

EMBARKMENT OF PORT ROYAL

The movement of the Engagement—A Flag of Truce.

At precisely five minutes before ten of the clock the Bay Point Battery opened its fire upon the Wabash, and that in Hilton Head followed almost a minute later.

Commander Tatnell and his gunboats disappeared in the early part of the engagement. He sent a few shots towards the fleet, but as usual his boats were not near enough to do us any injury.

From my point of observation, on board the Atlantic, it was apparent that few of the shells, which at first were the only projectiles used, burst within the fortifications. The guns had too great an elevation, and their iron messengers went crashing thru' the tree tops a mile or two beyond the batteries.

Within a distance of one hundred yards from the rebels guns, the Wabash threw in her fiery messengers, while the other frigates, no further away, participated in the deadly strife; and the gunboats from their sheltered nook, raked the ramparts frightfully.

In describing their circuit and delivering their fire, the vessels consumed rather more than an hour for each round. Little more than half of this time, however, was spent in getting into position, for gliding slowly around, perhaps entering the bay beyond the fort a half a mile, just far enough to permit the safe turning of its immense ship, the Commodore brought her bow and re-acted from his star board battery, until the guns became too hot to handle, that devastating fire.

But the enemy was by no means inactive. He offered a stubborn, an heroic resistance. Looking through a powerful telescope, belonging to an engineer officer of the expedition, I saw when the ships were approaching the battery the second time two men wearing red shirts. They had been particularly active, and now sat at the muzzle of a gun, apparently exhausted and waiting for more ammunition.

Then it was that the gunboats did their most efficient envenoming. Their shells and round shot flew straight across the parapet of the fortification, driving the artillery men from their guns and making dreadful havoc. The little steaming Mercury Master Commanding Martin, gallantly steamed into a shallow bay to the left of the fort, not more than half a mile distant, and presenting her diminutive figure to the rebel guns, opened upon them with her 30 pounder Parrot, which was fired rapidly and with good effect.

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The signal to cease firing was at once hoisted, and it being precisely 2 1/2 o'clock the bombardment had been nearly five hours in progress. The flag-ship lowered a boat and sent it ashore, carrying a flag of truce in the bow, and our own proud banner in the stern. Its mission was to inquire if the enemy had surrendered.

Rebel Headquarters.

The officers of Fort Walker had established their headquarters at a rich old plantation mansion, not far from the fort, on an estate belonging to a family by the name of Pope.

It was evident that the garrisoned rebels had large reinforcements close at hand, awaiting an opportunity to come to their services. If required, those reinforcements were kept in the background, to keep our forces ignorant of their strength, and draw us, as we believed, to destruction.

As soon as the negro slaves observed us coming on shore they flocked along the bank in great numbers, some bearing parcels and bundles as if expecting us to take them at once to a home of freedom. Every variety of negro and slave was represented.

This morning I paid a visit to Fort Beauregard, at Bay Point, which is a work not so formidable in an engineering point of view, but of sufficient importance to be a valuable acquisition to us. It was this battery or fort which caused all the damage to the fleet, their firing being of excellent ability.

Soon after landing a detachment of men proceeded up to Beaufort, and found it tenantless except by one dilapidated person, who presented some traces of cultivation, and of having been an original South Carolina gentleman, but he appeared to be either paralyzed by frankness or fear, and it probably was not the latter.

Every vessel engaged in the action was more or less cut up, although none were injured so badly as to make it necessary to return home for repairs. The Wabash was struck by about 35 shots. One shot started her leaking, but not very badly.

Eight dead bodies, some shockingly mangled, were found within the fort. One was that of a young officer, whose legs had been shot away. There was a mangled arm in one place, half buried in the sand, and in another, near where the huge guns lay prone with their carriages shattered, were mangled pieces of flesh immersed in gore.

At the Pawnee was struck nine times, and the Mohican also received a number of shots. These two were the most cut up of any of the smaller vessels of the fleet. The Ottawa, Seneca, Vandana, Seminole, Susquehanna, Pocahontas and Augusta all were several times hit, but none were disabled.

The Wabash fired, during the entire action, 900 shots, being a 18, 9, 10 and 11-inch shells, with the exception of a few rifled cannon projectiles of a new pattern, and which were used simply as a matter of experiment. The Susquehanna fired 500 shots, the Bienville 180, and the average of the gunboats and the other smaller ships may probably be set down at 150 each.

The Confederate Force.

According to the statement of the prisoners and the negroes, the forces at Hilton Head amounted to about 1,200 men, commanded by Gen. Thos. J. Drayton, including 500 German Artillery, under Col. Wagner, 50 Horse Guards, and some 800 infantry of the 9th regiment, South Carolina Volunteers, Col. Heyward, and the 12th regiment, Major Jones commanding.

The prisoners report that the fortifications at Port Royal have been occupied since the 8th of July last by a small garrison of South Carolina infantry. They were built by Major Lee, of South Carolina, and are well constructed earthworks, their main defect being in the parapet, which was too low to sufficiently shelter the men.

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The whole number of invalids in the military hospitals at Washington is 877.

The Lady's Friend.

THE LADY'S FRIEND FOR 1862.—The World's Favorite. For 32 years the Standard Magazine, pronounced by the Press of the United States, the best Lady's Magazine in the World, and the Cheapest.

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