

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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### National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission     Amended Submission

#### A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Properties Associated with Campaigns for the Control of Navigation on the Lower Potomac River, 1861-1862; Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia

#### B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Camps, Depots, and Support Facilities for Union and Confederate Campaigns to Control Navigation on the Lower Potomac River, 1861-1862, Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia

Warships, Civilian Vessels, Blockade Runners, and Ordnance on the Lower Potomac River and Tributaries 1861-1862, Virginia and Maryland

Union and Confederate Batteries on the Lower Potomac River 1861-1862, Virginia and Maryland

#### C. Form Prepared by

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#### D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Eric M. ...* Dep. FPO  
Signature and title of certifying official

Mar 10, 2008  
Date

Department of Navy, United States Marine Corps

State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

United States Department of the Interior  
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Properties Associated with Campaigns for Control of Navigation on the Lower Potomac River, 1861-1862;  
Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia, MPS

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**Table of Contents for Written Narrative**

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Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

**E. Statement of Historic Contexts** **Pages 1 - 22**  
(If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)

**F. Associated Property Types** **Pages 23-25**  
(Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)

**G. Geographical Data** **Page 26**

**H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods** **Pages 27- 28**  
(Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)

**I. Major Bibliographical References** **Pages 29 - 33**  
(List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)

**Supplemental Material**

<b>Figures</b>	<b>Pages 34 - 51</b>
<b>Property type and site map</b>	<b>Pages 52 - 54</b>
<b>Maps and site information</b>	<b>Pages 55 - 75</b>
<b>Campaign Chronology</b>	<b>Pages 76 - 80</b>

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 120 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## E. Statement of Historic Contexts

### HISTORIC CONTEXT SUMMARY

Confederate forces constructed batteries along the Virginia shore of the Potomac from Mathias Point to Freestone Point in the summer and fall of 1861. When these batteries became active in October 1861, they achieved a blockade of maritime transport to the nation's capital. This strategic action would have a pronounced influence on Union strategy and command, changing the course of the American Civil War.

Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott commanded the Union Army at the outbreak of war. Scott, renowned by the Duke of Wellington as the "greatest soldier of our age," for his brilliant strategies in the Mexican War, developed a surround, contain, and divide strategy against the Confederacy which included a naval blockade of its ports and conquest of the Mississippi River. Dubbed the "anaconda" strategy, as envisioned, its successful implementation would cause an economic strangulation of the seceding states. Scott did not favor direct attacks against the Confederate capital of Richmond, but public opinion demanded action against the rebel forces so menacingly close to Washington. This led to the first battle of Manassas. Though it was an embarrassing defeat, Federal forces retained sufficient strength to defend the capital, and Winfield Scott's reputation was untarnished, as he had opposed the campaign from the start.

Encouraged by their success at Manassas, the Confederates continued to fortify northern Virginia. Artillery pieces abandoned by the retreating Federal forces at Manassas contributed to these efforts, and many were soon placed in batteries along the Potomac shoreline (O.R. Vol. 5: 835). Construction at these points had been concealed well enough for their strength and locations to be unclear to Union commanders. On October 15, 1861 Union Navy warships *Seminole* and *Pocahontas* opened fire on a suspected picket post at Shipping Point (now known as Hospital Point) at the mouth of Quantico Creek. The return fire announced the position of formidably big guns in the Confederate battery (O.N.R. Vol. 4: 719). The deepest part of the Potomac River channel runs close to Shipping Point. Placing their largest guns there, the Confederates made this the center of their system of fortifications, an offensive battery which effectively "closed" the Potomac for 15 miles of its length (*Harper's Weekly*, November 2, 1861).

Winfield Scott retired little more than two weeks after the Confederate batteries on the Potomac were unmasked. The 75-year-old Scott cited numerous health problems forcing his retirement, but these could have

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hardly been helped by the fact that Confederate land forces were blockading the U.S. Navy from its own capital, an ironic inversion of his strategy of blockading the South at sea. In his stead, President Lincoln appointed General George McClellan to command the army. McClellan would lead a campaign against Richmond up the Virginia Peninsula between the James and York Rivers the following year, but, in November 1861, the Confederate blockade was an immediate concern. To counter this he sent Joseph Hooker's Division to Charles County, Maryland, and with them long-ranged, rifled, British-made, Whitworth guns (O.N.R. 4: 734). Positioned at Budd's Ferry and Indian Head, these Union batteries fired thousands of shells across the river at the Confederate positions, chiefly those at Shipping Point and Evansport. These barrages greatly harassed the Confederate forces but caused few casualties, and the batteries remained.

The Union forces would have to attack the Confederates at Evansport via an amphibious assault, and the defenders were very much in anticipation. Shipping Point Battery #1 was the main offensive armament of the Confederate blockading force. Supporting and defending these guns from land attacks were regiments of infantry and cavalry forces camped to the west and south of the shoreline batteries. Local roads, as well as Chopawamsic and Aquia Creeks to the south, were fortified and defended against potential Union landings and flanking attacks against Evansport from those waterways. Despite this, the Confederates abandoned Shipping Point, Evansport, and other batteries along the Potomac as a new northern line of defense was ordered to be formed south of the Rappahannock. These forces would be needed closer to Richmond as auxiliaries to thwart McClellan's campaign against the southern capital. Union ships fired on Shipping Point on March 9, 1862. No answering fire came from the batteries, and upon landing, they found the gun positions and supporting camps evacuated. The Potomac was once again safe for Union shipping.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

Upon the eve of Virginia's secession, April 22, 1861, Captain Dahlgren of the Washington Navy Yard dispatched the USS *Mount Vernon* to search for secessionist gun positions on the Potomac.<sup>1</sup> A "flying" flotilla was proposed for operations on the Potomac the same day.<sup>2</sup> The *Mount Vernon* found no guns, but observed the presence of the steamer *George Page*, an Army transport, at a Confederate held wharf on Aquia Creek.<sup>3</sup> The possession of a steamer by Confederate forces on the Potomac had important implications: they would soon arm her. Moreover, the *George Page* was a shallow draft side-wheel steamer built for the Army Quartermaster Corps as a transport – she was capable of moving large numbers of troops across the Potomac. On April 27 President Lincoln proclaimed a blockade of all ports in Virginia and North Carolina.<sup>4</sup> The Virginia Navy

