



The Day Book

Volume 3, Issue 1

November-December 1996

A Newsletter for the Supporters of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum

A Battle of Titans

The North Atlantic Blockading Squadron vs. Fort Fisher, 1864-65

by Gordon Calhoun

For most of the American Civil War, the port of Wilmington, N.C. was one of the primary ports of call for blockade runners bringing in much need supplies for Confederate States forces. The port was guarded by one of the most formidable fortresses ever built on American soil, Fort Fisher. Fort Fisher rested at the mouth of the Cape Fear River about 20 miles south of Wilmington. Fort Fisher's seacoast guns kept the U.S. Navy's blockading force at bay and provided excellent protection to the blockade runners. By late 1864, Wilmington's importance grew as all other ports in the South had either been taken or were under heavy siege. The port was the last link that Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia had to the outside world.

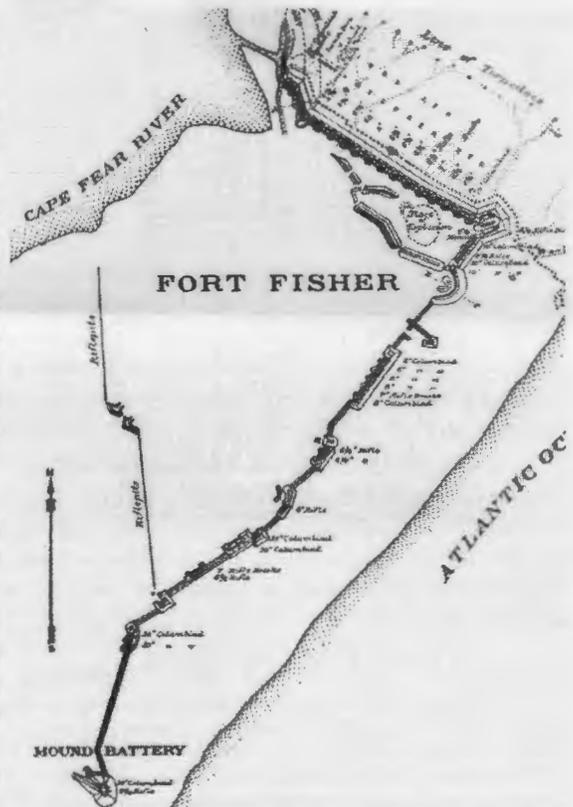
The credit for Fort Fisher's strong defenses goes to Col. William Lamb. A native of Norfolk and son of a three-term mayor of Norfolk, he spent his time before the war writing editorials in support of the Southern state's rights movement.

When Lamb took command of Fort Fisher in April 1862, he

found that it only had four guns and very weak fortifications. He immediately set about improving the fortifications and acquiring more guns. By the time of the first Union expedition in late 1864, Fort Fisher had over 45 guns and sand walls that were upwards of 20 feet thick. Workers also placed land mines in front of the north wall which could be detonated by an operator during an assault.

As early as 1862, Union leaders talked about the need to seize Fort Fisher, but the Army claimed it could not spare the troops for an assault. More resources became available by early 1864 and the U.S. Navy and Union Army began to plan the campaign.

After Rear Adm. David Farragut turned down Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles' offer to take charge of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, Welles turned to recently promoted Rear Adm. David Dixon Porter. Porter accepted the offer and beginning in the summer of 1864, he assembled an armada in Hampton Roads. Since Wilmington was the last open



Sometimes referred as the "Gibraltar of the South," Fort Fisher guarded the important port of Wilmington, N.C. By the time Union forces got around to attacking the fort, it had mounted over 45 guns and formidable sand fortifications. Adding to Fort Fisher's defenses was the depth of the Cape Fear River, which was deep enough for blockade runners but too shallow for Union ironclads and frigates to ascend. (1867 drawing from Battles and Leaders of the Civil War)

Confederate port, Porter had most of the Navy's veteran ships at his disposal. These included three of the powerful 48-gun steam frigates, led by USS *Minnesota*, and five ironclads. By

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Local History. World Events.

