place, having been circulated through the Union, the Common-Council have deemed it their duty to lay before Congress a true history of the steps which the citizens have, from time to time, taken, in order to guard against that misfortune which has come upon them a misfortune they deplore as much on the national, as on their own individual account. The citizens of Alexandria rejoice that an opportunity has been afforded them to lay before Congress a faithful narrative of the proceedings which self-preservation compelled them to adopt. It will show that they did all in their power to avert the blow. In the month of October, 1812, a volunteer company was raised in Alexandria, and stationed at Fort Washington, in the manner stated in the letter of Captain M'Guire, marked B. In the month of March, 1813, the artillery company of Alexandria, then commanded by Captain Marsteller, was stationed at Fort Washington. See Captain Griffith's certificate, marked C. On the 21st March, 1813, the Common Council appointed the Mayor of the town and the President of the Council, to wait upon the Secretary of War, in company with the Colonel of the second legion, to request a supply of arms and ammunition for the use of the militia, in the defence of the town. See document D. On the 8th of May, 1813, the Council appropriated $81,500, out of the funds of the Corporation, for mounting the cannon belonging to the town. See document marked D. On the 11th May, 1813, the Common Council appointed a committee of vigilance, to confer and co-operate with the committees of Washington and Georgetown, in requiring assistance from Government, for the general defence of the District of Columbia. See document E. A deputation from the committees of the three towns waited upon General Armstrong, the result of their conference was such as is stated in the certificate of Colonel George Deneale, marked D. On the 11th May, 1813, the Common Council appointed a committee of vigilance, to confer and co-operate with the committees of Washington and Georgetown, in requiring assistance from Government, for the general defence of the District of Columbia. See document E. A deputation from the committees of the three towns waited upon General Armstrong, the result of their conference was such as is stated in the certificate of Colonel George Deneale, marked D. The Secretary of War did send an engineer, as he promised, who made a report to him, a copy of which is hereto annexed, and is marked H. The Common Council, on the 23d of July, 1814, passed two resolutions, and appointed a committee of vigilance, for the purposes in said resolution expressed. See E. In pursuance of these last resolutions, the committee of vigilance proceeded to take such measures as they could, towards complying with the object of their appointment; they passed
the resolutions which are marked I. In pursuance of the first resolution of the committee of vigilance, General Winder was waited upon, and, a few days after, he visited Alexandria, had an interview with some of the committee of vigilance, and Colonel Deneale, as will appear by the certificate of Colonel Deneale, marked K. The banks of Alexandria and Potomac, on the 6th and 13th of August, loaned to the General Government, the one ten thousand, and the other, twenty-five thousand dollars, upon the conditions that the same should be applied to the erection of fortifications for the District of Columbia south of Alexandria. See the letters of the Presidents of those banks, marked I, and M. The corporation, on the fifteenth of September 1814, appropriated out of the funds of the town twelve hundred dollars, for the purpose of paying the expenses of laborers and carts to be employed in the erection of fortifications for the defence of the District. See document D. The committee having laid before you the documents which exhibit the efforts of the citizens of Alexandria to have the town defended from invasion, beg leave to lay before the committee a report of the Common Council and committee of vigilance, dated on the 7th of September last, of the conduct of the citizens, when the British squadron approached Alexandria. See document marked N. When the first attempt was made' on the 25th of August to blow up the south end of the Potomac bridge, six hundred stand of arms were blown up, about two hundred of which remained uninjured, and fit for use; these were collected together by Mr. Joseph Dean, one of the committee of vigilance, and sent to the Little Falls of Potomac for safety. When General Hungerford's army arrived in the neighborhood of Alexandria, these arms were ordered to be delivered to General Hungerford. See Mr. Dean's certificate, O. On the 10th of August, the Mayor apprised General Hungerford where two twelve pounders, which had been, by the order of General Young, removed from town, could be found. See the Mayor's letter, marked P, and the reply of General Hungerford, signed byames Mercer, his aid, marked Q. The day on which the enemy left Alexandria, a letter, purporting to be from Admiral Codrington, dated 28th August, 1814, addressed to the commanding officer of the British squadron in the Potomac, with the cover which now encloses it, was handed from the post office in this place to Mr. Joseph Dean, one of the committee of vigilance; how it got into the post office we know not; we can refer the committee to Mr. Thomas P. Gilpen, the deputy postmaster here, and to Mr. Basil Spalding, of Maryland, who, we have reason to believe, can give some account of the route the letter came to Alexandria; this document is marked R. If the committee should require any further information, or explanation, we shall be ready, at all times, to give it as far as we can.

We are, with great respects &c.

WM ,NEWTON,
EDM. I. LEE,
G. DENEALE,
ALEXANDRIA, November 20, 1814.

Sir: From the appearance of the enemy's squadron in sight of Alexandria, on the evening of the 27th August last, until its departure on the 3d of September, I remained in town, with the exception of an absence of a few hours on the day last mentioned. Amongst the many base calumnies propagated respecting our unfortunate town, by men more profligate than the enemy who plundered us, there is none more cruel' and
The printed narrative of the Common Council contains all the material facts connected with the capture of the above mentioned, which you have particular notice in your letter of the 19th instant, I can assure you is totally destitute of truth. The people of Alexandria did not afford the enemy any assistance in removing or shipping the plundered property; nor did any instance, to my knowledge, occur of any individual having attempted to save his own property by turning the attention of the enemy towards that of another. In respect to persons, the plunder was indiscriminate. The enemy not regard to their own convenience, and not from the suggestions of others, confined their depredations to the warehouses on the water, in which large quantities of produce were contained, belonging to the inhabitants as well as to strangers; all sufferers alike. After the Common Council had passed their resolution of the 29th of August, declaring their want of authority to require the observance of the terms to which they had been compelled to accede, and recommending submission, they did no other act at all connected with the seizure or surrender of property.