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armed the area around the wharf on Aquia Creek, later known as Youbedamned Landing, within two weeks.<sup>5</sup> An armed port and an armed steamer posed a direct threat to the Union control of the river and southern Maryland. On May 31, 1861 the Potomac Flotilla gunboats *Thomas Freeborn*, *Anacostia*, and *Resolute* attacked the wharf at Aquia Creek (Figure 1). Fierce exchanges between these vessels and two sets of batteries on shore continued for two days. They were joined by the 10-gun USS *Pawnee* on the second day.<sup>6</sup> Although minor wounds were recorded on both sides, and substantial damage inflicted on the vessels, the *Thomas Freeborn* in particular, the only fatalities were a chicken and a horse. Commander James H. Ward, Commodore of the flotilla, battled on until the *Freeborn* had to be towed back to the Washington Navy Yard for repairs.<sup>7</sup> Confederate shells had penetrated to the drive shaft of the *Thomas Freeborn*, which held though inoperable. Commander Ward's comment on the damage was lighthearted, as he indicated his preference for that type of drive shaft on future vessels. The Virginia Navy officers knew "Yankee Ward" well, having graduated from the Naval Academy in Annapolis where Ward had been an instructor and past commandant. Published in naval engineering and artillery, Ward was putting theory into practice.

At the close of the second day, Union sailors observed what they believed to be a withdrawal of the Confederate batteries. The flotilla withdrew, much to the dismay of the Confederates, who had been laboring to move their heavy columbiads to high ground and rifled field guns to the landing. This arrangement was the opposite of their original deployment, and the Confederate commander, Lt. Lynch of the Virginia Navy, had hoped to sink the remaining gunboats with this enfilade in a renewed duel.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, rifled field artillery and infantry had dug in on the north side of the creek, at Symmes Point.<sup>9</sup> So the tone was set for the battle of the Potomac, a conflict with much expended ordnance and few casualties.<sup>10</sup> The battle of Aquia Creek might be termed a Confederate victory as the Union never again attempted to enter Aquia Creek so long as the batteries were manned, and they continued to be until at least March 13, 1862.<sup>11</sup>

During the month of June 1861 Union vigilance in the blockade of the Potomac River increased, and so did Confederate works along the shoreline. Camps gathered strength, wharfs were burnt, and the flotilla confiscated and scuttled or burned vessels suspected of running the blockade.<sup>12</sup> Furtive encounters between shore parties and cavalry units at Chopawamsic Creek were soon to be eclipsed by bloodier action downriver.<sup>13</sup> The Union and Confederates had both recognized the strategic importance of Mathias Point in King George County, where the Potomac makes a mighty bend, and the channel snakes close to the Virginia shore. Passing Union vessels had reconnoitered the area for any signs of Confederate fortifications from the start of the conflict. In late June they would find what they were looking for.

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Annoyed with the volleys of musket fire that had begun to greet Union vessels rounding Mathias Point,<sup>14</sup> Commander J.H. Ward (Figure 4) decided to put an end to the practice, as well as investigate the possible construction of batteries on the strategic landform. He proposed to land a contingent of troops, and "denude the Point of the jungle and young growth" which concealed the enemy soldiers. On June 24, the USS *Resolute*, a gunboat of the flotilla, landed a party which burned the home of a certain Dr. Hooe, where Confederate cavalry were known to camp and where a raid against a Union merchant schooner had been launched.<sup>15</sup> The next day an expedition of the formidable USS *Pawnee* (Figure 6), accompanied by a steamer carrying Army engineers, sent landing parties onto the point, scattering Confederates and capturing two horses in the process. Encouraged by the success of this mission, Ward organized a landing party from the crew of the *Pawnee* to establish a position on the point.

With his flagship, the USS *Thomas Freeborn*, and the USS *Resolute*, both converted steamer tug boats, standing off shore, the landing party erected a breastwork of sandbags on June 27 (Figure 2). By the time they had completed this task, the Confederates had moved into position and opened fire with muskets at 250 yards. The landing parties took to the boats and pulled toward the *Freeborn*. Several men were wounded, including captain of the maintop Masters Mate John Williams from the *Pawnee*. The flagstaff of his launch was shot away, and the flag was pierced with 19 musket balls, but Williams grabbed the stump of the flagstaff and held the flag aloft until the launch reached safety. Williams would later receive the Congressional Medal of Honor for his deeds on that day, the first act of valor in the Civil War for which the medal was awarded to a sailor. On the deck of the USS *Thomas Freeborn* (Figure 5), Commander Ward, Commodore of the Potomac Flotilla, was personally aiming the howitzer to cover the retreating sailors.<sup>16</sup> In the process, Ward was struck in the abdomen by a musket shot, dying later that day. Command of the Potomac Flotilla was turned over to Captain Thomas T. Craven.<sup>17</sup> Many months would pass before the Confederates would relinquish strategic Mathias Point.

In the same week of the fierce fight at Mathias Point, a daring and unusual plan by Confederates to gain a naval presence on the Potomac was launched in southern Maryland. The whole of their plot was to seize a merchant steamer, the *St. Nicholas* in Maryland, board a strong contingent of troops, hide them below decks, and bring the vessel to a location where one of the Union gunboats would likely come along side of her. The intended result would be the capture of the Union vessel, intended to be the USS *Pawnee*, strongest vessel of the flotilla, which had been observed to rendezvous with the *St. Nicholas*, probably delivering mail, on previous trips.<sup>18</sup> Though desperate, this wasn't the comical part of the plan. Led by Lt. Lewis of the Confederate Navy, Maryland volunteers dressed in civilian clothes including one as a "French Lady," posed as passengers boarding at

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Patuxent, Maryland. Their ruse was successful, and they took the captured steamer *St. Nicholas* to Coan River on Virginia's Northern Neck where they took on troops.

