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American Intelligence.

GENERAL BOYD'S LETTER.

Copy of a letter from Brigadier General John P. Boyd, who commanded in the battle of Williamsburgh, to Major-General James Wilkinson, commander in chief.

CAMP NEAR CORNWALL, NOV. 12, 1813.

SIR—I have the honor to report to you that yesterday, while the rear division of the army, consisting of detachments from the 1st, 3d and 4th brigades, and placed under my command to protect the flotilla from the enemy that hung on our rear, was under arms in order to move agreeably to your orders, down the bank of the St. Lawrence, a report was brought to me from the rear guard, that a body of about 200 British and Indians had advanced into the woods that skirted our rear. Gen. Swartwout, with the 4th brigade, was immediately ordered to dislodge them; Gen. Covington, with the 3d brigade, being at the same time directed to be with in supporting distance. Gen. Swartwout dashed into the woods, and with the 21st infantry (a part of his brigade) after a short skirmish, drove them back to the position of their main body. Here he was joined by Gen. Covington. The enemy had judiciously chosen his ground among the deep ravines which every where intersected the extensive plain; and discharged a heavy and galling fire upon our advancing columns. No opposition or obstacle, however, checked their ardor. The enemy retired for more than a mile before their resolute and repeated charges. During this time, the detachment of the 1st brigade, under Col. Coles, whose greater distance from the scene of action retarded its arrival, rapidly entered the field. Being directed to attack the enemy's left flank, this movement was promptly and bravely executed, amid a shower of musketry and shrapnel shells.—The fight now became more stationary, until the brigade first engaged, having expended all their ammunition, were directed to retire to a more defensible position, to wait for a re-supply. This movement so disconnected the line as to render it expedient for the first brigade likewise to retire. It should be remarked, that the artillery, excepting two pieces under Capt. Irvine, attached to the rear division, (which, from the nature of the ground, and the circuitous route they had to take, were likewise much retarded in their arrival) did not reach the ground until the line, for the want of ammunition, had already begun to fall back. When they were arranged, (in doing which I was assisted by the skill of Col. Swift of the engineers) their fire was sure and destructive. When the artillery was finally directed to retire, having to cross a deep, and, excepting in one place, (to artillery) impassable ravine, one piece was unfortunately lost. The fall of its gallant commander, Lieut. SMITH, and most of his men, may account for this accident.—In the death of this young man, the army has lost one of its most promising officers. The squadron of the second regiment of dragoons under Maj. Woodford was early on the field and much exposed to the enemy's fire, but the nature of the ground, and the position of his line, did not admit of those successful charges, which their discipline and ardor under more favorable circumstances, are calculated to make. The reserve under Col. Upham and Major Malcolm, did not arrive from the boats in time to participate in but a small part of the action; but the activity and zeal they displayed while engaged, evinced the benefit that might have been derived from their earlier assistance.

The whole line was now re-formed on the borders of those woods from which the enemy had been first driven, when night coming on, and the storm returning, and conceiving that the object you had in view, which was to beat back the enemy, that would retard our junction with the main body below, to have been accomplished, the troops were directed to return to the ground near the flotilla—which movement, was executed in good order, and without any molestation from the enemy.

I cannot close my representation of this battle, without indulging in a few remarks upon the merits of those officers, whose conduct will give a character to the conflict of this day. Gen. Covington, whose readiness to enter the field was an earnest of his subsequent activity, received a mortal wound, while leading his men on to successful charge. His troops still feeling the effect of his gallant example, continued to advance long after their brave commander had fallen. His fate will perpetuate the memory of the plain which has been crimsoned by his blood—Col. Preston was severely wounded while fighting at the head of his regiment. The universal sympathy which is excited by the honorable misfortune of this amiable officer, attests the high estimation which is entertained of his talents as a soldier, and his virtues as a man. Major Cummings, with whose military merits and exertions I have long been acquainted, met with a similar fate while leading to a charge, and undi- courage by the wound, continued to advance, until loss of blood obliged him to retire.—Many platoon officers received

