Table Annexed to Article: Armstrong’s Hints Passed Through to Armstrong’s Notices

Peter J. Aschenbrenner, Purdue University
TABLE ANNEXED TO ARTICLE:
ARMSTRONG’S HINTS PASSED THROUGH TO ARMSTRONG’S NOTICES
2 OCL 651_1

PETER J. ASCHENBRENNER
Department of History, Purdue University
paschenb@purdue.edu

TABLE 651_1A
{FOOTNOTES FROM HINTS OMITTED;
FULL TEXT OF HINTS IN MR TEXT FORMAT AT 2 OCL 651}

FIRST TRANCHE
FROM HINTS

{43} As however your enemy may break through your first barrier, you will have anticipated the necessity of a second and even of a third line, and have made your arrangements accordingly — that is, you will have magazines formed on several points of these newly projected positions, and supplied from that tract of country, which (on the supposition of retreat) your {44} enemy will first occupy. It is by this mode of proceeding alone that you can render justice to the first principle of defensive war.

The reader will have seen, that to the party carrying it on, a defensive war is a war of retreats, and of course, of the kind most difficult of management. He who conducts it well, must besides courage, science, activity and decision, possess also patience, foresight and fortitude. To fly from post to post, and yield in {45} succession the finest positions and provinces to an enemy, is not difficult. This which sycophants have dared to dignify with the name of the Fabian war, is within the reach of ignorance, stupidity and cowardice; but such is not the war of which we speak. Instead of finding security only in flight;—instead of habitually refusing to look the enemy in the face; instead of leaving his march undisturbed by enterprises of courage or of labor; instead of abandoning without contest, points made strong by nature or by art; instead, I repeat, of all this, the true war of defence seeks every occasion to meet the enemy, and loses none by which it can annoy or defeat him; it is always awake; it is constantly in motion; and never unprepared for either attack or defence.—When not employed in efforts of courage or address, it incessantly yields itself to those of labor and science. In its front, it breaks up roads or breaks down bridges; while it creates or repairs those in its rear: It forms abbatis, raises batteries, fortifies passes, or entrenches encampments; and to the system of deprivation
already detailed, adds all the activity, stratagem and boldness of the petite guerre.

Dividing itself into detachments, it {46} multiplies its own attacks and the alarms of the enemy. Collecting itself at a single point, it obstructs his progress for days, and sometimes for weeks together. Does it even abandon the avenues it is destined to defend? It is but for the purpose of shielding them more securely — by the attack of the hospitals, magazines, convoys or reinforcements. In a word, adopting the maxim, that the enemy must be made to pay for whatever he gains, it disputes with him every inch of ground, and if at last it yields to him a victory, it is assuredly of that kind, which calls forth only his sighs.

Source: This passage appears in Hints to Young Generals at pp. 43 – 46.

**CONTRAST THE FOREGOING WITH THE FIRST TRANCHE OF COUNTERPART PASSAGES FROM NOTICES**

{41} Remarks. The crimes and errors of public functionaries, however calamitous and disgraceful, are not without their uses. And that on this occasion, the bitter fruits of experience may, if possible, be converted into wholesome aliment, we subjoin a few observations indicating the principal faults committed, and the means by which they might have been substantially obviated, if not entirely avoided.

I. "Every commander of a corps, destined to the reduction of a fortress by siege or investment, ought, if possible, to draw his antagonist from behind his works, and induce him to risk an action in the open field." //41-1// This maxim, nearly as old as the art to which it belongs, is founded on a reason sufficiently obvious, viz. that, "as forts make the weak strong, and the strong stronger, it necessarily follows, that it will be more easy to beat your enemy {42} without, than within his intrenchments." Of this rule and the reason on which it is founded, General Hull was either entirely ignorant or utterly regard less; for though on the 2d of July, according to his own statement, he found his adversary willing to forego the advantages given him by his fortress, and determined to risk a battle against a force much superior to his own; and with the additional disadvantage of interposing between himself and his only place of refuge, a wide and rapid river, — the challenge was not merely declined on our part, but such
cunningly devised fables transmitted to Colonel St. George, as induced that
officer to abandon his chivalrous, but unmilitary project. //42-1//

II. Another maxim of the art, which, like the preceding, is but a
dictate of common sense, level to any ordinary capacity and requiring no
scientific research, is, — that "whenever it be sufficiently ascertained, that
your enemy is suffering under any extraordinary degree of debility, arising
from deficient supplies, prevailing diseases, impaired discipline {43}
dissatisfaction or want of numbers in his ranks, or ill-condition of his
defences, it becomes your duty to assail him incessantly and vigorously."

