



THE CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P. O. BOX 5028, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

OCTOBER 1973

Vol. 17 No. 2

138th Meeting

DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1973
SUBJECT: AMERICAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT 1755-1912
SPEAKERS: BERNARD DREWS, JOHN ALLISON, FRED
SCHUHLE AND DONALD HECKAMAN
PLACE: THE HERMIT CLUB, DODGE COURT
PRELIMINARIES: 6:30 PM DINNER 7 PM

AMERICAN MILITARY EQUIPMENT 1755 - 1912

Tonight our members will be treated to a program conducted by four of our members who specialize in collecting different types of American military equipment. Led by Bernie Drews as the chief moderator, he will take the lead in discussing the early years of military equipment, and then in turn introduce Don Heckaman, John Allison and finally Fred Schuhle who will all display their individual selections and give the appropriate information concerning each.

Of course it will be impossible for our panel to present all the major types of military dress and equipment but they will have the most prominent pieces available to see and hear about.

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NOVEMBER MEETING

Our November meeting will be held away from our regular meeting place. We will journey to the Western Reserve Historical Society for a tour and talk by the Director and CCWRT member Meredith Colket. More details will be available in our next newsletter and October meeting.

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DECEMBER MEETING

Our first departure from the Civil War during the 1973-74 season will be Father Smythe, of John Carroll University, talk on General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing. Don't miss this meeting as Father Smythe has recently written a book on Pershing and is considered to be one of the leading authorities on Pershing.

CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE OF CLEVELAND
BULLETIN BOARD

CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE DIGEST MARKS ITS FOURTH YEAR

Four years ago, Jerry Russell of Little Rock, Arkansas, came up with an idea that has since benefitted everyone interested in Civil War history and the round tables. It's the Civil War Round Table Digest, a bimonthly newsletter reporting the activities of the round tables all over this country. More recently -- because the round tables themselves have become so deeply involved -- Jerry has vigorously taken up the fight to preserve the Civil War battlefields. He's kept all his readers up to the minute on what fields were endangered by commercial encroachments; what was being done to stop them; who and where to write to in order to join the fight; and the results of the effort (both successful and unsuccessful).

Each issue of the Digest also carries news of interest to book collectors, relic hunters, uniform specialists, shooting groups, and others who closely follow the Civil War period.

Here's wishing Jerry many more useful years at the editorial helm of the Digest. He's doing a job that all of us would like to have a hand in if we had the time. If you're interested in supporting the Digest and what it stands for (as well as rewarding yourself with all the news of the round tables), why not send in your subscription? It's just \$7.50 per year. Digest address is: PO Box 7388, Little Rock, Arkansas, 72207. (Thanks to the "Old Sarge" whose expression I've just repeated).

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NEWSLETTER EXCHANGE

Although there has been many similarities drawn between the assassinations of Presidents Kennedy and Lincoln, the following appeared in the July issue of the Bebel, the newsletter of the United Kingdom Division of the Confederate High Command:

"COINCIDENCE?"

Both Kennedy and Lincoln were concerned with Civil rights;
Lincoln was elected in 1860; Kennedy in 1960
Both their wives lost children while in the White House. Both
Kennedy & Lincoln were killed on Friday in the presence of
their wives.
Both were shot in the head from behind.
John Wilkes Booth, Lincoln's assassin, was born in 1839; Lee
Harvey Oswald, Kennedy's assassin was born in 1939.
Both assassins were southerners favoring unpopular ideas and both
were shot before being brought to trial.
Lincoln and Kennedy were both succeeded by V. President Johnson;
Andrew Johnson born in 1808 and Lyndon Johnson in 1908; both
were Southern Democrats of humble origin.
Lincoln's secretary, whose name was Kennedy, advised him not to
go to the theatre that day;
Kennedy's secretary, whose name was Lincoln, advised against
going to Dallas.
Booth shot Lincoln and ran from a theatre to a warehouse;
Oswald shot Kennedy and ran from a warehouse into a theatre.

Maybe this is pure coincidence but it makes one think. Did fate have a hand in this or is it by some strange chance that the people concerned had the same names and were born on the same dates? (Thanks to the Cincinnati CWRT newsletter for "Coincidence?").

