

REPORT
OF
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,
December 3, 1836.

To the PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES :

SIR : In presenting for your consideration at this time the condition of our navy for the past year, I am enabled to assure you that, since my report of the 5th of December last, there has been an increased activity in the construction and equipment of vessels at our navy yards, and in the movements of our ships and squadrons at sea and on foreign stations.

The *Columbia*, a frigate of the first class, has been finished, launched, and nearly completed for sea.

The brigs *Dolphin* and *Porpoise* have been built, launched, and fitted for sea.

The frigate *Macedonian*, of the second class, has been finished, launched and equipped for sea ; and she is now receiving her crew, as the ship of the commanding officer of the South Sea exploring expedition.

The two barques, *Pioneer* and *Consort*, and schooner *Pilot*, have been built, launched, and so far equipped, as to be ready for receiving their crews.

The store-ship *Relief* has been finished, launched, and equipped, and is now receiving her stores.

The repairs of the ship of the line *North Carolina* have been completed, and she is equipped and fitted for sea, and is now under sailing orders for the Pacific station.

The repairs of the *razée Independence* have been completed, and she is now nearly equipped for sea.

The ship of the line *Delaware* has been placed in dry dock, and her repairs commenced.

The ship of the line *Columbus* has also been put into dry dock, and her repairs commenced.

The repairs of the ship of the line *Ohio* have been commenced and considerably advanced.

The repairs of the sloops of war *Falmouth* and *Fairfield* have been completed.

The sloop of war *Natchez*, and schooner *Grampus*, have been repaired and equipped for sea.

The labor upon the ship of the line *Pennsylvania* has been resumed, with a view to her completion, and she will probably be ready for launching in the early part of next summer.

The steam-vessel building at New York is so far completed as to be ready for the reception of her engines and machinery ; in procuring which there has been some unavoidable delay. It was desirable to secure the

services of the most able engineer in the United States, to superintend the construction of the engines and machinery of this, as well as other steam-vessels proposed to be built for the service of the United States. Efforts have been made to secure the services of such an engineer, but without success. The first attempt to procure the requisite engines and machinery, by contract, by advertising for proposals, proved abortive: as the lowest offers for the boilers and for the engines were made by different persons; and the person offering for the engines declined the contract, because he could not also have the contract for the boilers. Arrangements, however, have been since made for procuring the engines and boilers wanted; and the vessel will probably be ready for service in the course of the next summer.

For a detailed statement of the condition of our vessels on the stocks, as well as those afloat at our navy yards, and the means of completion, as well as repair, I beg leave to refer to the reports of the Commissioners of the Navy Board, herewith submitted, marked H and I; and for the amount of timber, iron and other materials, procured for the gradual improvement of the navy, I refer to their report, marked L.

Much has been done in advancing the works and improvements hitherto authorized at the different navy yards, except at that of Pensacola. The works and improvements for which appropriations have been made at that yard, have been delayed until a permanent plan for the same, after a due examination by a board appointed for that purpose, could be adopted.

Since my last annual report, the following vessels have been employed in the Mediterranean: the frigates *Constitution*, *United States*, and *Potomac*; the sloop of war *John Adams*, and the schooner *Shark*; the ship of the line *Delaware* having been withdrawn from that squadron, and the frigate *United States* added to it, within the present year.

The frigate *Potomac* having been employed on that station for upwards of two years, has been ordered home, with instructions to run down the coast of Africa, and visit the settlements at *Cape Mesurado*, *Cape Palmas*, and *Bassa Cove*; thence to proceed to *Rio de Janeiro*, and after communicating with the commander of our squadron there, to return to *Norfolk*.

In the *West Indies*, the frigate *Constellation*, the sloops of war *Vandalia*, *St. Louis*, *Concord*, *Warren*, *Boston*, and *Natchez*, and the schooner *Grampus*, have been actively employed. The *Warren* sailed for that station the latter part of *December* last, and has returned within a few days to *Norfolk* for repairs; and when these shall be completed, she will rejoin the squadron.