It has been abundantly established, that between the 5th and 20th
of July, fort Malden was, in all its parts, in a dilapidated state, and on two of
its sides, (the north and west,) wholly indefensible; that during the same
period, its nominal garrison did not exceed seven hundred men, of which,
more than six hundred were militia and savages; the one, indifferent, if not
disaffected to the war, and the other, professing neutrality and strictly
forbidden by their military usages, from, taking part in the defence of
fortified places. //43-1// From these facts we are authorized to conclude,
that had General Hull, at any time between the 5th and 20th of July,
pushed boldly forward and presented his columns of attack before Malden,
the place would have been surrendered to him, with as little ceremony as he
surrendered Detroit on the 16th of August; a conclusion, put beyond all
doubt by this additional fact, that when, on the 16th of July, the British out-
post on the Canard was defeated and the bridge taken, so great was the
alarm in Malden, that the shipping was brought up to the wharves, and
actually employed in taking in the baggage, etc. //43-2// {44}

III. Nothing can be more ill-judged and ruinous, than to send out
small parties on services which necessarily expose them to the attacks of
large ones; and hence the maxim, that "the strength of a detachment
should be proportioned, 1st, to the importance of the object to be obtained
in sending it; and 2d, to the disposable means possessed by the enemy of
embarrassing or defeating the attainment of that object." In none of the
detachments made by General Hull, were these conditions fulfilled; and in
that of Major Van Home, both were directly and grossly violated. What
object could have been more important to the American army, situated as it
then was, than the re-establishment of its communications with the State of
Ohio; from which alone were to be expected reinforcements of men and
supplies of provision? And again, what fact was better ascertained, than the
facility with which the whole British force concentrated at Malden, and
amounting to seven hundred combatants, could be brought to act upon any American detachment, marching by the route of Maguago and Brownstown? Yet was Van Home sent to fulfil that object and by this route, with only two hundred militia-riflemen! //44-1//

IV. When, on the 8th of August, Colonel Miller was detached to effect the purpose which Major {45} Van Horne had failed to accomplish on the 5th, it required no spirit of prophecy to foresee, that Proctor (the British commander) would make every possible effort to overwhelm the second detachment as he had done the first; but that to this end he must employ the whole force, composing the garrison under his command. It is extraordinary, that this simple and obvious view of the subject, should have escaped the attention of any man to whom military ideas were at all familiar; or if it did occur to General Hull, that it should have failed to suggest the only means left for prosecuting his own objects, and converting the policy and enterprise of his antagonist into folly and misfortune. These means obviously were — so to strengthen Miller's detachment, as to leave nothing to chance; and thus to assure himself not merely of the discomfiture, but of the destruction of whatever force the enemy might hazard on the southern side of the Detroit; while, contemporaneously with Miller's movement, a second and small detachment should silently and rapidly descend the river to the neighborhood of Malden, and thence proceed to assail and carry the fort.

That both parts of this plan (had it been adopted) would have entirely succeeded, there cannot now be a doubt ; since, with the corps he had, Miller defeated Muir at the head of the whole British, Canadian and Indian force; and since, from the evening of the 7th to the 9th of August, fort Malden (ordinarily requiring the defence of seven {46} hundred men) was left to the custody of a sergean'ts guard only! //46-1//

V. Notwithstanding these repeated blunders of the American General, fortune did not yet entirely abandon him ; and on the 16th of August, presented a new occasion, requiring on his part only the vulgar quality of defensive courage, to have completely baffled the designs of Brock and reestablished his own ascendancy on the Detroit. This occasion was found in the indiscretion of his adversary; who, on crossing the river with a force smaller than it was his purpose to assail, had hastily determined to risk the storm of a fortification, strong in itself, abundantly
supplied and sufficiently garrisoned. If it be thought extraordinary, that under these circumstances.

