

O.R.-- SERIES I--VOLUME XVIII [S# 26]

APRIL 11-MAY 4, 1863.--Siege of Suffolk, Va.

No. 2.--Abstract from "Record of Events" in Department of Virginia, April 11-May 4.(*)

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April 11.--The enemy advanced upon Suffolk, Va., from Blackwater, drove in our pickets, capturing the outpost of cavalry on South Quay road, and was not checked until within artillery range, when he was driven back.

April 12.--He advanced on the Somerton road, but was repulsed, retiring hastily, and our infantry pickets were posted on the original lines.

April 13.--The enemy concentrated along the Nansemond, erected heavy batteries, and succeeded in blockading the river; he failed in all his attempts to effect a crossing. The gunboats and our batteries were almost incessantly engaged and several times silenced the enemy's batteries.

April 19.--The enemy opened on the gunboats from **Fort Huger**. A plan was immediately agreed upon by General Getty and Lieutenant Lamson, U.S. Navy, to cross the river and attack the fort. The gunboats and batteries opened upon it impetuously. In the mean time a detachment from the Eighty-ninth New York Volunteers and from the Eighth Connecticut crossed on the gunboat Stepping Stones and stormed the fort, and were highly successful, capturing five pieces of artillery, two 20-pounder Parrotts and three 12-pounder howitzers; also 129 prisoners, including 9 officers.

April 20.--Major Stratton, Eleventh Pennsylvania Cavalry, visited Elizabeth City, N.C., and found it abandoned by our forces.

April 27.--A reconnaissance in force was made upon the enemy's right flank on the Edenton road, also on the Somerton, and after some skirmishing the enemy was driven from his rifle-pits back upon his main line. Two transports ran the blockade under the volunteer pilotage of Lieutenants Rowe and Horton, Ninety-ninth New York Volunteers. Many shots were fired by the enemy, but little damage was done to the steamers.

April 28, 29, and 30.--Skirmishing on the river between our gunboats and the enemy.

The following re-enforcements arrived during the month:

April 12.--Ninth New York Volunteers, assigned to Getty's division.

April 14.--Nineteenth Wisconsin Volunteers, assigned to Getty's division (transferred April 28.

April 16 and 17.--Two brigades assigned to Abercrombie's division, consisting of eight regiments; one regiment transferred to General Corcoran's division.

April 18.---One hundred and seventeenth New York Volunteers, assigned <ar26_272> to General Getty, and One hundred and sixty-ninth New York Volunteers, assigned to General Corcoran.

April 19.--Detachment of the Third New York Volunteers and the First Delaware, Sixteenth and Nineteenth New York Batteries.

April 17.--The Ninth Vermont was assigned to General Getty and transferred, April 24, to the Reserve Brigade. The Twenty-sixth Michigan and One hundred and fifty-second New York assigned to General Corcoran.

April 22.--The Tenth New Jersey was assigned to General Corcoran and the One hundred and eighteenth New York assigned to Reserve Brigade.

The following officers were killed and wounded during the month:

April 8.--Captain Bowdish, commissary of subsistence; killed by accident on the railroad.

April 12.--Lieut. Col. Edgar A. Kimball. Ninth New York Volunteers; killed by Brig. Gen. M. Corcoran while on duty.

April 23.--Capt. John E. White, Ninety-ninth New York Volunteers; wounded by rebel sharpshooters.

April 24.--Surg. James Wilson, Ninety-ninth New York Volunteers; wounded by rebel sharpshooters. Second Lieut. B. Conron, Thirteenth Indiana Volunteers; killed in skirmish on Somerton road. Col. C. Buell, One hundred and sixty-ninth New York Volunteers; wounded in skirmish on Somerton road. Maj. Alonzo Alden, One hundred and sixty-ninth New York Volunteers; wounded in skirmish on Somerton road.

April 15.--Capt. J. McAnally, One hundred and fifty-fifth New York Volunteers; wounded in the skirmish on Edenton road.

April 24.--Second Lieut. T. J. Cantwell, One hundred and sixty-fourth New York Volunteers; wounded in the skirmish on Edenton road.

May 1.--The Ninety-ninth New York Volunteers had a skirmish with the enemy on South Quay road, near Suffolk. Loss: killed, 4; wounded, 42.

May 2.--Two companies of the Third Pennsylvania Artillery reported.

May 3.--Reconnaissance on the Petersburg road by General Getty; enemy driven from their rifle-pits on their main line. Loss, killed and wounded, 60. After dark the enemy abandoned the siege of Suffolk, retiring in haste toward the Blackwater.

May 4.--Colonel Foster commenced pursuit after the enemy, coming on the rear guard at Leesville, which were dispersed and most of them captured. General Corcoran pursued them on the Edenton road, General Terry on the South Quay road, and a cavalry detachment on the Petersburg road, but all were unable to come across any force. Many prisoners were captured, mostly stragglers (about 250), including 4 officers. One hundred and thirty signified their willingness to take the oath of allegiance and were sent North.

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O.R.-- SERIES I--VOLUME XVIII [S# 26]

APRIL 11-MAY 4, 1863.--Siege of Suffolk, Va.

No. 4.--Reports of Maj. Gen. John J. Peck, U. S. Army, commanding at Suffolk.

[ar26_274 con't]

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES FORCES,
Suffolk, Va., May 5, 1863.

COLONEL: On September 22, 1862, I was ordered to Suffolk, with about 9,000 men, to repel the advance of Generals Pettigrew and French <ar26_275> from the Blackwater, with 15,000 men. No artificial defenses were found nor had any plan been prepared. Situated at the head of the Nansemond River, with the railways to Petersburg and Weldon, Suffolk is the key to all the approaches to the mouth of the James River on the north of the Dismal Swamp. Regarding the James as second only in importance to the Mississippi for the Confederates and believing that sooner or later they would withdraw their armies from the barren wastes of Northern Virginia to the line of the James and attempt the recovery of Portsmouth and Norfolk as ports for their iron-clads and contraband trade, I prepared a system, and on the 25th commenced Fort Dix. From that time until the present I spared no pains for placing the line of the river and swamp in a state of defense. My labors alarmed the authorities at Richmond, who believed I was preparing a base for a grand movement upon the rebel capital, and the whole of the Blackwater was fortified, as well as Cypress Swamp and Birchen and Chipoak Rivers. This line rests upon the James near Fort Powhatan.

About February 26 Lieutenant-General Longstreet was detached from Lee's army and placed in command of the Department of Virginia, with headquarters at Petersburg. Of his corps, 15,000 were on the Black-water and 15,000 between Petersburg and the river, near the railway. This distribution enabled him to concentrate in twenty four hours within a few miles of Suffolk and looked threatening. Reports were circulated and letters written to the effect that Longstreet was in South Carolina and Tennessee with all his forces with the view of throwing me off my guard.

My information was reliable, and I fully advised the department of the presence of this force, and on March 14 Getty's division (Ninth Corps) reported for duty. Early in April deserters reported troops moving to the Blackwater, that many bridges were being constructed, and that a pontoon train had arrived from Petersburg.

On the 6th I was advised that General Foster was in great need of troops and asked to send him 3,000. I replied that no soldiers ought to leave the department, but I would spare that number provided they could be supplied at short notice.

On the 10th, at 4.30 p.m., as the troop train was leaving, I was informed of the contents of a captured mail by General Viele to the effect that General Longstreet would attack me at once with from 40,000 to 60,000; that he had maps, plans, and a statement of my force, and that General Hill would co-operate.

On the 11th Hood's division followed up my cavalry, returning from Blackwater on the South Quay road, and about 4 p.m. captured, with out a shot, the cavalry outposts. Others followed on other roads and a surprise in open day was attempted. The signal officers, under Captain Tamblyn, rendered most signal service. Lieutenant Thayer held his station for a long time in spite of the riflemen about him.

On the 12th, about noon, Pickett's division advanced on the Somerton and Jenkins' on the Edenton road, and a large column on the river by the Providence Church road. Much fine skirmishing took place on all these roads, but the pickets were pressed back and the enemy was not checked until he came within artillery range. He sustained some loss and fell back a few miles to his line of battle.

On the 13th the enemy skirmished with our light troops on all the approaches. On the Somerton, Colonel Foster handled him very roughly, driving him back and restoring his picket line at sundown. On the river the contest was sharp and long, but the batteries and gunboats held the enemy at bay.

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On the 14th Lieutenant Cushing, U.S. Navy, was hotly engaged for several hours with a large force at the mouth of the West Branch. His loss was severe, but the enemy suffered much and had some artillery dismounted. The enemy opened a ten-gun battery near the Norfleet house for the purpose of destroying the gunboats and of covering a crossing. Lieutenant Lamson, with the Mount Washington, West End, and Stepping Stones, engaged the battery for some hours in the most gallant manner, but was compelled to drop down to the West Branch. The Mount Washington, completely fiddled and disabled, grounded, as did the West End, and both were towed off by the Stepping Stones. The rudder of the Alert was broken. Several batteries on the river were opened with fine effect and others were pushed with all dispatch toward completion. More or less skirmishing and artillery fire on all portions of the lines. In the night the Smith Briggs, lying near my headquarters, was attacked, but Captain Lee and the guns-of the draw-bridge repulsed the enemy.

On the 15th the force between Suffolk and West Branch was reported by the best authorities at 10,000, with a pontoon train under the immediate command of General French. About noon our batteries, under the direction of General Getty, below the mouth of Jericho Creek, were warmly engaged with the Norfleet battery. Four of the rebel 20-pounder rifles were dismounted and the battery was silenced. A party sent out on the Edenton road captured the camp equipage of one regiment. Fear of an ambushade prevented taking of many prisoners.

On the 17th Major Stratton, with a force of cavalry, held South Mills, which is the key to nearly all the approaches from North Carolina on the south side of the Dismal Swamp. There was much skirmishing on all the avenues of approach with some field artillery. General Terry's front was much annoyed from the first day by the near approach of riflemen. Under his orders the enemy was signally punished.(*). General French's engineer was taken prisoner by Lieutenant Cushing's pickets. He was laying out works and had a map of Suffolk, which he tore to pieces.

On the 18th the enemy was very active in throwing up new batteries and rifle-pits along the river. A heavy one was in progress near the mouth of West Branch on **Hill's Point**. Admiral Lee, U.S. Navy, ordered all the boats out of the Upper Nansemond, lest they should be destroyed, leaving the whole defense of the river to the land forces. The admiral was urged to reconsider his orders. Upon my representation the order was temporarily suspended.

On the 19th, about dusk, General Getty and Lieutenant Lamson executed most successfully a plan which had been agreed upon for crossing the river and capturing Battery Huger at the mouth of the West Branch. The Eighty-ninth New York and Eighth Connecticut were taken over on the Stepping Stones. Five pieces of artillery, 9 officers, and 120 soldiers were captured. It was well conceived and ably conducted, and reflects great honor on the combined arms. Lieutenant Lamson suggested the enterprise, landed with four of his howitzers, and played a brilliant part. Captain Stevens was conspicuous for his

gallant conduct in this affair and deserves mention; also Lieutenants McKechnie and Faxon, aides of General Getty.

On the 20th Major Stratton visited Elizabeth City, N.C., and found <ar26_277> it abandoned by our troops. He found General Longstreet's pickets in the vicinity of Sandy Cross.

On the 21st the command was highly honored by a visit from Major-General Halleck, Commander-in-Chief, accompanied by Major-General Dix.

On the 22d a heavy rain-storm commenced, suspending all fatigue labors, but adding materially to the strength of the swamp on the left flank.

On the 24th a demonstration was made upon the enemy's right flank, on the Edenton road, under General Corcoran and Colonels Foster and Spear, while a feint was made on the Somerton by Colonel Buehler. The enemy was driven in confusion from all his advance points and rifle-pits back upon his main line of defense behind the dam and swamp at Darden's Mill. A force estimated at about 1,500 was believed to be massed on that front. The object of the move was attained and the command withdrawn. Colonels Beach, Drake, and Murphy had provisional brigades, and handled them extremely well; Captain Simpson commanded the artillery.

On the 25th information was received of the arrival of heavy artillery from Petersburg. Troops were reported on this side of the Chowan, on the way from General Hill, under General Garnett.

On the 27th Major Stratton occupied Camden Court-House and burned a ferry-boat of the enemy's. Rebels were very active at night chopping, moving troops, and signaling. A new battery of three guns was opened by them below the Norfleet Battery. Chopping parties were broken up by the Redan and Mansfield Battery. They reoccupied the **Hill's Point Battery** in the night. The steamers Commerce and Swan, under the volunteer pilotage of Lieutenants Rowe and Horton, of the Ninety-ninth New York Volunteers, ran down past the batteries in the night, but not without many shots. These officers are entitled to much credit for this service.

On the 28th Suffolk was visited by a heavy storm. A rebel work for several guns was discovered on the river.

On the 29th the Hon. Secretary of State, W. H. Seward, paid a visit, in company with Major-General Dix, to this command.

On the 30th, early in the morning, the enemy opened with one Whit-worth, one 30 and one 35 pounder Parrott. Toward night they opened fire upon the Commodore Barney, and the battery was silenced by the Barney (Lieutenant Cushing, U.S. Navy) and Captain Morris, battery in Fort Stevens.

May 1.--There was a sharp skirmish on General Terry's front about 5 p.m.(*) The enemy, re-enforced largely, was held in check from the guns of Nansemond, South Quay, and Rosecrans with considerable loss. Another brigade from North Carolina was reported to have joined Longstreet.

May 3.--A reconnaissance in force was made by Generals Getty and Harland on the enemy's left flank. The troops crossed at 9 a.m., at the draw-bridge, under the fire of Battery Mansfield, the Onondaga, and the Smith Briggs, and seized the plateau near Pruden's house in spite of sharpshooters in the rifle-pits, orchards, and woods. The advance was slow, every inch being hotly contested. The movement re-suited in bringing heavy re-enforcements for the enemy. His numbers and artillery failed to check the troops. By night the enemy was massed <ar26_278> on his strong line of intrenchments and under the fire of a numerous artillery. The purpose of the movement having been attained, the troops were directed to remain on the ground awaiting events.

