

**MARINES IN GRAY:
THE BIRTH, LIFE AND DEATH OF THE
CONFEDERATE STATES MARINE CORPS**

A Thesis

by

MICHAEL E. KRIVDO

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

December 2006

Major Subject: History

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ABSTRACT

Marines in Gray: The Birth, Life and Death of the Confederate States Marine Corps.

(December 2006)

Michael E. Krivdo, B.A., Texas A&M University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Joseph G. Dawson, III

This thesis explores and provides analysis on several areas of study related to the history of the Confederate States Marine Corps that have long been neglected. It examines the military and political processes that were instrumental in both creating and employing a Southern Marine Corps. It also investigates relationships between the U.S. and Confederate Marine Corps, particularly in light of how the experiences of former U.S. Marines shaped the growth of the Southern Corps. In particular, the thesis asserts that, despite shared origins, the CSMC seized on opportunities presented by the Civil War and became expert in new mission areas through the efforts of a core group of determined and experienced leaders. In the process, the CSMC came to eclipse its Northern cousin, becoming a valued and vital element of the Confederate Navy.

The CSMC is examined in light of its national service, thereby affording fresh perspectives on the patterns formed by its actions as part of the Southern war effort. This new research framework supports a better understanding of the roles and missions expected by Southern leaders from their Corps, and more clearly illuminates the

CSMC's differences. In particular, this approach highlights the inherent strengths of the CSMC's unique structure that lent itself to a more efficient concept of employment.

Finally, this thesis asserts that the CSMC became, for its abbreviated history, the agile, innovative, and versatile fighting unit that, man-for-man, the U.S. Marine Corps would not achieve until some time late in the nineteenth century. However, the lessons of its service were not realized, in part because of its relative historical obscurity.

This manuscript is dedicated to my son, Michael Edward Krivdo, II, and daughter, Kaitlan Mary Krivdo. Their understanding and patience with my research have helped make this a qualitatively better product.

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Acknowledgement is given to the invaluable assistance of my committee chair and mentor, Professor Joseph G. Dawson, III, who has contributed innumerable hours to this manuscript. The countless hours he has spent reading through my drafts and providing recommendations have helped me in many ways. His efforts have helped me become a better researcher and writer, and his hard work and dedication are truly appreciated.

I am also grateful to the skilled guidance and advice of Professor Roger Reese, who consistently challenged me to focus on the impact of individuals and to attempt to ascertain their underlying motivations. He has also taught me the value of being specific and precise in my writing, forcing me in many instances to come directly to the point that I was striving to make.

In addition, Professor Cemal Pulak, has always provided me with encouragement throughout this long academic process. Despite his full schedule both on campus and abroad, he always made time for me and my research, and his keen eye for detail helped refine this manuscript in its final stages. His comments and recommendations always added a new perspective to my arguments.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the assistance and advice of my wife, Dianne Krivdo, whose support made this project possible. Not only did she provide steadfast and unconditional encouragement throughout the long process, she contributed in several direct ways to the completion of this manuscript. Dianne's artistic and

administrative expertise may be found throughout this work. More importantly, she helped to “take up the slack” at home when Dad was otherwise occupied with research, reading or writing. Dianne, my heartfelt thanks go out to you for allowing me this opportunity to pursue my academic goals.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The American Civil War has been scrutinized to the point that it may seem to pose no new questions for historians to research; that all substantive matters regarding the war and its participants already have been answered. While much research has been done on the Civil War, some unexplored issues remain to be analyzed. This thesis investigates a neglected subject, the Confederate States Marine Corps (CSMC), and analyzes the military and political relationships that influenced that unit's creation and employment. It examines how Confederate leaders allocated scarce Marine Corps assets in response to the enemy's activities and looks at the patterns formed by such use to discern the concept for employing this unique military organization. In doing so, analysis will reveal a more complete and nuanced understanding of the Confederate Armed Forces. This thesis also explores the various roles and missions assigned to Confederate Marines, evaluates their performance at accomplishing those tasks, and looks at how they moved into new and more challenging assignments as the war progressed. It asserts that the Confederacy knowingly created the CSMC with a different structure than that of its Northern cousin, the USMC, and that the differences made the CSMC a more flexible and adaptable organization. The structural differences

This thesis follows the style and format of the *Journal of Military History*.

allowed leaders to employ the CSMC on a national level, despite its small size, and also to rapidly concentrate units to meet more significant threats.

In its short life, the CSMC acted upon ideas already in gestation prior to the conflict and performed essential, yet historically unappreciated, roles in support of the Confederate cause. The CSMC implemented certain operational concepts originally conceived in the pre-war U.S. Marine Corps, such as the deployment of battalion-sized expeditionary units integrated with modern rifled artillery, features that allowed it to better allocate its finite resources to meet stronger Union challenges with increased capability.¹ Yet despite its successes, the CSMC's military contributions have been generally unrecognized, overshadowed, or co-opted by other, larger unit operations or events. This work argues that the Confederacy, in creating and employing its Marine Corps, reaped benefits and rewards on a scale greater than the sum of its investment.

The Civil War provided an opportunity (or necessity) to experiment with innovative military concepts and tactics, an opportunity that the leaders of both the CSMC and its higher organization, the Confederate States Navy, seized to their advantage. The CSMC became expert not only in traditional Marine tactics and weaponry, but also in employing modern weapons systems such as rifled artillery and torpedoes. Marines adapted their traditional tactics to keep pace with the rapid changes taking place in naval warfare during the war. The CSMC also became adept at, and helped develop, new and innovative tactics for use during specialized amphibious raids, such as seizing enemy naval ships at sea. In doing so, Marines became experts at raiding; and mastered the complex intricacies of what later came to be called special

operations tactics. Therefore, Confederate Marines came to be considered an essential component of such operations, and leaders of raids actively sought out their service for the most difficult of tasks. In general, the CSMC became an innovative military unit and its leaders were willing to think outside the normal boundaries and experiment with new ideas. Confederate commanders sought out Confederate Marines to form the nucleus of specialized raiding and landing parties, units whose operations struck fear in the hearts of Union commanders and precipitated a greater emphasis on wide-scale defensive measures by Union forces. This thesis focuses on the development of these new military ideas and concepts, the effects of their implementation in the South, and the implications for their future military use. It argues that CSMC leaders seized every opportunity to further the value of their unit within the Confederate military, and consequently pursued new tactics and challenging assignments throughout the war.

Elements of the CSMC served with distinction throughout the Civil War, participating both in major battles on land and in engagements at sea. The highest levels of Confederate political and military leadership officially commended Marines' actions, and evidence suggests that their initiative, tenacity and courage may have contributed to significant achievements such as saving the Confederate capital itself from direct bombardment and capture early in the war.² Nonetheless, little has been published on their contributions or accomplishments. In fact, their presence, in the few instances where historians acknowledge it, is often reduced to that of an historical oddity: an insignificant unit that contributed little to the Confederate war effort.³ This thesis concludes that the reality was just the opposite: Confederate Marines provided a

significant portion of the combat manpower of the navy and fought with a tenacity and courage that gained the recognition and respect of senior commanders.

The issue of anonymity aside, Confederate Marines served the southern cause from its earliest actions through the last shots of the war: from the siege of Fort Pickens, Florida, to the surrender at Appomattox and beyond. Within days of the South's firing on Fort Sumter that precipitated the war, CSMC units began forming and converging across from the last remaining Union stronghold in the South at Fort Pickens. Soon, other Marine companies converged on that site and coalesced into the first of several battalions, and the Corps' performance quickly established a favorable reputation as an expeditionary element of the navy. In the final days of the war, Confederate Marines also fought side-by-side with Lieutenant General Robert E. Lee's men as part of a Naval Brigade attached to Lieutenant General Richard Ewell's Corps. On 6 April 1865, that Naval Brigade participated in the final major engagement of the war at Sailor's Creek.⁴ The Marines fought well, but in vain. Surrounded by a numerically superior foe, the Naval Brigade held its ground while flanking units withdrew, leaving them isolated. Although some Marines evaded Union encirclement at Sailor's Creek, they nonetheless were forced to surrender three days later with Lee's forces at Appomattox Court House. Other Marines continued to serve even after the dissolution of Lee's army, fighting on in Mobile and Savannah and even performing special missions such as guarding President Jefferson Davis and other government officials during their flight from Union troops.⁵

This thesis provides answers to several important questions concerning the origins of the Confederate States Marine Corps. Specifically, why, in a period of intense

manpower shortages and competing priorities, did the Confederate leadership decide to create a Marine Corps? What influence did the U.S. Marine Corps have on the forming and employing of the CSMC? When they decided to create a Marine Corps, and why did southern leaders depart from the contemporary model as represented by the U.S. Marine Corps? Where does the Confederate States Marine Corps fit in the overall naval strategy of the South? What was its relationship with the Confederate States Navy? Did the concept of employing Marines evolve throughout the war? If so, how did it evolve, and why? Finally, was the creation of the CSMC worth the investment of scarce manpower and materiel? This project concludes that it was worth the expenditure, and that the CSMC fit well with the Confederate naval strategy.

This thesis also explores questions of a comparative nature. Were there institutional differences between the two American Marine Corps? And, if so, were they significant? If so, how were they significant and what do the differences represent? Furthermore, were there differences in leadership, training, employment and overall performance between the two corps? How, if at all, were the differences related to the senior leadership, both officer and civilian, of the Federal and Confederate respective systems? Did the CSMC embrace innovation and new technologies while its counterpart seemed to regress into traditional roles and missions? Were these institutional attitudes in some way related to the senior leadership of each respective service?

This study argues that the South's gain of competent and experienced officers from the U.S. Marine Corps contributed to a proportional, but opposite effect to the USMC itself. The loss of significant numbers of experienced and seasoned leaders to

the rebel cause robbed the USMC of a critical resource at a particularly vulnerable time and the USMC encountered great difficulty recovering from the effect of that loss. Conversely, the Confederacy gained a wealth of seasoned leaders at a time it most needed them, and their influx provided the CSMC with an immediate source of veteran leaders around whom the rest of the unit could form.

The majority of CSMC officers gained from the USMC were company-grade veterans, a stratum particularly important to unit training and operating. These officers were also the Marines with the most recent expeditionary experience, and their loss was keenly felt within the USMC and eagerly welcomed by the South. Because of this transfer of talent during a particularly critical transition period for both services, the CSMC managed to fill its ranks and field units in a remarkably short period of time. Moreover, these same leaders proved adept at exercising individual initiative and creativity to accomplish missions in the absence of guidance from above, making the CSMC an even more flexible and adaptive force. Given the many opportunities that the war provided, these company-level leaders exercised their initiative from below and were responsible for pushing the CSMC into new functional areas that the USMC did not venture into. The degree of depth of this inverse relationship of leadership has not previously been fully explored.

The historiography of the Confederate States Marine Corps is surprisingly light. Although few areas of American history have been scrutinized as closely as the Civil War, many students remain unaware of the existence or contributions of the CSMC. Fewer still have sufficient knowledge of its activities in order to form an opinion – much

less consensus – of its effectiveness as a fighting organization.

For example, historian Frank Vandiver reduces the CSMC's total contribution during the war to one blunt sentence: "The [Confederate] Marine Corps, pitifully small, was of little use."⁶ Historian Allan Millett also slights the Confederate Marines. He states that they came to suffer "not only from the institutional weaknesses of its parent organization [the US Marine Corps] but the ravages of national defeat." Millett maintains that "the Confederate Marines were doomed to serve through the war with diminished usefulness and growing anonymity," inferring that the Confederate Marines' lack of prominence constituted *de facto* proof of their lack of value to the South.⁷

Historian Ralph Donnelly disagrees with the assessments of Vandiver and Millett. He believes that Vandiver's characterization gives "a completely erroneous picture of the Confederate States Marine Corps."⁸ Instead, Donnelly asserts that "the demand for [Confederate] Marines was constant and widespread, and they were used whenever available."⁹ This thesis supports Donnelly's assertion. Nonetheless, despite its uniqueness as an organization, particularly one that fought throughout the war on both land and sea in a number of roles, the CSMC is probably the least historically documented regimental-sized unit in the war.

About the only point of consensus in the historical writings about the Confederate Marines is that there is a paucity of official correspondence regarding their activities. This lack of easily accessible documentation has been explained in a number of ways. First, the Confederate Marine Corps was a small organization, one that probably never numbered greater than 600 Marines at any time during the war.¹⁰

Second, the Marines were normally attached to other commands where they served as small components, an arrangement that in some cases relegated their service to anonymity. Third, the Confederate Navy destroyed many of its official records, including those of the CSMC, during the fall of Richmond at the end of the war. Fourth, the records of individual ships in which many Marines served, were routinely destroyed or lost in the final actions of the ship.¹¹ Because of these factors, little official documentation survived the war. The few records available are found mostly in private collections or in the personal correspondence files of some of the principal leaders.

To make the situation more difficult for researchers, attempts to produce a definitive monograph on the Confederate Marine Corps were not undertaken until the 1950s, almost a century after the Civil War.¹² By that time, all of the participants had died and, with them, a valuable source of first-hand knowledge was lost. In contrast, a greater percentage of the Confederate Army's records survived intact, providing researchers with a clearer picture of the army's individual unit activities. Moreover, in contrast to the Confederate Marines, many army survivors left memoirs, records and correspondence. For all these reasons, analytical studies of the Confederate States Marine Corps are few. Previous accounts of the CSMC offer mostly discontinuous accounts of that organization. This thesis builds on the earlier works to reconstruct a solid history of the CSMC, and to contribute to its historiography.

The first general history of the CSMC is a 1956 master's thesis by James Gasser.¹³ In it, Gasser provides a framework for the basic organization of the CSMC and recapitulates some of their contributions during select combat actions. Gasser's

project presents a narrative history of the CSMC, yet lacks analysis to address some difficult issues about why the CSMC was created, how well it served in its role, and what contributions it made to the Confederate war effort. It also fails to place the CSMC within the context of how it compared to the wartime performance of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Following in Gasser's footsteps, historian Ralph Donnelly wrote several books and articles on the CSMC, making some significant contributions to the historiography of the CSMC. Beginning with three articles published in 1959, 1964 and 1966,¹⁴ Donnelly established the foundation on the CSMC that provided for later research on the subject. In subsequent years, he expanded his works to the point where he eventually produced a total of four books related to the CSMC. Two of the books are collections of biographical essays and service record material on the commissioned officers and some enlisted Marines of the CSMC, while the remaining two books are different versions of a narrative history of the CSMC.¹⁵ Of the two, the later work, *Rebel Leathernecks*, incorporates a broader sampling of primary source material and is a more refined product. While that book imparts to the reader a general perspective of the nature of the CSMC and a narrative of some its activities, it has a number of flaws. Basically, the book provides information related to the state wherein particular actions occurred. This approach has the effect of imparting to the reader a stream of factual material of varying value that offers a fragmented and discontinuous storyline. Donnelly's organizational style makes it difficult to see the overall picture of the sequence of deployments to meet Confederate military requirements from a broad perspective. To complicate matters,

Donnelly's narrative presentation, while informative, leaves some evident gaps. Also, while the book adequately describes in general terms the organization and actions of the CSMC, it does not provide analysis of why Southern leaders created the CSMC with its unique structure, nor assess how well it performed its missions in relation to other units or opponents.

Finally, while over the years several journal articles have been published providing more information about certain specific actions of the CSMC, these are fairly limited in scope and generally do not present new analysis of its creation or relative performance. Few offer new insight on the leadership of the unit or its overall contributions or effectiveness. And while there are a number of histories of the U.S. Marine Corps and its performance during the Civil War, none provide a critical comparative analysis between the USMC and CSMC or explore the significance of the CSMC as it related to the USMC.¹⁶ This thesis fills these gaps. Although the CSMC was a relatively small military organization, it is apparent that the Confederacy invested considerable effort and resources toward creating, deploying, operating and maintaining their Marine Corps. And, because both the CSMC and USMC evolved in large part from the same pre-war organization, it is both relevant and necessary to discuss pre-conflict naval issues and the development of naval strategies, operations and tactics. Since the Confederacy, like the Union, believed in civilian control of its armed forces, information gleaned from research into the political influences that helped shape the development of the naval services, and the various social factors that affected recruiting and retaining Marines are also incorporated. This project postulates that national

strategy considerations played a central role in the creation, maintenance, and employment of the South's Marines.

Endnotes

- ¹ Joseph G. Dawson, III, "With Fidelity and Effectiveness: Archibald Henderson's Lasting Legacy to the U.S. Marine Corps," *Journal of Military History* 62 (October 1998), 744-49.
- ² Ralph Donnelly, "Battle Honors and Services of Confederate Marines," *Military Affairs* 23 (Spring 1959), 37-40.
- ³ See Frank Vandiver, *Rebel Brass: The Confederate Command System* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1956), 66; Allan Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps*, rev. and exp. ed. (1983; New York: Free Press, 1991), 99.
- ⁴ This battle location is also spelled as Sayler's or Saylor's Creek.
- ⁵ For more detail on the CSMC's activities against Fort Pickens and the last days of the Confederacy, see Chapters IV and V of this thesis. Other sources include John McGlone, III, "The Lost Corps: The Confederate States Marines," *US Naval Institute Proceedings* 98 (November 1972), 69, 73; Ralph Donnelly, *The History of the Confederate States Marine Corps: The Rebel Leathernecks* (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Books, 1989), 15-27, 323-26.
- ⁶ Vandiver, *Rebel Brass*, 66; Vandiver's assessment of the CSMC is first criticized in Donald Gardner, "The Confederate Corps of Marines" (M.A. thesis, Memphis

State University, 1973), 1; Donnelly, "Battle Honors," 37, also disagrees with Vandiver's assertion.

⁷ Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 99.

⁸ Donnelly, "Battle Honors," 37.

⁹ Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 270.

¹⁰ Nonetheless, the 600 Marines represented about 20 percent of the total number of personnel within the Confederate States Navy. In comparison, by 1864 the USMC numbered about 4000 men, yet represented less than 10 percent of the overall manpower of the Union Navy, then almost 50,000 strong. Therefore, within its respective naval structure the CSMC filled a relative strength of over twice that of the USMC.

¹¹ Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 4; John Thomas Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy From Its Organization to the Surrender of Its Last Vessel* (New York: Rogers & Sherwood, 1887), 772. See Dallas Irvine, "The Fate of the Confederate Archives: Executive Office," *American Historical Review* 44 (July 1939), 832-33, for an account of the events surrounding the destruction of the Navy Department records. Based on statements of participants and eyewitnesses, Irvine concludes it was probable that the Confederate Navy Department's records were purposely destroyed at the Navy Yard in Charlotte, North Carolina, before its capture by Union forces. Irvine also notes that since the Secretary of the

Navy occupied offices in the War Department (the offices of which were burned along with other office buildings in Richmond), it is likely some records were destroyed there as well. James Gasser, “Confederate Marines in the Civil War” (M.A. thesis, Alabama Polytechnic Institute, 1956), 1-2.

¹² In Donnelly, “Battle Honors,” 37, note 2, Donnelly remarks that for many decades the main compilation of Confederate Marine history resided in Scharf’s *History of the Confederate States Navy, 1769-1872*. Donnelly further notes that Scharf provided a mere four pages of his book (out of 810 total pages of text) to the subject of the Confederate Marines, and that he considered Scharf’s treatment “cursory, inadequate, and not completely reliable.”

¹³ See the aforementioned Gasser, “Confederate Marines.”

¹⁴ The three articles are the previously cited Donnelly, “Battle Honors;” Ralph Donnelly, “A Confederate Navy Forlorn Hope,” *Military Affairs* 28 (Summer 1964), 73-78; and Ralph Donnelly, “The Confederate Marines at Drewry’s Bluff,” *Virginia Cavalcade* 16 (Autumn 1966), 42-47.

¹⁵ Ralph Donnelly, *The History of the Confederate States Marine Corps* (New Bern, N.C.: published by the author, 1976), represents his first iteration of a narrative history of the CSMC. Thirteen years later, a revised and updated version of that manuscript appeared as the previously cited Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*.

¹⁶ For example, see Millett, *Semper Fidelis*; J. Robert Moskin, *The U.S. Marine Corps*

Story (New York: McGraw–Hill, 1977); and David M. Sullivan, *The History of the United States Marine Corps in the Civil War*, 4 vols. (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Publishing Company, Inc., 1997-2000).

CHAPTER II

CREATING A CONFEDERATE CORPS OF MARINES

On 16 March 1861, barely a month after forming a new government, adopting a new constitution and inaugurating a president, the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States of America created a Confederate Navy. One component of that new navy consisted of a “corps of marines,” an organization originally conceived as a battalion-sized unit commanded by a major and further subdivided into six one-hundred man companies, each commanded by a captain (see Figure 2-1).¹ Although the legislation did not specifically state the purpose for the Confederate States Marine Corps (CSMC), or detail how it would be employed, there are clues that may help to fill in these blank spaces in the historical record. One fact is evident: Confederate leaders created the CSMC with a distinctly different organizational structure. They did not form the CSMC as a mere copy of its cousin, the United States Marine Corps (USMC), but as a unique organization altogether. Their departure from the USMC model indicates that Confederate legislators and administrators had some different purposes in mind for their Marine Corps. If form follows function, it seems logical that Confederate leaders created the CSMC along different lines to meet different requirements. As the war continued and the CSMC coalesced into a seasoned collection of fighting units, the variations in structure between the two organizations became more apparent as Confederate leaders further expanded and modified the CSMC.

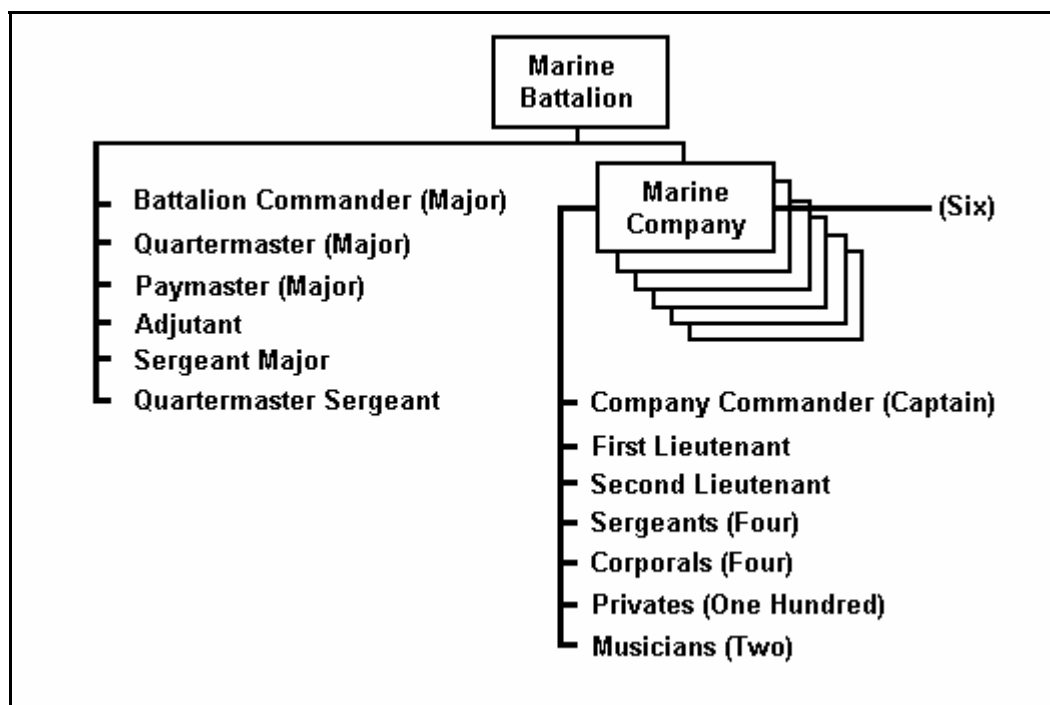


Figure 2-1. Initial Organizational Model of the Confederate States Marine Corps, 16 March 1861.²

When they created their military, Confederate leaders might reasonably have been expected to duplicate the organization with which they were most familiar: the U.S. military. In the case of the CSMC, the USMC provided a functional and existing model that could have readily served as a base for that of a similar Confederate service. Certainly, the easiest solution would have been for Southern leaders to simply adopt a scale model of the USMC structure, particularly since a majority of the Confederate Marine Corps' leaders had invested many years of service in that unit and were intimately familiar with its organization. However, from its inception the CSMC departed from the USMC structure in several significant ways. Presumably, there were

reasons for these changes, yet this study is the first to analyze the data and provide probable reasons for these differences.

This chapter explores the influences and events that culminated in the establishing and early fielding of the CSMC to better understand to what degree, and why, that organization differed from its northern cousin. Also, the events that led to creating, manning and organizing the Confederate States Marine Corps, and the personalities and intentions of the leaders most closely involved in its administration and employment are investigated to gain a clearer appreciation of the how this unique military unit came to be. Additionally, changes to the organization took place in response to the increasing pressures of war. This chapter also examines the events surrounding the early employments of the CSMC in relation to the wartime situation to ascertain how and why these changes came about. Since the CSMC gestated in part from the prewar USMC, some appreciation of the nature of the prewar Marine Corps and its driving influences at the time of secession and war provide a necessary key toward better understanding of why the CSMC developed as it did. Therefore, the departure point for this study is the status of the U.S. Marine Corps within the naval service in the decade prior to the start of the Civil War.

The 1850s constituted a decade of reform for both the U.S. Navy and the Marine Corps. Some Southern Democrats, with Northern support, demanded an enhanced American influence in the Caribbean, particularly around Cuba. These politicians believed that they needed to strengthen the capabilities of the American Navy to offset British naval activities in that region. According to historian Joseph Durkin, the

American Navy had been in a period of general decline since the end of the War of 1812, to the point where, by 1853, it did not possess one vessel of comparable quality or capability to those of any major European naval force. Although the naval services had improved the professional standing of their officer corps after 1800, following the War of 1812 there was little support to maintain a strong and modern navy. By the 1850s, more than two decades of neglect caused by differing political priorities had taken their toll on the navy and the quality of both personnel and equipment had declined. The naval officer corps had not only aged, some had rotted on the vine, and in many cases the men were both unfamiliar with the modern naval technological advances in use in foreign navies, and reluctant to pursue them.³ As a result, some Navy leaders proved resistant to efforts to modernize the service, and reluctant to consider new technologies and innovations that were becoming standards in first-rate modern navies.

To reverse the weakness in American naval power, some political leaders set out to strengthen the naval service. Achieving that goal required qualitative as well as quantitative changes. Simply increasing the numbers of ships and sailors were not enough. Outmoded to begin with, some of the Navy's ships had been left to deteriorate in various dockyards for years. Of the Navy's seventy ships, Secretary of the Navy James Dobbin reported to Congress in 1852 that many of the ships "are not only unfit for service, but . . . are not worth repairing." He estimated that "There are not in the Navy forty vessels which could be brought into service in ninety days, if needed." Even if the ships were returned to service, America's squadrons would still be decades behind European navies in terms of technology and utility. To compete, the Navy needed to

modernize its ships, weapons, and equipment by constructing new hulls that incorporated technologies already in use by first-rate navies, such as those of England and France. Congress supported the effort in a number of ways. In December 1853, Secretary Dobbin pushed through funding to construct six new steam frigates. And the passage of the Naval Reform Act of 1855 increased funding for research and development of newer ships and up-to-date naval weaponry, such as rifled cannon. These efforts eventually led to the commissioning of several modern American fighting vessels powered by steam as well as sail, and armed with powerful new artillery pieces.⁴

For the modernization to succeed, the Navy needed better personnel. Manning the new ships required men with different skills than those needed on the vessels of the old navy, and maintaining proficiency in those skills required making changes to the Navy's recruiting and training practices. Steadily, yet not without resistance, unskilled line-haulers and laborers gave way to skilled engineers and mechanics as steam supplemented sail. The increased application of technology necessitated a greater screening of recruits to ensure better-qualified and capable officers and men were selected, trained and retained -- men who could master the technical challenges of the new shipboard duties. Congress empowered a Naval Retiring Board to let aging or infirm officers go and retain and promote younger ones, with the intent of creating a more robust cadre that would be more capable of meeting the challenges that the new technologies presented. Congress also made changes to the Naval Academy appointment process to enhance the selecting and recruiting of more qualified men.

These reforms, though controversial, resulted in the forging of a younger, more professional fighting force that entered the 1860s with improved capability.⁵

Although it too had passed through a period of stagnation and organizational neglect in the period 1820 to 1840, the U.S. Marine Corps entered the 1850s as a healthy and vibrant service. It had the advantage of excellent leadership interested in modern tactics and weaponry. The Marine Corps, whose service had been sometimes misunderstood, maligned, or questioned in the past, became increasingly valued by its parent (the Navy) and by the country at large. Capitalizing on the long tenure of its fifth Commandant, Brevet Brigadier General Archibald Henderson, the Marine Corps' operational versatility and proven performance in combat in a variety of foreign engagements earned it the respect of its government and citizens. In his nearly fifty-three years of service, almost thirty-nine of them as Commandant, Henderson personally orchestrated a period of growth and reform that converted the small, weakly organized, fragmented and sometimes poorly led assemblage into a seasoned fighting force both relevant for the times and reliable in its service. Henderson revitalized the Marine Corps, and some of his concepts anticipated by a number of years those that Congress later implemented to modernize the Navy. Henderson's leadership style, political skill and perceptive vision transformed the Corps from an organization in crisis to one considered by the Secretary of the Navy to be "an indispensable branch of the Naval Service."⁶

From the time he assumed the commandancy of the Marine Corps in 1820, until his death in 1859, Archibald Henderson aggressively sought to fix problems within his

corps and to further its status and reputation as a service. When he assumed command, morale was at a low point and the Marine Corps threatened with either outright disbanding or being broken into small, separate ships' detachments. Henderson fought zealously for the USMC's continued existence and succeeded in expanding it into new roles. Under his tutelage, the Marine Corps began to embrace the role of a naval expeditionary force. Close to home, it participated in landings on enemy coasts from California to the Gulf of Mexico, thus "contributing to the American domination of [the Pacific] coast."⁷ Farther abroad, embarked Marine detachments provided naval forces with greater combat power, allowing American diplomats and commanders to exert force where needed to support foreign policy or protect American interests. The power of naval presence began to be realized, and the USMC played its part in that effort. For example, during Henderson's tenure as commandant, Marines participated in over fifty armed landings around the world. In fights that spanned the range of expeditionary operations, Marines waded ashore with sailors around the world, fighting and dying in support of American expansion and diplomacy. They fought against pirates in Sumatra from 1832 to 1839 and in Africa in 1843, stormed barrier forts along the Chinese coast in 1856 and 1859, and protected American citizens and interests in South and Central America, the South Pacific and Japan, becoming the centerpiece in naval landings and shows of force. In addition to the traditional role of providing detachments of Marines for service aboard Navy ships, Henderson also formed *ad hoc* Marine battalions and deployed them to fight alongside the Army in both the War with Mexico and the Seminole Wars, where they served with distinction.⁸ In this manner, Henderson instituted flexibility and responsiveness into the Marine Corps' persona in ways that

enabled it to fight across the spectrum of warfare, whether that meant participating in traditional small-unit actions through deployed shipboard service to operating at a larger scale at the battalion level in concert with the Army.

Looking toward the future, Henderson also began to incorporate artillery training within the corps and considered ways to enhance naval landing force procedures. Understanding the effects that the shift from sail to steam propulsion and the increased use of armor plate would have on modern navies, and realizing how these changes would render many of the traditional roles of Marines afloat obsolete, Henderson sought to adopt several reforms that would make his service more valuable and relevant in modern naval warfare. He foresaw the advantages of integrating Marines into ships' naval artillery crews, and further believed in incorporating Marine artillery in landing parties would both allow Marines to fill an important role and significantly increase the combat power of those landing parties. To accomplish this, he advocated for acquiring an organic artillery capability within the Corps and introducing artillery training for all ships' detachments, believing these efforts would consequently increase the importance of Marines in expeditionary operations. To implement his vision, he first sought to have select Marine officers attend the U.S. Army's artillery course at West Point, intending to create a pool of knowledge and expertise within the corps that could then be employed to train other Marines in artillery skills. His ideas soon bore fruit. In 1857, Lieutenant Israel Greene became the first Marine officer to graduate from that course, and Henderson posted him to the Marine Barracks at Washington, D.C., to serve as the Corps' Instructor of Artillery. In that same year, Secretary of the Navy Isaac Toucey

supported Henderson by providing the Marines with their first organic artillery pieces, two 32-pound cannon and four modern Dahlgren guns, giving Henderson the ordnance needed to make his vision come to life. Receipt of these guns allowed him to make artillery training a required element of the pre-deployment program for Marines assigned to duties afloat. As a result, some Marines soon found themselves assigned to gun crews aboard select warships as part of their regular duties.⁹

Commandant Henderson also lobbied hard to acquire modern, more accurate rifles to replace the Corps' older musket-type shoulder weapons. He emphasized marksmanship training, resulting in an increase in their range, accuracy and capability. Furthermore, he enhanced the overall quality of the training of enlisted Marines by adopting and adhering to standardized infantry, artillery and engineer training programs. Also, as part of his struggle to make the Marine Corps a more useful service, Henderson seized every opportunity to prove its value as a flexible and expeditionary force. The commandant consistently volunteered his Corps for assignments outside of their normal mission areas. By successfully handling domestic crises at home ranging from quelling prison riots to restoring order on the streets of Washington and New York, and actively participating in actions and interventions abroad, the Corps improved its public reputation and demonstrated its versatility to the nation at a time when some political and military leaders still sought to do away with it. Instead of being dissolved, under Henderson the Marine Corps grew threefold in size and became a trusted and valued component of the naval force. As evidence of that new trust and confidence, in the years immediately preceding the Civil War, President James Buchanan called his Marines on

several occasions to counter some serious threats to the security and stability of the nation's capital. In June of 1857, Buchanan authorized the employment of Marines to restore order to Washington, D.C. in the wake of several days of violent riots that overwhelmed city police forces. In November 1859, the president authorized Marines to recapture the Federal Armory at Harper's Ferry, Virginia that had been seized by the violent abolitionist John Brown. And, in the days following the secession crisis in December 1860 and January 1861, Buchanan and his secretaries of War and the Navy again ordered Marines to garrison several forts surrounding the capital that had been left seriously undermanned by Army units due to chronic shortages and massive desertions. To senior leaders such as President Buchanan, General Winfield Scott and Secretary of the Navy Isaac Toucey, the Marines were proving their value in times of crisis. Toucey summed up his opinion of the Corps in his 1859 annual report, stating that "the Marine Corps is an indispensable branch of the Naval Service [. . . and] a gallant little band upon which rests the most widely extended duties at home and in every sea and clime, without sufficient numbers to perform them."¹⁰ Nonetheless, all the hard work and dedication that went into earning that reputation seemed a wasted effort in light of the events that soon transpired.

Unfortunately for the U.S. Marine Corps, Henderson's tutelage ended abruptly with his death in January 1859, on the cusp of the Civil War. With his passing, leadership of the Corps changed dramatically, the position of commandant falling automatically to the next senior man, Colonel John Harris. Harris, then sixty-eight years old, held the distinction of being not only the next senior officer, but also the last veteran

officer of the War of 1812 on active duty in the Marine Corps. Harris quickly proved to be quite different in outlook, temperament, and vision from Henderson: he remained firmly set in stolid, sedentary ways and shared little of Henderson's prescient ideas. According to historian Joseph Alexander, Harris had two glaring flaws: he lacked "the broad vision of Henderson," and was "simply too old and stale to meet anything but the bare minimum requirements of his office."¹¹ Lacking Henderson's drive and prescience, Harris had passed the previous twenty-five years in various duties ashore, fulfilling the basic functions of his postings routinely and without distinction. As the next senior officer on active duty, Harris fully expected, and received, routine nomination as Henderson's successor by conservative-minded Secretary Toucey, who appeared to give no serious consideration to look at alternative nominees.¹² Ultimately, Harris's appointment changed the character of the Marine Corps for the worse at that same critical moment when America faced imminent division and conflict. With Harris's appointment many of Henderson's initiatives died.

Although Harris experienced a number of problems during his tenure as commandant, the secession crisis of early 1861 posed a particularly special challenge to his leadership. In all of the Union's military services, alarming numbers of officers resigned their commissions, and the Marine Corps proved to be no exception to this phenomenon. However, early in the crisis, some civilian leaders noted that Marine officers seemed to be resigning in higher percentages than did Navy officers, and "the [rate of] defections did little for the Marine Corps's status with the Lincoln administration or with social Washington."¹³ To make matters worse, neither Secretary

Toucey nor Commandant Harris took steps to stem the tide, and Harris actually approved many of the early resignations, instead of punishing them with dismissal. In fact, Harris even went so far as to provide some of the departing officers with glowing recommendations, essentially embarrassing the administration and seemingly approving of their actions. In one open recommendation for Lieutenant Andrew Hays, Harris not only approved his resignation, he went so far as to remark that “should he decide to enter any other military corps, I take great pleasure in recommending him as a gentleman to be relied upon at all times,” words that helped gain Hays a commission in the CSMC less than a month later.¹⁴ The incoming Lincoln administration soon mandated a harsher stance regarding the flood of officer resignations, directing that all resigning officers be automatically dismissed from service, and not allowing them to resign as the first had been. Yet in spite of the personal implications of dismissal, these administrative details did little to stem the flow of officers to the Confederacy. In a short span of time, a slight majority of Harris’s company grade officers resigned, and many of them soon after joined the Confederate military in some capacity (see Table 2-1). With them also went an unknown number of non-commissioned officers and enlisted Marines, some possibly influenced by the same departing officers. In addition to losing more than half of their company grade officers, a prized source of mid-level leadership, the Corps also lost (and the South consequently gained) two important field grade officers: Major Henry Tyler, Sr., the Corps’ Adjutant-Inspector; and Major George Terrett, commander of the Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C. These two officers, both intimately involved with the training of new personnel, resigned just as the USMC began its wartime expansion. And

in another embarrassing moment, one of the revered former commandant's sons, Richard Henderson, accepted a commission as a lieutenant in the CSMC.¹⁵

Table 2-1. Listing of U.S. Marine Officers Who Resigned or Were Dismissed Between December 1860 and December 1863.¹⁶

Name	Rank	Separation Type	Later Service
Terrett, George H.	Major	Dismissed	CSMC, CSA
Tyler, Henry B. Sr.	Major	Dismissed	CSMC
Rich, Jabez C.	Capt	Dismissed	Va. MC
Simms, John D.	Capt	Dismissed	CSMC
Tansill, Robert	Capt	Dismissed	CSMC, CSA
Taylor, Algernon S.	Capt	Dismissed	CSMC
Baker, Adam N.	1 st Lt	Dismissed	CSMC
Greene, Israel	1 st Lt	Dismissed	CSMC
Hays, Andrew J.	1 st Lt	Resigned	CSMC
Henderson, Charles A.	1 st Lt	Dismissed	CSMC
Holmes, George	1 st Lt	Resigned	CSMC
Kidd, Robert	1 st Lt	Dismissed	Unknown
Matthews, S. H.	1 st Lt	Dismissed	Unknown
Meier, Julius E.	1 st Lt	Dismissed	CSMC
Read, Jacob	1 st Lt	Resigned	CSMC
Stark, Alexander W.	1 st Lt	Dismissed	CSA
Tattnall, John R.	1 st Lt	Dismissed	CSMC
Turner, George P.	1 st Lt	Dismissed	CSMC
Tyler, Henry B. Jr.	1 st Lt	Dismissed	CSMC
Wilson, Thomas S.	1 st Lt	Dismissed	CSMC
Cummins, George W.	2 nd Lt	Dismissed	Unknown
Grant, Oscar B.	2 nd Lt	Resigned	Remained In North (Civilian)
Howell, Becket K.	2 nd Lt	Resigned	CSMC
Ingraham, Henry L.	2 nd Lt	Resigned	CSMC
Rathbone, J. H.	2 nd Lt	Resigned	Remained In North (Civilian)
Reber, J. M.	2 nd Lt	Dismissed	Remained In North (Civilian)
Sayre, Calvin L.	2 nd Lt	Resigned	CSMC
Sells, D. M.	2 nd Lt	Resigned	Remained In North (Civilian)

Through these defecting officers, the South's Marine Corps came to be infused with the spirit of Henderson's reforms and imagination. A significant number of these incoming CSMC officers had previously been intimately involved in implementing Henderson's initiatives, and many carried out that effort for their new Corps. Major Tyler, Henderson's Adjutant and Inspector, went on to command a Confederate Marine battalion for a critical period of time in the unit's infancy and then afterward served in the CSMC headquarters. Major Israel Greene, former artillery instructor to the USMC, became the CSMC's Adjutant and Inspector. Major George Terrett, previously the commander of the Washington Marine Barracks during a time when that post served as Henderson's training ground for new recruits, later commanded a Confederate Marine battalion at Drewry's Bluff, successfully integrating Marine infantry and artillery troops into a force that helped defeat the Union Navy's drive toward Richmond. Drewry's Bluff eventually came to serve also as the training center for the CSMC, a location at which most new officers and many enlisted received their initial screening and training.¹⁷ This centralization of training served to standardize techniques, procedures and traditions throughout the new Corps, under the watchful eyes of former Henderson disciples. Other examples exist as well that support the contention that Henderson's influence permeated the new corps through these men.

The former Federal Marine officers transferred to the South a wealth of recent combat experience and operational expertise, particularly at the small-unit level. They constituted a valuable nucleus of leadership around which the fledgling Confederate naval service formed. Concurrently, their defections caused a deficit of experience in

the USMC, a vacancy that some believe contributed to its relatively poor performance, particularly in the critical first engagements in the war. According to historian Allan Millett, the defections stripped the USMC of much of its company level leadership, leaving the large numbers of raw recruits that filled the gap without effective instruction or supervision.¹⁸ As a result, during the USMC's initial combat employment of the war, at Bull Run near Manassas, the meager fifteen officers and noncommissioned officers with prewar experience proved insufficient in number to keep the remaining three hundred thirty raw recruits in check when the fighting started. Under the pressures of their first experiences in combat the Marine Battalion fell back three times before it broke and ran from the enemy, forging an early reputation as poor fighters that proved difficult to shake. And, in a twist of fate akin to rubbing salt in an open wound, one of the Confederate brigades that the Marine Battalion faced at Bull Run, the Fourth Brigade of Virginia Volunteers, had been ably commanded by former USMC Major George Terrett, now holding a commission as a colonel in the Provisional Army of the Confederacy. Soon afterward, with the arrival of Brigadier General James Longstreet, Terrett relinquished his command and received a second commission as a major in the CSMC.¹⁹ Examples of service like Terrett's illustrate the level of experience and capability of many of the former USMC officers and represent the value that they added to the Confederate military.

Volumes have been written discussing reasons why some officers decided to resign their Federal commissions and enter the service of the Confederacy, and some did not. Much of that discussion is outside the scope of this work. It is acknowledged that

the decision appears to be very much an individual one, with each officer weighing his own circumstances, politics, or sense of loyalties before making that decision. Although many factors contributed toward individual officers making their decision, one factor germane to this study is the possible effect that the personality, policies and leadership style of Commandant Harris may have played in influencing Marines. Where all services experienced significant numbers of resignations, the percentage of officers resigning from the Marine Corps surpassed that of the Navy, suggesting that the USMC had its own unique problems with retention. Personal feelings toward Colonel Harris may have been a contributing factor in some officers deciding to resign. From the time of his appointment in 1859 until his death on 12 May 1864, Harris represented a divisive influence within the Corps. Generally, historians characterize his tenure as a period of incessant bickering, backstabbing and general discontent among the officer corps, with friction and mistrust common throughout the chain of command.²⁰ A command climate such as his is not conducive to team building or cohesion, and it is easy to imagine that personal resentments toward Harris may have tipped the balance in favor of going South when it came time to decide that issue.

For example, in April 1860 the Marine Corps' Adjutant and Inspector, Major Henry Tyler, Sr., and his son, Lieutenant Henry Tyler, Jr., placed Harris on report for alleged improprieties in assignments, and won their case. Both Tylers then continued to work directly under Harris in Washington until they resigned their commissions. In the interim, their daily relations with Harris were most likely strained. Unlike other Virginia-born officers who resigned quickly upon that state's secession, the elder Tyler

deliberated for over a week and did not tender his resignation until 1 May 1861. Quite possibly he spent that time debating the possible consequences of leaving the service of the Marine Corps to which he had invested thirty-eight years of his life. His uneasy relationship with Harris may have played a role in his eventual decision; it may even have been the deciding factor.²¹ Harris, who considered his role as commandant to be more of an administrator than a field leader, aggravated previously existing tensions between the ranks of the older, more sedentary barracks commanders and the younger, more active junior leaders, the latter of which carried the brunt of expeditionary assignments and possessed the most recent combat experiences in their service around the world.

Tyler was not the only USMC officer to have experienced troubled relations with Harris; other officers had also endured some type of conflict with him in years past. While a majority of the officers who resigned were originally from the South, others like Captain Israel Greene were not, leaving open the question of how many resigned due to ideology, perceived opportunity, or simply as a way to extend a vote of “no confidence” on Harris’s leadership.²² Most likely, some combination of all these factors played a role in influencing individual Marine officers to decide whether or not to resign their commissions. It is reasonable to assume that officers who had experienced contentious relations with their commandant might view an opportunity to join another organization in a more favorable light.

Harris’s leadership problems crossed political and ideological lines and did not end with the secession crisis; he proved a divisive force even among those officers who

remained with the Union. Even after the war began, the Corps' officers continued to squabble amongst themselves, jockeying for promotions or favors, reinforcing the notion that some problems in the USMC extended beyond the more obvious North– South tensions. On occasion, these personal and professional differences became a distraction from the more important task of fighting the war. At times the war seemed secondary to the infighting and, in one instance, the open bickering reached the point where the new Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, felt compelled to personally intervene to stop the squabbling. In May 1862, with the Peninsular Campaign in full swing and the Union Navy fighting Confederates for control of the James River, more than one third of the USMC's senior officers, including Harris himself, were instead embroiled in an embarrassing public trial in Washington, D.C. Marine Lieutenant Colonel John Reynolds openly accused Harris of perjury, dereliction of duty, and various other offenses, hoping to publicly humiliate him. The spectacle dragged on for almost two weeks and played out in the press on a daily basis, eventually forcing Welles to take action directly. Disgusted with both the proceedings and in how they were carried out in public, Welles ignored the official recommendations of the court and instead issued a "letter of reproof" to both Harris and Reynolds for their roles in the spectacle. Afterward, in his diary, Welles grimly stated, "Almost all the elder [Marine] officers are at loggerheads and ought to be retired," an expression of what he felt about the senior leaders of the Corps.²³ On Harris's death two years later, Welles recalled that thought, and indicated that little had changed over the years regarding his low opinion of the Marine leaders and his belief that they were part of the Corps' problems, and not likely to produce solutions. Remarking matter-of-factly that Harris's "death gives

embarrassment as to a successor,” he frankly assessed that “The higher class of marine officers are not the men who can elevate or give efficiency to the corps.”²⁴ Welles decided that fixing the Corps required a drastic solution. Afraid of repeating the mistakes of his predecessor who routinely promoted the next senior man in line (Harris), Welles broke with tradition and dug deep into the USMC’s officers to promote one based on personal qualifications, not longevity. He reached down and elevated Major Jacob Zeilin to the commandancy, and simultaneously retired four of the Corps’ most senior officers.²⁵ With this action, Welles began a new tradition of selecting commandants based on their fitness, and without regard for whether such a selection might offend more senior officers. Nonetheless, Welles’ move came too late in the war to have much effect on the USMC’s performance in the conflict.

Under Harris, the U.S. Marine Corps missed the perfect opportunity to become the amphibious force that Henderson had envisioned. The consensus among historians is that the USMC’s overall combat service record during the Civil War was generally disappointing. Following the sub-par performance of the Union’s Marine Battalion at the First Battle of Bull Run in July 1861, subsequent Marine battalions produced an equally poor string of outright failures or flawed performances at Fort Sumter in September 1863 and during both attacks on Fort Fisher in December 1864 and January 1865. Also, embarrassing episodes like the *Ariel* incident, in which 150 armed Marines (including six officers) in transit at sea were captured by the Confederate cruiser *Alabama* without firing a shot, did little to build confidence among Union military leaders or the general public about the fighting capability of Marine units larger than

detachment size. In some cases, even when naval commanders attempted to employ Marine battalions, Army commanders countermanded or ignored the orders. For example, when Flag Officer Samuel DuPont attempted to employ his Marine battalion to conduct raids in 1862 along the St. Johns River in Florida, Brigadier General William T. Sherman disregarded DuPont and, instead, substituted his own troops for those missions. DuPont became so frustrated with the situation that he declared he would “send the battalion back home” to Washington, believing “it is idle to attempt to fit it in anywhere and they are a fine body of well-drilled and disciplined troops and should be employed.”²⁶ Although several opportunities surfaced during the war that might have highlighted the amphibious role of the Marines, the USMC failed to capitalize on them. As a result, other units generally fulfilled the amphibious role during Union operations, and the Federal Marines missed their chance to carve out what would have been a distinctive niche. Writing on that subject after the war, USMC Captain Louis Fagan, himself a participant in the near-disastrous Union naval assault on Fort Fisher, dryly observed, “the War was our great opportunity and we owlshly neglected it.”²⁷

In contrast, the CSMC appears to have embraced the initiatives first put in motion by Archibald Henderson. Confederate Marines, led by the same officers that helped Henderson implement infantry and artillery training in the USMC, turned those same skills and experiences toward creating a Confederate Marine Corps that could operate comfortably either on land or sea, and became firmly enmeshed with the Confederate Navy on several levels: the CSMC could operate equally well in

detachment, company, or battalion configuration, depending on the situation.

Succeeding chapters will explore this concept in greater detail.

Residuals from Henderson's prewar influence extended into other Confederate services as well, primarily through the services of several former USMC officers who later applied their experiences gained under Henderson's tenure to benefit the armed forces of the South. For example, former USMC Second Lieutenant Alexander Stark put his early Marine Corps artillery training to use for the Confederacy to a degree that deserves special recognition. Stark returned from an overseas naval deployment too late to secure a posting in the CSMC. Instead, he joined the Confederate army as a major of artillery, and advanced to the rank of lieutenant colonel while commanding an artillery battalion that bore his name. Stark distinguished himself in one other way as well: he became one of only a handful of Confederate officers to author a field manual, *Instruction for Field Artillery*, which the Secretary of War then published and distributed throughout the army.²⁸

Returning attention back to actions in the South, the secession crisis led to a frenzy of activity as southern delegates attempted to create a functioning central government and armed forces where none had previously existed before. On 1 February 1861, in response to the pending inauguration of Republican president-elect Abraham Lincoln, seven states of the Deep South seceded from the Union. Their decision was not a hasty one; Americans had openly debated the notion of secession for many years. Lincoln's election in November 1860 precipitated a political crisis in the South, causing advocates for secession to dispatch representatives to other slave-holding states to push

for secession and to lobby for the formation of a Southern, confederated government. Beginning with South Carolina on 20 December 1860, special conventions of seven slave-holding Southern states each adopted separate ordinances of secession and withdrew from the Union, soon to be followed by other states. Things began to move rapidly in the new Confederacy: by 4 February 1861, the First Session of the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States of American convened in Montgomery, Alabama; by 8 February, that congress crafted and unanimously adopted a constitution; and on 9 February selected Jefferson Davis as president.²⁹ The new Confederacy now had a functioning legislative and executive branch of government.