General Brock should have forgotten all the dissuasives from attack furnished by history, it was certainly still less to be expected, that General Hull should have forgotten all the motives for defence furnished by the same source. Such, however, was the fact; the timidity of the one kept pace with the temerity of the other; and at last, in an agony of terror, which cunning could no longer dissemble and which history is ashamed to describe, the fort, army and territory were surrendered without pulling a trigger!

The errors which yet remain to be noticed are attributable to the administration—a fact, furnishing no reason why they should be treated with more ceremony than others, with which they were associated. They will be sufficiently indicated by the following remarks.

VI. The nation which meditates the invasion of a neighboring territory, should be careful to employ the last moments of peace, in acquiring a thorough knowledge of the force it may have to encounter.

Another duty, not less obvious and imperative than the preceding, will be that of speedily withdrawing or promptly reinforcing its own remote and isolated posts. If there be any thing in the local position of these, that may render their retention important to the progress or issue of the war, the latter course should be pursued—but if on the contrary, it will have no material bearing on either, the garrisons should be speedily recalled and the posts abandoned, while this can be done successfully and safely.

Yet were both these important duties neglected. When Hull arrived at Detroit, he was ignorant alike of the condition of J'Malden and the number of its garrison. So also the commandant of Michilimackinac continued to be uninformed of even the declaration of war, until after the investment and surrender of his post; while the garrison of fort Dearborn, still more remote, remained unrecalled, until the middle of August, when retreat had become wholly impracticable.

VII. We have seen that General Hull lost his own baggage and that of the army, the whole of his hospital stores and intrenching tools, and sixty men, in consequence of the ill-judged and tardy manner employed in
transmitting to him the declaration of war. A fact, so extraordinary in itself, and so productive of injury to the public, calls for more development than has yet been given to it.

It will be remembered that a declaration of war was authorized on the 18th of June, 1812. On this day, Secretary Eustis wrote two letters to General Hull. In one of these, no mention was made of this important event; in the other, it was distinctly and officially announced. The former of the two, was carefully made up and expedited by a special messenger, who arrived in the General's camp on the 24th of June; while the latter, was committed to the public mail as far as Cleveland; and thence, through a wilderness of one hundred miles, to such conveyance, "as accident might supply."

The result was, that the declaration did not reach its destination until the 2d of July, two days after it had been received by the enemy at Malden. On this occasion, the British government was better served: Provost received notice of it on the 24th of June, at Quebec; Brock, on the 26th, at Newark; St. George, on the 30th, at Malden; and Roberts on the 8th of July, at St. Josephs. But a fact, still more extraordinary than the celerity of these transmissions is, that the information thus rapidly forwarded to Malden and St. Josephs, was received under envelopes, franked by the Secretary of the American Treasury. //48-1//

VIII. Few things are more self-evident, than that so long as the enemy had a fleet on Lake Erie and we had none, Malden could be supplied and reinforced by the British posts below; and that if hardly pressed, its garrison could be safely withdrawn to one or other of these posts. To meet these contingencies, and to protect Hull's long line of provisionment from interruption //49-1//, two suggestions were made — the one, to construct a navy competent to the command of the lake; //49-2// the other, to assemble on the Niagara a military force, which by menacing the safety of forts Erie and George, would prevent Brock from making detachments to Malden. In choosing between these alternatives, the government did not hesitate — they promptly rejected the former, and adopted the latter; but, unfortunately, without taking measures sufficiently decided for giving it execution.

When, accordingly, Hull perceived that the enemy's force at Malden was increased and increasing, he called aloud on the militia officer
commanding at Buffalo for support — who announced in reply, that "he had none to give, direct or indirect." So also, when the Secretary of War ordered Major-General Dearborn to make speedy movements on the British posts in his front, the General answered — that 'Hill then, he had not known that the troops on the Niagara made part of his command. "//49-3// {50}

IX. The principal advantage accruing to a nation, which is the first to declare war, is that of selecting its time and point of attack, and of concentrating on the latter, such force as will ensure victory, and the moral effect produced by it on both belligerents. Of this truth, so obvious in itself, the American cabinet of 1812, do not appear to have been apprised — for when (according to General P. B. Porter's testimony) Hull required three thousand men, as the least number with which all the objects of the campaign could be successfully prosecuted; the government replied, that "more than two thousand could not be given." //50-1//

Whether this decision be examined in relation to the capacity of the nation; to the variety and importance of the services to be performed; or to the means necessary to their execution, nothing could have been more erroneous. To those who know any thing of the character or numbers of the western population, or of their peculiar interests and feelings at that period and on this subject, we need but remark, (and without any fear of contradiction,) that five thousand men could have been obtained as promptly as two thousand.