In conjunction with the above, Major Crosby crossed the Nansemond near Sleepy Hole with the Twenty-first Connecticut, a section of the Fourth Wisconsin Battery, and eleven mounted rifles. At 4 a.m. pushed on and occupied Chuckatuck, driving out 300 rebel cavalry. He skirmished all the way to Reed's Ferry, capturing 16 prisoners, and then returned to the river under cover of the gunboats. At the same time Colonel Dutton crossed in boats and occupied **Hill's Point** with the Fourth Rhode Island, a portion of the One hundred and seventeenth New York, and a detachment from the Commodore Barney. He advanced some distance, but was met by a superior force posted strongly in the woods, and after much skirmishing returned upon **Hill's Point**, from which the enemy could not dislodge him.

I again take pleasure in acknowledging the valuable services of Lieutenants Cushing, Lamson, and Harris, U.S. Navy. These officers rendered every assistance in their power in crossing the river.

Lieutenant Cushing sent a boat howitzer and detachment with the Fourth Rhode Island, under Colonel Dutton.

I regret to state that Colonel Ringold, of the One hundred and third New York, lost his life from two wounds while leading on his men in the most gallant manner. He was a meritorious officer.

May 4.--About 9 p.m. on the 3d the enemy commenced retiring upon the Blackwater. His strong line of pickets prevented deserters and contrabands from getting through with the information until he had several hours the start. Generals Corcoran and Dodge were promptly in pursuit on the Edenton road while Colonel Foster followed upon the Somerton. By 6 a.m. Colonel Foster was pressing the rear of a formidable column on the old road near Leesville. He was compelled, from the smallness of his force, to wait for the command under General Corcoran and could not again strike the column before it reached the river. The cavalry of Colonels Spear and Onderdonk were pushed on numerous roads, and rendered valuable services in procuring information and capturing prisoners.

Thus ends the present investment or siege of Suffolk, which had for its objects the recovery of the whole country south of the James extending to the Albemarle Sound in North Carolina, the ports of Norfolk and Portsmouth, 80 miles of new railroad iron, the equipments of two roads, and the capture of all the United States forces and property with some thousands of contrabands.

General Longstreet finding that an assault at the outside upon works defended by one-half his own force would be expensive and uncertain, and having failed in turning either flank, decided to besiege the place and asked for re-enforcements; probably not less than two divisions joined from General Hill. The works constructed are on the most extensive scale and in the most approved manner.

The rules and regulations prescribed by military authorities for the conduct of siege operations have been observed. Some idea may be formed of this so-styled foraging expedition when I state that not less than 10 miles of batteries, covered-ways, and rifle-pits have been thrown up; most of the artillery was protected by embrasures; the parapets were from 12 to 15 feet in thickness and well revetted, while the covered ways were from 8 to 10 feet. Longstreet had a wire laid from the Blackwater, and telegraphed arrangements throughout his lines. <ar26_279>

RESULTS.

We have taken five pieces of the famous Fauquier Artillery, about 400 prisoners, some rifles, and camp equipage. Probably 500 or 600 have been killed and wounded and 500 have deserted, making a total loss of at least 1,500.

Our own killed is 44; wounded, 202, and missing, 14. Total, 260.(*)

All the *morale*, prestige, and glory belong to the patient and brave officers and men of the Federal Army.

Besides these brilliant results, this command has held the masses of the enemy around Suffolk in order that General Hooker might secure the crowning victory of the war, and it is entitled to a share of the glory that may accrue to his arms. My thanks are due all officers and soldiers who have worked cheerfully and patriotically on these fortifications. They now see that their labors are not in vain.

The truth of history requires that I should state that a small portion of the One hundred and twelfth New York became homesick and discontented, and said that they came to fight and not to dig. This feeling was seized upon by politicians, and since the adjournment of the Senate I have been advised that efforts were made to defeat my confirmation in consequence thereof. Soldiers who love their country will cheerfully perform any duty assigned them; men who know how to build fortifications will know how to defend or assault them. It should not be forgotten that the principal rebel successes have been behind intrenchments, as at Manassas, Fredericksburg, Richmond, Vicksburg, Charleston, &c.

It is an unpleasant duty to state that most of the Ninth New York, Colonel Hawkins, left this command on the 3d, by expiration of their term of service, while their comrades were actively engaged with the enemy. It can be regarded only as an unfortunate termination of a hitherto brilliant career of service.

To Generals Corcoran, Terry, Dodge, and Harland, and Colonels Dutton and Gibbs, commanding fronts or lines; Colonels Spear and Onderdonk, of the cavalry; Colonels Gurney and Wardrop, commanding reserves, and Captain Follett, chief of artillery, I am under very great obligations for the able, faithful, judicious, and cheerful discharge of every duty incident to their important positions.

General Getty was intrusted with the river line below the Onondaga Battery, the key of the position and about 8 miles in length--a very difficult line to defend against an enterprising enemy acquainted with every by-path and guided by owners of the soil. His responsibilities were of the highest order, and the labors of his troops were incessant. Under his vigilant supervision everything was done that could be for the security of the right flank, and the enemy was foiled in all plans for crossing.

Col. R. S. Foster, of Indiana, commanding brigade and a portion of the front, added fresh laurels to the high reputation which he established in West Virginia and on the Peninsula. He was at home in grand skirmishes, and the enemy always recoiled before him.

General Gordon reported three days before the conclusion of the siege and was assigned to the command of the Reserve Division. His long and varied experience rendered his judgment of great value, and I regret that he has been called to another field.

My thanks are due General Viele, of Norfolk, for the prompt transmission of important intelligence and for the alacrity with which my calls were responded. <ar26_280>

Captain Ludlow, quartermaster at Norfolk, deserves mention for his untiring efforts in forwarding the main bulk of supplies for the army.

The medical department, under the able management of Dr. Hand, was in excellent working order and equal to every emergency. The wounded were promptly cared for and spared all unnecessary suffering. The commissary department was admirably managed by the late Captain Bowdish, and since his death by Captain Felt.

Colonel Murphy commanded brigade; Colonel Drake, Fort Union; Colonel Hawkins, Fort Nansemond; Captain Sullivan, Fort Halleck; Colonel Davis, the Draw-Bridge Battery; Colonel Worth, Battery Mansfield; Colonel Thorp, the Redan and Rosecrans; Captain Johnson, Battery Monday; Colonel England, Battery Montgomery; Colonel Pease, Battery Stevens, and Colonel McEvily, Fort Dix, with ability, and their troops were always ready for the enemy.

Major Stratton, Eleventh Pennsylvania Cavalry, was at South Mills watching the operations of the troops from Carolina. By his discretion and energy the rebels were prevented from penetrating the Dismal Swamp.

Captain Tamblyn, Lieutenants Seabury, Young, Thayer, Strong, and Murray, of the Signal Corps, have been indefatigable day and night and of the greatest service in their department. Captain Davis shares the above commendation for the few days he was here.

The conduct of Lieutenant-Colonel Nixon, Ninety-ninth New York; of Captain Morris, Lieutenants Hasbrouck, Hunt, Whitney, and Beecher, of the artillery; Lieutenants James, Grant, Macardle, Soederquist, and Burleson, on engineer duty; of Lieutenant Buttz, assistant provost-marshal, and of Major Wetherill, was conspicuous. Major Stewart, of the Engineer Corps, joined for a few days, evincing the same lively interest which characterized his valuable services on the Peninsula.

The command is mainly indebted to the provost-marshal, Major Smith, of the One hundred and twelfth New York, for the good order and cleanliness which has prevailed in town and camp.

The co-operation of the gunboats, under Lieutenants Cushing, Lamson, and Harris, U. S. Navy, sent by Admiral Lee, has been very effective, and I take great pleasure in acknowledging the gallant services of their officers and crews. The army gunboats Smith Briggs and West End, commanded by Captain Lee and Lieutenant Rowe, proved invaluable. The Smith Briggs was for many days the only boat above the West Branch, in consequence of the order of Admiral Lee.

My personal staff have all earned a place in this record by their zeal, fidelity, and unremitting labors day and night, increased by injuries which I sustained from the fall of my horse. Their claims to promotion were established long before the siege of Suffolk. Maj. B. B. Foster, assistant adjutant-general; Capt. George S. Dodge, quartermaster; Lieuts. Charles R. Stirling and James D. Outwater, aides-de-camp; Lieut. A. B. Johnson, ordnance officer, and Lieut. James D. Mahon, judge advocate.

Doubtless many names have been omitted, but discrimination is impossible where all have done so well.

For the conclusion is reserved the agreeable duty of testifying to the cordial and efficient support I have ever received from Major-General Dix. No request or suggestion has ever escaped his attention, and most of my requirements have been anticipated by his liberal and comprehensive policy.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN J. PECK,

Major-General.

Col. D. T. VAN BUREN,
A. A. G., Dept. of Va.

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HEADQUARTERS,
New Berne, N.C., December 18, 1863.

GENERAL: My excuse for this trespass upon your most valuable time is that I have been unofficially advised that Admiral Lee has endeavored to depreciate the importance of Longstreet's campaign against me.

This is very singular, for he did not visit Suffolk during the nine months I was in command, and saw nothing of my system of fortifications or of Longstreet's, the development of which was from 9 to 10 miles. His headquarters were at Newport News, some 30 miles from mine. His views were based entirely upon the impressions of young and inexperienced subordinates, whose vision was limited to short distances beyond the gunboat decks.

On April 20, thirteen days before the conclusion of the siege, he ordered all the boats to **Hill's Point** for safety, 7 miles from Suffolk, against which I protested, and some sharp correspondence ensued. Besides the distance the densely-wooded banks of the Nansemond were unfavorable for forming a judgment of the numbers and labors of the enemy, everywhere screened in timber. The whole country was one vast forest, out of which I had to cut a field of fire for my artillery. Admiral Lee thinks that Longstreet brought a force of negroes for building his extensive line of works. On his arrival the negroes ceased to come into my lines, and parties were sent out to bring them in for information, but without success.

After his repulse on May 3 and night retreat some blacks escaped from Franklin and informed me that all the contrabands, except servants and drivers, were left at Franklin, across the Blackwater, to prevent their escape. They also stated that they prayed very loud that "Massa Longstreet might be whipped by you folks."

Captain Lamson, one of the most gallant officers in the U.S. Navy, commanded the flotilla in the Upper Nansemond, and was on the staff of the acting admiral. He says he made a complete examination, during two days, of Longstreet's lines after his retreat, and changed his opinion and so told the admiral; he estimated the rebel force from 35,000 to 50,000. Major-General Dix was over my lines, including the Nansemond, ever; alternate day, and had favorable opportunities for judging; he says some 35,000. General Gordon states that the works he examined could not have been made by less than 30,000.

Major-General Keyes concluded my situation was so critical that I ought to evacuate the lines to save the troops from capture. On my positive refusal he called for two corps. He estimated 40,000 prior to Hill's arrival.

A mail, with several hundred letters, was taken, showing that Hill was to co-operate, and that they had a statement of my force, artillery, and a map of the works.

General Hooker telegraphed that his reliable spy in Richmond advised that Jeff. Davis had ordered Hill to leave North Carolina and join Longstreet at Suffolk. All prisoners, deserters, and Union people agreed as to this co-operation.

About April 26 a division arrived from Little Washington, having crossed the Chowan near Gatesville. General Hill joined with his entire command on May 1, by way of Weldon, Franklin, and Holland's Corners. Hill's letter to Longstreet, asking orders, is in my possession.

General Dix employed a spy to visit the armies of Longstreet and Lee in February and March. He was two weeks in Longstreet's lines and longer in Lee's. Through a friend in the War Office in Richmond <ar26_282> he was allowed entire freedom in the camps and sold his goods to officers and men on credit. He reported 28,000 to 30,000 in March in my general front and one hundred and nine regiments, of some 84,000, in the army of Lee. Then 28,000, with the forces of Hill from North Carolina, represent generally the mass opposed to me. My effective force for some days was 14,928. I asked for one division

only. For a few days I had about 29,000 effectives on a line from below **Hill's Point**, on the river, extending across to the Dismal Swamp of at least 15 miles in length, with a detachment of the same at South Mills, 30 miles distant, the key to the southern approaches of the swamp.

The campaign will be clear when it is stated that Hill was to make noisy and furious demonstrations in Carolina, for the purpose of inducing General Foster to call for troops from Virginia. Accordingly, Pettigrew appeared in the vicinity of New Berne and Hill attacked or cannonaded Washington.

Our casualties were 6 at New Berne, but I have failed to learn that any occurred at Washington. Ten thousand were asked for General Foster, and I was called upon to contribute from my 15,000 on the 10th April. Against my judgment I consented to send 3,000, and they were on the troop train. Longstreet was advised of this detachment in a few hours and advanced that very night. With your approval I brought back the 3,000 at dusk, and very luckily for our affairs in that quarter.

The operations about Suffolk, ending May 4, were suddenly eclipsed in the night of general gloom and painful anxiety which attended Hooker's great disaster at Chancellorsville. Attention was not again awakened upon that field, and the campaign has been imperfectly understood by the public.

I desire to thank you for the liberal support sent me at Suffolk.

With sentiments of respect, your obedient servant,

JOHN J. PECK.

Major-General HALLECK,

Commander-in-Chief, Washington, D.C.

[Inclosure.]

From the Philadelphia Enquirer, April 24, 1863.

THE GALLANT CAMPAIGN AT SUFFOLK.