I remain, with respect, &c.

R. L TAYLOR.

The Honorable R. J. JOHNSON.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

the memorial of the subscribers, citizens of the town of Alexandria, respectfully represents:

That the late capture by the British squadron of their town, has afforded a pretext to wanton defamers to brand the citizens of Alexandria with every epithet of ignominy and disgrace. Not content with proclaiming their slanders through the papers of the day, some have been so unprincipled as to whisper in the ears of some of the honorable members of your body, the most illiberal accusations; one of which is, that the property of the citizens, taken from them by the violence of the invading enemy, had been voluntarily parted with by the inhabitants, and an equivalent received for it; a charge totally unfounded in fact, and without the smallest ground of truth for its support; as your memorialists can venture to assert that no solitary instance of the kind can be produced. When, therefore, your memorialists find the reputation of the town assailed in public and private, by those dark and restless spirits whose delight it is to devour reputation, every virtuous and honorable mind must feel it a solemn duty to solicit, as a right, from their constitutional governors, a strict and just investigation into the whole of their Conduct. The citizens of Alexandria, in the aggregate, can fear the result of no inquiry which may be made into their conduct on the occasion alluded to. They know their motives have been pure, and that the course they took can be justified by those immutable principles of self preservation, for the exercise of which no just Government will condemn them, and the surrender of which cannot of right be demanded. Your memorialists cannot forbear, on this occasion, to express their indignant surprise to find their town traduced for a conduct which every citizen in the nation would have pursued had they been abandoned, as Alexandria was, to the mercy of a victorious and powerful enemy. In this situation, what alternative had we but to
tell the enemy we could not resist, because we had not the means? This is all we did. We yielded to superior power. Our weakness has been our crime. Our reliance upon the protection of our Government has been our misfortune. For this misfortune have the citizens of Alexandria been publicly charged as traitors to their country. To submit to calumny of this nature without a murmur is more than could be calculated upon. To ask an investigation is what ought to be expected from the virtuous and innocent. This request is the more reasonable when it is recollected that the President of the United States has deemed it proper, in his public proclamation, to state that Alexandria had, in yielding to the terms imposed upon them, "inconsiderately" surrendered to the enemy. Your memorialists deem it a duty which they owe to the reputation of the town, concisely to state what have been the efforts, at different times, of the citizens, to obtain an adequate defence of the town and District. In the month of October, in the year 1812, a few months after the declaration of war, a company of about seventy volunteers was raised in Alexandria, and equipped at the expense of some of the citizens. This company was under the orders of the General Government, who had them stationed at Fort Washington, where they continued for some months, and from thence removed to Annapolis, at which place they were disbanded. In the month of March, in the year 1813, the artillery company, forming a part of the militia of the town consisting of about seventy men, rank and file, was stationed for about three months at Fort Washington, The municipal authority of the town, conscious of its unprotected state, and justly considering it the duty of the General Government to defend every portion of that territory which was placed under its exclusive authority, on the 21st of March, 1813, a pointed the Chief Magistrate of the town, the President of the Common Council, together with the commanding officer of the second legion of the militia of the District, to wait upon the Secretary of War, and request a supply of arms and ammunition for the use of the militia in the defence of the town. Your memorialists have reason to believe that arms were furnished a short time after this request. In the month of May 1813; the Common Council sent four respectable citizens to the President of the United States, to apprize him of the then defenceless state of the town. These gentlemen, did wait upon and communicate to him what was the condition of Alexandria as to the means of defence; that the citizens felt great anxiety on account of the danger with which they were threatened from the vicinity of the enemy in our waters, and the defenceless state of the District, and requested him to have some measures of defence and protection adopted as speedily as possible. To this request the President stated, that every portion of the community was entitled to the protection of the Government, and that representations of any respectable body of men had rm claim upon its attention, and gave the gentlemen who waited upon him to understand that their representation would be properly attended to; he also stated it was impossible to extend protection to every assailable point of the country. The committee urged upon him the various circumstances which would invite the attack of the enemy, upon the city of Washington in particular, which would of course involve the whole District in its dangers. The committee, at the same time, assured him of the perfect readiness of the citizens of Alexandria to co-operate, by their personal services, or in any other way, with the Government, in any measure of defence which it might adopt for the security of the District. {594} The Common
Council, solicitous to provide for the defence of the town and District, as far as their limited powers and means would permit, did, in the month of May, 1813, appropriate, out of the funds of the corporation, fifteen hundred dollars, to pay for mounting some cannon which were in the town, and had been in the use of the militia while under the State Government. In the month of May, 1813, a deputation from Alexandria, Washington, and Georgetown, had an interview with the Secretary of War, relative to the defenceless situation of the District. This committee did urge that a more efficient defence might be afforded for the District than then existed. It was particularly urged upon the Secretary that the fortifications at Fort Washington, commonly known by the name of Fort Warburton, should be increased. In consequence of this representation, the Government sent an engineer to examine the fort, who, on the 28th of May, 1813, reported to the War Department, as the result of his examination, that "an additional number of heavy guns at Fort Warburton, and an additional fort in the neighborhood, are both to be considered unnecessary." Notwithstanding the repeated solicitations of the citizens of Alexandria, in the year 1813, nothing was done towards its defence, except sending an engineer to examine the fort. In silence did Alexandria submit to this neglect of their safety, until the month of July, 1814, when the Common Council again endeavored to procure an adequate defence. Gentlemen, acting under the authority of the corporation, in the month of July, waited upon the military commander of the tenth district, with the view of ascertaining what measures of defence had been taken, or were intended to be adopted, for the defence of the town of Alexandria and District. The General, who seemed to be anxious to do his duty, as far as the means within his control would enable him, stated to those gentlemen the number of militia he expected would join him, and which seemed to be all the defence he calculated upon. This was a species of defence which certainly could be of no use against an attack by water. It is too obvious, that the town of Alexandria could not be defended in any other manner than by a proper fort or forts below it, with a competent garrison. The General commanding the tenth district visited Alexandria. The mode of defending it from a water attack was pointed out to him. To adopt it, required money; this he was not furnished with. This difficulty, however, was removed by the offer of three of the banks in Alexandria to loan the Government fifty thousand dollars, for the purpose of erecting proper defences for the District; which loan was accepted, and the money paid to the Government. No steps were taken towards securing the town from attack by water, but it was left to be defended at the fort by a garrison not exceeding eighty men, rank and file. On the 24th of August, a few hours before the battle at Bladensburg, the Commanding general and President of the United States were, by the authority of the committee of vigilance of Alexandria, reminded of the destitute state of the town as to the means of defence, and informed what would be the deplorable alternative the citizens would be reduced to if the British squadron, which was approaching the town, and was then from twenty to thirty miles below, should find their town unprotected as it was at that time. In the afternoon of the 27th of August the squadron arrived at the fort, (the magazine having been blown up, and it 'abandoned by the few troops of the United States which had been stationed there) without opposition. On, the morning of the 28th, after the fort had been destroyed by the enemy and after
their vessels had passed it, and were in full view of the town, and not before, no officer, military or civil; of the United States, being, on this emergency, in the town or District to defend or direct, (the military of the town having been previously marched off en masse, by public authority) the municipal authority of the town were, from extreme necessity, compelled to take such steps as were best calculated to save the town from conflagration. They authorized a flag to meet the advancing foe. The result of that interview was, that the town, and a certain part of the property, was saved from destruction and plunder, upon condition that the enemy, during their continuance before the town, should not be molested. It is due to the citizens of Alexandria, who were in it, during that distressing period, to state, that no aid or assistance was offered by them to the enemy. They remained passive but indignant spectators of that plunder which they had not the means of preventing. In support of the various allegations, stated in the preceding part of this memorial, your memorialists beg leave to refer to documents laid before the committee of the House of Representatives, upon the subject of the capture of Alexandria and Washington. Your memorialists feel it their duty, more particularly, to call the attention of Congress to a subject connected with the capture of Alexandria, and which is enveloped in a mystery, that can be dissipated only by the power of your honorable body. On the 29th of August, the British squadron commenced taking off from the warehouses the flour and tobacco. They continued until Friday morning, the 3d of September, when the last loaded vessel was sent down the river. The post office in Alexandria had, during the time the fleet lay opposite the town, been removed into the country some miles. On Friday, the 3d of September, the Postmaster found in the letter box of the house which had been used as the post office, the following letter, to wit: 