The *Concord* sailed from *Portsmouth, N. H.*, the 27th of *February* last; the *Boston* on the 10th of *July* last, from *Boston*; the *Natchez* from *New York*, on the 4th of *August*; and the schooner *Grampus* on the 10th of *April* last. All these vessels, except the *Warren*, are now on that station.

The brig *Porpoise* has been employed in conveying the commissioners appointed under a resolution of the Senate, directing an examination of the harbors south of the *Chesapeake bay*, with a view to their fitness for the purposes of a navy yard. She is daily expected at *Norfolk*; after which it is intended that she shall sail, as soon as conveniently may be, to join the *West India* squadron.

On the coast of *Brazil*, the sloops of war *Erie* and *Ontario* have been

employed. The Ontario returned to the United States in June last, has been undergoing repairs at Norfolk, and she is reported to be in readiness for a crew.

The brig *Dolphin* sailed in September last from New York, with instructions to proceed to the coast of Africa, and visit the settlements at Gambia, Bissau, Nunez, Cape Mesurado, Bassa Cove, and Cape Palmas; thence to proceed to Rio de Janeiro, to form a part of the Brazilian squadron.

In the Pacific, the frigate *Brandywine*, the sloop *Vincennes*, and the schooner *Boxer*, have been employed. The sloop *Vincennes*, which previously to my last report was ordered to return to the United States, by way of the East Indies, arrived at Norfolk on the 6th of June last. The frigate *Brandywine* has been ordered home, and she is probably on her way at this time: her place will be supplied by the ship of the line *North Carolina*, now under sailing orders.

In the East Indies, the sloop *Peacock* and schooner *Enterprise* have been engaged in protecting as well as extending our commerce. They are now on their return to the United States, with orders to visit the settlements of the American Colonization Society on the coast of Africa, near Cape Palmas, Bassa Cove, and Monrovia.

Our squadrons at sea and on foreign stations have afforded to our commerce all the aid and protection that their means would permit.

It was believed that our commerce in the Gulf of Mexico, and in the West Indies, would be more exposed than in any other quarter. To meet the apprehended danger, an unusually large force has been placed at the disposal of Commodore Dallas, the commander of the West India station. In addition to the vessels already stated as forming his squadron, three revenue cutters and three steamboats have been placed under his command: and he has been charged with the complicated duties of protecting our commerce, of preventing the importation of slaves into Texas or the United States, and of co-operating with the officers of the army and militia in prosecuting the war against the Creek and Seminole Indians; in the performance of all which duties, his squadron has rendered the most essential services to the country.

In maintaining so large a force on the West India station, which ought to be still increased, it has not been in the power of this department to send to other stations the number of vessels which the safety of our commerce required, and serious apprehensions have been justly entertained that our merchants might sustain heavy losses from the want of an adequate force in the Pacific and on the Brazilian station, especially on the latter. Although these apprehensions have not been realized, yet a due regard to the interests of commerce and the honor of our country requires that a more respectable force should be sent to those stations, as soon as practicable. There is no serious difficulty in sending out such a force, but that arising from the want of seamen; and this difficulty will be in some degree obviated on the arrival of the vessels now on their return to the United States.

When, at the commencement of the last and preceding sessions of Congress, it was recommended that a considerable addition should be made to the number of our ships in commission, to meet the exigencies of the rapidly increasing commerce of our country, it was perceived that, should

the measure be adopted, as it has been, by the liberal appropriations of Congress, it would be necessary to adopt, at the same time, measures for increasing the number of our seamen. The most obvious means of accomplishing this object, was the one recommended, of enlisting into the service of our navy boys over the age of thirteen, and under the age of eighteen, until they shall arrive at the age of twenty-one years. A bill for this purpose has been before the Senate for the last two sessions, which, it is confidently hoped, will become a law during the approaching session of Congress. In the mean time, as a larger number of seamen is required for the merchant service than usual, and as there is at present actually in the naval service of the United States one-fifth more seamen than were employed three years ago, and a greater number than has been employed at any time within the last fifteen years, some difficulty must necessarily exist in recruiting seamen required for immediate service.