Having in our recent articles traced the progress of the war in the Southwest, in Tennessee, and in North Carolina, we follow them up this morning by a review of the short and exciting campaign about Suffolk. This campaign, in presence of some of the vast events of the war, appears to be nothing more than an episode, but in our judgment it is entitled to considerable prominence. It must be remembered that the military authorities charged with the occupation of Norfolk established an important post at a considerable distance to the southwest of that city--at Suffolk, where the Petersburg and Norfolk Railroad intersects the Seaboard and Roanoke Railroad, leading to Weldon, N.C. Suffolk is also at the head of navigation on the Nansemond River, which empties into the James River near its mouth. From this post the National troops were enabled to operate to a distance in the interior of the south side of Virginia, keeping the country comparatively clear of guerrillas, contraband traders, and spies, and thus more effectually guarding Norfolk. <ar26_283>

For a long while the rebel leaders at Richmond permitted this occupancy by the Union forces to pass without interference, although it was exceedingly unpalatable to their adherents in the country occupied. Within the last two or three weeks, however, for reasons that may appear in the sequel, they detached a heavy force, under their pet General Longstreet-to recover Suffolk and to bring Norfolk once more under the sway of the rebellion. The movement commenced about the same time with that of General Hill against General Foster's garrison at Washington, N.C., and the two were unquestionably intended to co-operate with each other.

Having massed some 38,000 men behind the Blackwater River General Longstreet began the execution of his plan on the 10th instant by crossing his grand army over that stream by means of five pontoon bridges.

On the next night his advance drove in our pickets in front of Suffolk, and the situation of our forces began to look serious.

The rebel plan was to cut the Nansemond River some 6 miles or so below Suffolk, on our right flank, while another force was to be thrown against the Norfolk Railroad, on our left flank and rear, and, thus surrounded, General Peck's entire army and the city of Norfolk were to fall a rich and easy prize into the hands of the enemy. It so happened, however, that two matters over which the rebel chieftains could exercise but little control interfered to defeat the scheme. In the first place General Peck, who was in

command of the National force, was entirely too vigilant, too active, and too enterprising for General Longstreet; and in the second place General Foster's resolute resistance against Hill at Washington, N.C., where the latter stubbornly persisted in holding out after his adversary claimed that he was hopelessly cut off, prevented Hill from coming up in time to execute his share of the grand achievement. Nevertheless, General Longstreet went at his plan with energy, and from April 11, when he first drove in our pickets, until Tuesday last he kept up an incessant series of attacks of the most harassing and vexatious character to General Peck's troops. He rushed his squadrons of cavalry against our lines in one place and established batteries of field artillery to sweep the Nansemond River at others. He maneuvered to overwhelm us here and flank us there, and in every way endeavored to penetrate our lines, but was baffled in every attempt by the watchfulness, activity, endurance, skill, and courage of General Peck and his brave companions in arms.

Among those who were conspicuous on our side General Getty, Colonel Foster, of the light troops, and Lieutenant Lamson, of the Navy, are mentioned by General Dix; Colonel Foster having repelled an assault upon the right, and General Getty, with Lieutenant Lamson, having stormed, in the most gallant manner, a troublesome battery of six guns, which they captured, with 160 prisoners.

Thus repulsed at every point, Longstreet appears to have abandoned his enterprise, at least for the present, for the latest advices state that skirmishing ceased on the 21st.

Now, what is the importance of this defeated movement of Longstreet's? To get an intelligent answer to that question we have only to look at contemporaneous operations on the James River. For several weeks past the rebels have been quite busy fortifying its banks just as they have fortified the Mississippi. They are casemating Fort Powhatan, and have three batteries thoroughly finished. They are taking up the obstructions at Fort Darling. They know the value of water communication to us, and of what priceless advantage it is to them <ar26_284> to be able to prevent our passage. This is the lesson they have learned at Vicksburg, Port Hudson, Fort Pemberton, and at Charleston.

If they fortify the James down to its mouth it is closed for our purposes and left free for theirs. It brings their iron-clads, now lying idle at Richmond, clear down to Hampton Roads, where they may lie in wait and have their opportunities always in sight. To complete this grand scheme of operations Norfolk is wanted, and then, with their iron-clads, that city would be an open port until we could complete another fleet of monitors to close it up again. We tried to develop all this some days ago. Moreover, there are indications that the rebel leaders intend to defend Richmond with a much smaller army than that hitherto devoted to that purpose, and upon a line much nearer to that city than the Rappahannock. That is the reason why there is so much activity in strengthening the works immediately in front of Richmond. They know that we can scarcely assail that city by the land route, for that compels a long line of communications, which experience tells them they can break up with a small and active body of cavalry; hence another reason for fortifying the James and closing the water approaches against our iron-clads. All these considerations make the campaign about Suffolk a rather important feature of the war and not a mere episode. It appears to be over for the present, but we trust that the vigilance, activity, and skill which have thus far baffled the enemy will continue to be exerted, and that General Peck will have supports at hand. Longstreet's withdrawal may only be temporary, to wait the tardy arrival of Hill from North Carolina.

The Richmond Examiner of November 27, 1863, has the following in its leading editorial upon Lieutenant-General Longstreet and his Knoxville and Suffolk campaigns, which are pronounced as parallel failures. The liberal admissions by the rebel press at the time and now respecting the Suffolk operations are highly creditable to the command of Major-General Peck, and ought to satisfy those who sought to underrate that campaign:

Perhaps the result might have been different if Longstreet and his corps of the Virginia army had been in line. His operations in East Tennessee afford little compensation for the reverse at Chattanooga, nor have the late bare and scanty news from that quarter sustained the high hope which the public justly based on the first intelligence briskly forwarded by General Bragg. His telegram declared that Longstreet's cavalry had pursued the enemy into Knoxville, that the infantry was close up, and it was natural to suppose that the next news would be that of Knoxville's recapture; but the next news from Longstreet contained a mention of intrenching, which suggested disagreeable reminiscences of Suffolk. Since then little or nothing has been heard from Longstreet unless we are to receive the unofficial story of the telegraph this morning to be trustworthy. Oh, that it may be so! His pressure on Burnside has undoubtedly quickened

Grant's attack on Bragg, while the absence of his whole corps from the Confederate line at the time of Sherman's arrival in the Federal host has given the enemy a great opportunity. It was during the parallel campaign of Longstreet against Suffolk that Hooker made his *coup* at Chancellorsville; but he found there Jackson, while Grant had to do with Bragg alone.

HDQRS. ARMY AND DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA,
New Berne, N.C., December 25, 1863.

GENERAL: I have the honor to make the following supplementary report as a part of my report of operations during the siege of Suffolk in April and May last:

The name of Col. J.P. McMahon, One hundred and sixty-fourth New York, should have been in the paragraph commencing with "Colonel Murphy, commanding brigade." <ar26_285>

My right flank rested upon the Upper Nansemond for some 8 miles, a narrow, shallow, and tortuous stream, offering great facilities to an enterprising enemy for crossing and cutting the communications with Norfolk. Including this the whole line extending to the Dismal Swamp was from 12 to 15 miles in length; besides a force in observation was requisite at South Mills, 30 miles distant, the key of the southern approaches to the swamp. In view of these and other objections I advised the withdrawal of the troops to a new and short line near Portsmouth after the reduction of the rebel and Union fortifications.

The advance of Pettigrew toward New Berne and of Hill upon Little Washington were only feints (our casualties being less than a dozen at both places) made by order of Longstreet some days before the date fixed for his own advance upon Suffolk for the purpose of inducing the authorities in North Carolina to call on Virginia for re-enforcements. As designed, 10,000 were asked for North Carolina, of which I was contributing 3,000 on the 10th. The information reached Longstreet at Franklin, and he crossed the Blackwater that night.

Major-General Hooker kindly telegraphed that he had advices that General Hill would join Longstreet. The time when the North Carolina troops arrived is material. Major Stratton, of the cavalry, reported the fact on the 20th, and I did the same on the 25th, some of them being captured. Major Stratton was correct, for Major-General Foster advised that the enemy retired from Little Washington on the evening of the 15th, and that the deserters said the cause was that they were ordered to re-enforce the army in Virginia.

May 4, while in full pursuit of the columns of Longstreet and Hill toward the Blackwater, an order was received to dispatch General Gordon with a large force to West Point. Ten thousand additional were also ordered to be held in readiness to move at a moment's notice, leaving but the ordinary small garrison intact at Suffolk and of course ending offensive operations.

On May 4 prisoners were taken representing forty odd regiments and independent commands, which gives some idea of the organization and masses of the enemy. The many miles of earthworks thrown up by the rebels were constructed by the troops. Lest the contrabands should come into my lines the bulk of them were left on the other side of the Blackwater.

It is proper to remark that the forces under my command from September to April, 1863, were rated by the public at twice and even thrice the actual numbers.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN J. PECK,

Major-General.

Brig. Gen. LORENZO THOMAS,
Adjutant-General, U. S. Army.

[Indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE EAST,
New York City, January 21, 1864.

Respectfully forwarded.

The withdrawal of the troops to a line nearer Norfolk was suggested by me after the investment of Suffolk and was ordered by the General-in-Chief.

JOHN A. DIX,

Major-general.

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O.R.-- SERIES I--VOLUME XVIII [S# 26]

**APRIL 11-MAY 4, 1863.--Siege of Suffolk, Va.**

**No. 15.--Report of Brig. Gen. George W. Getty, U.S. Army, commanding Third Division, Ninth Army Corps.**

[ar26\_301 con't]

HDQRS. THIRD DIVISION, *NINTH ARMY CORPS,*  
*Suffolk, Va., May 12, 1863.*

SIR: On April 11, the alarm of the enemy's approach being given, in compliance with the orders of the major-general commanding, the troops of this division were called out under arms. The pickets along the northeastern front were strengthened; two companies of the Tenth New Hampshire were placed in Fort Halleck, where they remained until May 10; the troops under Colonel Dutton engaged in fortifying the river; the Twenty-first Connecticut and five companies of the Thirteenth New Hampshire at Fort Connecticut; the Fourth Rhode Island, One hundred and third New York, and the remainder of the Thirteenth New Hampshire at Fort Stevens were called in. Three companies, however, of the Thirteenth New Hampshire were ordered to remain at Fort Connecticut, with orders to observe the river, resist any attempt of the enemy to cross until the last moment, and then to fall back to Suffolk over the corduroy bridge across Broer's Creek, taking up the bridge. The troops remained under arms and on the alert during the night. The Second Brigade strengthened the south front between Forts Union and McClellan, and remained in this position until April 28, with the exception of the Eighth Connecticut Volunteers, which, on the 14th, was ordered to the river front, where it has since remained.

On the 18th General Harland was assigned to the command of the front from Fort Halleck to Battery Onondaga, and on the 28th the Eleventh and Fifteenth Regiments Connecticut Volunteers, and on the 29th the Sixteenth Connecticut Volunteers, reported to him.

On the 12th Col. A. H. Dutton, commanding the Third Brigade, was placed in command of the line of defenses included between Forts Jericho and Halleck, and at once set to work throwing up rifle-pits <ar26\_302> and fortifying his position. Under Colonel Dutton's supervision the front between Fort Halleck and Battery Onondaga was very materially strengthened. Rifle-pits were thrown up, covering all the approaches by the Portsmouth road, and a second line on the west bank of Jericho Creek and Fort Dutton, on the left of Fort Jericho, was thrown up. He was relieved on April 18 by Brigadier-General Harland and assigned to the command of the river defenses between the mouth of Jericho Creek and Dr. Council's. The Eighty-ninth Regiment New York Volunteers was placed in Fort Montgomery, where it remained until May 6 with the exception of temporary absences.

On the 13th the Fourth Regiment Rhode Island Volunteers was ordered to report to Brigadier-General Corcoran and was stationed by him behind the breastworks on the left of Fort Union. It occupied this position until May 1, when it was relieved by the Ninth Vermont and placed on the line of river defenses near Fort Connecticut, where it now is. The One hundred and third New York was stationed on the 13th instant behind the breastworks to the left of Fort Union, a position which it held until May 6. The Ninth Regiment New York Volunteers was placed in Fort Nansemond, where it remained until relieved and sent North on May 3.

It is my painful duty in this connection to animadvert upon the course pursued by the Ninth Regiment New York Volunteers, who for the first time in their military history turned their backs upon the enemy, and, deaf to the appeals of the commander of the department, persisted in returning home, when every consideration of patriotism, honor, and pride called upon them to remain and share the dangers of battle

with their comrades in the field. Most deeply do I regret that a regiment whose career since they entered the service two years ago has been most brilliant should at the close sully their glorious reputation by such an act; but it is due to truth to say that in my opinion the fault lies chiefly with the officers, and most of all with the commanding officer, whose whole course in this affair seems to have been actuated by personal pique and caprice.

On April 14, reconnoitering along the river, I discovered a battery of the enemy at Norfleet's farm, which in an engagement that morning with our gunboats had disabled the Mount Washington and repulsed the remainder. I found that this battery mounted four guns--two 20-pounder Parrotts and two brass 12-pounders; that it commanded completely a point directly opposite and extending out some distance from this side, and that a large party of the enemy was at work strengthening the battery and throwing up additional works and rifle-pits. I immediately sent for guns and troops, negroes and tools, which arrived in the course of the afternoon.

During the night I filled the point with sharpshooters to dispute the passage of the enemy in case he attempted to cross, and posted the Tenth New Hampshire and a section of artillery to check his farther advance in case he succeeded in driving our sharpshooters and effecting a lodgment on the point. Their position was strengthened with rifle-pits during the night. Two positions were selected for batteries, one near the base of and a little to the right of the point, since named Battery Kimball, distant some 1,200 yards from the enemy's battery, the other on the left side of the point, at the mouth of Broer's Creek, distant 900 yards from the enemy's battery, and since named Battery Morris.

The works were pushed vigorously during the night. Battery Morris, constructed by Captain Beger, Second Wisconsin Battery, who, with three guns of his battery (10-pounder Parrotts), had been sent to me by the order of the commanding general, was completed and the guns placed in position before 2 a.m. Battery Kimball was completed about midnight. Two 20-pounder Parrott guns, under Captain Morris, Ninth Regiment New York Volunteers, and one 3-inch gun of the Fourth Wisconsin Battery, also under his charge, were placed in position. Both batteries were screened by trees and underwood.