"IPITIGENA, 28th August, 1814. The object of the expedition being accomplished, and the inhabitants of the country upon the banks of the Potomac being armed for their property, on account of the presence of the British squadron in that river, the Commander-in-chief has directed and toibrivard openly, by the hands of one of the inhabitants, this order, for the ships in the Potomac to retire and rejoin his flag. C R T."

"CHEW." "Bearing admiral, and Captain of the Fleet." This letter is directed as follows: "On H. B. M. service; to the commanding officer of H. B. M. ships in the river Potomac." The preceding letter was found in the post office, enclosed in a letter without name date, or post mark, addressed "to the committee of vigilance or safety of the town of Alexandria," which is in the following words: "GENTLEMEN. Motives of a personal nature prevent my delivering the enclosure. You will best judge of the propriety of doing it in your official character, without loss of time." The above did not come to the knowledge of the committee of vigilance until after the squadron had left the town with their plunder. Your memorialists have been enabled to ascertain, that the letter from Admiral Codrington was in the Office of State, early in the morning of the 31st of August, and that it was there read. Among those who saw it there was a member of your honorable body. How or when it was sent from the Department of State, or why it was sent in the manner it was, or by whom it was deposited in the deserted post office at Alexandria, your memorialists have not been able
to ascertain, nor is it in their power to do so. Your memorialists have deemed it their duty to lay the transaction so far as it has come to their knowledge, before your honorable body. It remains for Congress to take such further steps for the development of the transaction as in their wisdom shall seem to be proper, and which justice to the citizens of Alexandria demands.

All which is most respectfully submitted.


GFORGETOWN, October 31, 1814. In reply to your letter of the 28th instant, requesting, on the part of the committee of investigation, "all the information I have on the subject of a letter from Admiral Codrington to Captain Gordon',' I have the honor to state that, on the morning of the 31st August, some hours before day, I was called up by a dragoon, express from one of our camps below, who
delivered a packet addressed to me by Admiral Cochrane; while I was opening and examining the despatch, the dragoon, who seemed to be an intelligent man, remarked to me that the British ships before Alexandria had been ordered down the river by the Admiral in the Patuxent. On questioning him, he stated that an open note to that effect, addressed to the British commander at Alexandria, had been brought to the camp from which he came, by the same messenger who had charge of the despatch I had just received from him that he had understood both had been put into the hands of a countryman, on the shores of the Patuxent, by the enemy, from which countryman they had been taken by an American officer, and conveyed to the camp; that he heard the officer who had given him charge of the packet for me, speak of the manner in which they came, and mention the contents of the open note to other officers then near him; that the officers, as he heard them say, intended to send the note across the country, and have it put on board the British fleet by a citizen. The letter addressed to me by Admiral Cochrane was dated on the 9th of August.