Confederate commanders deemed the original plan to take the *Pawnee* to be too dangerous, and may have feared that the participants would be charged with piracy if the mission failed. Although the original plan of taking the vessel up the Potomac where she might rendezvous with an unsuspecting USS *Pawnee* was abandoned, the *St. Nicholas* captured two merchant vessels on the Chesapeake Bay before she was taken up the Rappahannock to Fredericksburg and used as a transport between there and Fort Lowry at Tappahannock.<sup>19</sup>

Even as these events were transpiring, Robert E. Lee and Fredericksburg District commander Brigadier General Theophilus Holmes made plans for establishing batteries of heavy guns along the Potomac shore. While the utility of a battery at Mathias Point had always been one of Lee's objectives, he mentions that the three "9-inch columbiads" (these were better known as Dahlgren guns, but Lee used the generic term for obvious reasons) could be employed at Evansport (Quantico) if that were preferred.<sup>20</sup> While the effort to erect the battery at Mathias Point continued (completed in August 1861), Lee sent Commander C.H. Kennedy of the Confederate Navy to survey the Potomac shoreline up river. He found a most auspicious location at Shipping Point (now also known as Hospital Point), writing on July 7 that, "...9-inch guns will command the channel, and with the aid of one rifled 12-pounder will close the river in the day time."<sup>21</sup> Elsewhere along the Potomac, batteries were established on both sides of the mouth of Potomac Creek by late July,<sup>22</sup> and in the wake of the Union defeat at Manassas, captured guns became available for Evansport.

In a directive dated August 22, 1861, Adjutant and Inspector General Cooper instructed General Holmes to establish a battery and informed him that five of the captured guns -- a 32-pounder, two 12-pounder howitzers, and two Parrot Rifles -- were available for its armament along with a 'rifled columbiad' from Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond.<sup>23</sup> The 32-pounder referred to may be the same gun that is displayed at Waller Hill (known as Rising Hill in the 19th century) on Marine Corps Base (MCB), Quantico today (Figure 7). There would eventually be three major batteries, and three smaller ones at Evansport on present day MCB Quantico, and two more at the mouth of Chopawamsic Creek. Other Confederate gun emplacements were erected at Freestone Point (at the mouth of Neabsco Creek) and Cockpit Point (between Powell's Creek and Quantico Creek), on both sides of the mouths of Aquia Creek and Potomac Creek, as well as field pieces deployed at Boyles Hole, between Potomac Creek and Mathias Point. Altogether, 14 batteries were established along the Potomac shore, under cover of brush, discovered by the Union only when they were armed and ready to fight.

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When the flotilla discovered a battery, they were quick to test its resolve. At the end of August gunboats repeatedly dueled with the batteries and troops at Potomac Creek, but with little effect to either side.<sup>24</sup> September saw increased activity by the flotilla, while the Confederates were secretly preparing their largest and most heavily fortified battery at Shipping Point. Whether from the fog of war, or simply the fog of the Potomac, the flotilla suffered a series of collisions in September 1861, one resulting in the sinking of the armed tug USS *Tigress* near White House Point (Ft. Belvoir).<sup>25</sup> Another collision occurred between the USS *Valley City* and *Seminole* as they attacked the battery at Freestone Point.<sup>26</sup> The USS *Yankee* collided with a merchant schooner, whose owner demanded steep payments for the damage,<sup>27</sup> and the USS *Jacob Bell* (Figure 3) smacked into the USS *Island Bell* sending both to the Washington Navy Yard for repairs. The logs of the Potomac Flotilla's vessels in the summer and early fall of 1861 are replete with instances of cannon fire upon the Virginia shore, presumably to probe for Confederate positions,<sup>28</sup> and sporadic musket fire from Confederate troops on both navy and civilian vessels. In July, Acting Master William Budd, commanding the USS *Resolute*, encountered an "infernal machine,"<sup>29</sup> a name given to torpedoes or marine mines by the sailors.

This device, encountered on the Potomac off Aquia Creek, consisted of two casks with mines slung beneath connected by a line which would trigger fuses in the casks when impacted by a vessel (Figure 8). This appears to have been the first use of a torpedo in the Civil War, and perhaps the first instance of mine warfare in history. On the same day the USS *Pocahontas* (Figure 9) shelled the Confederate gunboat CSS *George Page* (Figure 10) from across Bent's Point. A direct attack up Aquia Creek was impossible due to the batteries there, but the *Page's* smoke stacks were visible as a target, and some damage was reported. A Marine gunner aboard the USS *Pocahontas* was cited for marksmanship.<sup>30</sup>

In late August 1861 General Holmes (Figure 11) had over 8,000 troops under his command. With the exception of about 1,000 in Tappahannock and Northern Neck, most of the remainder were manning, defending, or building batteries from Mathias Point to Shipping Point. Further north, under General Beauregard, over 33,000 troops were camped across northern Virginia from Cockpit Point to Leesburg. Batteries erected at Cockpit Point and Freestone Point were under Col. Louis Trezevant Wigfall, in Beauregard's command, later promoted to brigadier.<sup>31</sup> Union intelligence exaggerated the troop strength around Aquia Creek to 14,000, when it was closer to a third of that in August.<sup>32</sup> The Potomac Flotilla routinely destroyed boats that might be used to run the blockade on the slightest suspicion. This fact doubtlessly contributed to the "flotilla" they reported the Confederates to be assembling at Aquia Creek.<sup>33</sup> It may have been the only measure boat owners could take to protect their property. The Union suspected an invasion of southern Maryland was being planned; later, the

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Confederates would sorely regret that they had not been planning this.<sup>34</sup> Less attention was given to what the Confederates were actually doing. Despite several reports of fortifications being constructed at Evansport, no attempt to attack the area was made, although the *Seminole* and *Valley City* attacked the batteries already completed at Freestone Point on September 25.<sup>35</sup> Union commanders continued to be concerned about Confederate invasion, and the presence of a large schooner anchored in Quantico Creek near so many Confederate troops heightened these concerns.