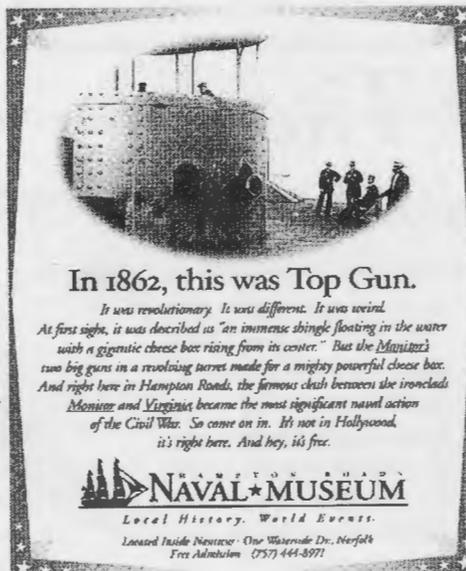
The Director's Column

by Becky Poulliot

Local History. World Events. So reads the new "tag line" for the Hampton Roads Naval Museum. This catchy one liner encapsulates what our exhibits take nearly 8,000 feet to convey: how this region's naval history has influenced our nation's development. Depictions of a few of those history-shaping events have appeared in a series of print advertisements. A set of four ads tell the museum's story beginning with the Battle Off the Virginia Capes. The *Monitor* ad, the second one, is shown here and conveys the clever wording and catchy imagery of the group. Eugene Ely's flight and the Battle of the Atlantic round out the series, which has appeared *en masse* in the *Virginian Pilot's* "Business Weekly" section to favorable comments. A fifth ad has been published in the *Pilot's* "Sunday Break" section. It contains a huge wave with the statement that some of the most memorable battlegrounds aren't; hence the importance of naval history. Please let me know what you think of the ads. There has been some discussion about turning them into posters advertising the museum.

This winter is turning into a busy time

for public relations efforts. The museum has been accepted into the American Association of Museum's MAP III



program. MAP is the acronym for Museum Assessment Program, and MAP III concerns the museum's public dimension efforts and how the institution relates to the visitor and the community at large. The American Association of Museums (AAM) is the official national membership program which represents our country's museums. Organized in 1906, the AAM sets

professional standards using peer review and institutional study in a professional accreditation program. MAP III will allow us to improve our communication among board members, volunteers and community leaders through a four to five month self-study program. The museum's MAP III committee consists of Hampton Roads Naval Historical Foundation Board Members **Jack Barry, Dick Rumble, David Stovall,** museum docents **Jud Hill, Al Petrich, Preston Turpin and Pat Spear** (Pat is also a foundation board member), and staff members **Joe Judge and Bob Matteson**. I will be coordinating the effort along with the local public relations firm of **Emily Miles and Associates**.

MAP III will be used as a tool for planning future educational programs and exhibits. The assessment is another step towards AAM accreditation, which we hope to obtain within the next five years.

On the evening of Sept. 19th, the museum celebrated the 215th anniversary of the Battle off the Virginia Capes with a reception hosted by the Alliance Française. Thank you to **Mr. and Mrs. Gray Kiger** and the law firm of **Vandeventer, Black, Meridith and Martin** for helping the Alliance Française underwrite the reception. Over 100 guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, music by a jazz combo from the Atlantic Fleet Band, and a Marine-Navy color guard who paraded and retired the colors at sunset. **Adm. Jean-Yves Nerzic**, head of the French Military Mission to the Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, gave us an enlightened look at the French leader of the Battle Off the Virginia Capes, **Adm. François Joseph Paul, Comte de Grasse**.

The year closes with the annual Christmas party. Mark your calendars for the evening of Dec. 12. See page 10 for more details.

About *The Day Book*

The Day Book is an authorized publication of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum (HRNM). Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official view of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Navy or the U.S. Marine Corps and do not imply endorsement thereof. The HRNM is a museum dedicated to the study of 220 years of naval history in the Hampton Roads region. The museum is open Mondays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Tuesdays through Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Day Book's purpose is to educate and inform readers on historical topics and museum related events. It is written by the staff and volunteers of the museum. The newsletter takes its name from a 19th century Norfolk newspaper.

Questions or comments can be directed to the Hampton Roads Naval Museum editor. *The Day Book* can be reached at (757) 322-2993, by fax at (757) 445-1867, or write *The Day Book*, Hampton Roads Naval Museum, One Waterside Drive, Suite 248, Norfolk, VA 23510-1607. The museum can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~VAM/vamhome.html>. *The Day Book* is published bi-monthly with a circulation of 1,200.

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Don't Take That Souvenir!

Guidelines for Amateur Underwater Archaeologists

by Joe Judge

Near the end of the Civil War section of the museum's gallery is an exhibit of underwater archeology. The exhibit focuses on the history of the sloop-of-war USS *Cumberland* and the commerce raider CSS *Florida* and their artifacts. The purpose of this exhibit is not only to educate the public about the two Civil War vessels, but also to educate them about the care and treatment that underwater shipwrecks deserve. An increasing problem over the last 20 years has been the misuse and mistreatment of these valued treasures.

The answer to the question "What is the best way to treat this historic resource?" can legitimately be answered "Leave it alone." The reasons for this answer are many, not the least of which are the shipwreck's role as a grave site and the idea that future generations should be able to see the shipwreck undisturbed. The complexities of maritime law, often very old maritime law, failed to protect most vessels.

Fortunately, U.S. Navy ships and aircraft wrecks that lie underwater are protected. A whole series of Federal laws and regulations, most particularly the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 and the Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1987, make the "do's" and "don'ts" of Navy ship and aircraft wrecks fairly clear.

Navy ships and airplane wrecks are the property of the Navy unless specific, formal action has been taken to dispose of them. Aircraft and ships stricken from the active list are not considered disposed of or abandoned. These laws also apply to ships of the Confederate States Navy and to ships

and aircraft surrendered to or captured by the Navy. The Navy retains the right to these wrecks whether the wrecks are in American, foreign or international waters.