At daylight the next morning Captain Beger cutting away the trees which intercepted his fire, opened on the enemy's battery, firing percussion-shell from one gun, fuse-shell from a second, and case-shot from the third. In a few moments the enemy replied, firing briskly. Several of the 20-pounder shells passed through and through the frail parapet of Battery Morris. As soon as his whole attention was engaged with Battery Morris and the position of his guns ascertained from their fire, the screen was thrown aside from Battery Kimball and Captain Morris opened fire from all his guns, directing his whole fire on one piece of the enemy, and successively on two others, silencing all three in turn, Captain Beger meanwhile keeping up a hot and well-directed fire from his three guns in Battery Morris. At the end of two hours the enemy's fire slackened and became very feeble. In another hour he was entirely silenced.

During the action our sharpshooters, who had been placed on the point and on an island in the marsh to the right, kept up a fire which must have proved very annoying to the enemy's gunners, since it provoked one or two discharges of canister. The following night he withdrew his guns.

The only casualties were 3 drivers of Battery A, Fifth United States Artillery, wounded, 1 mortally. One of the 20-pounder Parrotts threw off its muzzle after firing twelve rounds and was replaced by a 3-inch gun from the Fourth Wisconsin Battery, a section of which had been sent to me and was kept in reserve.

The three days following every nerve was strained to put the river in a thorough state of defense. The military road already completed to Fort Connecticut was extended to Fort Stevens. Batteries and rifle-pits were thrown up on all the exposed points. The troops, as fast as they arrived, were sent into the trenches, and on the 18th the following was the disposition of the troops along the line of the river:

Lieut. G. B. Easterly, Fourth Wisconsin Battery, at Battery Kimball, with one 20-pounder Parrott and two 3-inch guns; Thirteenth New Hampshire Volunteers, with one company of sharpshooters, holding position next below the mouth of Jericho Creek; Captain Beger, Second Wisconsin Battery, with two guns, in Battery Morris, supported by one company of the Twenty-fifth New Jersey Volunteers; Lieutenant Crabb, with one section of light 12-pounders; Lieutenant Schulz, with one section of 10-pounder Parrotts; the Tenth New Hampshire Volunteers, Ninth Vermont Volunteers, one company of the

Twenty-fifth New Jersey Volunteers, and four companies of the Nineteenth Wisconsin Volunteers, under the command of Colonel Donohoe, Tenth New Hampshire Volunteers, holding position of Fort Connecticut, from Broer's Creek to Dr. Council's; Captain Morris, with two 20-pounder Parrotts in Battery Stevens, supported by Colonel Pease, One hundred and seventeenth New York Volunteers; Major Wheelan on the right of Colonel Pease, with four companies of Mounted Rifles, and five gunboats between the mouth of Broer's Creek and a point half a mile below Dr. Council's landing. Gunboats below West Branch; number not known. Two regiments of infantry, the Eighth Connecticut and Nineteenth Wisconsin Volunteers, six companies, and one section of artillery in reserve. <ar26\_304>

On the 14th instant the enemy had planted a battery in the earth works on Hill's Point, and, in the engagement that ensued between them and our naval forces in the river, almost entirely destroyed the gunboat Mount Washington. After this action five gunboats returned to the Upper Nansemond, above Hill's Point, and it became evident that their safety required that this battery should be silenced, for the channel of the river runs within 50 yards of Hill's Point, and the action of the 14th showed conclusively that it would be almost certain destruction for any boat to attempt to run past. It was therefore with a view to deliver our gunboats from a dangerous position, as well as to annoy the enemy and to gain possession of an important point for future operations, that an expedition to cut out the battery was undertaken. The plan of operation, as arranged with Lieutenant Lamson, U.S. Navy, commanding flotilla, was as follows: Five hundred men were to embark on the gunboat Stepping Stones at Dr. Council's landing, proceed down the river, land on Hill's Point just above the battery, and charge the works with the bayonet. Lieutenant Lamson volunteered to land four boat howitzers to co-operate in this movement, and at his request was furnished with 40 men to man the drag-ropes.

At 5.30 p.m. on April 19, detachments of 130 men from the Eighth Connecticut and 140 men from the Eighty-ninth New York embarked on the Stepping Stones at Dr. Council's landing. A canvas screen, which effectually concealed the men, was drawn up all around the deck, and the boat pushed off and steamed rapidly down the stream. As she approached the battery not a shot was fired or a sound heard to indicate the presence of the enemy. He was waiting, with all his guns double-shotted with canister, until the vessel should come abreast and within 50 yards of his battery. At 300 yards above the battery Lieutenant Lamson headed his boat inshore, but striking on a spile she glanced off, and, borne on the ebb-tide, was on the eve of shooting in front of the battery, when Lieutenant Lamson, with admirable presence of mind, reversed the paddle-wheels and backed her aground. The men jumped off from both ends of the boat up to their waists in mud and water, scrambled hastily ashore, and with a cheer dashed for the battery. In an instant Lieutenant Lamson had landed his howitzers and followed. The enemy, apprised of our approach by the cheers, opened a hot fire of musketry, and was enabled even to reverse and fire one of his guns; but seeing himself cut off, and receiving one or two discharges of canister from Lamson's howitzers, he surrendered. The capture of 5 guns, 7 officers, and 130 men, the liberation of the five gunboats above, and the occupation of a point of vital importance to the enemy and an admirable point of operations for us were the results of one of the most brilliant achievements of the war. Our loss was 4 killed and 10 wounded.

The battery taken, our whole attention was turned to fortifying the position and preparing for attack. The boat howitzers were placed in battery just above the landing place in a position to sweep the plain in front over which the attacking party must pass, rifle-pits were commenced, and pickets thrown out. Col. A. H. Dutton was placed in command. Five companies of the Tenth New Hampshire Volunteers, a detachment of 60 men of the Ninth Vermont, Colonel Pease, One hundred and seventeenth New York, with four companies of his regiment, and Lieutenant Crabb, Battery A, Fifth U.S. Artillery, with gun detachments to man the captured pieces, were sent over to re-enforce the position, and by morning a formidable line of rifle-pits and batteries was erected. <ar26\_305>

The boat howitzers were withdrawn and re-embarked on the arrival of Lieutenant Crabb. Contrary to expectation the morning dawned without an attack. A section of Battery A, Fifth U.S. Artillery, under the command of Lieutenant Murray, and the remainder of the One hundred and seventeenth New York were sent across. The day was spent in fortifying and strengthening the position. No demonstration was made by the enemy during the day with the exception that in the morning a line of skirmishers advanced across a field and afterward withdrew.

In compliance with the order of the major-general commanding, given upon my representations, the position was evacuated on the night of the 20th. The movement began soon after dark. The artillery, intrenching tools, surplus ammunition, &c., were embarked on the Stepping Stones, and the troops ferried across and landed on the marsh opposite by the West End and by small boats. The picket line was held to the last moment, and at 12.30 o'clock the last load crossed over undisturbed by the enemy, who during the whole evacuation scarcely fired a shot or gave the least annoyance.

After the capture of Hill's Point Battery nothing of special importance occurred until May 3. The enemy's sharpshooters caused considerable annoyance to our pickets and working parties; nevertheless the works were pushed vigorously, every available man being sent into the trenches.

On the 18th the enemy opened fire from two heavy guns in sunken batteries on the West Branch, a few hundred yards above Hill's Point; but the capture of Hill's Point on the 19th exposed them to a similar fate and necessitated their withdrawal. They were withdrawn on the night of the 19th.

On the 24th the Ninth Vermont, Eighth Connecticut, and the Nineteenth Wisconsin Volunteers were ordered by the major-general commanding to report to General Dodge to take part in a reconnaissance under direction of General Corcoran. They returned the following morning.

On the 27th instant a new battery of the enemy was discovered some distance west of Norfleet's house, and on the morning of the 28th it opened fire on the Swan and Commerce, two unarmed steamers which passed down the river from Suffolk.

On April 30 the enemy opened fire from a battery of three heavy guns at Le Compte's house on the West Branch. After a short engagement with the gunboats and the two 20-pounder Parrotts, under Captain Morris, in Fort Stevens, the battery was silenced.

On May 2 I received orders to make a reconnaissance on the Providence Church road the following day.

The operations of the 3d instant constituted a reconnaissance designed to ascertain the number and position of the enemy's force and his movements. They were threefold. The main force was to advance on the Providence Church road, while two expeditions were to cross the Nansemond below at different points, seize Reed's Ferry, and feel the enemy's left. The One hundred and third and Eighty-ninth Regiments New York Volunteers, supported by the Twenty-fifth New Jersey and Thirteenth New Hampshire, crossing the bridge over the river, deployed as skirmishers on the right and left of the road and advanced, driving the enemy back from position to position until he took refuge in his rifle-pits and batteries. Hasbrouck's battery followed along the road, and, with the assistance of Davis' battery, kept silent the enemy's artillery. Major Wheelan, with four companies of the Mounted Rifles, followed «20 R R--VOL XVIII» <ar26\_306> Hasbrouck's battery but was not brought into action. The Connecticut regiments, Eleventh, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth, under General Harland, followed and supported the advance, relieving the advance regiments as they exhausted their ammunition and holding the ground already gained; Colonel Onderdonk's cavalry, the One hundred and forty-third. One hundred and forty-fourth, and One hundred and seventieth Regiments New York Volunteers, constituted the reserve, under the command of Colonel McIvor, of the One hundred and seventieth Regiment New York Volunteers.

The enemy was found strongly posted at the forks of the Providence Church and Reed's Ferry roads. An earthwork on his left rested on a swamp, from which strong rifle-pits extended across his whole front and rested on his right on a branch of the river. It will be seen that the position could not be turned, and to carry it a direct assault had to be made on the front, which, even if successful, must inevitably have resulted in a great sacrifice of life. It was determined, therefore, on consultation with the major-general commanding, that the objects of the reconnaissance, in revealing the position and force of the enemy, were attained as far as was possible under the circumstances, and therefore nothing remained but to withdraw with as little loss as possible. Accordingly, the rifle-pits on the enemy's side next the drawbridge were manned by the One hundred and seventieth New York Volunteers, and the whole force was rapidly and quietly withdrawn without the loss of a man. The movement was completed by 9 p.m. and the bridge taken up.

We lost in this engagement Col. Benjamin Ringold, of the One hundred and third Regiment New York Volunteers, a most gallant and valuable officer, who fell at the head of his regiment late in the afternoon. (\*)

Meanwhile the Fourth Rhode Island Volunteers crossed in boats at **Hill's Point** at daylight and advanced across the field toward the woods, but, encountering a superior force of the enemy advantageously posted in the woods, they were compelled, after considerable skirmishing, to withdraw upon **Hill's Point**, from whence they were withdrawn to this side the following night. The Fourth Rhode Island was assisted by a boat howitzer from the Commodore Barney and by a detachment of the One hundred and seventeenth New York Volunteers. The Twenty-first Connecticut, a section of Vallee's battery, Fourth Wisconsin, and a sergeant and 10 men from the Mounted Rifles, under command of Major Crosby, of the Twenty-first Connecticut, crossed the river near Sleepy Hole, with the assistance of the gunboats, and advanced to Chuckatuck, where they drove out some 300 of the enemy's cavalry, part of which retreated on the route leading to Isle of Wight and the remainder on the road leading to Everett's Bridge, some 3 miles above Reed's Ferry. Skirmishing all the way, they pushed forward to Reed's Ferry, which they occupied after a brisk skirmish, in which they captured a lieutenant and 15 men. Being unable to communicate with our forces on the left, the Fourth Rhode Island, or the main advance, Major Crosby, moved down the left bank of the West Branch to the Nansemond and took up an intrenched camp, from which he was withdrawn the following day. He lost 2 killed and 4 wounded.

On May 5 the commanding general published General Orders, No. 31, announcing the retreat of the enemy.

On the 7th, Field Orders, No. 14, were issued, disposing the troops of this division as follows, which positions they now occupy: The Second <ar26\_307> Brigade, General E. Harland, from Fort Halleck to the mouth of Jericho Canal; the Third Brigade, Col. A. H. Dutton, on the river, from the mouth of Jericho Creek to Battery Stevens; the First Brigade, Col. H. S. Fairchild, in reserve along the line of Suffolk County road from Jericho Canal to Calhoun's; the artillery in the batteries along the river.

The amount of work performed by troops on this line, taken in connection with the great amount of picket duty necessitated by the extent of the line and the incessant watchfulness imposed by the presence of the daring and enterprising enemy in great force, is astounding. On the front, from Fort Halleck to Battery Onondaga, there have been thrown up 3,434 yards of rifle-pits and 308 yards of parapet, 7 feet high and 7 feet in thickness on top. On the river line, 4,398 yards of rifle-pits, 1,944 feet of parapet, with an average height of 8 feet and thickness of something over 10 feet on top, were constructed. In addition to which some 10 miles of entirely new roads, including several bridges over impassable creeks and marshes and miles of corduroying, were made. Much of the work was done under the fire of the enemy's sharpshooters, who proved exceedingly annoying during the whole course of the siege. These results could not have been obtained had I not had the efficient support of Colonels Dutton and Pease, commanding the upper and lower defenses respectively, and their officers and men. Both of these officers worked day and night.

Colonel Dutton, in addition to his duties as a commanding officer, was also obliged to assume those of an engineer, and personally laid out and constructed many of the most important works on this line.

Lieutenant Murray, of Battery A, Fifth U.S. Artillery, was also of great service in constructing works. Fort Lamson and a battery next below Dr. Council's was laid out by him.

The services of Colonel Derrom, in constructing roads and bridges, were of the utmost value. Without the bridge constructed by him across Broer's Creek it is doubtful whether the line of the river could have been held with the small force at my disposal.

Colonel Stevens, also, of the Thirteenth New Hampshire, is deserving of credit. Both Colonels Stevens and Derrom displayed zeal, judgment, and courage on the 3d instant.