On October 11, men from the gunboats *Rescue*, *Resolute*, and *Union* rowed into Quantico Creek in longboats and set fire to the schooner. This alerted the Confederate troops, who responded with musket fire, but to no effect.<sup>36</sup> Their daring raid had been a success, but the Union sailors had no idea how daring it had been. Their gunboat stood just off Shipping Point, as they rowed past, not knowing of the powerful battery that was near completion, perhaps ready for operation. Why didn't the Confederates fire their big guns on this occasion? Perhaps they were unprepared, but it may be that they were holding their fire and concealment, waiting for bigger targets. Concomitant with the erection of the batteries at Shipping Point, the salvaged hull of the USS *Merrimac* was being converted into an ironclad at Gosport Navy Yard in Portsmouth, Virginia. The *Merrimac* had been one of the most modern ships in the fleet, a sleek screw steam frigate with powerful guns.<sup>37</sup> When Union forces abandoned Gosport she was scuttled, but not so well that the Confederates could not salvage the hull and engine. Her conversion into the ironclad CSS *Virginia* is a separate topic from this theme, but a similar screw steamer, the USS *Pensacola* may have figured very prominently in the stratagems of the battle of the Potomac. Built at the naval yard in her namesake city and launched in August 1859, the *Pensacola* was towed to the Washington Navy Yard for additional outfitting in January 1860. The additional outfitting surely included mounting Commandant Dahlgren's latest shell guns. The *Pensacola* remained under development at the Washington Navy Yard as the drama of secession unfolded, and was not commissioned until September 16, 1861.<sup>38</sup> During this time she was most likely the subject of close scrutiny by eyes sympathetic to the Confederates, who were completing the powerful batteries at Shipping Point as the *Pensacola* was being commissioned.

A photograph taken of her at this time, as she lay off Alexandria, shows two well dressed gentlemen on the shore in the foreground. A comparison of portraits to these figures shows them to have a striking resemblance to Confederate naval officers Lt. Charles C. Simms and Lt. John T. Wood (Figures 12 and 13). Simms was assigned to Evansport at the time, but reassigned to Aquia on October 2, 1861. Although the details of Simms's assignment are not disclosed in the Official Records, he was commended by Maj. Gen. Holmes for having

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“...uniformly shown the utmost devotion and his whole conduct has been characterized by an energy and zeal in the highest degree commendable.”<sup>39</sup> Could this have included an undercover mission to Alexandria to obtain a photograph of the *Pensacola*, with the audacious Wood and Simms unable to resist a cameo in the foreground (Figure 14)? The photograph was made in 1861, perhaps September, although it may have been made before the war. Whether this bit of information is any evidence of Civil War naval intelligence or not, the Confederates undoubtedly hoped to blockade, damage, or even capture the powerful *Pensacola*. While the earthen walls of the Confederate defenses were being formed, the Union flotilla continued its task of blockading the Potomac River. While intercepting men and supplies coming from Maryland to Virginia, they were also intercepting escaped slaves headed north. Union commanders found themselves in a peculiar position regarding escaped slaves early in the war. Despite the recalcitrance of the seceding states, Federal policy was to uphold the Union, including laws influenced by the Dred Scott decision, requiring the return of escaped slaves to their masters regardless of where they were apprehended. In the earliest weeks of the war some Union officers complied with this, even returning slaves to Confederate lines. On May 24, 1861, Gen. Benjamin F. Butler commanding at Fort Monroe considered a request by a Confederate colonel to return three slaves who had escaped to the Union pickets. Having watched strong fortifications being raised at Sewell’s Point and Craney Island across the water with the aid of slave labor, Butler refused to comply with the request. He replied to the Confederate officer that only if the masters of the escaped slaves would swear allegiance to the Union would they be returned.<sup>40</sup> This action would anticipate Union policy, and the terms of the Emancipation Proclamation when it would be issued over a year and a half later. In the weeks following Butler kept the slaves, and put their labor to the service of the Union.<sup>41</sup> The precedent he set would later be made law by the first Confiscation Act, passed by Congress on August 6, 1861.<sup>42</sup> Butler continues to refer to escaped slaves in Union Army custody as slaves, but the Navy was different. Slaves rowed, or even swam to the Union gunboats in the Potomac in increasing numbers. They were referred to in the naval records as “contrabands,” at least as early as the first week of August 1861.<sup>43</sup> At times “contrabands” performed valuable service to the Flotilla, serving as pilots and informants, but usually they were taken either to the Navy Yard or to Fort Washington for internment. By September this had become unmanageable, and on September 25, 1861 Secretary of the Navy Gideon Wells issued an order that the “contrabands” could be employed by the Navy, and given the compensation of \$10 a month.<sup>44</sup> A low wage even then, but this was compensation offered to the “contrabands” and not for their former masters, as was essentially the standard for the Army up until then.<sup>45</sup>

About this time, in late September 1861, the battery at Freestone Point at the mouth of Neabsco Creek was ready for action. Reports of these guns, under Col. Wade Hampton, firing at shipping headed up the Potomac to

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Washington began coming into the Navy Yard. The USS *Valley City* and USS *Seminole* attacked them on September 25.<sup>46</sup> A report on the action by Col. Louis T. Wigfall to Jefferson Davis states that the batteries fired 30 shots to the 22 shots fired by the vessels, and kept firing “to show them how we could drive them.”<sup>47</sup> The official records of the Union Navy lack detail on the exchange, being more concerned with a serious collision which occurred between the attacking Union vessels during the fight.<sup>48</sup> Wigfall (Figure 15) claimed the flotilla was “divided up and down river” by the battery, but the closure of the waterway to the Union was not yet at hand, as communiqués of the Flotilla reflect.<sup>49</sup>