Under the same envelope was a letter directed to the Secretary of State. Believing that it might be of importance he should receive this without delay, I immediately, although not yet day, called on Colonel Monroe, then acting as Secretary of War, delivered the letter, and informed him of what the dragoon had reported to me relative to the open note, said to be on its way to the enemy's fleet before Alexandria.

This, I am confident, was the first information received at Washington of the note in question, During the latter part of the same day, being at Colonel Monroe's quarters, (I think about one o'clock) he told me that the open note of which I had apprised him in the morning had now found its way to him, having been brought up by one of our officers from the camp, at which the dragoon had stated he had left it, and he showed it to me. I have no recollection of its date. I remember that it was addressed to Captain Gordon and signed by Codrington, I think, as captain of the fleet, and by order of Admiral Cochrane.

The substance, I well recollect, was to direct Captain Gordon to descend the Potomac, lest alarm for their property should be given to the inhabitants by the presence of his squadron.

The contents of this note, as well as the manner chosen by the enemy for its conveyance, if it did come from him, were thought not a little singular and suspicious. The communication by water was open to him; and to express his anxiety for the fears of the inhabitants about the safety of their property from a force which had been for two years in the constant habit of burning and carrying it off in every direction on these waters, and which was at that moment emptying the stores of Alexandria of private property to an immense amount, could hardly be considered earnest; and particularly when this expression was contrasted with his determination to destroy and lay waste every
district of country within his power, made known by the letter of Admiral Cochrane to the Secretary of State, of the 18th August, (since published) which was the letter delivered by me that morning, and with which this note was understood to have come from Admiral Cochrane's fleet.

Colonel Monroe took this view of the subject, and expressed his suspicions that the note was a forgery, and the possibility, it was genuine, that, by previous concert, it might be intended to convey something different from, perhaps the very reverse of, what appeared on its face. Under these circumstances, and in the then same state of things, a preparation going on to intercept the British ships below Alexandria, some doubts were entertained of the propriety of permitting it to pass to them; he however, determined that it should be disposed of in such a way as to let the citizens of Alexandria have the benefit of it, if benefit there was, and at the same time to keep the enemy in ignorance that the Government had any knowledge of it.

He requested me to take charge of the note, to deliver it to a gentleman of Alexandria, and to ask of him to give it such a course immediately. I did accordingly, in about an hour after, put it into the hands of a highly respectable citizen of that town, accompanied by the request enjoined on me. He undertook the charge with great cheerfulness, and suggested as the best mode of answering the purpose intended, that lie would place it in the post office, at Alexandria, under cover, addressed to one of the acting committees of the town, remarking that it would reach them in that way almost as speedily as if he were to deliver it himself, and that by this means the committee and himself would be relieved from embarrassment, if the committee were called upon to answer by the officers of the enemy, in whose power they were, as to the channel through which it had been received. I thought his reasons good, and approved of the mode he proposed to adopt. That he did so deposite the note, in the course of the same afternoon, I was informed by him on the next day; and I have no question of the fact whether the enemy received this note, or when, and, if received, what influence it may have had on his conduct, I have never learned; but there is one fact notorious on this subject—that he ceased to levy contributions on the town of Alexandria about the middle of the day on which Commodore Porter's battery reached the White House, (the position below Alexandria, selected from which to annoy him in his descent) and that he immediately after began to draw off his ships from the station he had taken before the town. This was on the 1st day of September. Commodore Porter's artillerists and General Young's brigade crossed the ferry at Georgetown, on the expedition, at the commencement of the night of the 31st August. That this movement was known to the enemy on the next day, and instantly arrested his devastations at Alexandria, I have never had the slightest doubt. As to the time and circumstance of the movement, I cannot be mistaken, as I was with both the corps during that night, one at their encampment, and the other on their march.

In relation to the remaining part of your letter, there are no particular facts within my knowledge, that I am aware of,
pertinent to the inquiry of the honorable committee into the cause of the success of the enemy in his recent enterprises against Washington and Alexandria.

With very great respect, &c. JAMES MONROE.

The Hon. RICHARD M. JOHNSON.


OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF THE CITY OF WASHINGTON, Oct. 29, 1814.

SIR:

In answer to the inquiries you made of me yesterday, I have the honor to state that the whole cost of the undermentioned public buildings, from the commencement to the burning by the enemy, appears as follows:

North wing of the capitol, including the foundation walls of both wings, and of the centre or main building, and of alterations and repairs, $457,388 36
South wing of the capitol, 329,774 92
President's house, 334,334 00
Public offices, 93,613 82

Total $1,215,111 10

At the instance of a committee of the Senate, the remains of those buildings have been examined by architects and master builders, all of whom report it as their opinions, that the walls of the President's house, and both wings of the capitol, with some inconsiderable repairs, will be safe and sufficient to rebuild on. The walls of the two offices, particularly of the upper stories, are deemed insufficient to bear new roofs, and will require taking down and renewing, as far as shall be found necessary. The amounts of the estimates for repairing and rebuilding the five edifices, making the offices fireproof, with some other improvements suggested, are from three hundred and fifty thousand dollars to upwards of six hundred thousand dollars. The largest estimate, however, embraces an expense of considerable amount, for completing the west part of the north wing for a library, which none of the lower estimates includes. The average amount estimated, of putting all the buildings in the state the enemy found them, appears, by dividing the aggregate amount of the estimates by the number of them, to be about four hundred and sixty thousand dollars, allowing for the materials of the burnt buildings, which may be used in rebuilding.