Divers may dive on Navy wrecks at their own risk. This risk can be considerable, since Navy wrecks often contain unexploded ordnance and other hazards. A tragic example

Hellcat. There are only 26 of these famous Navy fighters left. Word about the aircraft quickly got out, with the result that in no time the aircraft was gone. Divers had cut it into pieces suitable for display on their home mantelpieces.

Divers may not disturb or remove any portion of a wreck. The urge to take home a souvenir is a major



CSS Florida is a prime example of what can happen when a ship wreck is vandalized by souvenir hunters. While a proper archaeological dive was done on the Hampton Roads wreck at a later date and the stolen artifacts recovered, the shipwreck site had been severely abused and many of the artifacts permanently damaged. (U.S. Navy photo of a 1894 drawing by Clary Ray)

happened off San Pedro, California. An experienced California diver, who was an editor of a diving magazine and the author of a guide to California shipwrecks, died in a 1995 accident while exploring the World War I destroyer USS *Moody* (DD-277). Trouble began for the divers when they could not free the anchor to their boat.

Despite the bevy of laws that exist, and the natural dangers of working underwater, unthinking individuals still can wreak havoc on historic sites. In 1990, divers in Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island were surprised to come across an airplane, a Grumman F6F

enemy of archaeological sites all over the world and this urge seems to become particularly acute when someone is underwater. Such actions destroy the wrecks and only insure that other divers will never have the chance to see the wreck. Vandalism of underwater sites will eventually destroy those sites. Debris fields from ships or airplanes, even though they are not complete, are considered archaeological sites and receive the same protection under law as true wrecks.

A recent legal conflict concerning USS *San Diego* (CA-6) highlighted *Archaeology continued on page 4*

Archaeology continued from page 3

some of these issues. *San Diego*, an armored cruiser, was the only major warship lost by the United States in World War I. The cruiser struck a mine laid by *U-156* off Fire Island, N.Y. in 1918. In recent years, the ship has become a popular dive spot, and unfortunately a popular spot for artifact recovery. The Naval Historical Center's interest in preserving the shipwreck upset many divers who enjoyed access to the wreck and to the associated artifact hunting. One group decided to use admiralty law to place a salvage claim on the vessel. The claim has since been dropped, and the Navy began working with dive groups to produce a management plan for the site.

Some other sites have been protected with less acrimony. In 1995, the Naval Historical Center and the state of Maryland cooperated to establish the State's first diving preserve for *U-1105*, a German submarine recovered as a war prize and then sunk in 1949 off Piney Point, Maryland. The Navy is also working closely with the state of South Carolina, the National Park Service and many other groups to develop a management (and possible recovery) plan for the Confederate submarine *Hunley*, recently discovered near Charleston.

States usually have their own

regulations for exploration of underwater cultural resources. In Virginia, the Department of Historic Resources, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other agencies all have their say about the removal or disturbance of underwater historic property.

In some cases, individuals or groups have proposed the recovery of an underwater asset. The Navy will consider such proposals, but only for educational or scientific reasons, and will never accede to the disposal or sale of wrecks. Archaeological

The urge to take home a souvenir is a major enemy of archaeological sites all over the world. Such actions destroy the wrecks and only insure that other divers will never have the chance to see the wreck.

resources, like other resources, are finite and fragile. Congress has directed the Navy to make every effort to protect these sites. In many cases, the sites are the last resting places of Navy personnel that deserve the utmost respect.

The body of current laws and regulations can be summed up in a few common sense rules. If you want

to dive on a Navy wreck, get permission from the Naval Historical Center and state agencies. Find out about underwater hazards. Above all, do not disturb the wreck or take anything from the wreck. This includes the surrounding debris field. If you witness or know of the theft of material from a Navy wreck, report it to the U.S. Coast Guard and the Naval Historical Center in Washington, D.C. (202) 433-7229/8230. 

Make a note that the HRNM phone numbers have changed.

(757)444-8971 is still in use but only for general visitor's information. Individual staff members now have their own phone numbers.

(757) 322-2987 is the new main phone number.

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From the Depths of the HRNM Archives Comes...

Regulars vs. Reserves, ca. 1862

by Joe Mosier

At the start of each of America's wars, the rapid expansion of the U.S. Navy brought confrontation between regular Naval officers who had served prior to the war and their merchant counterparts serving only during wartime. Both services had their own traditions, customs and rules which led to occasional conflict. In the Hampton Roads Naval Museum archives, the Civil War letter book of Lieut. Commander Thomas Talbot Truxtun contains an excellent example of this situation. This grandson of early Navy great Capt. Thomas Truxtun was serving in the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron at South Carolina when he faced difficulties with his Executive Officer aboard USS *Dale*.

USS *Dale*
Saint Helena Sound, S.C.
January 13, 1862

To: Hon. Gideon Welles
Secretary of the Navy
Washington, D.C.

Sir,

[The letter starts with a three page list of reasons for temporarily suspending Acting Master J. O. Barclay from duty] These, Sir, are, I think a few good reasons for suspending Acting Master J. O. Barclay, "without assigning any cause," and no doubt will account for a man of his advanced years and long experience as a commander at sea, who makes it his daily boast that the discipline of the Navy is nothing to what he has been in the habit of maintaining on board his ship, that the respect paid by officers of the Navy cannot compare with that extracted by merchant captains from their subordinates, for bringing against me the most serious charge known among naval men, viz., that of unofficer- and ungentleman-like conduct.