With the possibilities of war on the horizon, one of the Provisional Confederate Congress's first priorities was to create an army and a navy. On 21 February 1861, three days after Jefferson Davis was inaugurated as president of the Confederacy, the congress passed "An Act to Establish the [Confederate] Navy Department," and with it a Marine Corps. The president looked next for a man to lead that navy. On 25 February, Davis nominated former U.S. Senator Stephen Russell Mallory for the position of Secretary of the Navy, and congress confirmed that appointment on 4 March. Although never a naval officer, Mallory brought to the post a wealth of experience, having served eight years on the Committee on Naval Affairs, six as the committee chairman, before resigning from the U.S. Congress in February 1861. Importantly, he had been an active and central figure behind a series of efforts to reform and modernize the navy in the 1850s.³⁰ With Mallory's selection, the Confederacy gained a leader experienced in naval affairs, administration, and possessed of an eye to the future.

From the beginning, differences became apparent between the president's command relationships over the Confederate Army and Navy. President Davis, who had served as secretary of war to U.S. President Franklin Pierce, held tight rein over his own secretary of war. Generally, Davis delegated little authority over the actions of field commanders to the various men who held that office. Instead, he either personally issued orders and guidance directly to the field, or directed subordinates to deliver such orders for him. Davis placed strict limitations on the powers to be exercised by his various secretaries of war, even to the point of advising one of them that he must always work through "the established channel," meaning through Davis personally, in any matter that included "the removal of an army, the transfer of a general . . . the assignment of general officers," or any subject "material to the public defense."³¹ In one of his first actions as commander in chief, Davis issued instructions that all contracts sent through the secretary could only be approved by Davis himself, prompting his critics to remark that he had reduced the role of the secretary of war to the status of "chief clerk."³² Davis reinforced this belief by routinely superseding orders issued by the secretary of war and even publicly stated that "he did not believe any civilian could competently direct" the affairs of that department.³³ That is, no civilian other than himself.

In contrast, Davis conferred a great deal more authority to his Secretary of the Navy, Stephen Mallory. In part, Davis perceived Mallory to be competent in naval affairs in his own right, based on Mallory's own experiences with that service during his years in the senate. Yet another factor may have been Davis's unfamiliarity with the

naval service, and he demonstrated a proclivity to focus on things familiar to him, and he considered the army and war department to be very familiar, indeed. Therefore, from the very beginning, Davis seemed to be more keenly interested in every aspect and detail of running the army, and subordinated other efforts, like creating and maintaining a navy, to others. Despite some political opposition to Mallory's nomination as Secretary of the Navy, Davis expressed complete confidence in his selection, and soon after congress confirmed his appointment.³⁴ Ironically, in his new role Mallory now faced that same modern and capable navy that he had helped create in the 1850s.

Although sometimes drawing criticism from political foes, Mallory brought competence, innovative vision, hard work, and loyalty to his position. According to historian Rembert Patrick, Mallory made an extraordinarily capable secretary of the Navy who, during his tenure, "directed the Navy Department of the Confederacy brilliantly,"³⁵ skillfully incorporating new technologies, imaginative ideas and initiative. Patrick also observes that Mallory's "temperament enabled him to work in harmony with the President, and generally with his fellow cabinet members,"³⁶ giving him a degree of leverage in gaining support among the cabinet for his programs. He earned the trust, confidence and respect of the president, who in turn conferred on Mallory greater independence and authority than he granted to any of his secretaries of war.³⁷

In turn, Mallory seems to have developed a similar relationship with his own subordinate, Colonel Lloyd Beall, who became the Commandant of the CSMC on 23 May 1861, shortly after congress expanded and reorganized the corps as a regiment. Beall, a thirty-one year U.S. Army veteran who had served in the Black Hawk War with

Jefferson Davis, had earned high respect from several high-ranking Confederate officers. Chief among them was General Joseph E. Johnston, who once wrote General Robert E. Lee that he considered “Colonel Beall of the ‘Marine Corps’ eminently qualified for the grade of brigadier-general,”³⁸ a rank that the CSMC, even after its expansion, did not rate. Correspondence between Beall and Mallory suggests that they possessed a mutual respect for each other, and were both frank in expressing their opinions and honest in their assessments. There are no indications that Mallory felt compelled to closely supervise Beall’s performance or countermand his orders, as Davis often did with his secretary of war, leading one to conclude that Mallory trusted Beall’s judgment in Marine Corps matters. Reciprocally, Beall apparently felt comfortable discussing problems with Mallory, and the secretary often acted on Beall’s recommendations even when the proposed solutions were not popular or politically palatable. On occasion, Beall respectfully disagreed with certain policies or regulations he considered to be detrimental to the CSMC, and proved successful in tactfully pursuing his point to a conclusion favorable to the CSMC.³⁹ In general, the CSMC benefited from the close and trusted relationship between its commandant and the Navy secretary, and Colonel Beall, in turn, looked out for the welfare of his men and organization.

Congress’s act of 17 March 1861 established a Confederate Navy Department consisting of five sub elements: four bureaus and a Marine Corps Command. The four bureaus were the Office of Ordnance and Hydrography; the Office of Orders and Details; the Office of Medicine and Surgery; and the Office of Provisions and Clothing (see Figure 2-2). The Marine Corps Command comprised the headquarters element for

the CSMC, and served primarily as an administrative link with the Navy Department, coordinating with the other bureaus and the Secretary's office on all Marine Corps matters. Each bureau chief, including the Commandant of the Marine Corps, reported directly to the Secretary of the Navy, who exercised sole decision-making authority over both Navy and Marine Corps under order of the president. Under this arrangement, Mallory employed direct administrative and operational control over units in the field in concert with the commandant's advice and counsel.⁴⁰

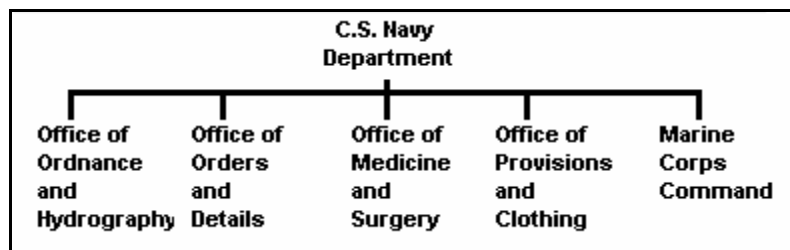


Figure 2-2. Organization of the Confederate States Navy Department.

That same act of congress established the battalion-sized organization depicted earlier in Figure 2-1. As the requirements of the new Marine Corps solidified, the organization grew on paper to meet them, eventually gaining a colonel, as Commandant, who reported directly to Mallory. Administratively and logistically, Marine detachments, companies and battalions were normally provided with supplies, arms, ammunition, pay, and other support by the army or navy command to which they were assigned at the time. Nonetheless, the CSMC maintained its own paymasters and quartermasters as well, providing the headquarters with some degree of centralized control over its expenditures and the ability to deal with unique payroll and supply issues. For command and control purposes, Marine units in the field relied on a mixture

of telegraph, correspondence, and messengers to maintain contact with the headquarters in Richmond, providing reports on events within their area of responsibility, while concurrently cooperating with the local commander to whom they were assigned. Detachments reported to companies, which in turn reported information to battalion staff (if one was in place) or directly to the Marine Corps Headquarters in Richmond. Headquarters provided guidance, direction and orders accordingly to either the battalion or company commander, as applicable. In this manner, Secretary Mallory and Colonel Beall applied a method of command and control that could best be described as “centralized command, decentralized execution,”⁴¹ a type of system that can be highly responsive to the intent of the commander, yet allows for great flexibility and initiative on the part of subordinate leaders.⁴²

Organization is critical to the command and control process and should reflect the requirements of the commander. The structuring of the CSMC into companies, with the provision of forming battalions from those companies as required, represented a remarkable departure from traditional USMC organization. Surprisingly, the USMC had no specified structure, only Congress’s table of maximum authorized personnel, listed by rank. Traditionally, the USMC had routinely formed units and filled billets to administrative barracks assignments on an *ad hoc* basis, an inefficient system at best. No standardized structure existed until the Spanish-American War in 1898. The CSMC’s structure thus represented a giant step forward in the development of the Marine Corps, and the creation of permanent companies as the base unit became the core of its organization. Although he does not specify how he arrived at his conclusion,

historian Ralph Donnelly believed the creation of companies to be an “innovation suggestive of [that used by] the British Marine Corps,”⁴³ yet the importance of that feature has been widely overlooked. The ability to deploy by permanent individual companies and also by provisional battalions comprised of those companies constituted a significant improvement in operational flexibility over the USMC, a subject that will be examined in detail later in this thesis. The CSMC’s prescient structure allowed it to be more flexible and adaptable to changing field situations while maintaining a high degree of cohesion and standardization. This gave the Confederates more options to select from when dealing with changing enemy threats and priorities. These options ranged from the posting of detachments afloat, the stationing of individual companies to select locations, to the forming of *ad hoc* battalions to respond to priority threats. At times the CSMC did all of these concurrently. The CSMC’s operational concept and organization therefore maximized both economy of force and mass, two long-standing principles of war that are particularly difficult to attain by military forces with chronic personnel shortages such as that of the Confederacy.⁴⁴

There is an unusual aspect to Mallory’s adoption of the company-based organizational model: it appears in the earliest iterations of the CSMC, even prior to adopting a formal strategy for fighting the war. This is unusual because, in the absence of a formal strategy, the easy solution would have been to simply copy the existing U.S. Marine Corps structure. Instead, the Confederates departed from that model and created a Marine Corps organized along quite different lines. Perhaps Mallory and other naval leaders had a different vision for the CSMC, one that afforded them the operational

flexibility that was probably desired at that time when so many aspects of the Navy remained unclear and unresolved.⁴⁵ Or, it may be that Mallory, unsure how the overall strategy would look, favored flexibility over tradition as a way of countering uncertainty.

It is one thing to create an organization on paper, but bringing that paper unit to life requires tangible resources. Manning and equipping the Confederate Navy and Marine Corps presented a considerable challenge to Southern leaders. Unlike the Confederate Army, with its access to state militias that could provide some immediate fighting capability and resources, the Confederate Navy initially had no assets: no personnel, equipment, money or ships. However, the requirements were immediate and of critical importance to the continued survival of the Confederacy. Writing of the challenges Mallory faced in raising his naval force, Confederate veteran J. Thomas Scharf observed that “the timber for his ships stood in the forests, and when cut and laid was green and soft; the iron required was in the mines, and there were neither furnaces nor workshops; the hemp for the ropes had to be sown, grown, reaped, and then there were no rope walks. . . . Without a rolling mill capable of turning out a 2.5 [inch] iron plate, nor a workshop able to complete a marine engine, and with a pressing need to build, equip and maintain ships-of-war, the embarrassments and difficulties which Mr. Mallory encountered may be estimated.”⁴⁶

The Navy’s personnel circumstance proved equally distressful. Mallory and his staff were challenged to organize, man and equip the Navy quickly, while competing with other organizations for its share of resources. From its birth, the Confederate naval

service had a critical deficiency of qualified technical personnel. Fortunately for the Confederacy, experienced individuals helped establish the Navy Department. The first officers and enlisted men in the Confederate Marine Corps came essentially from three sources: from the U.S. military, from politically connected Southerners seeking military positions, and state militia men (see Table 2-2). Each of these sources provided the Confederacy with a core for what quickly became a functioning navy, a reservoir of persons of known capabilities, technical expertise or professional experience, yet they were too few in number to completely fulfill the pressing needs of the Confederacy.⁴⁷

Table 2-2. Confederate Marine Officers with Prior U.S. Military Service.⁴⁸

Name	Rank/Service	Years Served	CSMC Rank
Allison, Richard Taylor	Purser, USN	1849-1861	Major (Paymaster)
Baker, Adam Neill	1 st Lt, USMC	1853-1861	1 st Lieutenant
Beall, Lloyd James	Col, USA	1826-1861	Colonel (Commandant)
Gonzalez, Samuel Zacharias	Storekeeper, USN	1854-1861	Major (Quartermaster)
Greene, Israel	Capt, USMC	1847-1861	Major (Adjutant)
Hays, Andrew Jackson	1 st Lt, USMC	1847-1861	1 st Lieutenant
Holmes, George	1 st Lt, USMC, USA	1849-1861	Captain
Howell, Beckett Kempe	2 nd Lt, USMC	1860-1861	1 st Lieutenant
Ingraham, Henry Laurens	2 nd Lt, USMC	1858-1861	1 st Lieutenant
Meier, Julius Ernest	1 st Lt, USMC	1855-1861	1 st Lieutenant
Read, Jacob	Capt, USMC	1847-1861	1 st Lieutenant
Sayre, Calvin Lawrence	2 nd Lt, USMC	1858-1861	1 st Lieutenant
Simms Jr., John Douglas	Capt, USMC	1841-1861	Captain
Stockton, Edward Cantey	Lieutenant, USN	1849-1858	2 nd Lieutenant
Tattnall, John Rogers	Capt, USMC	1847-1861	Captain
Taylor, Algernon Sidney	Capt, USMC	1839-1861	Major
Terrett, George Hunter	Major, USMC	1830-1861	Major
Thom, Reuben Triplett	1 st Lt, CSA	1846-1848	Captain
Turner, George Pendleton	1 st Lt, USMC	1856-1861	1 st Lieutenant
Tyler Sr., Henry Ball	Major, USMC	1823-1861	Lieutenant Colonel
Tyler Jr., Henry Ball	2 nd Lt, USMC	1855-1861	1 st Lieutenant
Wilson, Thomas Smith	2 nd Lt, USMC	1857-1861	1 st Lieutenant

Recruiting became paramount. To obtain qualified personnel, congress followed up its organization acts by issuing formal invitations and conducting reviews of unsolicited recommendations to select officers to fill the vacancies. Experienced men were offered appointments, with consideration given toward the individual's former rank and experience. Also, select invitations were extended to several Southern gentlemen of reputable background who may have had little or no former military familiarity, but who were either politically connected or even personally related to senior Confederate government officials.⁴⁹ Regardless of their source, these officers became the core of the CSMC during its formative first year of existence, and came to imprint it with their personal characteristics.

The strong link between the prewar Union and Confederate Marine Corps has been noted. Of the fifty-four officers known to have served with the CSMC between 1861 and 1865, seventeen had served previously in the U.S. Marine Corps.⁵⁰ Three other officers came from active service with the U.S. Navy, where they were familiar with Marines and their duties. Two other officers had served previously in the U.S. Army: one, Lloyd Beall, became the Colonel Commandant of the CSMC, while another, Reuben Thom, became a company commander. One other officer, Alfred Van Benthuisen, had served as a privateer in a number of foreign armies before becoming a CSMC company commander.⁵¹ Not surprisingly, these former military officers entered key leadership billets in the new Confederate Marine Corps, thereby infusing that organization with their knowledge and experience. Moreover, according to historian John McGlone, over one hundred enlisted Marines left the USMC and entered the

Confederate Marines, a factor that helped provide stability and experience within its enlisted ranks.⁵²

It is important to reiterate that several of the officers who “crossed-over” to the South had played key supporting roles during Commandant Henderson’s period of reform of the U.S. Marine Corps. An exact degree to which Henderson’s ideals, goals, and influence transferred to the Confederate Marines is impossible to estimate with precision. Nonetheless, it appears likely that some of Henderson’s ideas and reforms were infused in the Confederate Marines through the influence of these former Union officers, and most recognizable is Henderson’s emphasis on mastery of artillery skills, both afloat and ashore. The converse is also true; the loss of these leaders’ service and experience to the U.S. Marine Corps probably negatively affected that service, and some historians attribute the loss of experienced officers and non-commissioned officers to the generally poor performance of the USMC during the Civil War years.⁵³

In any event, the Confederacy began to fill the leadership vacancies in the Corps. On 25 March 1861, newly selected Confederate President Jefferson Davis appointed Reuben Triplett Thom of Fredericksburg, Virginia, to the rank of captain in the CSMC, granting him the distinction of being the first officer in that service. Thom, who had seen previous combat service as a first lieutenant in the Alabama Regiment of Infantry during the Mexican War, and who had held the position of Quartermaster General of Alabama prior to entering the CSMC, also became the organization’s first recruiting officer. Mallory directed Thom to solicit volunteers within the Montgomery area for what would eventually become his own company. Although Montgomery was then the

capital of the Confederacy, recruiting there proved slow and unreliable: by 29 April, one month after starting his assignment, Thom had only managed to enlist about twenty-seven Marines, a far cry from the one hundred he needed for his company.⁵⁴

Four days later, Davis commissioned five more officers, two to the rank of captain and three as first lieutenants, all of whom had served previously in the U.S. Marine Corps. Concurrently, Secretary Mallory decided to shift the organization's recruiting effort to New Orleans. One of the captains, George Holmes of Portland, Maine, had a wealth of military experience. He had served with the Florida Volunteers during the Mexican War and later spent twelve years as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps before resigning that commission only one month previous to accepting the CSMC appointment. Mallory ordered Captain Holmes and newly commissioned First Lieutenant Beckett K. Howell, who also recently resigned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps, to proceed to New Orleans for recruiting duty.⁵⁵

On 30 March, Davis commissioned another captain of Marines, Alfred Crippen Van Benthuyzen, a native of New Orleans who, like Howell, was also related to President Davis. That same day, Mallory ordered Captain Van Benthuyzen to "proceed to New Orleans and report to Captain George Holmes . . . for recruiting duty." Although Van Benthuyzen had not previously served in the U.S. military, he had led a colorful life. Prior to being appointed to the CSMC, it appears that he had seen combat in China during the Tai-Ping Rebellion of 1857-58, and had also served on the staff of Guiseppe Garibaldi's army during its campaigns in Italy in 1860.⁵⁶ Counting Captain Van Benthuyzen, the CSMC now had almost half of the active officers it needed to fill its

rolls, and three of its future company commanders, with most of their effort focused on recruiting enlisted men around New Orleans.

Enlistment proved fruitful in the Crescent City. About 280 Marines were enlisted in or around New Orleans between 10 April and 29 June 1861, a period of less than three months. Since each company consisted of about one hundred enlisted men, recruits from New Orleans filled out the majority of three complete companies, about half of the six companies originally authorized by the Confederate Congress. Therefore, enlistees from New Orleans were over represented in the CSMC, particularly during the first year of the war. In fact, since the overall strength of the CSMC at the close of 1861 totaled approximately 350 men, New Orleans Marines constituted about 80 percent of the Corps' total strength at the end of the first year of the war. Despite this apparent success, Mallory seemed dissatisfied with the pace of recruiting, and instead complained, "the whole number of marines as authorized by law has not yet been obtained."⁵⁷ He blamed the perceived lack of progress on the level of competition caused by concurrent efforts of the Confederate army, and the state militias of both Alabama and Louisiana to recruit in the same cities at the same time.⁵⁸

Mallory's disappointment aside, analysis of CSMC recruiting and retention indicate it experienced success under the conditions it had to operate in. Although the total strength of the CSMC most likely never exceeded 600 Marines at any time, its size remained fairly consistent and its personnel served both afloat and ashore at practically any location where the Confederate Navy engaged Union forces. Indeed, as the war dragged on and many army regiments decreased in size, the CSMC actually increased in

personnel strength until the very end, when combat actions and disintegration of governmental functions took their toll.⁵⁹ Considering the difficulties, the CSMC in fact did comparatively well in manning and maintaining its level of personnel throughout the war.

Events soon occurred making the task of fielding operational units a priority of Confederate leaders and provided an opportunity for the CSMC. On 12 April 1861, Southern forces under the command of General Pierre G. T. Beauregard opened fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, causing the Union garrison there to surrender the next day. The war had started. Confederate leadership now focused its attention on the only remaining Union stronghold in the South: Fort Pickens near Pensacola, Florida. On 24 April, Secretary Mallory directed the commander of the first operational Marine company, Captain Van Benthuisen, to proceed with his men to the Warrington Navy Yard, opposite Fort Pickens. In an exhibition of readiness, Van Benthuisen's company, soon to be designated as Company B, departed New Orleans by steamship that same evening, and arrived in Pensacola two days later on the evening of the 26th, through a combination of steamship, rail and foot transport. On arrival, Van Benthuisen reported for duty to Beauregard, who placed him "in charge of a heavy battery in front of Fort Pickens."⁶⁰ The New Orleans *Delta* reported that Van Benthuisen's company occupied front-line combat positions along the left flank of the Confederate defenses, indicating the importance of their assignment. Van Benthuisen's company, now one of the first units committed to the Pensacola – Fort Pickens area, improved on the existing fortifications, trained in naval artillery and infantry skills, and prepared for combat.⁶¹

Meanwhile, recruits continued to trickle in fill CSMC vacancies in New Orleans. The companies began to take shape, and CSMC officers organized and began to train their men. As companies became operational, they were ordered to the front to help augment forces already there. On 12 May, Lieutenant Howell escorted a contingent of about 150 more Marines from New Orleans to Pensacola, where they joined what Secretary Mallory now described in reports as a Marine battalion, commanded by Captain Van Benthuisen. By 24 May, the battalion contained about 320 Marines organized into three companies, each involved in training or operating around Pensacola. At this time, Captain Holmes commanded Company A; First Lieutenant Henry Laurens Ingraham (another former USMC officer who received his commission in the CSMC with Holmes and Howell on 29 March) commanded Company B while Van Benthuisen led the battalion; and Captain Thom commanded Company C. Mallory then issued Van Benthuisen some general directions concerning the welfare of the Marines and granted him authority to arrange billeting, requisition arms, and draw clothing and supplies for the battalion. He also directed Van Benthuisen to “see that the Marines are so instructed and drilled in the use of their arms as to make them efficient soldiers in the shortest time.”⁶²

The Marine battalion in Pensacola drew other assignments. Twelve Marines from Company B were detached to serve aboard the transport steamer *CSS Time*, which helped protect the Confederate positions around Pensacola harbor. Marines were also dispatched to protect the naval stores at the railroad depot. Moreover, to discourage Union attempts to infiltrate Confederate positions, Bragg instituted a harbor patrol to

conduct picket duty in the water at night. That patrol, equipped with two small boats, consisted of a small force of thirteen Marines and several sailors. Additionally, when the Confederate Navy placed the bark-rigged screw steam cruiser *Sumter* (formerly the merchant steamship *Habana*) into military service on 3 June, Van Benthuyesen detailed Lieutenant Howell and twenty Marines to serve as the ship's detachment aboard that vessel.⁶³ The CSMC had committed its first effective, provisional battalion of the war.

With an active battalion engaged against Fort Pickens, Mallory foresaw a requirement to expand the CSMC to meet its commitments. Following the secession of four states of the Upper South and the subsequent expansion of the Confederacy, and at Mallory's specific request, congress expanded the Confederate States Marine Corps' organization with an amendatory act on 20 May 1861. This "Act to Enlarge the Marine Corps" authorized a total strength of forty-nine officers and 944 enlisted men (see Figure 2-3). Although earlier studies of the CSMC have noted that the new structure was "similar to those authorized for an army ten-company regiment," there is more to it than that.⁶⁴ The organization structure of the expanded CSMC contained important differences that went beyond a superficial similarity with a Confederate Army regiment. Building off of earlier similarities between the first iteration of the CSMC and existing Confederate army regiments, the corps' new regimental structure continued to diverge from the familiar USMC organization, and those differences provide clues that point to the way that Confederate leaders envisioned employing their Marines.

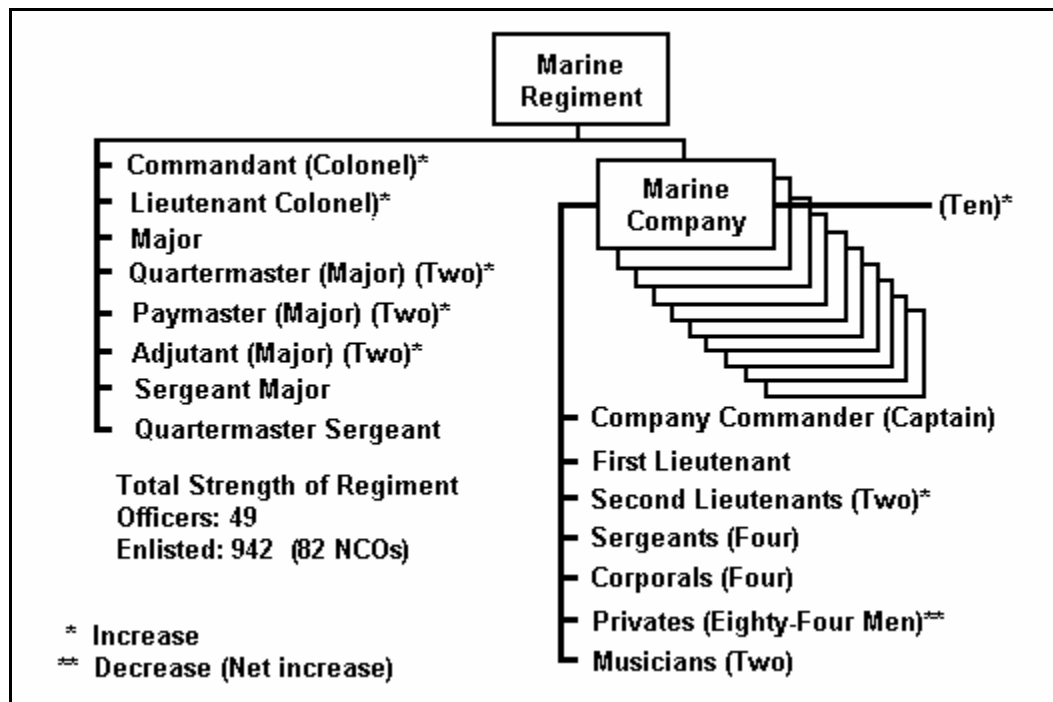


Figure 2-3. Expanded CSMC Structure, 21 May 1861.⁶⁵

The reorganization act, while expanding the Corps to a regimental-sized unit, maintained the company as its base unit, evidence that leaders valued the flexibility that the company offered as a concept of employment. However, other important refinements were included in the new structure that both acknowledged and supported the CSMC's capabilities to employ as even smaller units: as detachments for service aboard navy ships and stations. The new organization increased the numbers of lieutenants and non-commissioned officers in each of the companies, giving those units a sufficient number of small-unit leaders to both facilitate the creation of separate detachments and provide for adequate supervision of the men while serving away from the direct control of the company commander. Although this newer table of organization did not specify an intermediate battalion level of command, the CSMC

continued to form and employ battalions throughout the war, often assigning persons from within the regimental headquarters to fill required battalion command and administrative positions.⁶⁶ This structure allowed the leaders to frequently shape and reallocate their personnel situation to match their operational requirements, an efficient and frugal way of maximizing their personnel resources.

The expansion act also authorized a billet for a Colonel Commandant, filled three days later through the appointment of Colonel Lloyd J. Beall. After assuming command, Beall soon forwarded several recommendations for further adjustments to be made to the corps' structure, citing increased requirements for the extended deployment of Marines afloat. Beall specifically requested that more noncommissioned officers be added to the table of organization to enhance the leadership, supervision and training capability of small, detached elements, particularly during extended deployments. Specifically, Beall argued that "having found by experience that the peculiar service of marines requires a larger proportion of noncommissioned officers and musicians than the land service, from the fact that the Corps is liable to be divided up into small detachments as guards on board of ships and at naval stations, and that these guards are not complete without one or two noncommissioned officers and a musician to each."⁶⁷ Congress, facing national shortages in manpower, quite naturally hesitated to accede to these requests for more small-unit leaders, but with Mallory's vigorous support many of these recommendations for increased structure were nonetheless adopted in later amendatory acts to the corps' structure (see Figure 2-4). Mallory also supported the addition of several civilian staff to the headquarters of the CSMC, improving the overall command and control capability.⁶⁸

These increases in structure in the face of national shortages indicate a validation of the requirement for more Marines, regardless of the pressures applied by competing services.

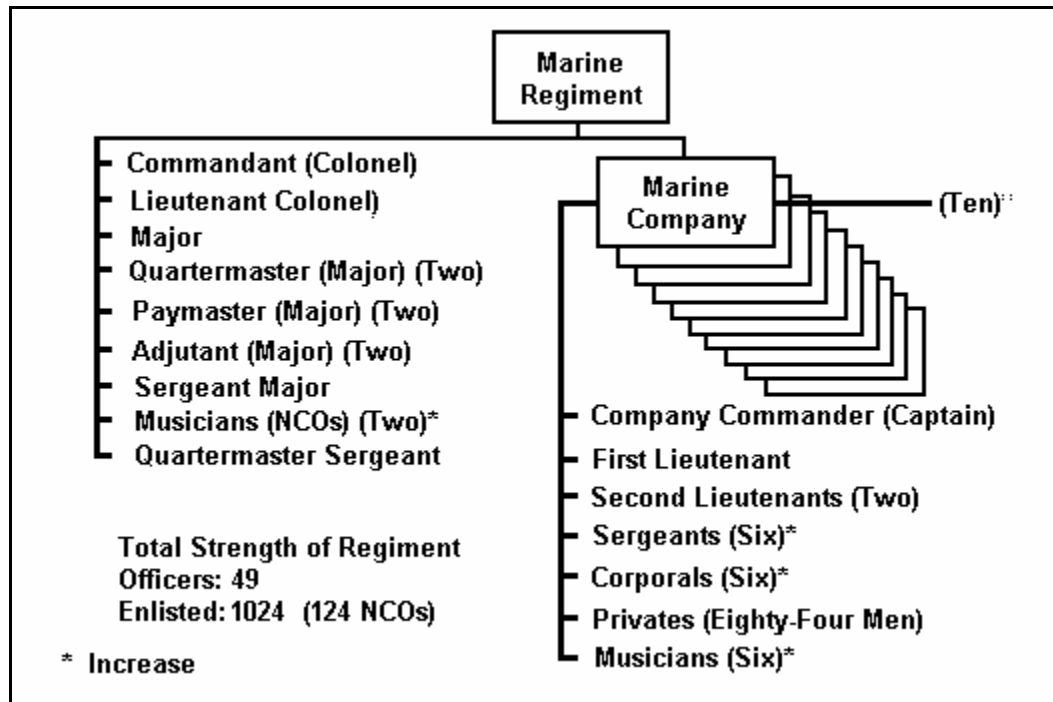


Figure 2-4. Further Expansion of the CSMC Structure, 24 September 1862.⁶⁹

A new wave of officer accessions helped fill the ranks of the expanded Confederate Marine Corps. On 26 July 1861, newly commissioned Lieutenant Colonel Henry B. Tyler, Sr., reported for duty in Pensacola and assumed command of the Marine battalion. Only recently resigning his commission as a U.S. Marine major, Tyler had served that organization for thirty-eight years. He had most recently held the post of Adjutant and Inspector, one of the Marine Corps most senior and influential positions, a posting that placed him in close proximity to Commandant Henderson. In that post, Tyler had responsibilities related to the implementation of many of Henderson's reforms

and initiatives. Now, in the service of the Confederate Marine Commandant, Tyler applied his expertise to continue to train and prepare the men of the CSMC battalion, while concurrently fulfilling required duties in the battle lines around Fort Pickens.⁷⁰

Other former U.S. Marines were also inducted into key positions in the newly expanded Marine Corps. George Terrett, recently the commanding officer of the Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C., and thirty-one year veteran, received a commission as a line major on 20 June 1861. Israel Greene, who had led the USMC detachment in the famous and successful operation against John Brown at Harper's Ferry, and former Instructor of Artillery, received an appointment as a captain on 30 June 1861. Soon after, Greene received a promotion to major and assumed the post of Adjutant and Inspector for the CSMC. John Simms, a twenty-year veteran of the USMC who served in the War with Mexico and led a battalion in the assault at Chapultepec, among other distinctions, received a commission as a captain on 15 July 1861. Other former Marines moved into vacant leadership billets, raised new companies, and began to train for the fights that were soon to come. By the end of the first year of the war, the CSMC had a robust organization filled with motivated Marines and led by capable, experienced combat veterans.⁷¹

By the end of 1861, the Confederacy possessed a Marine Corps comprised of three companies and a battalion staff, which had already engaged in combat with the enemy and continued to gain operational experience with each passing day. Its senior leadership, both civilian and military, exercised a form of command and control that provided centralized direction and guidance, yet relied on the imagination, initiative and

judgment of its subordinate leaders to accomplish assigned missions. The individual companies and detachments were well led by persons possessed of a wealth of experience in the military. As an advantage, these leaders understood the tactics, operations, and capabilities of their enemy well, yet were not bound to the same limitations.

The CSMC possessed a new and unique form of organization that made it flexible and responsive to changing operational requirements. Naval leaders developed a concept of employment for the corps that allowed them multiple options in fielding forces to meet ever-changing situations. Mallory possessed a combat unit that could be employed throughout the South as an economy of force measure, yet could also be concentrated at a single location if the threat warranted. More importantly, the leadership of the CSMC, at all levels, embraced new technologies, inventions and procedures, and leaned into the future of warfare, not away from it. As Mallory built his navy with new weapons and ships, the CSMC stood ready and willing to integrate itself into the fight. At the small unit level, new leaders were trained and developed, and men of all ranks infused with an *esprit de corps* that could be traced directly to the days of Archibald Henderson. As the CSMC continued to expand, it also became increasingly engaged with the enemy and consequently redeployed, concentrated and relocated its elements as necessary to meet the national demands for its service.

Endnotes

- ¹ The Provisional Congress unanimously adopted a Provisional Constitution on 8 February 1861, and the next day selected Jefferson Davis to serve as President for a period of one year. Confederate States of America, *Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America*, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904-1905), 1: 103, 151 (hereafter referred to as *JCC*); Confederate States of America, *Acts and Resolutions of the First Session of the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States, Held at Montgomery, Ala.* (Richmond: Enquirer Book and Job Press by Tyler, Wise, Allegre & Smith, 1861), 48-49, 98-105, quote from 103 (hereafter referred to as *Acts, First Session*); Confederate States of America, *Acts and Resolutions of the Second Session of the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States, Held at Montgomery, Ala.* (Richmond: Enquirer Book and Job Press by Tyler, Wise, Allegre & Smith, 1861), 39, 86-87 (hereafter referred to as *Acts, Second Session*); Joseph T. Durkin, *Confederate Navy Chief: Stephen R. Mallory* (1954; reprinted, Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 144-45; Ralph Donnelly, *The History of the Confederate States Marine Corps* (Washington, N.C.: published by the author, 1976), 4. According to Donnelly, the overall strength of the CSMC in 1861 was probably about 350, by 1862 about 500, about 560 by the end of 1863, and about 561 on 31 October 1864. In part because the CSMC found itself on the losing side in the war, its innovative

contributions were not fully appreciated, or even acknowledged, and would not be adopted by the U.S. Marine Corps until many decades later.

² Information supporting the creation of this figure is drawn from *Acts, First Session*, 103.

³ For details on naval reforms of the early 1800s, see Christopher McKee, *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession: The Creation of the U.S. Naval Officer Corps, 1794-1815* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1991). Congressional debate and action regarding reforms undertaken during the 1850s can be found in a number of sources, among them: Library of Congress, *Journal of the Senate of the United States of America*, 44: 286-93, 45: 680-81, and 45: 691 (hereafter referred to as *U.S. Senate Journal*); also, Durkin, *Confederate Navy Chief*, 60-62, on 62, describes the general condition of the American Navy in 1853. Greater detail is found in Secretary Dobbin's "Report of the Secretary of the Navy," reprinted in its entirety at: *Congressional Globe*, 33rd Cong., 1st Sess. (1853), 13-18.

⁴ Harold D. Langley, "James Cochrane Dobbin," *American Secretaries of the Navy*, 2 vols., ed., Paolo E. Colletta (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1980), 1: 285-87; *Congressional Globe*, 33rd Cong., 1st Sess. (1853), 13-18, quotes from 15. Information related to the funding of six steam frigates can be found in: Library of Congress, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States of America*, 49: 146-47 (hereafter referred to as *U.S. House Journal*); Durkin, *Confederate Navy Chief*, 62-66. Ironically, Durkin notes the efforts of

the Southern Democrats to protect their own regional interests in the 1850s resulted in them “unwittingly building up the Navy that would one day throttle them,” quote from 62.

⁵ Langley, “James Cochrane Dobbin,” 1: 290-95; Durkin, *Confederate Navy Chief*, 64-66; 70-83.

⁶ Joseph G. Dawson III, “With Fidelity and Effectiveness: Archibald Henderson’s Lasting Legacy to the U.S. Marine Corps,” *Journal of Military History* 62 (October 1998), 727-28, 744-53; J. Robert Moskin, *The U.S. Marine Corps Story* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977), 286-87; quote from U.S. Government, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy, 1859*, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., vol. 3, pt. 3, 1141 (hereafter cited as *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy, 1859*).

⁷ Quote from Dawson, “With Fidelity and Effectiveness,” 746.

⁸ Joseph H. Alexander, “Archibald Henderson,” *Commandants of the Marine Corps*, eds., Allan R. Millett and Jack Shulimson (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2004), 71-72; Dawson, “With Fidelity and Effectiveness,” 746-47; Harry Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings of United States Marines, 1800-1934* (1934; reprinted, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, 1974), 3-7, 23-28, 77-82, 99-102, 108-11, 120-22, 137-40, 144-46, 151-54, 160-61.

⁹ Dawson, “With Fidelity and Effectiveness,” 748-53; Alexander, “Archibald Henderson,” 71-73; Harold D. Langley, “Isaac Toucey,” in *American Secretaries of the Navy*, 1: 309; U.S. Navy Department, “Annual Report of the Secretary of

the Navy, 1857; Ralph Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches of the Commissioned Officers of the United States Marine Corps* (1973; 3d ed., Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Books, 2001), 84; Allan Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (1980; revised and expanded ed., New York: Free Press, 1991), 83-84.

¹⁰ Dawson, "With Fidelity and Effectiveness," 748-53; Alexander, "Archibald Henderson," 72-73; Langley, "Isaac Toucey," 1: 310; Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 83-84; quote from *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy, 1859*. For a detailed description of the events leading up to the recapture of Harper's Ferry and the duties of the U.S. Marine Corps in the secession crisis, see David M. Sullivan, *The United States Marine Corps in the Civil War* 4 vols. (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Publishing Company, 1997), 1: 1-27, 32-34.

¹¹ Joseph H. Alexander, "John Harris," in *Commandants of the Marine Corps*, 75

¹² *Ibid.*, 74-77.

¹³ Quote from Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 92.

¹⁴ Letter of Recommendation, John Harris to Andrew Hays, Headquarters, Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 2 March 1861, Entry 4 (Letters Sent, 1798-1884), Record Group (hereafter abbreviated as RG) 127 (Field Organization Records), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (hereafter abbreviated as NA).

¹⁵ Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 92; U.S. Navy Department, "Report of the Secretary of the Navy, Transmitting in Answer to a Resolution of the Senate of the 21st of

December, 1863, a List of Officers of the Navy and of the Marine Corps, who Between the First Day of December, 1860, and the First Day of December, 1863, Left the Service, With the Grade and Rank of Each,” (*Senate Executive Document No. 3*, 5 January 1864), 38th Cong., 1st Sess. (*U.S. Serial Set*, vol. no. 1176, session vol. 1), 12 (source hereafter referred to as “List of Officers”); Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 95-98, 238-39, 264-65.

¹⁶ Material included in this Table is compiled from two sources: “List of Officers,” 12; and biographical information found in Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 8-11, 84-85, 91-92, 101-102, 105, 111-12, 129-31, 168-70, 189-90, 197-99, 224-25, 230-33, 236-39, 259, 263-65, 267-69, 286, 4, 77, 213, 17, and 243, respectively.

¹⁷ Individual sketches of these and other CSMC officers can be found in Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*; and the specific role of Greene in building an artillery capability to the USMC under Henderson’s tenure can be found in Alexander, “Archibald Henderson,” 72.

¹⁸ Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 94-95.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 94-95; Moskin, *U.S. Marine Corps Story*, 79-80; U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. and atlas (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, 2: 943-44 (hereafter cited as *OR*, and all citations are to Series I, unless otherwise noted); Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 238-39.

- ²⁰ For characterizations of the legacy of Col. John Harris as Commandant, see Alexander, “John Harris,” 74-84; Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 90-93; and Moskin, *U.S. Marine Corps Story*, 76-83.
- ²¹ Alexander, “John Harris,” 78; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 263-69; Alexandria (Va.) *Gazette*, 3 May 1861, 2-3.
- ²² “List of Officers,” 12; Donnelly, *Biographical Essays*, 84-85, 197-99, 236-39, 263-65; Donnelly, *History of the Confederate States Marine Corps*, 136-41; Alexander, “John Harris,” 78-79.
- ²³ Gideon Welles, *Diary of Gideon Welles*, 3 vols. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), 1: 89.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 2: 31.
- ²⁵ Alexander, “John Harris,” 77-84; Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 90-93; Welles, *Diary*, 2: 51; and Joseph Alexander, “Jacob Zeilin,” *Commandants of the Marine Corps*, 87-88.
- ²⁶ Quote from Letter, Admiral DuPont to his Wife, 23 March 1862, reprinted in Samuel DuPont, *Samuel Francis DuPont: A Selection from His Civil War Letters*, 3 vols., ed., John D. Hayes (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1969), 1: 377 (hereafter referred to as *DuPont Letters*).
- ²⁷ U.S. Navy Department, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, 30 vols. and index (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894-1922), Series I, 1: 778-80, 782-84 (hereafter cited as *ORN*, and all citations are to Series I, unless otherwise noted); Millett, *Semper Fidelis*,

94-97; Alexander, "John Harris," 80-81; Admiral Samuel DuPont to his Wife, letter, 23 March 1862, reprinted in *DuPont Letters*, 1: 376-86; quote from Capt. Louis E. Fagan, USMC, to 1st Lt. Henry Clay Cochrane, USMC, letter, 11 September 1877, Henry Clay Cochrane Papers, Personal Papers Collection (P. C. 1), Marine Corps Historical Division (MCHD), Quantico, Va. (source hereafter referred to as Cochrane Papers).

- ²⁸ Donald Ray Gardner, "The Confederate Corps of Marines" (M.A. thesis, Memphis State University, 1973), 16-17; Alexander W. Stark, *Instruction for Field Artillery; Compiled From Standard Military Authority; Embracing Schools of the Piece, Battery, and Battalion or Evolutions of Batteries* (Richmond, Va.: A. Morris, Publisher, 1864); Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 310-13.
- ²⁹ William J. Cooper, Jr., *Jefferson Davis, American* (New York: Random House, 2000), 5, 325-28; Edward Pollard, *The First Year of the War* (Richmond: West & Johnston, 1862), 27-47, quote from 45; *JCC*, 1: 7-12, 31-40.
- ³⁰ Maj. G. W. Van Hoose, "The Confederate States Marine Corps," *Marine Corps Gazette* (13 September 1928), 166; *JCC*, 1: 63, 71-72, 85, 95-96, 105-106; Durkin, *Confederate Navy Chief*, 131-36.
- ³¹ Quotes from Cooper, *Jefferson Davis, American*, 414, 415.
- ³² Rembert Patrick, *Jefferson Davis and His Cabinet* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1944), 104.
- ³³ Jefferson Davis, *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, eds., Lynda L. Crist, *et al.*, 11 vols. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971-), 7: 36-37 (hereafter

referred to as eds., Lynda L. Crist, *et al.*, *Davis Papers*); Cooper, *Jefferson Davis, American*, 325-29, 414-15; also Patrick, *Davis and His Cabinet*, 27, 104, 113-15, quote from 114.

³⁴ Patrick, *Davis and His Cabinet*, 57; Durkin, *Confederate Navy Chief*, 61-83, 131-33.

³⁵ Durkin, *Confederate Navy Chief*, 270-71.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 271.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 246-47, 263-67, 270-71.

³⁸ *OR*, 11, pt. 3: 543.

³⁹ *Acts, Second Session*, 39; *JCC*, 1: 297; *OR*, 11, pt. 3: 543; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 17; Raimundo Luraghi, *A History of the Confederate Navy* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 27; Col. Lloyd J. Beall to Sec. of the Navy Stephen Mallory, 14 August 1862, *ORN II*, 2: 251; Donnelly, *History of the Confederate States Marine Corps*, 17; Ralph Donnelly, *The Confederate States Marine Corps: Rebel Leathernecks* (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Publishing, 1989), 6-8; Col. Lloyd J. Beall to Sec. of the Navy Stephen Mallory, 11 December 1862, reprinted in *ORN II*, 2: 116-17.

⁴⁰ *JCC*, 1: 71-72; for a detailed description of the functional roles of each bureau and the command relationships see Luraghi, *Confederate Navy*, 12-14; and Durkin, *Confederate Navy Chief*, 136-44.

⁴¹ As described in U.S. Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 6 (MCDP 6), Command and Control* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1996), 87-89, 109-12.

⁴² *Acts, First Session*, 48-49, 98-105, 2: 39, 86-87; Durkin, *Confederate Navy Chief*, 144-45; U.S. Marine Corps, *Command and Control*, 87-89, 109-12.

⁴³ Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 3.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1-3, 265-27; Luraghi, *Confederate Navy*, 26-27. Although in “Minutes,” Meeting of Marine Officers, North Atlantic Squadron and Norfolk Station, 12 February 1876, copy in Cochrane Papers, attendees recommended to the USMC Commandant the adoption of a permanent company-based organization; Congress rejected the reorganization in U.S. Congress, Senate Naval Affairs Committee, *House Report 762* (18 January 1881), 46th Cong., 3d Sess., copy also in Cochrane Papers. The USMC did not adopt a company-based organization until the creation of a six-company battalion for service in the Spanish-American War, as detailed in Entries for 17-22 April 1898, “Journal of Marine Battalion Under Lt. Col. R. W. Huntington, 1898,” RG 127, NA. See also Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 110, 131-33, although again Millett does not elaborate on the innovative significance of the Marine Corps’ adoption of a company-based structure, or its inherent advantages.

⁴⁵ Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 1-3, 265-71; Luraghi, *Confederate Navy*, 26-27; *ORN* II, 2: 44-49.

⁴⁶ J. Thomas Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy From Its Organization to the Surrender of Its Last Vessel* (New York: Rogers & Sherwood, 1887), 31; Luraghi, *Confederate Navy*, 22-28, 32; Van Hoose, “Confederate States Marine Corps,” 166.

⁴⁷ Luraghi, *Confederate Navy*, 22-28, 32; Van Hoose, “Confederate States Marine Corps,” 166. The author’s conclusions regarding the sourcing of officers are based on analysis of material from two sources: previously cited “List of Officers,” 12; and biographical information found in Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 4, 8-11, 17, 77, 84-85, 91-92, 101-102, 105, 111-12, 129-31, 168-70, 189-90, 197-99, 213, 224-25, 230-33, 236-39, 243, 259, 263-65, 267-69, and 286.

⁴⁸ Material included in this Table is compiled from two sources: “List of Officers,” 12; and biographical information found in Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 4, 8-11, 17, 77, 84-85, 91-92, 101-102, 105, 111-12, 129-31, 168-70, 189-90, 197-99, 213, 224-25, 230-33, 236-39, 243, 259, 263-65, 267-69, and 286. Just prior to being appointed as a captain in the CSMC, Reuben Thom served as the Attorney General for the state of Alabama. See also APPENDIX A (U.S. Marine Corps Officers Who Resigned or Were Dismissed Between December 1860 and December 1863) of this thesis for further detail.

⁴⁹ For example, Capt. Alfred C. Van Benthuisen, one of the CSMC’s first company commanders, was related by marriage to Jefferson Davis. Despite his not having previously served in the U.S. military, contemporaries reported that Van Benthuisen had served in various military positions overseas, such as serving as a staff officer to Giuseppe Garibaldi during his Italian campaigns, and in China during the Tai-Ping Rebellion. See David Sullivan, “Fowler the Soldier, Fowler the Marine: Letters From an Unusual Confederate,” *Civil War Times Illustrated*

26 (February 1988), 34, and correspondence in Ralph Donnelly Papers, MCHD, Quantico, Va., for more detail on Van Benthuyesen's military experiences prior to the Civil War. See Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, for more detail on the backgrounds of other officers appointed to serve in the CSMC.

⁵⁰ Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 8-11, 84-85, 91-92, 101-102, 105, 111-12, 129-31, 168-70, 189-90, 197-99, 224-25, 230-33, 236-39, 259, 263-65, 267-69, and 286. See also APPENDIX B (Confederate Marine Corps Officers with Prior Service in the United States Military) for a detailed summary of information regarding this subject.

⁵¹ See the description of Van Benthuyesen contained in Sullivan, "Fowler the Soldier, Fowler the Marine," 34; also correspondence between Ralph Donnelly and Gail Van Benthuyesen Pigeon, found in Ralph Donnelly Papers, MCHD, Quantico, Va.

⁵² Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, vi, 8-11, 16-20, 77, 84-85, 91-92, 101-102, 105, 111-12, 129-31, 168-70, 189-90, 197-99, 213, 224-25, 230-33; 236-39, 243, 259, 263-65, 267-69, and 286. Donnelly states that "a total of 58 officers were named to the CSMC and all but two, Lucien L. Dawson and Edmund J. Lloyd, accepted commissions. Of those that accepted, two captains (Jabez C. Rich and Robert Tansill) are not known to have served on Confederate States Marine Corps duty, while a third (Jacob Read) may have, but only temporarily." Counting Read, a total of 54 officers can be confirmed to have served in the CSMC during the war. Also see the information contained in Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 8, Table 2,

entitled “The Staff of the Confederate States Marine Corps.” See also McGlone, “The Lost Corps,” 69.

⁵³ According to Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 90-97, the performance of the USMC during the Civil War was generally poor, particularly when compared to its performance before 1860. Among the problems Millett cites are poor upper and middle leadership, lack of imagination and innovation within the organization, no focus or sense of mission, poor recruiting, panicky reputation from their poor performance at the First Battle of Bull Run, and their minimal success at battalion-sized operations.

⁵⁴ Confederate States Navy, “Officers of the Marine Corps,” document, Microform Publication M1091 (*Subject File of the Confederate States Navy, 1861-1865*) (hereafter cited as M1091), Roll 16, Frame 34, RG 45, NA; Augusta (Ga.) *Chronicle and Sentinel*, 22 February 1861, 3; Mexican War Service Record of Reuben T. Thom, Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served during the Mexican War, RG 94 (Records of the Adjutant General’s Office), NA; Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army: From its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), 2: 953; Mexican War Pension Application for Reuben Thom, 12886, Certificate 12336, RG 94, NA; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 243.

⁵⁵ Capt. Holmes resigned his commission as an officer of the USMC on 28 February 1861, and on 29 March 1861, received a commission in the CSMC, along with

First Lieutenant Howell. See “Officers of the Marine Corps,” RG 45 (Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library), NA; B. K. Howell to Jefferson Davis, Washington, D.C., telegram, 27 February 1861, Jefferson Davis Papers, Reel 24, Frame 143, Tulane University, New Orleans, La. Beckett Howell had the distinction of being the younger brother of the wife of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, a relationship that may have helped him draw some of the assignments he held in the CSMC. For more information on Howell, see Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*.

⁵⁶ “Officers of the Marine Corps,” 3-4, RG 45, NA; Capt. Van Benthuisen was, like Howell, also related to Jefferson Davis through Van Benthuisen’s aunt Eliza, who was the wife of Davis’s brother, Joseph; see Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 105, 272; S. R. Mallory to Capt. A. C. Van Benthuisen, Montgomery, Ala., letter, 30 March, 1861, Van Benthuisen Papers, Tulane University, New Orleans, La., quote from text (collection is hereafter referred to as Van Benthuisen Papers); Correspondence between Gail Van Benthuisen Pigeon and Ralph Donnelly, Ralph Donnelly Papers, MCHD, Quantico, Va.