I have the honor to be, &c.

THOMAS MUNROE.
Washington City, November 28, 1814.

In answer to your note of to-day, I have to state, that, on the morning of the 24th August last, when the alarm was given that the enemy were on their march to this city, and it was expected that they would come by the way of the Eastern Branch bridge, being myself well armed and mounted on horseback, I rode there under the wish to render all the service in my power to oppose them. When I arrived near the Eastern Branch, I found a few of the city and Georgetown uniform companies there, laying upon their arms, and understood that the President, the Secretary of War, and other officers, were at the house of a Mr. Minifiee, (where I observed their horses at the door) and that they were holding council. I then rode down to the bridge, where there were a few sailors, with a piece or two of cannon in front of the bridge, who, I understood, were to destroy the bridge in case the enemy approached. After but little delay, I rode back to the uniform troops, who, I found, were getting in action to march to Bladensburg, to which way it was then said that the enemy were coming. I immediately rode on towards Bladensburg with all expedition. When I arrived upon the hill, on this side of the Bladensburg bridge, I observed Colonel Monroe, the then Secretary of State, just in the rear of our troops, which were posted on both sides of the road, between there and Bladensburg; the cry was, that the enemy were coming, but no person appeared to be able to give any correct account of them.

I then observed to Mr. Monroe, that I would go on and see the enemy, and would let them know when they were coming. I accordingly rode into Bladensburg, and halted a few minutes at Ross's tavern, where there were a few militiamen, from whom I could get no other information than that the enemy were coming on the river road. I then proceeded to a height, a little west of Ross's tavern, called Lowndes' Hill, which had a commanding prospect of the river road for a considerable distance, and which was almost fronting the hill. After remaining there for some time, I observed, at a considerable distance, a great cloud of dust rise to a great degree, which satisfied me that they were coming in great force. Sometime after, I observed a few horsemen, not in uniform, on the road, who appeared to be reconnoitering, and were soon followed, by troops that filled the road. They appeared to march very slow, and in close order, not less than twenty-four or thirty abreast in front, and the horsemen before spoken of; sometimes in front, and at other times a little to the right of the front, which position they marched in until they nearly approached the foot of the hill and not more than a gunshot from me, where I was sitting on my horse, and the
road in full sight for near a mile, and that filled with British troops, and still approaching. At this time there was not a person in sight of me, other than the enemy, except one dragoon, who appeared to have been posted there a little to my left, upon the same hill, where I left him, and have since understood he was taken by the advance party of the enemy. When they approached to the foot of the hill, and I expected they might attempt to cut off my retreat to the bridge, I fell back, and descended the hill in the front of Mr. Lowndes' house; and, immediately after I crossed the bridge, I looked back, and found that the advance party of horse had got into the Annapolis road, to the east of Lowndes'-house; and about twenty-four of them went up a lane in Bladensburg, towards the Baltimore road, leaving six or eight at the entrance of the lane. I then was proceeding to our troops, to give information, when I met the President, General Armstrong, Colonel Monroe, and Mr. Rush, the Attorney General, considerably in advance of all our troops, going immediately into Bladensburg. I observed, on meeting them, "Mr. Madison, the enemy are now in Bladensburg." He exclaimed with surprise, "the enemy in Bladensburg!" and, at the same moment, they all turned their horses and rode towards our troops with considerable speed. I called out aloud, "Mr. Madison, if you will stop I will show them to you; they are now in sight." He paid no attention. They all rode off very fast, except Mr. Rush, who halted, and I observed to him that there are part of the enemy stopping at that lane; he said, that cannot be the enemy, they are not in uniform. I told him that they were a part of the advance party, that the others had gone up the lane, and that not any of them were in uniform. At this moment the red-coats began to heave in sight, in two sections, some in the rear, and others in the front, of Lowndes' house, and were forming in the Annapolis road. Mr. Rush, on seeing them, observed, "I am satisfied;" and turned his horse very suddenly to ride away, when his hat fell off, and he rode some distance without it, when I called out to him, "Mr. Rush, come back and take up your hat;" which he did and then pursued his company with all speed. Our troops, before I could get up to them, began to fire, from the left of the line, with cannon and small arms, into the town of Bladensburg. I supposed, at the time, it was from the information communicated by Mr. Madison from me, as I was the last person from Bladensburg. I immediately rode up the hill, expecting to find some of the Heads of Departments, to endeavor to get them to stop the firing, till it could be more effectual. I could not see the President or any of the gentlemen that were with him when I gave him the information. But I observed General Winder in the rear of the line, who I found to be the commanding officer. I immediately addressed him, and informed him that I was just from Bladensburg, and that there was but very small party of the enemy in the town; that they had commenced firing too early; and that, if they would reserve their fire a few minutes, the British troops were then coming down the hill, and were about to form on the Annapolis road, when they would be able to do some execution: for they were then heaving their fire away. I found that General Winder appeared to pay but little attention to what I had said. I remained upon the battle ground for some time, and until the retreat was ordered, and every thing and everybody appeared to be in the greatest confusion, no point fixed for rallying, or bringing the enemy to action, and the greater part of our troops were retreating in the greatest disorder. I returned to the city, and stopped at the President's
house, which I found entirely abandoned, excepting one white servant, who informed me that the President had returned from the battlefield, and that he had gone out of the city. I observed at the President's door two pieces of cannon, well mounted on travelling carriages, which had been fixed there for the defence of the house, under a guard of soldiers, for sometime, which was also abandoned. This being late in the day, and the most of the retreating soldiers having passed by, there was, however, still some coming on, very much fatigued, and worn down with hunger and thirst. I stopped a number of them, and plied them with plenty of brandy, which I got the President's servant to bring forward from the house. I then prevailed upon the soldiery to remove the cannon, by hand, towards Georgetown, where they were saved from falling into the hands of the enemy, who took possession of the house soon after. This now being near night, and not seeing a single military man in the city, I retired a few miles in the country, where I soon was a spectator to the conflagration of the capitol, President's house, &c. I remained in the vicinity of the city until after the enemy had abandoned it, when I returned; and in a day or two after, when stopping at the door of Colonel Monroe, who was present, as well as Mr. Madison, Mr. Rush, and several other gentlemen, Mr. Rush observed to me, sir, we consider ourselves under obligations to you for preventing our falling into the hands of the enemy at Bladensburg; observing, at the same time, that they were going immediately into Bladensburg, understanding that part of General Winder's troops were there, and that they should have supposed the advance part of the enemy, not in uniform, were a part of General Winder's troops. The foregoing is as correct a narrative of facts as I can at this time recollect.