Mr. Barclay has, time and again, admitted to me his (very natural) ignorance of Naval etiquette, and that he was too old to learn; to this admitted fact I attribute the gravity of his charges against me, for, throwing aside certain infirmities of temper, he has ever evinced a most laudable zeal in the performance of his duties.

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
W. T. Truxtun, Lieut. Comdg.

U.S. Ship *Dale*
Saint Helena Sound, S.C.
March 26, 1862

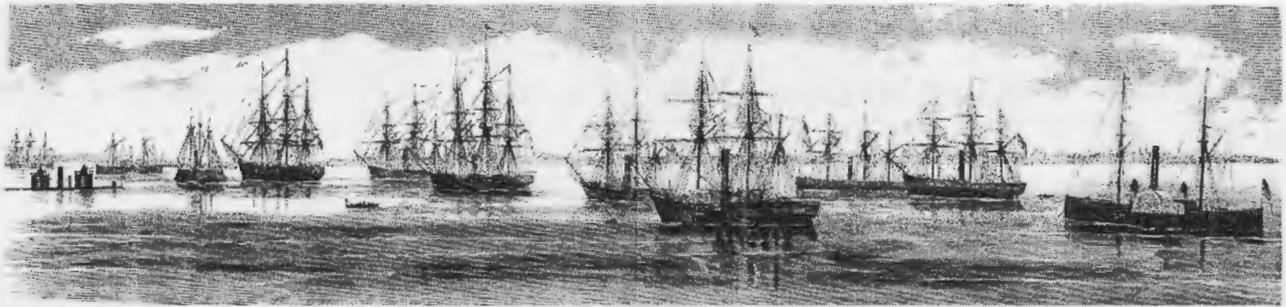
To: Acting Master John Weidman

I have carefully considered the contents of your letter of this date and investigated, as far as their general nature would permit, the complaints which it contained. It appears to me that the misunderstanding between yourself and the Executive Officer Mr. Barclay, has originated in the very improper habit you both have indulged in of making mutually unpleasant remarks as to the relative merit of the Navy, and Merchant Marine.

If Mr. Barclay in general conversation makes assertions which you think derogatory to the service that you have the honor to belong to, you will best disprove them in passing them by in a dignified silence and by a prompt and ready attention to duty, coupled with a proper degree of respect for his position and advanced years, show that your training as an officer has been combined with that of a gentleman....

I am respectfully, etc.
W. T. Truxtun, Lieut. Comdg.

According to E. W. Callahan's *List of Officers of the Navy of the United States and of the Marine Corps from 1775 to 1900*, J. O. Barclay was appointed to the rank of Acting Master on May 24, 1861. He resigned, still in that rank, on April 23, 1864. John Weidman graduated from the Naval Academy in 1857. He later served on board U.S. Steam Gunboat *Osceola* at the capture of Fort Fisher. On June 30, 1875, Weidman retired in the rank of lieutenant commander. At the capture of Fort Fisher, W.T. Truxtun commanded the steam gunboat *Tacony*. After the war, he would rise to the rank of commodore and serve as Commandant of the Norfolk Navy Yard prior to his retirement in 1886. 



Shown here is an engraving of the naval build-up in Hampton Roads in preparation for the Fort Fisher expedition. The fleet was one of the largest ever assembled in American waters. Fifty-eight warships, including five ironclads and three of the Navy's 48-gun frigates, and 100 transports gathered in Hampton Roads from June to December 1864 for the assault. (Dec. 17, 1864 Harper's Weekly engraving)

Fort Fisher continued from page 1

October 1864, the Navy had assembled 58 warships, mounting a total of 676 guns, in Hampton Roads. To assist in assaulting the fort, the Union Army assigned Maj. Gen. Ben Butler to command a 6,500-man brigade.

The expedition did not get underway until December. Several of the ships in the Union fleet required repairs at Norfolk and the question of a "powder-ship" scheme had yet to be settled. The powder-ship idea was originally concocted by Butler who had heard about the mammoth shock effect of black powder explosions in English coal mines. In a rare show of inter-departmental cooperation, Adm. Porter agreed (see page 7 for more on the Butler-Porter relationship). The steamer USS *Louisiana* was converted to look like a blockade runner and packed with over 215 tons of gunpowder. In theory, the idea was to run the ship aground near the fort, blow it up and then all the Confederate soldiers inside the fort would be scared stiff by the explosion.

With the powder-ship finally finished, the armada cleared Hampton Roads arriving off Fort Fisher on Dec. 21, 1864. A rough gale tormented the fleet on the way down, delaying the arrival of the ironclads. Butler's troop transports decided on their own to head to the Union-held port of Beaufort, N.C. for safety.