When again it is recollected, that the defence of our western posts and territory; the prevention of a war with the savages; the capture of Malden; the command of Lake Erie, and the means of a prompt co-operation with the troops destined to act on the Niagara, formed the objects of the campaign — who can for a moment doubt {51} their magnitude or interest? And lastly, though it be readily admitted, and we hope sufficiently proved, that the force given to General Hull was competent to the capture of Malden and the preservation of Detroit, still it by no means follows, that it was commensurate with all the objects of the expedition; since among these were to be found, "the capture or destruction of the British fleet on Lake Erie," //51-1// an object which, in the absence of all naval means, could only be effected by such an augmentation of the army as would have entirely excluded the British fleet from the shores of the lake.
Had the government taken this short and plain view of the subject, and invited Governor Shelby of Kentucky, or Governor Meigs of Ohio, to follow in Hull's track, with two thousand gun-men and Winchester's brigade of infantry, how different would have been the issue of the campaign? Unfortunately, we began by weighing military expeditions in gold scales; and the experiment proved (as it will never fail to do) that parsimony, always paltry, is in war the most lavish and criminal prodigality.

Source: This passage appears in *Notices of the War* at pp. 41 – 51.
Next to keeping your troops in a state \{21\} to act simultaneously, it is important in this art to select with judgment the point against which you are to carry your attack. This may be the centre, or an extremity, or the rear of your enemy’s line. An attack on the centre is only justifiable when your enemy has committed a fault. If he has extended his line too far, and thus weakened his centre; or if he has committed the maintenance of it to divisions isolated by ravines, &c. &c. you may strike these, and with decisive effect, as by this measure you break down altogether his order of battle, and compel his wings to fly, or to take the hazard of fighting without concert, and falling in succession.

An attack on the rear, has in itself some inherent advantages and disadvantages. — When successful, it carries with it entire discomfiture to your enemy, — but as it presupposes the turning of a flank, so it occupies more time than that manoeuvre; it involves more labor and calculation; it puts more to hazard, and lastly, it makes necessary a division of your forces—because in executing it, you must be careful to leave a strong body in the extremity you pass, which will answer the several purposes of keeping open a communication with your primitive line of \{22\} operations, while it severs that of your enemy; of assailing him in front while you attack him in rear, and of preventing him from escaping from a bad position, by a concealed movement.

These remarks sufficiently indicate the preference which the attack of a wing has over that of either of the other points.

Source: This passage appears in Hints to Young Generals at 20-22.
SECOND TRANCHE
FROM NOTICES:

{116} Remarks. The errors which signalize the close of this campaign in the north, are numerous and striking. Those of Dearborn and Smyth appear to have been the result of constitutional defects — barrenness or inactivity of mind in the one, and infirmity of purpose in the other; while those of Van Rensselaer were obviously sins of ignorance, the offspring of that deficient knowledge, which every man must feel, who for the first time, and without any previous instruction, finds himself at the head of an army and on the eve of a battle. Of the former, any new illustration would be unnecessary, as they have been already sufficiently indicated; while of the latter, a special but brief notice may be useful.

I. The false and improbable report of a spy, was made the groundwork of the expedition. "With practised Generals, the credibility of spies is always doubtful, and never confided in, unless sustained by some collateral evidence, furnishing a strong probability in its favor." In the present case, such proof was entirely wanting; and the report itself expressly contradicted by the fact, that the complete success of Brock's late expedition to Detroit, had left no reason to believe a repetition of the visit; and the less so, as the hourly augmentation of the American army in his front, made the safety of the British posts on the Niagara his most important duty. Notwithstanding these obvious considerations, the knowledge and integrity of the spy were taken for granted, and, in the General's opinion, warranted not merely an attack on Queenstown, but a full dispensation from the employment of all military rules while making it.