⁵⁷ Quote from Confederate States Navy, “Report of the Secretary of the Navy,” 26 April 1862, reprinted in *ORN II*, 2: 53.

⁵⁸ Author’s analysis of available enlistment data as compiled in Ralph Donnelly, *Service Records of Confederate Enlisted Marines* (Washington, N.C.: published by the author, 1979), 1-116, and the information contained in Microform Publication M260 (*Records Related to Confederate Naval and Marine Personnel*), Rolls 1-7,

RG 45, NA; *Acts, First Session*, 103; Confederate States Navy, "Report of the Secretary of the Navy," 26 April 1862, reprinted in *ORN II*, 2: 51-55.

⁵⁹ Donnelly, *History of the Confederate States Marine Corps*, 4. As outlined in note 1 to this chapter, Donnelly provides estimates that the strength of the CSMC was about 561 on 31 October 1864, quite possibly its highest number. Luraghi, *Confederate Navy*, 27, states that the CSMC, "which would perform its difficult tasks honorably, never had more than 753 men," quote from 27. However, analysis of available muster rolls and existing records indicate that Donnelly's figures seem more accurate.

⁶⁰ Quote from Confederate States Navy, "Report of the Secretary of the Navy," 26 April 1862, reprinted in *ORN II*, 2: 53.

⁶¹ Cooper, *Jefferson Davis, American*, 340-42; Jefferson Davis to Braxton Bragg, Montgomery, Ala., letter, 3 April 1861, in eds., Lynda L. Crist, *et al.*, *Davis Papers*, 7: 85-87; Bragg to Davis, Barrancas Barracks, Pensacola Harbor, letter, 7 April 1861, in *ibid.*, 7: 94-98; New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, Supplement, 24 April 1861, 5; Washington (D.C.) *Evening Star*, "Pensacola Affairs," 7 May 1861, 2; Confederate States Navy, "Report of the Secretary of the Navy," 26 April 1862, reprinted in *ORN II*, 2: 53; New Orleans *Delta*, 27 April 1861, 1; Mallory to Van Benthuyzen, letter, 27 April 1861, Van Benthuyzen Papers.

⁶² New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, 5 May 1861, 6; *ibid.*, 7 May 1861, 6; Voucher dated 12 May 1861, Van Benthuyzen Papers; Mallory to Capt. Van Benthuyzen, 17 May 1861, Van Benthuyzen Papers.

- ⁶³ Gen. Ord. No. 70, H.Q. Troops C.S. near Pensacola, Fla., 27 June 1861, Entry 265 (Orders, Army of Pensacola, 1861-62), RG 109 (War Department Collection of Confederate Records), NA; “Muster Roll of Capt. A. C. Van Benthuyzen’s Company, From the First Day of November, 1861, to the First Day of January, 1862,” Van Benthuyzen Papers. The CSS *Time* is listed by the U.S. Navy Historical Center as “a steamer used as a Confederate transport for conveying supplies into the Pensacola Navy Yard,” U.S. Navy Department, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* (Internet Reference Publication) (Washington, D.C.: Naval Historical Center), available on the Internet at: <<http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/cfa9/time.htm>>, last accessed 14 September 2005, 1, quote from 1.
- ⁶⁴ Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 3-5, quote from 3; James Charles Gasser, “Confederate Marines in the Civil War,” (M.A. thesis, Alabama Polytechnic Institute, 1956), 7, citing from *ORN II*, 2: 53; *JCC*, 1: 259, 263, 297, 328; *Acts, First Session*, 104; *Acts, Second Session*, 86-87.
- ⁶⁵ Information to support the construction of this figure was drawn from *Acts, First Session*, 104; *Acts, Second Session*, 86-87; and *JCC*, 1: 259, 263, 297, 328.
- ⁶⁶ *JCC*, 1: 259, 263, 297, 328; *Acts, First Session*, 104; *Acts, Second Session*, 86-87.
- ⁶⁷ Col. Lloyd J. Beall to Sec. of the [Confederate States] Navy S. R. Mallory, Richmond, Va., letter, 14 August 1862, reprinted in *ORN II*, 2: 251.
- ⁶⁸ *JCC*, 1: 259, 263, 297, 328; *Acts, First Session*, 104; Confederate States of America, *Register of the Officers of the Confederate Navy, 1862* (Richmond, Va.:

Enquirer Book and Job Press, 1862), 25; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 17.

Also see Van Hoose, "Confederate States Marine Corps," 167.

⁶⁹ Author's depiction of the structure of the CSMC after the inclusion of the information contained in Confederate States of America, "An Act Amendatory of an Act to Reorganize the Marine Corps" (24 September 1862), *The Statutes at Large of the Confederate States of America, Passed at the Second Session of the First Congress; 1862*. James M. Matthews, ed. (Richmond, Va.: R. M. Smith, Printer to Congress, 1862).

⁷⁰ Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 17, 264-65; Dawson, "With Fidelity and Effectiveness," 751-52; *JCC*, 1: 394, 407; Special Orders No. 168, Headquarters, Troops near Pensacola, Fla., 26 July 1861; "ZB" Biographical File of Henry B. Tyler, MCHD, Quantico, Va.; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 20-21.

⁷¹ *JCC*, 1: 297, 349; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 84-86, 197-99, 236-40; "Report of Capt. John D. Simms, Comdg. Marine Battalion, to Col. Lloyd J. Beall, Comdt., C.S.M.C.," Drewry's Bluff Battery, 16 May 1862, Van Benthuisen Papers, also reprinted in *ORN*, 6: 745.

CHAPTER III

CHANGING ROLES AND MISSIONS

Around 6:30 A.M. on Thursday, 15 May 1862, a flotilla of Federal gunboats approached the last major turn in the James River before a stretch of about six miles of straight water that penetrated the heart of the Confederate capital of Richmond (see Figure 3-1). The five Union Navy vessels, under the command of Commodore John Rodgers, had spent the last five days fighting upriver past Confederate batteries and positions in a bold attempt to penetrate Richmond's defenses and "shell the city to a surrender."¹ Rodgers led his force from the deck of his flagship, the ironclad *Galena*, with the remainder following in a line-ahead formation. The formidable *Monitor*, fresh from its famous engagement with the Confederate ironclad *Virginia* (formerly *Merrimack*) steamed in trace of the *Galena*. Behind the *Monitor* came the ironclad *Stevens Battery* (or Revenue Steamer *E.A. Stevens*, also *Naugatuck*), and finally two wooden gunboats, the *Aroostock* and the *Port Royal*. The Federal sailors had high morale and anticipated a quick victory, perhaps one that would lead to the capture of Richmond.²

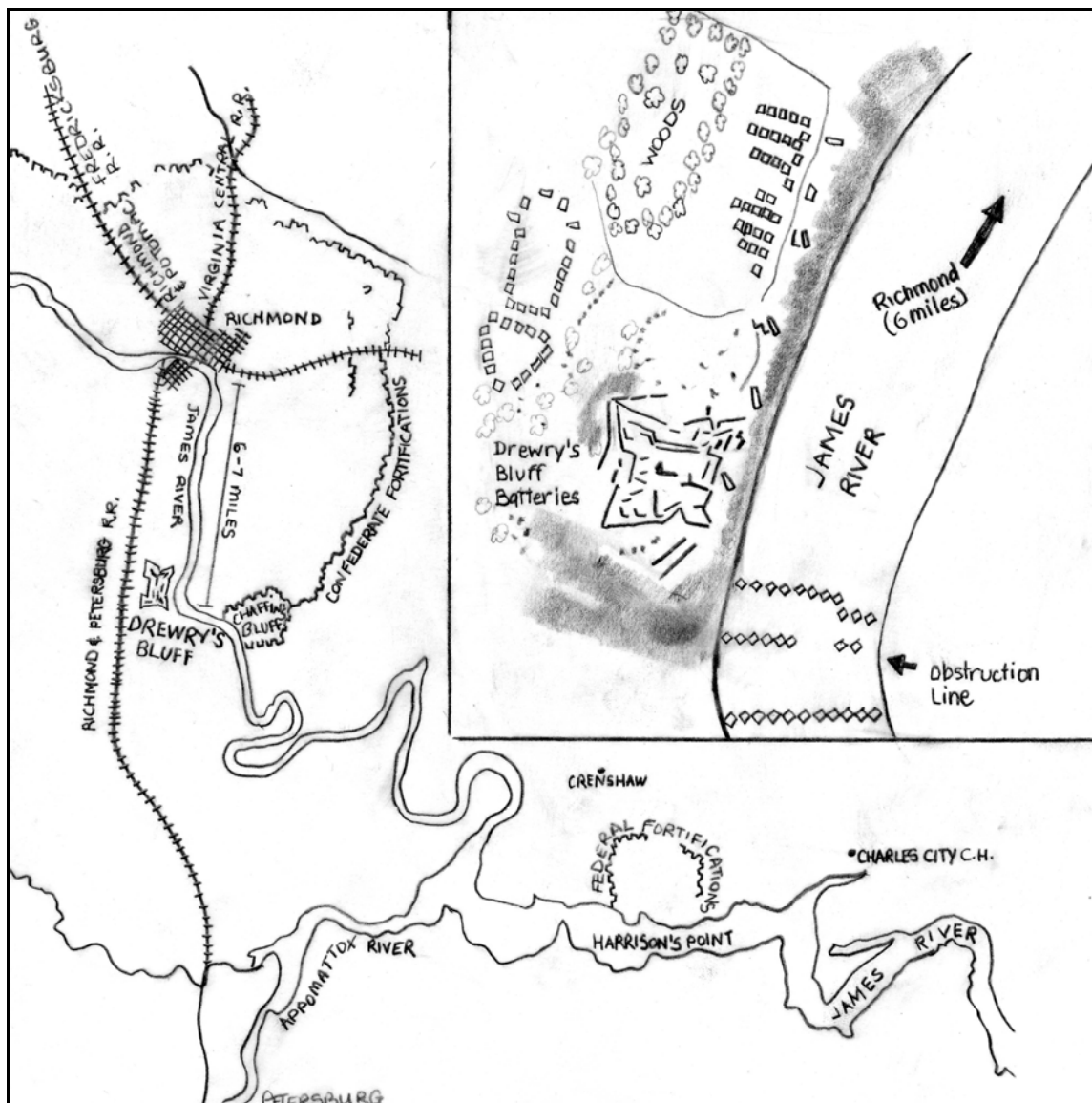


Figure 3-1. Drewry's Bluff and the James River South of Richmond.³

As the ships began to negotiate the bend in the river, Confederate Marines concealed in prepared positions along both banks opened fire with their rifles on the vessels, driving the Union sailors to seek shelter inside the hulls of their ships to avoid being hit. *Galena* pushed forward, but a series of obstacles that had been hastily emplaced by Confederates impeded her progress, forcing her to halt about 400 yards

from the obstructions. As soon as the Union ships stopped, Confederate shore batteries commenced fire on the concentrated vessels. The first shot penetrated the *Galena*'s hull armor at the port bow, wounding two sailors. The second shot also pierced her armor, killing one sailor and injuring three more. Subsequent shots by the Confederate batteries pounded the flagship, inflicting heavy damage on her equipment and personnel.⁴

To draw fire from the *Galena* and to bring its own guns into action, the *Monitor* moved alongside the flagship and both Union ships returned fire on the entrenched Confederate positions. Due to the location of the Confederate batteries, sited on bluffs that towered about eighty feet above the river's surface, the Union ships had great difficulty elevating their guns to the point where they could hit enemy positions. In particular, the *Monitor*'s crew found they could elevate their guns but a few degrees, making them relatively useless in engaging the bluff batteries. As a result, most of the Union fires proved ineffective against the Confederate guns. Less than four hours after the engagement began, all five Federal ships had been damaged, with the *Galena* suffering the most, and the situation forced Rodgers to give the order to withdraw (see Figure 3-2).⁵ The small Confederate defensive force had gained a timely victory over the Union Navy and protected its capital from bombardment.



Figure 3-2. Contemporary Drawing Depicting

“Balloon View” of the Drewry’s Bluff Engagement.⁶

The Confederate defense at Drewry’s Bluff is but one of many actions that Confederate States Marines participated in, yet the various roles the Marines played in this one engagement contributed significantly toward the South’s winning a victory in that fight. This chapter explores some of the various ways in which the Confederate Navy employed the Confederate States Marine Corps, particularly how the CSMC departed from traditional roles and missions practiced by its counterpart, the U.S. Marine Corps, and filled new ones. In this chapter, role is defined as “a specific task or function,” assigned to a service, and mission defined as “a duty assigned to an individual or unit.” The term tactics is related to procedures and techniques, involving the “employment and ordered arrangement of forces in relation to each other” using both “standard, detailed steps” and “non-prescriptive ways or methods to perform missions, functions, or tasks” in battle.⁷

As naval forces modernized for war, the changes dictated new requirements for the employment of Marines, and a concomitant need for different tactics to gain advantage over an enemy. The Confederate Marines, to a greater degree than their Northern counterparts, built on ideas and concepts already in gestation during Commandant Henderson's tenure, and even expanded their capabilities into new areas. Successes on the proving grounds of combat made the CSMC an integral part of the Confederate Navy and consequently their services became sought after for difficult assignments. Confederate Marines also developed and adopted innovative tactics to deal with the new challenges of naval warfare in the age of ironclads. The roles and missions of the CSMC expanded as a result. The CSMC seized every opportunity to develop new tactics to gain advantage over their enemy, adapted old tactics to better use, and conducted operations that reflect their flexibility and adaptability.

Before discussing ways that the Confederate Marines differed from their Northern cousins, it is first necessary to clearly identify what the traditional roles and missions of Marines were prior to the start of the Civil War. Since its inception as the Continental Marines in 1775, Marines were normally assigned to duties both afloat and ashore under the operational command of the navy. Afloat, Marine detachments were assigned aboard select naval vessels, where they served as a guard force for the ship's officers and performed various security functions. In combat, Marines were often posted to the "fighting tops," positioning themselves in the ship's rigging, from which they could engage the officers and gunners of enemy ships with their rifles and marksmanship skills. In this role, Marines attempted to kill enemy officers or gunners, thereby

disrupting the enemy's command and control capability or reducing the effectiveness of enemy fires. When required, ship's Marines also formed the nucleus of landing parties, task organized units formed when needed to attack shore batteries or enemy positions depending on the tactical situation ashore. In port, Marines typically stationed guards to control access to the ship and prevent desertion of sailors, being in effect the security force for the ship.⁸

Ashore, Marines were assigned to guard naval bases and installations. In this role the Marines were typically organized into garrison units called Marine Barracks, commanded by a major. Guard shifts were organized to meet the requirements of the post. On occasion, barracks Marines were utilized for civil functions, such as quelling civil disturbances. For example, in the summer of 1857, Marines from the barracks in Washington, D.C., were deployed in reaction to disturbances in that city caused by violent activities of members of the anti-immigrant "Know-Nothing" party. The Marines were dispatched to break up the mobs and restore order through a show of force. In much the same fashion, battalion-sized units were sometimes formed out of barracks and detachment Marines, and deployed primarily as *ad hoc* infantry units that served alongside army units. This concept saw first use in the Seminole War, but proved effective during the Mexican War as well, where Marines gained fame for fighting in the "Halls of Montezuma."⁹

In the first half of the nineteenth century a revolution in naval technology took place in the American Navy that brought with it new methods of naval warfare. These changes, accelerated by the war itself, affected the way naval battles were fought as the

capabilities of navy ships increased. As naval forces employed these capabilities, Marines had to change their traditional roles and missions or risk becoming irrelevant. New tactics were needed that could deal with the problems of fighting ironclad navies. The transition from sail to steam, the increased use of iron and armor plating in ship construction, and the development of longer range, and more accurate naval artillery brought with it new opportunities for Marines. The increased use of armor plating on ships and the longer ranges of engagement made possible by new innovations in artillery rendered the stationing of Marines in the rigging as obsolete as the rigging itself would become. Additionally, naval reforms increased the morale of sailors and thereby reduced the incidence of crew mutinies, consequently diminishing the need for Marines to enforce order and discipline aboard ship. The combat role of Marines afloat had to adapt with the times. Anticipating these changes, Commandant Archibald Henderson proposed in 1823 that Marines also be trained in artillery so that they could both man ships' guns while afloat and provide increased combat capability for landing forces ashore, a mission that Marines would undertake with increasing frequency throughout the 1850s. During that decade, artillery went ashore with landing parties on at least nine occasions, and in one year (1854), artillery deployed with landing forces during three occasions. Henderson's intention that Marines be equipped with organic artillery to provide landing parties with greater firepower proved a prescient concept, and predated the development of amphibious tactics in the early twentieth century. Because of Henderson's reforms, most Marines routinely received training in naval artillery before the Civil War, and were often assigned duties afloat with a ship's gun batteries.¹⁰ Under

Henderson's tutelage, the U.S. Marines had developed a reputation as skilled gunners, a role that caused some naval officers to increasingly value their services afloat.

Surprisingly, following the outbreak of war in 1861, the Marine Corps seemed to split on its role as naval artillerymen, and that split seemed to follow along sectional lines. Many of the officers who resigned to join the Confederate Marine Corps had earlier been instrumental in implementing Henderson's reforms, particularly those involving artillery training and employment, and it is probable that their experiences compelled some of them to continue that role within the CSMC. For example, the U.S. Marine Corps' longtime Adjutant and Inspector, Major Henry Tyler, Sr., of Virginia; the commander of the Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C., Major George Terrett of Virginia; the Corps' first artillery instructor, Captain Israel Greene of New York; and other key officers involved in the training of Marines resigned their commissions and joined the CSMC. Conversely, after the outbreak of war U.S. Marine leaders seemed divided on their roles in support of the Navy, with some leaders openly withholding their Marines from manning guns or performing other duties afloat.¹¹

During the Civil War, the Union employed the USMC primarily in three ways: as guards serving in Marine barracks at various naval shore installations, as Marine detachments serving aboard select naval vessels, and as infantrymen in *ad hoc* battalions. The first two roles are long-standing and traditional. The few U.S. Marine battalions that were formed spent much of their existence being transported from one location to another awaiting use as part of a landing force, or were committed alongside army troops. Historian Allan Millett, in his analysis of the small number of times these

battalions were employed, stated that their operations in that role “were marked by minimal success.”¹² Marines’ service while guarding naval installations was so traditional that naval officers took it for granted. Of course, it constituted a support role, not a combat role entailing direct contact with enemy forces. Afloat, Federal Marines performed several functions, the most notable being their manning of a ships’ main or secondary gun batteries. However, some Marine officers resisted or refused to allow their Marines to man ship’s guns. On at least one occasion, the Commandant of the Marine Corps became personally involved by censuring a captain who refused to have his men serve selected guns aboard ship. Although USMC detachments performed well as naval gunners in some of the Union Navy’s most famous wartime engagements, it also appears that not all U.S. Marine officers appreciated or wanted to continue such a means of supporting the Navy while afloat. In fact, some senior USMC officers questioned the need to retain close relations between the Navy and Marine Corps at all, causing the Commandant to again intervene on the behalf of the Navy. After receiving complaints from a commander of a naval base about lack of support from Marines, the Marine Commandant personally admonished the commander of that base’s Marine Barracks for being “unwilling to be associated with the Navy,” and directed him to be more cooperative in the future. Painfully aware of efforts underway in Congress at the time to transfer the USMC to the Army, such episodes only fanned the flames of institutional dissatisfaction with the Corps and further forced the commandant to take direct steps to improve the spirit of cooperation between the two naval services.¹³ In any event, some USMC officers questioned the role of Marines, particularly while afloat on

Navy ships. With most Marines serving in *ad hoc* infantry-type battalions afloat waiting for possible duty as part of a landing party, some dilution of their active participation as ship's company must have occurred. The result appeared to be an emphasis on the U.S. Marine Corps' role as infantry, and a deemphasizing of their role as naval artillerists.

With Northern Marines seeming to favor employment in infantry-type roles, the Southern Marines embraced both infantry and artillery roles, and some of their units even shifted between these roles as required by the situation. In general, CSMC units also transitioned seamlessly between duties afloat and ashore, and this agility made them more valuable to squadron commanders who operated predominantly from bases in the littorals. In this regard, the engagement at Drewry's Bluff on 15 May 1862 provides a good case study of the versatility of the CSMC in combat. Analysis of the engagement and, in particular, the contributions of the Marines offers scholars an understanding of the versatility of the operational and tactical capabilities of the CSMC at a relatively early stage in its existence. It also documents CSMC contributions to the war effort in several distinctly different roles. A Marine battalion was rapidly constituted from various ships and stations and recommitted into combat under strict time constraints. The rapidity with which the Marine leaders reorganized their forces validates the effectiveness of their organizational model. In a show of efficiency and flexibility, various ships' detachments flowed back into their parent companies, and the companies joined an *ad hoc* battalion formation, providing them a clear and unambiguous command and control structure. And, in this one engagement, Marines served as both infantrymen and naval artillerists, the latter mission conducted from batteries located both afloat and

ashore. Marines also assisted in the construction of fighting positions and obstacles within the defensive area, helping provide two engineering elements that proved vital to the success of the defensive operation. Additionally, some of the units shifted from one role to another, or from service afloat to service ashore, without any apparent loss in capability. Throughout, all of their actions were integrated into the overall plan of action, with the central purpose of defeating the Union naval force and halt its advance up the James River.

The Confederates earned a timely victory at Drewry's Bluff, and the CSMC participated in that success. Despite pressing time limitations caused by the Union force's advance up the James River, the Confederate defenders managed to concentrate their previously scattered forces on select features of key terrain, shook off the effect of some recent tactical setbacks, and dove with fierce determination into the mission of saving their capital from direct attack. They quickly formulated a plan that focused their strengths in such a way as to best attack the enemy's weaknesses, and then went right into the execution of that plan while still retreating from enemy action. Under pressure of the enemy's advance, the defenders nonetheless constructed effective obstacles to halt the enemy at a precise point where they could then engage them with their weapons. The defenders planned their fires according to modern combined arms concepts designed to place the enemy in a dilemma, giving the Union gunboats no options for success. The location selected for the defense also offered several advantages to the Confederate forces: the topography of Drewry's Bluff allowed Confederate batteries to engage approaching Union gunboats at close range, giving them the advantage of surprise; and

the heights of the bluffs allowed the defenders to engage the enemy with both direct and plunging fires. To add depth and flexibility to their fires, the defenders incorporated two complementary combat arms elements: they integrated naval vessels into the plan, siting them upstream where they could provide enfilading fires on the Union ship formation as it negotiated the bend; and they stationed a battalion of Marine sharpshooters along both banks. Finally, the close proximity of Drewry's Bluff to the last major bend in the river before Richmond alternately protected the Confederate positions from long-range observation or fires, and denied the Union attackers the favorable use of their longer-range artillery.¹⁴

The defenders designed and constructed the obstacle belt to defeat the Union Navy's greatest strength, its mobility. Moreover, they deliberately located the line of obstructions out of sight of the Union ships until they came out of the bend in the river, and where it would halt Federal ships at the exact position where Confederate fires could be massed from all batteries (see Figure 3-3). Although the Confederates had identified the requirement for obstacles on the James River several months previously, little work had been accomplished as late as 28 April. A series of Confederate setbacks such as the evacuation of Gosport (Norfolk) Navy Yard on 10 May and the surprise scuttling of the CSS *Virginia* on 12 May soon added a sense of urgency and even desperation to the situation. With the Confederate capital literally open to attack up the James River, Confederate leaders committed all available forces to the defense of Drewry's Bluff. Under pressure from Congress to "defend [Richmond] to the last extremity,"¹⁵ Secretary Mallory ordered Commander Ebenezer Farrand, CSN, to pursue an aggressive

engineering effort to finish the construction of an effective obstacle belt across the river in the shortest time possible. As panic hit Richmond and prominent Confederates relocated their families and belongings to safer cities, a relatively small collection of sailors, Marines and militiamen converged on Drewry's Bluff to attempt to accomplish what the Confederate Navy had so far failed to do: stop the advance of the Union Navy.¹⁶

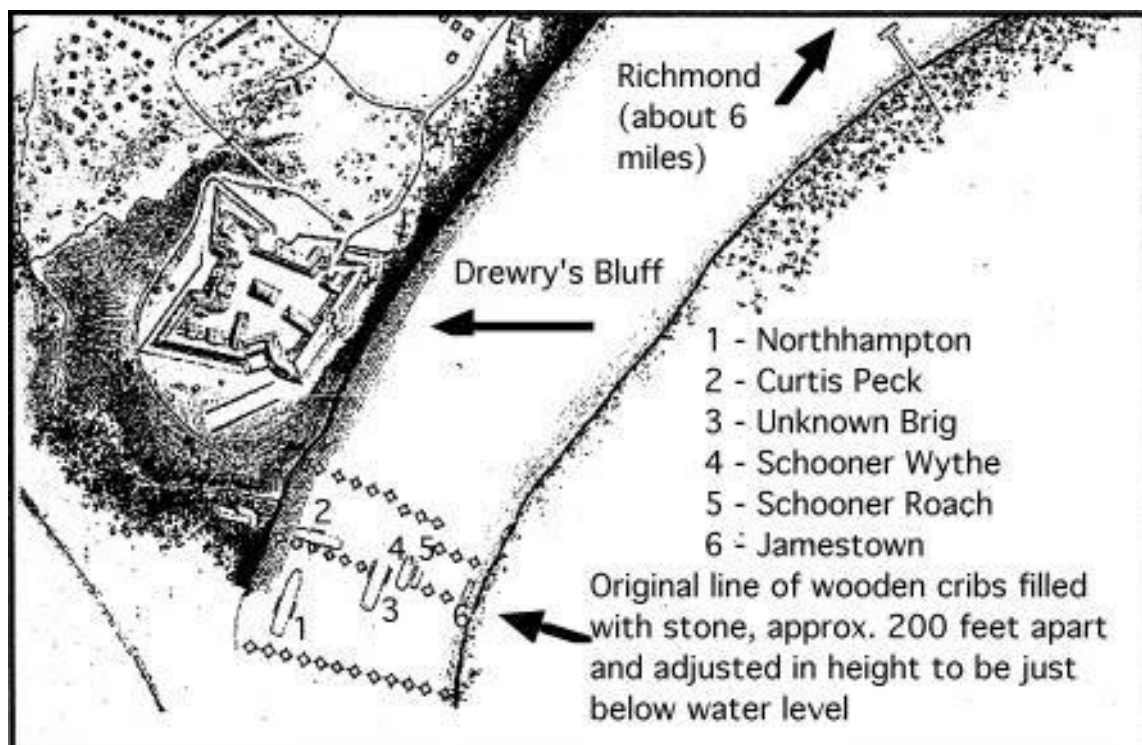


Figure 3-3. Sketch of the Obstacle Belt at Drewry's Bluff, Virginia.¹⁷

The CSMC played a central part in preparing for the engagement by helping to site and construct gun positions, prepare infantry firing positions, and construct the obstacle belt. With most of the manpower coming from naval sources, Secretary of the Navy Stephen Mallory placed Confederate Navy Commander Ebenezer Farrand, in

overall command of the Drewry's Bluff position, thereby investing joint command of the defense in one person. Mallory also ordered the crew of the *Virginia* and all surviving vessels of the James River Squadron (including the CSS *Patrick Henry* and CSS *Jamestown*) to proceed to Drewry's Bluff to augment Farrand. Fortunately for Farrand, the two Virginia militia artillery batteries already in place at Drewry's Bluff were under the command of Colonel Robert Tansill, late of the USMC and holder of a dual commission as a captain in the CSMC and a Colonel (Artillery) in the Virginia militia. By all indications, the two commanders cooperated closely on all matters. To strengthen the artillery capability on the bluffs, the naval artillery pieces from the scuttled *Jamestown* and *Virginia* were emplaced as shore batteries. Farrand also ordered one piece of artillery from the *Patrick Henry* dismounted and added to the bluff batteries to provide reinforcing fires. The Marines that had been assigned to those ships, all of whom had seen recent combat service as gunners afloat during the naval engagements at Hampton Roads, continued to man their guns, whether those pieces were now positioned afloat on the *Patrick Henry* or ashore on the bluffs. Additionally, two Marine companies were ordered to Drewry's Bluff and organized into a provisional infantry battalion. Farrand assigned the Marine battalion the mission of providing coordinated, close protection for the shore batteries. To accomplish this, the Marines constructed prepared fighting positions along the riverbanks from which they could fire on exposed Union officers or sailors, or repel any Federal attempts to land troops.¹⁸

Soldiers, sailors, Marines and civilians not required for strengthening of the battery positions were assigned to assist in the construction of the obstacle belt. Work

crews constructed wooden cribs out of timber framing and the cribs were placed approximately two hundred feet apart across the width of the river. Once in position, the cribs were then filled with rocks until they sank into the mud. The cribs were manufactured so that their height, when submerged, came to a level just below the surface of the water at the low water level. This made the cribs difficult to detect until the enemy was almost upon them. Steam pile drivers were employed to drive wooden poles into the river bottom to reinforce the obstacle belt. Farrand's men then filled gaps in the pattern formed by the submerged rock cribs and pilings by sinking the sloop *Thomas Jefferson*, the steamer *CSS Jamestown*, and several smaller ships brought down from Richmond for that express purpose. According to participant Robert Wright, "the *Jamestown* was sunk lengthwise in the channel [with] her bow standing up the river. Canal boats, laden with stone, the steamer *Curtis Peck* and the steamboat *Northhampton* were sunk outside of the piles, thus making a very strong blockade" (see Figure 3-4).¹⁹ To make it more difficult for the enemy to attempt to move or dislodge the wrecks, the hulls of the scuttled ships were chained together prior to their sinking. Working around the clock for days on end, by the evening of 14 May the defenders had succeeded in creating one solid line of obstacles that extended across the James River from one bank to the other.²⁰



Figure 3-4. Visible Wrecks Outlining the Obstacle Belt.²¹

After completing the obstacle belt and emplacing the shore batteries, the defenders had effectively created an efficient and deadly kill zone into which they hoped to trap the Union force. And, once the Union forces entered that trap and commenced firing, another factor became apparent that made the Union Navy's situation even worse. Opening fire, the Federals discovered that the obstacles stopped their flotilla at a position in the river where their ships' guns could not be elevated to the degree where they could engage the Confederate batteries sited on the higher bluffs (see Figure 3-5). In particular, Union Navy Lieutenant William Jeffers, commanding officer of the *Monitor*, reported that after pulling up next to the *Galena* "to take off some of the fire" directed at that ship, "found that my guns could not be elevated sufficiently to point at the fort."

Conversely, the Confederates were able to deliver accurate plunging fires that achieved great effect on the thinner, more vulnerable upper decks of the Union ships.²²



Figure 3-5. View of Drewry's Bluff from across the James River.²³

At this stage in the war, ironclads still retained an aura of invincibility, and the *Galena*, as yet an unknown and untested factor, nonetheless presented a formidable façade that caused great concern to the Confederates. Northern scientists had proclaimed the *Galena*'s unique armor design as "impregnable."²⁴ However, once the firing started, Confederate rounds began to penetrate the *Galena*'s hull and decks with an ease that surprised and alarmed the Union sailors manning that ship. The first two rounds fired by Confederates penetrated the armor at the port bow, killed one sailor immediately and wounded five more. The longer the Confederates engaged it, the more they were able to see that their shots were having effect. Some hits penetrated the *Galena*'s armor more than once, causing even greater damage to the ship. An account

by one Confederate gunner, Sergeant Samuel Mann, described an impact thus: “shot could be seen coming out of and tearing up her deck, after glancing up, having been deflected from something inside of her hull.” Shots began to pierce the armor with shocking regularity. Finally, at about 11:05 A.M., a round fired from the *Patrick Henry*’s 8-inch smoothbore pierced the armor of the *Galena* at her now battered port bow, and smoke soon began to billow from her gun ports, indicating a fire on board the ironclad. Within minutes following that hit, the *Galena* “signaled a withdrawal from action, slipped her cables and retired”²⁵ back down the James, accompanied by small arms fires and “three hurrahs” from delighted Confederates along both banks. One Confederate heckler, having served previously with the commander of the *Monitor*, shouted to the crew of that retreating ship to “Tell Captain Jeffers that is not the way to Richmond.”²⁶ The defeat of the Union Navy’s drive was complete. If, as historian Kurt Hackemer indicates, “the *Galena* gave Union forces in the James River a psychological edge” before the engagement, her defeat transferred some of that edge to the Confederates.²⁷

Other factors also combined to defeat the Union Navy’s drive to Richmond. Before, during and after the battle, to further increase the dilemma of the attackers, Confederate Marine sharpshooters maneuvered along fighting positions located on the banks of the river, delivering a deadly accurate and concentrated fire on Union gunners, artillery observers, helmsmen, and any person who attempted to venture on deck. Even prior to the Union flotilla rounding the bend and entering the trap, sharpshooters shot and killed a sailor from the *Galena* who attempted to take depth soundings. And, in a

departure from the tradition of fighting from stationary positions in the “fighting tops,” the Marine sharpshooters maneuvered from one prepared position to another to gain further advantage over their enemy. Their fires forced Federal officers, sailors and Marines to ‘button up’ and remain out of sight behind the protection of the ships’ armor to prevent being shot. This effectively reduced the Federals’ visibility, and consequently limited their abilities to maneuver or accurately adjust fires. It also forced the sailors to physically suffer from the prolonged oppressive effects of being bottled up within the confines of the ironclad. A veteran of the *Monitor*, Paymaster William Keeler, described the situation thus: “Not a man could shew (*sic*) himself on deck without a ball whizzing by him. A man on the *Galena* who was sounding was badly wounded & one passed between my legs & another just over Lt. Greene’s head.”²⁸ Keeler’s shipmate, Navy Lieutenant S. D. Greene, also described the harsh environment within the ironclad: “Probably no ship was ever devised which was so uncomfortable for her crew, and certainly no sailor ever led a more disagreeable life than we did on the James River, suffocated with heat and bad air if we remained below, and a target for sharp-shooters if we came on deck.”²⁹ Essentially, the sharpshooters trapped the crewmen within their own hull, subjecting them to that oppressive and confined atmosphere.

Confederate Marine sharpshooters also severely wounded the captain of the *Port Royal*, removing him from the action early. The steady, accurate fires of the Marines frustrated several Federal attempts to breach the river obstacles through use of explosives or grappling hooks, and prevented the Union forces from landing troops that might have flanked Confederate artillery positions. The sharpshooters proved so

effective that Captain Charles Wilkes, commander of the Federal Navy's James River Flotilla, recommended after Drewry's Bluff that Union forces develop rocket batteries or similar shipboard weaponry that might "prove effective in driving the sharpshooters out of the woods," and minimize their threat to ships during riverine operations. At Drewry's Bluff the Union dilemma proved complete: they could not move forward, could not remain where they were, and their attempts to counter one of the Confederate threats exposed them to the fires of another. With no other options, the Union navy retreated from the engagement, leaving the Confederates in control of the upper James for almost three more years.³⁰

In the end, the Confederate defense at Drewry's Bluff played a major part in halting the Federal advance on Richmond using the James River approach. One reason for its success was the performance of the Marines in several distinct roles: as infantry, and as artilleryists, both afloat and ashore. Moreover, the CSMC's role at Drewry's Bluff is not the only instance of such versatility, but rather one of several examples of its operating in multiple roles that illustrate its value and relevance to the Confederacy. And, more importantly, the nature of its fulfilling multiple roles further differentiated its service from that of the USMC.

Its Drewry's Bluff service has been discussed here, yet Marines performed other roles and missions as well. The Civil War provided the CSMC with many opportunities to expand its tactical development outside their previous traditional Marine Corps roles and missions, allowing it to develop into a more flexible and adaptable force that could be employed in a broader range of assignments. Southern Marines adapted well to the

challenges of the war. As a result, they honed their new skills to a fine edge, in the process refining their tactics and procedures to accomplish new combat missions, and some of them fell within the parameters of special operations. Furthermore, the Confederate Marines executed their missions to the same exacting standards of planning, training and preparation.

One of the new missions that Confederate Marines became increasingly involved in was participating in specialized raids. Although Marines had participated in conventional raiding actions from the very beginning of the war, conducting a raid on Ship Island as early as July 1861, and at Santa Rosa Island on 9 October 1861, as the war ground on, the CSMC began to increasingly be called on to participate in several highly specialized raids against a wide variety of enemy targets, such as seizing or sinking enemy warships at sea.³¹ Marines participated in even more complex and risky raids, such as attempts to free prisoners of war or to attack enemy shipping behind the battle lines. In conjunction with their service as raiders, Marines took up and gained some degree of proficiency with new weaponry. For example, CSMC elements assisted in the employment of torpedoes (early sea mines). All of these missions reveal the level of depth of the skills developed by Confederate Marines.

In 1863, Confederate naval planners directed an ambitious project designed to incapacitate or capture the most dangerous form of warship at the time, the ironclad or iron vessel. In the spring of that year Confederate officers grew concerned about the number of Union monitors operating around Charleston Harbor and convened a board of officers to study methods of destroying them. The board developed several options, or

plans, to enable a select group of well-trained sailors and Marines to board and destroy ironclads at sea. The first “means of boarding the vessel” identified by the planning board consisted of simply using small boats to ferry troops to the target vessel. The strength of this method was that Charleston, and indeed the entire South, had great numbers of such small boats readily available for use. The second method consisted of employing two or three small steamers to place the boarding party in position. The third method involved construction of a purpose-built ship “without spars, divided into several water-tight compartments,’ and fitted with a “light scaffold to extend ... ten or fifteen feet over the side,” over which the raiders could quickly board the target vessel. Although leaders gave consideration toward construction of a special purpose ship, none was ever built to fill this requirement. Instead, the board decided upon the use of small boats as a more practical, and stealthy method of boarding enemy vessels.³²

The raiders meticulously planned their actions in great detail. Leaders assigned each member of the boarding party a specific duty, allowing individuals to train and rehearse to the point where they mastered the skills required for that task. According to one surviving plan of action, the commander, Confederate Navy Lieutenant William A. Webb, directed:

“the boarding force to be divided into parties of tens and twenties, each under a leader. One of these parties [is] to be prepared with iron wedges, to wedge beneath the turret and the deck; a second party [is] to cover the pilot-house with wet blankets; a third party of twenty [is] to throw powder down the smoke-stack or to cover it; another party of twenty [is] provided with turpentine or camphene in

glass vessels, to smash over the turret, and with an inextinguishable liquid fire to follow it; another party of twenty [is] to watch every opening in the turret or deck, provided with sulphuretted cartridges, etc. to smoke the enemy out. Light ladders, weighing a few pounds only, could be provided to reach the top of the turret. A rough drawing illustrative of this design is enclosed.”³³

The degree of detail reflected in the plan illustrates the level of effort and thought that went into solving the technical problems of boarding and seizing modern armored vessels. This planning process was remarkably similar in principle to the procedures used in modern special operations tactics. Not only were tasks assigned to parties, or teams, but also subtasks were assigned to specific individuals, allowing them to concentrate on honing their skills to execute that subtask that would in turn mesh with those of other team members, enabling the group to accomplish the overall mission. To illustrate the degree of detail given to planning these raids, the following individual assignments were specified for a raiding force under the command of Confederate navy Lieutenant William G. Dozier:

“Stack Men

T. S. Wilson, Capt. C.S.[M.C.], in charge; I. A. Mercer, Sergt. *Bottle and Sulphur*: Hugh Aird, Pat’k Hart, Wm. Bell, Stephen Caul. *Blankets and Powder*: Henry Calvin, Jas. Gorgan, Thos. Crilley, Theodore Davis. *Ladder, Bottles and Sulphur*: Richard McGregor, John Barratt. *Axe*: W. A. Bassant, Anthony Cannon. *Plateman*: S. C. Curtis.

Turretmen.

S. M. Roof, Capt. C.S.A., Vol. in charge; A. D. Jean, Sergt. *Bottle and Sulphur*: O. Hackabon, C. Backman, M. B. Buff, C. Blackwell, P. P. Clarke. *Cleavemen, Bottles and Sulphur*: J. J. Chanus, J. J. Dooley, H. H. Bankman, J. K. Dooley. *Wedge and Hammermen*: E. E. Gabell, S. Gregores, J. A. Gregores, E. Human. *Sailmen, Bottles and Sulphur*: Paul Hutts, S. M. Hutts, A. Howard, J. Hook, W. Leach.

Hatch and Ventilator Men.

J. J. Hook, Lieut. C.S.A., Vol. in charge; D. S. Griffith, Corporal. *Bottles and Sulphur*: G. D. Lacombs, F. M. Mathios, S. Miller, J. Mack, M. Hutts. *Tarpaulin, Hammer and Nails*: S. B. Parr, H. Pool, J. Pool.

Seamen.

John Berry, with grapline; John Cronan, with grapline.”³⁴

According to Scharf, Dozier’s “special service” group embarked aboard the CSS *Sumter*, a steamer tasked with transporting the raiding force to the vicinity of the target vessel, where the raiders would then transfer to smaller boats and then row out to board enemy ships. Once alongside, the seamen would deploy grappling lines to allow the teams to gain access to the deck of the target ship. A leader and assistant leader directed the actions of each team and its individual team members. The “stack men” intended to put the enemy ship’s wheelhouse out of action by covering it with blankets and filling it

with sulphur, and to also cover the ship's smoke stack, causing the engine's exhaust to instead build within the hull. "Turretmen" practiced driving iron or wood wedges into the base of gun turrets to prevent their movement, making it possible to then disable the gun turret with sulphur or "inextinguishable liquid fire," essentially rendering the turret uninhabitable to gunners. "Ventilator or Hatch Men" were assigned to specific openings in the enemy ship, developing and refining techniques to seal the openings to both egress and airflow. Such actions produced two effects: first, isolating the ship's crew below decks where they were less effective in countering the attackers; and second, making it easy to "smother the monitors" either by diverting the ship's own engine exhaust below decks, or by introducing sulphur or other chemicals inside the ship's hull.³⁵ If all worked as planned, the enemy crewmen would be sealed below decks, and then blinded, panicked or incapacitated by any combination of smoke, fumes or fire, rendering them incapable of defending the ship.

The problems associated with seizing what were essentially hostile, floating fortresses were well thought out. The Confederate plans were ingenious in that they directly attacked critical weaknesses they identified in ironclads of the era: specifically, their limited visibility, confined quarters and spaces, and lack of adequate ventilation. By blocking vision ports with blankets, the ship would be blinded; freezing the turrets in place with wedges inhibited the ship's ability to direct its fires against the attackers; and blocking the ship's own ventilation and ducting could easily smother the ship's crew in their own exhaust. Each facet of the attack targeted weaknesses in ironclad design and used them against the ship's crew.

However, Scharf noted that Confederate leaders issued orders for the raiding parties to “attack by twos the *New Ironsides* or any monitor” inside the outer bar of the harbor during the hours of darkness on 12 April 1863. Plans were formulated that were both detailed and meticulous, with consideration also given to possible contingencies the raiders might encounter. For example, if discovered and hailed by Union sentries prior to commencing the attack, the raiders were instructed to answer with “contrabands,” or “boats on a secret mission.” The hope was that the raiders might be able to confuse the sentries as to their real purpose, allowing them to take advantage of any hesitation in their response. Finally, at around midnight on the 11th, fifteen boats full of raiders lay alongside the CSS *Stono*, and the leaders went aboard to conduct final coordination for the raid. In the midst of their meeting, Commodore John Tucker, commander of Confederate naval vessels afloat at Charleston, “came on board to announce that the [Union] monitors had left the bar,” and were steaming out of the harbor. With their targets now gone, the attacks were cancelled, depriving the raiders of the opportunity to execute their plans.³⁶

Before new raids could be planned, Mallory ordered the Marine battalion and the rest of the special expedition back to the Richmond area. Quite possibly, the combination of the successful defense of Charleston Harbor from an attack by nine Union monitors on 7 April and the later withdrawal of several remaining monitors on 11 April convinced Mallory that his scarce assets could best be employed elsewhere. In any event, despite repeated requests from General P. G. T. Beauregard, commander of

Confederate forces in Charleston, to keep the raiders, Mallory recalled the force back to their camp at Drewry's Bluff, where they arrived by the 21st.³⁷

Nonetheless, the time, effort and resources invested into the raiders' training to conduct shipboard seizures were not wasted, but invested. Soon after, the same individuals who trained and rehearsed to seize Union ironclads in Charleston Harbor conducted similar raids. One such example is the CSMC's participation in the capture and destruction of the USS *Underwriter*, a Federal warship assigned to blockade duty in the Neuse River in North Carolina. In January 1864, the Navy Department ordered the creation of a volunteer unit to perform special service under the command of Confederate Commander John Taylor Wood. Wood, a veteran of the CSS *Virginia*'s battle at Hampton Roads and the engagement at Drewry's Bluff, had already earned a reputation as a skilled raider. Following the first fight at Drewry's Bluff in May 1862, Wood led a group of select volunteers to attack enemy ships operating within the Chesapeake Bay and Rappahanock River areas. His efforts were rewarded with the capture of two Federal gunboats and four merchant schooners. Hoping to repeat his achievements, Wood again secretly handpicked volunteers, including twenty-five Marines under the command of Captain Thomas Wilson, "for special service" in North Carolina, audaciously intending to seize a Union warship as it conducted blockade duty offshore. Captain Wilson also had experience in these types of operations, having previously served as team leader of the 'stackmen' during earlier preparations for raids against the Union ironclads in Charleston Harbor. Quite possibly, other members of his command did as well. On the night of 1-2 February, Wood's raiding party, outfitted

with rifles, pistols, cutlasses, and forty rounds of ammunition apiece, loaded aboard fourteen small boats on the Neuse River and proceeded downstream towards New Bern.³⁸

By all accounts, Wood placed a great deal of emphasis on preparing his men for the operation. In addition to organizing the party for the mission, he spent some time and effort thinking of the obstacles that he needed to overcome to ensure that his men succeeded in their mission. Wood intended to take their target ship at night, relying on the element of surprise to give him the advantage. Knowing that the limited visibility would make control of his forces difficult, Wood prescribed that each man in the raiding party wear a band of white cotton cloth around their left arm, just above the elbow. He even went one step further, issuing a watchword, "Sumter," that could be used to verbally verify members of their party and identify foes. And, anticipating a close quarters fight, each raider armed themselves with a cutlass and a navy revolver. Marines also carried their rifles to engage targets at further ranges, should it be required. Wood divided the raiding party into two groups, one to board the port side of the ship, and one the board the starboard side. Since boats naturally rebound once they strike the side of a ship, opening a dangerous gap into which boarders might fall, Wood detailed some of his "coolest men" and issued them grapnels to ensure the boat remained secured to the ship's side while boarding. Finally, Wood reconnoitered the area to identify his target and fix her position for the raiders. Preparations complete, the raiders then retired to the woods to rest for the coming action. According to a member of his party, "Wood paid

no attention to doubts and surmises, but had his eye fixed on boarding and capturing that ship.”³⁹

Shortly after midnight on the 2nd, Wood’s raiders embarked their boats and manned the oars. The party formed into two columns of four boats apiece, each column designated to attack a different part of the target. At about 2:30 A.M., the raiders closed on the *Underwriter* while that ship lay at anchor. During the approach, leaders of the raiding party studied the ship with glasses, memorizing its features and disposition. The Union ship had only posted two sentries above deck, and most of the crew lay asleep in their quarters below. About one hundred yards out from the hull, a sentry aboard the ship shouted, “boat, ahoy,” alerting the crew. The exposed raiders pulled at the oars, knowing “the only reply we could make was by the marines (three or four being in each boat), who delivered their fire with great coolness.” As the Marines provided covering fires for the boarding party from the unsteady platform of their small craft, the raiders made fast their boats, climbed up over the rails, neutralized the sentries and fired at Federal sailors as they tried to react to the attack. The Marines then followed the boarding party onto the deck of the *Underwriter* and quickly overpowered the remaining Union sailors, soon compelling them to surrender.⁴⁰

Unfortunately for the raiders, the ship’s boilers were cold and the noise of the fighting had alerted neighboring Union vessels. The alarm spread quickly through the Federal forces. Although the darkness made it difficult for them to discern targets, Union gunners from nearby Fort Stevens began firing their artillery in the general direction of the *Underwriter*, and even managed to hit it several times. Wood, realizing

that his men would be unable to fire the boilers and make sufficient steam to move the ship before enemy gunners could better range her, reluctantly ordered that the ship be destroyed. He detailed an officer and several men to set her afire, and then withdrew to safety with the remainder of his raiders, wounded and prisoners. While pulling away, Wood's men could see flames leap from the ship's wheelhouse, further attracting the attention of the Union gunners, who now had an aiming point on which they could concentrate their fires. The flames soon touched off the ship's magazine, which exploded, sinking the gunboat. In the meantime, Wood and his party made it ashore, where they transferred their prisoners and wounded to the care of the army. The daring event soon captured the attention of Northern newspapers and the story circulated widely.⁴¹

Commander Wood forwarded a separate report on the performance of the Marines to Colonel Beall, Commandant of the CSMC. In it, Wood commended the Marines for their actions while on "special duty" with his group. He observed that "though their duties were more arduous than those of the others" in his group, the Marines "were always prompt and ready for the performance of all they were called upon to do." In closing, Wood commented that Captain Wilson's Marines "would be a credit to any organization, and I will be glad to be associated with them on duty at any time."⁴² Not surprisingly, Marines would soon get another opportunity to serve on "special duty" with Wood.

