

# THE RALEIGH MINERVA.

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## Further respecting Detroit.

FROM THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

Letter of Colonel Cass, of the Army, late under the command of Brig. General Hull, to the Secretary of War.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 10, 1812.

SIR—Having been ordered on to this place by Col. M<sup>r</sup> Arthur, for the purpose of communicating to the government such particulars respecting the expedition lately commanded by Brig. General Hull, and its disastrous result, as might enable them correctly to appreciate the conduct of the officers and men, and to develope the causes which produced so foul a stain upon the national character, I have the honor to submit to your consideration the following statement:

When the forces landed in Canada, they landed with an ardent zeal, and stimulated with the hope of conquest. No enemy appeared within view of us, and had an immediate and vigorous attack been made upon Malden, it would doubtless have fallen in an easy victory. I know Gen. Hull afterwards declared, he regretted this attack had not been made, and he had every reason to believe success would have crowned his efforts. The reason given for delaying our operations, was to mount our cannon, and to afford to the Canadian militia time and opportunity to quit an obnoxious service. In the course of two weeks, the number of their militia who were embarked had decreased by desertion from 600 to 100 men—and, in the course of 3 weeks, the cannon were mounted, the ammunition fixed, and every preparation made for an immediate investment of the fort. At a council, at which were present all the field officers, and which was held 2 days before our preparations were completed, it was unanimously agreed to make an immediate attempt to accomplish the object of the expedition. If by waiting 2 days we could have the service of our heavy artillery, it was agreed to wait—if not, it was determined to go with it and to attempt the place by storm. This opinion appeared to correspond with the views of the general, and the day was appointed for commencing our march. He declared to me, that he considered himself pledged to lead the army to Malden. The ammunition was placed in the waggon—the cannon were embarked on board the floating batteries, and every requisite article was prepared. The spirit and zeal, the ardor and exertion displayed by the officers and men on learning the near accomplishment of their wishes, was a sure and sacred pledge, that in the heat of battle they would not be found wanting in their duty to their country and themselves. But a change of measures, in opposition to the wishes and opinions of all the officers, was adopted by the General. The plan of attacking Malden was abandoned, and instead of acting offensively, we broke up our camp, evacuated Canada, and re-crossed the river in the night, without the shadow of an enemy to injure us. We left to the tender mercy of the enemy, the miserable Canadians, who had joined us—and the protection we afforded them, was but a passport to vengeance. This fatal and unaccountable step, dispirited the troops, and destroyed the little confidence which a series of similar, but late and indecisive measures had left in the commanding officer.

About the 10th of August, the enemy received a reinforcement of 400 men. On the 12th, the commanding officers of 3 of the regiments [the 4th was absent] were informed, through a medium which admitted of no doubt, that the general had stated, that a capitulation would be necessary.— They on the same day addressed to Gov. Meigs, of Ohio, a letter, of which the following is an extract:

"Believe all the bearer will tell you—Believe it, however it may astonish you, as much as it told you by one of us. Even a C\*\*\*\*\* is taken of by the ———. The bearer will fill the vacancy."

The doubtful fate of this letter rendered it necessary to use circumspection in its details, and therefore these blanks were left. The word "capitulation" will fill the first, and "commanding general" the other. As no enemy was near us, and as the superiority of our force was manifest, we could see no necessity for capitulating, nor any propriety in alluding to it. We therefore determined, in the last resort, to incur the responsibility of giving the general of his command. This plan was eventually prevented by two of the commanding officers of regiments being ordered upon detachments.

On the 13th, the British took a position opposite to Detroit, and began to throw up works. During that and the two following days, they pursued their object without interruption—and established a battery for two 18 pounders and an 8 inch howitzer. About sunset on the evening of the 14th, a detachment of 350 men from the regiment commanded by Col. M<sup>r</sup> Arthur and myself was ordered to march to the river Raisin, to escort the provisions, which had sometime remained there protected by a party under the command of Captain Brush.

On Saturday, the 15th, about 1 o'clock, a flag of truce arrived from Sandwich, bearing a summons from General Brock, for the surrender of the town and fort of Detroit, stating, he could no longer restrain the fury of the savages. To this an immediate and spirited refusal was returned. About 4 o'clock, their batteries began to play upon the town. The fire was returned and continued without interruption and with little effect till dark. Their shells were thrown till 11 o'clock.