II. "Every military enterprise, should have some useful and important object." Yet, according to the General's official report, his views were limited on this occasion, to the expulsion of a small British detachment from Queenstown, and the occupation of that village as winter quarters for his troops — objects which, if attained, would have little if any influence on the progress or issue of the war, while they could not fail to impose upon him the perils of defending throughout the winter, an open and unfortified village; and (what would be worse) the absurdity of placing between himself and his resources, a wide, rapid, and unfordable river.

III. The troops employed, or intended to be employed, on this service, were principally militia; and, therefore, not better chosen than the
object itself. Why this was so, is a problem, not yet satisfactorily explained. If it originated in an esprit du corps, or belief of militia efficiency, there may be some color of excuse for the error; but, if as reported, the arrangement was made to gratify the ambition of an individual, the act was not merely {118} injudicious, but criminal. At the period in question, there were at the General's disposition, more than three thousand troops of the line; from whom a corps might have been selected, which, if well found, equipped and commanded, would not have been either beaten or baffled.

IV. "If it be necessary to pass an army over a large and rapid river, in presence of an enemy, demonstrations should never be omitted — provided the extent of your own force will justify detaching." That General Van Rensselaer had at this time a redundant force, will be seen by his official report; yet so far from assigning any portion of it to this use, he was even careful so to distribute it as would have completely counteracted this intention, had it existed.

Colonel Scott and his artillerists, were called from the Falls, and Smyth and his brigade from Black Rock — points, where, had they been left, their presence would have kept at their posts, the garrisons of Erie and Chippewa, and thus prevented their co-operation in the defence of Queenstown. //118-1//

V. "Every officer, charged with the direction of a military enterprise, should, before commencing it, assure himself that the means necessary for the purpose, are provided and ready for use." In this case, it was different, as we have seen, that neither boats, oars, nor pilots, had been assembled in sufficient numbers; and, (what is still more {119} extraordinary) that no efficient means had been taken, for ensuring the safety, or regulating the employment, of such of these articles as had been collected.

VI. "An army crossing a river in small detachments and consecutively, exposes itself to be beaten in detail, by an enemy much inferior to itself" — another and important maxim, which, on this occasion, was forgotten or disregarded.

VII. The place selected for crossing the river, was ill-judged. "A sheet of eddies, from shore to shore," as described by the General, and commanded by two of the enemy's batteries, could not fail to aggravate the
evil of the receding error; and both multiply and increase the difficulties inherent in the operation, under circumstances the most favorable.

VIII. The omission to ascertain, previously to the adoption of the project, the political sentiments of the militia on the question of invasion; and that of not promptly recalling the advanced corps, after having ascertained that point, were errors of great magnitude. Both measures were entirely within the General's power, and had they been adopted, would either have prevented the enterprise, or have terminated it at a moment, when, by the death of Brock, and the flight of the enemy, we should have had the credit of a victory, instead of the discredit of a defeat. And lastly, nothing could be more ill-judged than the attempt made to withdraw the corps, after it had lost its ascendancy in the field; and when the means necessary for passing the river, or of covering the retreat, no longer existed. {120}

Blunders and faults like those we have been employed in narrating, could not fail to make a powerful impression upon public opinion. With such of our population as had opposed the war, they became a fruitful source of ridicule, and augury of future and greater evils; and with those who had honestly and zealously advocated it, of sorrow and humiliation. These last mentioned feelings were not, however, unmingled with hopes, that a second campaign, under better auspices, and more of preparation than was permitted to the first, would redeem many of its errors, and demonstrate that, though a peace of thirty years might have obscured or blunted the knowledge necessary for conducting the war, it had not utterly extinguished that spirit and aptitude for military enterprise, which so eminently characterized the latter stages of the revolutionary contest; and which even now, began to display itself on the ocean and the lakes.

Source: This passage appears in Notices of the War at pp.116-120.
{39} These are close, open or irregular. The first are only employed when you are greatly superior to your enemy, either in the number or quality of your troops; or when, from causes not to be controlled, you have a large and exposed front to defend. They may be strengthened as in the case of intrenched camps (from which they differ but little) by redans, bastions, redoubts or forts.

Generals of great name have held this species of fortification in much disrespect, and the objection they make to it is, no doubt, a solid one. “An army,” they say, “behind such works, cannot avail itself of the errors committed by the enemy—because it cannot march against him in order of battle, having only a few narrow avenues through which it can defile. He may therefore blunder with impunity, and retire without annoyance.”