Union ships in Washington harbor made steam early on the morning of October 15, 1861. Secretary Welles had ordered the steamers *Seminole*, *Pocahontas*, *Pawnee*, and *R.B. Forbes* to report to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron at Hampton Roads, along with companies of Marines bound for the fleet.<sup>50</sup> Sharp eyes on the Virginia shore may have sent the news down river. As the USS *Pocahontas* (Figure 9) passed White House Point (now Fort Belvoir) her captain reported a battalion of troops moving up river and another body of Confederate troops between Cockpit Point and Freestone Point moving in the same direction. Captain Craven, commanding the Potomac Flotilla had already relayed intelligence to Secretary Welles that a battery was under construction at Shipping Point.<sup>51</sup> As the *Pocahontas* passed Evansport she fired a few shots from her main armament of six guns, the largest 32-pounders. No fire answered and she proceeded on her way to Hampton Roads. At 10:45 am, the USS *Seminole*, “was passing majestically slow by Evansport,” according to her Commander J. P. Gillis, when the three batteries opened fire (Figure 18). The *Seminole* was hit at least seven times, with half of her rigging damaged, a boat destroyed, and her hull perforated in two locations. The fire came from two batteries on shore, probably Shipping Point batteries #1 and #2, and a third “400 yards inshore,” perhaps the one at Rising Hill. Remarkably, the sailors were hit with only a few splinters, and Cmdr. Gillis fished his mizzen mast out of the Potomac, fired a few shells in return, and proceeded on to Hampton Roads.<sup>52</sup> The news reached the Navy Yard before the departure of the USS *Pawnee*, *Valley City*, and other vessels. The *Valley City*, with a contingent of Marines on board, bound to join the fleet in the campaign to capture Port Royal, South Carolina, passed the batteries unmolested, under cover of darkness.<sup>53</sup> They would go on to a successful campaign, and be the first Marines to use Parris Island as a base.<sup>54</sup> The *Pawnee* (Figure 6), arrived about daybreak, and was not so lucky. Under orders to steam ahead and not return fire, her crew hunkering to the opposite side of the ship, she escaped without casualties, though not without damage, being hit five times with two hits to her hull. Had Lt. Wyman not taken Captain Craven’s advice not to return fire, the hit on his No. 2 gun would have killed several of the crew (Figure 16).<sup>55</sup> Lt. Wyman had shifted the contingent of Marines

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*Pawnee* had been carrying to the *Valley City*, avoiding unnecessary losses as the second vessel steamed past the batteries without returning fire (Figure 17).

After these first few sharp exchanges, things began to really heat up on the Potomac. Several sloops and schooners were fired upon on October 17, and on October 18 brush was cleared by the Confederates at Cockpit Point revealing more batteries.<sup>56</sup> With these alarming threats to this “important avenue to the city” of Washington, Secretary Welles wrote General McClellan hoping for relief.<sup>57</sup> He found this in the General’s response that a detachment of both infantry and cavalry were headed for the Maryland shore, opposite Evansport. The measure was sparked by the observation that signal lights were shown in Maryland to alert the batteries of approaching Union ships.<sup>58</sup> Spies and blockade runners took advantage of the partial control of the river that the guns delivered to the Confederates, as the Union vessels observed a number of boats passing between the shores.<sup>59</sup> On October 19, the Confederates scored a success, capturing the hay-laden schooner *Fairfax* at Evansport.<sup>60</sup> Hay may not seem much of a prize but it must be remembered that in those times the main engines of land warfare burned hay, and this schooner was the Civil War equivalent of an oil tanker. Lt. A.D. Harrell commanding the USS *Union* adds that they captured a second schooner, and had landed as many as 500 men in Maryland. He feared that rebel artillery would soon be on the Maryland shore as well.<sup>61</sup>

The guns of Shipping Point and Cockpit Point were beginning to close this important avenue of commerce, the Potomac, to Washington. On October 21, more than 40 vessels were reported to be blocked by the batteries.<sup>62</sup> Worse, reports came in from “a trusty channel” that 18 guns were ready in a battery at Mathias Point, trapping both freighters and gunboats in a segment of the river between.<sup>63</sup> Finally, the troops sent by McClellan to Maryland, reported from Camp Hooker at Budd’s Ferry opposite Evansport that the Confederate gunboat CSS *George Page* had made passage from Aquia Creek to Quantico Creek.<sup>64</sup>

Captain Craven despairingly wrote to Secretary Welles on October 23:

In view of the utter uselessness of the Potomac Flotilla for the further protection of the river, I feel it my duty to respectfully suggest for the consideration of the Department that the guns of all the vessels be landed at Mattawoman Creek and mounted upon Stump Neck. In addition I would propose that the guns of the *Pensacola* be also mounted at that point...Feeling that my position here in command of the flotilla can be of no further benefit, I most respectfully request to be detached from the command and appointed to some seagoing vessel.<sup>65</sup>

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In a week of operations the Evansport batteries had the Union in disarray. Their control of the Potomac was upended, and the troops at Budd's Ferry retreated from the shore, taking positions on the road to Washington to prevent an advance, not a landing.<sup>66</sup> This was hastened by reports that the CSS *George Page* had "a deck load of troops" aboard.<sup>67</sup> Whether she had troops aboard or not, she began shelling the Union forces ashore. In response, Gen. Hooker's entire division was sent, artillery and all, to Budd's Ferry on the night of October 24.<sup>68</sup> Hooker's reinforcement of the position in Maryland may have staved off an invasion attempt, or at least the fear of one, but the blockade was another matter. In a letter to Secretary Welles, Commander John A. Dahlgren, Commandant of the Navy Yard and perhaps the foremost expert in America, North or South, on heavy artillery echoed Captain Craven's disparagement (Figure 20). Calculating the consumption of hay in the capital, and the ability of the railroad to compensate for the stymied river commerce, he concluded that a counter-battery must be established. In closing, he lists all the guns available at the Navy Yard for such a battery – including the main armament of the USS *Pensacola*.<sup>69</sup> Despite the dismissal of some Union Army officers, the guns were a serious threat to any deep draft vessel. While smaller craft might skirt the Maryland shore, large vessels would have to hold to the channel, placing them in perilous enfilade between the batteries at Cockpit Point and Shipping Point.

This situation did not play well with the press. Captain Craven's report of the situation reached the press as quickly as it did the Navy Department. No sooner had he arrived with news of the situation than a dispatch was sent to the *New York Herald*. "The Potomac Closed," read the headline of the *Herald* on October 23, 1861 (Figure 19). The article details the locations of batteries from Freestone Point to Mathias Point, with some emphasis on the latter. The editors of *Harper's Weekly* grouched in the November 2, 1861 edition:

...there is no reason why the erection of batteries on the Potomac should be regarded as closing that river. Balls and shells are unpleasant things to come into contact with, no doubt. It is, however, the business of vessels of war to encounter them, and their captains can no more complain of being under fire than private soldiers.