I am, sir, with great respect,

WM. SIMMONS.

And then this is p. 369

The Honorable R. M. JOHNSON, &c.

SIR: I had the honor to receive yours of yesterday. My statement shall be concise as possible. On perusing, in the National Intelligencer, of the 10th instant, the report of the committee of which you are chairman, the following passage arrested my attention: "From early in the morning till late in the afternoon, Colonel Minor sought Colonel Carbery diligently, but he could not be found. He rode to head quarters and obtained an order from General Winder upon the arsenal, for arms, &c. Marched to the place with his regiment. Colonel Carbery arrived at the moment, and apologized for his absence, and informed Colonel Minor that he had, the evening before, ridden out to his country seat." Without adverting to the information on which the committee may have thought proper to rely, for what is stated in the above extract, I shall merely proceed to state some facts, supported by respectable testimony, which, it is believed, will, in the opinion of the committee, completely invalidate what is there set forth.

1. It will appear that on the night of the 23d of August, between the hours of nine and eleven, I was seen between Capitol Hill and the camp. See the certificate of Major Marsteller, Deputy Quartermaster General, No. 1. That, late at night of the 23d, I arrived at Mr. Semmes' hotel, in Georgetown; 'that I lodged there that night; was seen about sunrise next morning, near M Leodis hotel, on the Pennsylvania avenue and that afterwards I returned to my quarters in Georgetown, and breakfasted. See Nos. 3 and 4, given by Mr. Semmes, my landlord, and
Captain Cassin, of the District militia. That, on the morning of 24th August, between seven and nine, I signed requisitions for arms, &c. for Colonel Minor, and gave them to the surgeon of his regiment. See Lieutenant Hobbs, No. 2. That Doctor Jones, who was with our troops when the action commenced, returning to his hospital to attend to his duties there, saw Colonel Minor's troops halted on Capitol Hill, and thinks they were getting their dinners. See his certificate, No. 5. That, in the opinion of Lieutenant Baden, of the ordnance department, Colonel Minor's troops, from the time they arrived at the arsenal, had sufficient time to have got their arms, &c. and have marched to the battle ground before the action commenced. See his certificate, No. 6. These certificates being in your hands can easily be referred to.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, sir, your obedient servant,
HENRY CAJREBERY, Colonel 36th 618, Infant.

The Honorable RICHARD M. JOHNSON,[this appears in a different form in the version printed by A. and G. Way, Printers, 1814 at usahec; I have photos of the break; but then this is an earlier version which appears in Way as “LETTER”]
Chairman of a Committee of Congress.