The terms of service of the seamen on the Pacific and Brazilian stations are about to expire. Those on the Pacific station have been ordered home, but will not probably arrive before the middle of January next. In the mean time, the North Carolina is ordered to that station, requiring immediately a large number of seamen, and Captain John B. Nicholson has been selected to sail in the razeed Independence, to relieve the commander on the coast of Brazil, who, when relieved, will return with the seamen belonging to his station. The Independence will require a large number of seamen to complete her crew. Besides, it is important that each of these ships should be attended by one or two smaller vessels; but this is impracticable in the present state of the service.

It will be easily perceived, therefore, that the force wanted for the protection of commerce exceeds the means of supply which this department can immediately bring into operation. When, therefore, on the 18th of May last, it was provided, by an amendment to the general naval appropriation bill, that the President of the United States should be authorized to send out a surveying and exploring expedition to the Pacific ocean and South Seas, I considered it impracticable to fit out this expedition in a manner to meet the views of Congress, under eight or nine months, without a serious injury to other branches of the naval service.

The only insurmountable difficulty, however, in my opinion, was the recruiting the requisite number of seamen in three or four months, without interfering with arrangements already made for sending ships to the Pacific and Brazilian stations, and for sending an additional force to the West Indies.

As, however, it was your earnest wish that the intentions of Congress, in authorizing this measure, should be carried into effect with the least possible delay, and that the expedition should be fitted out upon the extensive and liberal scale which the indications of public opinion seemed to require; and as the officer, Captain Thomas ap Catesby Jones, selected for the command of the expedition, gave assurances that the difficulty of obtaining seamen could be obviated, by giving him power to have them recruited under his immediate superintendence, and for this particular service, it was determined to make an extraordinary effort to accomplish these objects.

Every facility consistent with the rules and regulations of the navy was afforded Capt. Jones for recruiting seamen in the manner he pro-

posed ; and measures were immediately adopted to have one frigate of the second class, one store-ship, two barques, and one schooner, all which he considered as indispensably necessary to the success of the enterprise, prepared without delay. The frigate and store-ship, which were on the stocks when this measure was adopted, have been finished and equipped, and are now receiving their crews ; and the other three vessels have been entirely built and equipped for sea. The whole have been finished in the most substantial manner, and adapted to the particular service for which they are destined. These vessels will sail to Norfolk to complete their crews, take in their stores, and to await further orders.

To prevent any delay that might arise from the want of mathematical, astronomical, and philosophical instruments, books, maps, charts, &c., required for the expedition; Lieut. Wilkes of the navy was sent to Europe, and sailed from New York on the 8th of August last, to make the necessary purchases, in which he has been successful as to the greater part of the articles wanted. For some instruments, however, he has been under the necessity of waiting until they can be manufactured. His return is expected about the middle of this month.

It is believed that every proper exertion has been made to recruit men for this service, but without the anticipated success ; no more than about two hundred, according to the returns received, being as yet recruited ; and as Captain Jones requires five hundred and eighteen petty officers, seamen, ordinary seamen, boys and marines, together with eighty-five commissioned and warrant officers, for his squadron, it is evident that a considerable time must yet elapse before the expedition can be ready for sea.

Recruiting seamen for a particular service may be attended with great inconvenience, and should not be adopted but upon the most urgent occasion, such as that of the exploring expedition was conceived to be. If the exigencies of the Government should require of such recruits service different from that for which they were enlisted, discontent, and even mutiny, may be apprehended. Besides, this mode of recruiting cannot but interfere with the recruiting for the general service ; and, in the present case, the order to recruit for the exploring expedition has made it necessary to adopt the same mode of recruiting for the crews of the vessels about to sail for the Pacific and Brazilian stations.

Recruiting for three distinct objects of service at the same time, while the usual recruiting for the general service is continued, cannot but retard the whole, and compel us to keep in receiving vessels a much larger number of recruits, constantly disposed to desert, than would be required if recruited for the general service alone.

Although the number of recruits is small for any one of these objects, yet, in the aggregate, the number is quite as great as should be expected, when we consider the unusually great number of seamen now in the naval service of the United States, and the great demand for them in the merchant service.