The whole deportment of the troops was excellent; with a single exception there was no complaint. Every order was obeyed with the utmost cheerfulness, and the same men who came off picket duty in the morning went on fatigue duty at night without a murmur.

The artillery is especially deserving of great credit. Captain Morris, Ninth New York Volunteers, with a battery of 20-pounder Parrotts, with the assistance of three 10 pounder Parrotts of Captain Beger's battery, silenced most effectually the enemy's battery at Norfleet's, and afterward rendered good service silencing his batteries at Le Compté's.

The services of the signal officers, Lieutenants Thayer and Murray, were great, and rendered always cheerfully and promptly.

I cannot close this report without acknowledging the important services rendered by the naval forces co-operating in the river, a tribute which they have richly merited. Lieutenants Cushing and Lamson and the officers and men of their commands have shown that in their country's service they know no fear, and that the old breed of naval heroes is not extinct; but to Lieutenant Lamson in particular, whose gallantry exhibited in his engagements at Norfleet's and at **Hill's Point** has been fully equaled by the willingness and desire he has shown on all occasions to co-operate with the land forces and to do everything <ar26\_308> for the good of the service, my thanks are due. But in acknowledging the services of meritorious officers I must not omit those of my own staff. To their services I am myself a witness, and with great pleasure am I able to state that in every emergency they have responded to the call made upon them with alacrity and willingness. Captain Gardner, assistant adjutant-general; Lieutenants McKechnie and Faxon, aides-de-camp; Dr. Humphreys, medical director, and Lieutenant Herbert, ordnance officer, did their whole duty, and in this is comprised everything.

Capt. Hazard Stevens, assistant adjutant-general, whose distinguished services and conduct have been acknowledged in previous reports, was particularly conspicuous throughout the operations above recited. On all occasions, whether in the discharge of his legitimate duties in the trenches, reconnoitering, or on the field under the enemy's fire, he evinced an earnestness and devotion worthy of emulation and deserving the highest praise.

I append lists(\*) of officers and men of the Eighty-ninth New York and Eighth Connecticut Volunteers, who participated in the storming of the enemy's battery at **Hill's Point**; also reports of brigade, battery, and regimental commanders. Lists of casualties already transmitted.(+)

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

**GEO. W. GETTY,**

*Brigadier-General, Commanding Division.*

Maj. B. B. FOSTER,

*Assistant Adjutant-General, Suffolk, Va.*

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**O.R.-- SERIES I--VOLUME XVIII [S# 26]**

**APRIL 11-MAY 4, 1863.--Siege of Suffolk, Va.**

**No. 17.--Report of Col. William R. Pease, One hundred and seventeenth New York Infantry.**

[ar26\_309 con't]

**HDQRS. ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTEENTH N. Y. VOLS.,**  
*Calhoun's Point, Va., April 19, 1863--11.30 a.m.*

GENERAL: I have the honor to report about 10.15 a.m. to-day a new rebel battery, opposite Stevens' battery at this Point, opened fire on the gunboat below here. They fired two or three shots before the boat replied. The boats from above moved down to a point opposite this camp and opened fire. Stevens' battery opened as soon as possible and very satisfactorily. A new battery of the enemy, heretofore unknown to us, below the old battery, opened the fire, and we believe that it has been pretty effectually silenced. I filled the rifle-pits, dug last night, with sharpshooters, and a brisk fire has been kept up on their sharpshooters. The enemy have not replied to the fire of the battery on this Point. They have not fired for the last forty minutes. The gunboats are firing occasionally. All is well. No casualties known.

Very respectfully, general, your obedient servant,

**W. R. PEASE.**

General GETTY,

*Commanding Third Division.*

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HEADQUARTERS,  
*Calhoun's Point, Va., April 21, 1863.*

CAPTAIN: I have the honor to report that at 6 o'clock p.m. yesterday I received an order from the commanding general to hold the One hundred and seventeenth New York Volunteers and a section of the Fourth Wisconsin Battery in readiness to march to the landing at Dr. Council's house and embark for Hill's Point in case the party sent against the enemy's work at that place were successful. The place was <ar26\_310> carried about 7 o'clock p.m., and this command marched immediately. On arriving at Dr. Council's no boat was ready to take the command over. About 10 o'clock p.m. Captain Vallee received an order to return with his section of artillery to Calhoun's Point. The One hundred and seventeenth New York Volunteers, 720 strong, remained in the road until about 12 p.m., and received an order to report to Colonel Donohoe, Tenth New Hampshire Volunteers, about 1½ miles above Dr. Council's. The regiment reported as ordered, and about 2.30 p.m. on the 20th an order was sent to send four companies of the One hundred and seventeenth New York Volunteers back to Dr. Council's house to embark for Hill's Point. A special order was received from the commanding general for the colonel of the One hundred and seventeenth New York Volunteers to take command of the four companies of his regiment and accompany them to Hill's Point. Companies D, F, H, and K were the companies sent over; they arrived at 4 o'clock p.m. and began to intrench. A detail was made from the companies to furnish skirmishers. The skirmishers were deployed and exchanged shots with the enemy, in which First Sergt. William Casselman, Company D, One hundred and seventeenth New York Volunteers, was severely wounded in the right leg by a rifle-ball from the enemy's skirmishers. The first fire applied to the building on Hill's Point was set by Second Lieut. D. B. Magill, One hundred and seventeenth New York Volunteers, who volunteered to perform the service. At 10 o'clock a.m. on the 20th the remainder of the regiment arrived and reported and were set to work intrenching. At 3 o'clock p.m. the order to evacuate the Point was issued. The embarkation commenced on one of the gunboats, and after landing about 400 men on the marsh opposite Hill's Point the small boats were substituted, and the crossing of all was completed about 12.30 a.m. on the morning of the 21st. All reached their old camp in safety.

I am, captain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

**W. R. PEASE,**  
*Colonel, Comdg. One hundred and seventeenth N. Y. Vols.*

Capt. HAZARD STEVENS,  
*Asst. Adjt. Gen., Third Division, Ninth Army Corps.*

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HDQRS. ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTEENTH N. Y. VOLS.,  
*Calhoun's Point, Va., April 22, 1863--8.30 a.m.*

CAPTAIN: I have the honor to report all quiet on this end of the line. No movement of the enemy discovered last night; no evidences of any parties working during the night. If we could have the use of a 12-pounder boat howitzer it would be very effective indeed in preventing the enemy from placing artillery in the battery on the opposite shore. Captain Morris informs me that the howitzer can be obtained from Captain Cushing, on the gunboat. I have a four-gun battery nearly completed, and respectfully request that the remainder of Captain Vallee's pieces be sent down. There was no movement of the gunboats during the night.

Very respectfully, captain, your obedient servant,

**W. R. PEASE,**  
*Colonel, Comdg. One hundred and seventeenth N.Y. Vols.*

Captain STEVENS,  
*Assistant Adjutant-General.*

HEADQUARTERS CALHOUN'S POINT, VA.

May 1, 1863.

CAPTAIN: I have the honor to report the gunboats all below Hill's Point. They were fired upon while moving down about 7 o'clock p.m. yesterday. The officer in command of the picket at Hill's Point last night reports that about 9.40 p.m. his sentinels saw men approaching in small parties of 2 and 3, and our men who were on guard in advance of the rifle-pits opened fire upon them. The enemy returned it and continued to advance, increasing in numbers. Our sentinels fell back, firing, and the men behind the rifle-pit opened fire; but the enemy still advanced and greatly outnumbered our party. Our men took to the boats and on reaching the boats not a piece was loaded to give the signal agreed upon in case they were obliged to retreat. The officer in command, Lieutenant Magill, then fired three shots from his revolver, which was the signal, and all put off. They reached the opposite bank in safety a few minutes past 10 o'clock p.m. There was no firing from the enemy after the boats reached the shore, but in going they fired several volleys. There is nothing in reference to the enemy's batteries since 7 o'clock p.m. yesterday. The 30-pounder Parrott has not arrived.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. R. PEASE,

*Colonel, Commanding.*

Capt. HAZARD STEVENS,

*Asst. Adj. Gen., Third Division, Ninth Army Corps.*

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HEADQUARTERS CALHOUN'S POINT, VA.,

May 4, 1863--8.45 p.m.

CAPTAIN: I have the honor to report that I this morning sent Lieutenant Risley, of the One hundred and seventeenth New York Volunteers, with 30 men of his regiment, across the river with orders to advance as far as possible, and gain such information as he could of the movements of the enemy. He landed and sent a party of his men out as skirmishers, advancing slowly; seeing some indications of the enemy, I ordered him to return to the rifle-pits until I could send for one of the gunboats to come up and protect his left flank and rear. At 1.30 p.m., there being no indications that we were to receive any assistance from the gunboat, I directed Lieutenant Risley to advance slowly and go as far as he could. He started and found no impediment to his progress; he passed four batteries in the woods along the marsh on the right bank of the West Branch all bearing on the river. He reports that the enemy kept the right bank of the West Branch very strongly picketed. He passed on to the battery on the hill at Le Compte's house. The position is a very strong one; an excavation made behind a fence, revetted with timbers and two embrasures; rifle-pits on the right and rear of the buildings. Lieutenant Risley sent a citizen and a negro, both of whom I sent to headquarters of the division.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. R. PEASE,

*Colonel, Commanding.*

Capt. HAZARD STEVENS,

*Asst. Adj. Gen., Third Division, Ninth Army Corps.*

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O.R.-- SERIES I--VOLUME XVIII [S# 26]

APRIL 11-MAY 4, 1863.--Siege of Suffolk, Va.

No. 19.--Report of Col. John E. Ward, Eighth Connecticut Infantry, of the capture of Battery Huger, April 19.

HDQRS. EIGHTH REGIMENT CONNECTICUT VOLS.,  
*Suffolk, Va., May 6, 1863.*

GENERAL: I have the honor to submit the following report of the part taken by my regiment in the capture of the rebel battery at Fort Huger, April 19, 1863.

On the afternoon of April 19, in accordance with orders from General Getty, I marched from my bivouac with six companies (130 men) of my regiment and embarked on the gunboat Stepping Stones, in company with Lieutenant-Colonel England and about 150 men of the Eighty-ninth New York Volunteers. We were landed at Hill's Point, in the rear of **Fort Huger**, a little before sunset, immediately charged upon the works, and after a very short struggle captured the fort, with five pieces of artillery, a large quantity of ammunition, and about 130 prisoners, including 7 officers. Having taken possession we immediately proceeded to place the captured guns in position to resist any attempt of the enemy to retake the Point, and commenced intrenching ourselves as well as possible with the means at our disposal.

Re-enforcements, including the other four companies of my regiment, soon arrived, and all were employed during the night in constructing rifle-pits, removing ammunition from the fort, and performing picket duty. At about 10 o'clock our pickets stationed a short distance outside the fort were attacked and driven in, but were immediately reposted and held their position until the regiment was relieved at noon the following day.

The loss of my regiment in this affair was 1 killed, 4 severely wounded, and several others very slightly injured. A list\* of the names of the killed and wounded is forwarded herewith.

Very respectfully, yours,

**J. EDWARD WARD,**

*Colonel Eighth Regiment Connecticut Volunteers.*

Brig. Gen. J. D. WILLIAMS,

*Adjutant-General State of Connecticut.*

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O.R.-- SERIES I--VOLUME XVIII [S# 26]

APRIL 11-MAY 4, 1863.--Siege of Suffolk, Va.

No. 21.--Report of Col. Arthur H. Dutton, Twenty-first Connecticut Infantry, commanding Third Brigade.

<ar26\_316>

HDQRS. THIRD BRIG., *THIRD DIV., NINTH ARMY CORPS,*  
*Suffolk, Va., May --, 1863.*

CAPTAIN: I have the honor to submit the following report of recent operations:

Early in the month of April my command was constituted as follows: The Fourth Rhode Island and Thirteenth New Hampshire Volunteers, stationed on the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad, three-quarters of a mile north of Suffolk; the Twenty-fifth New Jersey Volunteers, on Jericho Creek, three-quarters of a mile northwest of the above, and the Twenty-first Connecticut Volunteers, on the Nansemond River, 3 miles below Suffolk. The latter regiment had just commenced the work now known as Fort Connecticut, and on April 8 was joined by three companies of the Thirteenth New Hampshire, under Major Storer.

On the 10th ultimo, information having been received that the enemy was advancing from the Blackwater, I was ordered to proceed, with the Fourth Rhode Island, the Thirteenth New Hampshire, and the One hundred and third New York, to a point on the Nansemond opposite the mouth of Western Branch, fortify the position, open direct communication with the Twenty-first Connecticut, and hold the entire line between the said point and the mouth of Jericho Creek, to prevent any crossing of the enemy. Below this point the river was safely held by gunboats. The command arrived at the point designated about midnight. At sunrise the work on the fortifications commenced; trees were felled, rifle-pits made, Battery Stevens commenced, and Lieutenant Bruce, of my staff, reconnoitered a site for a military road to the camp of the Twenty-first Connecticut. A road was already in progress from the latter camp direct

to Jericho Creek, and only awaited the completion of a trestle bridge over Broer's Creek, under charge of Colonel Derrom, Twenty-fifth New Jersey.

On the evening of the 11th, however, orders were received to return instantly to Suffolk. No means of transportation being at hand, it became necessary to leave a considerable quantity of baggage and a small guard. The battalion of Major Storer was retained at Fort Connecticut, with instructions to maintain a strict watch on all sides to prevent a crossing of the enemy, if possible, and, if forced to retreat, to do so by way of the new road, destroying camp equipage, &c., and demolishing the trestle bridge. No attack being made, on the following day our position was strengthened. I was assigned to the command of the line of defense included between Forts Halleck and Jericho. On this line I threw up rifle-pits and posted the troops in the most advantageous manner for concentration upon any given point, while at the same time I held myself in readiness to support General Corcoran, on my immediate right, should his be the line attacked. Not thinking it safe to send a train of wagons for the abandoned baggage, I dispatched two or three at a time to Battery Stevens, and by this means transferred everything in safety from that point to my headquarters. Six men from the Fourth Rhode Island remained there permanently to observe the enemy. The baggage of the Twenty-first Connecticut was transferred by hand over Broer's Creek and thence by wagons to its camp.