Porter waited for three days for Butler's transports to arrive before running out of patience. He decided to wait no longer. He had two choices on strategy. The first was to bomb the fort and then launch a direct assault. The second option was to work some of his ships up the Cape Fear River, run the Confederate shore batteries and cut the

fort off from outside help.

The problem with the second option was that Porter did not have current river charts. He was afraid to have a ship run aground and be captured. He also feared that underwater mines, which the Confederates used with great effectiveness, might have been placed in the river. After having the river sounded by one of the most fearless Naval officers in history, Lt. Cmdr. William Cushing, Porter decided to stick with a direct assault.

As previously arranged, Porter sent off the powder ship towards the fort. The ship exploded in a great thunder which was felt thirty miles away. Ten hours later, he ordered the fleet to begin firing and unleashed the greatest naval bombardment in history on the morning of Christmas Eve. While the bombardment was going the way Porter wanted, two factors were against him. First, Butler's transports had not yet arrived. Secondly, unknown to Porter, the powder-ship explosion did absolutely nothing to the Confederate troops except to have them relax their guard a little while they laughed.

On the other side of the wall, Lamb was well aware that a Union attack was coming as Confederate spies and Northern newspapers had reported for months on the Naval build-up in Hampton Roads. But Lamb could not get any more troops to help defend the fort as his superior officer, Gen. Braxton Bragg, held them for his own use. Lamb had to make do with the 1,800 Carolinians and Georgians that were already present.

The Union fleet put up a steady stream of fire for several hours. Unprotected structures inside the fort were smashed as were a few guns. The Confederate

troops were perfectly safe inside their bomb-proof shelters. Porter soon found that he could not keep up a rapid fire pace and ordered his ships to limit their fire to conserve ammunition.

During the small breaks in the bombardment, Lamb ordered his garrison to return fire in limited numbers. The more devastating shots fired by the garrison were caused by the 150-lb Armstrong Gun which hit the frigates *Minnesota* and *Wabash*. Suffering a chronic ammunition shortage, Lamb decided to reserve his shot until an assault



The officer in charge of the defenses at Fort Fisher was Norfolk-native Col. William Lamb. He spent two years supervising the improvements of Fort Fisher and, along with his friend Gen. W.H.C. Whiting, led the defense of the fortress. He is buried at the Elmwood Cemetery in Norfolk (1867 engraving from Battles and Leaders of the Civil War)

came. Because the Confederate guns only fired back in a limited manner, Porter believed that the fort was paralyzed and ripe for the taking. He could not have been more wrong.

Just as the first day's bombardment was about to cease, Butler's transports showed up. Though Butler was furious that Porter started without him, he began to land his troops. The Federal soldiers

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The Porter and the Beast

One of the reasons for the failure of the first expedition against Fort Fisher was the lack of cooperation between the Union Army and the U.S. Navy. This lack of cooperation stemmed from a bitter rivalry between the commander of the Army forces, Gen. Ben "Beast" Butler, and the commander of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, Rear Adm. David Dixon Porter.

Both of these two senior officers had very sharp administrative minds and were popular with their respective troops and sailors. However, the two officers came from very different backgrounds and had very different opinions about military service.

Porter was the son of Capt. David Porter of War of 1812 fame and became a midshipman in 1825 at the age of 12. That same year his father was court-martialed for speaking out against the Department of the Navy. As a result, the younger Porter never trusted civilian politicians or political military officers. Porter wrote to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles that "I shall be sure of my man, before I cooperate with any soldier."

Ben Butler, on the other hand, had little shame when it came to politics and the military. Butler was one of the

country's best trial lawyers, a partisan politician and a general all at the same time. He always commanded the attention of the newspaper reporters and used them with great effectiveness.

The rivalry started in 1862, when Porter and Butler had to work together in the assault on Fort Jackson and Fort St. Phillip, which defended New Orleans. Like the Fort Fisher expedition, Porter's mission was to disable the forts' guns while the army troops would assault and seize the forts.

Porter's squadron bombarded the forts for two straight days with mortars. The forts, however, did not give up until Porter's superior officer, Flag Officer David Farragut, attacked the forts directly with his squadron. Porter still took much of the credit for the victory when he reported that the forts had been smashed to pieces by the mortar fire. Butler disagreed and told all the Northern reporters that the capture of the forts and New Orleans was all his doing. He claimed that the Navy and its mortar boats



Rear Adm. David Porter



Maj. Gen. Ben Butler

did nothing. Porter wondered aloud in a letter to the Department of the Navy how Butler could have seized the fort while his troops were 30 miles away from it.

Fate reunited the pair for the Fort Fisher expedition in 1864. By this time, Porter had been promoted to rear admiral and was asked to lead the fleet against the fort. Butler at this time was the former military governor of Norfolk, and now head of the Army of the James. Much was personally at stake for both Porter and Butler. Porter always lied in the shadow of Adm. Farragut and wanted to be thought as great as his cousin. Butler had an eye on the White House and believed that a victory at Fort Fisher credited to him alone would give him the necessary fame.