Their editorial zeal was quelled somewhat when the *Resolute* and other Potomac Flotilla steamers attempted to tow two schooners past the batteries, only to have them captured.<sup>70</sup> These schooners, laden with hay, were the oil tankers of their day. By this time, Hooker's division had moved into position on Stump Neck and at Budd's Ferry. His battery of Parrot guns fired a barrage at the CSS *George Page* anchored in Quantico Creek, but with all but the smokestack of the vessel concealed behind the headlands, he considered it "no more than target practice."<sup>71</sup> The blockaders had become the blockaded, even to the point where stripping one of the best ships

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in the Navy of its guns for a counter battery to Shipping Point. Winfield Scott's "anaconda strategy" could not have found worse results. Within two weeks, on November 1, 1861, he is replaced by Gen. McClellan. The change may have been coming anyway. Scott was old and ailing, but this turn of events removed any doubt and hastened the change of command.<sup>72</sup>

These early days of the Civil War in Virginia saw the birth of American military aviation. Professor Lowe established the Balloon Corps of the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers. Although some had suggested the use of balloons to scout the Potomac shorelines as early as July,<sup>73</sup> the balloons were too much in demand for them to be allocated until the Confederate 'guns of October' brought attention. In deploying the balloon for service along the larger rivers, a special barge was devised for launch and support. This was used for the first time off Mattawoman Creek to reconnoiter the camps and batteries at Evansport and Cockpit Point. So, within a few months, this little stretch of the Potomac had seen the first instance of mine warfare, as well as the first (such as it was) aircraft carrier (Figure 21).<sup>74</sup> The balloon ascents, along with exaggerated reports of the strength of the force sent from Washington may have done more harm than good for the Union's situation. Fearing an invasion, the Confederate commanders became concerned with defenses against attempts to take their batteries.

General Johnston (Figure 22) bemoaned the situation:

By the way, have you seen General Trimble's arrangements for land defense? If my ideas of the ground, given by a pencil sketch, are at all correct, they amount to nothing. A few of Dahlgren's boat howitzers would knock them to pieces from the hills in rear.<sup>75</sup>

General Beauregard (Figure 24) howled about the condition of the landward defenses, writing to General Whiting, an engineer, on November 13:

Have Triplett's and Powhatan Hills been fortified, as had been determined upon; if not already, why not? Those and Talbot Hill are the keys of that position; no time ought to be lost in fortifying them, even if it were only for infantry, for if the enemy takes them, how long would the batteries hold out? Not ten minutes! Can you not have it done at once if not already done?<sup>76</sup>

In fact these fortifications had not been set up. General Isaac Trimble (Figure 23) had laid out the hilltop defenses, but despaired of the capability of musketry alone to be an effective defense. Lacking guns for those positions, he pointed out that infantry at that distance from the batteries could only defend against a landward

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attack. Trimble continued with his focus on shoreline pickets and other infantry positions immediate to the batteries, lacking the guns he felt necessary to project a defense from the heights.<sup>77</sup>

Heat mounted elsewhere along the firing line. General Hooker (Figure 25) ordered Union forces to make another assault on Mathias Point, a reconnaissance in force this time.<sup>78</sup> The schooner USS *Dana* (a converted coast survey vessel) and the steamers *Thomas Freeborn* and *Island Bell* of the Potomac Flotilla were joined by 400 men of the 76th New York Infantry, brigaded as the 5th Regiment of General Sickles's (Figure 26) Excelsior Brigade. Commandeering a number of fishing boats from the Maryland shore, the gunboats landed troops on Mathias Point on November 10.<sup>79</sup> In contrast to the abortive attempt to discover the batteries made by the late Commander Ward's sailors in June, the force of soldiers landed was equipped to attack, including light howitzers. Although they encountered resistance from a mounted picket, the expedition found only long abandoned rifle pits and earthworks at the point. Instead of the reported battery of eighteen heavy guns, Mathias Point held only the abandoned plan for such a position.<sup>80</sup> Ward's attack may have been more successful than imagined, although the Confederates would not leave the Union with this peace of mind in the area, opening fire on the *Freeborn* with a battery of field guns a few miles up river, at a place known as Boyle's Hole, opposite Maryland Point.<sup>81</sup> On November 14, a schooner attempted to sail past Cockpit Point, but was becalmed. Confederate batteries opened fire (Figure 27), and her crew soon abandoned the stranded vessel, leaving her at anchor. Upon observing a party of Confederates making for the vessel, Lt. Col. Wells of the 1st Massachusetts Infantry organized retaliation. Moving two 10-pounder Parrot guns to Stump Neck, they drove off the raiders, who set fire to the schooner as they retreated. Not content in merely denying the Confederates a prize, the soldiers rowed to the ship, extinguished the fire, and were even able to sail her to the Maryland shore as a breeze had come up during the fray.<sup>82</sup>

Having transferred his flag to the fast, former revenue cutter *Harriet Lane*, Captain Craven had made it to Washington, but asked for reassignment again as in his initial assessment of the situation on the lower Potomac in October. On November 20, in the wake of the reconnaissance at Mathias Point, he made his formal request for reassignment.<sup>83</sup> Union ships were beginning to slip past the guns at Shipping Point, but only at night. The *E.B. Hale*, carrying new nine-inch Dahlgren guns to New York did so. Merchant vessels passed, and were usually fired upon, but generally with moderate effect.<sup>84</sup> The Confederates increased their troop strength and armaments. A Virginia company of light artillery was ordered to Evansport on December 13, and the CSS *George Page* was observed in Chopawamsic Creek, and then again in Quantico Creek.<sup>85</sup> The *Page* had most likely delivered a new piece of ordnance, an English rifled cannon smuggled past the South Atlantic Blockading