The second or open entrenchment, is not liable to this objection. This consists of a line of redans, of bastions, or of {40} redoubts, which, separately, are not formidable, but which, if well supported by each other and by an army behind them, will make an enemy weep over even a victory. Whether redans, redoubts or bastions be employed, one of these with an epaulement behind it, should be thrown up before each battalion of the front line, and the intervals should be defended by artillery, &c. but as these will be your weak points, you must be careful to shorten your front as much as possible, and thus avoid their multiplication.

The last of these forms is the irregular, which rejecting a more systematic work, seizes only particular and favorable points. Are there villages on your line of battle? These must be separately entrenched and well filled with me. Is your line intersected by ravines? These favor an assailant, and must be commanded by one or more redoubts. Have you a wood in your front, or on your flanks? This must be cut down and formed into an abbatis; and in the intervals between these, you must throw up redans or bastions.

That open, and even simple lines, may be defended with great effect, is abundantly established by history in general; nor is our own wanting in evidence of {41} the same kind. The affair of Bunker’s-hill was a noble effort of undisciplined valor on the one side, and of a total absence of military judgment on both sides. Had Gen. Howe have landed on the isthmus, he would have taken the American lines in flank, and precluded our militia
from the possibility of retreat. Their position was a perfect *cul de sac*, from which they escaped but by the ignorance or presumption of the British general.

As the principles of military tactics and those of fortification are the same, and as no officer can be accomplished without a competent knowledge of the latter, I may be permitted to subjoin to this section the maxims which govern on the subject of *field fortification*. These are—

1st. To give to your works the least possible extent that may consist with the accommodation of the troops destined to occupy them:

2d. To choose that *form* of work, which has the least circumference:

3d. To dispose your lines in such way as shall give to your fire the greatest possible number of directions without crossing itself:

4th. To locate your work on ground which shall not be commanded by any neighboring height:

5th. To clear your front and flanks of every thing that shall obstruct your view of the enemy’s movements, or lessen the effect of your fire upon him:

6th. To give to your parapets that elevation, thickness and form which shall completely cover the entrenched ground; and,

7th. So to place your exterior defences (palisades, wells, &c.) as shall most retard the approach of the enemy—keep him longest under your fire, and render any oblique movement, whether to the right or to the left, not less difficult, than a direct one.

Source: This passage appears in *Hints to Young Generals* at pp. 39-42.

**THIRD TRANCHE**

**FROM **NOTICES**

{150} [Remarks] Before concluding this article, a brief detail of the rules of war applying to the case, may not be useless.

1. In defensive war, when local and other circumstances forbid fortification, the true resource of the {151} weaker power, will be found in a speedy adoption and strict observance of partisan principles — constant vigilance and unremitting activity. "By these/" says a high authority, "much may be done. The former will sufficiently secure against danger ; and the latter, by multiplying small attacks, made by day and by night, on the camp-guards, detachments, and communications of an enemy, will greatly
retard his progress, diminish his strength, and, not improbably, exhaust his patience."

Of this important rule, the first injunction only was remembered. Care sufficient was taken to avoid danger; but of the multiplied attacks directed by the second, nothing was seen during the five days of campaign which preceded the 24th of August — whence it followed, that the strength, progress, and patience, of the enemy, underwent neither change nor disturbance till that day.

2. "Pitched battles generally decide the fate of a campaign, and not unfrequently, that of a war; whence it follows as a rule, that conflicts of this kind should never be hazarded by an army hastily collected, and wholly unpractised in war, when contending with another, highly disciplined, well equipped, ably commanded, and nearly, if not entirely, equal to itself in numerical force."

This rule, imperative as it is, was disregarded — a fact the more extraordinary, as the General well knew the high military character of the enemy, and even believed his numerical force to be equal, if not superior, to his own, while of the American army he declared, that "not two men of the whole, knew anything of military service." //152-1//

3. "The first duty of a General determined to risk a field-fight, and having the choice of ground on which to do it, is to select a position adapted to the array, number, and character, of the troops at his disposal; and thus qualify himself for the high additional duty of giving to the whole a corresponding order of battle."