At day light, the firing on both sides recommenced: about the same time the enemy began to land troops at the Springwells, 3 miles below Detroit, protected by two of their armed vessels. Between 6 and 7 o'clock they had effected their landing, and immediately took up their line of march. They moved in a close column of platoons, 12 in front, upon the bank of the river.

The 4th regiment was stationed in the fort—the Ohio volunteers and a part of the Michigan militia, behind some pickets, in a situation in which the whole flank of the enemy would have been exposed. The residue of the Michigan militia were in the upper part of the town to resist the incursions of the savages. Two 24 pounders loaded with grape shot were posted upon a commanding eminence, ready to sweep the advancing column. In this situation, the superiority of our position was apparent, and our troops, in the eager expectation of victory, awaited the approach of the enemy. Not a sigh of discontent broke upon the ear; not a look of cowardice met the eye. Every man expected a proud day for his country, and each was anxious that his individual exertion should contribute to the general result.

When the head of their column arrived within about 500 yards of our line, orders were received from General Hull for the whole to retreat to the fort, and for the 24 pounders not to open the enemy.—One universal burst of indignation was apparent upon the receipt of the order. Those whose conviction was the deliberate result of a dispassionate examination of passing events, saw the folly and impropriety of crowding 1100 men into a little work, which 300 could fully man, and in which the shot and shells of the enemy were falling. The fort was in this manner filled; the men were directed to stack their arms, and scarcely was an opportunity afforded of moving. Shortly after a white flag was hung out upon the walls. A British officer rode up to enquire the cause. A communication passed between the commanding general, which ended in the capitulation submitted to you. In entering into this capitulation, the general took counsel from his own feelings only. Not an officer was consulted. Not one anticipated a surrender, till he saw the white flag displayed. Even the women were indignant at so shameful a degradation of the American character, and all felt as they should have felt, but he who held in his hands the reins of authority.

Our morning report had that morning made our effective men present fit for duty 1060, without including the detachment before alluded to, and without including 300 Michigan militia on duty. About dark on Saturday evening the detachment sent to escort the provisions received orders from Gen. Hull to return with as much expedition as possible.—About 10 o'clock the next day they arrived within sight of Detroit. Had a firing been ordered, or any resistance visible they would have immediately advanced and attacked the rear of the enemy. The situation in which this detachment was placed, although the result of accident, was the best for annoying the enemy and cutting off his retreat that could have been selected.—With his raw troops enclosed between two fires, and no hopes of success, it is hazardous little to say, that very few would have escaped.

I have been informed by Col. Findley who saw the column of their quarter master general the day after the surrender, that their whole force of every description, white, red and black, was 1030. They had 29 platoons, 12 in a platoon, of men dressed in uniform.—Many of these were evidently Canadian militia. The rest of their militia increased their white force to about 700 men. The number of their Indians could not be ascertained with any degree of precision; not many were visible. And in the event of an attack upon the town and fort, it was a species of force which could have afforded no material advantage to the enemy.

In endeavoring to appreciate the motives and to investigate the causes which led to an event so unexpected and dishonorable, it is impossible to find any solution in the relative strength of the contending parties, or in the measures of resistance in our power.—That we were far superior to the enemy; that upon any ordinary principles of calculation we should have defeated them; the wounded and indignant feelings of every man there will testify.

A few days before the surrender, I was informed by Gen. Hull, we had 400 rounds of 24 pound shot fixed and about 100 000 cartridges made. We surrendered with the fort 40 barrels of powder and 250 stand of arms.

The state of our provisions has not been generally understood.—On the day of the surrender we had 15 days of provision of every kind on hand. Of meat there was plenty in the country, and arrangements had been made for purchasing and grinding the flour. It was calculated we could readily procure 3 months' provisions, independent of 150 barrels flour, 1300 head of cattle which had been forwarded from the state of Ohio, and which remained at the river Raisin under captain Brush, within reach of the army.

But had we been totally destitute of provisions, our duty and our interest undoubtedly was to fight. The enemy invited us to meet him in the field.

By defeating him the whole country would have been open to us, and the object of our expedition gloriously and successfully obtained. If we had been defeated we had nothing to do but to retreat to the fort, and make the best defence which circumstances and our situation rendered practicable. But basely to surrender without firing a gun—tamely to submit without raising a bayonet—disgracefully to pass in review before an enemy as inferior in the quality as in the number of his for-

ces, were circumstances, which excited feelings of indignation more easily felt than described. To see the whole of our men flushed with the hope of victory eagerly awaiting the approaching contest, to see them afterwards dispirited, hopeless and desponding at least 500 shedding tears because they were not allowed to meet their country's foe, and to fight their country's battles, excited sensations, which no American has ever before had cause to feel, and which, I trust in God, will never again be felt, while one man remains to defend the standard of the Union.