disabling or slight wounds in the honorable discharge of their duty, a report of whose names and merits I have directed the several chiefs of brigades to make to me, in order that I may transmit it to you.—It is with great satisfaction that I acknowledge my warmest approbation of the gallantry and zeal which was constantly displayed throughout this eventful day, by Brig. Gen. Swartwout, and Col. Coles, who commanded the detachment of the first brigade. After the fall of Gen. Covington, Col. Pierce, on whom the command of the third brigade devolved, conducted with his characteristic coolness and valor. In speaking of the other numerous field officers who participated in this battle, Col. Gaines and Ripley, Lieut. Col. Aspinwell, and Majors Morgan, Grafton, and Gardner, their equal claim to applause forbids the invidious task of discrimination. I find a pleasure, likewise, in acknowledging the eminent service I derived from the experience and activity of Adjutant-General Colonel Walbeck, from the assistance of Inspector Gen. Col. Johnson, and assistant Adjutant Generals Major Beebe and Chambers; the latter was wounded in the honorable discharge of his duty. In addition to these acknowledgments, a sense of justice as well as personal friendship, induces me to express my entire approbation of the conduct of Lieut. Henry Whiting, my aid-de-camp, who was in this instance, as he has been during the whole campaign, my zealous and brave assistant. Lieut. Worth, aid-de-camp to Major General Lewis, led by a laudable ambition, left the flotilla, and volunteered his acceptable services to me on the field.

Permit me now to add, sir, that though the result of this action was not so brilliant and decisive as I could have wished, and the first stages of it seemed to promise, yet when it is recollected that the troops had been long exposed to hard privations and fatigues, to inclement storms from which they often could have no shelter; that the enemy was superior to us in numbers, and greatly superior to us in positions, and supported by 7 or 8 heavy gunboats; that the action being unexpected, was necessarily commenced without much concert; that we were, by unavoidable circumstances, long deprived of our artillery; and that the action was warmly and obstinately contested for more than three hours, during which there were but a few short cessations of musketry and cannon; when all these circumstances are recollected, perhaps this day may be thought to have added some reputation to the American arms. And if, on this occasion, you shall believe me to have done my duty, and accomplished any one of your purposes, I shall be satisfied. Allow me to add my regret, which is felt in common with the army, that the severity of your indisposition deprived us of your presence on this occasion. The Adjutant General has been directed to furnish a report of the killed, wounded and the casualties.

I have the honor to be, Sir, with great consideration, and respect, your most obedient humble servant,
(Signed) JNO P. BOYD.
Brigadier Gen. Commanding.

THE ESSEX FRIGATE.

Copies of letters from Capt. David Porter, commanding the United States Frigate Essex, to the Secretary of the Navy, dated, United States Pacific Ocean, July 2, 1813.

SIR—I have the honor to inform you that on the 29th of April, in the latitude of 49. N. long. 91. 15 W. about twenty miles to the northward of the island of Albemarle, one of the Gallapagos in the Pacific Ocean, I captured the British ship Montezuma: two others being in sight, close together, distant from us about seven miles, which we were informed were the British letters of marque ships Polix and Georgiana; the first mounting ten 24's, 6 and 9-pounders; the other six 18-pounders, four swivels, and six long blunderbusses, mounted on swivels. The wind being light and variable, and blowing greatly in the hazy and enterprize of my officers and men, and apprehensive of their escape, from the prevalence of fogs in that climate, I directed the boats of this ship to be armed and manned, and divided into two divisions, placing the first under the command of Lt. Downes, 1st Lt. in a whale boat, accompanied by midshipman Farragut. The officers in command of boats under Lt. Downes, were, Lt. S. D. McKnight, in the 3d cutter, accompanied by Midshipman W. H. Odenheimer, Sailing Master John P. Cowell, in the jolly boat, accompanied by Midshipman H. W. Ogden, and Midshipman George Isaacs, in the 2d cutter. The second division under the command of Lt. Wilmer, 2d Lt. in the pinnace, accompanied by Midshipman Henry Gray, and Master's Mate James Terry; Lt. Wilson and Mr. Shaw, Purser, in the 1st cutter; and Lt. Gamble, of the marines, in the gig. Suitable signals were established, and each boat had her particular station pointed out for the attack, and every other previous arrangement was made to prevent confusion. The boats, 7 in number, rowed off in admirable order. Guns were fired from the enemy to terrify them: they rowed up under the muzzles of the guns and took their stations for attacking the first ship, and no sooner was the American flag displayed, by Lt. Downes, as the signal for boarding, and the intention was discovered by the enemy, than the colors were struck, without a shot being fired; so much were they daunted by the intrepidity of our brave officers and men. They then left a crew on board the prize and took their stations for attacking the other vessel, when her flag was also struck, on the first call

to surrender. Thus were two fine British ships, each pierced for twenty guns, worth near half a million of dollars, mounting between them 16 guns, and manned with 55 men, well supplied with ammunition and small arms, surrendered, without the slightest resistance, to seven small open boats, with fifty men, armed only with muskets, pistols, boarding axes and cutlasses! Be assured, sir, that Britons have either learned to respect the courage of Americans, or they are not so courageous themselves as they would wish us to believe.