THE COURIER
of
THE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE OF CLEVELAND, OHIO

FOUNDED FEBRUARY 19, 1957

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GUY DI CARLO JR., EDITOR, P.O. BOX 5028, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

LIFE ON THE "ALABAMA"

By One the Crew

On the 3rd of July, 1862, I signed in Liverpool the articles that made me one of the crew of the "290" --afterwards the ALABAMA. The shipping agent, Campbell, warned me against Yankee spies, and assured me that in three months Great Britain would declare war against the United States. Next day I went aboard, and liked the look of the vessel. Everything, to a practiced eye, indicated the character of the ship. No platforms were laid, but the places for the pivot-guns were plainly marked, her magazines were finished and shot boxes were about.

On the 28th of July, the ALABAMA passed out of the Mersey, on a supposed trial-trip, and anchored in a bay on the Welsh coast, where she was joined by most of her crew. We had about one hundred men, half of them sailors, the others being coal-passers, etc. After a day delay we sailed around the north coast of Ireland, and in thirteen days arrive at Terceira, one of the Azore Islands. The "290" was by no means as fast as I had expected from report; she did not make over ten knots during her first trip, and had a fashion of burying herself when driven to speed, and that set everything afloat. Of course her crew, in the berth-deck, were none the more comfortable for this.

In a few days were joined by an English bark, loaded with guns and war materials, and went to work laying platforms for the heavy guns, and mounting the pivot-guns, one a very fine Blakely rifled hundred-pounder, and the other an eight-inch sixty-eight pounder, smooth bore. As the Portuguese governor had ordered us out of the harbor, we had to do our work in a rolling sea, three miles from an anchorage. Before we had finished the steamer BAHAMA came in, bringing Captain Semmes and the remainder of the crew, also more guns, and, it was said, a large sum of money.

We all got liberty and went ashore. Familiar as I was with sailor antics, this surpassed everything. The few policemen of the town were seized and mounted on the men's backs; the authorities were defied and although no serious outrage was committed, the Portuguese officials remonstrated with Semmes for turning such a gang loose on them. Most of these men had not yet signed articles, and of course the officers of the ALABAMA could not control them. When the time came for signing they were told they could stay or go; the "quit backing and filling," and came forward at once and were sent on board. The ship was "all adrift" like a midshipman's chest, and the boatswain's pipe was going all the time. We worked hard to clean the ship, and got her in order in two days. The crew were now divided into watches, and the routine life of a man-o'-war commenced.

We left Angra on a bright Sunday morning in company with the BAHAM. Our officers came out in "full fig"; the scratch band played "Dixie"; a all hands were mustered, and we saw the flag we were to fight under, for the first time, and heard the first of Captain Semmes's exhortations. He told us among the other things that Providence would bless our endeavors to free the South from the Yankees, etc. A boatswain's mate behind me growled, "Yass, Providence likely to bless this crew!" During the night some one ornamented a bread-bag with a terrific skull and cross-bones and managed to fasten it to one of the mizzen-braces. In the morning the master-at-arms was hunting for the delinquent, but the men only laughed at him, and suggested that "Chucks, the marine," had been at his tricks. Chucks is the "Robin Goodfellow" on board an English man-o'-war, who bears the blame of all mischief that can't be found out. I had been looking over the crew, and made up my mind that, on the whole, I had never been on a ship with such a bad lot. They were all sailors from Clew to earing,--no haymakers among them,--but they were mostly of that class, found in seaport towns all over the world, that ship for the "run" (from port to port), and not for the voyage, and are always a rough, mutinous set. They did not seem to care for the ship's officers, and were determined to stand no "man-o'-war dickey from them.

When off watch the men began to overhaul each other's log, and to tell lies about their voyages. I was pleased to find that I had not a shipmate aboard. The best man in the port to watch, to which I belonged, was a Scotchman named Gill. He was about forty, very powerful, and could hold an ordinary man at arm's length clear of the deck. He was saturated with Calvinism, and could quote Scripture and sermons by the hour, but was, all the same, a daring, dangerous ruffian. According to his own account, he had been in numerous mutinies, in one case taking a Spanish brig, killing the officers, beaching her on the Deseada Key, in the Leeward Islands, and getting to Porto Rico in the launch with the plunder. This man's influence was bad, and he was the cause of much of the insubordination that took place on board.