Although the return of the public vessels now ordered to the United States will, to a considerable extent, furnish men for future service, yet, sending out so large a force as that required for the exploring expedition, to be detained for the term of three years, cannot but be felt as a serious

inconvenience, in fitting out the number of vessels wanted for the immediate protection of commerce.

As it has been evident, for the last three months, that this exploring squadron could not be ready for sea before the commencement of the approaching session of Congress, nor, indeed, until a late period of the session, I have not yet attempted to organize a scientific corps for the expedition. But, from inquiries made, I am happy to say, that, in most of the departments of science, we have gentlemen ready and willing to embark in this enterprise, whose labors will reflect honor upon themselves and upon the country.

From several learned and philosophical societies, as well as from distinguished individuals, I have received the most ample and satisfactory communications, embracing all the various subjects which it will be necessary to give in charge to the gentlemen who are to conduct the scientific researches which form the most important objects of the expedition.

These communications, so promptly and liberally furnished, are in the highest degree creditable to their authors.

The scientific corps may be organized as soon as accommodations can be afforded them in the vessels of the exploring squadron, and those vessels may leave their place of rendezvous at any season of the year when prepared for sea.

Under the acts concerning naval pensions and the navy pension fund, there are, of

Widow pensioners	-	-	-	-	-	158
Invalid pensioners	-	-	-	-	-	308
Total	-	-	-	-	-	<u>466</u>

The annual amount to pay widows is	-	-	-	\$34,185
The annual amount to pay invalids is	-	-	-	23,824

\$58,009

The nominal value of stocks of every description belonging to the fund is \$1,143,658 84 ; of which \$641,600 is, by direction of Congress, vested in the stock of the United States Bank ; and until the law which directs such investment shall be repealed or altered, this department will have no authority to withdraw the money, or make any different investment of it. If permitted to continue in United States Bank stock, it is very probable that many months will elapse before any income can be derived from this part of the capital, and, in the mean time, the pension fund may sustain a loss, by the necessity of selling other stocks to meet the necessary disbursements.

Of widows on the pension list, eighty-nine have been paid from the day of their husbands' deaths, respectively ; and sixty-nine have been paid only from the 30th day of June, 1834, as required by the act of Congress of that date.

Under the privateer pension fund, the number of pensioners is 35.

The annual amount to be paid them is \$2,766.

The amount of stock (Maryland five per cent.) belonging to the fund, is \$4,007 05.

From this statement it is evident that legislative provision must be

made for the payment of these pensioners when the fund shall be exhausted, which will probably occur before the 1st of January, 1838.

I would, therefore, respectfully suggest the propriety of making a permanent provision for the payment of those pensions, which by law are granted "during disability, or during life."

Of the navy hospital fund, the balance on the 1st of October, 1835,	was	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$52,878	79	
Payments to the fund from the 1st of October, 1835, to	the 1st of October, 1836	-	-	-	-	-	-	25,340	73	
									\$78,219	52
Disbursements during the same period	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,502	16	
									\$75,717	36

The necessary disbursements of the fund, it will be seen, bear but a small proportion to the amount of its receipts; and I therefore repeat a recommendation heretofore offered, that provision be made by law for investing this surplus in some safe stock, for the benefit of the fund. The documents hereunto annexed, marked and numbered O No. 1 to O No. 5, P No. 1 to P No. 4, and Q, furnish all the information respecting those funds required by the 3d section of the act of Congress of the 10th of June, 1832.

I must beg leave to repeat, what I have heretofore stated, that, under the act of June 30, 1834, the widows of officers, seamen, and marines who have died in the naval service since the 1st of January, 1824; or who may die in the said service by reason of disease contracted, or by casualties, by drowning or otherwise; or of injuries received while in the line of duty, are entitled to pensions equal to half the amount of the pay to which their husbands, respectively, were entitled at the time of their deaths.

The act of the 3d of March, 1835, "to regulate the pay of the navy of the United States," and which increased the pay of many of the officers, is silent as to pensions. A difficulty arises in ascertaining the proper amount of pension to be allowed to the widows of naval officers whose pay has been increased by this act.