The first expedition was a disaster. Each man kept the other in the dark about his respective plans for the mission. Butler succeeded in getting the press to blame Porter for the failure. However, Gen. Grant sided with Porter in the argument. Grant relieved Butler from all duties for failing to follow orders. Grant replaced Butler with Gen. Alfred Terry, whom Porter got along with much better. Together they succeeded in seizing the fort a month later. Porter won two victories in 1865: he captured Fort Fisher and got Butler fired. -G.C.

Fort Fisher continued from page 6 began to take positions a couple of miles north of the fort. Outside the fort, they captured an abandoned battery and a couple hundred Confederate soldiers during a small skirmish. Union sailors were so confident of victory that ship bands struck up the tune *Yankee Doodle* at the sight of the Union flag over the captured battery. The fleet continued its bombardment through Christmas Day.

The celebration was much too early. Butler's staff looked over the fort and after a few probing attacks, came to the conclusion that there was no possibility of storming it. Porter's bombardment had done nothing to suppress the fort. Based on these reports and the coming of gale force winds, Butler ordered his troops to begin packing up and to get back on their transports. The troops came under fire from Fort Fisher's guns while

falling back. The fire was intense enough that Butler's transports took off without some of their own soldiers. Porter was in shock as he watched Butler's transports leave without even so much as a goodbye. Not only was Butler violating his orders to set up a siege of Fort Fisher, but he had abandoned his own men. After rescuing the rest of Butler's troops, Porter decided to call off the operation and the fleet ceased fire late on Christmas Day.

The Union fleet had fired around 20,000 shells over the two day period. For their efforts they knocked out only six guns, caused 15 casualties and destroyed some exposed wooden buildings. The port was still open and still supplying Lee's army.

The public blame for the failure was squarely put on Porter's shoulders. *Harper's Weekly* led off their Jan. 14,

1865 issue with an editorial denouncing Porter. In reference to the powder-ship idea newspaper wrote, "There is something ludicrously suggestive of Chinese warfare, of the loud beating of the tom-tom to appall the enemy." They continued, saying, "Admiral Porter thought the fort was seriously disabled, when a reconnaissance showed it was not...some one has blundered, and that some one should be ascertained and properly dealt with." This kind of blame could be attributed directly to Butler who wielded great influence with the press. Porter on the other hand was under a gag order from Secretary Welles and was not allowed to defend himself. In the South, the victory was viewed with mixed results. Bragg hailed it as a great victory, while other Confederate officers knew

Fort Fisher continued on page 8

The Porter and the Beast

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The Union fleet had fired around 20,000 shells over the two day period. For their efforts they knocked out only six guns, caused 15 casualties and destroyed some exposed wooden buildings. The port was still open and still supplying Lee's army.

The public blame for the failure was squarely put on Porter's shoulders. *Harper's Weekly* led off their Jan. 14,

1865 issue with an editorial denouncing Porter. In reference to the powder-ship idea newspaper wrote, "There is something ludicrously suggestive of Chinese warfare, of the loud beating of the tom-tom to appall the enemy." They continued, saying, "Admiral Porter thought the fort was seriously disabled, when a reconnaissance showed it was not...some one has blundered, and that some one should be ascertained and properly dealt with." This kind of blame could be attributed directly to Butler who wielded great influence with the press. Porter on the other hand was under a gag order from Secretary Welles and was not allowed to defend himself. In the South, the victory was viewed with mixed results. Bragg hailed it as a great victory, while other Confederate officers knew

Fort Fisher continued on page 8



Two weeks after the first expedition against Fort Fisher failed, the U.S. Navy organized a second assault with a new, more cooperative Army general and more ammunition. Shown above is the bombardment of the fort by the Union fleet. Before Army troops finally captured the fort on Jan. 15, 1865, the Union fleet had fired over 70,000 shells, or about 1,464 tons of shot, during the two expeditions. (1867 engraving from *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*)

Fort Fisher continued from page 7

the Yankee fleet would be back.

The chief Union officer, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, was angry at Butler. He felt that Butler had disobeyed orders by picking up and leaving the way he had done. As a result, Grant relieved Butler of all duties and put Gen. Alfred Terry in command of the Fort Fisher assault brigade.

At the beginning of the new year, Union forces organized a second expedition. Porter had learned a few things from the first expedition. He brought more ammunition and tried to cooperate more closely with the Army. Porter later wrote that he felt fortunate to have worked with Terry and that Terry was one of only three Army generals he actually liked.

The second attack began on Jan. 13, 1865. That morning, the Navy renewed the bombardment and the Army landed 8,500 troops. Porter ordered the ironclads in 500 yards closer than the previous attack and instructed the wooden ships to fire off as many shots as daylight would allow. He also ordered his gunners not to use the enemy flagpole as a targeting fixture. During the first expedition, gunners used Fort Fisher's flag as a firing point. While the flag was knocked down three times, the fort went untouched. The gunners were told to fire at the fort's gun emplacements. The change in gunnery tactics proved to be very significant. Before the bombardment ceased 48 hours later, almost all of Fisher's heavy guns had been disabled and several holes were

blown into the fort's walls.