I hadn't a great deal of admiration for our officers, First Officer Kell being the best; but the truth is, the only officer that sailors respect is a sharp, resolute, driving one. Fear is the best basis for discipline on a ship. The men got it into their heads that our captain had been a parson; and knowing the versatility of the average American, I would not have been surprised, as I had once sailed under an officer who had been an editor, school-master, Baptist preacher, had been in the legislature, and I believe in the penitentiary for slave-trading, and was withal a first-rate sailor. This did not raise Captain Semmes in the regard of the crew, who cursed him for a psalm-singer, and a "jury captain"; but the fact that with such a company he cruised nearly two years and kept his ship, shows that he had both judgment and resolution.

On the 3rd of September we took our first prize, a whaling schooner, and for the first time in my life I saw a burning vessel. When the boat returned with the prisoners, there was some excitement, but it soon became a commonplace matter. The prisoners were placed on deck under a spar-rigged sail, and fared badly in stormy weather. Our berth-deck was so crowded that the hammocks touched all over, and this gave opportunities to the rough to annoy their quieter shipmates. My hammock was cut down three times in one night, the knittles being rendered useless, and I had to finish my "turn in" on the deck. As soon as our watch was called I waited for the guilty man at the forward companionway and nearly battered the life out of him. I was duly reported and lost my "grog" for ten days, but I was not "dumped" any more.

We were now taking prizes rapidly, being not over four hundred miles from New York, in the "rolling forties" directly in the track of American commerce. The treatment of the prisoners was fairly good and they were not ill-used on board, but the conduct of the boarding-crews

was shameful; the officer in charge of the boat had no control over the and they rushed below like a gang of pirates, breaking open the sailors' chests and taking from the persons of the prisoners everything that took their fancy. I never saw them injure prisoners or use their weapons except to frighten their victims, but the wanton destruction of the clothes and effects of captured sailors was simply disgraceful. This sort of thing seriously affected the morale of the men and had we then met an enemy of equal force, but of the usual standard of man-o'-war discipline, we should have made a very poor show. The prisoners were of all nationalities, but their officers all seemed to be American by birth and were mostly a fine, gentlemanly lot. The old sea-dog element so common among English skippers in the East does not seem to exist among the American officers of the merchant marine; they might easily be mistaken for clerks, or even professors. Not so the old sailors in command of the "tea wagons" and East Indian ships,--their walk and lingo proclaim them sailors, and nothing else. One of the mates of a whaling ship we took and burnt was a parson-like man and preached and prayed to his fellows. He was long and lanky, and two of our roughs began to haze him: but they mistook their calling, and in two minutes were so mauled and manhandled that it was reported aft; but the first officer said it served them right, much to the satisfaction of the honest man between decks.

On one of the prizes a man named George Forest was found. He had deserted from the Confederate service on the SUMTER, and was recognized and put in irons. The same day the TONAWANDA was taken; she was bonded and not burned. Forest was tried by court-martial, and lost his pay etc.; then he was sent forward and put in our watch, where he at once fraternized with the Scotchman Gill and began to organize opposition. George Forest was a Yankee Irishman, born on Long Island. He was a first-class sailor, and had he possessed an education would have made his mark. He was tall, powerful, and had considerable manly beauty, and could talk to sailors better than any man I ever knew. He was a born mutineer, but was not as dangerous as old Gill, who could hold his tongue, which Forest could not. Having, as he said, nothing to lose but his life, as his pay was confiscated, he was openly insolent and defiant, and constantly in trouble, while the petty officers were afraid of him and his set. On a regular man-o'-war he would soon have ended his career; but, as Gill argued ingenuously, the ALABAMA had never been in a Southern port and was outside of the law, and it would be no mutiny to take the ship. There must have been something in this, or the officers would never have permitted what they did. In truth the expulsion of a dozen men would have made the captain secure in his authority, and I never could understand his forbearance. One means of maintaining discipline and subordination was wanting on the ALABAMA, and that was constant work. Where officers are enabled to command obedience to orders this is never neglected. "Teasing time" is well understood by merchant skippers, and consists in overhauling the rigging, restowing stores, frequent mustering, and inspecting bags and hammocks. But we were so heavily manned, and so full of stores (a prime necessity in the case of a ship that could not command a port when needed), that we had barely room to swing our hammocks; in fact we could scarcely move without tumbling over somebody. The monotony was dreadful. After we had swept the ocean of prizes we had no excitement, and we cast about in every way to amuse ourselves. The ruffianly portion of the crew found their pleasure in hazing and ill-treating their duller and less resolute shipmates, and there were some fearful examples of this kind of work. We had sparring matches and single-stick playing, in both of which I excelled. Spinning yarns and singing songs were resources that never failed. The starboard watch made every man sing in turn under penalty of a pannikin of salt water, and our poets were kept busy in composing new ditties. One man had a splendid tenor voice; he was well educated and had been, he said, an officer in the Royal Navy, and was,