The pay of a captain in command of a squadron on a foreign station was increased to four thousand dollars a year; when on other duty, to three thousand five hundred dollars; and when off duty, to two thousand five hundred dollars. A corresponding increase of pay is made to other officers.

In the case, for instance, of a captain dying when in command of a foreign station, a question arises whether his widow shall receive a pension to the amount of six hundred dollars a year, to which she would be entitled if the act increasing the pay had not passed; or whether she shall receive the half of the amount to which her husband was entitled as commander on a foreign station, as a captain on other duty, or as a captain off duty. Like difficulties occur with respect to the widows of other officers.

The necessity of an explanatory act, to obviate these difficulties, was respectfully suggested. The subject received the attention of both Houses of Congress, but no final action was had upon it. The question remaining unsettled, creates much embarrassment in this department.

That the widow of a captain who for years has commanded on foreign stations, but has returned to his country, and is not on duty at the time of his death, shall receive but little more than half the pension she would be entitled to had her husband died a few weeks or days sooner, is evidently unjust. Nor is it just that the widows of captains who died of wounds received in battle or otherwise in the late war, should receive pensions of but a little more than half what might be awarded to the widows of captains dying since the 3d of March, 1835.

The rank of the officer, it is respectfully suggested, should regulate the amount of pension to the widow, rather than the accidental circumstance of service at the time of his death.

In my last annual report, I stated that previously to the passing of the act of the 30th June, 1834, for the better organization of the United States marine corps, double rations had been allowed to the commandant of the corps, and to the officers of the same, commanding at the navy yards at Portsmouth, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Norfolk, and Pensacola; and to the senior marine officers in the squadrons in the Mediterranean, the West Indies, the Brazilian coast, and the Pacific ocean, all receiving the sanction of Congress by their appropriations. By this act, the officers of the marine corps are to receive the same pay, emoluments, and allowances as are given to officers of similar grades in the infantry of the army.

The act of the 16th of March, 1802, fixing the military peace establishment of the United States, authorizes allowances to the commanding officers of each separate post, of such additional number of rations as the President of the United States shall from time to time direct.

These provisions of this last act were continued by an act of the 3d of March, 1815, fixing the military peace establishment.

The paymaster of the marine corps made payments for double rations to officers heretofore receiving the same, from the 1st of July to the 30th of September, 1834; but the accounting officers of the Treasury did not think proper to allow the same, inasmuch as the commands of these officers had never been designated as separate stations, agreeably to the rule prescribed for the army.

This is a case of difficulty, which, it is respectfully suggested, requires legislative interposition. This subject received the favorable consideration, but not final action, of Congress at their last session. It is confidently hoped that the claims of this corps will receive the early attention which their necessities require, and to which they are entitled by their merits—merits which are much strengthened by their patriotic conduct, in volunteering their services in a campaign against the Creek Indians, in which they have distinguished themselves by their zeal and perseverance in the duties assigned to them. As, however, they have been attached to the army, while on this campaign, their merits will more appropriately receive the notice of the War, than of the Navy Department.

In obedience to the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 3d of March last, requiring a course of experiments to be instituted, for the purpose of ascertaining the efficiency, and testing the safety, of the medium or light guns of the navy, and of comparing their effects with the guns for which they were proposed to be substituted, a board of commissioners has been appointed, consisting of Commodore Charles Morris, Commo-

dore Daniel T. Patterson, Commodore Thomas ap Catesby Jones, Captain William B. Shubrick, and Captain Lawrence Kearney, to make the course of experiments required. Several officers have been detailed to co-operate with them, and very extensive preparations have been made near Old Point Comfort, to have the experiments made in the most complete and satisfactory manner. As soon as the proper experiments can be made, the results will be reported to the House of Representatives.