I am expressly authorized to state, that Col. M<sup>r</sup> Arthur and col. Findley and lieut. col. Miller viewed this transaction in the light which I do. They know and feel, that no circumstance in our situation, none in that of the enemy, can excuse a capitulation so dishonorable and unjustifiable. This was the universal sentiment among the troops; and I shall be surprised to learn, that there is one man, who thinks it was necessary to sheath his sword, or to lay down his musket.

I was informed by Gen. Hull the morning after the capitulation that the British forces consisted of 1800 regulars, and that he surrendered to prevent the effusion of human blood. That he magnified their regular force nearly five fold, there can be no doubt. Whether the philanthropic reason assigned by him is a sufficient justification for surrendering a fortified town, an army and a territory, is for the government to determine. Confident I am, that had the courage and conduct of the general been equal to the spirit and zeal of the troops, the event would have been brilliant and successful as it now is disastrous and dishonorable.

Very respectfully, sir,

I have the honor to be,

Your most obedient servant,

LEWIS CASS, Col.

3d regt. Ohio Vol.

The Hon. Wm. EUSTIS,

Secretary of War.

Besides the facts so clearly and lucidly stated in Colonel Cass's report, there are other material and important facts, that ought to be made public, which would not perhaps properly enter into a Military Report. Let one suffice for the present:

After the surrender of Detroit, the British and American officers, of necessity, mingled together and entered into conversation. In conversation with Col. Cass, on the subject of the present war, its probable duration, &c. an officer of the British army, of as high a grade as captain, said, in such a manner as evinced his own belief in it, that the New England States would remain neutral in this war; that no attack would therefore be made on them; that a convention was to meet in Massachusetts, the object or effect of which would be to ensure this neutrality!!—Colonel Cass told the officer he had mistaken the character of his [Colonel Cass's] countrymen. "We trust in Heaven he had; but the doctrine lately laid down as orthodox in Faneuil Hall, with the contemporaneous language of the Federal prints, had a most "awful squinting" towards such a state. We publish this fact, at the present moment, with no other view than to shew to the opposition how an enemy, judging from their conduct, has dared to calculate on their disaffection to the general cause."  
Nat Int.

## OFFICIAL.

Washington City, September 19, 1812.

Yesterday afternoon, at 2 o'clock, Lt. ANDERSON, of the United States army, reached this city, bearer of dispatches from Brigadier General WILLIAM HULL, to the Department of War, of which the following copies have been obtained for publication:

Montreal, 8th Sept. 1812.

SIR—The enclosed despatch was prepared on my arrival at Fort George, and it was my intention to have forwarded it from that place by Major Withers, of the Michigan volunteers.—I made application to the commanding officer at that post, and was refused; he stating that he was not authorized, and General Brock was then at York. We were immediately embarked for this place, and Major Withers obtained liberty at Kingston to go home on parole.

This is the first opportunity I have had to forward the dispatches.

The fourth United States' regiment is destined for Quebec, with a part of the first. The whole consist of a little over three hundred.

Sir George Prevost, without any request on my part, has offered to take my parole, and permit me to proceed to the states.

Lieut. Anderson, of the eighth regiment, is the bearer of my dispatches. He was formerly a Lieut. in the Artillery, and resigned his commission on account of being appointed Marshal of the Territory of Michigan. During the campaign he has had a command in the Artillery; and I recommend him to you as a valuable officer.

He is particularly acquainted with the state of things previous and at the time when the capitulation took place. He will be able to give you correct information on any points, about which you may think proper to enquire.

I am, yours &c.

W. HULL.

Hon. W. Eustis, Secy of the Dept. of War.

Fort George, August 26, 1812.