like all disrated gentleman that I have ever met, a "vicious and irrec-laimable blackguard." How strange to hear him sing "The Lament of the Irish Emigrant," and "My Mary in Heaven" with taste and feeling, and the next moment disgust even his rude associates by a burst of obscene blasphemy. One sailor, a wonderful story-teller, who generally pre-faced his yarns with "When I sailed in the TAPROBANE, East Ingyman," was known as "Top-robbin." His imagination was prolific of horrors, and his grim and sepulchral visage aided in producing an effect on his hearers. His tales were of phantom ships, that sailed in the teeth of wind and current, and of ghastly women that came aboard in the height of storms, etc., and so realistic and impressive was his delivery that some of the worst ruffians in the watch sought their hammocks in fear andstrembling. But the poor fellow came to grief in this wise. It was remarked that he had always missed his "tip" in the singing and had rather avoided the tuneful choir. He was on this particular night ordered to "pipe up" and no more temporizing about it. He put on a look of intense misery, and commenced:

"How Jerry Lee was hung at sea
For stabbing of his messmate true,
And his body did swing, a horrible thing,
At the sport of the wild sea-mew."

What a voice! -- it was at knce a squeaky treble and a hoarse bass. Wit one accord the men yelled to him to stop. He was assured "If you ever sing again in this ere watch while we're off soundings, we'll fire you through a lee port. Such a voice as that would raise a harrycane." Poo Top-robbin seemed glad to quit, remarking that he didn't sing for his own "diversion," and we all agreed with him.

Most of the songs would not look well in print, but they were near ly all squibs on the "Captain and his officers," and were bawled out without mitigation of voice, and no doubt heard in the mess-room aft. The belief that Captain Semmes had been a parson inspired many of these dities, one of which ran as follows:

"Oh, our captain said, "When my fortune's made,
I'll buy a church to preach in,
And fill it full of toots and horns,
And have a jolly Methodee screechin."

"And I'll pray the Lord from night to morn
To weather Old Yankee Doodle --
And I'll run a hinfant Sunday-school
With part of the Yankee boodle."

The following was the last effort of the Muse and was sung the Saturday night before we left Cherbourg:

"We're homeward bound, we're homeward bound,
And soon shall land on English ground;
But ere that English land we see,
We first must lick the KERSAR-GEE"

But we didn't lick the KERSAR-GEE, and the poor poet realized the al-ternative, for I saw him crushed and mangled under a gun, just before I went over the side.

October 17th we struck a spell of bad weather, lasting five days. At one time I thought we should founder. The weather main-brace parted losing us the main-yard, fore-top and stay-sail. At one time the ves-sel was fairly on her beam-ends, and the decks were straight up and down. The ship was well handled, but was not, in my opinion, a weath-erly craft, and I came to the conclusion that if we ran across one of the fast Yankee cruisers our career would come to an end.

November 18th we arrived at Martinique, and had an "ovation"; the exultation of the French over the disasters to Yankee commerce impress

me. A French corvette lying there gave a dinner to the officers. Gill licked two of the Frenchman's petty officers nearly to death, as his share of the entertainment, and our liberty was stopped in consequence. Forest swam on shore that night, and eluding sharks and lookouts, was hauled into one of the berth-deck ports with five gallons of the worst liquor I ever drank. It set the entire watch crazy. Forest kept comparatively sober, but old Gill "bowsed up his jib" until he could scarcely stand. Such an uproar I never heard; the lanterns were lit in defiance, and when the watch was called, the officer of the deck was saluted with all manner of "skrim-shander." The boatswain was knocked down and hurt by a blow from a belaying-pin, and everything loose was fired aft. The officers and marines, with the sober portion of the crew, now charged forward, and a terrible melee ensued. Gill knocked a gunner's mate's jaw out of place, and was laid out by a capstan-bar, and finally the drunken men were secured. Forest was identified by a port guard from shore, as the man who got the liquor, and as defiant as ever, was placed in doble irons and under guard.