Col. Lamb knew that the end was near unless help came soon. He telegraphed Wilmington several times asking Gen. Bragg to use his 6,000 troops and attack the Federal troops. Bragg did not reply to any of Lamb's messages and busily prepared to evacuate Wilmington. All Lamb and his garrison could do was to



Porter organized an all volunteer 2,000-man brigade of sailors and Marines from the fleet. The assault was a disaster as the brigade attacked the strongest part of the fort armed with nothing more than cutlasses, revolvers and carbines. The attack did distract the Confederate defenders' attention long enough for the Army brigade to breach the main wall on the north side. (1867 engraving from *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*)

keep their heads down. The troops did not even get a break at night as the Union ironclads, lead by USS *New Ironsides* and *Monadnock*, maintained sporadic fire.

To assist in the actual attack, Porter began accepting volunteers for an all-Navy assault brigade. Two thousand sailors and Marines responded. On Jan. 15, they were to storm the fort at the same time the Army brigade attacked. Around 8 a.m., they charged the Northeastern bastion with nothing more than revolvers, cutlasses and

carbines. The result was a disaster. Lamb saw the assault coming and ordered all of his troops to man the walls and repel the attack. Confederate fire was so accurate and deadly that the Navy brigade was pinned to the beach and eventually retreated in bad order. Over 200 Union sailors and Marines were killed or wounded.

The Navy brigade assault had the unintentional result of distracting the Confederate defenders, allowing the Army brigade to successfully breach the north wall of the fort. The garrison fell back to its trench system inside the fort. Lamb's minefield which was meant to repel such an assault had been disabled by the Naval bombardment. After nine charges, the Federal brigade prevailed. Lamb himself was severely wounded during the attack.

A few days after the capture of the fort, Wilmington fell to Union forces. Cut off from any outside supplies, Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House ten weeks

later, which ended the war.

Porter got his long awaited victory and fame and would go on to become one of the first Chief of Naval Operations. Despite the defeat, Lamb was hailed in the South as the "hero of Fort Fisher." The patriot Lamb, however, did do something after the war which was more courageous than any of his Fort Fisher deeds: he became a Republican in the Reconstructed South. Despite his party affiliation, he was elected three times as mayor of Norfolk. 

NADEP, Norfolk Exhibit Now on Display

Through Jan. 31, 1997, the Hampton Roads Naval Museum is proud to present *Without Us...They Don't Fly!: A Retrospective on Naval Aviation Depot, Norfolk*. The exhibit showcases the depot's service to the Naval Air Forces over the last 75 years. Among the items on display are pictures dating from the facility's beginnings, a 1" to 1' scale model of an A-6 Intruder and an aircraft sheet metal mechanic's tool case. The exhibit is located on the hallway just adjacent to the museum. 



The center piece of the exhibit is a 1" to 1' scale model of an A-6 Intruder being repaired. The model includes everything, from spilled coffee to the tools used to repair the aircraft, that one would see on an airplane being overhauled at NADEP, Norfolk. (Photo by Gordon Calhoun, model built by Jim Ryan)



Through artifacts and other memorabilia, the spirit of the "Tidewater Industrial Tiger" lives on. Shown here are several items telling the story of NADEP, Norfolk including the American flag from NADEP, the EPA environmental quality award it received and aircraft work manuals. (Photo by Gordon Calhoun)



Just outside the museum, is a photo retrospective of the depot's service to the Naval Air Force. Hanging from the ceilings are decals of the different names the depot has used from its beginnings. (Photo by Gordon Calhoun)

Mark Your Calenders!

for the annual
Volunteer Christmas Party!

**Dec. 12, 7pm at
Norfolk Live!**

**Lots of Good Eats, Lots of Good Treats!
Volunteer Awards to be Given Out
Scheduled to Provide Entertainment
is Singer Bob Zentz**



For more information on prices and to RSVP call the museum
at (757) 322-2986 by Dec. 1



Volunteer News & Notes

by Bob Matteson and Becky Poulliot

Thank You's are in Order

We know how difficult it has been without a volunteer coordinator. Please be assured that we are making every effort to fill the position, and so far several individuals have indicated an interest. In the meantime, dedicated volunteers have been assisting the permanent staff.

Preston Turpin set up a terrific quarterly docent meeting and tour in September at the MacArthur Memorial Museum. Thanks to him and the MacArthur Memorial's educator, **Preston Burton**, who gave an excellent tour of the memorial for the 20 in attendance. It has been stated that the volunteers want to continue having quarterly meetings at other sites followed by tours. Some suggestions include the Virginia Marine Science Museum in Virginia Beach and Fort Norfolk. Should you have any other ideas, let us know.

Special thanks go to **Gary Abrams**, **Jud Hill**, **Margaret Godfrey** and **Ralph Preston** for their character interpretations at the museum's Alliance Française tour and reception on Sept. 19. They did the impossible, luring more than 100 guests away from their food and upstairs to tour the museum.

Events to Look Forward To

The **3rd Annual Docent Christmas Party** will take place on Dec. 12 at 7 p.m. This year, we have the event planned to take place at **Norfolk Live!**, a club located at the Norfolk Naval Station. Entrees will include Cornish game hen and ham with all the trimmings. Volunteer and newsletter awards will be publicly presented after dinner.