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Squadron.<sup>86</sup> It apparently made quite an impression on the Union forces during its employment – and after its capture it was taken to the Washington Navy Yard for test-firing. The Blakely gun (Figure 30) generated such interest that it merited two brief articles in *Scientific American* in the spring of 1862.<sup>87</sup> One of only two of its kind smuggled into the Confederacy, the other Blakely gun gained fame in the battle of Vicksburg. There it was fired so often, in succession that the barrel cracked, but the gun was not done for – the Confederate artillerists continued to use the shortened weapon as a mortar.<sup>88</sup> This gun became known as the “widow Blakely,” perhaps because her ‘mate,’ the gun at Evansport, had been captured.<sup>89</sup> The captured groom remains estranged, ensconced in Willard Park, still at the Washington Navy Yard after 145 years, while the broken widow is still in Vicksburg. It could be the Vicksburg gun was originally at Evansport. General French, commander there would figure prominently in the Vicksburg campaign.<sup>90</sup>

Early in the month, troops and more guns continued to bolster the Confederate positions (Figure 28). Many of the additional Confederate preparations were defensive. They would have been spurred to greater wariness on December 11, as the USS *Stepping Stones*, a converted New York ferry boat packing a 12-inch deck gun, edged into Occoquan Creek to take soundings and inspect the area for a possible assault.<sup>91</sup> Elsewhere on the Potomac in December 1861, the battery at Boyd’s Hole periodically opens fire, the earlier light field pieces replaced by heavier guns with enough range to hit the Maryland side of the river. The Boyd’s Hole battery earns the distinction of the only combat sinking of a ship during the campaign, when they fired on the schooner *Mary Willis* attempting to pass their position.<sup>92</sup>

As 1861 drew to a close, the dank quarters of the winter camp (Figure 29), pickets along the river, and drawdown of two regiments had sapped the ranks of effective, fit for duty, troops. Counting a mere 772 privates from a force that had counted six regiments or more, General French worried about the ability of his command to withstand an attack.<sup>93</sup> As a result, the Confederates mounted a new gun they had received from the Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond, better defending the point.<sup>94</sup> French was still concerned with his position – in spite of the rumblings of Johnston and Beauregard to fortify the heights behind Evansport in early November, a “weak picket fence” around the inshore side of Shipping Point Battery #1 was all he could report as defenses as late as December 30.<sup>95</sup> The troop situation was one where French wanted more men immediate to his batteries. General Whiting, under the Potomac District had 7601 troops around Dumfries, less than a two-hour march away. General Holmes, commanding the Aquia District, simply suggested the movement of one of the two regiments French had south of Chopawamsic Creek closer to Evansport.<sup>96</sup> This was probably the undermanned 47th Virginia Infantry, a local unit. Due to mustering by county, and the decline of population from westward

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migration of eastern Virginians, many of these units were far below the full strength of 1000 officers and men. A small, more company than regiment-sized unit probably moved from Clifton Church to Rising Hill (archaeological site 44PW1412) in early January 1862. The 2nd Tennessee Volunteers, a regiment at full strength, probably remained at a camp south of Chopawamsic Creek (archaeological site 44ST0302), enabling them to reply to landings at Chopawamsic or Aquia Creeks should the need arise. The main encampments at Evansport (archaeological site 44PW0917) were reported by French as occupied by the 35th Georgia and 22nd North Carolina regiments; the recently drawn off units being the 14th Alabama and 1st Arkansas regiments.<sup>97</sup> The former units are fairly well established as connected with specific winter camp areas of 44PW0917, while the positions of the latter two, as well as a hodgepodge of smaller units and the naval officers commanding the batteries, may be answered by further archaeological and archival research.<sup>98</sup>

The war beyond the Potomac moved on, and though the Confederate guns were a continued danger to shipping, the Union needed to get past them. On January 3 the gunboats USS *Anacostia* and USS *Yankee* were ordered to take positions off Cockpit Point that would enfilade the batteries there. In the brief action a shell from an “80 pounder rifle gun” hit the *Anacostia*, and a six-inch shell exploded under one of the Confederate guns, knocking it from its mount. Lt. Wyman’s (Capt. Craven’s successor as commodore of the Potomac Flotilla) purpose in this action was to “obtain a more complete understanding of the enemy’s works.” This was accomplished, but it was later observed that the Confederates rearranged the battery to be less vulnerable to the kind of attack made by *Yankee* and *Anacostia* that day (Figure 31).<sup>99</sup> January 9 Secretary Welles ordered the *Pensacola* to prepare to steam down river, report to Hampton Roads, and join the fleet.<sup>100</sup> Captain Morris of the *Pensacola* had had plenty of time to consider how he would get his ship past the guns, as she lay idle in the harbor for nearly four months since her recommissioning. In late December he requested two scows he thought to be available from the Army. His plan was to lash them to the side of the *Pensacola* and fill them with wet hay in the hopes that her boilers might be shielded from shot and shell.<sup>101</sup> Although this desperate accoutrement to the ship was not affected, her run through the gauntlet was well orchestrated. On January 11 she steamed down to White House Point, to lie at anchor until the dead of night, attempting the passage after moonset. Union vessels were set to mark the shallows off Mattawoman Creek, and gunboats were positioned to offer covering fire if a duel erupted. Finally, around 5:00 am she slipped past. Capt. Morris counted three shells from Cockpit Point, and fifteen from Shipping Point, but all missed high, if not all by much.<sup>102</sup> General French reported the passing of the *Pensacola* with no small regret, bemoaning the sluggishness of the corporal of the guard, and detailing his failed preparations. *Pensacola* was nearly abreast of Shipping Point before being recognized, and made a poor target

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in the black of night. The most powerful ship on the Potomac would not fall into Confederate hands, and escaped without a scratch.