We now heard that a Yankee cruiser, the SAN JACINTO, was outside awaiting us. The general sentiment of the crew was to fight. We were tired of the monotony of hunting merchantmen and, win or lose, wanted a change. But our officers thought otherwise, and by the open and undisguised assistance of the French naval officers and shore authorities signals were set to mislead the Yankee commander, and a pilot took us out by a route that enabled us to leave the island far astern by day-break. On the 27th of November we arrived at the island of Blanquilla and coaled. We were about one hundred miles from the coast of South America. Forest was here sentenced to be sent ashore, to lose his pay and to be dismissed from the service in disgrace. He snapped his fingers and swore to be even with the officers. We made jp eighty dollars for him, and one of the boatmen took it ashore to him. I thought it a good riddance, bjt kept my opinion to myself.

After looking into Porto Rico we went through the Mona passage, or the lookout for California steamers, and on the 27th of December we captured the ARIEL. She was boldly sailed, and only came to, after a shot from our Blakely rifle had barely missed hulling her. As she was full of passengers, she was bonded and let go. We had up to this time taken nineteen prizes. December 24th, we came to the Arcas keys, desolate sand banks on the Caribbean Sea. Here we were to coal, and spend our Christmas-day, at liberty on shore. "Liberty on Christmas, the mean pirate!" sang out one of the port watch. "Well, here's for a quiet life--I can lick anything in the starboard watch!" In five minutes the whole front of the island was covered with combatants. Every one hit everybody else, and when the officer of the day sent a guard and boats to bring the men off, they had their hands full. Some of the men were badly hurt, and we had cause to remember our Christmas at Arcas.

Sunday was our busy day. Half our prizes were taken on that day, and now our first action was to take place on Sunday, January 11, 1863. We knew from the orders given that we were in an enemy's vicinity and, accordingly, were at the guns when we saw through the dusk the bows of a small steamer, coming towards us. Her officers had no need to be taken unawares, as any good seaman would have seen that we were at quarters, guns manned. But she came within one hundred yards of us before hailing. We answered: "This is Her Britannic Majesty's steamer PETREL!" The answer came back, "This is the United States steamer HATTERAS!" At the same moment we answered: "This is the Confederate steamer ALABAMA!" In fact, before they could well make out the hail, we gave her the whole broadside of our starboard batteries. We were not more than fifty yards away, and we heard the crash of shot. She at once returned our fire -- but it was evident her armament was light. After ten minutes' rapid firing someone called out, "The enemy is sinking," and we were ordered to stop firing, as the vessel had sur-

rendered. Boats were manned, and in a few strokes of the oars we were alongside. Her bow was in the air, and she was going down stern foremost. In a few minutes her men and wounded were in the boats, and giving a wallow, the HATTERAS went down. To me she looked more like a flimsy river steamer than a war vessel. Indeed, most Yankee cruisers look slim and slight compared with the more sturdy build of the English men-o'-war.

Much was said of our victory until we learned that the armament of the HATTERAS had been four thirty-two pounders, and that we had only killed and wounded five of her crew. With our weight of guns we should have done more harm; but the truth is, that we had but a few skilled gunners on board, and they were not at the heavy guns. Our gun drills were farcical, in my opinion. In fact, we never came within distance of man-o'-war drill or discipline.

We now sailed for Jamaica, going into Port Royal, and had a pleasant time. Here something occurred that few knew of. An Irishman called "King-post," from his build, being short and thick, was suspected of giving the officers information of the plans of Forest and his mates. He was closely watched and he knew it, but was on his guard. He took his liberty with the others, and of course got drunk. Seeing Gill and another man leading a third and going toward the suburbs, I followed, and made out the third man to be King-post. I missed them, and as I knew that Gill was well acquainted with the Port, I at once conjectured that he had seen me following them, and had changed his course. An hour after both men came back, and I joined them. I asked where the Irishman was. Gill looked at me with his hard gray eyes, and significantly said: "I dunna-know; laddie, but he'll haud his tongue noo; and ye had better say naithing, yir a wise fallou." King-post never came back and was supposed to have deserted; but no doubt he fell a victim to those two ruffians. The crew broke all bounds here and nearly all the petty officers were disgraced, much to their satisfaction, as they had no respect from the crew and were responsible for them to their officers. I could have been quartermaster, but declined.