Four months later a similar operation took place, this time launched from Savannah, Georgia. On the afternoon of 31 May 1864, a group of about one hundred

twenty sailors and Marines led by Confederate Navy Lieutenant Thomas Pelot boarded seven small boats and rowed down the Savannah River. Moving only by night, the raiders reached Raccoon Key in the early morning hours of 2 June. From concealed positions, the force observed Union gunboat movements, and on 3 June Pelot's scouts discovered that one of the Union vessels lay at anchor in Ossabaw Sound, only a few miles from the raiders' vantage point. After consulting with his scouts, Lieutenant Pelot decided to attack the vessel later that night. Assisted by the arrival of rainy weather and conditions of limited visibility, the force made final preparations and moved out shortly after midnight, intending to seize the vessel. Similar to the attack on the *Underwriter*, the boats separated into two columns, one to attack each side of their target simultaneously. A short time later, despite being challenged by Union sentries, the raiding force approached, boarded and seized the side-wheel Federal Navy steamer *Water Witch* (see Figure 3-6). Although Union newspapers reported the crew put up "a desperate fight," the raiders quickly captured the ship, overpowering the crew in about ten minutes because of their use of surprise and rapidity of action. One report stated that a small boat came alongside the *Water Witch* in the darkness, hailed the sentries, and shouted, that he "and a number of contrabands [...] wished to come on board." The ship's "officer of the deck gave them permission to come alongside," and "in an instant [the raiders] were on deck."⁴³ The raiding party, using ropes and nets, gained access to the decks on both the port and starboard sides simultaneously, and fanned out to seize Union crewmen as they tried to respond. Once in control of the ship and its crew, the raiders sailed the *Water Witch* back to Savannah, where Confederate defenders

integrated its firepower into the harbor's defenses. The raider officers later forwarded the ship's battle flag to Mallory as a trophy of their escapade.⁴⁴

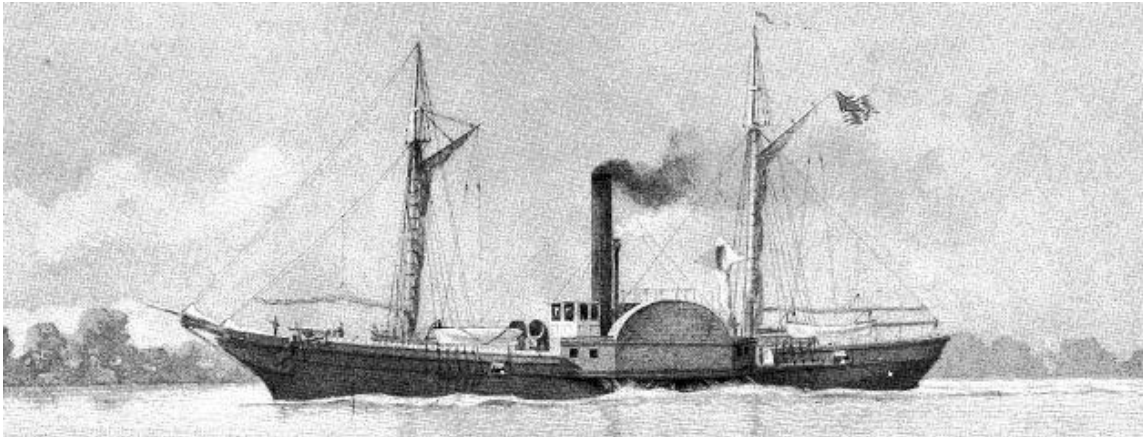


Figure 3-6. Contemporary Drawing of the USS *Water Witch*.⁴⁵

Although small in scale, the obvious successes of these ship seizures and the evident desire and capability of Confederate raiders to repeat these raids produced a negative effect on the operations of the Union blockaders. The seizures of ships like the *Underwriter* and *Water Witch* caused morale among Federal sailors to suffer and forced blockading ships to move further offshore, making them less effective in accomplishing their mission. In a flurry of orders and reports on the situation, Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren, Union commander of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, issued stern warnings and guidance to his ships' captains, and advised Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles that the burden of the extra precautions to avoid repeat seizures were such that "it is not to be disguised [...] that the force under my command is becoming inadequate to the duties of this station."⁴⁶ The *New York Times* proclaimed the seizure of the *Water Witch* "A Naval Disaster," and lambasted the officers of the *Underwriter* for their

“criminal” neglect and the “carelessness” of their actions in allowing themselves to be seized at sea.⁴⁷

Northern naval leaders took special notice of these raiding operations, and their comments on the subject provided some of the strongest praise for the raiders bold and audacious actions. The successes of Wood’s raiders in particular caused Union Undersecretary of the Navy Gustavus Fox to remark that the Federal Navy should create similar organizations. Writing to Admiral Samuel P. Lee, Fox believed that such raids were a worthwhile expenditure of men and materiel, even if the attempts fail. He noted that historically, the English Navy had long “abounded in rash coast attacks and cutting out expeditions of all kinds. They were encouraged, and form a bright page of naval history.” Hoping to encourage similar efforts within his own Navy, Fox continued, “You may be very sure the Department will not find any fault with any dashing expeditions that give reasonable hope of a result injurious to the enemy, even though they fail occasionally.” Fox advocated the Union adopt a similar approach: “Going into the river to destroy a blockade runner about to sail is a most happy idea, and most serious to the enemy, because cotton and dispatches would be burned.”⁴⁸ However, no such action would be undertaken. Similarly, following the attack on the *Underwriter*, Union Admiral David Dixon Porter admitted, “This was rather a mortifying affair for the navy, however fearless on the part of the Confederates.” Furthermore, as long as the South possessed men with talent and audacity as found in John Taylor Wood, Porter predicted, “. . . such gallant action would often be attempted”⁴⁹

At that stage in the war, these raids proved to be embarrassing to the Union Navy and helped raise the morale of the South's naval forces, providing sailors and Marines with proof of their contributions to a war effort that focused predominantly on the actions of the Army. Southern newspapers lauded the efforts of the raiders, with the *Charleston Mercury* proclaiming the seizure of the *Water Witch* an event that "will rank among the brilliant achievements of the war."⁵⁰ Northern newspaper correspondents in the South focused on the embarrassment of Union navy forces over the episodes: the *New York Times*' own Hilton Head correspondent reported that the seizure of the *Water Witch* was "conceded to be one of the most disgraceful marine disasters that has ever taken place in the department."⁵¹ Several raiders became quite famous throughout the Confederacy. In particular, John Taylor Wood achieved a reputation for his bold and daring exploits, and historian John M. Taylor characterizes him as a "brown-water 'Jeb' Stuart, striking by water behind Federal lines when the enemy least expected him."⁵² In his North Carolina volume for the book series *Confederate Military History*, historian and former Confederate General D. H. Hill, Jr. wrote "few more daring deeds than [Wood's capture and destruction of the *Underwriter*] were done during the war."⁵³ None less than Robert E. Lee praised Wood for his part in the action, stating, "Commander Wood who had the hardest part to perform did his part well."⁵⁴ Wood's men received special recognition in the form of a 'Thanks of Congress' from their government, and he and several other leaders also received more tangible and direct benefits in the form of meritorious promotions, a rarity in the Confederate naval service. Encouraged by the successful raids, members of the House Committee on Naval Affairs

wrote President Davis, urging that similar expeditions be attempted. Despite the inherent dangers in these types of missions, Marines and sailors actively sought spaces in raiding parties. Iverson D. Graves, stationed aboard the CSS *Savannah* at the time of the seizure of the *Water Witch*, wrote “Much to my disappointment I was not one of the party, although I fully expected to go with it.”⁵⁵ Despite the dangers involved, there appeared to be no shortage of men for these adventures. Ship captures sometimes yielded more tangible benefits in the form of valuable intelligence information: three naval signal books were seized aboard the *Water Witch*, and were expeditiously forwarded by Flag Officer William Hunter, commander of Confederate ships at Savannah, to Confederate Navy headquarters in Richmond, with the observation that they might “be useful in your James River operations.”⁵⁶

As the war continued, Confederate leaders increasingly called upon Marines to assist in raids that were even more risky and bold. In June 1864, General Robert E. Lee and President Jefferson Davis developed a daring plan to free thousands of Confederate prisoners held at Point Lookout, a prison compound in southern Maryland. Intelligence from a Confederate spy indicated that few troops were stationed in or around Maryland and Washington, D.C., and the agent, identified only as “DARST,” recommended that “a diversion should be made, either to capture or release our prisoners at Point Lookout or a raid upon Washington with a view to the destruction of military supplies and public property.”⁵⁷ Lee advocated freeing and arming prisoners in camps behind enemy lines, a bold action that would not only provide the Confederates much needed manpower, but might also turn Grant’s forces toward such a threat, thereby relieving some of the

existing pressure on Confederate forces defending Petersburg and Richmond. In a letter to Davis, Lee proposed a desperate and fantastic scheme: “Great benefit might be drawn from the release of our prisoners at Point Lookout, if it can be accomplished. The number of men employed for this service would necessarily be small, as the whole would have to be transported across the Potomac where it is very broad, the means of doing which must first be procured.”⁵⁸

General Lee believed that the prisoner force, once free and armed, could be used to press a limited attack on Washington, forcing Grant’s forces to move north to deal with the threat. For some time, rebel spies had been providing Richmond with estimates of as many as twenty to thirty thousand prisoners at Point Lookout (in reality an inflated figure), supposedly guarded by a small force of second-rate, inferior quality troops. Based on this information, Davis, Lee and other Confederate leaders believed that the potential gains from such a raid far outweighed the risks. To accomplish his intent of freeing and arming the Southern prisoners, Lee proposed that two elements carry out the raid: a land force composed primarily of cavalry and artillery, drawn mainly from Maryland forces fighting for the South; and a waterborne force under the command of veteran raider Commander (and holder of an Army commission as a colonel) John Taylor Wood, backed by a force of sailors and Marines skilled in amphibious-type operations. Lee envisioned Wood’s mission as embarking aboard two blockade runners loaded with arms and supplies, conducting an amphibious landing near the camp, linking up with friendly ground troops, and overwhelming the prison guards. The prisoners could then be freed, armed and supplied, and the now reinforced raid force could then

attack toward Washington, D.C., in concert with Confederate Army Lieutenant General Jubal Early's land force. Davis concurred with Lee's plan and ordered it placed in motion. Orders were soon issued to Early and Wood, and Wood began gathering his raiders, procuring arms for the prisoners and arranging for transport of his amphibious landing force to Point Lookout.⁵⁹

According to participant Captain Edward Crenshaw, CSMC, on 2 July 1864, Captain John Simms, commander of the Marine Battalion at Drewry's Bluff, "received an order to put all the effective men and officers of his command [...] with orders to proceed to Wilmington, North Carolina" for special duty. At about 3:00 A.M. on 3 July, about ninety Marines under the command of Captain George Holmes left Drewry's Bluff by steamer to Richmond, where forty more Marines from the city's navy garrisons joined them. Many of these men were veterans of previous raids. By 7:00 A.M., the battalion, now numbering about one hundred thirty Marines, departed Richmond on the Danville railroad and, through a combination of rail movement and road marches, arrived in Wilmington on 6 July. On arrival, the Drewry's Bluff battalion linked up with Captain Alfred Van Benthuisen's Company B, CSMC, which had been stationed in that town some months previously. The Marine component of Wood's raiding force now numbered more than two hundred men.⁶⁰

On 7 July, officers briefed the Confederate Marines on the plan and the entire force began preparing for the mission. Wood's plan involved running the Union blockade off Wilmington, and landing his force across a Maryland beach near Point Lookout at dawn on 12 July. The extra weapons and supplies for the freed prisoners had

already been procured and were being prepared for shipment aboard the transports. For embarkation purposes, Wood divided the Marine battalion into two separate groups of over one hundred men apiece, and assigned each group to a specific ship for transport to the landing beaches. This tactical arrangement served two purposes: that each ship would have some organic fighting capability during the transport phase, and that in the event only one ship arrived at the landing area, Wood would still have some Marines in his landing party. On 8 July, both elements were embarked respectively aboard “two fast running blockade running steamers, the *Let-Her-B* and *Florie*, having been seized by the Government and fitted out for us.” Captain Holmes commanded the group located aboard the *Florie*, while Captain Thomas Wilson (of *Water Witch* fame) commanded his men on board the *Let-Her-B*. Additional stores and provisions for the mission were then loaded aboard the ships, along with the two thousand rifles that Colonel Wood had procured for arming the prisoners as they were freed. Once all cargo and troops were embarked, the ships got underway and moved downstream to anchor off Smithville for the night.⁶¹

On the night of 10-11 July, both ships left anchor and moved downriver to run the Union blockade, but while passing Fort Fisher “were signalled [*sic*] to stop, that dispatches in cipher had just arrived from the President to Col. Wood.”⁶² The ships held position while a small boat went ashore and retrieved the coded message from Davis. The dispatch brought bad news: Union forces were not only aware of the plan, but had started to transfer the prisoners from Point Lookout to other prison camps located deeper in the North. Despite attempts at secrecy, news of the raid had circulated widely in

Richmond for days, and it was not surprising that some rumors found their way to Union ears. As early as 7 July, the New York *Herald* reported, “most of the prisoners at Point Lookout have been sent to Elmira, N.Y., and the remainder are being transferred as rapidly as possible.”⁶³ Confederate war clerk Robert Kean recorded in his diary on 11 July that news of the expedition “has been in everybody’s mouth [in Richmond] for more than a week past,” and that news of the raid had likely leaked to the North.⁶⁴ Apprised of the movement of the prisoners from Maryland and fearful of a trap, Davis ordered the cancellation of the raid and the return of the force to Drewry’s Bluff.⁶⁵ Although Wood’s raiders did not have the opportunity to follow through with their plan to free the prisoners, this episode nonetheless illustrates the degree of confidence that the higher levels of the Confederate government had in the capabilities of the CSMC to handle complex and risky assignments.

Along with their regular duties, Confederate Marines also operated closely with the Confederate Navy’s Torpedo Service. Not only did Marines learn the principle tactics and techniques related to the employment of torpedoes (the forerunner of modern sea mines), they conducted several missions as part of joint raid forces during torpedo attacks on Union shipping. During these missions, Marines normally served both as security for the raid force and as an assault element to attempt to seize or destroy Federal ships using torpedoes as offensive weapons. For example, during the aforementioned operations in Charleston Harbor in early 1863, J. Thomas Scharf remarked that the attempts to “smother the monitors” were to take place in conjunction with simultaneous torpedo attacks on other Union ships. For several months the men of the raiding crews

and torpedo boats worked and trained side-by-side, preparing for attacks on the Federal ironclads should the opportunity arise.⁶⁶

In February 1865, thirteen Marines led by Lieutenant James Thurston, CSMC, were detached from their duties at Drewry's Bluff and directed to report to Navy Lieutenant Charles W. Read for "temporary special duty." That duty involved serving as an element of a raiding force to conduct a bold attack on Union navy vessels in the vicinity of the main Federal supply base at City Point, Virginia. At the time, City Point functioned as the principle logistics center for General Grant's forces as he tightened his grip on the cities of Petersburg and Richmond. Read had the support of the highest levels of the Confederate Navy, and he pulled together between ninety to one hundred twenty sailors and Marines for the assignment. His mission was to infiltrate Union lines with four torpedo-equipped boats loaded on wagons, and attack Federal ironclads and other shipping near the Union supply base at City Point. If possible, the raiders were also to attempt to seize one or more Federal ironclads in that area and use them to add more firepower and support for the Confederate attack. If the raiders achieved success, other Confederate forces were prepared to exploit the situation by retaking City Point with gunboats and troops, thereby cutting Grant's supply lines and turning his flank. Naturally, the plan hinged first on the successful infiltration of Union lines by the raiding force and the launching of their torpedo boats in the James River. However, Union naval officers, long concerned about Confederate torpedo activities, actively questioned rebel deserters and prisoners for any hints of such plans, and took quick action on any

intelligence concerning torpedo operations. Secrecy and stealth were therefore vital to the success of the raiders' mission.⁶⁷

Shortly after dawn on 3 February 1865, Read's torpedo expedition left Drewry's Bluff with four wagons specially constructed to carry torpedo-equipped boats. The beds of the wagons had been removed, and chocked in place over the axles and frame were whaleboats, which were laden with torpedoes, spars, and other essential equipment packed carefully for the road march. Read and his second-in-command, Navy Lieutenant William Ward, led the convoy, followed by the sailors and wagons, then the Marine Detachment. The Confederate Marines, armed with rifles, provided security for the force on the march. The weather was bitterly cold and the roadbed frozen, making the trip miserable for the party. By evening the men arrived at General Richard Anderson's headquarters about two miles west of Petersburg and camped for the night. Early the next morning, the raiders departed friendly lines from Anderson's positions and crossed over into Union-held territory. Avoiding Union pickets, by the evening of 6 February the group managed to reach Wakefield Station, about halfway to the James River. The next day, as described by raider W. Frank Shippey, the appearance of a sudden, severe snowstorm forced the party to seek shelter and "stop for a few hours, the sleet being so blinding that our mules could not make headway, besides the road being frozen and slippery." While warming themselves in a deserted farmhouse, the group encountered a Confederate messenger who informed Read that his party's mission had been betrayed to Union forces by one of its own members sent ahead to scout out the terrain. According to Shippey, "a regiment of Federals lying in ambush and awaiting

our arrival” now occupied the location where they were to rendezvous with the scouts. Read, hesitant to believe the report when they were so close to their objective, rode forward alone to verify the story, and returned to inform the party that the report was accurate. Federal troops were indeed alerted to their plans. Read had no option but to retreat with his force back to Confederate lines, forfeiting any chance of attacking Federal ships at City Point. Despite Union attempts to find them, the party reentered Confederate army positions on 13 February, having spent a total of about ten days behind Union lines.⁶⁸ Although the raiders failed to achieve their goals, the mission nonetheless provides yet another example of the CSMC’s role in conducting special operations.

Afloat, the CSMC enjoyed a prominent role in ship’s actions, on all the oceans of the world. Despite the relatively small size of the service, the CSMC nonetheless provided detachments for most of the ships of the Confederate Navy. To do this with such a small organization, the CSMC often transferred detachments from one ship to another as the situation demanded. Once a particular ship was removed from battle, or the prospects of further direct engagement reduced, Marines were usually transferred to another ship whose chances of combat were greater. Rarely were Marine detachments maintained aboard ships whose prospects for battle were remote, indicating that the naval leadership both recognized the value of Marines in combat afloat and realized the finite nature of the Corps’ (and the Navy’s) manpower. By transferring detachments between ships according to the tactical need, the Navy could better meet operational demands in a more economical fashion.

For example, Second Lieutenant David Raney, Jr., formerly a corporal in the 1st Florida Infantry Regiment before being commissioned in the CSMC on 22 April 1861, reported for duty with Company A in Pensacola, and around 19 June was assigned as an officer in charge of a Marine detachment aboard the transport steamer *CSS Time*, conducting harbor patrols between Warrington Navy Yard and Union-held Fort Pickens. Following Company A's transfer to Savannah, Georgia, on 18 September, Raney assumed command of the Marine guard aboard the gunboat *CSS Samson*, and he participated in the Battle of Port Royal on 7 November 1861, landing on Hilton Head Island with reinforcements to assist in the evacuation of the Confederate garrison at Fort Walker. With little naval activity in that area, he served as a recruiting officer at Savannah before transferring to Company D in Mobile, Alabama, some time between 25 August and 1 November 1862. At Mobile, Raney was assigned first to the steamer *Junior*, aboard which he and his men participated in a failed attempt to seize a Union blockader in January 1863. Later, he assumed command of the Marine guard aboard the *CSS Tennessee* from the time the ship was placed in commission on 1 March 1864 until its surrender at the Battle of Mobile Bay on 5 August 1864. Imprisoned, Raney escaped from the New Orleans cotton warehouse in which he was being held, and returned to his duty in Mobile on 31 October 1864, fighting on until the Mobile Squadron surrendered on 5 May 1865.⁶⁹

Out of necessity, Marines often served aboard a succession of ships as those vessels entered or left combat service. For example, Private Tobias Gibbons of Company C served aboard the *CSS Virginia* from April to May 12 1862, when that ship

was scuttled, and later served aboard the CSS *Drewry* during the first quarter of 1863 before being assigned to the CSS *Richmond* some time before January 1864. In between assignments aboard ship, Gibbons appears on muster rolls for various shore duties, such as the Gosport Navy Yard at Norfolk, the Drewry's Bluff garrison and the Rocketts Navy Yard in Richmond.⁷⁰ Another Marine from the same company, Private Andrew McGaohegan, served aboard the CSS *Patrick Henry* during both the Hampton Roads engagement in March 1862 and Drewry's Bluff in May 1862, aboard the CSS *North Carolina* throughout most of 1864 until transferring in August of that year to the CSRS *Arctic*.⁷¹

According to historian Ralph Donnelly, the CSMC represented about 13 percent of overall Confederate Navy strength, and its manpower filled a vital niche in providing combat power to individual ships of the fleet. A straightforward analysis of the Marine Corps' approximate numbers of about 600 compared to the rough estimates given by many sources of about 2500 to 3000 for the entire navy department show the CSMC equaled about twenty percent of the overall structure. However, even these statistics can be misleading and blur the true level of Marine contribution to the naval effort. For example, although the navy's personnel were needed to man ships and stations throughout the Confederacy regardless of enemy threat, Marines could be (and often were) transferred in response to threats and concentrated at posts in close proximity of the enemy. This method of forward deploying Marines to where they were most needed seems to be the approach adopted by Confederate naval leaders during the war, according to an analysis of its operations. Therefore, in actuality the CSMC represented

a greater proportion of naval unit strength where the South most needed them: in contact with the enemy. In that light, Donnelly is entirely correct in his assertion that the Confederates considered a Marine Guard to be “a necessary and integral part of a ship’s complement.” The next chapter will explore this theme in greater detail. By contrast, the wartime USMC represented less than 7 percent of the Federal navy strength, and fulfilled fewer shipboard roles.⁷²

In summary, the CSMC served the Confederacy well in a variety of missions and roles, wherever its service was most required. In addition to being creative and proactive in developing new tactics to defeat the enemy, the Marines moved throughout the South to meet Union forces. They generally served wherever Confederate sailors served. They also served alongside Army forces, in places like Pensacola, Fort Fisher or Fort Gaines, where the commanders of those posts valued and commended their service. In contrast to its Northern cousins, the CSMC embraced new technologies, tactics and techniques that could help them overcome the national shortages they faced in terms of manpower, materiel, and money.

The South was fortunate in that it inherited a fine group of leaders who had the courage to explore new ideas, and supported the continuation of proven concepts. Many of the CSMC’s officers had been raised under the tutelage of Commandant Henderson, and they carried some of those reforms with them as they joined the Confederacy. As a result, the CSMC benefited from its possession of a wealth of experience from its inception. The CSMC was also fortunate in being part of an overall organization that valued innovation and bold action. New ideas were not only welcome in the CSMC, but

also expected. All of these factors contributed to creating an environment that welcomed innovation, particularly in the realm of new tactics and developing roles and missions. In an era that experienced great changes in naval technology in a relatively short time, innovation became a requirement to survive, particularly to a service that experienced chronic shortages of men and materiel. The CSMC helped the Confederate Navy fulfill that requirement by assuming more roles and missions as the war progressed.

The CSMC came to take on increased roles and missions outside those in place both before the war and during the first year of its existence. The Confederate Navy began to employ the CSMC as an expeditionary force in readiness, assigning them to specialized raid missions both afloat and ashore. By war's end, Marines had been assigned to a few high-risk, high-payoff ventures, evidence that their services were both appreciated and had earned the respect of Confederate leaders. The Corps' roles became more complex and varied, and the missions that Marines undertook were both challenging and of high importance to the nation.

To accomplish the tasks assigned to them, the CSMC became involved in the development of new tactics, techniques and procedures. Planning became increasingly complex and detailed, and rehearsals were incorporated to help refine their actions to a high degree. In the process, the CSMC gained a reputation for excellence that led in turn towards greater roles. Marines found themselves participating in some of the most complex, risky, yet potentially rewarding assignments. Not always successful, some operations failed due to circumstances outside their control and not due to failings of the

Marines themselves. And, while the CSMC did not gain wide recognition for its actions as part of a larger group, the Marines nonetheless became a force of choice for Confederate leaders when the requirement for accomplishment of difficult specialized tasks arose.

Naval leaders still expected the CSMC to carry out its primary tasks, when not fulfilling new missions and roles, and it performed those functions until the last days of the war. Special tasks were accomplished in addition to their normal combat duties, not outside them. Their ability to accept the most risky assignments increased their value as a combat force. In this manner the Confederate Marines, more than their Northern counterparts, developed and executed a proven amphibious raiding capability and enhanced the performance of landing parties. Despite their successes in new operational roles, these capabilities died with the Confederacy in April 1865, and would not resurface in the U.S. Marine Corps for some decades after the war.

Endnotes

¹ Quote from McClellan to Welles, 12 May 1862, reprinted in J. Thomas Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy From Its Organization to the Surrender of Its Last Vessel* (New York: Rogers & Sherwood, 1887), 712.

² U.S. Navy Department, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, 30 vols. and index (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894-1922), Series I, 7: 366-67, 369-70 (hereafter referred to as *ORN*, and all citations are to Series I, unless otherwise noted); William M. Robinson, Jr., “Drewry’s Bluff: Naval Defense of Richmond, 1862,” *Civil War History* 7 (June 1961), 172-73; J. Russell Soley, “The Navy in the Peninsular Campaign,” in *North to Antietam: Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 4 vols. (New York: Castle Books, 1956), 4: 268-69. The USS *Merrimack* is also misspelled or erroneously referred to in several sources as the *Merrimac*. The fortifications known as Drewry’s Bluff can also be found under the names Drury’s Bluff, Fort Drury (or even “Drewry”), Ward’s Hill, Ward’s Bluff, and Fort Darling, depending on the source.

³ Drawing by Dianne G. Krivdo, 20 November 2006, based in part on information from Davis, George B., *et al.*, “Campaign Maps, Army of the Potomac, Map #3, White House to Harrison’s Landing,” *The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War* (1901; reprinted, New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 2003), Plate 19, 78; John Coski, *Capital Navy: The Men, Ships, and Operations of the James River*

Squadron (Campbell, Calif.: Savas Woodbury Publishers, 1996), 36; John D. Hayes, "Decision at Drewry's Bluff," *Civil War Times Illustrated* 3 (May 1961), 25; and "Confederate Engineer's Map of Drewry's Bluff," January 1863, Map # 521, Jeremy F. Gilmer Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C. (hereafter Gilmer Papers).

⁴ "Report of Commander Rodgers, U.S. Navy, Commanding U.S.S. *Galena*," 16 May 1862, reprinted in *ORN*, 7: 357-58; Scharf, *History*, 713-17; Robinson, "Naval Defense of Richmond," 173-75.

⁵ *ORN*, 7: 357-58; "Report of Lieutenant Jeffers, U.S. Navy, Commanding U.S.S. *Monitor*," 16 May 1862, reprinted in *ibid.*, 7: 362; Scharf, *History*, 713-17; Robinson, "Naval Defense of Richmond," 173-75.

⁶ Portion of Cover Art, "Balloon View of the Attack on Fort Darling in the James River, by Commander Roger's [sic]," *Harper's Weekly* 6, no. 261 (31 May 1862), 337, included in: Library of Congress, *Map Collections: 1500-2004* (G3884.F5176S5 1862.B3 CW 541.2), Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, Washington, D.C.

⁷ The quoted definition of "role" comes from *Collins Concise Dictionary and Thesaurus* (Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishing, 1992), 642; the definitions for "tactics," "procedures," and "techniques" are extracted from: Department of Defense (DoD), *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Electronic edition), managed by the Joint Doctrine Division, J-7, Joint Staff, available on the Internet

at: <<http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/>>, as amended through 9 May 2005, respectively.

- ⁸ David M. Sullivan, “The Marines,” in *The Confederate Navy: The Ships, Men and Organization, 1861-65*, ed. William M. Still (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 147; Joseph G. Dawson, III, “With Fidelity and Effectiveness: Archibald Henderson’s Lasting Legacy to the U.S. Marine Corps,” *Journal of Military History* 62 (October 1998), 727-28, quoted terms from 727; Allan Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (1983; exp. ed., New York: Free Press, 1991), 56-61.
- ⁹ Sullivan, “The Marines,” 147; Washington (D.C.) *National Intelligencer*, 2 June 1857; Washington *Evening Star*, 2 June 1857; Dawson, “With Fidelity and Effectiveness,” 727-28, 740-47, 750-52; Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 72-83, 85-86; quote from the “Marines Hymn,” the traditional Marine Corps anthem.
- ¹⁰ Dawson, “With Fidelity and Effectiveness,” 734-35; Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 57, 63, Joseph Alexander, “Archibald Henderson,” in *Commandants of the Marine Corps*, eds. Allan Millett and Jack Shulimson (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2004), 69-72. During the 1850s, Marines serving on landing parties were provided with their own artillery support on at least nine occasions. Four of these were in China (one landing in 1854, two in 1856, and one in 1859), one in Fiji (1855), one in Nicaragua (1854), and two in the Ryukyu Islands (1853 and 1854); see Harry Ellsworth, *One Hundred Eighty Landings of United States*

Marines (1934; reprinted, Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1974), 21-28, 80-81, 108,11, 121-22.

- ¹¹ Slightly over 50 percent of all company grade U.S. Marine officers resigned their commissions and joined the CSMC. In addition, several prominent field grade officers, among them Maj. Henry B. Tyler, Sr., formerly the Adjutant and Inspector of the Marine Corps, and Maj. George Terrett, commander of the Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C., also resigned and subsequently were commissioned in the CSMC. Effectively the second in command at the time of his resignation, Tyler had worked closely with Henderson in implementing his reforms.
- ¹² Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 96.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 94-99; Col. Commandant J. Harris to Capt. D. M. Cohen, Headquarters Marine Corps, 18 February 1864, letter, Record Group (hereafter RG) 127 (Letters Sent, 1798-1884), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (hereafter abbreviated as NA); Col. Harris to Maj. [Addison] Garland, 28 December 1863, letter, Item 120, Series 4, vol. 11, RG 127, NA; Joseph Alexander, "John Harris," in *Commandants of the Marine Corps*, 83.
- ¹⁴ U.S. Marine Corps, *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1-3, Tactics* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1997), 39-40, describes "combined arms" as the practice of combining "supporting arms, organic fires, and maneuver in such a way that any action the enemy takes to avoid one threat makes him vulnerable to another," thereby presenting the enemy not merely with

a problem, but a dilemma, or “no-win situation.” The engagement at Drewry’s Bluff represents an early example of this modern doctrinal approach to tactics. U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. and atlas (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, vol. 2, pt. 1: 636 (hereafter cited as *OR*, and all citations are to Series I, unless otherwise noted); *OR* I, 2, pt. 1: 636; Robinson, “Naval Defense of Richmond,” 167-68, 171-75; William H. Parker, *Recollections of a Naval Officer* (New York: C. Scribners’ Sons, 1883), 279-80.

¹⁵ Edward A. Pollard, *The Second Year of the War* (New York: Charles B. Richardson, 1864), 33.

¹⁶ Gordon P. Watts, Jr., *Underwater Archaeological Survey at Drewry’s Bluff, James River, Virginia* (Washington, N.C.: Tidewater Atlantic Research, Inc., 1999), 6-14, 16-21, 64-68; *ORN*, 7: 355-66, 799-800; *OR* II, 1: 636-38; Robinson, “Naval Defense of Richmond,” 167-68, 171-75. For primary source accounts of the situation in Richmond prior to the successful defense at Drewry’s Bluff, see Pollard, *Second Year of the War*, 29-35; Mary Chesnut, *Mary Chesnut’s Civil War*, ed. C. Vann Woodward (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981), 332-40; John Beauchamp Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk’s Diary*, ed. Howard Swiggett, 2 vols. (New York: Old Hickory Bookshop, 1935), 1: 122-25.

¹⁷ From information contained in Watts, *Underwater Archaeological Survey at Drewry’s Bluff*, 8; and “Confederate Engineer’s Map of Drewry’s Bluff,” January 1863,

Map # 521, Gilmer Papers. See also Watts, *Underwater Archaeological Survey at Drewry's Bluff*, 6-14, 16-21, 64-68, and Ralph Donnelly, "The Confederate Marines at Drewry's Bluff," *Virginia Cavalcade* 16 (Autumn 1966), 45.

Additional information may be found in Coski, *Capital Navy*, 42-43, 52-56.

- ¹⁸ Mallory's order placing Farrand in overall command, and related assignments of forces are reprinted in *OR* II, 1: 636-38; William I. Clopton, "New Light on the Great Drewry's Bluff Fight," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 34 (1906), 87-89; Col. Robert Tansill held a dual commission as both a Colonel of Artillery in the Virginia Militia and a captain in the CSMC, and had previously served twenty-eight years in the U.S. Marine Corps prior to tendering his resignation in May 1861. See Ralph Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches of the Commissioned Officers of the United States Marine Corps*, 3rd ed. (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Books, 2001), 217-22; *OR* II, 2: 47-49, 70, 76-80, 428-29, 599-602; *OR* I, 9: 45-46; and *OR*, 18: 923, for more information on Tansill during this period. Robinson, "Naval Defense of Richmond," 171-73; *OR*, 11: 518, 521; *OR*, 51: 555, 557-58; Ralph Donnelly, *The Confederate States Marine Corps: Rebel Leathernecks* (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Publishing, 1989), 39-40; *OR*, 11, pt. 3: 505; *ORN*, 7: 366; Donnelly, "Confederate Marines at Drewry's Bluff," 43-44. Regarding the service of Marine gunners aboard *Virginia*, *Patrick Henry* and *Jamestown*, see "Report of Flag-Officer Franklin Buchanan, C.S.N.," 27 March 1862, reprinted in *ORN*, 7: 47; Letter # 21, Lt. Joseph N. Barney, C.S.N., 14 February 1862, Entry 430 (Letters Sent by Comdr. Joseph Nicholson

Barney, C.S.N., December, 1861 – April, 1863), RG 45 (Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library), NA (hereafter referred to as Barney Letters, RG 45, NA); Letter # 47, April 29 (?), 1862, Barney Letters, RG 45, NA; *OR*, 11, pt. 3: 305.

¹⁹ Quote from Robert Wright, “The Sinking of the *Jamestown*,” *Richmond Times*, 16 July 1899, reprinted in *Southern Historical Society Papers* 29 (1901), 372.

²⁰ A most dependable source of information regarding the construction and composition of the obstacle belt at Drewry’s Bluff is found in Watts, *Underwater Archaeological Survey at Drewry’s Bluff*, 1-70. That survey provides details associated with the rock cribs, scuttled vessels and various other materials that were used to construct the obstacle belt across the James River. It supplements the information contained in various contemporary documents that describe the barrier, such as: *OR*, 2, pt. 1: 636; Clopton, “New Light on the Great Drewry’s Bluff Fight,” 82-98; and Wright, “The Sinking of the *Jamestown*,” 371-72; see also Robinson, “Naval Defense of Richmond,” 171-75; *Richmond Dispatch*, 15 May 1862, 1; *Charleston Mercury*, 16 May 1862, 1; and Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 39-42.

²¹ Portion of the right side photo of a stereo photographic set titled “James River, Va., Schooners Sunk to Obstruct Passage,” digital copy of original negative held in Civil War Photographs, 1861-1865 (Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.), catalog number: LC-B811-2475B. May be located on Internet at: <<http://memory.loc.gov>>.

- ²² Watts, *Underwater Archaeological Survey at Drewry's Bluff*, 6-10; *OR*, 2, pt. 1: 636; *ORN*, 7: 357-70, quotes from "Report of Lt. Jeffers, U.S. Navy, Commanding U.S.S. *Monitor*," reprinted in *ibid.*, 7: 362; see also Robinson, "Naval Defense of Richmond," 173-75; and Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 39-43.
- ²³ Photo taken from across the James River looking up at Drewry's Bluff. Some of the obstructions that were sunk as part of the obstacle belt are visible. Photo listed as Levy & Cohen black and white negative #461, "Drury's Bluff," Library of Congress negative # LC-B8184-10381, Civil War Photos Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
- ²⁴ Kurt Hackemer, "Experimental Ironclad: A Construction and Early Operational History of the USS *Galena*," (M.A. thesis, Texas A&M University, 1991), quote regarding the supposed impregnability of the *Galena*'s armor from 39, (cited from "Improved Armor for Warships," *Scientific American*, new series, 5 [2 November 1861], 276-77).
- ²⁵ Quote from Clopton, "New Light on the Great Drewry's Bluff Fight," 92.
- ²⁶ Quote from Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 715; see also Royce Gordon Shingleton, *John Taylor Wood: Sea Ghost of the Confederacy* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1979), 51.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, 91-94; "Additional Report of Comdr. Farrand, C.S. Navy," *Drewry's Bluff*, 15 May 1862, reprinted in *ORN*, 7: 369-70; Robinson, "Naval Defense of Richmond, 173-74, quotes from 174; Hackemer, "Experimental Ironclad," 39, 122-23, 153. Additional quote (with paraphrasing by author), of *ibid.*, 153.

- ²⁸ William Frederick Keeler, *Aboard the USS Monitor: 1862*, ed., Robert W. Daly, (Annapolis, Md.: United States Naval Institute, 1964), 126
- ²⁹ “Report of Capt. John D. Simms, Comdg. Marine Battalion, to Col. Lloyd J. Beall, Comdt., C.S.M.C.,” Drewry’s Bluff Battery, 16 May 1862, Van Benthuisen Papers, Tulane University, New Orleans, La.; “Additional Report of Comdr. Farrand, C.S. Navy,” Drewry’s Bluff, 15 May 1862, reprinted in *ORN*, 7: 369-70; Hackemer, “Experimental Ironclad,” 120; George B. McClellan to Edwin M. Stanton, White House, Va., telegram, 17 May 1862, reprinted in *ORN*, 7: 373-74, and various similar reports attest to the effect of the sharpshooters on the Union naval forces; Comdr. S. D. Greene, “In the *Monitor* Turret,” *The Century* 29 (March 1885), 762.
- ³⁰ “Report of Capt. John D. Simms, Comdg. Marine Battalion, to Col. Lloyd J. Beall, Comdt., C.S.M.C.,” Drewry’s Bluff Battery, 16 May 1862, Van Benthuisen Papers; “Additional Report of Comdr. Farrand, C.S. Navy,” Drewry’s Bluff, 15 May 1862, reprinted in *ORN*, 7: 369-70, 373-74. Also, “Report of Assistant Surgeon Fort, U.S. Navy, of Casualties on Board U.S.S. *Port Royal*,” 16 May 1862, reprinted in *ORN*, 7: 363, in which Fort noted that the ship’s captain was severely wounded by rifle fire from the sharpshooters stationed along both banks. Wilkes’ requests for rocket development can be found in *ORN*, 7: 571, 576. All five of the Union vessels suffered damage from the engagement and individual damage reports can be found in *ORN*, 7: 356-66.

³¹ *OR*, 53: 708-09; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, 11 July 1861, 1; *ibid.*, 13 July, 2; *OR*, 6: 463.

³² *OR*, 14: 908; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 687-89, quotes from 687.

³³ Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 687-88.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 688-89.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 687-90, quotes from 687 and 688.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 689-91, quotes from 690.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 687-91; *OR*, 14: 908; for a description of the Union's attack and siege of Charleston, see Rear Adm. George E. Belknap, "Reminiscent of the Siege of Charleston," in *Naval Actions and History, 1799-1898* (Boston: Published for the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, by Griffith-Stillings Press, 1902), 159-73.

³⁸ John Bell, *Confederate Seadog: John Taylor Wood in War and Exile* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co., 2002), 23-31; Shingleton, *John Taylor Wood*, 63-69, 74-89, 90-109, quote from 92; *Richmond Dispatch*, 2 September 1863, 1; *ibid.*, 7 September 1863, 1; *New York Times*, 6 February 1864, 3; *ibid.*, 7 February 1864, 1; *ibid.*, 11 February 1864, 1; Correspondent to the *Richmond Dispatch* quoted in the *Charleston Mercury*, 19 February 1864, 1; *ORN*, 5: 344-45; *ORN*, 9: 452-55; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 122-24, 395-401, 688-89; William Harwar Parker, "The Confederate States Navy," in *Confederate Military History*, 12 vols. (Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Company, 1899), 12: 76-78;

Raimundo Luraghi, *A History of the Confederate Navy* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 305-08.

³⁹ B. P. Loyall, "Capture of the *Underwriter*," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 27 (1899), 138-39, quotes from 139.

⁴⁰ *New York Times*, 6 February 1864, 3; *ibid.*, 7 February 1864, 1; *ibid.*, 11 February 1864, 1; Correspondent to the *Richmond Dispatch* quoted in the *Charleston Mercury*, 19 February 1864, 1; Loyall, "Capture of the *Underwriter*," 139-41, quote from 140; *ORN* I, 9: 452-55; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 395-401.

⁴¹ Loyall, "Capture of the *Underwriter*," 141-43; *New York Times*, 6 February 1864, 3; *ibid.*, 7 February 1864, 1; *ibid.*, 11 February 1864, 1; Correspondent to the *Richmond Dispatch* quoted in the *Charleston Mercury*, 19 February 1864, 1; *ORN*, 9: 452-55; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 395-401.

⁴² "Letter of Commendation," Comdr. Wood, C.S. Navy, to the Col. Comdt. of C.S. Marine Corps, Richmond, 16 February 1864, reprinted in *OR*, 9: 453-54, quotes from 453 and 454.

⁴³ Quotes from *New York Times*, 10 June 1864, 4; and *ibid.*, 16 July 1864, 1, respectively.

⁴⁴ *ORN*, 15: 496-501; *New York Times*, 10 June 1864, 1, 4; *ibid.*, 11 June 1864, 1; *ibid.*, "From Our Hilton Head Correspondent," 11 June 1864, 1; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 645-50; *New York Times*, 16 July 1864, 1; Parker,

“Confederate States Navy,” 12: 78-80; Luraghi, *History of the Confederate Navy*, 307-09.

⁴⁵ Illustration from *ORN*, 15: 468a.

⁴⁶ Quote from *ibid.*, 15: 472.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 468-72; *New York Times*, 10 June 1864, 1; *ibid.*, 11 February 1864, 1; *ORN*, 9: 589; Luraghi, *History of the Confederate Navy*, 307-09.

⁴⁸ Quotes from David Dixon Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War* (New York: Sherman, 1886), 472.

⁴⁹ “Confidential Letter from the Assistant Secretary of the Navy to Acting Rear Admiral [S. P.] Lee, U.S. Navy, Regarding Cutting-Out Operations,” Washington, 8 April 1864, reprinted in *ORN*, 9: 589; Porter, *Naval History of the Civil War*, 472.

⁵⁰ *Charleston Mercury*, 6 June 1864, 1, referencing a story from the *Savannah Republican*, 4 June 1864.

⁵¹ *New York Times*, 11 June 1864, 1.

⁵² John M. Taylor, “John Taylor Wood: Confederate Commando,” in *Raiders and Blockaders: The American Civil War Afloat*, eds., William N. Still, Jr., et al. (Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s 1998), 244.

⁵³ Clement Evans, *Confederate Military History*, 12 vols. (Atlanta, Ga.: Confederate Publishing Co., 1899), 4: 221.

⁵⁴ Robert E. Lee, *Lee’s Dispatches: Unpublished Letters of General Robert E. Lee, C.S.A., to Jefferson Davis and the War Department of the Confederate States of*

America, 1862 – 1865, ed. Douglas Southall Freeman (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915), 136.

⁵⁵ Iverson D. Graves to Miss Cora Graves, Steamer *Savannah*, Savannah, Ga., 13 June 1864, letter, Graves Family Papers, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, N.C., reprinted in Richard Harwell, ed., *A Confederate Marine: A Sketch of Henry Lea Graves with Excerpts from the Graves Family Correspondence, 1861-1865* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: Confederate Publishing Company, 1963), 119-20, quote from 119 (hereafter referred to as Harwell, ed., *Graves Correspondence*).

⁵⁶ Assessments of the morale-boosting effect of Wood's raids may be found in Luraghi, *History of the Confederate Navy*, 309, 348; Taylor, "John Taylor Wood," 244-45; Shingleton, *John Taylor Wood*, 89, 110-11. Details of the Confederate Thanks of Congress may be found in Confederate States of America, Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904-1905), 3: 747-48 (hereafter cited as *JCC*); *JCC* 4: 537; *ORN* II, 3: 167; Jefferson Davis, *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, 11 vols., eds. Lynda L. Crist, et al. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971-), 10: 225 (hereafter referred to as eds., Crist, et al., *Davis Papers*); *New York Times*, 10 June 1864, 1; Iverson D. Graves to Miss Cora Graves, Steamer *Savannah*, Savannah, Ga., 13 June 1864, letter, Harwell, ed., *Graves Correspondence*, 119-20; *ORN*, 15: 480, 498, quote from 498.

⁵⁷ *OR*, 51, pt. 2: 1000-1001.

- ⁵⁸ Ibid., 51, pt. 2: 1000-1001; *OR*, 37, pt. 1: 766-68, quote from 767; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 108-10.
- ⁵⁹ *OR*, 37, pt. 1: 766-68; Edward Crenshaw, "Diary" (unpublished manuscript), Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Ala., Entries for Saturday, 2 July and Wednesday, 6 July 1864, reprinted in part as: Edward Crenshaw, "Diary of Captain Edward Crenshaw," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 1 (Winter 1930), 448-49 (hereafter referred to as "Crenshaw Diary," with reference to issue, if changed); *OR*, 40, pt. 3: 758-59; Shingleton, *John Taylor Wood*, 116-18; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 109-12.
- ⁶⁰ "Crenshaw Diary," Entries for Sunday, 3- Wednesday, 6 July 1864, 448-49.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., Entries for Thursday, 7- Saturday, 9 July 1864, 449-50, quote from Entry for Friday, 8 July 1864, 450; *ORN*, 10: 721; *OR*, 40, pt. 3: 758-9; Shingleton, *John Taylor Wood*, 116-17; Bell, *Confederate Seadog*, 32-33; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 109-11.
- ⁶² "Crenshaw Diary," Entry for Monday, 11 July 1864, 450-51.
- ⁶³ Ibid., 450-51; Davis to Col. J. Taylor Wood and General G. W. C. Lee, (Care of General Whiting, Wilmington, N.C.), Richmond, 11 July 1864, telegram, reprinted in *OR II*, 7: 458; also *New York Herald*, 8 July 1864, 1.
- ⁶⁴ Robert Kean, *Inside the Confederate Government: The Diary of Robert Garlick Hill* Kean, ed. Edward Younger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), 164.
- ⁶⁵ "Crenshaw Diary," Entry for Monday, 11 July 1864, 450-51; Davis to Col. J. Taylor Wood and General G. W. C. Lee, (Care of General Whiting, Wilmington, N.C.),

Richmond, 11 July 1864, telegram, reprinted in *OR II*, 7: 458; New York *Herald*, 8 July 1864, 1; *ORN*, 10: 721-22; Josiah Gorgas, *The Civil War Diary of General Josiah Gorgas*, ed. Frank Vandiver, Jr. (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1947), 124; Shingleton, *John Taylor Wood*, 117-18; Bell, *Confederate Seadog*, 32-33; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 110-11.

⁶⁶ Scharf, *History*, 687-91, quote from 688.

⁶⁷ *ORN*, 11: 811-12, quote from 811; “Crenshaw Diary,” Entry for Thursday, 2 February 1865, reprinted in part as: Edward Crenshaw, “Diary of Captain Edward Crenshaw,” *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 2 (Fall 1940), 376; W. Frank Shippey, “A Leaf from my Log-Book,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 12 (1884), 416-17; R. O. Crowley, “The Confederate Torpedo Service,” *Century* 56 (June 1898), 290, 295; Ralph Donnelly, “A Confederate Navy Forlorn Hope,” *Military Affairs* 28 (Summer 1964), 73-74; *ORN*, 11: 380-83.

⁶⁸ “Crenshaw Diary,” Entries for 2 and 3 February 1865, 376; R. Thomas Campbell, *Sea Hawk of the Confederacy: Lieutenant Charles W. Read and the Confederate Navy* (Shippensburg, Pa.: Burd Street Press, 2000), 170-75; Shippey, “Log-Book,” 418-21, quotes from 419; *ORN*, 11: 381-82; Donnelly, “Forlorn Hope,” 75-78.

⁶⁹ *JCC* 1: 266; “ZB” Biographical File of David Raney, Jr., Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, Va. (hereafter MCHD); Muster and Pay Rolls, Company A, CSMC, Folder No. 5 (Marines at the Georgia and South Carolina Stations, December 1861 – March 1862), Entry 426 (Muster Rolls of Marine Detachments

of the Confederate States Navy, July 1861 – December 1864), RG 45, NA, also reprinted in part as ““C.S. Marines on Georgia and South Carolina Stations (Oct., Nov., Dec., 1861),” *ORN* II, 1: 316-17; *ORN*, 12: 297; Adm. Franklin Buchanan to Lt. John W. Bennett, Mobile, Alabama, 26 January, 1863, letter, Buchanan Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.; Daniel B. Conrad, “Capture of the C.S. Ram *Tennessee* in Mobile Bay, August 1864,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 19 (1891), 81-82; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 158-61.

⁷⁰ An excellent source of information on enlisted Confederate Marines is Ralph Donnelly, *Service Records of Confederate Enlisted Marines* (New Bern, N.C.: Owen G. Dunn, Co., 1979) (hereafter referred to as *Enlisted Records*). Based on his many years of researching individual Confederate Marines, Donnelly’s book compiles basic information from a wide variety of existing primary sources. Pvt. Tobias Gibbons’ (also spelled “Givens”) information can be found on page 36. See also “Muster Roll of the C.S.S. *Virginia*,” reprinted in *ORN* II, 1: 310; “Clothing Receipt Roll for the C.S.S. *Drewry*,” First Quarter 1863, Entry 419 (Muster Rolls and Pay Rolls of Vessels of the Confederate States Navy, May 1861 – April 1865), RG 45, NA; and “Muster Roll of Capt. R. T. Thom’s Company C, CSMC, Confederate States of America, From the 1st Day of November 1864 to the 31st Day of December 1864,” Entry 426, RG 45, NA.

⁷¹ For more information on Pvt. Andrew McGaohegan (also spelled “McGeehan”), refer to Donnelly, *Enlisted Records*, 64; see also “Muster Roll of the C.S.S. *North*

Carolina,” Second Quarter 1864, reprinted in *ORN* II, 1: 296; and “Muster Roll of Capt. R. T. Thom’s Company C, CSMC, Confederate States of America, From the 1st Day of November 1864 to the 31st Day of December 1864,” Entry 426, RG 45, NA.

⁷² Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 4-5, 36-37, 134-42, quote from 142; *ORN*, 6: 772; *ORN*, 7: 47.

CHAPTER IV

OPERATING AS A BATTALION

The Confederate States Marine Corps (CSMC) was a national service. Viewing the patterns formed from its activities on a national scale is essential to a serious analysis of its performance, and provides a clear picture of the importance of the Marines not only to the Confederate Navy, but also to the Confederacy as a whole. Such a pattern reveals that Confederate naval leaders sought to gain advantage from certain features of the CSMC's structure that allowed them to concentrate Marines at specific points in time and space where they were most urgently needed, and to reallocate them in response to changes in tactical or operational circumstances. This chapter examines the employing of these battalion-sized units in a new light to discern such patterns and support this analysis.

Previous studies of the CSMC are organized in such a way that masks the pattern created by its employment, making it difficult for scholars to analyze its contributions to the war. Although several historians have written narratives of select CSMC operations, they have generally chosen to present their material as events occurring within specific state boundaries.¹ Describing the activities of the CSMC state-by-state made it easier for these authors to arrange their material, but that approach constitutes a flawed methodology for several reasons. First, the use of a state-centered narrative model reinforces a false focus on the states as bases of operations rather than on the nation itself. Second, such a practice does not readily support examining of the CSMC's

activities on a broader scale against the overall backdrop of the enemy's opposing maneuvers. Because of these limiting factors, students of Civil War Marines relying on these early studies may find it difficult to discern, and thereby analyze the patterns formed as a result of the CSMC's employing units on a national level. Consequently, they may fail to distinguish several important features directly related to the CSMC's role in Confederate national naval operations.

During the war, the Confederacy employed its Marines as battalions on several occasions to counter significant enemy threats. On at least two other instances leaders allocated Marine battalions to large-scale amphibious raiding units tasked with special operations roles. Fortunately for the South, the CSMC's unique structure facilitated the rapid raising of battalions, and it possessed an inherent flexibility that made it possible to redistribute combat power to other locations quickly and efficiently. Units could be shifted suddenly or incrementally throughout the nation, depending on the requirements. This feature made the CSMC an agile and capable organization. In contrast, the CSMC's northern cousins, the USMC, maintained its conventional structure that essentially limited it to being used in one of two basic options: as small shipboard detachments, or as battalions. To their own regret, U.S. Marine battalions during the Civil War gained an early, and decidedly negative reputation with their poor, panicky performance in the First Battle of Bull Run (First Manassas), and their subsequent actions only reinforced that standing in many circles. As iterated by historian Allan Millett, "the [U.S.] Marine Corps began the Civil War on the defensive both tactically and institutionally, and it never recovered." With rare exceptions, whenever U.S.