George M. Campbells letter.
Nashville, (TEN.) December 7, 1814. SIR: I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 29th October last. You request that I should give the committee, of which you are chairman, such facts and views as may be in my power respecting the proceedings of a cabinet council on the 1st of July last, in relation to the defence of military district No., 10; and on the subject of a conversation that took place between the President and myself, on the 24th of August, respecting the part General Armstrong was to take at Bladensburg, and also any other facts and views that may be thought pertinent to a fair and impartial inquiry into the causes of the fall of the capital of the United States. The information requested by the committee shall be given without reserve so far as my recollection and state of health will enable me. I deem it, however, proper of the relations existing between the Executive and the other members of the government usually called on to assist in council, I should not consider myself bound, on such application as the present, to disclose, in all cases, the proceedings which may have taken place at such council, or what may have passed at a conversation held with the President individually, such as that above referred to, as such disclosure might justly be considered as restrained; in the former case, on the ground of official, and in the latter, on that of personal confidence; and, without taking into consideration the effect of the restraint that would naturally be imposed on such deliberations and interchange of sentiments, by establishing the precedent that they were liable to public disclosure whenever called for, there might be cases in which the public interest would be compromised by such disclosure. I do not, however, consider the present such a case; and I have no motive for withholding the information required on account of any bearing {598} it might be supposed to have on my own conduct on that occasion, or on that of any other member of the Government, as I am perfectly satisfied it is the desire of the Executive, and presume it is so also of the other members, that every circumstance calculated to throw light on the subject before the committee, and develop the real causes which led to the late events at the Seat of Government should be disclosed without reserve. Under these impressions, therefore, I act, in giving the
information desired. At the cabinet council referred to; held on the 1st of July, by the members of the Government, convened by request of the President, I was present. Despatches had been received, a few days previously thereto, from two of our ministers (Messrs. Gallatin and Bayard) in Europe, the consideration of which, according to my present impressions, was the principal object of the conference. They were accordingly taken up for deliberation, and the changed aspect of affairs in Europe, as unfolded by them, as well as by information derived from other sources, was brought into view. The subject of our foreign relations, generally was taken into consideration, and the effect the late great events on the continent would be likely to produce upon them was freely spoken of. It was stated as probable, first, I believe, by the President, that England, considering her own relative power and influence greatly increased, would be disposed to employ a considerable portion of her military and naval forces, lately disengaged from the great European contest, in prosecuting the war against this country; that she might be expected to strengthen herself in Canada, and carry on her depredations against our Atlantic coast on a scale more extended than heretofore. Some general remarks were also made on the propriety of adapting our measures to that state of things an increase of the enemy's forces would produce; and there appeared a concurrence of opinion among the members as to the importance of providing the means, and making the requisite arrangements, for defending, not only district No. 10, including the Seat of Government, but, as far as practicable, every other portion of the Union, against which an attack might reasonably be expected— but I do not at present recollect any specific proposition, made while I was present, in relation to the defence of that district, or any other place in particular. I cannot, however, undertake to state in detail all the proceedings that took place in relation to this subject on that occasion. The state of my health was very imperfect, and some official duty, according to my present recollection, requiring to be attended to at a certain hour, occasioned me to withdraw before the subject of the defence of the Seat of Government was formally taken up for decision; nor do I now recollect of being present when the question on that subject was decided. The President, either on my return the same day, or shortly after, informed me it had been determined to call forth and organize a force deemed sufficient for the defence of the district, and particularly the Seat of Government, of which measure I approved; and, from the Secretary of War, I afterwards understood the number to be called on for that purpose was fifteen thousand men, which appeared to me amply sufficient. Nothing further occurs to me, at present in relation to what passed at that conference, while I was present, on the subject of the defence of the Seat of Government. I recollect that, about this time, the President, in conversation, stated his impressions to be, on the fullest consideration he had been able to give the state of affairs in Europe, in connexion with the disposition of Great Britain, as far as it could be ascertained from the late despatches of our ministers, as well as from other sources of information, that we ought to calculate she would direct a considerable portion of her numerous forces, liberated from the late great conflicts on the continent, and left entirely at her disposal, against this country, either to produce a favorable effect on the pending negotiation, and, if disposed to peace, close the war with some brilliant achievement calculated to give her arms the air of eclat; or, if not, so dis-
posed, for the purpose of prosecuting the war more vindictively, and possibly with a view to other more ambitious objects; and that, whatever might be her ulterior views, we ought to expect that Washington city, being the seat of the National Government, and, from its local situation more accessible, as well as less capable of defence, than most other places, would be among the first objects of her attack, and that we ought, therefore, to make the requisite preparations to meet such event. With this view, I understood, General Winder was appointed to the command of the district, and orders given for concentrating, in the neighborhood of the city, such force, to consist of regulars and militia, as was deemed sufficient for its defence.

The conversation between the President and myself, on the 24th August, respecting which the committee requests information, having taken place incidentally, and under peculiar circumstances, it will not be expected that I should recapitulate it at length; and it may be difficult to communicate its substance with precision, or the causes that led to it, without going more into detail than would be acceptable to the committee, or accord with my own inclination. When it was known, on the evening of the 23d of August, that the troops under General Winder had retired across the Eastern Branch, and encamped in the city, it occasioned, as may be readily supposed, considerable agitation in the minds of the citizens. It appeared to have been expected, that in case our force was not considered sufficient to meet and repulse the enemy, on his landing, his advance would be opposed; and his progress, at least, retarded as far as practicable, by harassing him on his march, erecting defensive works at suitable positions, and throwing such other obstructions in his way, as was best calculated to check his movements; for all which operations the nature of the country through which he must pass was said to be very favorable; when, therefore, it was stated that he was near the city, without such means having been either at all, or but partially resorted to, it produced some surprise, as well as inquiry into the causes that led to such a result. Falling in conversation with the Secretary of War, on this subject, I expressed my apprehensions that suffering the enemy to approach so near (if his progress could by any possible means have been checked) as to make the fate of the city depend on a single battle, to be maintained, on our part, principally by raw, inexperienced troops, was hazarding too much. He appeared to concur in this opinion. And when I inquired whether the late movements of the troops were made pursuant to his advice, or with his approbation; and what plan of operations was determined on to oppose the further progress of the enemy; and, also, whether our army would have the benefit of his suggestions and advice, in directing its future movements; he gave me to understand that the movements which had taken place were not in pursuance of any plan or advice given by him; that General Winder, having been appointed to the command of the district, including the city, and the means assigned for, its defence placed at his disposal, he was considered as having the direction of their application; and it was to be presumed he had formed such plans for defending the city, as he deemed best suited to the emergency and the means he possessed; and that interposing his opinion might be considered indecorous, and perhaps improper, unless he had the approbation of the Executive for so doing; in which case, any assistance that his suggestions or advice could render, should be afforded.