On the 12th the Fourth Rhode Island was assigned to the command of Brigadier-General Corcoran.  
<ar26\_317>

On the 13th the Nineteenth Wisconsin was assigned to my command, and on the day following the Ninth Vermont also reported to me.

On the 15th my line of defense was extended to Battery Onondaga: at the mouth of Jericho Creek. It may suffice here to remark that all points of the defenses have been constantly strengthened each day since the commencement of the siege, all soldiers, including pickets, being required to labor day and night on the intrenchments.

On Tuesday, the 14th, the enemy having, from a battery nearly opposite the small-pox hospital, engaged and damaged the naval forces on the river, I was ordered to reconnoiter positions for counter batteries and superintend their construction. Under the supervision of the general commanding division I constructed Batteries Kimball and Morris, the Tenth and Thirteenth New Hampshire and Eighth Connecticut bivouacking near at hand as supports.

Early on the morning of the 15th these batteries, consisting of two 20-pounder Parrotts, two 3-inch rifled guns, and three 10-pounder Parrotts, being detachments from the Second and Fourth Wisconsin and Morris' Independent Batteries, opened fire, and by 10 o'clock the rebels ceased to reply.

On the 17th the Ninth Vermont Volunteers proceeded to Fort Connecticut. Meantime the military road from Suffolk to Fort Stevens had been completed by the Twenty-fifth New Jersey Volunteers, five companies of which regiment were in camp at Broer's Creek.

On April 18 General Harland superseded me in command of the troops on the Jericho, and I was assigned to duty on the 19th on the line of the Nansemond, making my headquarters at Fort Connecticut.

On the evening of the 19th the rebel battery of five guns at Hill's Point was captured by detachments from the Eighth Connecticut and the Eighty-ninth New York. The following is an account of the capture of the Hill's Point Battery on the Nansemond River:

Shortly before sunset the gunboats on the river and the four rifled guns at and near Battery Stevens (two 20-pounder Parrotts, Captain Morris, and two 3-inch ordnance guns, Captain Vallee) opened a terrific fire upon the rebel battery. Meantime detachments from the Eighty-ninth New York, Lieutenant-Colonel England, and the Eighth Connecticut, Colonel Ward, embarked on the gunboat Stepping Stones, Lieutenant Lamson, at a point about a mile above the battery. Protected by the artillery fire the gunboat boldly steamed down the river and ran close to the shore, about 200 yards above the rebel work--the shore at the point being an abrupt bluff. Immediately the troops disembarked, wading to their waists in water, ascended the bluff, and with loud cheers charged on the rear of the fort. Meantime the gunboat's crew had landed four boat howitzers, placed them in position, and opened on the fort. The enemy, taken completely by surprise, were able to discharge but two or three volleys of musketry and one gun, when our troops entered the work and captured the entire party, consisting of 7 officers and 130 men, with five brass guns and a large supply of ammunition.

I was now directed by Brigadier-General Getty to assume command of the post and put it in a state of defense during the night. The force at my disposal for this purpose consisted of detachments of the Eighth Connecticut, Eighty-ninth New York, Tenth New Hampshire, and Ninth Vermont, in all about 700 men. The soldiers, although fatigued and fasting, worked with a most commendable zeal to intrench themselves, as we fully expected an attack in the morning.

To the two detachments first named especial credit is due. They had been under arms nearly all day, had most gallantly captured the <ar26\_318> battery in the evening; had been a considerable time without food, and were drenched with the water through which they were forced to wade in landing, yet not a murmur was heard from them throughout.

I forward herewith a sketch from memory, showing the location of the rebel battery and the works thrown up for our own defense. Half an hour before daylight our preparations were nearly complete and the troops in position. The artillery was massed on the left, covering the point of disembarkation, three guns being in Battery A and one howitzer in Battery D. All were loaded with canister and directed to sweep the plain by which the enemy must approach. One howitzer was disabled, the trail of the carriage being broken. My design was to defend the entire line if possible, and if forced to abandon a portion to withdraw the troops on the right across the ravine and concentrate my entire force upon the left, which, besides being the strongest position, also covered the communication with the naval forces.

At early daylight a line of the enemy's skirmishers was discovered advancing about 1,000 yards distant. They covered themselves behind trees and fences and a few were observed entering a house a few hundred yards in front of our left.

About this time the One hundred and seventeenth New York, Colonel Pease, and a section of Gilliss' battery (A, Fifth U.S. Artillery) arrived and were duly posted, the latter in Battery C and subsequently in Battery B.

It now became apparent that the enemy did not meditate an attack, but contented himself with annoying our pickets by occasional scattering shots. I accordingly gave direction that the house above alluded to should be fired and the woods shelled. This being accomplished we were troubled no more.

During the day (20th) our troops continued to strengthen the defenses, but in the afternoon orders were received to evacuate the place. This was done by the assistance of the naval forces. The intrenching tools, artillery, limber-chests, &c., were placed aboard the gunboat Stepping Stones before dark, quakers being substituted in the batteries; but during the process the ebbing tide left the steamer aground, and fears were entertained that the enemy might attack us before she floated again, in which event the destruction of the vessel and the loss of much material might have resulted. Immediately after dark, however, the process of ferrying the troops across the river in row-boats commenced and was safely accomplished by midnight; meantime the steamer was got off in safety. The evacuation was thus completed without the loss of a man or a single article of property.

In this connection I cannot forbear paying a tribute to the valor and energy of the naval forces under Lieutenant Lamson. This gallant officer has at all times shown himself most willing to render invaluable assistance to the land forces with men and material, tearlessly imperiling the safety of himself, his men, and his vessels.

The day following the evacuation of Hill's Point I was assigned to the command of all the troops on the Nansemond from Jericho Creek to Dr. Council's place. They consisted of the Tenth New Hampshire Volunteers, the Twenty-first Connecticut Volunteers, the Thirteenth New Hampshire Volunteers, the Eighth Connecticut Volunteers, the Twenty-second Connecticut Volunteers, the Ninth Vermont Volunteers, Gilliss' battery (A, Fifth U.S. Artillery), three guns of Beger's (Second Wisconsin) battery, four guns of Vallee's (Fourth Wisconsin) battery, one 20-pounder Parrott (unassigned), and four guns captured from the enemy. The Thirteenth New Hampshire replaced the Nineteenth Wisconsin, <ar26\_319> which regiment, by command of General Getty, has been sent to Suffolk for disgraceful conduct. The infantry and artillery was advantageously posted along the river and the fortifications advanced daily. No action occurred previous to May 3 except continual firing between opposing batteries and pickets.

On the night preceding May 3, as a part of a combined movement, I was directed to send the Fourth Rhode Island Volunteers across the Nansemond at Hill's Point in row-boats, to march thence at daybreak

and occupy the Suffolk and Smithfield road near its junction with the Providence Church road, communicating with the Twenty-first Connecticut at Reed's Ferry, on the West Branch; also to cross the Twenty-first Connecticut some 3 miles lower down with a section of Vallee's battery and a squad of cavalry. This force was to advance to Chuckatuck and communicate with the Fourth Rhode Island at Reed's Ferry.

The latter force crossed, as directed, under command of Major Crosby, and marched to Chuckatuck, his progress being constantly impeded by the enemy's skirmishers, who resisted his advance with tenacity although in small force. Reaching Chuckatuck he did not consider it safe to send a detachment to Reed's Ferry, and therefore proceeded to that place with his entire column. Not meeting the Fourth Rhode Island at that point, as expected, and having no other means of communicating with co-operative forces---the Reed's Ferry Bridge being burned--he marched down the West Branch to the Nansemond, losing some half a dozen men. His march was impeded from beginning to end by the enemy's skirmishers, but his movements were continued regardless of obstacles. His regiment behaved with great gallantry. While already nearly exhausted with fatigue and picket duty it performed in twelve hours a march of 18 miles, 8 miles of which were through an enemy's country, drove its opponent before it, and brought in 16 prisoners, including 1 officer. For further details of Major Crosby's march I refer to his graphic report, herewith forwarded.

Meantime Lieutenant-Colonel Buffum, with the Fourth Rhode Island, 250 strong, occupied the opposite shore before daybreak, but not being familiar with localities disembarked by mistake half a mile above Hill's Point. I had urged upon him the importance of taking a guide, which, however, he declined to do, pleading a perfect understanding of the position. I joined his command at daybreak and instantly saw the misfortune that might have resulted from his error had the enemy occupied Hill's Point in any force, as, by holding the intrenchments there thrown up by me on April 20, they might have easily kept us away. We, however, immediately occupied the place, driving out about a dozen rebels. I now formed line of battle, threw out skirmishers, and advanced. Immediately the enemy opened fire from behind fences and trees. We drove them about three-quarters of a mile, to the edge of a forest which completely environed the position from shore to shore. Here their fire was so rapid that I halted to study the position. I drew their fire in volleys two or three times to determine their force, which I estimated at from 200 to 400. Between me and them there was a quarter of a mile of open ground, over which we could not have advanced without tremendous loss. I then threw skirmishers into the timber on the right and there also discovered the enemy in greater or less force. It seemed therefore that to advance farther would insure my being cut off from Hill's Point and perhaps captured. I therefore fell back and proceeded to the gunboat Barney to consult with Captain Cushing. Here it was reported that the enemy had 500 men at Le Compte's <ar26\_320> house, about half a mile to the right of my advance: between me and Reed's Ferry.

It now occurred to me that if the main advance from Suffolk was successful the force opposed to me would be intercepted between General Getty, the West Branch, and myself, and I accordingly resolved to attract their attention by continual skirmishing. Captain Cushing kindly supplied me with a boat howitzer and a detachment of sailors. Colonel Pease, One hundred and seventeenth New York, also sent me, at my request, 100 men, and I once more advanced, driving the enemy to the skirt of the woods. Skirmishing continued for a couple of hours, when the enemy brought artillery and opened fire upon me. My howitzer having expended its ammunition I again retired with slight loss.

During the engagement the officers of the regiment behaved with great coolness and bravery, and there were individual instances of gallantry among the men, but I regret to state that the mass of the men exhibited an aversion to exposing themselves, a willingness to retreat, and a contempt for good order that I scarcely expected in a regiment of two years' experience and which has five battles inscribed upon its flag.

At about 3 p.m. I received a dispatch from Major Crosby announcing his success. I therefore meditated a joint movement of the two regiments upon the enemy near Le Compte's house, which I was assured would result successfully though involving considerable loss; but learning that the Twenty-first Connecticut was utterly exhausted and without food for man or horse I concluded to await orders from the general commanding. After dark, by order of General Getty, I withdrew the troops from Hill's Point, bringing over also some valuable pieces of timber, which I found useful the following day.

On the 4th the enemy retired altogether from our front, and I withdrew Major Crosby's force. The horses and artillery were embarked by the aid of an improvised floating wharf which I constructed out of row-boats and loose timber.

Ever since the commencement of the siege I have been generally well seconded by the officers and soldiers under my command. All have nobly done their duty, but some have done more. Among these I take pleasure in mentioning Maj. H. B. Crosby, of the Twenty-first Connecticut, who has always shown himself a zealous, industrious, brave, and trustworthy officer. I would also specially commend Colonel Derrom, Twenty-fifth New Jersey, to whose ability as an engineer the service is much indebted; Colonel Donohoe, of the Tenth New Hampshire, to whom I am indebted for valuable co-operation in superintending the river defenses; Major Storer, of the Thirteenth New Hampshire; Captains Brown and Reed, of the Fourth Rhode Island, and Lieutenant Bruce, of my staff, for their faithful and soldierly deportment in the various trying scenes in which they separately participated. I am indebted for repeated and valuable favors to Lieutenants Cushing and Lamson, U.S. Navy, commanding flotilla. I also take pride in calling the attention of the general commanding to the general admirable behavior in action of the three new regiments of my brigade. I transmit herewith a list of casualties in my brigade. (\*)

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

**A. H. DUTTON,**

*Colonel, Commanding.*

Capt. CHARLES T. GARDNER,  
*Assistant Adjutant-General.*

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O.R.-- SERIES I--VOLUME XVIII [S# 26]

APRIL 11-MAY 4, 1863.--Siege of Suffolk, Va.

No. 24.--Reports of Maj. Gen. Samuel G. French, C. S. Army, commanding the Department of Southern Virginia.

[ar26_324 con't]

HDQRS. DEPARTMENT OF SOUTHERN VIRGINIA,
Near Suffolk, Va., April 22, 1863.

SIR: I respectfully submit to the lieutenant-general commanding the following report respecting the loss of the guns of Stribling's battery:

On the morning of the 15th instant I started from my camp on the South Quay road, at the request of Lieutenant-General Longstreet, to endeavor to destroy the gunboats of the enemy in the Nansemond River. Stribling's, Bradford's, and [J. C.] Coit's batteries were taken down. Only one gunboat could be seen, and she was lying behind the point of land below the mouth of the Western Branch of the Nansemond. The batteries were put in position in the hope she would move up, but a storm coming on and the near approach of night induced me to withdraw the guns. The engineer informed me that he and other officers had selected two sites for batteries--the one near the left of General Hood's line of battle, in which there was in a work constructed a battery of field artillery and an infantry force for protection; the other was the work built for the defense of the river when we held Suffolk, and that in it was an infantry force, but no artillery. I directed Maj. L. M. Shumaker, my chief of artillery, on the night of the 16th to take from some houses on a farm near by materials to construct platforms, and before morning to put the guns of Stribling's battery in the work. This he accomplished.