By your directions, given under a resolution of the Senate of the United States of the 24th of May last, that the Executive be requested to cause to be made the necessary examinations and surveys of the several harbors south of the mouth of the Chesapeake bay, and a report of the comparative facilities and advantages of the same for the establishment of a navy yard, a board has been constituted, consisting of Commodore M. T. Woolsey, Captain Alex. Claxton, and Master Commandant E. R. Shubrick, who were sent out in the brig Porpoise, under the command of Lieutenant William Ramsay, to make the required examinations and surveys. After having made those examinations and surveys, the commissioners have returned to New York. Their report will, as soon as received, be communicated, as required by the resolution.

By your directions, also, a board has been constituted, consisting of Commodore Charles Stewart, Commodore Alex. J. Dallas, and Captain W. C. Bolton, aided by a competent engineer, to examine the navy yard at Pensacola, and to prepare plans for the improvement of the same. These commissioners have completed their examinations and plans, the result of which will be submitted to you in a separate report for your consideration and approval.

Under the act of the 30th June, 1854, authorizing the Secretary of the Navy to make experiments for the safety of the steam engine, and appropriating five thousand dollars for that purpose, the memorial of John C. F. Salomon, presenting a plan of a steam-boiler, composed of inverted arches, which he has invented, and which he considers as superior to the common cylindrical boiler, was referred to me by the House of Representatives.

On the assurance of Mr. Salomon that the sum of four hundred dollars would be amply sufficient for making all the experiments necessary for testing the value of his alleged improvement, I directed that sum to be expended in making and preparing two boilers, under his immediate superintendence: one a common cylindrical boiler, the other upon his plan of inverted arches. Experiments were made upon these boilers in February last, near the eastern front of the Capitol, in the presence of a large number of the members of Congress and others, but without any satisfactory result.

Mr. Salomon requested me to make further experiments upon these boilers, which I declined, but permitted him to have the use of the boilers for making such experiments as he might think proper; so that, if there is any value in his alleged improvement, he has the means of showing it at the public expense.

The sum of \$519 75 was heretofore expended under this act in testing Mr. Phillips's supposed improvement in steam-boilers, as stated in my last report; which, added to the sum expended on Mr. Salomon's sup-

posed improvement, amounts to \$919 75, leaving an unexpended balance of the appropriation of \$4,080 25.

By the statement marked U, hereto annexed, it will appear that of the appropriations heretofore made for the suppression of the slave trade, there remains in the Treasury a balance of \$11,413 58.

The necessary references to papers and documents connected with this report will be found in a schedule hereunto annexed.

All which is respectfully submitted.

MAHLON DICKERSON.

SCHEDULE OF PAPERS

Accompanying the report of the Secretary of the Navy to the President of the United States, of 3d December, 1836.

- A. Estimate for the office of the Secretary of the Navy.
- B. Estimate for the office of the Commissoiners of the Navy.
- C. Estimate for the expenses of the Southwest Executive Building.
- D. The general estimate for the navy.
 - Detailed estimate D 1, for vessels in commission.
 - D 2, for receiving vessels.
 - D 3, for recruiting stations.
 - D 4, yards and stations—pay of officers and others at.
 - D 5, for officers waiting orders and on furlough.
 - D 6, for provisions.
 - D 7, for improvements and repairs of navy yards.
- E. Special estimates for objects not embraced in the usual annual estimates for the current service of the navy.
- F. Estimate for the marine corps.
- G. List of vessels in commission of each squadron, their commanders, and stations.
- H. List of vessels in ordinary.
- I. List of vessels building.
- K. Report of proceedings under law for the *gradual increase* of the navy.
- L. Report of proceedings under law for the *gradual improvement* of the navy.
- M. Report of measures taken to carry into effect the law of the last session, in relation to the surveying and exploring expedition.
- N. Estimate of amount required for support of frigate Macedonian, store-ship Relief, two barques, Pioneer and Consort, and schooner Pilot, employed on surveying and exploring expedition, for one year.
- O. Navy pension fund—list of pensioners, &c. from No. 1 to No. 4.
- P. Privateer pension fund—list of pensioners, &c. from No. 1 to No. 4.
- Q. Navy hospital fund.
- R. List of deaths in the navy.
- S. List of dismissions in the navy.
- T. List of resignations in the navy.
- U. Proceedings under law for suppression of the slave-trade.