This rule, like its predecessors, escaped the General's notice. He was compelled, as we have seen, to fight a battle on ground unfit for the purpose, and on dispositions made of his troops, by men wholly ignorant of war, either as an art or a science.

4. "In orders of battle of two lines, the second takes the character, and performs the duties of a reserve." It cannot but be thought extraordinary, that a rule so obvious, should have been either unknown or disregarded by men wearing the badge, and exercising the authority -of generals; yet such was the fact — Winder, in his excitement, overlooked it, and Smith and his brigade showed no inclination to perform the duty.
//152-1// Winder's letter to the Committee of Inquiry. At page 158, of the report to Congress of this committee, we find the following description given by the General of the army he commanded: "A mass of men suddenly assembled, without organization or discipline, or officers of any the least knowledge of service, excepting Major Peters; or if any, unknown to me." Yet to officers thus described — to Slansbury and Smith — he assigns the duty of choosing his position, and to Mr. Monroe, that of forming his order of battle! {153}

5. "When retreat becomes necessary, the orders for making it should always be accompanied with a short and well-defined designation of a point for reunion. It is only by a strict observance of this rule, that the evils arising from a total dispersion of force, can be avoided." It cannot be forgotten, that in the present case, the omission to give out a rallying point, produced a dispersion of force, which formed the only plausible reason, for refusing to occupy and defend the capitol. //153-1//

6. "If, in a retreat, a beaten army find on its route a defensible position — such as villages and strong isolated buildings often furnish — it should be promptly seized, and strenuously defended." Military history offers many instances in which armies beaten in the field, have, by acting on this rule, become eventually the victors. Our own chronicles present a distinguished case of this kind, in the gallant and successful defence made of Chew's house, by Colonel Musgrave and six hundred British infantry, in the campaign of 1777, when assailed by a large portion of the American army, commanded by General Washington in person. If the two cases be examined in their several relations — the greater force of Winder than that of Musgrave for defence; the smaller force of Ross than that of Washington for attack; and the decided superiority of the capitol to Chew's house for position — the conclusion is irresistible, that, had Winder followed this example and defended the capitol, the result would {154} have been as fortunate in the one case, as it was discreditable in the other — the city would have escaped outrage, the capitol destruction, the army censure, and the nation disgrace.//154-1//

Source: This passage appears in Notices of the War at pp. 150-154.
NOTES TO NOTICES OF THE WAR IN ALL THREE TABLES

//Notices 42-1// "A large body of the militia had reinforced the British garrison, and all the surrounding tribes of Indians had been invited to his standard. Every preparation for attack was made on the 5th of July, and it was only prevented by a communication made to a person in Malden, who had the confidence of the commander; that it was not the intention of the army to march to Detroit; that all the boats were collected on the lowest side of the river; that cannon had been sent forward to Detroit; and that my intention was to cross the river and attack the fort.

This information caused the commanding officer to abandon the enterprise, and concentrate all his forces for the defence of his post. Hull’s Memoirs p. 29.

//Notices 43-1// Tecumseh’s speech to General Proctor, 18th September, 1813, — "You told us that we need not trouble ourselves about the enemy’s garrisons, and that you would take good care of your own; which made our hearts glad."

//Notices 43-2// "There was a great deal of confusion in the town, moving effect, &c. The Queen Charlotte came to the wharf and took in the women and Baggage, and had her topsails loose and ready to sale.” Forbish and Gooding’s testimony on Hull’s trial.

//Notices 44-1// Hull’s official report of the 26th of August, 1812.

//Notices 46-1// Lieutenant Forbish’s testimony.

//Notices 48-1// Official Report of Captain Hanks to the commanding General at Detroit, see also Appendix, No. 6.

//Notices 49-1// The line extended two hundred miles through a desert, and in a great part of its length was skirted by the lake, commanded by the British ships

//Notices 49-2// Hull’s Memoirs; testimony of Mr. Eustis on Hull’s trial.
//Notices 49-3// Appendix No. 7.

//Notices 50-1// Hull's trial; General P. B. Porter's testimony.

//Notices 51-1// President's Message of November 4th, 1812.

//Notices 118-1// Appendix, No. 12.


//Notices 153-1// Appendix, No. 28.

//Notices 154-1// Appendix, No. 29.