We were now on the coast of San Domingo, a lovely view of wooded mountains and tropical vegetation. On the 2nd of July the cry of fire was raised, and after much confusion all was made right. It came from the spirit-room, where one of the petty officers had entered with a naked light. We were making prizes now and then, and burning them, but to-day we were fairly beaten by a sailing vessel. When the lookout saw her it was toward sunset, and we set the English ensign, our usual ruse to deceive Uncle Sam; but this captain was wideawake, and piling on canvas he kept the weather-gauge. We could see that he was using every device that a good sailor knew to beat us. Our boatswain was an old clipper sailor and I asked him whether we were gaining on the chase. "Not an inch, and we are doing our best." The wind freshened and we tried long shot with our rifle-gun, but it was no use. The chase was a cloud of canvas, and was beautifully handled, and in my heart I wished her success. It was now getting dark, and several times we saw a light and felt assured that we were forereaching on the ship, when our lookout on the yard sang out, "That's a floating light." Our Yankee had fooled us by this old device, for we saw no more of him.

It was a very common thing for the crews that boarded a prize to bring liquor back with them. Once some fifteen bottles of brandy were smuggled aboard, and all hands partook. As usual there was a terrible time between decks. One petty officer was so badly hurt that it was thought he would die. Many of the men had grape-shot in a netted bag fastened to the wrist by a lanyard, and many a coward blow was given with these.

We hailed a large ship, June 30th, and fired a gun, which was at once returned, when we found that we were trying to bring to a British man-of-war, the DIOMEDE. She did not answer our ensign, but kept on her way in apparent disdain. We now left the South American coast and

made for the Cape of Good Hope, taking a few prizes on the way, and late in July anchored in Saldanha Bay, about one hundred miles north of Cape Town. Here one of the engineers shot himself by accident and was buried. We sailed for Cape Town and many of the crew deserted. At Simon's Town the entire crew broke away, petty officers and all, and the quartermaster and twelve men left us.

We now sailed for the Eastern seas, and making captures here and there, arrived at Singapore December 22. We had one long chase after a fine clipper ship, the *CONTEST*, but for our guns would have outsailed us. Her mate was an Englishman, and was put in irons after knocking down one of the officers and offering to fight any "pirate" on board. At one small island near the Straits of Sunda, garrisoned by Frenchmen, we had a stand-up fight with a gang of large baboons, and two of our men were badly bitten. I had my jacket taken clean off, at one clutch, and was glad to escape so easily. They threw stone and clubs like Tipperary men.

We sailed from Singapore for Table Bay, the weather being fearfully hot, and got there March 13th. I was approached in the middle watch by a man known as "Shakings," from his bushy yellow hair. He was a great crony of Gill's and told me that if I would stand in, they would make a rush aft, on the next night, and that we could easily take the ship; that the American consul would guarantee us one hundred thousand dollars, and see that no harm would come to us. I asked him who were with him, and he said four of the petty officers, and some twenty of the crew. I did not like this man, he had a bad eye, and I said I would think of it. I knew Gill, bad as he was, could be trusted, and I spoke to him. He assured me that we would not be opposed by the petty officers, and one determined rush would do it! I told him that I was sure the officers were on the alert and that as we were going to England soon, it would scarce pay -- and that the American consul would repudiate the whole affair and we would bring ourselves in the grip of English law. If we could run her into a Yankee port, it would be different. I thought of the wretched man at Port Royal and kept my own counsel.

We were told that our course was now for England and this had a good effect on the men. The Yankee flag seemed to become a stranger on the seas, and we had a dull time after leaving the African coast. We were off Lizard Point June 8th, with England dim and misty on the port bow. We took a pilot aboard and made Cherbourg on the 13th of June. There is no doubt that the ship needed repairs. She forged through the water, showing that her copper was stripping and that she had become a very tub in sailing. Her engines were out of order, and there was a constant thumping and fizzing in the engine-room. It was generally understood that in all probability her cruising would come to an end, for if she ventured into an English port that would be the last of her, as the English Government would stop her going out again. I do not think that I was ever so glad to get ashore in my life. On shore we soon heard of the U.S. steamer *KEARSARGE*, and we were glad that we would have an opportunity of trying our guns on something like our match. The police in Cherbourg being well organized our men behaved fairly well.