Marine battalions were employed, the disappointing results subjected them to open criticism.² On the other hand, the CSMC proved quite successful in its battalion-sized actions, the focus of this study. Analyses of the activities of units below the battalion level are addressed in a separate chapter.

The South formed and employed its first Marine battalion shortly after the Confederate bombardment of the Federal garrison at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, that precipitated the war on 12 April 1861. Following Sumter's surrender, Confederate President Jefferson Davis next focused on the only remaining Federal stronghold in the South: Fort Pickens near Pensacola, Florida. Davis quickly committed forces to secure Pensacola harbor for Confederate use, and the requirement for a Marine battalion was born. On 24 April 1861, Secretary Mallory ordered the first available and ready company of Marines to deploy from their recruiting station in New Orleans to help occupy Warrington Navy Yard, opposite Fort Pickens. The company would soon become the core of what quickly grew into a Marine battalion that served within Confederate General Braxton Bragg's coalescing Army of Pensacola. By 26 April, the first Marines arrived at Warrington and had been assigned to "a heavy battery in front of Fort Pickens," where they were "being actively drilled in the use of great guns and small arms" in readiness for the anticipated fight with Union forces.³

Reinforcements followed rapidly, as fast as the recruiters in New Orleans could enlist, organize, and train them. By 24 May, the Marine presence in Pensacola had grown to battalion size, consisting of more than three hundred men arranged into three companies, each unit assigned to its specific duties within the defensive force. Initially

commanded by Captain Alfred Van Benthuisen, the battalion allocated one company to man a naval artillery battery at Warrington, and two companies to occupy portions of General Bragg's defensive lines. Van Benthuisen also assigned men of the battalion to fill various security details around the Warrington Navy Yard and as guards for the naval stores located at the nearby railroad depot. He also created Marine detachments to perform duties on several Confederate Navy ships as those vessels were placed into service. One detachment served aboard the transport steamer CSS *Time*, patrolling Pensacola harbor. Another unit comprised of both sailors and Marines performed a different type of harbor security, conducting nightly patrols aboard small boats to discourage Union attempts to infiltrate Confederate positions. And, when on 3 June the Confederate Navy placed the cruiser CSS *Sumter* (formerly *Habana*) into active service, Van Benthuisen assigned one officer and twenty Marines to that vessel.⁴ In this manner, the Marines of the battalion fulfilled several important roles simultaneously within Bragg's defensive scheme, serving both on land as infantrymen and artillerymen, and at sea aboard Navy ships, where they significantly added to the combat power of those vessels.

Recognizing the need for Marines, in May 1861 the Confederate Congress authorized a major expansion of the CSMC and immediately began to fill its senior leadership positions. The expansion act did not specify a battalion command structure, but the utility of such a formation must have seemed apparent and a Marine battalion became a familiar fixture in the Confederate Navy. Soon after the expansion took effect, the CSMC's new commandant, Colonel Lloyd J. Beall, posted an officer with extensive

service as a Marine, Lieutenant Colonel Henry B. Tyler, Sr., to assume command of the battalion at Pensacola. Tyler's thirty-eight years of previous service with the USMC gave him a wealth of experience in leading and training Marines. On 26 July 1861, Tyler arrived at Pensacola and relieved Captain Van Benthuisen, who then reassumed command of his former company. Tyler, formerly the Adjutant and Inspector of the USMC, continued to press initiatives to better prepare the men of the battalion for combat. To his credit, General Bragg appreciated Tyler's experience, rank and seniority and he added to Tyler's responsibilities by appointing him concurrently as the commander of the 3rd Brigade, Army of Pensacola.⁵

Since they occupied key positions within the defensive lines, the Marines soon found themselves in the forefront of combat around Pensacola. On the night of 13-14 September, the battalion helped blunt a Union raid launched against the Warrington Navy Yard by counterattacking the raiding unit and driving them off. And on 9 October, some Confederate Marines participated in a retaliatory raid against a Union Army encampment located on nearby Santa Rosa Island. In that action, under cover of darkness a joint force of sailors, Marines and soldiers embarked aboard Confederate steamers and landed on the island, attacking and overrunning several Union encampments, routing the Federal soldiers, burning their tents and spiking several guns before withdrawing to Pensacola. In their reports on both the counterattack and the raid at Santa Rosa, senior officers favorably commented on the performance of the Marines, and several members of the battalion received commendations for their gallantry under fire.⁶

At about 10 A.M. on 22 November, Union gunners at Fort Pickens commenced an artillery bombardment of Confederate positions both in the Warrington Navy Yard and on the CSS *Time*, tied up at a nearby wharf. The fires on Warrington seemed to focus predominantly on the Confederate artillery positions located along the waterfront, including those of the Marines. For some reason, Bragg's headquarters ordered the Confederate batteries not to return fire that day, and their guns remained silent, yet the gun crews stayed ready in case they received orders to return fire. All day long, the Federal gunners maintained a high volume of fire that did not cease until after 9:00 P.M. Despite the lengthy duration of the bombardment and the high number of rounds fired, reports noted that the Union shells had little effect on the battalion's naval artillery battery, in part due to the quality of the fortifications built by the Marines in the months preceding the attack. Anticipating a resumption of Union fires, early the next morning Bragg's headquarters issued orders to all Confederate batteries, including those of Tyler's Marines, to return fire if Union gunners resumed their barrage. The enemy soon obliged, and when Federal gunners commenced firing at about 10:30 A.M., the Marines' battery immediately responded, becoming the first Confederate guns to do so. The exchange precipitated an artillery duel lasting until about 11:30 P.M. that evening, and both sides traded a total of about five thousand shells that day: Union gunners fired an estimated four thousand shells, and Confederate batteries accounted for the remaining one thousand rounds. And, although the ratio of the numbers of artillery rounds fired by each side paints a picture of a one-sided duel, reports indicated the Confederate forces appeared to come off better overall, achieving good effect on the enemy and inflicting

damage to two Union ships, eventually driving them from the area. Despite again receiving a large number of enemy shells aimed at their guns, the Marine battery suffered few casualties and reported little damage to its positions.⁷ The results of the bombardment suggest that the Confederate gunners operated their artillery with greater proficiency and accuracy than their opponents. Of special note is that this engagement provides early confirmation of Confederate Marines' abilities to serve in the primary role of land-based naval artillerists, a role that is quite different from any U.S. Marine experience during the war.

Despite the ferocity of the artillery exchange of 22-23 November, changes in the national military situation prompted Mallory to reevaluate the disposition of his forces and reallocate units accordingly. The November bombardment notwithstanding, Bragg's Pensacola campaign had developed into a military stalemate several months previously, and more urgent demands surfaced for Marines as the action shifted to other areas. Beginning in September 1861, Union naval forces threatened the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia, and a landing in that region appeared imminent. In response, on 18 September Mallory transferred one Marine company from the Pensacola battalion to Savannah, Georgia. Then, about a week after the artillery engagements of 22-23 November 1861, the Navy Department ordered a second company to leave Pensacola and proceed to Virginia, apparently believing the prospects for combat were increasing around their new capital.⁸

The transfer of the two Marine companies from Pensacola shrank the CSMC presence there considerably and dissolved the battalion, leaving only one company in

place at Pensacola. The reduction precipitated a minor bureaucratic fight over who should control Marines assigned to theaters. General Bragg, as commander of the Confederate forces at Pensacola, complained to Secretary Mallory about the transfers of Marines from his command. Bragg protested that the transfers left him with only one company of Marines, vice the battalion that he previously held, and in a heated letter to the Confederate Army's Adjutant General, mentioned that he would no longer continue to provide the Marines with arms and equipment only to see them soon ordered off to other destinations. He peevishly remarked that this latest draft on his forces constituted "a depleting process I cannot stand."⁹ Samuel Cooper, the Confederate Army's Adjutant General, forwarded Bragg's complaints up the chain of command, where they came to the attention of Secretary Mallory and Colonel Lloyd Beall, Commandant of the CSMC. Bragg believed that, as local commander, he exercised complete control over the troops assigned to him from any service; Mallory refused to support that concept and supported instead a philosophy of maintaining centralized control of naval assets so that he could respond to changing circumstances on a national level.¹⁰ Although the issue remained officially unresolved, in practice Mallory continued to exercise his authority and did not hesitate to move Marines to meet what he perceived as national requirements throughout the Confederacy for the duration of the war.

As the first year of the war came to a close, the only three combat-ready CSMC companies were fighting in three separate locations in the South. The Marine battalion had been dissolved, but not for long, thanks to the emergence of a new threat, this time to the Confederacy's capital city. In an attempt to force a quick resolution to the South's

rebellious secession, Union General George McClellan kicked off his Peninsula Campaign on 8 March 1862. Hoping to avoid the strengths of the Confederate Army outside Washington, D.C., in Northern Virginia, McClellan sought to instead land his army near Union-held Fort Monroe on the lower Virginia Peninsula and move overland to seize Richmond before the Confederate Army could react. Unfortunately for the Union, slow movements and a month-long Confederate defense near Yorktown allowed the South to counter McClellan, turning his bold thrust into a prolonged stalemate.¹¹

Nonetheless, beginning in May 1862, the Confederate Army experienced a series of defeats that changed the geography of the campaign. In rapid succession, Yorktown fell to Union forces on 3 May, and then Williamsburg capitulated two days later, leaving the Union with a seemingly undefended avenue of approach to Richmond. On 10 May the mayor of Norfolk surrendered his city to Union forces, giving the Federals control of the mouth of the James River and thereby forcing the remnants of the James River Squadron to withdraw toward Richmond to avoid capture. In a shocking turn of events, the draft of the South's most feared ironclad, the *Virginia* (formerly *Merrimack*), proved too deep for the shoals of the Upper James, and with no option for escape her captain ordered the *Virginia* scuttled. The loss of the *Virginia* hit the South hard, and concurrently boosted the morale of her enemy, who now saw an opportunity to quickly reach Richmond and possibly bring a swift end to the war.¹²

Panic ensued in Richmond. With the James River evidently open to attack by the Union Navy, the Confederate treasury boxed its gold to be transported to safety and the War Department likewise prepared its records for shipment. Some congressional leaders

hastily departed the city for their home states, accompanied by their family members and all the baggage they could ship, while refugees filled the trains and streets leaving town. The wife of President Jefferson Davis and the relatives of several cabinet members hurriedly left the capital area, ostensibly for “vacations” in South Carolina or other points south far removed from immediate danger.¹³ A climate of fear and apprehension descended on the city.

Although Confederate leaders still hoped that their strong batteries and forts along the James River could halt a Union drive, the success experienced by the Federal Navy’s tactics of simply bombarding and running such positions soon led southerners to decide to make a final stand at Drewry’s Bluff, widely viewed as the last defensible position before Richmond. Although the Confederates had long identified a requirement for obstacles backed by artillery at Drewry’s Bluff, little work actually had been accomplished. As late as 28 April, authorities only had emplaced two militia batteries at the bluff and only a few sunken pilings as obstructions in the river. Under pressure from Congress to “defend [Richmond] to the last extremity,”¹⁴ Confederate Secretary of the Navy Stephen Mallory designated Commander Ebenezer Farrand as overall commander at Drewry’s Bluff, and directed him to establish an effective defense in the shortest time possible. With the majority of Confederate Army troops already engaged in stopping McClellan’s Union Army, Confederate military leaders looked anxiously for sources of available manpower that might augment Farrand’s meager force.¹⁵

To meet this urgent requirement for forces, in early May 1862, naval leaders began to concentrate Confederate Marines at Drewry’s Bluff, again under a battalion

structure. Two of the only three operational Marine companies converged at the bluffs and joined with some Marines from the Corps' headquarters in Richmond. Secretary Mallory appointed Captain John Simms, formerly a USMC captain with a wealth of expeditionary experience, to lead the battalion, and placed him under Farrand's operational command. By 14 May, Simms' had his battalion in place and ready for battle. The next morning, when a Union flotilla rounded the bend and approached the elaborate defenses at the bluff, Marines contributed significantly to the subsequent defeat of the Federal gunships, and in turning back the Union attack up the James River.¹⁶

Following the battle, the CSMC instituted a long-term presence at Drewry's Bluff, manning artillery and infantry positions at the site until ordered to withdraw on 2 April 1865. The Confederate Marine Corps slowly improved the infrastructure at the fort, eventually establishing permanent quarters and facilities and christening the area "Camp Beall," in honor of the Corps' commandant, Colonel Beall. As well as supporting the garrison for the defense of the bluffs, the camp also served as a training base for new Marine recruits and officers.¹⁷ Whenever feasible, enlistees and newly commissioned officers would be stationed first at Camp Beall. There, they would receive daily instruction under the close supervision of more seasoned veterans. Once trained, these men could then be transferred to other postings, depending on personnel requirements. This arrangement allowed for a high degree of standardization of tactics, techniques and procedures throughout the CSMC, enhancing the interoperability within the Corps. Instituting homogeneous training and consistent standards made it easier to

form and reform units, and allowed the Marines to manage their personnel in a more efficient manner. It also permitted men to be easily transferred from one unit to another with negligible loss of proficiency that would normally arise from having to retrain to some different standard or procedure. And, the shared experiences of the training undoubtedly contributed to an increased *esprit de corps* and cohesion within units. In their personal correspondence, it is obvious that many of the Marines knew each other from having served together at one post or another.¹⁸

From their permanent base at Camp Beall, naval leaders deployed the Marine battalion in response to new threats. In early 1863, reacting to increased activity of the Union Navy and indications that it might be attempting to attack and seize the vital port of Charleston, South Carolina, Mallory ordered the Marine battalion to deploy to that city. On 19 February, the battalion, still led by Captain John Simms, left Richmond by train and arrived in Charleston three days later. Once established, the Marines began training for specialized raiding operations aimed at boarding, incapacitating or even seizing Union ironclads afloat, an idea that had been gestating since the naval engagements off Hampton Roads in March 1862. The Marines worked hard to prepare for this new role, conducting almost daily detailed rehearsals and dry runs over the next two months, and becoming intimately familiar with the tactics required for such difficult assignments. Although the opportunity did not present itself to actually execute that mission at Charleston, the experiences that the men gained through their preparation were not wasted, since some of the Marines later participated in similar ship seizure operations elsewhere in the South.¹⁹

While in Charleston, the Marine battalion also assisted in the defense of that city from Federal attack. On 6 April 1863, a formidable Union fleet of nine ironclad warships entered Charleston Harbor and waited for favorable weather to begin its assault to seize the city. At about 2 P.M. the following day, the fleet initiated its offensive, but the results were not what the Union naval leaders expected. As soon as the attack commenced, the Federal ships began drawing a deadly hail of fire from Charleston's defenders, who had prepared well for this action. The Confederate forces had liberally sown the harbor with deadly torpedoes (early sea mines), and had stretched lines and chains across portions of the harbor to channel the Federal ships into zones where the Confederate fires could then be concentrated. The Charleston gunners also had emplaced ranging buoys in the harbor that allowed them to rapidly and accurately adjust their rounds onto the Union ships. The Confederate batteries poured out a heavy and concentrated fire, expending over 350 rounds of well-aimed ammunition in a short time. Despite the relative brevity of the engagement, every Union ship reported receiving damage from the Confederate guns. The Southern batteries sank one Union warship outright, and damaged two more, thereby convincing the remainder of the Federal fleet to withdraw from battle and make for friendly ports to repair their damage, effectively ending the Union Navy's attempts to invade Charleston for the time being.²⁰

With the Union threat to Charleston temporarily neutralized, Mallory recalled the battalion to Drewry's Bluff, despite official protests by the Confederate commander in Charleston, General Pierre G. T. Beauregard, that he still needed the Marines' services. Like Bragg before him, Beauregard also lost the bureaucratic struggle for control of

Marines, and by 29 April the battalion had returned to Camp Beall. Simms did, however, leave behind a detachment of Marines under the command of Lieutenant Henry Doak to serve aboard the South's newest ironclad, the CSS *Charleston*. Doak's Marines manned two of the vessel's broadside guns during several exchanges of fire with Union vessels.²¹

The Marine battalion returned to Virginia in time to participate in a second battle with Union forces at Drewry's Bluff in May 1864. Unlike the first battle, this time the threat came from the land, in the form of Union Army forces under the command of General Benjamin F. Butler. Beginning on 6 May, Butler's cavalry commenced a series of attacks from their staging area near the town of Suffolk to try and sever the vital railroad line that maintained the major link between Richmond and the rest of the South. Confederate Army soldiers quickly responded and blunted the Union drive, forcing Butler to throw more men into the fight. Confederate leaders also escalated their response and for several days the two forces skirmished, with Butler's men eventually succeeding in tearing up about 300 to 500 yards of track and in pushing closer to the fortifications around Drewry's Bluff. Again, Union military forces seemed to be making progress in isolating the Southern capital. On the morning of 9 May, Butler's troops exchanged blows with Southern soldiers within three miles of the fortifications surrounding Drewry's Bluff, and CSMC Major George Terrett, in charge of both the Marine battalion and the Confederate garrison at Drewry's Bluff, urgently requested that Secretary Mallory send him the Marine guards from the two Navy Yards in Richmond, adding, "They number about 60 men and should be of incalculable service here."²²

Reinforced by the quick arrival of the two guard units, Terrett's battalion made ready for the fight. On 10 May, Terrett reported that the enemy had commenced "shelling our breastwork," the defensive fortifications that the Marines had constructed around the camp.²³ In response to the Union pressure, General Beauregard, now in command of that sector of the Confederate defense, reinforced the area around Drewry's Bluff with several army brigades and attempted to blunt the Federal attack. Nonetheless, by noon on the 12th, Union soldiers had managed to thrust their way into the Confederate earthworks around Drewry's Bluff and the Marine battalion, now holding the left flank of the Confederate defensive line, directed heavy fires into the Federal concentrations with their artillery and small arms. On the 13th, two regiments of Union troops again pushed into the Confederate trenches, but the defenders once more repulsed them. On the morning of 16 May, Terrett again reported "Brisk skirmishing both with artillery and small arms going on along our front."²⁴ The fighting escalated in intensity along the front, yet Confederate forces held strong against the pressure and, by the end of that same day had managed to force the Federals to withdraw.²⁵ The Marines had been in the midst of the fighting in the breastworks for almost a week and had again proven victorious, helping to maintain the capital's vital rail link with the rest of the South.

In July 1864, the Marine battalion participated in a bold scheme to rescue and rearm Confederate prisoners from the Union prisoner of war camp at Point Lookout, Maryland. The raid, conceived at the highest levels of the Confederate government, planned to employ two separate elements in its execution: a land component, and an amphibious component. The amphibious force, commanded by veteran raider

Commander John Taylor Wood, included the Marine battalion from Drewry's Bluff, reinforced with the addition of another company then stationed at Wilmington, North Carolina. Wood's plan involved embarking his men and equipment aboard two blockade-runners, evading the Federal blockade, and landing his raiders over beaches near the prison camp to both free the prisoners, then arm them and employ that force to attack the Union capital from the rear. The Marines responded quickly to the call for special service. On 2 July 1864, the battalion, again under the command of Captain John Simms, received "orders to proceed to Wilmington, North Carolina" for Wood's mission.²⁶ By 6 July, the battalion arrived at Wilmington, linked up with the Marines stationed there, and began to plan and prepare for their part in the raid. Soon after, the Marines embarked aboard two fast blockade-runners, the *Let-Her-B* and *Florie*, set sail on the night of 10 July, and anchored off Fort Fisher for final coordination of the assault. There, at literally the last moments before running the Federal blockade, Wood received an urgent signal cancelling the mission, and the disappointed Marines soon returned to Drewry's Bluff.²⁷

The Marine battalion continued to operate out of its camp at Drewry's Bluff until early April 1865, when the Confederate government ordered a general evacuation of Richmond and its defensive line. In those closing days of the war the Marine battalion, along with naval personnel from several other posts now occupied by advancing Union forces, joined with Richmond's naval personnel to form a Naval Brigade under the command of Confederate Navy Captain (Flag-Officer) John R. Tucker. On 2 April 1865, Secretary Mallory ordered Tucker's Naval Brigade to march toward Appomattox

with the remnants of General Robert E. Lee's Army of Virginia. As they departed Drewry's Bluff for the last time, the sailors and Marines could hear behind them the explosions from the scuttling of the ships of the James River Squadron. During the retreat, Lee assigned Tucker's brigade the mission of protecting the rear of his army as part of General Richard Ewell's corps, a difficult task in light of the strength of the pursuing Union forces. From 2 to 6 April the brigade marched without food along roads swollen with mud, skirmishing with Union cavalry the whole time.²⁸

On 6 April, in what the contemporary chronicler John Scharf called the "last of the great battles of the war," the Naval Brigade fought valiantly against Union General Philip Sheridan's massed infantry and cavalry at Saylor's Creek. Sheridan's men placed increasing pressure against Ewell's corps and Tucker's Brigade, still covering the retreat of General Lee's Army. Turning to fight a delaying action, the Naval Brigade occupied hasty defensive positions along the line of the creek, anchoring the right side of Ewell's corps. As the battle progressed, Confederate infantry brigades around them ceased firing and fell back, yet Tucker's brigade held firm. Soon, Sheridan's men captured Ewell and his command group, and Ewell issued orders for the rest of his corps to surrender. The Naval Brigade disregarded the command to quit, and instead fought on against two Union regiments with a bold determination, prompting one Union soldier to later recall that the battle was "one of the fiercest, most hand-to-hand and literally savage encounters of the war, with the remnant's [*sic*] of Stile's battalion and that of the Marines.... They clubbed their muskets, fired pistols into each other's faces, and used the bayonet savagely."²⁹ Another Confederate participant gushed with praise, "Those

Marines fought like tigers and against odds of at least ten to one.”³⁰ As Confederate Army units crumbled and surrendered around them, the remnants of the Naval Brigade continued to fight on as an isolated pocket of resistance, eventually pulling back into some dense woods and consolidating. Soon, they discovered that Federal troops had surrounded them. Only then, once forced to confront the realities of how untenable his position was, did Tucker surrender his force. Nonetheless, some Marines still managed to escape from the Union encirclement, only to end up surrendering with the remnants of Lee’s Army at Appomattox three days later.³¹ The Marine battalion had fought on to the very end.

Overall, Marine battalions served at several locations during the war, fighting at Pensacola, Drewry’s Bluff (participating in two key battles), Charleston, Wilmington, and finally at Saylor’s Creek (see Figure 4-1). Although battalion actions account for only a small portion of battles and engagements that Marines fought in, analysis of the pattern formed by their employments indicates that Confederate leaders appreciated their contributions. The repositioning of Marine battalions also suggests that Mallory gave considerable thought to their placement, and accordingly formed and assigned them to locations where their service was most needed. This implies that Mallory and other naval leaders considered Confederate Marines to be a valuable resource: one not to be wasted in areas where their service was not strictly required to meet a priority threat.

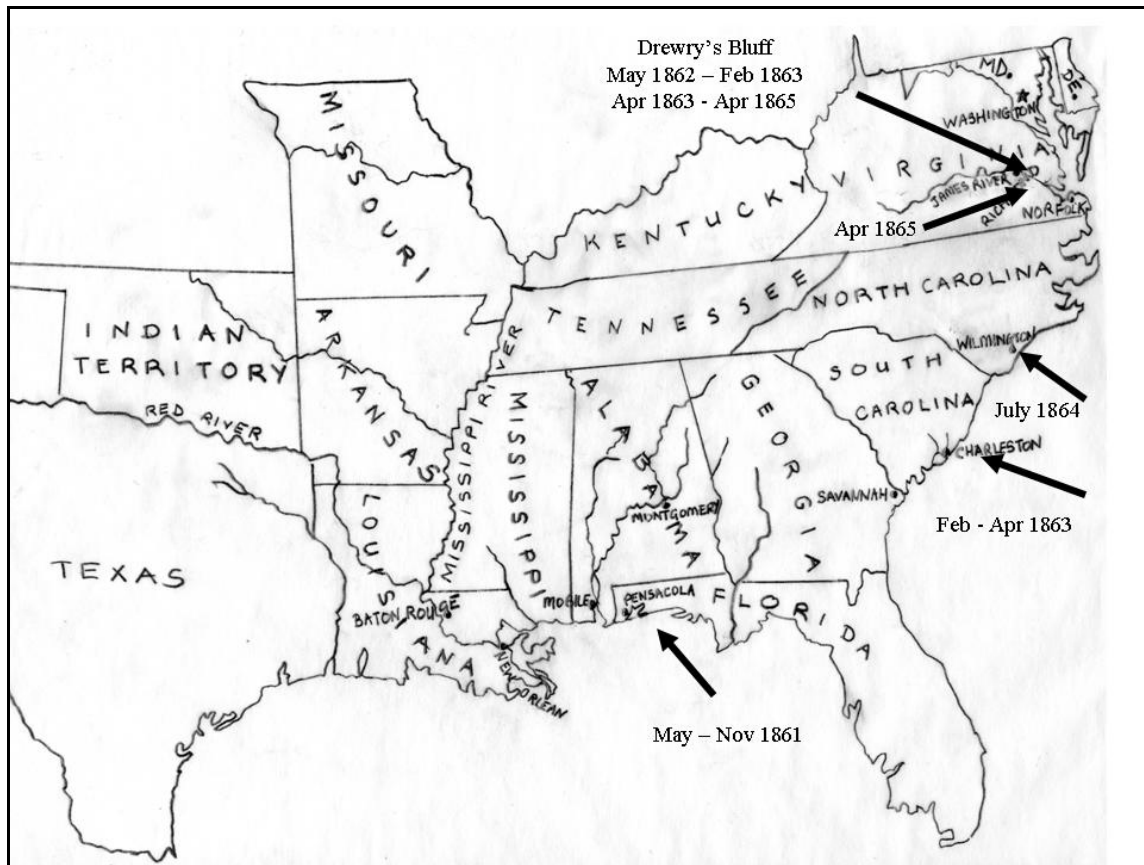


Figure 4-1. Marine Battalion Deployments during the War.³²

More importantly, the concentration and repositioning of Marines into battalion formations indicates that naval leaders viewed the CSMC not only as a finite resource, but one that possessed certain characteristics that lent themselves to such a scheme of employment. Success in their various assignments only reinforced this belief and analysis supports the view that the senior Confederate leaders came to look on the CSMC as a force-in-readiness that could be rapidly employed. The missions and roles assigned to the battalions expanded as well, indicating an increasing confidence in the capabilities of Marines. In essence, the CSMC became an expeditionary force for the Navy, one that could be relied upon in extreme conditions.

Endnotes

¹ For example, in “Confederate Marines in the Civil War” (M. A. thesis, Alabama Polytechnic Institute, 1956), James C. Gasser compartmentalizes his study into specific geographic areas: the Gulf States Area, the Carolinas and Georgia, and Virginia. In “The Confederate Corps of Marines” (M. A. thesis, Memphis State University, 1973), Donald R. Gardner covers only select actions that Marines participated in, and neither provides analysis of how CSMC operations fit within the larger naval picture, how the CSMC’s unique organizational structure affected its employment, nor addresses the particular concept of employment for the Corps. And, in two valuable works on the subject, Ralph Donnelly, *The History of the Confederate States Marine Corps* (Washington, N.C.: published by the author, 1976); and Ralph Donnelly, *The Confederate States Marine Corps: Rebel Leathernecks* (Shippensburg, Penn.: White Mane Publishing, 1989), the author provides a narrative of Marine operations as they occurred within specific state boundaries. None of these scholars of the CSMC provide analysis of the correlation between the CSMC’s unique organizational features, the roles and missions that it performed, or analysis of the pattern formed by the employment of its elements during the war.

² For a description of the U.S. Marines at Bull Run, see Allan Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (1983; expanded version, New York: Free Press, 1991), 93-96, quote from 93. Millett also notes that “[U.S.] Marine Corps battalion operations for the rest of the war were marked by

minimal success,” *ibid.*, 96. Assessments of a similar nature regarding the USMC’s performance during the Civil War may be found in other general histories of the U.S. Marine Corps.

³ William J. Cooper, Jr., *Jefferson Davis, American* (New York: Random House, 2000), 340-42; Jefferson Davis to Braxton Bragg, Montgomery, Ala., letter, 3 April 1861, reprinted in Jefferson Davis, *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, 11 vols., eds., Lynda L. Crist, *et al.*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971-), 7: 85-87 (hereafter referred to as eds., Crist, *et al.*, *Davis Papers*); Braxton Bragg to Jefferson Davis, Barrancas Barracks, Pensacola Harbor, Fla., letter, 7 April 1861, reprinted in eds., Crist, *et al.*, *Davis Papers*, 7: 94-98; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, Supplement, 24 April 1861, 5; Washington (D.C.) *Evening Star*, “Pensacola Affairs,” 7 May 1861, 2; “Report of the Secretary of the [Confederate States] Navy,” 26 April 1861, reprinted in U.S. Navy Department, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, 30 volumes and index (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894-1922), Series II, 2: 53 (hereafter referred to as *ORN*, and all citations are to Series I, unless otherwise noted); Secretary Stephen Mallory to Captain Van Benthuisen, letter, 27 April 1861, Van Benthuisen Papers, Tulane University, New Orleans, La. (hereafter referred to as Van Benthuisen Papers).

⁴ *New Orleans Delta*, 27 April 1861, 1; General Orders No. 70, H.Q. Troops C.S. near Pensacola, Fla. (Bragg), 27 June 1861, Entry 265 (Orders, Army of Pensacola, 1861-62), Record Group (hereafter RG) 109 (War Department Collection of

Confederate Records), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (hereafter abbreviated as NA); “Muster Roll of Capt. A.C. Van Benthuisen’s Company, From the First Day of November, 1861, to the First Day of January, 1862,” Van Benthuisen Papers.

⁵ Ralph Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches of the Commissioned Officers of the United States Marine Corps*, ed., David Sullivan (1973, 3rd ed., Shippensburg, Penn.: White Mane Books, 2001), 17, 264-65; Confederate States of America, *Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865*, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904-1905), 1: 394, 407 (hereafter referred to as *JCC*); Special Orders No. 168, Headquarters, Troops near Pensacola, Fla., 26 July 1861, Entry 265, RG 109, NA; “ZB” Biographical File of Henry B. Tyler, Marine Corps Historical Division (MCHD), Quantico, Va.; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 20-21.

⁶ Special Orders No. 237, paragraph 1, Army of Pensacola, 18 September 1861, Entry 265, RG 109, NA; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 22-23; Extracts from “Action on Santa Rosa Island, Fla.,” reprinted in U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 volumes and atlas (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, 6: 494-95 (hereafter cited as *OR*, and all citations are to Series I, unless otherwise noted); “Company of Marines,” Petersburg *Express* article reprinted in Washington (N.C.) *Dispatch*, 17 December 1861, 4; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 91-94.

- ⁷ “Report of Capt. A.C. Van Benthuyzen,” document, 26 November 1861, Van Benthuyzen Papers; “Report of Brig. Gen. Richard H. Anderson, C.S. Army,” 28 November 1861, reprinted in *OR*, 6: 494-95; “Report of Capt. Matthew M. Blunt, Twelfth U.S. Infantry,” Fort Pickens, Fla., 25 November 1861, *ibid.*, 6: 487; “Report of Lieut. Walter McFarland, U.S. Corps of Engineers,” Fort Pickens, Fla., 25 November 1861, *ibid.*, 6: 488; Headquarters, Army of Pensacola, Near Pensacola, Fla., letter, 4 December 1861, *ibid.*, 6: 489-93; General Orders No. 130, Headquarters, Army of Pensacola, Near Pensacola, Fla., letter, 4 December 1861, *ibid.*, 6: 494.
- ⁸ Special Orders No. 237, paragraph 1, Headquarters, Troops C.S. near Pensacola, Fla., 18 September 1861, Entry 265, RG 109, NA; *OR*, 6: 29; General Orders No. 131, paragraph 1, Headquarters, Army of Pensacola, 26 November 1861, Entry 265, RG 109, NA.
- ⁹ Maj. Gen. Braxton Bragg to Adj. Gen. Samuel Cooper, C.S.A., letter, 29 November 1861, reprinted in *OR*, 6: 771-72, quote on 772. An edited version of that same letter without Bragg’s caustic remarks appears in *ORN*, 16: 854.
- ¹⁰ General Orders No. 131, paragraph 1, Headquarters, Army of Pensacola, 26 November 1861, Entry 265, RG 109, NA; Bragg to Adj. Gen. S. Cooper, C.S.A., letter, 29 November 1861, reprinted in *OR*, 6: 771-72; *ORN*, 16: 854; Col. Lloyd J. Beall, Comdt. CSMC, to Bragg, H.Q., CSMC, Richmond, Va., 20 November 1861, “OV” File, Microform Publication M1091 (Subject File of the *Confederate States Navy, 1861-1865*), RG 45 (Naval Records Collection of the

Office of Naval Records and Library), NA (source hereafter referred to as M1091).

¹¹ Stephen Sears, *To the Gates of Richmond: The Peninsula Campaign* (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1992), 9-14, 21-39, 42-45.

¹² *Ibid.*, 48-68, 86-92.

¹³ For primary source accounts of the panicky situation in Richmond prior to the successful defense at Drewry's Bluff, see Edward A. Pollard, *The Second Year of the War* (New York: Charles B. Richardson, 1864), 29-35; Mary Chesnut, *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*, ed. C. Vann Woodward (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981), 332-40; John Beauchamp Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary*, 2 vols., ed. Howard Swiggett, (New York: Old Hickory Bookshop, 1935), 1: 122-25. See also Sears, *Gates of Richmond*, 87.

¹⁴ Pollard, *Second Year of the War*, 33.

¹⁵ Gordon P. Watts, Jr., *Underwater Archaeological Survey at Drewry's Bluff, James River, Virginia* (Washington, N.C.: Tidewater Atlantic Research, Inc., 1999), 6-14, 16-21, 64-68; *ORN*, 7: 355-66, 799-800; *OR II*, 1: 636-38; William M. Robinson, Jr., "Drewry's Bluff: Naval Defense of Richmond, 1862," *Civil War History* 7 (June 1961), 167-68, 171-75.

¹⁶ *ORN*, 7: 366, 357; "Report of Captain John D. Simms, Comdg. Marine Battalion, to Col. Lloyd J. Beall, Comdt., CSMC," Drewry's Bluff Battery, document, 16 May 1862, Van Benthuyzen Papers; *Richmond Daily Examiner*, 19 May 1862, 1; *ibid.*, 24 May 1862, 1; J. Thomas Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*

From Its Organization to the Surrender of Its Last Vessel (New York: Rogers & Sherwood, 1887), 771-72; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 36-49, 61-64; Ralph Donnelly, "The Confederate Marines at Drewry's Bluff," *Virginia Cavalcade* 16 (Autumn 1966), 42-47. For a more detailed account of the First Battle of Drewry's Bluff, see CHAPTER III of this thesis.

¹⁷ *ORN*, 7: 366, 357; "Report of Captain John D. Simms, Comdg. Marine Battalion, to Col. Lloyd J. Beall, Comdt., CSMC," Drewry's Bluff Battery, document, 16 May 1862, Van Benthuyzen Papers; Richmond *Daily Examiner*, 19 May 1862, 1; *Ibid.*, 24 May 1862, 1; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 771-72; Raphael Semmes, *Memoirs of Service Afloat during the War Between the States* (Baltimore: Piet & Co., 1869), 819-20; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 36-49, 61-64; Donnelly, "Confederate Marines at Drewry's Bluff," 42-47.

¹⁸ For personal correspondence from individual Marines and officers, see Graves Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.; Edward Crenshaw, "Diary" (unpublished manuscript), Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Ala. (hereafter referred to as "Crenshaw's Diary"), partially reprinted in serial form in several volumes and issues of *Alabama Historical Quarterly*; Van Benthuyzen Papers; J. Ernest Meiere, "Day Book of the Commanding Officer, C.S.M.C., Mobile, Alabama" (unpublished Letter Book of Captain J. Ernest Meiere, CSMC, 2 October 1862 – 7 June 1864), Probate Court of Mobile County, Alabama (hereafter referred to as Meiere, "Day Book"); Henry M. Doak, "In the War Between the States,"

(unpublished manuscript memoir), Accession No. 266, H. M. Doak Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tenn. (hereafter cited as Doak Memoirs).

- ¹⁹ *OR*, 14: 886-87, 907-08; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 685-87; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 125; David M. Sullivan, "The Marines," *The Confederate Navy: The Ships, Men and Organization, 1861-65*, ed. William N. Still (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 159-60.
- ²⁰ *OR*, 14: 886-87; Joseph Durkin, *Confederate Navy Chief: Stephen R. Mallory* (1954; reprinted, Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 271-72; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 685-92; Luraghi, *History of the Confederate Navy*, 195-96; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 124-26; Sullivan, "The Marines," 159-60.
- ²¹ *OR*, 14: 908; Doak Memoirs, 31-33; Donnelly, *History of the Confederate States Marine Corps*, 89-91.
- ²² Quote from G. H. Terrett [Maj., Comdg. Post] to S. R. Mallory, Sec. Navy, Headquarters, Drewry's Bluff, telegram, "12:30 nt," 9 May 1864, reprinted in Douglas S. Freeman, ed., *A Calendar of Confederate Papers* (1908; reprinted, New York: Kraus, 1969), 53.
- ²³ Enclosed response to Maj. Gen. R. Ransom, Jr., to Major G. H. Terrett, Richmond, telegram, 10 May 1864, in *ibid.*, 55.
- ²⁴ Major G. H. Terrett, to S. R. Mallory, Sec. Navy, Hd-Qrs. Post, Drewry's Bluff, telegram, 9:15 A.M., 14 May 1864, in *ibid.*, 58.

- ²⁵ *OR*, 25, pt. 2: 802; *OR*, 36, pt. 2: 877, 978, 985-88, 996; Robert Kean, *Inside the Confederate Government*, ed. Edward Younger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), 148; Clement Evans, ed., *Confederate Military History*, 12 vols. & supplement (Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Company, 1899), 4: 243-47; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 49-52.
- ²⁶ Quote from “Crenshaw’s Diary,” Entry for Saturday, 2 July 1864, as reprinted in: Edward Crenshaw, “Diary of Captain Edward Crenshaw,” *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 1 (Winter 1930), 448.
- ²⁷ *OR*, 51, pt 2: 1000-01; *OR*, 37, pt. 1: 766-68; “Crenshaw’s Diary,” Entries for Saturday, 2 July, Wednesday, 6 July, Thursday, 7 July, Friday, 8 July, Saturday, 9 July, and Monday, 11 July 1864, 448-51; *ORN*, 10: 721-22; *OR*, 40, pt. 3: 758-59; Davis to Col. J. Taylor Wood and Gen. G. W. C. Lee (Care of Gen. Whiting, Wilmington, N.C.), Richmond, telegram, 11 July 1864, reprinted in *OR* II, 7: 458; New York *Herald*, 8 July 1864, 1; Kean, *Inside the Confederate Government*, 164; Josiah Gorgas, *The Civil War Diary of General Josiah Gorgas*, ed. Frank Vandiver, Jr. (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1947), 124; Royce Gordon Shingleton, *John Taylor Wood: Sea Ghost of the Confederacy* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1979), 116-18; John Bell, *Confederate Seadog: John Taylor Wood in War and Exile* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co., 2002), 32-33; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 108-12. This action is covered in greater detail in CHAPTER III of this thesis.

²⁸ Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 748. Saylor's Creek is also referred to in several sources as Sailor's or Sayler's Creek.

²⁹ Quote from Morris Schaff, *Sunset of the Confederacy* (Boston: J.W. Luce and Company, 1912), 107.

³⁰ Quote from Daniel B. Sanford, letter, *Confederate Veteran* 8: 4 (April 1900), 170.

³¹ *OR*, 46, pt. 1: 906, 947, 980; Schaff, *Sunset of the Confederacy*, 106-08; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 748-49, quote from 748; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 57-62.

³² Map of Southern states by Dianne G. Krivdo, 22 November 2006.

CHAPTER V

EMPLOYING COMPANIES AND DETACHMENTS

A few days before Christmas, 1864, the commander of the Confederate garrison at Fort Fisher, North Carolina, forwarded an urgent request for reinforcements to help defend his post against imminent attack. For some time, the Union Navy had been concentrating its ships and men outside the entrance to the Cape Fear inlet, the access point to the city of Wilmington. Officers planned an assault to close that port and further choke the rebel capital at Richmond. Fort Fisher, a massive complex of coastal artillery batteries, revetments and fortifications, guarded the entrance to the inlet. Impressed with the extent of these defensive works, Federal engineers nicknamed the stronghold “the Malakoff of the South,” a reference to the famous fortress at Sevastopol in the Crimean.¹ Since 1862 Fort Fisher had afforded protection to hundreds of blockade-runners and had long rebuffed Federal intentions to halt the flow of vital supplies that passed through Wilmington. Finally, in the last days of 1864, the Union Navy amassed its largest fleet yet, over 150 ships, and combined their efforts with a sizeable Federal army force to attempt to seize Fort Fisher and close the port of Wilmington to all Confederate traffic.²

Anticipating the attack, the Confederate garrison commander urgently requested reinforcements. A company of Confederate Marines answered that call and moved quickly to man naval artillery and defensive positions within Battery Buchanan, the forward-most strongpoint within the Fort Fisher complex (see Figure 5-1). Together with other Confederate Navy forces, the men at Battery Buchanan manned four guns,

two 11-inch Columbiads covering the land approach to the fort proper, and two more cannon commanding the inlet, as well as the entrenchments surrounding the battery. The site had been extensively prepared to resist any Federal attempts to seize it: torpedoes (mines) were strewn through the shallow water in front of the battery and palisades of sharpened poles planted along the flat beaches to discourage an enemy infantry attack. The Marine commander who reinforced the battery, Captain Alfred Van Benthuisen, possessed a wealth of experience, having functioned in that capacity since the first days of the war. His men were also seasoned fighters who had fought both ashore and at sea. Like their commander, many had served since April 1861; they were accustomed to the sights and sounds of combat. The Marines quickly familiarized themselves with the battery position and weapons and prepared for the enemy's attack.³

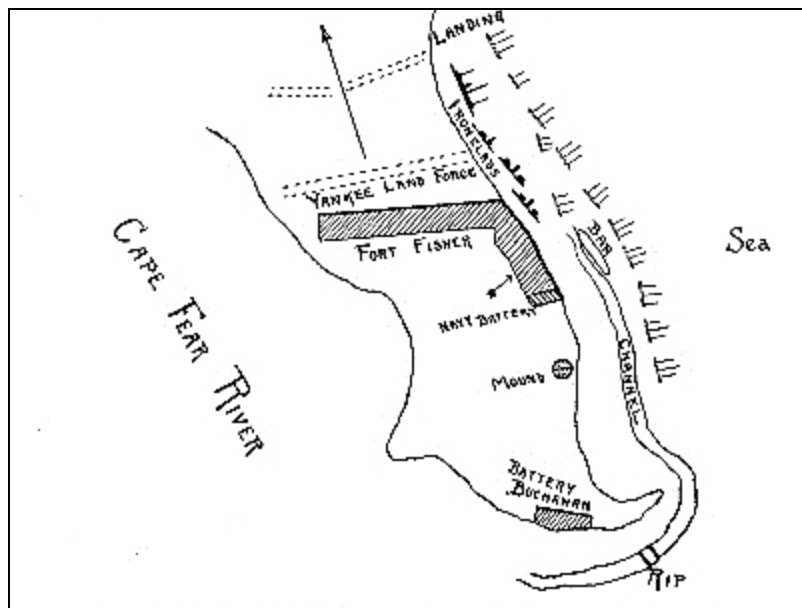


Figure 5-1. Contemporary Sketch of Fort Fisher, North Carolina.⁴

The Confederate defenders had not long to wait. On the night of 23 December 1864, Federal sailors towed the warship *Louisiana*, laden with a massive charge of about 250 tons of powder, to a position off Fort Fisher and subsequently detonated it at about 2 A.M. in the early hours of Christmas Eve. The blast generated an enormous concussive explosion that could be heard in the town of Wilmington, but caused little damage to the fort or its occupants. The attack began soon after, preceded by a bombardment for over an hour by the combined guns of more than thirty-five Union warships. However, the Federal land force under the command of Major General Benjamin Butler was not yet established ashore, and the resulting delay forced a postponement of the ground assault. The next morning, Butler finished landing his soldiers and prepared to attack the landward face of the fort. In the meantime, Confederate sailors and Marines at Battery Buchanan engaged several smaller Union boats that had approached their position and began a process of “dragging for torpedoes,” intending to clear a lane for later attack, should it be needed.⁵ The battery’s gunners opened fire on the minesweepers, sinking one boat outright and quickly driving the Federal sailors away from the beach. That afternoon, about 5:30 P.M., Butler launched his three thousand troops against Fort Fisher. Realizing the gravity of the situation, the fort’s garrison commander again called on the Marines and sailors of Battery Buchanan, seemingly not the focus of attack, and requested that they send all men that could be spared to the fort proper to help repel Butler’s main attack. The Marines responded. Their commander ordered most of his company to move to the fort proper at the “double-quick,” and the relief force arrived in time to help turn back the enemy. The Marines reinforced the garrison troops at several

Brooke guns on the landward side of the fort and also moved into the defensive works, reinforcing the defenders and firing into the attackers with small arms and artillery until Butler's men were forced to retreat. By placing themselves into the thick of battle at a critical moment, the Marines had helped to turn the tide of the battle and to repel the enemy's attempt to seize the fort. In their reports on the action, the garrison commander and senior Confederate officers praised the Marines for their performance under fire.⁶

The successful defense of Fort Fisher against a superior Union force was but one of many actions that Confederate Marines participated in during the war. Sometimes the Confederacy employed its Marines as *ad hoc* battalions during such operations, but battalion-level activities represented only a fraction of the CSMC's wartime contributions. Concurrent with battalion operations were the activities of the five individual and distinct companies, and the many detachments separately deployed from those companies. Exploring how those elements were employed illustrates quite clearly a picture of a flexible and adaptable Marine Corps committed to fighting on several fronts simultaneously. The CSMC's organization, leadership and performance gave Southern naval leaders a force that they relied upon to put combat power at specific locations in a wide variety of roles.

This chapter addresses another aspect of the pattern of CSMC activities by examining the Corps' contributions at the company and detachment level. Particular attention is paid to the employing and redeploying of units in response to specific perceived threats to the Confederacy. Committing Marines in these ways illustrates that naval leaders fully utilized their limited CSMC assets throughout the nation in concert

with national naval requirements. The Marine Corps' companies carried out their obligations effectively under increasingly difficult conditions.

The overall pattern of employing Marine companies reinforces the conclusion that the benefits afforded by the inherent flexibilities of the CSMC structure were evident to naval leaders. Moreover, Confederate Marines developed proficiencies in several combat roles and increasingly assumed challenging missions. The combination of its unique company-based structure and its proficiency in critical skills made the CSMC a versatile and flexible force, one that naval leaders exercised to their advantage. The CSMC saw extensive commitment and came to assume the role of a naval force-in-readiness, an attribute that becomes apparent when their overall employment pattern is examined. Operationally, the Confederate Navy posted Marine companies to various locations throughout the South in response to Union threat, and redeployed units as more dangerous threats emerged elsewhere or as requirements for Marines within a particular area decreased. As shown, the Confederates also exercised the option of pooling multiple companies under a battalion structure, allowing them to concentrate their combat power to meet greater threats. In this fashion, the company-based structure allowed Confederate naval leaders to concentrate their Marine assets under a centralized battalion command, or to disperse their assets to several locations, spreading their capability over a wider area by placing them aboard several ships of a squadron. Regardless of how they were employed, CSMC units still maintained a command and control structure that remained simultaneously responsive to the needs of its men and to the mission requirements of its immediate local commander.