Scheduled to provide entertainment during dinner is singer **Bob Zentz**. Mr. Zentz specializes in sea chanties and will make the evening very memorable.

The price of this feast has yet to be determined. Look for more details in the mail. However, if you are already getting hungry and can not wait for the mail, call us at the museum at 322-2986 for more info and to RSVP. We hope all of you will be able to attend.

Mark Greenough and **Living History Associates** will be returning in December to give their popular vignette entitled "Love Letters." This vignette presents a sailor at sea and his wife corresponding during the holiday season of the Civil War. The time and date have yet to be announced. Look for more details in the mail.

Happy Birthday to You!

November

Pat Spear
Joe Mosier

December

Eleanor DiPeppe
Jenro Lambaiso
Harold Anten
Hunt Lewis
Larry Warren
Peter Zink
John Maiorana



New Phone Numbers

The museum has recently received a new phone system. The old number of 444-8971 will still be used for general visitor information. Individual staff members now have their own phone numbers.

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| Becky Poulliot | 322-2990 |
| Joe Judge | 322-2984 |
| Bob Matteson | 322-2986 |
| Vol. Coordinator | 322-2985 |
| Marta Nelson | 322-2991 |
| Ofelia Elbo | 322-2987 |
| Gordon Calhoun | 322-2993 |
| Front Desk | 322-2989 |
| BTCS Dandes | 322-2988 |



The Hampton Roads Naval Museum
presents...

Joseph Law

Retired Public Affairs Officer and Naval Historian of the
Norfolk Naval Shipyard-Portsmouth

**Hear stories and tales about the most
famous shipyard in the United States**

To be held in the Nauticus Theatre
at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, Dec. 10
For more information call (757) 322-2986



The Museum Sage

Sage Stumper IV: The Lost Ships of the Battle of Hampton Roads

The Sage is very confident about getting lots of answers on this question, though he does warn it will take a little bit of research. The question has two parts. Here it is:

The Battle of Hampton Roads (March 8 & 9, 1862) is famous the world over because of the duel between the ironclad CSS *Virginia* and the ironclad USS *Monitor*. However, the battle itself was not simply a duel between two ships. In fact, it was more like a land battle in that it was quite the chaotic melee.

Part 1: There were five other large warships on the Union side. There were two steam frigates, two sail

frigates and a sloop-of-war that used to be a sail frigate. One sail frigate and the sloop-of-war were both sunk on March 8 by *Virginia*. Name these five warships.

Part 2: On the Confederate side there were five warships, all somewhat smaller than the Union ships, that joined *Virginia* in its sorties against the Union blockading squadron. Name these five ships that served in the Confederate James River squadron.

As always, the winner will receive a beautiful Hampton Roads Naval Museum coffee mug courtesy of the Hampton Roads Naval Historical Foundation. Good Luck!

Congratulations!

We are pleased to announce that HRNM docent John Simanton faxed in the correct answer to the last Sage Stumper question. The question was to explain the name of the Naval squadron based in Hampton Roads during the Spanish-American War. The name of the squadron was "The Flying Squadron." The answer is as follows:

Soon after the United States declared war on Spain, local politicians began to express concerns that the Spanish might come and bombard cities on the Eastern seaboard. The main Spanish squadron under Adm. Cervera was on its way over from Spain and no one was exactly sure where it might appear. To allay their fears, the U.S. Navy assembled several squadrons to watch for Cervera's fleet. Most of the ships in these makeshift squadrons were nothing more than old monitors and gunboats.

The Navy quickly realized that these ships would be no match for armored cruisers of the Spanish Navy. As a result, the Navy assembled in Hampton Roads a squadron of six warships, consisting of the battleships *Massachusetts* and *Texas* and the cruisers *Brooklyn*, *Columbia*, *Minneapolis* and *New Orleans*, that would be able to quickly react and "fly" to the scene of battle wherever the Spanish fleet emerged.

It turned out that the Spanish decided to send their ships to Cuba. Once the Navy discovered this, the Flying Squadron steamed down to Santiago Bay and participated in the victorious rout of the Spanish fleet.

On the Lighter Side of Things...



For this issue, the Sage presents a cartoon from the February 4, 1865 edition of the *Harper's Weekly* which first reported the Union victory at Fort Fisher. In this political cartoon entitled "John Bull's Occupation Gone," John Bull, *Harper's* representation of the British Empire, finds the market/port of Wilmington, N.C. "closed for the present by the order of U.S. Grant." Bull remarks "My heyes!-Market shut up!-and I've got to trundle my combustibles and other vegetables back 'ome again!"

Harper's Weekly not only was pro-Union in its leanings, but was also very anti-British and frequently denounced Great Britain's involvement in the American Civil War. The newspaper considered it foreign interference in a domestic dispute. In this particular cartoon, the newspaper gloats and thumbs its nose at the English about the fact that there were no more Southern ports for British blockade runners to use since Fort Fisher and Wilmington had been captured.

-G.C.