On the 15th of June at an early hour, it was told through the ship that the *KEARSARGE* was coming through the east end of the harbor. From the berth-deck ports we had a fair look at her. She seemed low in the water, but was evidently in fighting trim. She steamed past us, at the rate of about nine knots, and out of the west opening. We heard from the gossip of the ward-room servants that Semmes had challenged the American consul. The men who worked the guns had no confidence in any but the Blakely rifle."

We got everything ship-shape and left Cherbourg for our last cruise on a bright Sunday morning, June 19th. We were escorted by a French armored vessel, and when we got outside we could see the

KEARSARGE Awaiting us, about four miles away. Captain Semmes made us a short speech which was well received, though it seemed odd to me that an American should appeal to an Englishman's love of glory to animate him to fight the speaker's own countrymen. But we cheered, and the French ship leaving us, we steamed straight for the KEARSARGE. There is no doubt that Semmes was flurried and commenced firing too soon. We were, I should say, nearly a mile away, and I do not think a single shot told. The enemy circled around us and did not return our fire until within seven or eight hundred yards and then she let us have it. The first shot that struck us made the ship reel and shake all over. I was serving on one of the thirty-two-pounders, and my sponger was an old man-O'-war's man, who remarked after a look out of the port, "We might as well fire batter puddens as these pop-guns; a few more biffs like that last and we may turn turtle." He had scarcely spoken when a shell burst under our pivot-gun, tilting it out of range and killing five of the crew. "What is wrong with the rifle-gun?" was asked. "We don't seem to be doing the enemy any harm," while with slow precision came the crash of the heavy shell of the Yankee. One missile that seemed as big as a haystack whizzed over our heads, taking a section of the port bulwarks away, fortunately missing a man that was handling shot. He only remarked that he believed the Yankee was firing "steam-bilers" at us. Another shell struck us amidships, causing the ship to list to port so that our gun weighing three tons raced in, pinning one poor fellow against the port-sill. He died before we could get him clear. This was the missile that sunk the ALABAMA. "She's going down!" was the cry, and all was confusion. Another shell struck about the water-line, and the vessel reeled like a drunken man. The dead and wounded were lying about the deck, which was red with blood. Our officers did their duty and the men at once began to get up the wounded. The cutter and launch were in the water, and the officers were trying to keep the men back till the wounded were all in; but certainly many of them were left, for I saw several on the berth-deck when I went below, and the boats were then full and pushing off. When it was certain that the ship was sinking, all order was at an end. I had 10 quid and a watch in a locker between decks, and I ran below, but they were gone.

"All hands on deck -- ship's going down!" was called, and I had just got on the upper step of the forward companion-way when the water, entering the berth-deck ports, forced the air up and almost carried me off my legs. I cast my eyes around for a moment. Old Gill, with his head crushed under the carriage of the eight-inch gun, was lying there, his brawny hands clinching the breast of his jumper. Just as the water came over the stern I went over the port bulwarks. I was a good swimmer and had not been in the water five minutes when a French pilot-boat came running past, and a brawny fellow in petticoats and top-boots dragged me out of the water. Three of our crew were on board and two more were picked up. One of the men told me that he had been hailed by the doctor to aid him in bringing a man from the lower deck, but did not wait, as the water was then coming into the lower deck ports. I had seen an officer at the after companion-way just before going over the side, and this was no doubt Dr. Llewellyn, who was drowned.

We had inflicted great loss on private owners, but I am sure we did not aid the cause we fought for, in the least. I have seen somewhere an account of the taking of the HATTERAS, that made it a daring achievement. To sneak up to an enemy under a false hail, and pour in a broadside of metal much heavier than she could return -- surely, no English sailor will see anything to the national credit in this. The poor show we made with the KEARSARGE however, disposed of the glory we achieved in burning defenseless merchantmen; and the "meteor flag," that Captain Semmes was so proud of, came down with a run.

P.D. Haywood

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