The next morning three gunboats attempted to pass up. One succeeded, but was severely damaged, when the other two turned back. I <ar26_325> had selected the site for pits for two 32-pounders, and on the night of the 18th they were completed and the guns placed in position. For the protection of these guns in the pits I asked that three companies of infantry be sent, designing to use them, however, to guard also the road where all the camps were, but the lieutenant-general ordered down the Fifty-fifth North Carolina Regiment, Colonel Connally commanding.

On Sunday, the 19th, the situation of affairs was thus: Bradford's battery was in the new work, with instructions from my chief of artillery, while the work was defended by troops from Hood's division, and by his officers they were posted, relieved, and got their orders. In the Hill's Point Battery were Stribling's battery, with my instructions; the work defended by two companies of infantry, under instructions from the officers placing them there. The 32-pounders were in position and a company of the Fifty-fifth North Carolina near by, while the other companies were a supporting force to either of these last two batteries. All the batteries were to receive further support from General Hood's command if required, and all my officers were so informed, and couriers were left there to communicate such intelligence to General Law, who was on the extreme left, if his aid should be required. The river as low down as the mouth of the West Branch was guarded by the troops of General Hood, and reported, of course, to their commanders. I was ill on Sunday and could not ride down the river, but sent Col. G. A. Cunningham. There were four gunboats above the work on Hill's Point and three below, and five or six land batteries and sharpshooters on the opposite side of the river.

About 10 a.m. the four gunboats above and the land batteries opened a sharp fire on the Hill's Point work, and two gunboats from below moved up to aid them, when the 32-pounders opened fire on them, and after a spirited engagement one was slightly injured and both were driven back. The fire on the work, however, continued until near 4 p.m., when it ceased. Major Shumaker then communicated with Captain Stribling, and although it was reported that the gunboats had troops on board his note does not intimate that he apprehended an attack by a force of the enemy landing for that purpose.

About 4 p.m. Colonel Cunningham instructed Colonel Connally to support the batteries, and this was, as he states, about an hour and a half before the guns were lost. In that time he might have been near the work, so far as distance is concerned, but I have my doubts if any regiments could have passed the wide plain and rendered any real support under the fire that was or could have been brought to bear on their approach. The manner of attack appears to have been to have sent one gunboat down as though she was going to pass the work to engage the attention of the men in the fort, while from the other boats a force of about 500 men was landed. It appears to me that if the garrison was surprised, they were negligent; if not surprised, they did not offer a sufficient resistance.

I inclose herewith papers marked--

A--Order detailing Colonel Connally's regiment, by direction of the general commanding.

B--Copy of orders given Colonel Connally. C--Colonel Connally's report.(*) D--Maj. L. M. Shumaker's report.(+)

E and F--General French's orders to Major Shumaker.

G--Major Shumaker's note to Captain Stribling after the cannonade ceased. <ar26_326>

H--Captain Stribling's answer, shows he apprehended no land attack.

J--Report of property lost by the capture.

K--Report of Major Boggs, of the artillery.(*)

As before slated, I was ill in camp, which was some 9 or 10 miles distant from Hill's Point. As soon as I heard that the attack had been made and the report that the guns had been captured by the enemy I started for the purpose of retaking the work. On arriving there, about 1 a.m. on the morning of the 20th, I found on the ground Major-General Hood, General Law, and General Robertson, with his brigade. The night was dark, the ground unknown to the troops, the enemy's pickets out in advance of the work, and to have retaken the work by crossing the open plain under the fire of seven gunboats stationed near the fort, that of the land batteries, and that of the enemy in the work was believed would involve a sacrifice of men of more value to us than the fort if recaptured. The enemy, as you are aware, the night following evacuated the work. The report shows that 93 men, all the horses, harness, running-gear of cannons, limbers of guns, fuse, wagons, &c., were not in the work, and that the loss was only the five guns and most of the ammunition chests.

You are perhaps aware that on neither of those works could any labor be performed in the day-time, owing to the opposite bank being strongly occupied by the enemy, and I do not think the parties in the fort had time to prepare embrasures for the guns looking to the rear in anticipation of a land attack.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. G. FRENCH,

Major-General, Commanding.

Maj. G. MOXLEY SORREL,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

[Indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS,
Near Suffolk, Va., April 25, 1863.

Respectfully forwarded.

There seems to have been a general lack of vigilance and prompt attention to duties on the part of most of the parties connected with this affair. General French seems to be under the impression that General Hood's command was expected to protect the batteries. Such was not the expectation, and his conclusion that General Hood's command was expected to protect them seems strange, as the batteries were under his control exclusively, and he was twice ordered to take the Fifty-fifth North Carolina, the largest in this army, for that purpose. General Hood naturally and properly considered himself relieved from responsibilities with the river batteries when they were especially assigned to the charge of General French. His (General Hood's) division was on our left, and was ready, of course, to resist any general attack of the enemy; but the staff officers of General French should have made all of their reports to General French, that he might have made the necessary arrangements to resist any landing by the enemy. The slight loss of Colonel Connally's regiment while lying within 600 yards of the old fort will hardly justify the conclusion that nothing could live through the enemy's artillery fire. The attack was made about sunset, or a little later. The cannonade being more brisk than any that we had previously had with the gunboats, I took out my watch and <ar26_327> counted the number of shots per minute. In no instance did they exceed thirteen to the minute; the average, I think, was about eight. Of the thirteen shots that could have been fired at a command charging across the field after night it is not likely that more than four could have taken effect, and those ought not to be expected to destroy more than 2 men per shot. So I think it reasonable to conclude that the fort and battery could have been recaptured with the loss of 75 men. Many of the officers were of limited experience, however, and I have no doubt acted as they thought best. I do not know that any of them deserve particular censure. This lesson, it is hoped, will be of service to us all. The command at the fort seems to have been completely surprised, and is probably less excusable than other parties in the affair.

JAMES LONGSTREET,

Lieutenant-General, Commanding.

[Inclosure A.]

SPECIAL ORDERS No. 3.

HEADQUARTERS FRENCH'S COMMAND,
April 17, 1863.

I. Brig. Gen. J. R. Davis will detail three companies of the Fifty-fifth North Carolina Troops, Col. J. K. Connally, to proceed immediately to Norfleet's house, on the Reed's Ferry road, to report to Maj. L. M. Shumaker for duty in guarding the batteries located in that vicinity. One day's rations will be taken. The remainder of the regiment will march to the same place to-morrow morning for permanent duty on the river.

* * * * *

By command of Maj. Gen. S. G. French:

GRAHAM DAVES,

Assistant Adjutant-General.

General J. R. DAVIS,
Commanding, &c.

[Inclosure B.]
SPECIAL ORDERS No. 7.

HEADQUARTERS FRENCH'S COMMAND,
April 18, 1863.

I. Col. J. K. Connally, commanding Fifty-fifth North Carolina Troops, will detail two companies from his regiment for picket duty to-night, one to take post near the fish-house (Le Compte's) to prevent a landing by the enemy. In case a landing should be attempted, the boats will be permitted to reach the shore before being fired upon. This company will furnish a picket force of 4 men (in charge of a corporal) to take position on the Reed's Ferry road half a mile below Le Compte's house. Prompt information will be given of an advance of the enemy in force, but care will be taken not to give false alarms. The second company will take post near the battery now erecting (Smoot's). This company will furnish a party to assist in loading the wagons with forage and provisions from Riddick's farm. In case of attack Colonel Connally will hold his regiment in readiness to support the artillery and will maintain his position until the last.

* * * * *

By command of Maj. Gen. S. G. French:

GRAHAM DAVES,

Assistant Adjutant-General.

<ar26_328>

[Inclosure E.]

APRIL 19, 1863.

Major SHUMAKER:

I will have this matter of forage attended to. I hope you may succeed in sinking those infernal gunboats that have shown no consideration for women or children. If you cripple one and can use the field batteries against her do so. I felt too ill from the medicine I took to come down this morning. Keep me advised.

Yours, truly,

S. G. FRENCH,

Major-General.

[Inclosure F.]

HEADQUARTERS, *April 19, 1863.*

Major SHUMAKER:

Let me know what the result of the heavy cannonade now going on. Show this to Colonel Connally and have him post his regiment to repel any landing of infantry against the batteries. They had better move down near the battery of Stribling. The countersign is "Morgan" for to-night.

Yours, truly,

S. G. FRENCH,

Major-General.

[Inclosure G.]

MOORE'S HOUSE, *April 19, 1863.*

CAPTAIN: Let me know the result of the enemy's fire to-day. We have information that the boat you disabled day before yesterday has been towed down the river, sunk about to her gunwales. Citizens from the other side of the river saw her. She will not trouble you again soon. I go up to headquarters to-night and wish to take a report to the general.

L. N. SHUMAKER,

Major and Chief of Artillery.

[Inclosure H.]

BATTERY AT HILL'S POINT, VA.,
April 19, 1863.

MAJOR: The enemy has shelled us steadily for about three hours from gunboats lying up the river. There are four of them, and from their movements I think they are preparing to run down at least one of them. The lower boats have been otherwise occupied. There are no casualties, and we will be prepared to give them a warm reception should any attempt to run down. Our embrasures are now widened, so that we will be able to give the boat three shots from each gun as they run by.

With respect,

R. M. STRIBLING,

Captain, Commanding Battery.

[Indorsement.]

This note was written just before the work was attacked by the party that landed and carried the work.

S. G. FRENCH,

Major-General,

<ar26_329>

[Inclosure J.]

CAMP NEAR SUFFOLK, VA., *April 20, 1863.*

Maj. L. M. SHUMAKER:

SIR: In obedience to your order, received this morning, I have the honor to make the following report of the condition of Stribling's battery. The battery was captured by the enemy yesterday evening, when the loss was as follows:

Commissioned officers	4
Non-commissioned officers	8
Privates	47
12-pounder guns	3
24-pounder howitzers	2
Chests with 12-pounder ammunition	9
Chests with 24-pounder ammunition	6

The present condition of the battery is as follows:

Commissioned officers present for duty	1
Non-commissioned officers present for duty	7
Privates present for duty	83
Aggregate present	91

Public horses	93
Wagons	3
Ambulances	1
Forges	1
Limbers to guns	5
Running-gear to caissons	5
Chests of 12-pounder gun ammunition	3
Chests of 24-pounder howitzer ammunition	2

REMARK.--In addition to the number of men stated above as present for duty there are 6 privates absent sick, who may reasonably be expected to join their company within a few weeks.

With respect, your obedient servant,

GRAY CARROLL,

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF SOUTHERN VIRGINIA,

May 25, 1863.

GENERAL: During the three weeks that Lieutenant-General Longstreet kept the enemy confined within Suffolk there was an effort made to remove the iron from the Seaboard and Roanoke Railroad. Commencing near Suffolk, the engineer department succeeded in taking up about 3 miles of the rails and removed it toward Franklin and deposited it at or near a place known as Beaver Dam, where it could be protected by the forces near Franklin. After we withdrew from Suffolk the enemy discovered the effort made to secure the iron on our part, and soon marched to Carrsville with a force of between 9,000 and 10,000 infantry, 30 pieces of artillery, and cavalry, and immediately fortified their position and commenced taking up the track and removing it toward Suffolk. General Jenkins assembled all the available forces, and with about 3,000 men crossed over and drove in all their advanced lines behind their intrenchments and kept them there for near three days, causing them to abandon the road this side of Carrsville, and thus enabled our forces to save the road to that point, except a few hundred yards, and the iron brought from near Suffolk. The enemy would not leave his works to attack us, and with our small force had we driven him from his intrenchments it would have been a victory barren of results and involving a heavy sacrifice of men on our part. All this time while confronting him we were removing the iron as rapidly as possible. The road destroyed, the enemy fell back and immediately with his whole force assumed a position at Windsor, on the Norfolk and Petersburg Railroad, and simultaneously moved up the Chowan with gunboats above the Nottoway River.

Leaving some force to attack the gunboats in case they came up I assembled about 3,000 men and on Saturday afternoon crossed the Blackwater at the Blackwater Bridge by means of pontoons and moved in the direction of Windsor. I found the enemy again with all his force in a thick woods, his lines running from the railroad to across the Black-water road. His outposts and advanced lines were rapidly driven in, and I assumed a line of battle in hopes he would move to the attack. This he did not do, and after dusk I withdrew to the right bank of the river. There were no results that seemed in anywise attainable that would have justified me in attacking the enemy, outnumbering us fourfold.

While over the river information was received that the enemy's gunboats had moved up the Meherrin and taken possession of Murfreesborough, N.C. General Jenkins the same night moved to Franklin, and with his forces was directed to operate against the gunboats. I do not know what forces Maj. Gen. D. H. Hill has in North Carolina to guard those streams.

It is to me a source of great regret that so little of the iron from the two railroads referred to was taken up during the time General Longstreet was at Suffolk. I am sure had there been any concert or a proper concert of action in the departments the bridge over the Blackwater could have been built, and by constructing a small curve at the crossing of the roads near Suffolk trains could have been run from Petersburg to Franklin via Suffolk and both roads taken up. Had a bridge been thrown across the Zuni before General Longstreet moved and during the month he was making preparations, every bar of iron could have been secured while we were there at Suffolk.

Yours, very respectfully,

S. G. FRENCH,

Major-General, Commanding.

General S. COOPER,

Adjutant and Inspector General.

[Indorsement.]

ENGINEER BUREAU, *June 9, 1863.*

Respectfully returned to the honorable Secretary of War. No effort was spared to remove the iron from the Norfolk and Petersburg road and from the Seaboard road while General Longstreet was in command; but his efforts, assisted by the engineers under his control, were given to the collection of supplies for the

army, these being considered of the first importance. Everything possible with the engineers has been done to save the iron in question, and I am now able to report that a large part of the iron from the Seaboard Railroad is on the right bank of the Blackwater.

J. F. GILMER,

Colonel of Engineers and Chief of Bureau

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O.R.-- SERIES I--VOLUME XVIII [S# 26]

APRIL 11-MAY 4, 1863.--Siege of Suffolk, Va.

NO. 25.--Report of Maj. L. M. Shumaker, C. S. Artillery, Chief of Artillery, of the capture of Battery Huger, April 19.