I have the honor to be, with great respect, your obedient servant,
D. PORTER.
The Secretary of the Navy.

United States Frigate Essex, at Sea, Pacific Ocean, July 23, 1813.

SIR—On the 23d March last, I sailed from shaping my course to the northward, and on the 26th of the same month fell in with the Peruvian Corsair ship, Nereyda, mounting 20 guns; she had, a few days before, captured two American whale ships, the crews of which (amounting in number to 24 men) were then detained prisoners on board her; and they could assign no other motive for the capture, than that they were the allies of Great Britain, and as such, should capture all American vessels they could fall in with; therefore to prevent in future such vexatious proceedings, I threw all her armament into the sea, liberated the Americans, and dismissed the Nereyda.

I then proceeded with all possible dispatch for Lima, to intercept one of the detained vessels, which had parted with the Nereyda only three days before, and I was so fortunate as to arrive there and re-capture her on the 5th April, at the moment she was entering the port. This vessel (the ship Barclay, Captain Gideon Randall of New-Bedford,) I took under my protection, and have had her with me ever since.

From Lima I proceeded for the Gallapagos Island, where I captured the following British ships, viz.

Letters of Marque.			
Montezuma,	270 tons	21 men	2 guns.
Polix,	276	26	10
Georgiana,	230	25	6
Atlantic,	251	24	8
Greenwich,	338	25	10

The Georgiana being reputed a very fast sailer, and apparently well calculated for a cruiser, I mounted 15 guns on her, and gave the command of her to that excellent officer, Lieut. John Downs with a complement of 42 men; appointing midshipman W. H. Haddaway acting lieutenant on board her, and sent her on a cruise.

Lieut. Downs joined me at Tumbez near Guaquil on the coast of Peru, on the 24th June, after capturing three prizes, to wit:

Letters of Marque Ships.			
Hector,	270 tons	25 men	11 guns.
Catharine,	270	29	8
Rex,	220	21	8

The first had 2 men killed and 6 badly wounded in her rencounter with the Georgiana—and the Rose was discharged (after being deprived of her armament) with nearly all the prisoners captured by the Georgiana, as they amounted to nearly double her crew; she was furnished with a passport to proceed to St. Helena.

My own prisoners I liberated on parole at Tumbez. I found by experience that the Georgiana did not deserve the character given her for sailing. I therefore shipped her officers and crew to the Atlantic, and mounted on her 20 guns, with a complement of 60 men, and appointed midshipman Richard Dashiell, acting sailing master, on board her; to this vessel I gave the name of the Essex Junior. I also fitted up the ship Greenwich as a store ship, and mounted on her 20 guns, placing her under the command of Lieut. Gamble of the marines. On board her I have put all the provisions and stores of my other prizes, except a supply of three and a half months for each, and have by this means secured myself a full supply of every necessary article for seven months. I had hoped to dispose of my other prizes at Guaquil; the gov's in Peru, however, are excessively alarmed at my appearance on the coast, as my fleet amounts now to nine sail of vessels, all formidable in their appearance, and they would if they dare, treat us with a hostility little short of declared enemies.

I have given to Mr. John G. Cowell, sailing master, an appointment to act as 3d Lt. Mids. John S. Cowan to act 4th Lieut. and Mids. Odenhemier, as sailing master. I beg, sir, that the appointment of those officers, as well as of Lieut. S. D. McKnight, who is acting Second Lieutenant, and those serving on board the Essex Junior, may be confirmed by the department. I have given to Mr. M. W. Bostwick, my clerk, the appointment of Acting Midshipman; not that he is desirous of coming forward in the Navy in that line, but I hoped by this means to introduce him to the notice of the Department; as I shall take the liberty to recommend him strongly as a suitable person to hold the appointment of Purser. Drs. Richard R. Hoffman and Alexander M. Montgomery, two gentlemen of great merit, who volunteered their services with me at the commencement of hostilities, have received acting appointments from me, the first as Surgeon, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Dr. Miller; the other as Surgeon's Mate. To the great care and attention of those gentlemen, may, in a considerable degree, be attributed the extraordinary health of the crew; and as they are both desirous of joining the Navy, I hope their appointments may be confirmed.