Notwithstanding its designation that seems to indicate being the first of its kind, Company A actually came into being as the second company to be formed in the CSMC. The unit consisted mostly of men recruited early in the war from New Orleans, Louisiana, and was first commanded by Captain George Holmes, a transplanted Southerner originally born and raised in Portland, Maine. Holmes brought to the CSMC a wealth of military experience, having served first with the Florida Volunteers during the Mexican War and later spending twelve busy years as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps. He resigned that commission only one month previous to accepting an appointment as a captain in the CSMC on 29 March 1861. At that time, Secretary Mallory ordered Holmes to travel to New Orleans for recruiting duty, intending for Holmes to recruit his own 100-man company. Mallory also assigned newly commissioned First Lieutenant Beckett Kempe Howell, another former U.S. Marine Corps officer and distant relative of the Confederate president, to assist Holmes, and the two officers commenced recruiting in earnest on 10 April.⁷

By 12 May Holmes' unit was fully staffed, and on that day Lieutenant Howell escorted Company A and several other men, a contingent that totaled about one hundred and fifty Marines, from the recruiting station at New Orleans to their first combat duty station at Pensacola, Florida. There, the men of Company A combined their numbers with another company previously dispatched to that area, together constituting the core of what soon became the first Confederate Marine battalion. Because the Marines at Pensacola were already engaged in combat operations near Fort Pickens, the officers and non-commissioned officers of Company A, following the guidance of Secretary Mallory,

turned immediately to the task of instructing and drilling the men “in the use of their arms as to make them efficient soldiers in the shortest time.”⁸ On 24 May, Holmes, who had been delayed in New Orleans, arrived in Pensacola and rejoined his company.⁹

Concurrent with developing increased military proficiency, Company A’s Marines also shared several extra duties assigned to the battalion. Its men helped guard naval stores at the nearby railroad depot and filled some security-related postings in rotating fashion with Marines of Company B. On 19 June 1861, Holmes formed a detachment consisting of one commissioned officer and twelve Marines and assigned them to duty on the small transport steamer *CSS Time*, and it patrolled Pensacola harbor. Holmes appointed Second Lieutenant David G. Raney, Jr., as commander of that unit. The *Time* became an important element of General Bragg’s defenses, providing him with some degree of security from attack by water and a platform for reacting to enemy actions.¹⁰

Responding to reports of an increased union threat to the Georgia – South Carolina coast, on 18 September 1861, Mallory transferred Company A to Savannah, Georgia, for duty with Flag-Officer Josiah Tattnall’s “Mosquito Fleet.” On his arrival in Savannah on 20 September, Holmes reported aboard Tattnall’s flagship, the *Savannah*, and conferred with the squadron commander to determine his requirements for the company. Holmes established his headquarters on the *Savannah*, and retained some of his Marines for duty on that vessel. He then created a detachment of Marines under the command of First Lieutenant Francis H. Cameron to serve on the navy’s side-wheel steamer *Huntress*. He also formed a smaller detachment of only twelve Marines under

the command of Second Lieutenant James Thurston and assigned it to the steamer *Sampson*. Holmes' men, dispersed as they were among the ships of Tattnell's squadron, added to the combat power of each vessel by manning naval artillery, providing security, and serving on landing parties. Although the individual ships' captains exercised direct operational control over their respective detachments, Holmes maintained a decentralized command over his men, supporting their administrative or logistical needs centrally from his post on Tattnell's flagship. This command relationship seemed effective since the separate detachments directly supported the operational requirements of the captains of each vessel in the squadron, yet retained the capability to reconsolidate his company when needed. Holmes soon had an opportunity to put this method of employment to the test in combat. On 4 November 1861, the Marines of Company A, fighting from their respective ships, collectively participated in their first naval engagement during a brief clash with Union ships outside the entrance to Port Royal, South Carolina. In this action, Marines manned naval artillery on some of the vessels, and exchanged shots with the Federals at long range in an effort to disrupt their enemy's formations and plans to invade the coast.¹¹

Tattnell's limited engagement on the 4th proved insufficient in changing the Federal plan to invade Port Royal. On 7 November, the Union Navy maneuvered inshore and commenced a heavy bombardment of several Confederate coastal forts to neutralize those positions and pave the way for the landing of troops. Reacting to the situation, Tattnell formed a landing party from the Marines and sailors of the squadron to attempt to support and reinforce a beleaguered Confederate Army garrison at Fort

Walker, a focus of the Union Navy's offensive preparation fires. Holmes ordered his detachments to embark aboard several small boats and to link up ashore. The landing party, with Holmes' reconsolidated company, landed at Skull Creek near Port Royal undetected, and maneuvered to within less than a quarter mile from the fort. Holmes then led a small reconnaissance force to establish contact with the garrison troops. On reaching the fort, the advance element discovered that the garrison had already abandoned the strong point. Their position now untenable, the landing party quickly returned overland to its boats and re-embarked aboard their respective ships. Finding himself greatly outgunned and outnumbered in the face of the massive Union buildup, Tattnell then disengaged with the enemy and withdrew his squadron to Savannah, leaving the Federal forces in complete control of the Port Royal area. Despite the vulnerability of the Savannah area to further attack by the Federals, the Union forces seemed content to consolidate their gains at Port Royal rather than press their advantage. As a result, little activity occurred around the Savannah Station, and Confederate leaders soon decided that Holmes' company could be better employed elsewhere. Around 22 May 1862, in response to the Union Navy's attempt to attack Richmond along the James River approach one week earlier, Mallory ordered Company A to Drewry's Bluff to reinforce the Marines already stationed there.¹²

Reaching Virginia, Company A moved quickly into the Marine bivouac area at Camp Beall and integrated into the defensive positions around Drewry's Bluff. Along with their regular responsibilities of manning the hasty entrenchments that sprang up around the bluffs, Holmes, cooperating with other company commanders at that

location, also provided men to fill several security postings in the nearby Richmond area. For example, on 14 February 1863, Holmes detached Second Lieutenant Nathaniel Venable and thirty Marines to serve as guards at the two important navy yards in Richmond, where construction of new ironclad ships was underway (see Figure 5-2). Venable and his Marines were the first to be posted at the Richmond yards, but records indicate that the guard detachments soon became permanent assignments for the Confederate Marines. From February 1863 until the evacuation of Richmond in April 1865, the CSMC continuously dispatched Marine detachments (each normally comprised of one officer and thirty men) as guards to each of the yards, meaning that a total of two officers and sixty Marines were always on hand in the capital city. On 26 May 1863, Second Lieutenant John Van de Graff replaced Venable, suggesting that the CSMC companies implemented some form of rotation of men to such duties. For example, Venable later served for a period of time as a recruiting officer in Richmond, a posting that involved making occasional tours to the nearby conscription camps in search of qualified volunteers wishing to serve in the CSMC. Analysis of existing orders and service records indicate that Marine leaders rotated officers and enlisted men amongst these posts, and that the companies stationed at Drewry's Bluff apparently shared these Richmond responsibilities on an equal basis.¹³

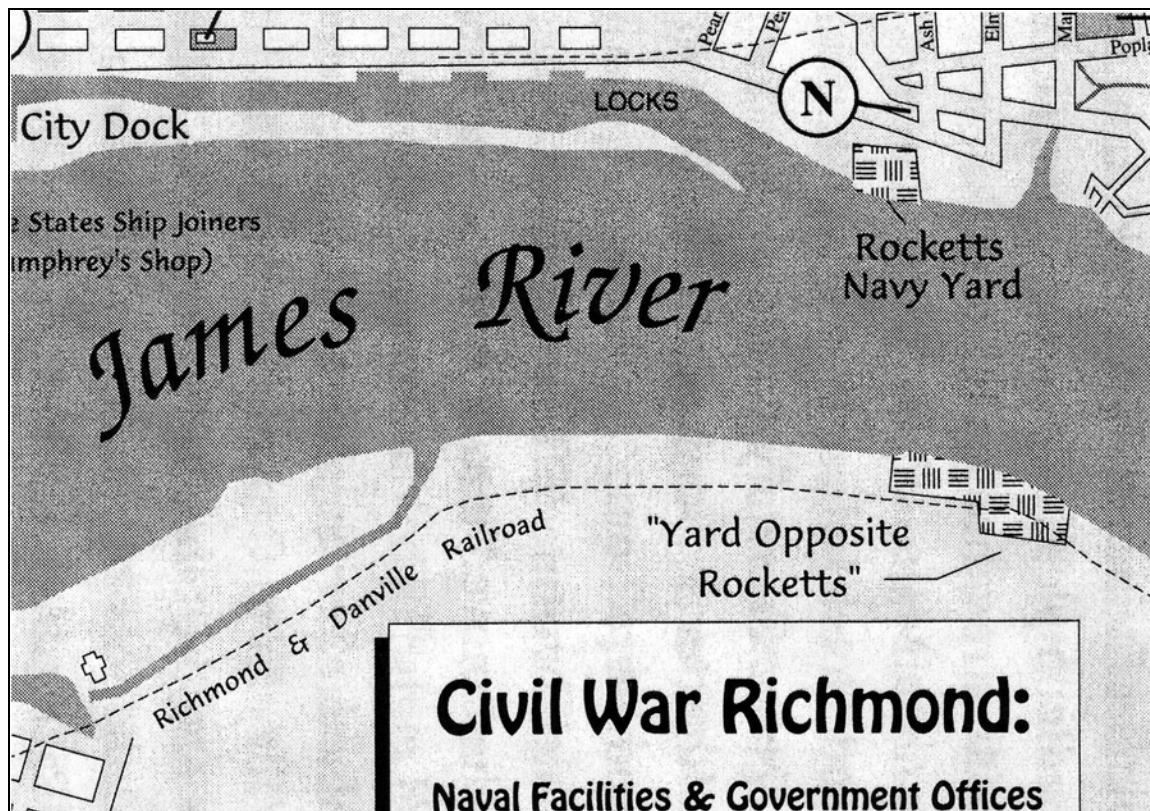


Figure 5-2. Location of the Two Navy Yards in Richmond.¹⁴

From February to April of 1863, Marines from Company A participated in the battalion deployment to Charleston, South Carolina, where they developed and mastered new tactics designed to disable or seize Union monitors operating off-shore. Although they did not get an opportunity at that time to test their tactics, some of the men later put their training to work by participating in several raids on Union Navy vessels, making the effort worthwhile. While in Charleston, the Marines also took part in the defense of that harbor against a Union Navy attack on 6-7 April, helping to drive off the Federal fleet. Following its return to Drewry's Bluff in late April, Company A performed picket duty around the Richmond area during the Chancellorsville Campaign in May 1863,

when some of that city's forces were drawn off for a time to support the fighting in Northern Virginia. Holmes and his men also fought during the aforementioned Second Battle of Drewry's Bluff, serving principally as infantry guarding the left wing of the Confederate positions that surrounded the fort proper. For about a week, from 10-16 May 1864, Holmes' men fought off several attempts by Union infantry to seize the earthworks around Drewry's Bluff. The Marines repelled the Federals from the trenches a number of times before forcing them to retreat for good around 16 May.¹⁵

In early July 1864, the men of Company A again deployed as part of the amphibious landing force formed to free and arm Confederate prisoners at a Federal camp at Point Lookout, Maryland. In this battalion-sized operation, Holmes departed Drewry's Bluff on 3 July with about ninety Marines and arrived in Wilmington on 6 July. There, Holmes' company gained reinforcements in the form of Marines posted at other locations, received briefings on the details of the mission and otherwise prepared for the operation. Soon after, Captain Holmes, now in command of about one hundred Marines, embarked his men onboard the blockade-runner *Florie*, one of two fast ships purchased for their transportation to the landing beach, and loaded the necessary arms and equipment for the mission. Both ships soon got underway and moved downriver in preparation for running the Union blockade. Regrettably, on 11 July, while off Fort Fisher, the raid commander, Colonel John Taylor Wood, received orders to cancel the mission, the plan having been compromised.¹⁶ The cancellation of the mission deprived historians of what would have been an excellent test of a Marine battalion's participation in an amphibious raid. Disappointed, the Marines returned to Drewry's Bluff.

Back at Camp Beall, the Marines of Company A began to form detachments for duty aboard ships of the James River Squadron, relieving Marines from another company that had previously filled those assignments. Some of these ships were involved in conducting operations against Union forces downriver from Drewry's Bluff. On 29 August 1864, Lieutenant Everard Eggleston relieved Lieutenant David Bradford as commander of the Marine detachment aboard the ironclad *Fredericksburg*. One month later, on the morning of 29 September, the *Fredericksburg* received an urgent call for assistance from a Confederate Army unit to break up a Union assault that had already overrun their positions at Fort Harrison and threatened to seize the key Confederate batteries located at Chaffin's Bluff. Responding to this call, the ironclads *Fredericksburg* and *Richmond* departed Drewry's Bluff and anchored near Kingsland Reach to bombard the Union troops. Due to the distances and intervening terrain, ships' officers were unable to judge the effect of their fires. To remedy the situation, Lieutenant Eggleston and a signal officer went ashore, moved to where they could observe the shell impacts, and noted the rounds were falling short of their intended targets. Then, through a system of pre-arranged signals, Eggleston provided the ships with corrections that allowed the ironclads to accurately adjust their fires onto the enemy using the maximum of their gun's elevation (six to seven degrees). This early example of naval gunfire spotting worked superbly and enabled the ships to fire hundreds of rounds into the concentrated enemy; scattering the attacking Federals and disrupting their assault on Chaffin's Bluff, saving that key Confederate post from being overrun.¹⁷

In early April 1865, Company A, along with several other Marine and Navy units stationed within the Richmond area, participated in some of the last major battles of the war. A more detailed narration of those last, desperate actions will be provided toward the end of this chapter, yet it should be noted here that by 9 April, with the surrender of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's forces at Appomattox, Virginia, Company A ceased to exist. However, it left behind a proud legacy, one befitting a proud unit that had served in six of the eleven states of the Confederacy during the war (see Figure 5-3).

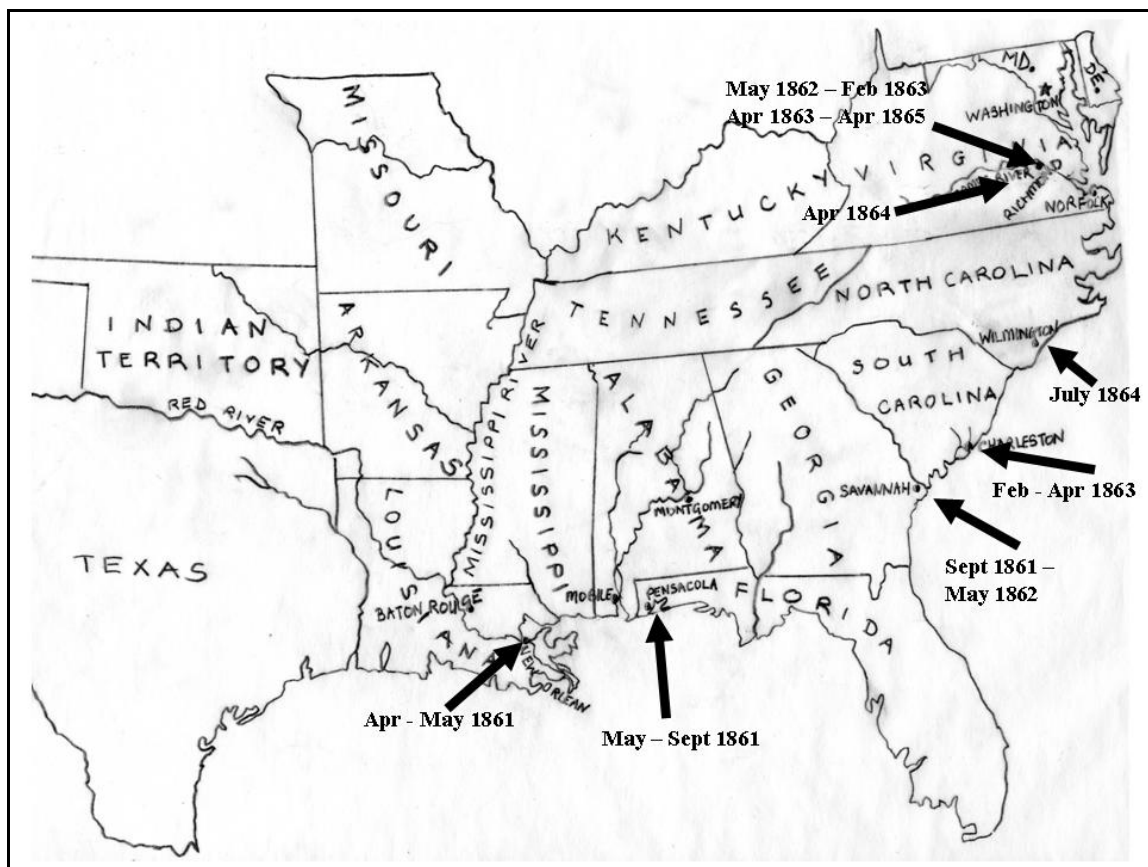


Figure 5-3. Map Showing the Deployments of Company A.¹⁸

The next CSMC unit, Company B, provides an excellent example of the flexibility inherent in the CSMC's organization. Company B served in more different configurations and combat roles than any other Marine unit during the war, both North and South. The history of the company clearly illustrates the wide range of missions expected of Confederate Marines, and it underwent a long and complex series of movements and command configurations as it fulfilled its assignments. In its time, the unit served as an independent company unit both afloat and ashore; executed primary duties alternately as an artillery and infantry company; operated as an element of a battalion; performed as a rapid reaction force; and undertook its assignments in both offensive and defensive operations. Several times in its history the company dispersed its strength into several detachments, and then reconsolidated back into a centralized company command in a different location altogether, all in response to demands for the services of Marines. Throughout, the broad range and depth of its actions combined to illustrate the wide differences between the two American Marine Corps, and show the degree to which elements of the CSMC supported the Confederate military, both army and navy.

Although its official designation implies otherwise, in actuality Company B became the first fully operational company of the CSMC. Its first commander, Captain Alfred Van Benthuisen, proved to be an exceptional recruiter and organizer, and he raised, organized and deployed his unit in less than two weeks. Between 10 and 23 April 1861, he personally enlisted about ninety-five men.¹⁹ Understanding the need to prepare his men for combat, Van Benthuisen and his enlisted leaders immediately began

drilling and instructing the new recruits to ready them for action in the shortest possible time.

On 24 April, only twelve days after the firing at Fort Sumter and one day after Van Benthuyzen's company became operational, Secretary Mallory directed the captain to deploy his company to the Warrington Navy Yard, opposite Fort Pickens, to assist in the defense of Pensacola. Van Benthuyzen embarked his company that same evening and arrived in Pensacola by a combination of steamship, rail and road march on the evening of the 26th, reporting for duty to General Braxton Bragg.²⁰

When Van Benthuyzen's men settled in at the Warrington Navy Yard, CSMC First Lieutenant Henry Laurens Ingraham and ten Marines from Montgomery, Alabama, met them. Although then the provisional capital of the Confederacy, Montgomery had proven disappointing for recruiting. By 29 April, Mallory shut down the Montgomery enlistment office altogether and ordered the remainder of the recruiting detachment, under the command of Captain Reuben Thom, to Pensacola, along with the twenty-seven men he had managed to enlist. They reinforced Van Benthuyzen's company, giving him about one hundred twenty Marines on duty at Warrington at the end of April.²¹

Mallory paid close attention to events in the Pensacola area. Anxious to report progress on that front, on 26 April Mallory advised President Jefferson Davis that Captain Van Benthuyzen had been placed "in charge of a heavy battery in front of Fort Pickens," and that his men were "being actively drilled in the use of great guns and small arms."²² The New Orleans *Delta* reported that Van Benthuyzen's company, now for the

first time being referred to as Company B of the Marines, occupied combat positions along the left flank of General Bragg's Confederate lines.²³

By 17 May 1861, Captain Van Benthuisen's Company B had become the core of an *ad hoc* battalion, and Mallory placed him in overall command of the unit. This transition established the pattern for the modular approach to battalion operations that the CSMC would utilize for the rest of the war. Typically, two or more companies combined, and officers from the companies were elevated to fill command and staff assignments within the battalion's command element. In this first iteration, the command structure came wholly from personnel organic to the companies themselves. However, after the Marine Corps expanded in late 1861, headquarters personnel from Richmond would often be selected to fill some battalion-level billets. At this early stage, when Mallory placed Van Benthuisen in command of the battalion, the captain appointed one of his company officers, most likely Lieutenant Richard H. Henderson, son of the late USMC commandant Archibald Henderson, to command Company B in the interim.²⁴

The company continued to man its original naval artillery positions in support of Bragg's forces, and also participated in various guard details within the Warrington Navy Yard. And, when the Confederate Navy placed the cruiser CSS *Sumter* into service on 3 June, Mallory detailed Lieutenant Howell and twenty Marines from the company to serve as the ship's detachment aboard that vessel (see Figure 5-4). The *Sumter* soon after became quite successful as a commerce raider on the high seas, seizing at least eighteen Northern vessels over the next six months. This assignment put

the first of many Marine detachments in naval vessels during the war, and established the typical model for such units, each normally consisting of one commissioned officer and twenty enlisted Marines. Soon after, on 26 June 1861, the Navy Department formed another ship's detachment, directing Van Benthuyesen to "order Lieutenant Henderson with one sergeant, two corporals and 20 privates of Marines to Steamer *MacRae* [McRae] at New Orleans."²⁵ In the meantime, Bragg also created his own harbor patrol, consisting of thirteen Marines and a number of sailors aboard two small boats, and tasked them with conducting night picket duty in the waters off Pensacola to discourage Union attempts to infiltrate Confederate positions. Apparently Van Benthuyesen rotated these duty assignments between the various companies of the battalion as more Marines arrived within the Pensacola area. On 26 July 1861, Lieutenant Colonel Tyler arrived from Richmond to assume command of the Marine Battalion, relieving Captain Van Benthuyesen from that post and allowing him to again take charge of Company B.²⁶

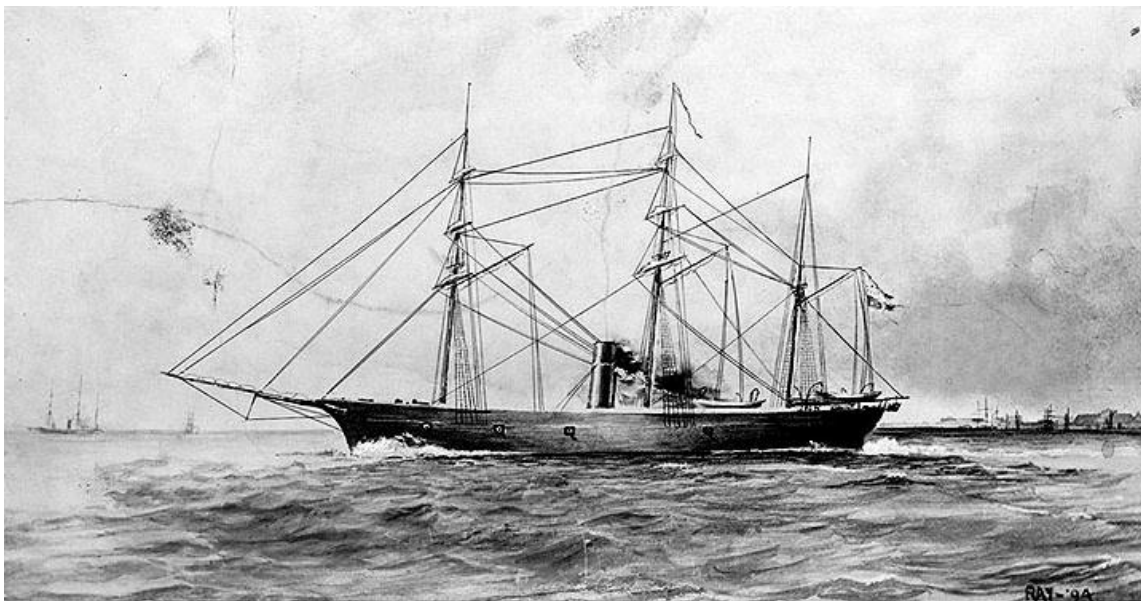


Figure 5-4. The Commerce Raider CSS *Sumter*.²⁷

During much of their time in Pensacola, Company B manned one or more ten-inch Columbiad guns in a battery located on a stone wharf within the Warrington Navy Yard (see Figure 5-5). On the morning of 22 November, Union gunners at Fort Pickens opened fire on the Navy Yard and the CSS *Time*, tied up at the wharf near the yard. The Federals maintained their fire until 9:00 P.M. that afternoon. Despite the length of the bombardment, reports of the action indicated the Union shells had little effect on Van Benthuisen's battery despite several direct hits. Although Confederate batteries were ordered not to return fire that first day, the following morning Confederate batteries were authorized to retaliate if the Union resumed its bombardment. The Federal gunners soon obliged and, when they commenced firing at about 10:30 A.M., Van Benthuisen's battery immediately returned fire, becoming the first Confederate guns to do so. In the artillery duel that lasted all day and half through the night, the Marines tirelessly worked their guns, traversing their fires effectively along the face of Fort Pickens. Despite becoming the main targets of the enemy, with some enemy rounds "grazing the top of the embankment," his men remained cool under the fire. After the action, Van Benthuisen reported "not a single casualty" among his men, and he attributed that fortune to the strength of his fortifications and the quality of their work beforehand in preparing for the exchange of fires.²⁸



Figure 5-5. Contemporary Photograph of a Water Battery at Warrington.²⁹

As fierce as the two-day bombardment was, the artillery exchange signaled the beginning of a stalemate in the Pensacola Campaign, and a period of relative inactivity descended on the area. In response to this impasse, Mallory began reassigning individual companies to other parts of the Confederacy with more pressing needs. On 13 February 1862, Mallory ordered Company B to Mobile, Alabama. Arriving two days later, Van Benthuyzen established a Marine detachment aboard the gunboat *Florida* (later renamed *Selma*), and located the remainder of his company on board the receiving ship *Dolman*. However, their presence in that vital port was cut short by the greater threat posed to the Confederacy by Union General McClellan's Peninsula Campaign,

aimed at seizing Richmond. On 2 March 1862, the *Florida's* Marine detachment returned to the company, and the entire unit departed soon after for its new posting at the Gosport (Norfolk) Navy Yard in Virginia.³⁰

The company's Marines arrived in Virginia in time to participate in a flurry of combat actions. Reaching Gosport Navy Yard on 11 March 1862, the men immediately deployed to provide security for that key post. Van Benthuisen himself assumed duties as the commander of Gosport's Marine guard, and he held that billet until 19 March, when newly commissioned Marine Captain John Simms, formerly of the USMC, arrived to relieve him of that responsibility. Although Company B fulfilled a critical role at the South's main naval base at Gosport, local events soon transpired that cut short the company's tenure there. Successful Union advances up the Virginia Peninsula had made the area surrounding Norfolk untenable by Southern forces, forcing the Confederate Army to withdraw to a defensive line along the Chickahominy River. With Norfolk left suddenly open to Union attack, the Navy Department reluctantly ordered the evacuation and destruction of the navy yard. The following day, the unexpected scuttling of the *Virginia* created a hole in the Confederate defenses that led directly to Richmond, and Mallory ordered Company B to reinforce the few troops located at Drewry's Bluff to try and fill that gap. These events culminated in the aforementioned First Battle of Drewry's Bluff on 15 May 1862. In that action, the Marines of Company B participated mainly as sharpshooters, firing their rifles from prepared positions dug along the bank of the James River. Their accurate and concentrated small arms fires

helped keep enemy crew below decks and therefore limited the ability of Federals to adjust fires or land troops.³¹

After the battle, Company B continued to garrison the Drewry's Bluff site. Concurrent with their work at improving the defensive positions at the bluffs and constructing a more permanent Marine camp, the company also occasionally provided men to the various guard details that sprung up around Richmond. Settling into its duty routine at the bluff, the company also worked hard to maintain its proficiency by developing a rigorous training regimen. And, from February to April 1863, the company deployed as part of the Marine battalion to Charleston, South Carolina, where the men took part in special training to conduct seizures of ironclads at sea and helped defend that harbor from an attack by several Federal Navy ironclads.³²

In late April, following its participation in the defense of Charleston harbor, Company B returned with the Marine battalion to their base at Camp Beall, Drewry's Bluff. Over the next year, in response to new demands for the services of Marines afloat on several of the South's new ironclads, the company dispersed its combat power into several detachments that served ashore at either of the two navy yards in Richmond, or aboard ships of the James River Squadron, then also headquartered at Drewry's Bluff. Presumably, the company's collocation with the squadron headquarters helped facilitate its decentralized command and control functions over its dispersed units.

Meanwhile, things began heating up around the port city of Wilmington, North Carolina. At that stage in the war, Wilmington harbor provided protection for many blockade-runners whose activities kept the capital supplied with provisions. Between

1863-64, about 230 ships managed to evade the Union blockade off Wilmington and make port, a significant feat that both illustrates the weaknesses of the blockade and the value of Wilmington.³³ In addition to providing a vital supply link for the Confederate capital and its surrounding army, commerce raiders utilized the harbor as a refuge and a base from which they could continue to attack and seize Union ships, making the defense of the harbor a strategic priority for the Confederacy. Union forces realized this and were tightening their blockade of the port in an attempt to choke the Confederacy into submission.

Realizing the necessity of keeping Wilmington open to blockade-runners and commerce raiders, Confederate naval leaders began redistributing their precious assets to strengthen the port's defenses, and part of that effort included the reassignment of Marines, in the form of a new Company B. Steadily, the company's duties in the Richmond area were assumed by detachments formed from other Marine companies, and Marines close to the Wilmington area were transferred to a newly reformed Company B. In this fashion, the company presence in the Richmond area shrank while concurrently growing in North Carolina to meet the new threat. On 18 January 1864, First Lieutenant Richard Henderson and thirty men from Company C transferred to Wilmington Station and reported aboard the ironclads *Raleigh* and *North Carolina*, becoming the core of the new company structure. Initially, Henderson stationed himself on shore and made frequent trips between the two vessels to inspect the performance and discipline of the Marines. On 1 March, Lieutenant Henry Doak joined the Wilmington Marines from his previous post at Savannah, Georgia, and he assumed Henderson's

duties as commander of the *Raleigh*'s detachment. One week later, Lieutenant Murdoch arrived with his detachment, formerly stationed on the James River Squadron ironclad *Richmond*.³⁴ With the arrival of Murdoch's men, the Wilmington detachment now constituted about three officers and sixty Marines, equaling approximately six-tenths of the personnel found in a full company.

In clear opposition to the Federal blockaders, Confederate Navy vessels operating out of Wilmington began clashing with Union Navy ships on a more frequent basis, and Marines actively participated in the engagements that followed. For example, Lieutenant Doak directed two of the *Raleigh*'s broadside guns during a fight with several Union Navy blockaders on 6 – 7 May. In that action, the *Raleigh* boldly attacked several blockading ships outside the mouth of the Cape Fear River, surprising the Union ships and driving all but four of the enemy vessels from the area. In the resulting exchange of fires, the Federal ships found that their fires had little effect on the *Raleigh*'s armor. Nonetheless, two of the combatants, the *Raleigh* and a Union blockader, *Nansemond*, traded shots well into the evening, neither ceasing their fires until about 11:45 P.M., when they finally disengaged for the night. Early the next morning, the *Raleigh* again attempted to close with the four Union blockaders, and eventually drove them out to sea. The *Raleigh* hit one Federal warship, the *Howquah*, in the funnel, seriously damaging that vessel. The complete withdrawal of the enemy ships left the *Raleigh* now in command of the approaches to Wilmington, but her victory proved short-lived. Unfortunately for Wilmington's defenders, on her return to port the *Raleigh* went aground on the shoals outside the mouth of the Cape Fear Inlet and broke her back,

forcing her captain to scuttle her to prevent her capture. The tide of battle had taken a drastic turn for the worse. Now without a ship to fight from, Doak and his men returned to Wilmington for reassignment and, around 10 May, he assumed command of the Marine detachment aboard the CSS *Arctic*, the receiving ship for Wilmington Station.³⁵

Back at Drewry's Bluff, the few remaining men of Company B formed a detachment under the command of Lieutenant David Bradford, and assigned it on 24 May 1864 to the newly constructed ironclad CSS *Fredericksburg*. With this assignment the company ceased to exist as a unit at Camp Beall, yet was gaining strength at Wilmington. Finally, in recognition of the growing numbers of Marines in North Carolina, on 15 June 1864 Mallory ordered Captain Van Benthuisen to depart his post at Mobile and to proceed to Wilmington to assume command of the new Company B.³⁶

The freshly reconstituted company became increasingly engaged in Wilmington as Union military threats intensified in the second half of 1864. From 6 – 13 July, Van Benthuisen's men participated in the briefings, rehearsals and preparations for the proposed amphibious raid to rescue and arm prisoners at Point Lookout, Maryland. Acting as an advance party, Company B met their battalion when it arrived at Wilmington on 6 July, and most likely provided support for the Marines as they went into camp that evening. On 7 July Commander John Taylor Wood briefed all of the participants on the details of the mission, and the next day embarked the raiders aboard the two blockade-runners, the *Florie* and the *Let-Her-Be*. Records indicate that Van Benthuisen's company divided itself between the vessels to balance out the number of Marines on each. The two ships got underway the evening of the 9th, dropped anchor off

the town of Smithville for a day, and again weighed anchor the night of the 10th, but were soon stopped by signalers from Fort Fisher bearing an urgent dispatch that cancelled the mission. A disappointed Van Benthuyzen soon after redeployed his men to their previous assignments.³⁷

Meanwhile, Company B's sole remaining detachment in Virginia, aboard the ironclad *Fredericksburg*, found itself engaged in combat south of Drewry's Bluff. In mid-August 1864, several ironclads and gunboats of the James River Squadron, including the *Fredericksburg*, conducted an attack on Union forces attempting to complete a canal near Dutch Gap, a move that would have allowed Federal forces to bypass several powerful Confederate land batteries and consequently weaken Richmond's defensive line. In the early morning hours of 13 August, the Confederate ironclads *Fredericksburg*, *Virginia II*, and *Richmond*, accompanied by the gunboats *Drewry*, *Hampton* and *Nansemond*, departed friendly lines near Drewry's Bluff and maneuvered downriver to within three-quarters of a mile of the canal. For twelve hours the warships bombarded the canal area, disrupting the digging effort and skirmishing with Federal gunboats. In retaliation, Union ship and land batteries pounded the Confederate vessels, inflicting some damage to the *Fredericksburg*. The ship nonetheless remained in action, even providing timely fire support to General Lee's forces on 17 August that was credited with repelling an enemy attack on Signal Hill. Soon afterwards, on 29 August 1864, Mallory finally replaced Bradford's detachment on the *Fredericksburg* with a detachment from Company A under Lieutenant Everard Eggleston, freeing that unit for service in Wilmington. Bradford's relief brought to a

close Company B's participation in activities on the James River, where it had served for over two years. Bradford's men then proceeded to their new company headquarters in Wilmington, providing more manpower to that unit.³⁸

With all of his men now in one general location, Van Benthuisen took advantage of the opportunity to fill several requests that naval commanders had made for Marine detachments to serve aboard outgoing commerce raiders, giving the makeshift warships a much-needed boost in combat power. The newest arrivals, Lieutenant Bradford and his men, were quickly assigned to the cruiser *Chickamauga* (formerly the blockade runner *Edith*). From 28 October to 15 December 1864, the Marines participated in that vessel's successful cruise in which six Union merchant ships were destroyed. On 1 October, Van Benthuisen assigned Lieutenant Doak and his men to the commerce raider *CSS Tallahassee* (then operating also under the name *Olustee*). In the short period of time between 29 October and 7 November 1864, Doak and his men contributed to the *Tallahassee*'s sinking of half a dozen Federal ships, a feat that sent shivers through the spine of Union merchant ships operating off the eastern seaboard. In addition to filling duties at sea, in early December 1864, Company B also began providing personnel to man some shore batteries at nearby Fort Fisher in response to requests for assistance by the fort's garrison commander. Initially, Van Benthuisen assigned Lieutenant Murdoch and a Marine detachment to man a land-based naval artillery battery at Battery Buchanan, a strongpoint located at the extreme end of Federal Point that commanded the entrance to New Inlet.³⁹

In early December 1864, the Union Navy began building up its forces to attack Fort Fisher. Within a period of less than a month the Federals conducted two large-scale attacks on the fort, both preceded by what was described as the most intensive naval bombardments ever made. Despite having a clearly superior force, the Union failed in its first attempt to seize the fortress and was forced to withdraw, though it soon regrouped and launched a second attack some weeks later. Throughout the ordeal, Van Benthuisen's Marines played a significant role in both battles, helping to soundly turn back the first Union attack and again fighting savagely in the second effort. In addition to providing a superb example of CSMC company operations as part of a major battle, the struggle for Fort Fisher also illustrates some of the contrasts in performance and reputation between the two Marine Corps. In this case, elements of the two Marine Corps faced each other on the field of battle: Van Benthuisen's company fought as part of the defense, while an *ad hoc* U.S. Marine battalion fought as part of an attacking naval landing force. The contrasts in their respective performances in battle merit a close study.

The first Federal assault on Fort Fisher began on 23 December 1864, initiated quite literally with an enormous bang. Under the cover of darkness that evening, the Union Navy towed the *Louisiana*, an aging warship deliberately packed with a massive charge of about 250 tons of powder, to a position located about a mile off the center of the fort and set her afire. The ship exploded soon afterward, creating a powerful shockwave that could be felt in Wilmington, over fifteen miles away. Despite the ferocity of the blast, the explosion caused no real damage to the fort itself, and failed in

its intent to “demolish the work and paralyze the garrison.”⁴⁰ It did, however, confirm Confederate suspicions that the Union Army and Navy were ready to move on Fort Fisher. Any remaining doubts of Federal intentions were soon erased by the commencement of the Union Navy’s massive preparatory bombardment undertaken by virtually every ship of Admiral David Dixon Porter’s fleet, a non-stop barrage that lasted from dawn on the 24th until about 5:30 P.M. that afternoon. Within a period of about twelve hours the Federal warships hurled almost 10,000 shells against the gun emplacements of Fort Fisher.⁴¹

During this first attack, the Confederate sailors and Marines initially occupied several gun positions located at Battery Buchanan, a strongpoint located outside the fort proper on the far extremity of the peninsula (see Figure 5-1). Within that location, Van Benthuyzen’s men helped man naval artillery pieces and also posted guards along the battery’s redoubts. During that first day of bombardments, quite possibly the most intensive of the war to that point, most defenders did little except hunker down in bomb-proofs to avoid the effects of the fires. When the barrage finally lifted in the late afternoon the garrison troops ventured out of their shelters and surveyed the damage. On the Union side, many of the attackers mistook the lack of return fire from the fort as an indication that their first day preparation fires had silenced most of the Confederate guns. Accordingly, early on 25 December the Federals began the long process of landing their assault troops, covering their movements with a second barrage from their warships. While the Union force was still transitioning ashore, at about 3:30 P.M., the men of Battery Buchanan finally became directly engaged in the fray. Several small

Federal ships emerged from the smoke some distance offshore of the battery and appeared to be taking soundings and possibly attempting to clear that area of mines and obstacles. It seemed as if the enemy was looking for another, closer landing point for their assault force. To prevent such a move, the Confederates opened fire on the ships, sinking one Union Navy barge outright and driving the remainder out of the area before they could finish their task.⁴² Their actions had helped secure the southern flank of the fort from attack.

Meanwhile, Union skirmishers had begun probing the landward side of the fort proper, looking for weaknesses in the defense. Then, Federal soldiers under the command of General Benjamin Butler began massing for a concerted attack on the fort. To help break up the attacking force before it could fully organize, the garrison commander, Colonel William Lamb, called for Van Benthuisen's men to help reinforce the defense at the threatened point. On receipt of the request, Van Benthuisen quickly double-timed about two-thirds of his company over the distance of one mile from Battery Buchanan to the threatened point of the attack. Arriving just in time to meet the attackers, the Marines moved immediately into the ramparts and began firing into the ranks of the enemy, repelling them with a ferocity that compelled Lamb to later commend their efforts at that critical juncture. In the face of this stiffened defense, the Federals fell back, leaving their dead and wounded on the field. Butler's men soon withdrew to their ships and the fleet sailed out to sea amid the loud cheers of the fort's garrison.⁴³ The South had won the first round of the fight for Fort Fisher.

The Confederates' elation at driving off the Union attack proved to be short-lived. Anticipating a second Federal attempt to seize the fort, additional militia troops joined Lamb's garrison, pushing the defenders' strength above two thousand men, yet even then their numbers were still less than one-fifth of that of their opponent. Not surprisingly, on 13 January 1865, the Union forces returned, this time in even greater strength. The Federal commanders had used their time since the first attack to further refine their plans, hoping to resolve some of the problems that they believed had caused their first attempt to fail. In this second effort, the Union plan again called for an intense preliminary bombardment of the fort, to be followed with a simultaneous attack by two land elements: the first consisting of a Federal army unit of over ten thousand soldiers to attack the land side of the fort; the second consisting of a separate landing force of two thousand Union sailors and Marines assaulting the seaward face of the fort.⁴⁴ With great precision, the sizeable Federal fleet moved into position to begin the attack (see Figure 5-6).

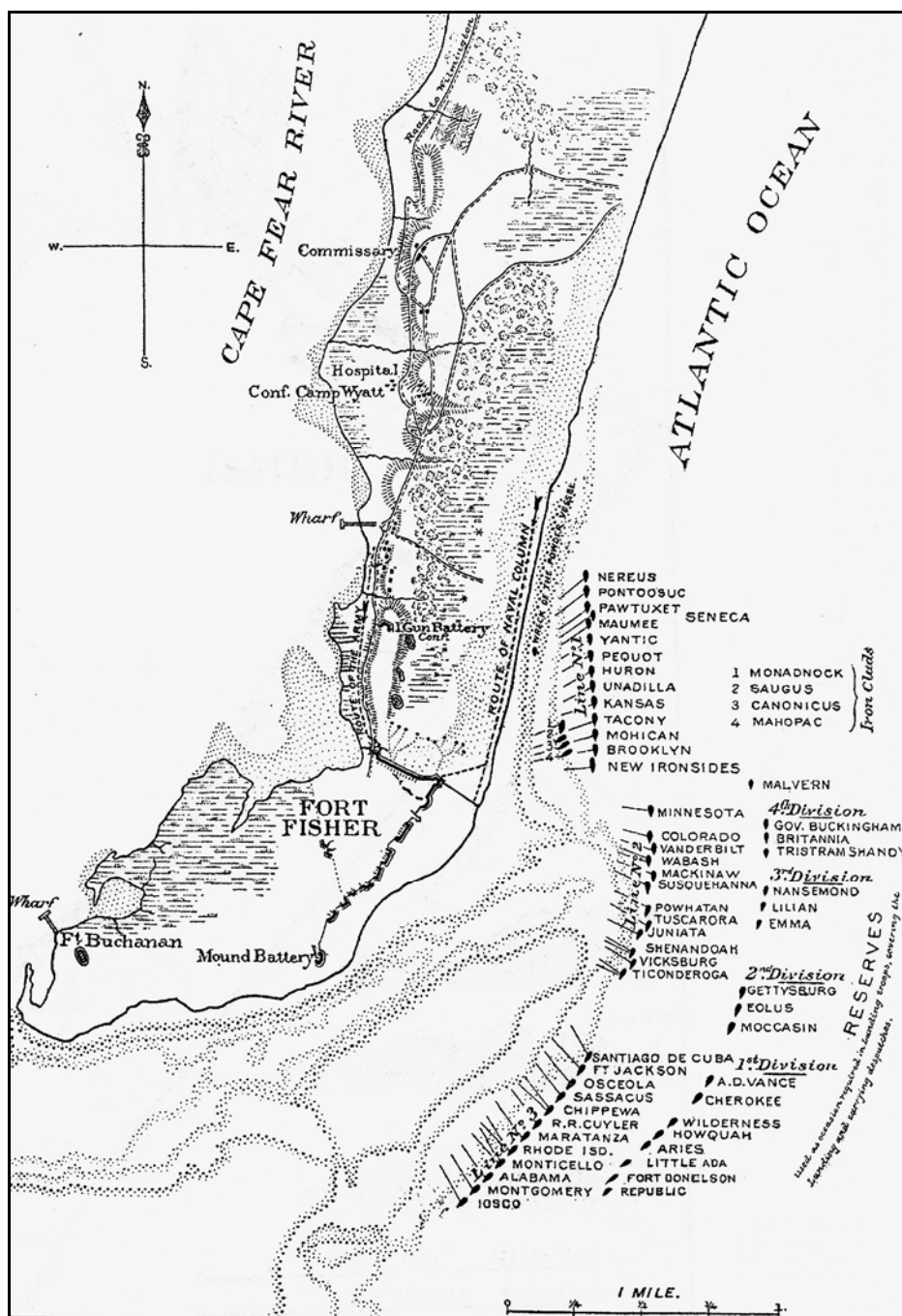


Figure 5-6. Sketch of the Plan for the Second Attack on Fort Fisher.⁴⁵

Again, Union Admiral David Dixon Porter concentrated all of his fleet's firepower on the Confederate defenders, hoping to diminish their will to fight.

Commencing on 13 January 1865, Fort Fisher's garrison suffered through three days of fierce naval bombardment, yet they weathered that phase with little deterioration in their morale or capability. Finally, on 16 January 1865, Porter's ships lifted their fires and the Union ground forces began their assault. However, despite their prior preparations, confusion once again reigned among the attacking Federal elements. The original scheme had called for Major General Alfred H. Terry's ten thousand Union Army soldiers to begin their assault against the northern face of the fort simultaneously with the launching of an attack on the seaward side by Porter's two-thousand-man naval landing force. Instead, the two attacks were not properly coordinated, as the Federal naval force attacked the fort by itself before Terry's land element was in place. Consequently, as the Union sailors and Marines attempted to cross an open stretch of beach in front of the fort, they drew the full brunt of Confederate fires. A premature lifting of Union naval gunfire support compounded their predicament since it allowed the fort's defenders to man their guns unmolested and concentrate their fires against the small, unsupported attackers as they moved across a couple of hundred yards of barren sand. As a result, the naval force took heavy casualties and quickly became pinned down on the exposed beach. Fortunately for the trapped naval landing party, Terry's land element soon began their attack and, through sheer numbers, muscled their way into the fort. The Confederate defenders fought tenaciously to repel the Federal army, but their survivors were ultimately forced to withdraw from the fort to Battery Buchanan on the extremity of the peninsula, where Union forces eventually cornered them. With no

line of retreat and facing far superior enemy numbers, Colonel Lamb had no option left but to surrender the remainder of the garrison.⁴⁶

In general, the Confederate Marines garnered considerable praise for their performance during both actions; conversely, the U.S. Marines received harsh criticism, particularly for their near-disastrous assault on the fort's seawall during the second attack. Historian Allan Millett observes that Admiral Porter, Union naval commander of the operation, in an attempt to deflect any culpability on his part for the high casualties incurred by the naval landing force, became especially vocal and placed blame for the failure directly onto the shoulders of the U.S. Marine leaders. In his official reports on the battle, Porter faulted the U.S. Marines for not clearing the rebel breastworks of infantry for his boarders, stating that "the marines could have cleared the parapets [of enemy] by keeping up a steady fire, but they failed to do so and the sailors were repulsed."⁴⁷ In his judgment, "the marines could have made the assault successful," but failed, and therefore the group "lost about 200 in killed and wounded" in that action.⁴⁸ His detailed report contained a more direct indictment: "All the arrangements on the part of the sailors had been well carried out; they had succeeded in getting up to within a short distance of the fort and laid securely in their ditches. We had but very few killed and wounded up to this point. The marines were to have held the rifle pits and cover the boarding party, which they failed to do. [. . .] At this moment, had the marines performed their duty, every one of the rebels on the parapets would have been killed." In other words, the fault originated not with Porter's plans, which he believed were

sound and “would have succeeded without severe loss had the marines performed their duty.”⁴⁹

In Porter’s eyes the USMC leaders were solely responsible for the debacle. Within his chain of command he went even farther in his charges. Writing confidentially of the controversy to the Undersecretary of the Navy, his friend Gustavus Vasa Fox, Porter conspiratorially related “I expect you were disappointed at our sailors not carrying the works, they ought to have done it, and would but for the infernal marines who were running away when the sailors were mounting the parapets, and every man fighting like a lion poor fellows”⁵⁰ To Porter the USMC was not only incompetent, but also cowardly! Porter’s comments aside, Millett and several other historians disagree, instead insisting that Porter should share some responsibility for his failure to clearly articulate and coordinate his plan, and to effectively supervise and direct his men. Certainly, it is a widely accepted military practice that a commander is personally responsible for the actions, and inactions of his command. A contemporary historical position is that the U.S. Marines were saddled with the failure after they were placed in the bad situation of being tasked to conduct an uncoordinated daylight attack across two hundred yards of open beach into the Confederate defensive positions. Millett nonetheless provides some harsh criticism of the Federal Marines, stating, “For both the Marines and the sailors, individual gallantry and collective ardor could not overcome inept tactical leadership and romantic planning”⁵¹ In contrast to these criticisms of the USMC, Scharf’s book and other contemporary accounts are filled with several first person testimonials of praise for the performance of Van Benthuisen and his

men. In this one instance where elements of the two Marine Corps clashed in combat, the Confederates received accolades and the Federal Marines condemnation.⁵²

The surrender of Fort Fisher meant the end of Company B as a fighting unit, yet some of its members managed to fight on to the last throes of the Confederacy. Per the customs in place at the time, some members captured in battle soon gained a pardon or were released because of wounds suffered in the fight, yet made their way back to Richmond rather than head home.⁵³ There, they rejoined the war effort in various capacities, demonstrating an unusual strength of will in a time when many Confederate units were unraveling due to problems of morale leading to frequent desertions. Some individual officers from Company B continued the fight to the absolute end of the Confederacy, performing tasks such as protecting fleeing government officials and guarding treasury trains.⁵⁴

In all, Company B served in a large number of posts throughout the Confederacy, becoming one of the most active Marine units. Its Marines served at New Orleans, Pensacola, Mobile, Norfolk, Drewry's Bluff, Charleston, and Wilmington (see Figure 5-7). Detachments from the company fought in an even wider range of locations, both on land and on the high seas. Throughout their colorful history the men of Company B fought in a wide variety of roles and missions, ranging from infantry to artillery, raiders to quick reaction troops and ships' guards, at all times acquitting themselves with honor and earning the respect of peers and enemy alike.

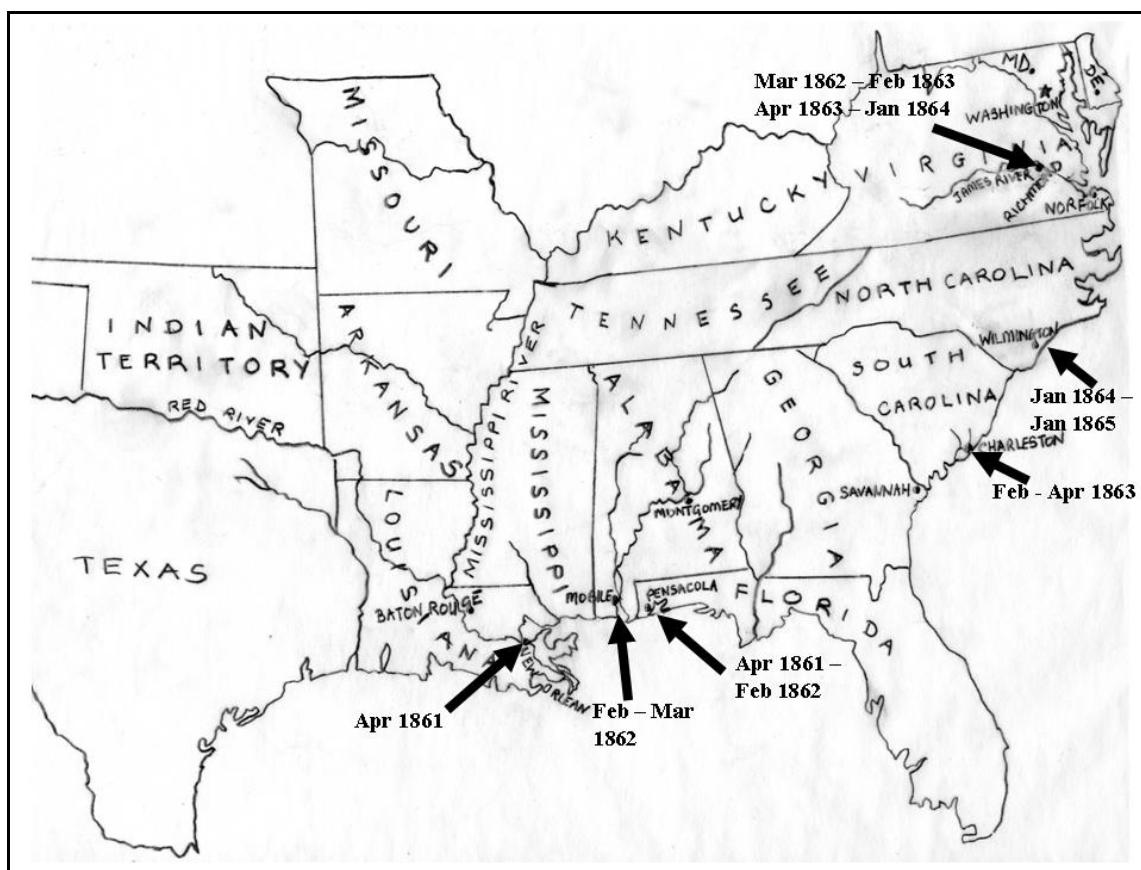


Figure 5-7. Map Showing the Deployments of Company B, CSMC.⁵⁵

Like its two sister companies already described, Company C can also trace its lineage back to the very creation of the CSMC, in fact to the first officer commissioned in the Corps. Similarly, the pattern of the company's service is worthy of inspection. Company C's history provides further support of the contention that the CSMC served as a national naval force, and that Southern leaders shifted those units to meet national naval threats. Furthermore, the company's employment pattern strengthens the argument that the CSMC's adoption of the concept of using the company as the base Marine organizational unit gave the CSMC great flexibility in fulfilling requirements for Marines. Its history also illustrates the close relationship between the Marines and the

naval commanders with whom they served. In a major step toward developing that closeness, Company C became the first Marine company to serve entirely afloat, simultaneously providing detachments aboard separate warships while creatively manning naval gun batteries aboard the squadron flagship with the remaining men of the command element. Its contributions enhanced the fighting abilities of the squadron during actions that represented the epitome of Confederate naval operations during the war. Additionally, the men of Company C became quite proficient in the complex art of conducting amphibious raids.