<ar26_331>

HEADQUARTERS,

Near Ely's, Va., April 21, 1863.

GENERAL: In obedience to your order I have the honor to report that on the morning of the 19th I directed Major Boggs to send Capt. [D. L.] Smoot, [Alexandria Light Artillery, or Company E, Eighteenth Battalion Virginia Artillery], with his two 30-pounder Parrott guns, into the works constructed for him to the west of **Hill's Point Battery**, occupied by Captain Stribling. Captain Smoot got into position just before daylight, and I directed Major Boggs to order him not to unmask or fire until the boats above Hill's Point attempted to come down or those below attempted to pass up. I also directed him to send Captain Bradford, with his four heavy 12-pounders, to relieve Capt. [S. T.] Martin, [Battery B, Twelfth Virginia Battalion], then occupying Major Henry's position with four 12-pounder howitzers, and to instruct him not to fire at anything but a gunboat, and only then when they came within short range, stating that your orders to me were to sink the boats if possible. Captain Stribling's battery was placed in the work at Hill's Point after I had explained the position and character of the work to both General Longstreet and yourself.

On Thursday night, the 16th, I had thoroughly inspected the work, and, finding the platforms burned away, took the heavy siding from a corn-crib on the Riddick farm to make floors for the carriages. These floors did not raise the guns sufficiently to fire over the parapet, constructed originally for guns of heavy caliber, mounted on barbette carriages. I ordered Captain Stribling to cut embrasures for all his pieces, which was done as far as could be that night and finished the succeeding night, so that on the morning of the 19th I had three batteries in position on the Nansemond River, to wit: Bradford's at Norfleet's Landing, Major Henry's position; Captain Stribling's, consisting of two 24-pounder howitzers and three 12-pounder Napoleons, at Hill's Point, in a very strong earthwork; and Captain Smoot, with two 30-pounder Parrott rifles, to the west of and about two-thirds of a mile from Hill's Point, where the river widens and a semicircular bluff bounds a large marsh.

On the morning of the 17th there were three gunboats above Hill's Point and below Norfleet's Landing, and five below Hill's Point lying below the mouth of the West Branch of the Nansemond River. About 10 o'clock three of these attempted to pass up by the battery at Hill's Point, and one of them succeeded in passing; the others were driven back, one of them severely damaged, as she was towed down the river afterward, disabled, and thought by the citizens to be sinking.

Thus, on the morning of the 19th there were four gunboats above Hill's Point and three below. About 10 o'clock Colonel Cunningham came down from headquarters (as I understood from himself and Lieutenant Etting) to relieve me, and he at once took charge and went around to Smoot's position. Shortly afterward the 30-pounder guns opened, and then commenced a general firing from all the gunboats and two of the enemy's land batteries, four of the boats and two batteries firing upon Hill's Point, the others directing their fire upon Smoot's position and occasionally shelling the woods where our sharpshooters were. About 4 o'clock there was a general cessation of firing, and I sent a messenger <ar26_332> to Captain Stribling with a note inquiring into the casualties, a copy of which is herewith

inclosed, with Captain Stribling's indorsement thereon. (*) About 1 o'clock Major Boggs informed me that the gunboats above Hill's Point had moved farther up the river, their decks covered with troops, and Captain Martin also reported to me that a large body of infantry (he thought a regiment, if not more) had passed his position (Norfleet's Landing) the day before, moving down the river. These facts I mentioned to General Law immediately after being informed of them, he having come to Moore's house where I then was.

Shortly after receiving Stribling's reply to my note I received a note from you giving me general directions, and I determined not to return to camp. About sunset I saw the boats in motion above Hill's Point, and from the signal whistles I judged that one or more of them intended to try to pass the batteries. I dispatched a messenger to Captain Smoot to hold himself ready, and held Coit's two 3-inch rifled guns to dash out whenever I could make them available in sinking any boat that we might disable. In a short time I heard a volley of musketry, then a few scattering shots, and then loud and continued cheering. In a few moments a messenger informed me that the enemy had landed a large body of infantry from three boats above Hill's Point, and had charged and taken the position. I immediately sent Major Boggs to inform Colonel Connally, who at once moved his regiment down. I then sent a courier to General Law, one to General Hood, and one to yourself. The courier to General Law returned, bringing me word from him that he could not send us assistance, and I at once directed Major Boggs to order Captain Bradford out from his position and sent Captain Smoot an order to get his guns and ammunition out into the road as soon as possible. I then ordered Coit's two light guns forward and went toward the fort or work as far as the farm-houses to ascertain the position of affairs. I soon became satisfied that any attempt to retake the guns with the force we had must fail, and that neither infantry nor artillery could cross the plateau under the cross-fire of seven gunboats and two land batteries, with an unknown body of infantry filling the work and lining the river bank. I therefore returned to the Reed's Ferry road to await your coming and to direct the movements of the remaining batteries. Your note directing me to have Connally post his regiment to support Stribling's battery and to prevent the landing of troops was not received until 8 o'clock, an hour or more after the position had been taken.

I herewith inclose Major Boggs' and Lieutenant Carroll's (+) reports, and copies of the various notes, directions, &c.. referred to above.

In conclusion, general, I have the honor to ask for a court of inquiry as well to verify the facts stated in the foregoing report as to have a record answer to any charge of neglect of duty, either expressed or implied.

Very respectfully,

L. M. SHUMAKER,

Major and Chief of Artillery.

Maj. Gen. S.G. FRENCH,
Commanding Division.

P. S.--It may be proper to state that the work is a heavy earthwork, fronting down the river, with heavy traverses between the guns, the <ar26_333> right gun being the only one able to fire across the river at right angles. The guns could not be fired to the rear, as there was rising ground immediately in rear of and higher than the work itself, and it was behind this in rear of the work that the landing was effected, there being no pickets, as I understood, on the river above to give information.

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O.R.-- SERIES I--VOLUME XVIII [S# 26]

APRIL 11-MAY 4, 1863.--Siege of Suffolk, Va.

No. 26.--Report of Maj. F. J. Boggs, C. S. Artillery, of the capture of Battery Huger, April 19.

MAJOR: In response to your call for a detailed report of the occurrences on the 19th I regret to say I have but an imperfect recollection of more than general affairs. Captain Smoot went into battery on the night of the 18th. On the 19th I went to the point below him, in view of the gunboat, to watch the effect of his shot if he should open. The instructions I gave him as received from you were to wait until a boat attempted to pass Stribling's position, or, if no attempt was made to pass, to wait for the boat to take a nearer position, as on the day before. I was not a little surprised to hear Smoot's guns open, as the boat, I thought, had not gone up far enough. The shots, however, were good. One, I am confident, struck on the starboard side in front just under the hurricane deck. During the night succeeding you ordered Smoot, in my presence, to come out cautiously, removing his guns first by hand, which he did, and last night succeeded in getting out his caissons. The orders given by me and from you to Stribling were to fire at nothing but a gunboat on attempting to pass or within short range, which order was strictly obeyed.

On the 18th, about 8 o'clock, three boats from below came up in line of battle and opened a terrific fire on Stribling's position, the rear boats continuing the fire while the first boat passed. Lieutenant Marshall informed me in the evening that two shots were fired at the leading boat, one taking a damaging effect. Seven shots were fired at the second boat, five taking effect and the sixth striking down the flag-staff. Several citizens of my acquaintance informed me that she was towed below in a sinking condition. I witnessed this fight also, and heard the crash of timber from the shots on the second boat.

On the evening of the 19th, about sunset, I was standing with you and Mr. Waterbury in Mrs. Moore's yard when we heard heavy firing and cheering, which, on investigation, we found to be the shout of the enemy in the capture of Stribling's battery. I immediately communicated your order to Colonel Connally to carry down his regiment, which order was executed. Coit's section was also carried in. The shelling was terrific, and I do not believe a dog could have made the trip from Riddick's quarters to the fort. In the morning of this day, while I was watching the effect of Smoot's battery, I observed three boats above the fort, one a large side-wheel vessel, this one, at least, loaded with troops. This information I communicated to you, and expressed my fears to several officers (I think to you) that there would be an effort to land troops. Capt. [James A.] Shingleur was there and saw the vessels and troops. Just after the report reached us of the capture of Stribling's battery you remarked that you had sent to General Law, but that he informed you he had not the troops to spare. I think you remarked you had also sent <ar26_334> to General Hood. Without delay, as I thought, Generals Hood and Law, and shortly after General French, were at the cross-roads and dispositions of infantry made. Bradford's battery was occupying the works above Henry's, and were ordered out by you through me, and I had succeeded in getting out all the pieces but one. General Hood ordered it back again, where it remained until last night, when everything was brought out in safety. The orders given to and obeyed by Captain Bradford were to fire at nothing but boats in passing or the enemy at short range. One wheel in this battery was shattered and the muzzle molding of one gun struck by the shot of the enemy. This battery, as well as the Hill's Point Battery, was commanded, the former by three, the other by two, land batteries over the river, and both by large bodies of sharpshooters.

F. J. BOGGS,

Major, Commanding.

Maj. L. M. SHUMAKER,
Chief of Artillery.

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O.R.-- SERIES I--VOLUME XVIII [S# 26]

APRIL 11-MAY 4, 1863.--Siege of Suffolk, Va.

No. 28.--Report of Capt. Robert M. Stribling, Fauquier Artillery, of the capture of Battery Huger, April 19.

GENERAL: In reply to your request of this morning I have the honor of making the following report of the capture of my battery on the Nansemond River on the evening of April 19:

About 11 p.m., April 16, my battery was placed in position in the old fort on Hill's Point by Major Shumaker, chief of artillery, with orders from him to fire upon any boats running up or down the river that might attempt to pass the fort, and to fire under no other circumstances except when the fire would be undoubtedly with effect, but to keep the men under cover as well as possible. Lieutenant-Colonel Coleman, of General Law's brigade, was in the fort with some infantry when I went into position. The next morning the enemy opened upon the fort from gunboats below and above, and also from a land battery upon the opposite shore. About 11 a.m. three boats attempted to run by the fort--one ran aground about 600 yards below, and only one succeeded then in passing; we fired upon it and made several holes through it. Toward sunset the boat which had been aground got off and passed by: we made seven holes through her, and I understood permanently disabled her. Saturday was a day of comparative quiet, no shots of any consequence being fired at the fort and we not firing at all.

Early Sunday morning firing commenced from the gunboats and about 1 p.m. became quite furious and continued so until between sundown and dark, when, upon a signal, all firing ceased, and immediately one of the boats above ran near the shore and rapidly landed two or more regiments about 400 yards above the fort. They double-quickened by the flank across the neck of land, thereby cutting off all communication. They then faced to the front, discharged their pieces, and charged upon the fort. The pieces which had been turned toward the land and the infantry supports (two companies, numbering about 60 men, and commanded by Captain Bozeman, of Forty-fourth Alabama Regiment, General Law's brigade) opened upon them and held them in check. They soon, however, flanked the fort on either side and entered it through a swamp and over the parapets on the river side and in rear of the guns. We were hastened off with the greatest rapidity and put on board the boat.

About 2 o'clock on the night of the 16th the pickets stationed up the river fell back to the fort, reporting that the enemy had landed in large force above. Notice was immediately sent through one of my sergeants to General Law. In the mean time Lieutenant-Colonel Coleman advanced his skirmishers up the river and found no enemy at the points indicated. They had re-embarked, as I learned after my capture. My sergeant returned and reported that a regiment was in the woods, about three-quarters of a mile distant, having been sent down to our support. When the enemy landed on the evening of the 19th there was no picket or lookout up the river; no gun was fired or no notice whatever served of their approach, and as the shore was heavily wooded we could see nothing from the fort. I had been led to suppose that the banks of the river were picketed and that I would receive notice of the approach of a land force, and also that there was a regiment in supporting distance. The construction of the fort was of such a nature that I could not use my guns with full effect against a land force, though it was admirably adapted to resist an attack from the gunboats and to blockade the river at that point.

I neglected to state that while the gunboat was aground during the morning of the 17th no gun in the fort could be brought to bear upon it on account of the narrowness of the embrasure which had been hastily cut out the night before. That night they were widened sufficiently to give command of the point.

I am, general, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. M. STRIBLING,

Captain Fauquier Artillery.

[Maj. Gen. S. G. FRENCH.]

P. S.--It might be well to add that on the night of the 16th, when the alarm was given, Lieutenant-Colonel Coleman told me that he had orders to notify General Law should any force cross the river, and that he had no courier. As my sergeant had a horse I offered him to the colonel, and he was sent by his order.

[Indorsement.]

Stribling's guns were lost because the infantry placed in the work as a garrison by Generals Hood and Law, and from whom they received all orders, were captured. When Hood's infantry garrison

surrendered the guns were captured. Why not inquire how it was the garrison found in the fort was captured?

S. G. FRENCH,

Major-General, Commanding.

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O.R.-- SERIES I--VOLUME XVIII [S# 26]

**APRIL 11-MAY 4, 1863.--Siege of Suffolk, Va.**

**No. 29.--Report of Lieut. Col. John A. Jones, Forty-fourth Alabama Infantry, of the capture of Battery Huger, April 19.**

[ar26\_337 con't]

*Names of the companies and their strength captured in the fort at Hill's Point, on the Nansemond River, April 19, all from the Forty-fourth Alabama Regiment.*

|               | <b>Officers.</b>           |    | <b>Non-com-</b>   |    |
|---------------|----------------------------|----|-------------------|----|
|               | <b>missioned</b>           |    |                   |    |
|               | <b>officers. Privates.</b> |    | <b>Aggregate.</b> |    |
| Company A     | 4                          | 6  | 18                | 28 |
| Company B.    | 1                          | 6  | 36                | 43 |
| <b>Total.</b> | 5                          | 12 | 54                | 71 |

**JNO. A. JONES,**

*Lieutenant-Colonel, Comdg. Forty-fourth Alabama Vols.*

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