I have also appointed my Marine officer and Chaplain to the command of prizes; they all

enter with much cheerfulness, into their new duties; & if the expedition should prove unsuccessful, it will not be, I am persuaded, owing to our want of activity or vigilance; and of this you must be satisfied, as for the last eight months we have been constantly at sea, with the exception of twenty-three days, and yet, sir, we have enjoyed extraordinary health and spirits; no symptom of the scurvy having yet appeared in the ships, nor have we, at this moment, more than two on the sick list; and their diseases are more owing to the infirmities of age than any other cause. Indeed, sir, when I compare my present situation with what it was when I doubled Cape Horn, I cannot but esteem myself fortunate to an extraordinary degree. There my ship was shattered by tempestuous weather, and destitute of every thing; my officers and crew half starved, naked, and worn out with fatigue.

Now, sir, my ship is in prime order, abundantly supplied with every thing necessary for her. I have a noble ship for a consort of 20 guns and well manned, a store ship of 20 guns, well supplied with the best of every thing that we may want, and prizes which would be worth in England two millions of dollars; and what renders the comparison more pleasing, the enemy has furnished all. Excuse me, sir, for not making known my present intentions, as this letter may not reach you. It, however, may be satisfactory to you to know how I intend to dispose of my prizes: Let it suffice to say that I shall endeavor to [cypher].

British letters of marque are numerous in these seas, and, were it not for my arrival, our whale fishers would have been much harrassed; but they now find it necessary to keep together for mutual protection. I expect to be [cypher] but shall be [cypher].

Subjoined is a list of deaths since I left the U. States; and I beg you will relieve the anxiety of my family, and all our friends, by communicating as much of this letter as you may think proper.

The times of my best men have expired; but their attachment to the ship and their zeal for the service we are engaged on, prevent all complaints on that account. It is not probable that you will hear of me for several months to come, unless some disaster happens; but I beg leave to assure you, sir, that I shall not be idle; and I hope before my return to make the services of the Essex as important as those of any other single ship. We may not be individually benefitted, but we shall do the enemy much injury, which will be a sufficient compensation to us for all the hardships and privations we must naturally experience, while cut off from all communication with the rest of the world, and are dependent on the precarious supplies the enemy may afford.

I have the honor to be,
With great respect,
Your obt. serv't,
D. PORTER.

Honorable WILLIAM JONES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington.

List of Deaths, since my departure from the United States.

- 1812. Dec. 3. Levi Holmes, seaman, Palsey.
- 1813. Jan. 24. Edward Sweeney, o. s. Old age.
- 1813. Jan. 24. Samuel Groce, seaman, Contusion of the Brain by a fall from the main yard.
- 1813. March 4. Lewis Price, marine, Consumption.
- 1813. April 4. James Shafford, gunner's mate, Accidental gun shot—wound of the Lungs.
- 1813. May 25. Doctor Robert Miller, surgeon, disease of the Liver.
- 1812. May 26. Benjamin Geers, qr. gr. Inflammation of the Stomach.
- 1813. June 29. John Rodgers, qr. gr. Fall from the main yard.

Political.

From the Albany Register, Nov. 30.

When the result of a promising campaign visits the feelings of every American bosom with disappointment, and fixes the stigma of disgrace upon the character of our army, it is not only the right but the duty of every one to examine into the causes from whence such evils flow. The most prominent, and it ought to be the most correct source of intelligence, is the communication of the commander in chief; but on this occasion I am compelled to say, from the best examination I have been able to bestow, the letter of Gen. Wilkinson to the Secretary of War, bearing date the 16th inst. contains ridiculous absurdities that would disgrace the pen of Alexander Smyth, of Proclamation memory. We are told that his great haste in his late expedition towards Montreal was (to use his own language) "the prosecution of the views of government," or in other words, the expedition against Montreal was planned and formed by the Secretary of War, "whose ill-health, bad roads and worse weather, determined him to tread back his steps to Washington." The public are left at a loss to determine whether Gen. Wilkinson approved or disapproved of this great and hazardous undertaking? In his great haste to pursue the views of government he could not stop to fight the enemy that were "teazing" him in his rear.—Now give common sense a short reign while this part of the General's letter is examined. I feel that I have a right to assert that General Wilkinson had no security from the enemy that they would not follow him all the way to Montreal—was it most fit and proper to turn and fight them when there was no enemy in front, and take them and their Gun-boats, &c. or wait until he was attacked as well in front, as in rear, and thereby make but one job of it.