On 25 March 1861, newly selected Confederate President Jefferson Davis appointed Reuben Triplett Thom of Fredericksburg, Virginia, to the rank of captain in the CSMC, granting him the distinction of being the first officer commissioned in that organization. Thom, who had seen previous combat service as a first lieutenant in the Alabama Regiment of Infantry during the Mexican War, and who had held the position of Quartermaster General of Alabama prior to entering the CSMC, also became the CSMC's first recruiting officer. Immediately upon accepting his commission, Secretary Mallory directed Thom to begin recruiting volunteers within the Montgomery area, and soon after provided him an assistant in the form of newly appointed First Lieutenant Henry Laurens Ingraham, a former USMC officer. Nonetheless, recruiting in Montgomery proved slow and unreliable. When, by April 29, the two officers had only managed to enlist about twenty-seven Marines, Mallory grew frustrated and ordered Thom to join the Marine battalion at Pensacola with the men he had. Soon after arriving in Pensacola, Thom's unit became officially designated as Company C.⁵⁶

On 24 May, Mallory ordered Thom to turn over his company to Lieutenant Ingraham and to proceed to New Orleans to finish the task of recruiting his full complement. The New Orleans area proved to be the most productive area for the CSMC's recruiting effort. Captain Thom found several recruits and also assumed the responsibility of serving as a purchasing agent for the Marine Corps, periodically contracting with local New Orleans companies for clothing and equipment items needed by the growing battalion in Pensacola. In June, the overall pace of recruiting slowed considerably, forcing Thom and his noncommissioned officer assistants to travel outside the Crescent City, venturing as far as Mobile and Memphis in their quest for qualified enlistees.⁵⁷

In the midst of their recruiting effort, events transpired in the New Orleans area that gave Captain Thom and the few recruits he had on hand their baptism of fire. In the first days of July 1861, the Confederate garrison commander at New Orleans, Major General David Twiggs, became concerned about reports of Union warships and activity around Ship Island, located about twelve miles south of Biloxi, Mississippi. Twiggs considered the island to be key terrain in his defensive plans and he feared that Federal forces were in the process of fortifying the island. To counter the Union plans, Twiggs decided to seize the initiative first and he directed the Confederate naval forces in New Orleans to take and occupy Ship Island, and to then defend the island from enemy attempts to seize it.⁵⁸

The Confederate Navy had few fighting men in New Orleans at that time. Twiggs ordered Lieutenant Alexander Warley, of the CSS *McRae*, to organize a raiding

party for the mission. Beginning with the *McRae*'s own twenty-man detachment from Company B, Warley also solicited the assistance of Captain Thom and thirty-five of his recruits, who combined forces to constitute about half of a raiding party that eventually numbered about 140 men. The raiders embarked aboard the steamers *Oregon* and *Swain*, and landed on Ship Island on the afternoon of 6 July. Finding the island recently deserted by the enemy, the raiders quickly emplaced four artillery pieces and fortified their positions with cotton bales and sand bags. The next morning, Warley's defenders traded artillery fire with the USS *Massachusetts*, a Union warship dispatched to investigate reports of Confederate activity on the island. During the engagement, Warley's small party of Marines and sailors repulsed several attempts of the *Massachusetts* to land troops on the island, forced the warship to retire, and defended the island until relieved the following day by three companies of the 4th Louisiana Volunteers. Thom's Marines then returned to their recruiting duties in New Orleans and the *McRae*'s men resumed their patrols.⁵⁹

Back in Pensacola, the remainder of Company C conducted operations within the defensive line of General Bragg's forces. On 14 September, Captain Thom ceased his recruiting duties in New Orleans, and returned to Pensacola to reassume command of his company, now nearly up to its authorized strength of one hundred men. With his departure, the CSMC's organized recruiting in the Crescent City came to an end, the various recruiting officers having enlisted about 280 Marines during their six months of activity in that city. In that critical first year of the war, New Orleans Marines made up

the majority of the first three full-strength companies, and were gaining increased experience and proficiency each day.⁶⁰

On the morning of 9 October 1861, Marines of Company C participated in a retaliatory raid against Federal forces on nearby Santa Rosa Island. For this operation, Brigadier General Richard Anderson formed a combined Confederate force of about one thousand men, 80 percent being soldiers, about 10 percent being Marines, and another 10 percent sailors. The raiders embarked aboard several small transport vessels and barges on the night of 8 October, crossed the harbor and landed in the vicinity of some known enemy bivouac sites on the island. Taking advantage of the night, the raiders marched from their landing point to their objective about three or four miles across the island and at about 3:30 A.M. commenced an attack on the campsite of the Union's 6th New York Zouave Regiment. The Confederates routed the Federals from their sleep and overran portions of the camp, burning any tents and supplies that they encountered. Anderson then withdrew, re-embarked his forces aboard the transports and returned before dawn to Pensacola. In his official report on the action, Anderson personally commended Marine Lieutenants Calvin Sayre and Wilbur Johnson for rendering "me active and efficient assistance throughout the whole of the operation."⁶¹ Sayre, seriously wounded in a leg during the action, was left behind during the withdrawal, captured, and received medical treatment at a Union field hospital. At the urging of CSMC Commandant Colonel Beall, Sayre was subsequently exchanged for a captured Union officer and returned to active duty in Richmond on 29 January 1862.⁶²

Elsewhere, in a stroke of great fortune for the South, Federal forces withdrew from the Norfolk Navy Yard following Virginia's secession in April 1861. In their haste, the retreating Union forces failed to completely destroy the yard's facilities and ships, leaving Norfolk ripe for the Confederate Navy. The abandoned shipyard yielded a treasure of arms, stores and equipment that enabled the new nation to rapidly build up the capability of its growing navy. Confederate naval engineers quickly exploited the facility, bringing its dry-docks and several half-scuttled vessels back to life. The resurrected naval yard also became the headquarters for the Virginia State Navy, an outfit that merged with the Confederate States Navy by mid-June 1861. As the Norfolk Navy Yard and the growing James River Squadron became increasingly engaged in the creation of the national navy's new warships, it became apparent that Marines were needed to guard the base and serve aboard the ships. To meet this requirement, around the end of November 1861, Secretary Mallory ordered Captain Thom's Company C to duty in Virginia.⁶³

Arriving in Norfolk on 7 December, Thom moved his company onto the Confederate receiving ship *Confederate States* (formerly the USS *United States*), one of the resurrected ships that had been hastily scuttled by the Federals. The *Confederate States*, while not considered to be seaworthy, had nonetheless been equipped with nineteen guns to enable her to serve as a harbor defense platform in addition to fulfilling her role as a training and receiving ship. To augment the ship's force, Thom posted a detachment under the command of Lieutenant Thomas Gwynn to serve aboard the vessel. Similarly, Thom dispatched Lieutenant James Fendall and a detachment of

Marines to the steamer *Jamestown*, and the men took over one of the ship's heavy guns. Thom also formed a detachment under the command of Lieutenant Richard Henderson (son of the former Commandant of the USMC, Archibald Henderson) to the steamer *Patrick Henry* (formerly USS *Yorktown*). Then, with the remainder of his company, about forty strong, he reported to the South's newest ironclad ram *Virginia* (formerly USS *Merrimack*) with the remainder of his company. On the *Virginia*, Thom's men, along with soldiers of the Norfolk United Artillery, manned two of the ship's main guns, and Thom himself directed their training and employment.⁶⁴ With these assignments, Company C now provided crucial gunners for the major Confederate ships of the James River Squadron.

Following the refitting of the ironclad ram *Virginia* in February 1862, Confederate naval planners anxiously awaited the opportunity to test its design against the Union Navy's wooden blockaders that were attempting to seal off the James River Squadron's access to the sea. Finally, on 8 March 1862, the *Virginia*, accompanied by the steamers *Jamestown*, *Patrick Henry*, *Teaser* and two other vessels ventured out into Hampton Roads to engage the ships of Federal Navy (see Figure 5-8). In the ensuing fight, the *Virginia* rammed and sank the Union warship *Cumberland*, damaged and set ablaze the *Congress*, and forced the *Minnesota* to run aground. The loss and damage to so many of their major warships sent shockwaves through the Union. In response, the Federals countered by committing their newest design ironclad, the *Monitor*, to the fight for control of the Roads. Shortly after daybreak on 9 March, the two iron behemoths met in battle, maneuvering around and firing at each other until the early afternoon, with

the *Virginia* unsuccessfully trying several times to either ram or even board the *Monitor*. In the end, the *Monitor* broke contact and sailed to the protection of Union shore batteries, yet most historians view the engagement as a draw.⁶⁵ Despite this, the engagement proved the value of ironclads to both sides, and ushered in a new era of modern naval warfare. Importantly, Confederate Marines were an integral part of the action and established an early positive reputation within the fledgling navy.

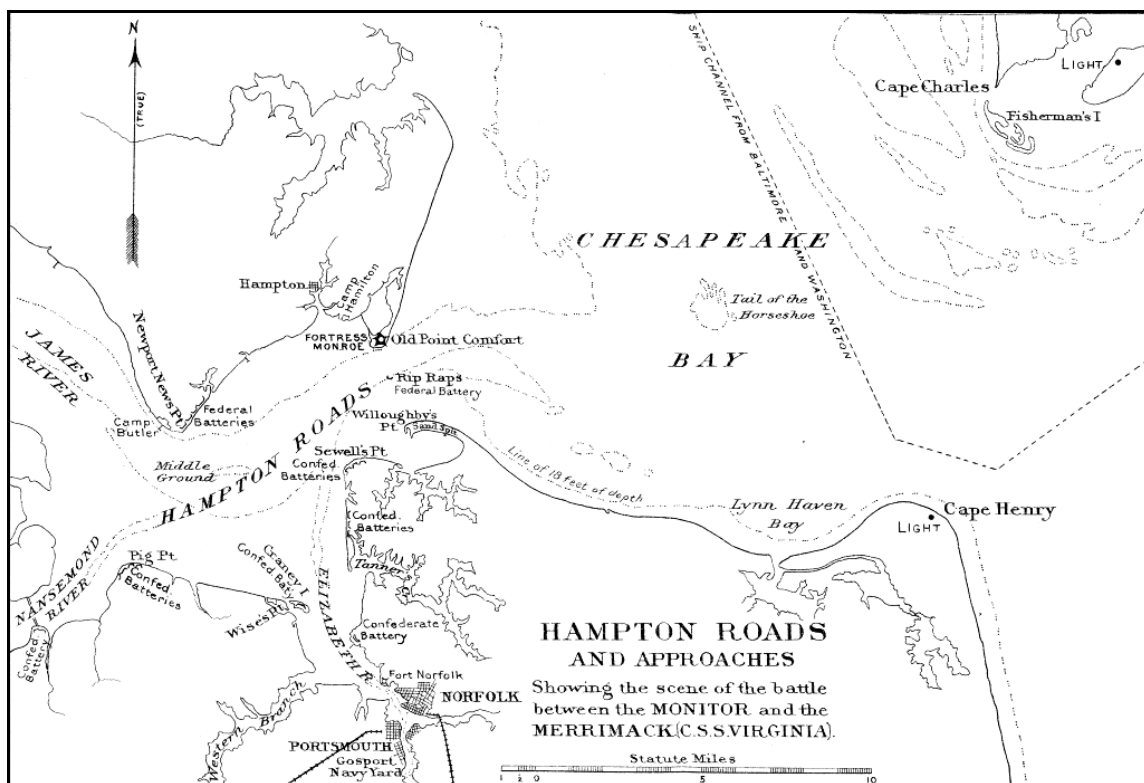


Figure 5-8. Hampton Roads Area on 8-9 March 1862.⁶⁶

The Confederate Congress rewarded the men of the ships involved in the engagement at Hampton Roads with an official Resolution of Thanks. The Marines of Company C contributed in the actions of those two days both by manning ship's cannons

and by providing accurate small arms fires on enemy officers and gunners. Some Marines were consequently injured or killed as a result of enemy fires, and their commanders respected their service. Confederate Flag Officer Franklin Buchanan, captain of the *Virginia* noted, “The Marine Corps was well represented by Captain Thom, whose tranquil mien gave evidence that the hottest fire was no novelty to him.”⁶⁷ First Lieutenant James Fendall on board the *Jamestown* received similar accolades for the actions of his detachment during the fight. In an official letter of commendation, the captain of the *Jamestown*, Lieutenant Joseph N. Barney, praised Fendall for “Devoting yourself with energy and application to the subject [of handling one of the great guns], you very soon brought your men to an excellence and thoroughness of drill highly creditable to yourself and to them. In the action of the 8th and 9th of March, the coolness, rapidity and precision with which your gun was handled was noticed by me, as well as a matter of remark with the officers of the ship.”⁶⁸

Soon after the engagement at Hampton Roads, Captain Thom relinquished his command to Captain John R. F. Tattnell. Thom had been wounded in the fight at Hampton Roads and subsequently sent to Mobile on recruiting duty until he could recover. On 17 April, Tattnell in turn relinquished his command of both Company C and as commander of the *Virginia*'s Marines to Captain Julius Ernest Meiere. The Marines of Company C continued to work the guns on their respective ships through several smaller actions until the sudden evacuation of Norfolk Navy Yard on 10 May 1862.⁶⁹

The surprise evacuation of Norfolk precipitated a chain of events that led to the first battle of Drewry's Bluff, and Company C played a central role in that action. With the evacuation, Thom's detachment on the *Confederate States* became assigned to Company B, since that unit had arrived in Norfolk in March to assume duties as the Marine guard for that post. The crew of the *Virginia*, following that ship's scuttling on 11 May, made their way up to Drewry's Bluff, carrying with them several of the ship's guns that were then emplaced to augment the bluffs' defenses. Soon after, as part of the plan to defend Richmond from Drewry's Bluff, the *Jamestown* also was deliberately sank as part of an obstacle belt across the James River and the ship's detachment also joined Meiere's men on shore. Those members of Company C not assigned to naval gun crews sited either ashore on the bluffs or on the deck of the *Patrick Henry* were then detailed to serve as sharpshooters along the riverbank, where they fought during the first battle for Drewry's Bluff on 15 May 1862.⁷⁰

Following their success at Drewry's Bluff, Meiere's company remained with the Marine battalion at that location, helping to improve the fortifications and encampment. On 20 September 1862, Meiere relinquished command of the company, most likely to Captain Thomas Wilson, and proceeded to Mobile to assume command of Company D located there. Meanwhile, Company C deployed as an element of the Marine battalion to Charleston from February to April 1863. In Charleston, the Marines experimented with methods of seizing enemy ships at sea and also participated in the defense of that city from a Union Navy attack on 7 April. After redeploying to Drewry's Bluff, that company resumed its garrison duties with the Marine battalion.⁷¹

In January 1864, Captain Wilson took a detachment of twenty-five Marines from the company to New Bern, North Carolina, for “special service” under Commander John Taylor Wood. Already well trained in the tactics and techniques of ship seizures, Wood’s select group of volunteers were organized into specialized boat teams, and armed with pistols and cutlasses. Wilson’s Marines also retained their rifles for more accurate, longer-range fires. The group departed aboard fourteen small boats on the night of 1-2 February 1864, with the intent of boarding and seizing a Union Navy vessel on blockade duty. Some time shortly after midnight on the 2nd, Wood’s men re-embarked their boats and pulled silently toward their target. At about 2:30 A.M., his raiding party boarded and gained control of the Federal warship *Underwriter*, but decided to set it aflame when they found that they could not get the ship underway quickly enough to evade return fire from nearby Union forts. Nonetheless, the mission was considered a bold and audacious success by both Confederate and Union naval leaders.⁷²

On returning to Drewry’s Bluff, Wilson again resumed command of Company C, and in mid-May 1864 his unit actively participated in the Second Battle of Drewry’s Bluff. During that action, the company functioned principally in an infantry role, manning a sector of the defensive fortification that surrounded the fort proper, most likely to the right of Company A, guarding the left wing of the Confederate positions. In early July 1864, the Marines of Company C also prepared for the battalion-sized raiding party to free and arm Confederate prisoners at Point Lookout, Maryland. On 11 July the two blockade-runners assigned to transport the raiding force got underway, but the raid

force commander, Colonel John Taylor Wood, received orders to cancel the mission and the disappointed Marines returned to Drewry's Bluff.⁷³

On 29 July, after their return from the aborted raid, Wilson posted a detachment to the raider *Tallahassee* (formerly named *Fingal* and *Atlanta*, also spelled *Atalanta*), a fast vessel built especially for blockade running. Its captain, Commander John Taylor Wood, proved equally as bold at sea as he did as a raider. The detachment commander, Lieutenant Edward Crenshaw, documented the adventure in his diary; leaving a rare, inside account of the interaction of the Marines with the rest of the crew during what became for the Confederates an exceptionally fruitful cruise. In his narrative, Crenshaw related his duties in the boarding of various vessels seized by Wood, and the role of Marines in controlling the captured ships' crews and passengers. He also recounted some of the negotiations that took place between Wood and the masters of captured vessels regarding the disposition of the vessels and their cargoes. On that cruise, lasting only three weeks (from 4 to 26 August), Wood's activities disrupted Union commerce along the eastern seaboard, capturing dozens of ships of all sizes.⁷⁴

Meanwhile, in Mobile, a sizeable number of Marines from Company D were captured during the surrender of the Confederate forces in Mobile Bay in early August 1864, leaving several pockets of surviving detachments in the area without officers. Intent on reorganizing the company as quickly as possible, on 18 August the Navy Department selected Captain Wilson to command the new unit. Fortunately for Wilson, several groups of captured Marines managed to escape from Federal custody in the interim and make their way back to Mobile, thereby facilitating the rapid reconstitution

of the company. In particular, the former company commander, Captain J. Ernest Meiere, and two of his lieutenants were among these surprise returnees, and the company was quickly returned to its former operational state, reinstating valuable trained men at a location where the Confederacy needed them. As a result, Wilson soon returned control of Company D to Meiere, and by 15 December 1864 had reassumed his command of Company C at Drewry's Bluff.⁷⁵

In the closing days of the war, Company C provided a small group of Marines led by Lieutenant James Thurston to prepare for a daring torpedo raid. The raid, under the command of Confederate Navy Lieutenant Charles Read, represented a bold attempt to infiltrate behind enemy lines with several specially constructed boats fitted with torpedoes, to attack the enemy's critical enemy naval supply base at City Point on the James River. Although risky, success on the part of the raiding party promised great reward for the South, and might have disrupted the logistics for Union General Ulysses Grant's Army that threatened Richmond. Certainly, the sinking of several transports and supply ships in the vicinity of City Point would have forced some adjustments in Grant's overall plans. The attempt was aborted when it was discovered that Union forces were aware of the effort, yet the daring adventure provides another example of the type of missions that Marines undertook during the war.⁷⁶

Alongside their sister unit, Company A, the men of Company C served in the Richmond area until its evacuation on 2 April 1865, then fought on as part of a composite naval unit until the surrender of General Lee's army at Appomattox on 9 April, when their official history came to an end.⁷⁷ To the end, their steadfast service

gained them both respect and recognition, a fitting eulogy to a unit that served throughout the war in some of the most notable campaigns and engagements of the conflict. The pattern of its employment provides further evidence of the inherent flexibility of the CSMC's structure. And, although the company served in fewer separate locations than either Company A or B, the officers and men of the unit demonstrated excellent initiative and ingenuity in adapting to new roles and missions, whether afloat or ashore (see Figure 5-9). The company's performance on ship is especially noteworthy, particularly during the first half of 1862. The Marine's met the challenges of sea duty head on, and fully integrated themselves into the gun crews aboard ships of the James River Squadron, adding materially to the combat power of the vessels. The Marines of Company C also mastered the difficulties of amphibious raiding, from their early start at Ship Island in July 1861, and continued to volunteer for special operations throughout the war.

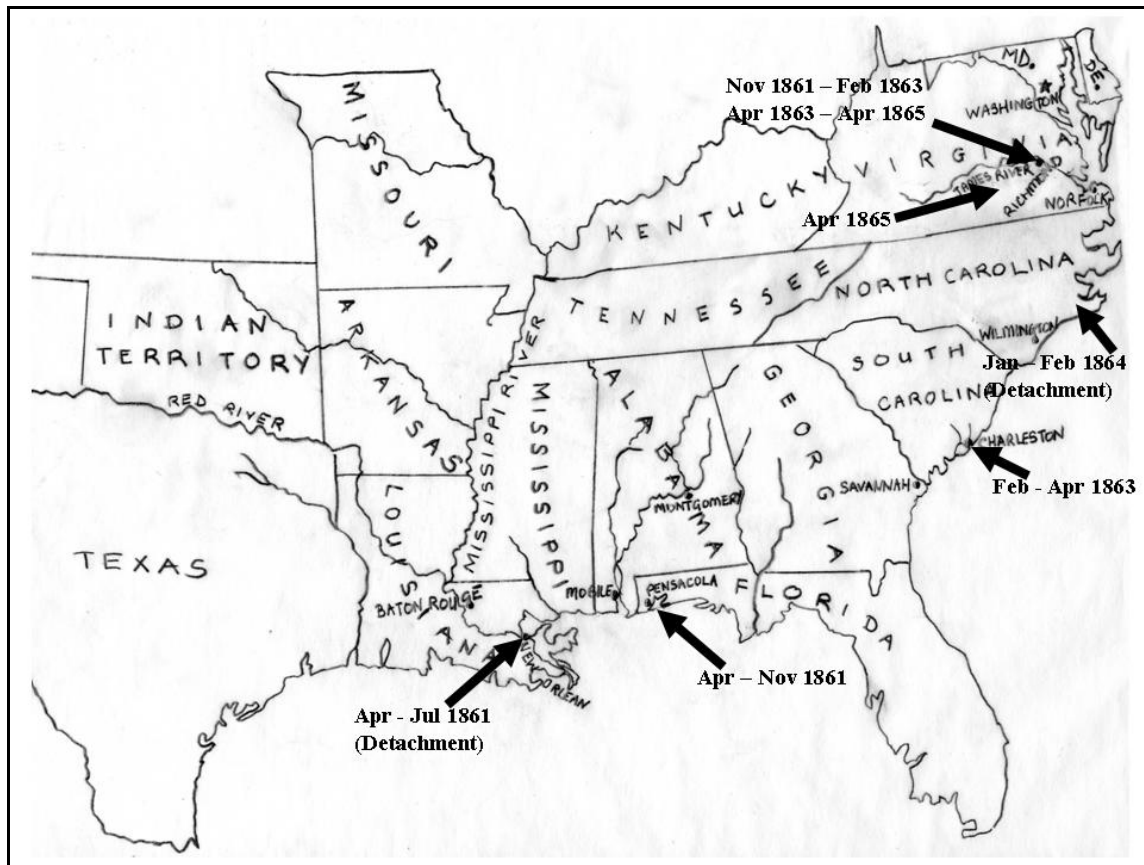


Figure 5-9. Map Showing the Deployments of Company C.⁷⁸

Discussion to this point has centered mainly on the activities of the first three separate Marine companies, in part because those units were operational from the beginning through the end of the war. However, the histories and patterns formed by the actions of two other Marine companies add to our overall understanding of the functioning of the Corps. In addition to the separate combat actions of these two companies, investigation and analysis of their activities suggest that the CSMC remained a high priority for the Confederate Navy throughout the war, and it follows that Marines were valued. This supposition is borne out by the fact that well into the war, some priority of increasingly scarce manpower and materiel continued to be allocated for the

creation of these new companies. Evidently, the requirements for additional Marine units outweighed competing demands. There are other unique aspects of the employment of these new units that will be examined in turn.

Although the CSMC never reached its authorized manpower level, it nonetheless continued to incrementally grow and expand as the war waged on. Fully a year after the war began, new CSMC companies were still being formed and committed to battle in response to new threats. One of those new companies was Company D, and that unit had one truly unique feature among the five separate Marine companies: it served the entire war from one location, Mobile, Alabama. Company D came into being as a direct result of a threatened enemy action. The surprise surrender of New Orleans in April 1862 generated great criticism about Mallory's leadership of the navy, and his political foes believed that he should have taken more positive action to prevent the capture of the busiest port in the South. With New Orleans now under Union control, public concern grew over preventing the same thing from happening to the port city of Mobile, suddenly the most critical port in the Gulf. Although Mallory had earlier deployed Company B from Pensacola to Mobile, McClellan's Peninsula Campaign, and the subsequent naval engagements around the mouth of the James River, forced him to transfer that company to Virginia to help defend the approaches to Richmond.⁷⁹

Quite possibly, Mallory's receipt of several reports that seemed to indicate that great progress was being made in the defense of New Orleans may have led him to wrongly conclude that there was no immediate threat to the Delta. His relocating of two of the three existent Marine companies to the James River area by March 1862 seems to

support this viewpoint. In any event, the sudden and surprisingly successful Federal strike against New Orleans appeared to catch him and many other Southern leaders off guard, and it looked to many as if Mobile might be the Union's next target. Mallory needed to take immediate action to reinforce that port, and he decided that part of that response would include the establishment of a new Marine company to support the Mobile Squadron. In June 1862, CSMC Headquarters in Richmond dispatched Lieutenant Calvin L. Sayre to Mobile to begin recruiting for a fourth company in that city.⁸⁰

Some time in early July 1862, Lieutenant James Fendall, a recent veteran of the naval engagements in Virginia aboard the *Jamestown*, joined Sayre in the effort to recruit a Marine company. Enlistment continued at a steady pace, possibly aided in part by the sense of urgency generated by recent enemy activities in New Orleans. To expedite the process of creating an additional company, on 20 September Mallory ordered one of his more experienced officers, Captain J. Ernest Meiere, to proceed to Mobile and assume command of what would soon be referred to as Company D. By 2 November 1862, Meiere reported his company strength at eighty-eight enlisted men; the majority assigned to several ships of the Mobile Naval Squadron, such as the Confederate ram *Baltic*, and the naval steamers *Gaines*, *Morgan*, and *Mary Wilson*. Onboard, the Marines were typically assigned to duties on the great guns, thereby increasing the combat power of the ship. By taking over gunnery duties, the Marines helped free up sailors for the increasingly complex tasks involved with the daily running

of ships in the age of steam. The Confederate Navy, always short of qualified technical help, seemed to appreciate the inclusion of skilled Marine gunners.⁸¹

For example, analysis of the muster roll for the *Baltic* reveals that the Marines comprised approximately one-third of the entire ship's complement, a significant percentage of the crew. Similarly, Marines made up about one-fifth of the total strength on the CSS *Morgan* and almost one-fourth of the men assigned to the ironclad ram *Tennessee*.⁸² These numbers are significant since Marines served in several of the Confederate Navy's ships. In fact, Marine detachments were often transferred from one ship to another in response to changing battle situations and as ships either entered or retired from battle, essentially having the effect of ensuring that Marines were rotated to ships with good chances of combat, further magnifying their significance. Because of the relative mobility of its Marine detachments, the Confederate Navy, despite being chronically undermanned, could still field a potent fighting force, at least where it mattered most: in contact with the enemy. As proof of this employment concept, there are historically few examples of detachments assigned or maintained on ships that seemed to have little immediate chance of combat.

The Marines of Company D served both afloat and ashore during the Battle for Mobile Bay in August 1864. Elements of the company not serving on ships fought as part of the garrison at Fort Gaines until its surrender on 7 August, and during the actions that took place at both Spanish Fort and Fort Blakely between 27 March and 11 April 1865. Survivors of these battles, some escaping from previous captivity or hospitalization and returning to active service, also fought in the last battles in Alabama

at Citronelle and the Nanna Hubba Bluffs, on 9 and 10 May 1865, respectively.⁸³ In this respect, the Mobile Marines hold the keen distinction of being the last CSMC unit to surrender in the war, a testament to their determined convictions and sense of duty.

The last of the five officially designated companies of the CSMC also came into existence in response to perceived threats to Southern naval interests. Its abbreviated history is nonetheless important to this study since it supports the thesis that the Confederate Navy valued the service of its Marines and allocated its scarce resources to raise new companies to fill gaps in the Corps' coverage. In the face of severe national shortages in men and materiel, Confederate military and political leaders still supported growth within the CSMC, and Company E's short history bears this out. It also reinforces the contention that naval leaders considered their Marines a national military asset and both formed and employed units accordingly to counter new national naval threats. Therefore, it follows that Marines were also viewed as a vital element in the pursuit of Confederate national naval strategy. As small as Company E's relative contributions were to the overall war effort, its existence alone is proof of some level of priority for the Marine Corps, particularly since its creation comes about almost two years into the war, when manpower and materiel shortages became commonplace.

In the winter of 1862, increased Union Navy activity off the coast of Georgia and South Carolina generated a requirement for Marines to again serve with the Savannah Squadron since the previous company had been transferred to Drewry's Bluff to augment that key position some months before. Accordingly, beginning on 8 November 1862, the Confederate Navy Department transferred about twenty-five Marines from

Company D in Mobile to Savannah, Georgia. The men were placed under the command of Marine Lieutenant James Thurston, and became the nucleus of a new company to support the Savannah Squadron. One of Thurston's first actions was to form and post a detachment to serve on the new Confederate ironclad *Atlanta*. Soon after, on 9 December, Captain John Tattnall arrived in Savannah to assume command of the Marines of that station and the growing detachment became officially known as Company E. And, on 31 December 1862, another twelve Marines joined the company from Mobile, bringing the total number of men to thirty-six. In January 1863, Tattnall began making trips to local conscript camps in search of qualified volunteers, and by the end of the month those efforts were beginning to bear fruit. The company grew to the point that when new Lieutenant Henry Graves arrived from his entry training at Drewry's Bluff on 2 February, Tattnall had enough men on hand to assign Graves his own detachment to serve on the ironclad *Savannah*, at that time still under construction in the yard. Graves began training his men for their duties and familiarizing them with the new ship, and also helped Tattnall with the task of recruiting. Graves soon proved to be a skilled recruiter in his own right, since his visits produced an influx of new Marines that by 20 April brought the company close to its authorized strength of 100 men.⁸⁴

Since the majority of the company consisted on new recruits, the company officers and noncommissioned officers worked tirelessly to prepare the men for their assignments. The enlistees trained for long hours every day except Sunday, focusing primarily on close order drill, mastering the basics of marksmanship, and running gun drills on board their assigned ships. The training soon paid off, since on 17 June the new

ironclad *Atlanta*'s detachment went into action. In their first run out to sea, Thurston's men manned two of the ship's 6.4 inch Brooke rifles in an unequal engagement with the Federal monitor *Weehawken*. In a bad turn of events for the Confederates, as the *Atlanta*'s captain attempted to close with his enemy, he ran his ship over a sandbar and grounded the ship within range of the enemy vessels' batteries, leaving her vulnerable to repeated bombardment by the *Weehawken*'s more powerful 15-inch guns. After trading shots for an hour and a half, the *Atlanta* remained fast aground under an increasingly effective battering by the *Weehawken*, forcing the captain to surrender soon afterward.⁸⁵

Captured, but not yet out of the fight, Lieutenant Thurston managed to escape from the Union prison at Fort Warren on 19 August 1863, but he was recaptured several weeks later. About a year later, Thurston gained a parole and returned back to the Richmond area by 1 October 1864 to rejoin the Confederate Marine Corps for duty. Of the twenty-seven men under his command who were captured off the *Atlanta*, about twenty-one of them returned to their post after their parole, a testament to the sense of duty and *esprit de corps* of the Savannah Marines.⁸⁶

As with other members of the Corps, the Marines of Company E became adept at a wide variety of tasks. On several occasions, Savannah Marines were assigned as escorts for large contingents of Union prisoners being transferred between posts. They also received assignments to guard naval stores and were used to help train Navy recruits. In addition to performing these more routine duties the Marines still retained their fighting edge, participating in such noteworthy missions such as the bold seizure of the Union warship *Water Witch* as it conducted blockading duty in Ossabaw Sound.

Toward the end of 1864, with the Federal Navy effectively bottling up the Savannah Squadron, the Marines assumed a more active role as infantrymen, serving in the city's defensive trenches during Union General Sherman's final push on Savannah during his famous "March to the Sea." In December 1864, Lieutenant Henry Graves, a participant in the defense, dryly remarked that the Marines "had splendid positions but not the men to hold them."⁸⁷ Finally, after dusk on 20 December all Confederate troops were ordered to withdraw. Graves's Marines solemnly marched to a nearby railhead and boarded trains that took them to Charleston. On the 21st, the crew and Marines of the *Savannah* scuttled their vessel and made their way overland, eventually linking up with their compatriots at Charleston. Because of the chaotic battle situation, Company E began to fragment. Some Marines made their way from Savannah to Augusta, Georgia aboard the CSS *Macon* only to end up manning an 8-inch Columbiad battery on Shell Bluff, a position that guarded the river approach to Augusta. Another detachment was dispatched to guard the Naval Ordnance Works in Charlotte, North Carolina.⁸⁸ By May, the war was over, and Confederate control over South Carolina and Georgia had disintegrated; as that control vanished, so did Company E.

In April 1865, as the Confederate army abandoned its defense of the capital city and withdrew toward the Appomattox River, the navy's ships and stations on the James River no longer needed. Mallory ordered all ships of the James River Squadron scuttled and its naval personnel integrated into General Lee's army. On 2 April 1865, as naval commanders carried out the orders calling for the destruction of the James River Squadron, they also formed an *ad hoc* Naval Brigade out of the sailors and Marine units

within the Richmond area. Company A and Company C joined one such Naval Brigade under the command of Commander John Tucker, while several Marine detachments from ships of the James River Squadron joined a smaller Naval Brigade under the command of Admiral Rafael Semmes. As Semmes' Naval Brigade moved toward Danville, Virginia to help cover the retreat of the Confederate government, Tucker's Naval Brigade joined General Lee's army and were assigned to General Richard Ewell's corps.⁸⁹

Company A reportedly fought as the rear guard of the Brigade, protecting the Confederate Army's main body as it withdrew from Richmond and made its way towards the Appomattox River. Company C provided support for their fellow Marines. On 6 April 1865, the Naval Brigade participated in a fierce battle along Saylor's Creek, and steadfastly held their ground against repeated charges from Union General Phillip Sheridan's troops. When other Confederate units fell back under the pressure, the Naval Brigade continued to fight, soon becoming an isolated pocket of resistance against the brunt of Sheridan's attack. As darkness closed in, the Federal forces completed their encirclement of the majority of the Naval Brigade, and Tucker then ordered its surrender. Some Marines managed to evade Union forces in the darkness and thick vegetation, and rejoined General Lee's Army, only to find themselves present among the troops at the surrender of Lee's forces at Appomattox Courthouse on 9 April 1865. Among the men of Company A were Lieutenant Henry McCune and twenty-one men of his detachment, Lieutenant Francis Cameron, and four other enlisted men of Company A. Company commander Captain Thomas Wilson, Lieutenant Richard Henderson, and

thirteen other enlisted men represented Company C at the surrender, formally closing that unit's history.⁹⁰

In summary, the Confederate Marines served the South well in a variety of missions and roles, fitting in where leaders decided they were most required. The flexibility afforded by its innovative adoption of a company-based structure allowed for rapid employment and redeployment of Marines throughout the South, giving naval leaders a unit that could be depended upon to react to sudden changes in the enemy situation. The South's Marines performed well wherever Confederate sailors met the enemy. They also cooperated effectively with army forces in places like Pensacola, Fort Fisher or Fort Gaines. And, in contrast to their Northern cousins, the CSMC embraced new technologies, tactics and techniques that could help them overcome the national shortages they faced in terms of manpower, material, and money.

The Confederacy was fortunate in that it inherited a fine group of Marine officers who embraced new ideas and concepts. Many of the CSMC's leaders had been raised under the tutelage of Commandant Henderson, and they carried many of those reforms South with them. As a result, the CSMC benefited from these men's expertise from its inception. These experienced leaders refused to be content with old, proven ideas, but felt comfortable in seeking and experimenting new solutions to new problems, creating an environment that supported innovation. In other words, the South's Marine Corps became both functionally and philosophically different from the Marine Corps of which it sprang. Within this new Corps, original ideas were not only welcome, but also expected. Furthermore, the CSMC's officers were not content to sit and wait for orders

from above, but seized every opportunity to push the Corps into new roles and missions. The company-grade officers exercised their initiative and worked closely with their local superior officers to ensure that the Marines became a valuable and highly desired component. In effect, the actions of these officers constituted a revolution from below; a movement to increase the value of Marines by becoming more relevant and skilled. In a war that generated dynamic changes in naval technology in a relatively short period of time, the capabilities to innovate and adapt were paramount. The CSMC met the challenges of modern naval warfare head on.

As further evidence of its innovative nature, the CSMC's adoption of its unique company-based structure predated its acceptance by the U.S. Marine Corps by several decades. The advantages of that system are many. It enabled Confederate leaders to manage their manpower and assets more effectively by assigning forces according to mission and enemy threat. Company structure allowed naval leaders to remotely assign Marines to locations where their service was needed and shift those assets as requirements changed. Additionally, the structure of the company gave it some degree of self-sufficiency, facilitating both the command and control of subunits and specialized logistical support to keep them combat ready. In this manner, the CSMC's organization and the operational concept of employment helped Secretary Mallory achieve both economy of force and concentration, two important principles of war.

This examination of CSMC operations at the battalion, company and detachment level illustrates the inherent advantages of the CSMC's organizational model over that of the pre-war U.S. Marine Corps structure. Adopting permanent companies as the base

level of command represented an innovative departure from the traditional Marine Corps model and afforded Confederate naval leaders increased options and maximum flexibility for employment of their forces.

Moreover, the analysis of the patterns of employment of the individual companies, and the timing of their formation, support the contention that Confederate leaders considered the CSMC to be an integral part of the navy, and a national military asset. It seems evident that the South's leaders valued the service of their Marines and consequently assigned some level of priority to raising and maintaining new companies, even in the face of crippling national shortages and sharp competition for resources. Finally, a critical examination of the histories of these unit's combat actions bears out a general commitment on the part of Marines collectively to accomplish their missions. One gains the sense that they reached even beyond their assigned tasks and exercised a collective initiative to do more than what was normally expected.

Endnotes

- ¹ Robert A. Brock, ed., “William Henry Chase Whiting,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* 26 (1898), 159.
- ² Brock, ed., “William Henry Chase Whiting,” 155-63, John Johns, “Wilmington During the Blockade,” *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* 33 (September 1866), 497-502; Edwin N. McClellan, “The Capture of Fort Fisher,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 4 (March 1920), 59-63; J. Thomas Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy, From Its Organization to the Surrender of Its Last Vessel* (New York: Rogers & Sherwood, 1887), 418-19.
- ³ Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 418-21.
- ⁴ “Diagram of Fort Fisher,” from U.S. Navy Department, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, 30 vols. and index (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894-1922), Series I, 11: 376 (hereafter referred to as *ORN*, and all citations are to Series I, unless otherwise noted).
- ⁵ Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 421.
- ⁶ Johns, “Wilmington During the Blockade,” 502; McClellan, “Capture of Fort Fisher,” 61-64; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 418-26; Clement A. Evans, ed., *Confederate Military History*, 12 vols. (Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Co., 1899), 12: 90-91, 4: 273-75.

⁷ Capt. Holmes resigned his commission as an officer of the U.S. Marine Corps on 28 February 1861, and on 29 March received a commission in the Confederate States Marine Corps, along with 1st Lt. Howell. See “Officers of the Marine Corps,” Microform Publication 1091 (*Subject File of the Confederate States Navy, 1861-1865*) (hereafter cited as M1091), Roll 16, Frame 34, Record Group (hereafter RG) 45 (Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (hereafter abbreviated as NA); B. K. Howell to Jefferson Davis, Washington, telegram, 27 February 1861, Jefferson Davis Papers, Reel 24, Frame 143, Tulane University, New Orleans, La.; New Orleans *Sunday Delta*, 7 April 1861, 3; Ralph Donnelly, *The Confederate States Marine Corps: Rebel Leathernecks* (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Publishing, 1989), 14. Beckett Howell also had the distinction of being the younger brother of Varina Howell Davis, the wife of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, a relationship which may have helped draw him some of the assignments he held in the CSMC. For more information on Howell, see Ralph Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches of the Commissioned Officers of the United States Marine Corps*, ed., David Sullivan (1973; 3rd ed., Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Books, 2001), 272.

⁸ Sec. of the [Confederate States] Navy Mallory to Capt. Van Benthuyzen, letter, 17 May 1861, Van Benthuyzen Papers, Tulane University, New Orleans, La. (hereafter referred to as Van Benthuyzen Papers).

- ⁹ New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, 5 May 1861, 6; *ibid.*, 7 May 1861, 6; Clothing Receipt Rolls, Entry 426 (Muster Rolls and Pay Rolls of Marine Detachments of the Confederate States Navy, July 1861- Dec. 1864), RG 45, NA; Voucher dated 12 May 1861, Van Benthuyzen Papers; Sec. of the [Confederate States] Navy Mallory to Capt. Van Benthuyzen, letter, 17 May 1861, Van Benthuyzen Papers; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 95-99; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 16-17.
- ¹⁰ Gen. Ord. No. 70, H.Q. Troops C.S. near Pensacola, Fla. (Bragg), 27 June 1861, Entry 265, RG 109, NA; “ZB” Biographical File of Lt. Raney, Marine Corps Historical Division, Quantico, Va. (hereafter MCHD); *ORN*, 1: 684-86.
- ¹¹ Spec. Ord. No. 237, paragraph 1, Headquarters, Troops C.S. near Pensacola, Fla., 18 September 1861, Entry 265 (Orders, Army of Pensacola, 1861-62), RG 109 (War Department Collection of Confederate Records), NA; U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. and atlas (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, 6: 29 (hereafter cited as *OR*, and all citations are to Series I, unless otherwise noted); *ORN*, 12: 295-98; “Muster Rolls, *etc.*, Confederate Vessels,” reprinted in *ORN* II, 1: 303, 305; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 89-91.
- ¹² Entries for 7 - 8 November 1861, “Account Book (of Ship’s Steward) C.S.S. *Savannah*,” Entry 419 (Muster Rolls and Pay Rolls of Vessels of the Confederate States Navy, May 1861-Apr. 1865), RG 45, NA; *ORN*, 12: 295-98; *OR*, 12: 297; *Savannah Republican*, 12 November 1861, 1; Voucher No. 70, C.S. Navy

Station, Savannah, Ga., 22 May 1862, Entry 419, RG 45, NA; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 89-91.

- ¹³ Spec. Ord. No. 158, Headquarters, Confederate States Marine Corps, 2 July 1863, M1091, "OV" File, RG 45, NA; Orders, Headquarters, Confederate States Marine Corps, 29 December 1863, M1091, "OV" File, RG 45, NA; Spec. Ord. No. 170, Hdqtrs., CSMC, 8 August 1863, M1091, "NV" File, RG 45, NA; "Muster Roll of Captain Holmes, Company A, CSMC, September 1 – October 31, 1864," Folder No. 9 (Marines Who Served Under Capt. George Holmes at Different Places, July, 1861 – December, 1864), Entry 426, RG 45, NA; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 282-84, 278-79; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 52-53.

- ¹⁴ John M. Coski, *Capital Navy: The Men, Ships, and Operations of the James River Squadron* (Campbell, Calif.: Savas Woodbury Publishers, 1996), 17.

- ¹⁵ *OR*, 14: 886-87, 907-08; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 685-87; Clement Evans, ed., *Confederate Military History*, 4: 420.

- ¹⁶ Edward Crenshaw, "Diary" (unpublished manuscript), Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Ala., Entries for Sunday, 3- Saturday, 9 July 1864, reprinted in part in Edward Crenshaw, "Diary of Captain Edward Crenshaw: July 1 – 17, 1864," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 1 (Winter 1930). 448-50 (hereafter referred to as "Crenshaw's Diary," with reference to other editions of the journal, as appropriate); *ORN*, 10: 721; *OR*, 40, pt. 3: 758-59; Royce Gordon Shingleton, *John Taylor Wood: Sea Ghost of the Confederacy*

(Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1979), 116-17; John Bell, *Confederate Seadog: John Taylor Wood in War and Exile* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co., 2002), 32-33; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 49-52, 109-11.

- ¹⁷ Spec. Ord. No. 67, Hdqtrs., CSMC, 8 August 1864, M1091, "NV" File, Miscellaneous, RG 45, NA; *ORN*, 10: 761-63, 757, 753-54; Coski, *Capital Navy*, 167-68.
- ¹⁸ Map of Southern states by Dianne G. Krivdo, 22 November 2006.
- ¹⁹ Report of the Secretary of the [Confederate States] Navy, 26 April 1862, in *ORN* II, 2: 53; Sec. Mallory to Capt. Van Benthuyzen, letter, 23 April 1861, Van Benthuyzen Papers; "Muster Roll of Capt. A. C. Van Benthuyzen's Company, From the First Day of November, 1861, to the First Day of January, 1862," Van Benthuyzen Papers.
- ²⁰ William Cooper, *Jefferson Davis, American* (New York: Random House, 2000), 340-42; Jefferson Davis to Braxton Bragg, Montgomery, Ala., letter, 3 April 1861, Braxton Bragg Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio, in Jefferson Davis, *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, eds., Lynda L. Crist, *et al.*, 11 vols. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971-), 7: 85-87 (hereafter referred to as eds., Crist, *et al.*, *Davis Papers*); Braxton Bragg to Jefferson Davis, Barrancas Barracks, Pensacola Harbor, letter, 7 April 1861, Braxton Bragg Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, in eds., Crist, *et al.*, *Davis Papers*, 7: 94-98; New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, Supplement, 24 April 1861, 5; Washington (D.C.) *Evening Star*, "Pensacola Affairs," 7 May 1861, 2.

- ²¹ “Officers of the Marine Corps,” M1091, RG 45, NA, 34; Montgomery (Ala.) *Weekly Mail*, 11 April 1861, 1; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 111; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 14-15; Mallory to Van Benthuisen, letter, 27 April 1861, Van Benthuisen Papers.
- ²² “Report of the Secretary of the [Confederate States] Navy,” 26 April 1862, in *ORN II*, 2: 53.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 2: 53; New Orleans *Delta*, 27 April 1861, 1; Sec. Mallory to Capt. Van Benthuisen, letter, 27 April 1861, Van Benthuisen Papers; “Report of Capt. A. C. Van Benthuisen,” document, 26 November 1861, Van Benthuisen Papers; “Muster Roll of Capt. A. C. Van Benthuisen’s Company, From the First Day of November, 1861, to the First Day of January, 1862,” Van Benthuisen Papers; Author’s analysis of Ralph Donnelly, *Service Records of Confederate Enlisted Marines* (New Bern, N.C.: Owen G. Dunn Co., 1979), 1-116, and the information contained in RG 45, NA.
- ²⁴ New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, 5 May 1861, 6; *ibid.*, 7 May 1861, 6; Voucher dated 12 May 1861, Van Benthuisen Papers; Sec. of the Navy Mallory to Capt. Van Benthuisen, letter, 17 May 1861, Van Benthuisen Papers.
- ²⁵ Quote from [Confederate States] Navy Department to Bragg, telegram, 26 June 1861, Braxton Bragg Papers, Western Reserve Historical Association.
- ²⁶ Papers Relating to the CSS *Sumter*, C.S.N. Miscellaneous Papers, Accession 438 (C.S.N. Miscellaneous Papers), Portfolio #10, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; “Payroll for Capt. Van Benthuisen’s Company,

C.S.M.C., for April – June 1861,” document, 30 June 1861, Van Benthuisen Papers; “Muster Roll of Capt. A. C. Van Benthuisen’s Company, From the First Day of November, 1861, to the First Day of January, 1862,” Van Benthuisen Papers; [Confederate States] Navy Department to Bragg, telegram, 26 June 1861, Braxton Bragg Papers, Western Reserve Historical Association; Gen. Ord. No. 70, Hdqtrs. Troops C.S. near Pensacola, Fla. (Bragg), June 27 1861, Entry 265, RG 109, NA; Spec. Ord. No. 168, Hdqtrs., Troops near Pensacola, Fla., 26 July 1861, Entry 265, RG 109, NA; “ZB” Biographical File of Henry B. Tyler, MCHD; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 95-99; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 17-18, 20-21.

- ²⁷ Drawing of CSS *Sumter*, by Clary Ray, Photo # NH 98, Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C., also available on Internet at:
 <<http://www.history.navy.mil/photos/images/h00001/h00098.jpg>>, last accessed 29 January 2006.
- ²⁸ “Report of Capt. A. C. Van Benthuisen,” document, 26 November 1861, Van Benthuisen Papers; “Report of Brig. Gen. Richard H. Anderson, C.S. Army,” 28 November 1861, in *OR*, 6: 494-95; Headquarters, Army of Pensacola, Near Pensacola, Fla., 4 December 1861, in *OR*, 6: 489-93; Gen. Ord. No. 130, Hdqtrs., Army of Pensacola, Near Pensacola, Fla., 4 December 1861, in *OR*, 6: 494.
- ²⁹ “Columbiad Guns of the Confederate Water Battery at Warrington, Fla. (Entrance to Pensacola Bay),” February 1861, photographed by W. O. Edwards or J. D.

Edwards of New Orleans, La., Photo no. 77-HL-99-1, Still Picture Branch, NA, also available on Internet at:

<http://www.archives.gov/research_room/research_topics/civil_war/civil_war_photos.html>, last accessed 30 June 2005. Although the photograph depicts Confederate soldiers manning the guns two months before Van Benthuisen's men arrived at Pensacola, there is a high probability that Company B assumed responsibility for one or more of these guns once it arrived in April 1861.

³⁰ Spec. Ord. No. 39, Hdqtrs., Army of Pensacola, near Pensacola, Fla., 13 February 1862, Van Benthuisen Papers; "Muster Roll of Capt. A. C. Van Benthuisen's Company, From the First Day of November, 1861, to the First Day of January, 1862," Van Benthuisen Papers; "Log of C.S.S. *Florida* (later *Selma*)," Entries for 1-8 March 1862, Accession 1542, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.; 2d Lt. Isaac S. Hyams, C.S. Inf., to Adjnt. & Inspr. Gen., Gosport (Norfolk), Navy Yard, 20 March 1862, Document 486-H-1862, Entry 12 (Letters Received, Adjutant & Inspector General), RG 109, NA.

³¹ "Report of Capt. John D. Simms, Comdg. Marine Battalion, to Col. Lloyd J. Beall, Comdt.," CSMC, Drewry's Bluff Battery, document, 16 May 1862, Van Benthuisen Papers; Stephen Sears, *To the Gates of Richmond: The Peninsula Campaign* (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1992), 88-92; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 38.

- ³² “Muster Roll for Company B, Confederate States Marine Corps, for the Month of December 1862,” Entry 426, RG 45, NA; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 688, 699; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 201.
- ³³ Richard E. Wood, “Port Town at War: Wilmington, North Carolina, 1860-1865,” (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1976), 183-84; William N. Still, Jr., “A Naval Sieve: The Union Blockade in the Civil War,” *Raiders and Blockaders: The American Civil War Afloat*, William N. Still, Jr., *et al*, eds. (Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s, Inc., 1998), 131-40.
- ³⁴ McClellan, “The Capture of Fort Fisher,” 61; Receipt for Clothing Turned Over to 2d Lt. J. C. Murdoch, CSS *Richmond*, 4 November 1863, M1091, “OV” File, Miscellaneous, RG 45, NA; “Quarterly Report of Stores Received and Disposed of Aboard CSS *Richmond* for the Quarter Ending 31 December 1863,” M1091, “OV” File, Miscellaneous, RG 45, NA; “ZB” Biographical File of Lieutenant Richard Henderson, MCHD; Spec. Ord. No. 27, Hdqtrs., CSMC, 7 March 1864, M1091, “NV” File, Miscellaneous, RG 45, NA; Spec. Ord. No. 24, Hdqtrs., CSMC, 22 February 1864, “ZB” Biographical File of Henry M. Doak, MCHD, Quantico, Va.; Henry M. Doak, “In the War Between the States” (unpublished manuscript memoir), Accession No. 266, H. M. Doak Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tenn. (hereafter cited as Doak Memoirs), 34-36. .