It appeared to me an occasion so highly important
and critical demanded the united efforts of all the military skill and ability within the reach of the Government; and that feelings of delicacy, if their cause could be removed, should not be allowed to come in collision with the public interest; and I believe, I so expressed myself to General Armstrong. On the following morning. I set out with the Secretary of War for General Winder's head quarters, then near the bridge on the Eastern Branch. When we proceeded as far as the President's house, we learned he had gone on before. Some other company joining us, I proceeded in advance, and arrived there before the Secretary; where I found, with General Winder, the President, the Secretary of the Navy, and I believe, the Attorney General of the United States, with some military officers. Some conversation took place in relation to the route the enemy would be most likely to pursue in approaching the city; when a messenger arrived, bringing the commanding general information, considered by him decisive that they would advance by Bladensburg, and he immediately proceeded with the troops to that place. At this time the Secretary of War had arrived. All the members of the Government, that were present, left the house. Falling in conversation with the President, I took occasion to state to him the impressions of the Secretary of War, as to the line of conduct his duty required him to observe on that occasion; and added, in substance, according to my present recollection, that the very critical situation of affairs appeared to me to require all the aid that military skill and ability could afford; that, on so important an occasion, considerations of delicacy, as to conflicting authority, should not, I presumed, be allowed to jeopardize, in any degree, the public interest; that I regretted the reserve apparently observed by the Secretary of War; but under stood from him, he acted on the ground that; as General Winder was appointed to the command of the district, and the means designed for its defence placed at his disposal, he was considered as possessing the right to direct the manner of their application—and that, in interposing his opinion, without Executive approbation, might be considered indecent, and perhaps an improper interference with the commanding general's authority; but that, if it was known to be the President's pleasure, he would afford any aid in his power, by his presence and advice; and I believe I also stated that, considering the extraordinary and menacing aspect of our affairs, I thought it my duty to make him this communication, that in case he, should think proper, the round on which the Secretary acted might he removed. The President replied, as I understood him, that General Armstrong might have known, any proper order given by him would readily meet with the Executive sanction; and that there was no doubt, any suggestions from him would be duly attended to by General Winder. Upon my remarking I had reason to believe, without his approbation, the Secretary would not interpose his opinion, or take any part in the business of the day, the President observed, he would speak to him on the subject. The President, the Secretary of War, and, myself, were then on horseback. The President joined the Secretary, and some conversation took place between them, the pur port of which I did not hear. The President, after parting from the Secretary, observed to me he had spoken to General Armstrong on the subject I had named to him, and that no difficulty, he presumed, would occur in the case; that any suggestions, made by the Secretary, would, without doubt, receive due attention from the commanding general, and, should any objection be made on the ground of authority,
the matter might readily be adjusted, as he would not himself be far distant; and the Secretary's order, (I presume it was meant in writing) given on the field; if necessary, would be considered as carrying with it the Executive sanction. The foregoing is, according to the best of my recollection, the substance of what the President communicated to me after conversing with General Armstrong. It, however, occurred in the midst of much bustle, and where various other subjects presented themselves for consideration; it is therefore possible I may not have understood him correctly, or may not now recollect all that passed.

Some general conversation took place about this time respecting the probable force, movements, and objects, of the enemy; also respecting the direction to be given to certain portions of our own troops, particularly those under Commodore Barney, who had not then been put in motion, and whom the Commodore appeared very desirous should be permitted, with himself, to take a share in the expected battle. Mention was also made of the precautionary measures proper to be taken, in the possible event of the enemy's success against the city, respecting the public property at the navy yard, &c; and, also, the propriety suggested in such case, of the members of the Government convening at some suitable place, to determine on ulterior arrangements; and Fredericktown was agreed on as best calculated for that purpose.

After parting with the President, I joined the Secretary of War, then on his way to Bladensburg; he observed the President had spoken to him respecting the operations of the day; that he would proceed to the scene of action; and, if there should be occasion, would suggest, to the commanding general, whatever occurred to him as likely to be useful; and, should it become necessary he would, on the field, give a written order that would carry with it, of course, official authority. He did not, however, state to me the particulars of the conversation that passed between the President and himself. Near the turnpike gate I parted with the Secretary; the state of my health required that I should return to my lodging. The foregoing contains all that occurs to me at present, in relation to the specific inquiries of the committee.

On the subject of their general inquiry, respecting the causes of the capture of the seat of Government, it is not probable I can add anything to the information they already possess, derived from other sources. A combination of circumstances, not easily accounted for, some of which could not probably have been anticipated, and others against which it might have been difficult to provide by any precautions that could have been adopted, led, it is believed, to that event.

The sudden advance of the enemy, after his arrival on our coast, so considerable a distance into the country; destitute as he was known to be of cavalry, and, in a great degree, of artillery, as well as of the means of transporting provisions; without delaying to establish garrisons, or otherwise to provide for keeping open his communication with his shipping and supplies; was a measure that could not, it is presumed, be justified on any military
principle, and may not, therefore, have been anticipated in time to provide effectually against its consequences. On the other hand, the tardy movements of the militia, called on from the neighboring States for the defence of the city, and their consequent failure to arrive in time, at the scene of action, whatever may have occasioned it, may undoubtedly be considered as the principal cause of the catastrophe that followed. How far the troops who had arrived, and were present might, under the guidance of different management, have succeeded in retarding the enemy, and, with the aid of the reinforcements hourly expected, in finally repulsing him, is not for me to decide: and it is a question on which even military men may not perhaps agree.

I have the honor to be, &c.

G. W. CAMPBELL.

Honorable R. M. Johnson, &C.