SIR—Enclosed are the articles of capitulation, by which the Fort of Detroit has been surrendered to Major General Brock, commanding his Britannic Majesty's forces in Upper Canada, and by which the troops have become prisoners of war. My situation at present forbids me from detailing the par-

ticular causes which have led to this unfortunate event. I will, however, generally observe, that after the surrender of Michilimackinac, almost every tribe and nation of Indians, excepting a part of the Miamies and Delawares, north from beyond Lake Superior, west from beyond the Mississippi, south from the Ohio and Wabash, and east from every part of Upper Canada, and from all the intermediate country, joined in open hostility, under the British standard, against the army I commanded, contrary to the most solemn assurances of a large portion of them to remain neutral; even the Ottawa Chiefs from Arboretch, who formed the delegation to Washington the last summer, in whose Friendship I know you had great confidence, are among the hostile tribes, and several of them distinguished leaders. Among the vast number of chiefs who led the hostile bands, Tecumseh, Muro-pot, Logan, Walk-in-the-water, Spit-Log, &c. are considered the principals. This numerous assemblage of savages, under the entire influence and direction of the British commander, enabled him totally to obstruct the only communication which I had with my country. This communication had been opened from the settlements in the state of Ohio, two hundred miles through a wilderness, by the fatigues of the army, which I marched to the frontier on the river Detroit. The body of the Lake being commanded by the British armed sloop and the shores and rivers by gun boats, the army was totally deprived of all communication by water. On this extensive road it depended for transportation of provisions, military stores, medicine, clothing, and every other supply, on pack horses—all its operations were successful until its arrival at Detroit, & in a few days it passed into the enemy's country, and all opposition seemed to fall before it. One month it remained in possession of this country, and was fed from its resources. In different directions, detachments penetrated sixty miles in the settled part of the province, and the inhabitants seemed satisfied with the change of situation, which appeared to be taking place—the militia from Amherstburg were daily deserting, and the whole country, then under the control of the army, was asking for protection. The Indians generally, in the first instance, appeared to be neutralized and determined to take no part in the contest. The fort of Amherstburg was eighteen miles below my encampment. Not a single cannon or mortar was on wheels suitable to carry before that place. I consulted my officers, whether it was expedient to make an attempt on it with the bayonet alone, without cannon, to make a break in the first instance.—The council I called was of the opinion it was not. The greatest industry was exerted in making preparation, and it was not until the 7th of August that two 24 pounders, and three Howitzers were prepared. It was then my intention to have proceeded on the enterprise. While the operations of the army were delayed by these preparations, the clouds of adversity had been for some time and seemed still thickly to be gathering around me. The surrender of Michilimackinac opened the northern hive of Indians, and they were swarming down in every direction. Reinforcements from Niagara had arrived at Amherstburg under the command of Colonel Proctor. The desertion of the militia ceased, besides the reinforcements that came by water, I received information of a very considerable force under the command of Major Chambers, on the river Le French, with four hundred pieces, and collecting the militia on his route, evidently destined for Amherstburg; and in addition to this combination, and increase of force, contrary to all my expectations, the Wyandots, Chippewas, Odawas, Pot-watomies, Missisacs, Delawares, &c. with whom I had the most friendly intercourse, at once passed over to Amherstburg, and accepted the tonanahki and scalping knife. There being now a vast number of Indians at the British post, they were sent to the river Huron, Brownstown, and Magnago to intercept my communication. To open this communication, I detached Major Vanhorn of the Ohio volunteers with two hundred men, to proceed as far as the river Raisin, under an expectation he would meet Captain Brush with one hundred and fifty men, volunteers from the state of Ohio, and a quantity of provision for the army. An ambuscade was formed at Brownstown, and Major Vanhorn's detachment defeated and returned to camp without effecting the object of the expedition.

In my letter of the 7th inst. you have the particulars of that transaction with a return of the killed and wounded. Under this sudden and unexpected change of things, and having received an express from General Hull, commanding opposite the British shore on the Niagara river, by which it appeared that there was no prospect of any co-operation from that quarter, and the two senior officers of the artillery having stated to me an opinion that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to pass the Turkey river and river Aux Canada, with the 24 pounders, and that they could not be disposed by water, as the Queen Charlotte, which carried eighteen 24 pounders, lay in the river Detroit above the mouth of the river Aux Canada; and as it appeared indispensably necessary to open the communication to the river Raisin and the Miami, I found myself self compelled to suspend the operation against Amherstburg, and concentrate the main force of the army at Detroit. Fully intending, at that time after the communication was opened, to re-cross the river, and pursue the object at Amherstburg, and strongly desirous of continuing protection to a very large number of the inhabitants of Upper Canada, who had voluntarily accepted shelter in my program, I established a fortress on the banks of the river, a little below Detroit, calculated for a garrison of three hundred men. On the evening of the 7th, and morning of the 8th inst. the army, excepting the garrison of 250 infantry, and a com-

(See fourth page.)