- ³⁵ Doak Memoirs, 34-36; Orders, Wilmington, N.C., 10 May 1864, "ZB" Biographical File of Henry M. Doak, MCHD; Raimundo Luraghi, *A History of the Confederate Navy* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 298-99.
- ³⁶ Lloyd J. Beall to Alfred C. Van Benthuyesen, Richmond, Va., telegram, 15 June 1864, Van Benthuyesen Papers; Lloyd J. Beall to Alfred C. Van Benthuyesen, Richmond, Va., telegram, 16 June 1864, Van Benthuyesen Papers; Spec. Ord. No. 54, Hdqtrs., CSMC, Richmond, Va., 16 June 1864, Van Benthuyesen Papers; Spec. Ord. No. 67, Hdqtrs., CSMC, 29 August 1864, "NV" File, Miscellaneous, M1091, RG 45, NA.
- ³⁷ "Crenshaw Diary," Entries for Wednesday, 6 July, Thursday, 7 July, Friday, 8 July, Saturday, 9 July, and Monday, 11 July 1864, 448-51; Davis to Col. J. Taylor Wood and Gen. G. W. C. Lee (Care of Gen. Whiting, Wilmington, N.C.), Richmond, telegram, 11 July 1864, in *OR II*, 7: 458.
- ³⁸ Coski, *Capital Navy*, 164-67; Spec. Ord. No. 46, Hdqtrs., CSMC, 25 May 1864, John K. Mitchell Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va.
- ³⁹ *ORN*, 3: 710-13; Doak Memoirs, 36-37; Luraghi, *History of the Confederate Navy*, 312; Shingleton, *John Taylor Wood*, 143; "List of Officers and Crew of the C.S.N. Battery Buchanan for the Month of December 1864," C.S. Navy Papers, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga.
- ⁴⁰ William Lamb, "Fort Fisher: The Battles Fought There in 1864 and '65," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 21 (1893), 269.

- ⁴¹ *ORN*, 11: 362-69; George W. Van Hoose, "The Confederate States Marine Corps," *Marine Corps Gazette* 13 (September 1928), 173; McClellan, "Capture of Fort Fisher," 61-63, 69; James C. Gasser, "Confederate Marines in the Civil War," (M.A. thesis, Alabama Polytechnic Institute, 1956), 86-87; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 417-18; Lamb, "Fort Fisher," 266-75.
- ⁴² *ORN*, 11: 362-69; Van Hoose, "The Confederate States Marine Corps," 173; McClellan, "Capture of Fort Fisher," 61-63, 69; Gasser, "Confederate Marines in the Civil War," 86-87; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 417-18; Lamb, "Fort Fisher," 266-75.
- ⁴³ *ORN*, 11: 362-69; Van Hoose, "The Confederate States Marine Corps," 173; McClellan, "Capture of Fort Fisher," 61-63, 69; Gasser, "Confederate Marines in the Civil War," 86-87; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 417-18; Lamb, "Fort Fisher," 266-75.
- ⁴⁴ *ORN*, 11: 364-69; McClellan, "The Capture of Fort Fisher," 70-74; Gasser, "Confederate Marines in the Civil War," 86-87; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 417-21.
- ⁴⁵ Sketch from Lamb, "The Defense of Fort Fisher," *Battles and Leaders*, 4: 644.
- ⁴⁶ *ORN*, 11: 364-69; Lamb, "Fort Fisher," 257-90; Lamb, "The Defense of Fort Fisher," *Battles and Leaders*, 4: 642-54; McClellan, "The Capture of Fort Fisher," 70-74; Gasser, "Confederate Marines in the Civil War," 86-87; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 118-19, Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 421-27.

- ⁴⁷ “Report of Rear –Admiral Porter, U.S.N.,” North Atlantic Squadron, U.S. Flagship *Malvern*, off Fort Fisher, 15 January 1865, in *ORN*, 11: 434-35, quote from 434.
- ⁴⁸ Quotes from *ibid.*, 11: 434 and 435.
- ⁴⁹ Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 99; “Detailed Report of Rear-Admiral Porter, U.S. Navy, Transmitting Lists of Casualties,” North Atlantic Squadron, U.S. Flagship *Malvern*, Off Fort Fisher, 17 January 1865, in *ORN*, 11: 436-42, quotes from 439 and 441.
- ⁵⁰ Porter to “My Dear Fox,” U.S. Flag Ship *Malvern*, Cape Fear River, N.C., letter, 21 January 1865, Gustavus Vasa Fox Collection, New York Historical Society, New York, N.Y., reprinted in James M. Merrill, “The Fort Fisher and Wilmington Campaign: Letters From Rear Admiral David D. Porter,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 35 (October 1958), 470-73, quote from 472.
- ⁵¹ Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 99.
- ⁵² *ORN*, 11: 364-65, 367-69, 372-73, 377-78, 439-40; Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 98-99; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 417-21. See also David M. Sullivan, *The United States Marine Corps in the Civil War*, 4 vols. (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Books, 2000), 4: 167-84, for an account of the controversy over Porter’s accusations. Despite several investigations and scores of statements from participants that the Marines performed honorably during the attack, Porter continued to assert that U.S. Marine leadership was responsible for the failure of the seaward attack. See David Dixon Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War*, 2 vols. (New York: Sherman, 1886), especially 716.

⁵³ For example, Lieutenant Murdoch, captured on 15 January 1865 at Fort Fisher, regained his freedom by being exchanged for a Union prisoner some time before 6 March. On 31 March, Murdoch and a party of twenty men under the command of Confederate Navy Master John C. Brain captured the schooners *St. Mary's* and *J.B. Spafford* in Chesapeake Bay, actions that can be taken as evidence of the audacious and tenacious spirit of Marines at that late stage in the war. See Murdoch to 1st Auditor of the Treasury, Richmond, Virginia, letter, 6 March 1865, "ZB" File of J. Campbell Murdoch, M1091, RG 45, NA; *ORN*, 5: 540-42, 537-38. As another example, Lt. Doak subsequently joined Tucker's Naval Brigade, fought at Saylor's Creek, evaded capture there, and eventually surrendered at Appomattox with General Lee's forces on 9 April. See "Crenshaw's Diary," Entries for Sunday, 5 March and Tuesday, 7 March 1865, reprinted in part in Crenshaw, "Diary of Captain Edward Crenshaw of the Confederate States Army," *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 2 (Fall 1940), 381; Doak Memoirs, 42-44; *OR*, 47, pt. 3: 652.

⁵⁴ For example, Capt. Van Benthuisen, despite being seriously wounded in the head during the final fight at Fort Fisher and hospitalized afterward, gained an exchange on 25 February and made his way back to Richmond by 6 March. Beginning on 3 April, Van Benthuisen and another of his Company B officers, Lt. David Bradford, participated in the evacuation of the Confederate White House, guarding the executive and treasury trains for about a month as they dodged pursuing Federal cavalry. Van Benthuisen, Bradford, two of Van

Benthuisen's brothers (both of them Confederate Army officers), and several others accompanied Jefferson Davis' party as it fled south, yet Bradford parted from the group on 3 May near Washington, Georgia. Detailed by Davis to proceed separately to the Trans-Mississippi Department, Bradford received last-minute orders and \$300 in gold for his services, and immediately left on his secret mission. Soon afterward, on 6 May, the presidential party split up near Sandersonville, Georgia, and the Van Benthuisen brothers and several other officers took over the escort duties for the president's baggage train, still carrying the remainder of the Confederate Treasury's gold. The treasure train proceeded on a separate route until 23 May, when several officers decided that the Confederate government had ceased to exist and elected to divide up the remaining treasury funds. Accordingly, Capt. Van Benthuisen and each of the remaining escorts received 400 gold sovereigns at an estimated value of about \$1,940 apiece, plus an additional \$55 for travel expenses. Their military service now ended, the Van Benthuisen brothers made their way home to New Orleans and became local businessmen. See "Crenshaw's Diary," Entries for Sunday, 5 March and Tuesday, 7 March 1865; M[icajah]. H. Clark, "The Last Days of the Confederate Treasury and What Became of Its Specie," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 9 (1881), 550; "The Confederate Treasure – Statement of Paymaster John F. Wheless," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 10 (1882), 141; Capt. M[icajah] H. Clark [Acting Treasurer] to B[urton] N. Harrison, letter, 26 August 1867, Harrison Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.;

Jefferson Davis, *Private Letters, 1823-1889*, ed., Hudson Strode, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 148; Alfred J. Hanna, *Flight Into Oblivion* (Richmond: Johnson Publishing Co., 1938), 85, 108-23; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 57, 136, 274-75. See also William C. Davis, *An Honorable Defeat: The Last Days of the Confederate Government* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 2001), 290, 337-40. Davis presents a more cynical appraisal of the actions and intentions of Watson Van Benthuyzen, brother of Marine Capt. Alfred C. Van Benthuyzen.

⁵⁵ Map of Southern states by Dianne G. Krivdo, 22 November 2006.

⁵⁶ "Officers of the Marine Corps," M1091, Frame 34, RG 45, NA; Augusta (Ga.)

Chronicle and Sentinel, 22 February 1861, 3; Montgomery (Ala.) *Weekly Mail*, 11 April 1861, 1; Mexican War Service Record of Reuben T. Thom, Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served during the Mexican War, RG 94 (Records of the Adjutant General's Office), NA; Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army: From Its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903*, 2 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 2: 953; Mexican War Pension Application, 12886, Certificate 12336, NA; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 243, 111; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 14-15; Mallory to Van Benthuyzen, letter, 27 April 1861, Van Benthuyzen Papers.

⁵⁷ Sec. of the [Confederate States] Navy Mallory to Capt. Van Benthuyzen, letter, 17 May 1861, Van Benthuyzen Papers; Clothing Receipt Rolls, Entry 426, RG 45, NA; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 243.

- ⁵⁸ “Report of Maj. Gen. Twiggs, C.S. Army,” New Orleans, 12 July 1861, in *ORN*, 16: 581-82; “Report of Commander Smith, U.S. Navy, Commanding U.S.S. *Massachusetts*,” Off Chandeleur Island, 9 July 1861, reprinted in *ORN*, 16: 581.
- ⁵⁹ “Report of Maj. Gen. Twiggs, C.S. Army,” New Orleans, 12 July 1861, in *ORN*, 16: 581-82; “Report of Commander Smith, U.S. Navy, Commanding U.S.S. *Massachusetts*,” Off Chandeleur Island, 9 July 1861, reprinted in *ORN*, 16: 581; *Richmond Dispatch*, 23 July 1861, *ORN*, 16: 583; “Account of Lieutenant Warley,” Microform Publication 1091, Roll 13, Frames 667-73, RG 45, NA; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 18-19; also Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 273.
- ⁶⁰ M1091, “OV” File, Miscellaneous, RG 45, NA; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 91-94.
- ⁶¹ Quote from “Report of Brig. Gen. Richard H. Anderson, C.S. Army, Commanding Expedition,” Pensacola, Fla., 23 October 1861, in *OR*, 6: 463.
- ⁶² *Augusta [Ga.] Chronicle and Sentinel*, 19 October 1861, 1; *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 19 October 1861, 1; *OR*, 6: 438-55; “Reports of Maj. Gen. Braxton Bragg, C.S. Army, Commanding at Pensacola, with Congratulatory Orders,” Barrancas, 9 October 1861, in *OR*, 6: 458-60; “Report of Brig. Gen. Richard H. Anderson, C.S. Army, Commanding Expedition,” Pensacola, Fla., 23 October 1861, in *OR*, 6: 460-63; *OR* II, 3: 187, 759, 764, 770-71; *OR* II, 1: 78-79, 97-98.

- ⁶³ Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 14-27; Coski, *Capital Navy*, 5-11; Gen. Ord. No. 131, paragraph 1, Hdqtrs., Army of Pensacola, 26 November 1861, Entry 265, RG 109, NA;
- ⁶⁴ Entries for 6 and 7 December 1861, "Letter Book, II, Gosport Dockyard," F. Forrest Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C. (hereafter F. Forrest Papers), 121-24; "Company of Marines," Petersburg *Express* article reprinted in Washington (N.C.) *Dispatch*, 17 December 1861, 4; French Forrest to Thos. P. Gwynn, CSMC, letter, 9 December 1861, F. Forrest Papers; "ZB" Biographical File of Lt. James R. Y. Fendall, MCHD; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 87; Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 67, 87, 96, 244; Coski, *Capital Navy*, 12;
- ⁶⁵ There are many accounts of the engagement at Hampton Roads of 8-9 March 1862 and especially the duel between the *Monitor* and the *Virginia* (formerly *Merrimack*) on 9 March. Sources include: Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 145-76; John Taylor Wood, "First Fight of the Iron-Clads," *Century* 29 (March 1885), 738-54; *ORN*, 7: 3-61.
- ⁶⁶ Map from *ORN*, 7: 2B.
- ⁶⁷ Quote from *ibid.*, 7: 47.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 7: 43-47; *OR*, 11, pt. 3: 505; Quote from J. N. Barney to Lt. Fendall, CSS *Jamestown*, James River, letter, 29 April 1862, copy in "ZB" Biographical File of James R. Y. Fendall, MCHD; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 36-40.
- ⁶⁹ Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 131, 226, 244.

⁷⁰ *ORN*, 7: 56, 58, 748; *OR*, 6: 401, 407; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 636; Spec. Ord. No. 39, Hdqtrs., Army of Pensacola, Near Pensacola, Fla., 13 February 1862, Van Benthuyzen Papers; 2d Lt. Isaac S. Hyams, C.S. Inf., to Adj. & Insp. Gen., Gosport (Norfolk) Navy Yard, 20 March 1862, document 486-H-1862, Entry 12, RG 109, NA; “After-action Report of Capt. John D. Simms, CSMC,” Drewry’s Bluff, document, 16 May 1862, Van Benthuyzen Papers.

⁷¹ Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 131, 286-87; Personal Statement of Capt. J. Ernest Meiere, 10 February 1864, in “Day Book of the Commanding Officer, C.S.M.C., Mobile, Alabama” (Unpublished Letter Book of Capt. J. Ernest Meiere, CSMC, 2 October 1862 – 7 June 1864), Probate Court of Mobile County, Alabama (hereafter referred to as Meiere, “Day Book”); Spec. Ord. No. 281, Adjutant and Inspector General’s Office, Richmond, Va., 1 December 1862, copy in *ibid.*; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 688-99; *ORN* I, 9: 451-54.

⁷² A more detailed account of this operation may be found in CHAPTER III of this thesis; good primary source accounts of this action include: Loyall, “Capture of the *Underwriter*,” 136-44; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 122-24, 395-401; *ORN*, 9: 452-55; and *ORN*, 15: 496-501.

⁷³ *ORN*, 9: 451-54; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 688, 699; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 49-52; “Crenshaw Diary,” Entries for Sunday, 3- Saturday, 9 July 1864, 448-50; *ORN*, 10: 721; *OR*, 40, pt. 3: 758-59; Shingleton, *John Taylor Wood*, 116-17; Bell, *Confederate Seadog*, 32-33; Donnelly, *Rebel*

Leathernecks, 109-11. A more detailed account of this operation is found in Chapter III of this thesis.

⁷⁴ “Crenshaw’s Diary,” Entries from Friday, 29 July 1864 to Friday, 19 August 1864, reprinted in part in “Diary of Captain Edward Crenshaw of the Confederate States Army,” *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 2 (Spring 1940), 54-69; Shingleton, *John Taylor Wood*, 121-42.

⁷⁵ *OR*, 52, part 2: 744; Spec. Ord., 16 August 1864, “OV” File of J. Ernest Meiere, MCHD; Marine Corps Entries in “Auxiliary Register No. 4, New Orleans, La.,” Entry 379 (August 1864, Captures), 19-20, RG 109, NA; *Mobile Advertiser and Register*, 29 September 1864, 1; Meiere to “Hon. Wm. H. Seward, Secretary of State,” Easton, Maryland, letter, 28 June 1865, Pardon and Amnesty Records, RG 94, NA; Spec. Ord., 15 December 1864, M1091, “OV” File of J. Ernest Meiere, RG 45, NA; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 82-85;

⁷⁶ “Crenshaw’s Diary,” Entry for Thursday, 2 February 1865, edited and reprinted in “Diary of Captain Edward Crenshaw of the Confederate States Army,” *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 2 (Fall 1940), 376; Ralph Donnelly, “A Confederate Navy Forlorn Hope,” *Military Affairs* 28 (Summer 1964), 73-78.

⁷⁷ *OR*, 46, pt. 1: 906, 947, 980; Morris Schaff, *Sunset of the Confederacy* (Boston: J.W. Luce and Company, 1912), 106-08; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 745-49; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 57-62.

⁷⁸ Map of Southern states by Dianne G. Krivdo, 22 November 2006.

- ⁷⁹ Spec. Ord. No. 39, Hdqtrs., Army of Pensacola, Near Pensacola, Fla., 13 February 1862, Van Benthuyzen Papers; 2d Lt. Isaac S. Hyams, C.S. Inf., to Adj. & Insp. Gen., Gosport (Norfolk) Navy Yard, 20 March 1862, Document 486-H-1862, Entry 12, RG 109, NA; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 38, 68-69. Company B served in Mobile for less than a month, from 13 February to some time prior to 11 March 1862, when it arrived at Gosport Navy Yard in Virginia.
- ⁸⁰ Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*, 67-71. For more information regarding Mallory's perceptions of the status of the defense of New Orleans prior to its fall, see Durkin, *Confederate Navy Chief*, 205-11; Luraghi, *History of the Confederate Navy*, 125-32, 155-61.
- ⁸¹ Capt. J. Meiere to Maj. I. Greene, Adj., CSMC, Mobile, letter, 2 October 1862, Ralph Donnelly Papers, MCHD; "Bounty Payment Roll for Marines Enlisted at Mobile, Alabama, 3rd Quarter, 1862," in Meiere, "Day Book;" Gen. Ord. No. 29, Hdqtrs., CSMC, 20 September 1862, in *ibid.*; Capt. J.E. Meiere, C.S.M.C., to Col. Lloyd J. Beall, Commandant, CSMC, Marine Barracks, Mobile, 2 November 1862, in *ibid.*; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 69-73; Capt. J.E. Meiere, C.S.M.C., to Paymaster Richard T. Allison, C.S.M.C., Mobile, letter, 15 December 1862, in Meiere, "Day Book."
- ⁸² Comparisons of numbers of Marines to sailors aboard select ships of the Mobile Squadron come from "Muster Rolls, etc., Confederate Vessels," reprinted in *ORN II*, 1: 280-81, 292-93; and "Office Memo," Letters for 3rd Qtr. 1864, (Miscellaneous Records and Orders, Papers of Paymaster Thomas R. Ware, RG

45, NA (hereafter referred to as “Ware Papers”), partially reprinted in Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 79.

⁸³ *ORN*, 21: 584-85, 590; *ORN*, 22: 102; Marine Corps Entries, in “Auxiliary Register No. 4, New Orleans,” Entry 379, 19-20, RG 109, NA; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 80-86.

⁸⁴ Spec. Ord. No. 288, paragraphs 1 and 12, 9 December 1862, Entry 12, RG 109, NA; Lt. Henry Graves, CSMC, to “My Dear Mother,” letter, Savannah, Ga., 5 February 1863, Graves Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C., reprinted in Richard Harwell, ed., *A Confederate Marine: A Sketch of Henry Lea Graves with Excerpts from the Graves Family Correspondence, 1861-1865* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: Confederate Publishing Company, 1963), 119-20, quote from 119 (hereafter referred to as Harwell, ed., *Graves Correspondence*); Lt. Henry Graves, CSMC, to “My Dear Mother,” letter, 23 May 1863, in *ibid.*; *Savannah Republican*, 20 April 1863; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 91-94.

⁸⁵ *ORN*, 14: 699-700; Evans, ed., *Confederate Military History*, 2: 418-19; *ORN II*, 2, pt. 2: 255-60; *ORN*, 14: 111, 291.

⁸⁶ *Augusta (Ga.) Daily Chronicle and Sentinel*, 5 September 1863; *OR II*, 7: 685-86; *Charleston Mercury*, 24 October 1864, 2, Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 95.

⁸⁷ Quote from Henry L. Graves, to Mrs. Sarah D. Graves, letter, 28 December 1864, in Harwell, ed., *Graves Correspondence*, 124.

⁸⁸ Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 94-100; Henry L. Graves, to Mrs. Sarah D. Graves, letter, 28 December 1864, in Harwell, ed., *Graves Correspondence*, 124-27.

⁸⁹ *OR*, 46, pt. 1: 906, 947, 980; Schaff, *Sunset of the Confederacy*, 106-108; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 745-49; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 57-62.

⁹⁰ See Chapter IV for a description of the action at Saylor's Creek. Also, *OR*, 46, pt. 1: 906, 947, 980; Schaff, *Sunset of the Confederacy*, 106-108; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*, 745-49; Evans, ed. *Confederate Military History*, 4: 420; Donnelly, *Rebel Leathernecks*, 57-62.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Anticipating that the Confederate Navy would need a corps of Marines, Southern leaders created the Confederate States Marine Corps (CSMC). As a result of several factors, that unit evolved into a unique organization to meet special wartime challenges. The CSMC contributed in a number of significant ways to the South's war effort, and its leaders both appreciated and commended its service during the American Civil War. Despite its achievements, little effort has been made over the intervening years to either understand or analyze the Corps' many contributions. Consequently, few military historians have realized the variety or significance of the CSMC's actions, or how it fit into the history of the war. This thesis argues that the historical importance and relevance of the CSMC to the Confederacy, and the contributions of its men toward the development of the Marine Corps as a military force is under-appreciated by historians.

From the CSMC's very inception, Southern leaders designed it for a specific purpose, unique to their needs. This is evident from their deliberate departure from the traditional U.S. Marine Corps structural model, investing time and effort instead to configure their Corps differently. The easiest solution would have been to simply adopt a version of the USMC's structure, yet it seems clear that Confederate leaders were not content with that approach. They instead invented a more flexible and adaptable organization that best met their perceived requirements for their new navy. Although specific records of the deliberations that went into the creation of the CSMC have not yet

been discovered, and may not have survived the war, other historical documentation provides some insight into the advantages of the CSMC's makeup and how it fit within the Confederate naval strategy.

Those advantages inherent in the South's Marine Corps structure seem clear. The innovative organizational model provided the Confederacy with a naval military unit that fulfilled a requirement for flexibility by being capable of employment in a variety of configurations. Options included committing Marines as a battalion, as separate companies, as detachments, or even as some combination of all of these. Comprehensively examining the CSMC's record of service strongly supports the conclusion that Confederate leaders continuously exercised this inherent operational flexibility to maximum advantage during the war. And, as the war progressed, many changes were made to their tactical and operational employing of the Corps' elements, continuously matching their Marine assets to the requirements facing them. Southern leaders repeatedly allocated their Marines on a national level based on their estimation of operational needs in specific theaters and reallocated them in response to changes in their assessment. Therefore, Marine units spent most of the war in active contact with the enemy, forward deployed to locations with a high likelihood of combat.

On several occasions, Confederate leaders formed Marine battalions, committing them to defend priority objectives. Some of these deployments were notable for the successes achieved, with Marines contributing to the defeat of significantly stronger enemy forces. During these operations, Marine battalions served under both army and navy commands, providing further evidence of the joint nature of their mission. In

rising to the demands of being employed in multiple ways, the performance of the Marine battalions provides a testament to the readiness and adaptability of Marine leaders and men in their responding as an expeditionary unit. For example, during Union General George McClellan's Peninsular Campaign of 1862, the Confederates created an *ad hoc* Marine battalion out of several companies and detachments and immediately committed it at Drewry's Bluff to defend the capital of Richmond. Despite the hasty nature of its forming, the CSMC battalion met the challenge and quickly organized for combat. Its men served in several roles, constituting an important element of the joint defensive force, and performed well in a desperate fight against a superior Federal naval force. The Marine battalion helped to turn back the Union drive, seal off the Upper James River to the enemy, and achieve a timely victory.¹

Southern leaders also detailed Marine battalions to accomplish offensive missions. One notable example is their planning to use a battalion as an assault element in an amphibious raid in June 1864. Hoping to land an amphibious force behind enemy lines to attack and free Confederate prisoners of war, southern leaders assigned the Marine battalion to secure a beachhead and attack Union troops guarding the prison camp. Although President Jefferson Davis regretfully cancelled the raid at the last moment, the scope of the assignment is indicative of the level of trust and confidence that the Confederacy's senior leaders possessed in the performance and capabilities of their Marines.²

However, the most important characteristic in the South's employing of its Marines is found in its incorporation of permanent companies into the structure of the

Corps. This organizational trait makes the CSMC a truly unique American Marine unit and imparted it with certain operational advantages over its Northern cousin, which had no formal structure at all and did not form permanent companies or battalions until the Spanish-American War, almost half a century later.³ Although both American Marine Corps fielded *ad hoc* battalions during the war, the South's organizing of its Marines into permanent companies helped to stabilize its personnel at the small-unit level, increasing the cohesion of the unit beyond that experienced within the USMC. Quite often men remained with the same company for the duration of the war. Personnel stability has long been recognized as one of the factors that add to a particular unit's combat effectiveness. Within the CSMC, the company became the base unit of organization, the unit to which men were assigned to first, and could then be further allocated in detachments. Additionally, these same companies comprised the basic building block for the forming of *ad hoc* battalions, created by the simple expedient of assigning two or more companies under a battalion command element composed generally of headquarters personnel. Therefore, the creating and employing of permanent companies added great flexibility, responsiveness and adaptability to the organization, and the Confederates made maximum use of those attributes.

Analysis of the South's pattern of employing its Marines indicates that its leaders deployed individual Marine companies and detachments to critical areas, allocating the CSMC's combat power on a national level by applying it selectively to specific locations where Marines were most needed. A good example of this methodology in action can be seen in the forming and employing of a separate company for service at Mobile Bay

following occupation of New Orleans by the Union navy. With the sudden loss of New Orleans, southern leaders felt compelled to reinforce Mobile to forestall that port's fall to a similar fate. The formation of a new Marine company at that location became part of that effort. Similarly, when it seemed likely that Union forces would soon attack Wilmington in late 1864, naval leaders relocated a Marine company to that location to augment its defense. The Wilmington Marines reinforced Confederate defenders at Fort Fisher just in time to help repel the first assault on that strongpoint by a large-scale joint Union amphibious force. The CSMC companies' contributions were commended and credited with helping to defeat the Federal attack. Although the fort fell to a second, stronger assault by Federals less than a month later, the Confederate Marines again proved valuable in the desperate fight that ensued.

Additionally, the CSMC assigned some companies to directly support the operations of specific naval squadrons, particularly those most actively engaged with the enemy. Depending on the needs of the squadron commander, company commanders would often form smaller detachments to serve aboard select Confederate Navy warships. Usually, the company commander would position himself and some of his men aboard the squadron flagship, where he could both continue to coordinate with the naval commander and control the training and performance of his detachments. Often, detachments were transferred between vessels as one ship might be removed from service because of enemy action or maintenance, allowing the commander to maintain the majority of his men where they would be most likely to engage the enemy.

In combat, Confederate Marines were commonly employed either as

infantrymen, as artillery gunners, or even as a combination of the two roles. Marines also served on occasion with the Confederate Torpedo Service, participating in several raids and expeditions with specialists from that field. With regard to their role as naval artillerymen, Marines served as gunners on both shore and shipboard batteries. Ashore, Southern Marines operated naval artillery at Pensacola, Drewry's Bluff, Mobile, Savannah, Fort Fisher, and other locations. At each of these posts, the gunners proved to be an important element in the defensive scheme. Afloat, naval commanders frequently assigned their Marines to command and man shipboard gun batteries, where they demonstrated themselves to be both proficient at those duties and active contributors in each ship's combat actions. For instance, Marines directed and operated gun batteries on at least three of the Confederate warships that took part in the famous engagements off the Hampton Roads in Virginia in March 1862. Marines also served proudly on all but one of the Confederate cruisers, helping them strike fear into Federal merchant ships in all the oceans of the world. On the cruisers, Marines not only manned guns, but also formed boarding parties that seized and guarded the passengers and crews of hundreds of captured Union merchant vessels.

Of course, Federal Marines also served as naval artillerymen on select Union ships. However, where the employing of Southern Marines as gunners seemed an almost routine practice in the Confederate Navy, the use of Northern Marines in that same role within the Union Navy became a more controversial and often contentious matter. Historian Allan Millett notes that Union "ships captains assigned Marines as gun crews as a matter of expediency, not as Navy Department policy. Many [Federal]

vessels survived without Marine gunners. Moreover, the vast majority of Navy vessels that participated in the war did not carry guards at all, and others had only a sergeant's guard of ten to twenty men."⁴ This is almost the exact opposite of the experience of the Confederate Marines, who were actively solicited for shipboard combatant service.

The reasons for this difference may be found in the attitudes of each service's officers regarding their views on their role as Marines. Although Northern Marines experienced arguably their greatest successes as gunners aboard navy warships, many USMC officers sought to deliberately distance their men from such duties, preferring instead to conduct more mundane and less practical tasks as shipboard guards. In combat, some Federal Marines continued to advocate the time-honored, yet increasingly archaic, mission of providing sharpshooters to fire on the officers and gunners of the opposing ship, a tactic that became increasingly impractical as both navies embraced ironclad ships and high-velocity naval cannon. Some Federal Marine officers even went so far as to openly question the need for their Corps' continued close association with the navy at all, causing further friction between the leaders of the two Northern naval services.⁵ No evidence has been uncovered that Confederate Marines enjoyed similar views. In fact, accounts support the thesis that CSMC officers actively sought duty as gunners, and Confederate naval officers appreciated and encouraged such service.

Similarly, there were apparent differences between the two Marine Corps regarding their assignments to shore batteries. Although Southern Marines were routinely assigned duties manning shore-based artillery batteries, there seems to be no reference made to Northern Marines being employed in an equivalent capacity.

Confederate Marines embraced this role, and their performance in these duties was both appreciated and commended at the highest levels of their government. Furthermore, such assignments were made irrespective of the size of the unit, whether it be battalion, company or detachment strength. When in battalion strength, the Marines seemed to always employ at least one company as gunners, with the remainder fulfilling infantry roles, a clear example of mastery of modern combined arms principles. For example, during the CSMC's first battalion employment, to Pensacola in early 1861, Company B manned a battery of ten-inch Columbiads, and Companies A and C served as infantrymen in the defensive fortifications. At the First Battle at Drewry's Bluff in May 1862, Marines from Company C operated several naval artillery pieces that had been salvaged from ships of the James River Squadron while Company B served as sharpshooters along the river bank to harass the enemy and repel attempts to land troops. Furthermore, the Marines of Company B, during their deployment in late 1864 to Fort Fisher, manned several naval guns sited at Battery Buchanan, then served also as a reaction force to repel assaulting Union troops. Similarly, there are several examples of detachments manning shore batteries, usually after the ship on which it served became disabled or ineffective. Evidently, naval artillery training and gunnery were required skills for most Marines in the CSMC, in addition to training as infantrymen.

The CSMC's unique company-based structure facilitated both the rapid concentration of forces and their subsequent redeployment to new areas of interest. Companies from several separate locations could be quickly retasked and organized into *ad hoc* battalions when needed. Alternatively, when Marines were no longer required in

a specific area, or when faced with multiple priorities, leaders could rapidly break up the battalion into separate company units and redeploy them appropriately according to the situation at hand. This particular concept of operations facilitated both the swift massing of Marine units and the achieving of economy of force: two important principles of war that helped the South better manage its smaller military resources.

Under this concept, the company headquarters not only supported its detachments logistically and administratively, but also allocated its resources to meet the needs of the area commander to which it was assigned. Analysis of company and detachment operations supports the contention that this method of employment was an efficient system. The company commander developed, prioritized and instituted standardized training for his men, and supervised them in their duties. Each company also served as a base for initial recruiting and training, and with the presence of a battalion structure to help support higher-level training it became easy to establish a degree of commonality and cohesion throughout the Corps. Although the USMC undoubtedly attained some similar degree of these characteristics, the permanence of the CSMC's company-based assignments and its employment model seems more effective. The combination of all these features, amply evident through the accounts of company employments during the war, made the CSMC an agile and versatile unit.

Outside of its differences in structure, the CSMC owed much to the Federal Marines. From that unit the CSMC gained many of its officers and senior enlisted men, many of whom had acquired valuable experience in its service that directly benefited the new Corps. Most of the officers had commanded Marines afloat in expeditionary-type

operations of varying scale and scope throughout the oceans of the world. Some had worked closely with the USMC's venerable and prescient commandant, Archibald Henderson, in the decade leading up to the rebellion. Several were intimately involved in promulgating or instituting the various reforms pushed by Henderson that were designed to embrace modern naval technologies and adjust tactics with the goal of enhancing the combat capabilities of the Marine Corps. These leaders brought all of that knowledge and experience with them when they went South, and infused the new CSMC with their spirit of innovation. These men helped the new Corps to quickly make up for its late start and helped to place the new unit in operation in a rapid and well-organized manner.

Conversely, the loss of these same leaders impacted the USMC negatively at the most inopportune time. When it most needed them, the USMC lost over half of its company-grade officers and several key staff officers. Had they remained in Federal service, all would have been intensely involved in the important task of training new enlistees. Instead, their resignations created a leadership vacuum in the USMC that deprived incoming recruits of adequate training and supervision, a factor that contributed to the USMC's poor performance in combat in its earliest test at the First Battle of Bull Run.⁶ In that fight, the Marine Battalion broke from its position three times, prompting their commandant to lament that the debacle was "the first instance in history where any portion of [the USMC] turned their backs to the enemy."⁷ In this, their initial combat action of the war, the USMC established a negative reputation that proved difficult to shake.

The CSMC's success depended in large part on the quality of its leaders. Strong and confident officers provided the key to making the CSMC's company-based structure and flexible employment concept work. Fortunately for the South, the CSMC benefited greatly through its acquisition of significant numbers of former Federal officers. Training the South's new Marines immediately tested these men, already skilled and adept at leading Marines in small-unit expeditionary operations. In that task, accomplished without close or direct supervision, these leaders relied on what they had learned over their previous years of service. Since Confederate Marines spent comparatively less time assigned to depot assignments than their Northern counterparts, their leaders' previous experiences at expeditionary duties proved even more critical. Similarly, when assigned aboard ship, Confederate Marines were more likely to be placed on ship's batteries than their USMC cousins, making proficiency in artillery almost a requirement. To all indications, Confederate Marine officers imparted among their men not only the traditions, discipline and spirit of the prewar Marine Corps, but helped to achieve Commandant Henderson's goal of creating a modern and adaptable fighting force as well. Their Marines became adept at both infantry and artillery skills, and embraced their role as an expeditionary naval force.

Led by such strong, confident officers, the CSMC's employment scheme emphasizing detached service had other benefits as well. Such service fostered an environment that valued the exercising of good initiative and sound judgment among its leaders. This environment promoted the growth of men who felt comfortable with articulating and coordinating mission requirements with local commanders, exercising

individual initiative in the absence of direct supervision, taking personal responsibility for their actions, and working in pursuit of common goals. The combination of a structure that supported detached service and leaders accustomed to acting in the absence of direct supervision paid great dividends in the long run. These factors created a synergistic effect that promoted an expansion of the CSMC's roles and missions during the war as small unit leaders seized local opportunities to advantage. Basically, without the constraint of having to consult with higher leaders on every aspect of their duties in advance of taking action, company and detachment commanders frequently acted on their own initiative to develop new tactics or adopt new roles or missions. They understood both their mission and the intent of their higher commanders, and took steps to fulfill that intent. Examples of this phenomenon abound, but several come to mind easily: the actions of Captain Thomas Wilson, in proactively becoming expert in the skills of raiding, of Captain Thom in helping seize Ship Island, and of Lieutenant Everard Eggleston, in his developing the art of shore-based naval gunfire spotting.⁸

Institutionally, the CSMC's senior leaders also contributed significantly to the successes enjoyed by the Marines. Gaining some of Archibald Henderson's leading proponents of modernization and reform, the CSMC became the *de facto* extension of the old commandant's drive. Men such as Major Israel Greene, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Tyler, Sr., and Captains John Simms and George Terrett kept Henderson's reforms and his spirit of innovation alive, and also fostered within their Corps a sense of *esprit de corps*. These officers shaped the direction that the CSMC would take and implemented training programs that were built off the ones they left behind in the North.

These leaders instilled discipline and motivations within the ranks that reflected the exacting standards and principles they themselves had served under for decades. Under their tutelage, new officers and men were screened, trained and imbued with the spirit of Henderson's antebellum Marine Corps.

Archibald Henderson had espoused a need for the Marine Corps to become more dynamic by acquiring skills in amphibious and expeditionary operations. He had labored to expand the Marine Corps' capabilities in those areas. And, since many of his principle supporters of these initiatives entered the CSMC, some of these same ideas transferred to the South's Corps with them. Furthermore, the Confederate Navy came to be led by Stephen Mallory, a man who embraced new ideas and concepts as a means of overcoming the South's disadvantages and shortages. Mallory also exercised a form of decentralized command and control of the navy, creating an environment in which subordinate leaders were expected to exercise their personal initiative in the absence of direct orders. In this environment, independent and confident Marines thrived. The CSMC's officers welcomed innovation and actively sought to expand their participation into new areas of combat. Their efforts would take Marines increasingly into new areas, particularly the arena of amphibious raids and special operations. Thus, the CSMC became an integral and indispensable part of the Confederate Navy.

In the end, the initiatives of Archibald Henderson did more to prepare the CSMC for its service during the Civil War than it did for the USMC. Its abbreviated history indicates that the CSMC moved into new mission areas and embraced new technologies and tactics. In contrast, under the direction of Henderson's more traditional and

conservative replacement, Colonel John Harris, the USMC regressed into its historical support tasks that were not in tune with the realities of modern naval tactics. Within the same period of time that saw the CSMC become adept at amphibious raiding and performing vital combat functions on naval ships, the USMC, despite organizing itself for use as an amphibious element, spent much of its time as mere passengers aboard navy ships; being moved almost administratively from area to area aboard transports, yet seldom being afforded an opportunity to be committed ashore. Although there are a few notable exceptions, when assigned afloat, Federal Marines functioned too often as little more than guards for the ship's officers, an increasingly irrelevant role in the age of ironclads and long-range naval artillery. In the few instances when it was employed as part of an amphibious force, the USMC's generally poor performance served only to draw increased criticism and made leaders more reluctant to employ them in the future. The CSMC, however, earned the respect of the leaders it supported and its officers passed up few opportunities to do more than what was expected of them.

If the progressive development of the prewar Marine Corps were viewed using the analogy of the growth of a tree, and secession representing a split of the trunk into two separate branches, events that occurred within the Federal Marine Corps soon after secession stunted the growth of its branch. Conversely, the South's branch continued to grow during the war, becoming in a sense the lead bough of the Marine Corps' developmental tree as that unit reached into new mission areas and mastered modern tactics. Unfortunately for both Marine Corps (and by extension, the American armed forces), the South's defeat resulted in its branch being broken off completely, leaving the

stunted branch representing the U.S. Marine Corps to struggle for mere existence for the next three decades. To make matters worse, little effort seemed to be made on the part of the victorious Union to try and realize any lessons from its Southern cousin's service. As a result, several successful initiatives of the CSMC were overlooked, and American Marine Corps development experienced a setback that took decades to overcome. Federal Marines, having both regressed in their development and suffering from their poor performance record in the war, found themselves in serious danger of becoming obsolete, or being possibly absorbed by other services. According to historian Jack Shulimson, "by the late 1870s the [U.S.] Marine Corps was an organizational anomaly and in some disarray. Dispersed into small detachments of usually 100 men or less, the Marine Corps had no formal company, battalion, or regimental structure,"⁹ a simple step forward that might have been discerned if even a cursory examination of the CSMC had been made. Instead, decades after the war, lessons remained unlearned and as a result the USMC found itself in serious danger of being dissolved.

On several occasions during the war, despite operating in an environment of shortages and competing priorities, the Confederate Congress expanded the authorized strength of the CSMC. This simple, yet significant, action confirmed not only their confidence in that unit, but acknowledged that the requirements for its service grew commensurately as the war progressed. It provides further proof that the South's leaders considered the CSMC to be an essential component of the Confederate Navy. Furthermore, although the CSMC never managed to fill its authorized strength, it nonetheless continued to increase its personnel in spite of the mounting challenges to

recruit men for its demanding duties. Despite offering potential recruits lower relative pay, little chance of promotion, a strict disciplinarian lifestyle and guaranteed service outside one's home state, by 1865 the CSMC contained more personnel than it did in December 1861.¹⁰ This fact in itself is significant, particularly when one compares the CSMC's size to the strengths of many of the Confederate Army's regiments at the end of the war.¹¹ Notwithstanding the rigors of national service as a Marine, the CSMC stubbornly continued to field operational units through the final days of the war, and in some cases constituted almost one quarter of the on-hand strength aboard the few remaining navy ships. Marines represented a significant percentage of the manpower in the Confederate Navy, a far greater percentage than their Northern cousins, the USMC.

This thesis has demonstrated that previous accounts have failed to clearly appreciate the level of the CSMC's rich history of service within the Confederate military. In particular, previous historians have not fully explored the Corps' service at the national level. Throughout the conflict, Marines served within army and navy organizations, and were involved in some significant battles of the war, especially at Drewry's Bluff in 1862, where their actions helped prevent an early Union seizure of the Southern capital city. Moreover, Confederate leaders understood the value of their Marines and shifted them from one theater to another in response to national priorities and in support of a national naval strategy. The CSMC rarely saw a break in action, since inactivity in one particular location usually signaled redeployment to another area with more pressing needs.

Throughout the war, Confederate Marines increased the breadth and range of

their capabilities, becoming a progressively greater asset to the Confederate Navy and a valued and important unit in their own regard. The war saw their expansion from a more traditional use as guard forces on ships and naval bases to their becoming seasoned veterans of important battles and masters of the tactics, techniques and procedures inherent in highly specialized raids. The innovative nature of the CSMC came into its own when its men began to fill the vacuum caused by the revolution in naval technology and tactics. Southern Marines developed and expanded their skills to meet the operational challenges of the day, often without outside direction. Individually, many of the CSMC's leaders developed an innate understanding of what needed to be accomplished and took action to get the job done. Often, their actions went unrecognized by the public at large, yet they persevered for the cause they believed in, fighting against superior forces until the very end of the war. Although for decades much of their efforts have been under-appreciated, their legacy of action and innovation now speaks for itself.

Endnotes

- ¹ For details on this battle, see the discussion in Chapter III of this thesis.
- ² The background and preparations for this raid are covered in Chapters III and IV of this thesis.
- ³ Several historians have mistakenly remarked that the uniqueness of the CSMC's structure is its adoption of a battalion structure. For example, in Raimundo Luraghi, *A History of the Confederate Navy* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 27, the author makes reference to the CSMC's "organic battalion structure" as the source of strength for the Corps' performance. In actuality, both Marine Corps formed battalions in an *ad hoc* manner during the war, following a tradition that went back to the Mexican War and the Seminole Wars.
- ⁴ Allan Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (1980; rev. ed., New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 92-95; J. Robert Moskin, *The U.S. Marine Corps Story* (1977; rev. ed., New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1982), 100.
- ⁵ See Chapter II for a discussion of this topic; see also Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 97-98.
- ⁶ See Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 78-80; David M. Sullivan, *The United States Marine Corps in the Civil War*, 4 vols. (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Publishing, 2000), 1: 142-53.

⁷ Harris to Welles, Headquarters, letter, 26 July 1861, Record Group 80 (Letters from Marine Officers), National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (hereafter NA).

⁸ Capt. Thomas Wilson and his men became skilled at raiding and seizing enemy ships afloat after working to develop such tactics and procedures in early 1863 at Charleston, South Carolina. Wilson and his men put their skills to work in early 1864 by participating in the seizure and destruction of the Federal warship *Underwriter* off New Berne, North Carolina. Capt. Reuben Thom and thirty-five new enlistees, reinforced by the twenty-man Marine detachment of the steamer *McRae*, formed the nucleus of an amphibious raiding party that successfully occupied and defended Ship Island in the approach to New Orleans in July 1861. Lt. Everard Eggleston, a detachment commander aboard the ironclad *Fredericksburg*, moved ashore with a signals officer to adjust naval gunfire onto a concentration of Federal troops that were about to overrun a Confederate army position. The *Fredericksburg*'s gunners could not see where their rounds were falling, so Eggleston located himself where he could do so, and his actions were credited with breaking up the Union attack. This may represent one of the earliest examples of shore-based naval gunfire spotting in American military history. See the appropriate accounts in Chapters III, IV, and V for greater detail.

⁹ Jack Shulimson, *The Marine Corps' Search for a Mission, 1880-1898* (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 1-10, quote from 1.

¹⁰ According to Ralph Donnelly, *The History of the Confederate States Marine Corps* (New Bern, N.C.: published by the author, 1976), 4, the end strength of the CSMC in 1861 was probably around 350, while it was estimated at 561 on 31 October 1864. Also see the author's analysis of Donnelly's figures and estimates of the CSMC's end strength at various benchmarks in Chapter II.

¹¹ In the last few years of the war, many Confederate regiments had shrunk to the size where they had become combat ineffective, some being manned only by senior and often infirm officers. Many were regiments in name only. Several efforts on the part of politicians and army headquarters to consolidate assets and weed out inefficiencies met with little success. In light of this situation, the success of senior CSMC leaders in fielding combat units to the end of the conflict seems to be a noteworthy success.

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APPENDIX A

U.S. Marine Corps Officers Who Resigned or Were Dismissed Between December 1860 and December 1863¹

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Separation Type</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Terrett, George H.	Major	Dismissed	CSMC, CSA
Tyler, Henry B. Sr.	Major	Dismissed	CSMC
Rich, Jabez C.	Capt	Dismissed	Va. MC
Simms, John D.	Capt	Dismissed	CSMC
Tansill, Robert	Capt	Dismissed	CSMC, CSA
Taylor, Algernon S.	Capt	Dismissed	CSMC
Baker, Adam N.	1stLt	Dismissed	CSMC
Greene, Israel	1stLt	Dismissed	CSMC
Hays, Andrew J.	1stLt	Resigned	CSMC
Henderson, Charles A.	1stLt	Dismissed	CSMC
Holmes, George	1stLt	Resigned	CSMC
Kidd, Robert	1stLt	Dismissed	Unknown
Matthews, S. H.	1stLt	Dismissed	Unknown

¹ Material included in this appendix is compiled from two sources: U.S. Navy Department, "List of All Officers of the United States Navy and Marine Corps who Left the Service Between December 1, 1860 and December 1, 1863, by Resignation, Dismissal, or Desertion, to Engage in the Rebellion Against the Government, or Otherwise," *Executive Document No. 3* (January 5, 1864), 38th Cong., 1st Sess.; also biographical information found in Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*. 8-11, 84-85, 91-92, 101-102, 105, 111-112, 129-131, 168-170, 189-190, 197-199, 224-225, 230-233, 236-239, 259, 263-265, 267-269, 286, 4, 77, 213, 17, and 243, respectively.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Separation Type</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Meier, Julius E.	1stLt	Dismissed	CSMC
Read, Jacob	1stLt	Resigned	CSMC
Stark, Alexander W.	1stLt	Dismissed	CSA
Tattnall, John R.	1stLt	Dismissed	CSMC
Turner, George P.	1stLt	Dismissed	CSMC
Tyler, Henry B. Jr.	1stLt	Dismissed	CSMC
Wilson, Thomas S.	1stLt	Dismissed	CSMC
Cummins, George W.	2ndLt	Dismissed	Unknown
Grant, Oscar B.	2ndLt	Resigned	In North
Howell, Becket K.	2ndLt	Resigned	CSMC
Ingraham, Henry L.	2ndLt	Resigned	CSMC
Rathbone, J. H.	2ndLt	Resigned	In North
Reber, J. M.	2ndLt	Dismissed	In North
Sayre, Calvin L.	2ndLt	Resigned	CSMC
Sells, D. M.	2ndLt	Resigned	In North

APPENDIX B

Confederate Marine Corps Officers with Prior Service in the United States Military¹

U.S. Marine Corps

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Date Served</u>	<u>Combat Duty</u>	<u>CSMC Rank</u>
Baker, Adam Neill	1stLt	1853-1861	No	1stLt
Greene, Israel	Capt	1847-1861	Yes	Major (Adjutant)
Hays, Andrew Jackson	1stLt	1847-1861	No	1stLt
Holmes, George	1stLt	1849-1861	Yes	Capt
Howell, Beckett Kempe	2ndLt	1860-1861	No	1stLt
Ingraham, Henry Laurens	2ndLt	1858-1861	No	1stLt
Meier, Julius Ernest	1stLt	1855-1861	Yes	1stLt
Read, Jacob	Capt	1847-1861	Yes	Capt
Sayre, Calvin Lawrence	2ndLt	1858-1861	Yes	1stLt
Simms Jr., John Douglas	Capt	1841-1861	Yes	Capt
Tattnall, John Rogers	Capt	1847-1861	Yes	Capt
Taylor, Algernon Sidney	Capt	1839-1861	Yes	Major
Terrett, George Hunter	Major	1830-1861	Yes	Major
Turner, George Pendleton	1stLt	1856-1861	Yes	1stLt

¹ Material included in this appendix is compiled from two sources: U.S. Navy Department, "List of All Officers of the United States Navy and Marine Corps who Left the Service Between December 1, 1860 and December 1, 1863, by Resignation, Dismissal, or Desertion, to Engage in the Rebellion Against the Government, or Otherwise," *Executive Document No. 3* (January 5, 1864), 38th Cong., 1st Sess.; also biographical information found in Donnelly, *Biographical Sketches*. 8-11, 84-85, 91-92, 101-102, 105, 111-112, 129-131, 168-170, 189-190, 197-199, 224-225, 230-233, 236-239, 259, 263-265, 267-269, 286, 4, 77, 213, 17, and 243, respectively.

U.S. Marine Corps (Continued)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Date Served</u>	<u>Combat Duty</u>	<u>CSMC Rank</u>
Tyler Sr., Henry Ball	Major	1823-1861	Yes	LtCol
Tyler Jr., Henry Ball	2ndLt	1855-1861	Yes	1stLt
Wilson, Thomas Smith	2ndLt	1857-1861	No	1stLt

U.S. Navy

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Date Served</u>	<u>Combat Duty</u>	<u>CSMC Rank</u>
Allison, Richard Taylor	Purser	1849-1861	No	Major (Paymaster)
Gonzalez, Samuel Zacharias	SK ²	1854-1861	No	Major (Qtrmaster)
Stockton, Edward Cantey	Lt	1849-1858	No	2ndLt

U.S. Army

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Date Served</u>	<u>Combat Duty</u>	<u>CSMC Rank</u>
Beall, Lloyd James	Col	1826-1861	Yes	Col (Commandant)
Thom, Reuben Triplett	1stLt ³	1846-1848	Yes	Capt

² Storekeeper.

³ Also served as the Attorney General for the state of Alabama prior to secession.

VITA

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Korean Language Course, Defense Language Institute (1999).

Graduate, Korean Naval War College (2000).

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Publications:

Principle Author, *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1-3 (MCDPI-3), Tactics*.

Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1997. (And over 20 other service, joint and allied publications).

The Reunification Dilemma. Korean Naval War College, Taejon, Republic of Korea, 2000. (Korean Language).

Professional Experience:

Retired Marine Corps Officer, 25 years active service. Served with U.S. State Department, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and United Nations (Peacekeeping), and United Nations Command.