The chill of winter had a cooling effect on military action for the rest of January. Measles had infected the Confederate troops, particularly those from the Deep South and frontier, an example being the 14th Alabama Infantry, with almost the whole regiment unfit for duty.<sup>104</sup> On January 23, the Confederate naval officers at Evansport were ordered to Richmond for reassignment.<sup>105</sup> Their move may have anticipated what Lincoln and McClellan were debating by the beginning of February - where to take the offensive. Lincoln (Figure 32) wanted another attack at Manassas, but McClellan (Figure 33) believed the course to victory lay on the Rappahannock, with a landing at Urbanna. Lincoln pressed McClellan hard for justification:

If you will give me satisfactory answers to the following questions I shall gladly yield my plan to yours:

- 1st. Does not your plan involve a greatly larger expenditure of time and money than mine?
- 2d. Wherein is a victory more certain by your plan than mine?
- 3d. Wherein is a victory more valuable by your plan than mine?
- 4th. In fact, would it not be less valuable in this, that it would break no great line of the enemy's communications, while mine would?
- 5th. In case of disaster, would not a retreat be more difficult by your plan than mine?<sup>106</sup>

In a lengthy response to these questions, Gen. McClellan listed the difficulties of terrain, and the entrenched Confederate positions in northern Virginia. He anticipated what Burnside's command would wallow through months later, the miserably muddy roads crossing the hills, and the impediment they would create for a successful attack. McClellan reasoned that an attack in the lower Chesapeake, at Urbanna or mounted (worse in his opinion at that time) from Fort Monroe, would result in a withdrawal of the Confederates from northern Virginia to counter the attack, and goes on to outline a plan to divide and conquer the Confederacy after the capture of Richmond.<sup>107</sup> Within a week not McClellan, but Grant in Tennessee, was to diminish the force in northern Virginia as Tennessee and Georgia regiments were ordered to Knoxville on February 9 to counter his advances.

The business of shelling, counter-shelling, blockade, and running the blockade kept on down the Lower Potomac. On February 11 the *Harriet Lane* (Figure 34), which had been the flotilla flagship made her way down the river, bound for Hatteras along with the USS *Baltimore* laden with ordnance stores. With the *Jacob*

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*Bell* astern, laying covering fire, the warships made their way down river in a heavy snow storm. Under this cover they passed Cockpit Point without incident, but were caught in an exchange with the Shipping Point batteries. *Harriet Lane*, built from the ground up as a revenue cutter and a fast steamer was nevertheless hit by Confederate shells, damaging the side-wheeler's iron wheel rim, forcing the *Jacob Bell* to take her under tow. Despite this impedance, these vessels made their way to Liverpool Point without further harm, where the *Lane's* paddle wheel was repaired after a few days.<sup>108</sup> The shot punctuated a mid-point in the Civil War career of the ship, less than a year before she had participated in the relief effort for Fort Sumter, and less than a year later she would be captured by the Confederates at Galveston and converted into a blockade runner. Before and after her run down the Potomac that snowy February day this warship, one of the most illustrious in Coast Guard history, participated in nearly every major naval action including the capture of New Orleans.<sup>109</sup>

Despite the strong positions along the Potomac, and the substantial natural defenses of the northern Virginia landscape, Jefferson Davis ordered a strategic withdrawal to better defend Richmond. General Johnston ordered French at Evansport to prepare his command for evacuation, urging the utmost discretion in the operation.<sup>110</sup> The Union forces were not attacking, nor did they appear to have immediate plans, but Lincoln wanted action and the Confederates knew it. On March 7 the evacuation began, the troops necessarily traveling light and leaving considerable personal and military provisions behind. Guns were spiked and thrown off their mounts, magazines detonated at batteries at Cockpit Point and Shipping Point, and the CSS *George Page* was burned in Quantico Creek. Lighter guns were retrieved, but the means were lacking to transport the heavier ones fast enough along the difficult roads. In just two days the fierce batteries of Evansport and Cockpit Point were unlimbered.<sup>111</sup>

Even as this was happening, an ironic tribute to the importance of the position was proclaimed by President Lincoln himself. In President's General War Order No. 3, issued on March 8, 1862 he instructed that no less than two army corps (at least 50,000 men) be retained to defend Washington so long as the batteries remained, and that no move by the Army of the Potomac should leave the capital in jeopardy. The order further directs an immediate attack against the batteries, in a combined army and navy effort.<sup>112</sup> At Hampton Roads the *Merrimac* made its attack against the Atlantic Blockading Squadron, on March 8 as well. The uncertainty of John Ericson's "cheese box on a raft" being able to prevail against the larger and less experimental CSS *Virginia* probably weighed on Lincoln still. McClellan had argued persuasively for a seaborne campaign down the lower Chesapeake Bay, bypassing the formidable natural barriers of northern Virginia, the Rappahannock, and the swampy drainages from there to Richmond; but what if the *Merrimac* could not be stopped, and tore

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into a Union transport fleet? The *Merrimac*, more or less accurately depicted in the press for months before, was reported to be off Point Lookout, Maryland at the mouth of the Potomac.<sup>113</sup> This report so worried the Union leaders that Capt. Dahlgren was ordered to mount defenses at Geisboro Point to defend Washington.<sup>114</sup>

On March 9, 1862, coincidentally the same day of the duel between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac*, Lt. Wyman shelled Shipping Point. Receiving no fire in return, and observing smoke onshore and in Quantico Creek, he went ashore to investigate.<sup>115</sup> He found that the Confederate retreat had barely been completed, ammunition bunkers and the CSS *George Page* put to the torch, but “slow matches” leading to trails of powder to set off ammunition bunkers were still burning. They extinguished these, salvaging some of the munitions.<sup>116</sup> The next day, General Hooker came across the river for a look. He marveled at the abandoned earthworks “of a much more formidable nature” than he had supposed. Guns still on carriages, and supplies of powder left in magazines, many supplies of food and clothing were left in the hasty retreat. He inspected a house “nearly a half a mile to the rear of Shipping Point, in the middle of one of their camps” his Union battery across the river in Maryland had shelled with their Whitworth guns (Figure 35). He found the shells had hit only two to three feet apart. Entering the house he found one of the shells on the mantelpiece labeled “Fired by the Yankees, February 27, 1862.”<sup>117</sup> Though the Civil War was barely a year old, and far from over, relic hunting had already begun.

The battle of the Potomac was over, and by March 17 the batteries at Aquia and Boyd’s Hole were gone, and a division of Union troops were being convoyed down river by the flotilla.<sup>118</sup> Controversy over the order to abandon northern Virginia would echo in the halls of Confederate government for some time to come. Louis Trezevant Wigfall, nominally prescient in his fiery secessionist politics, had been a brigadier commanding troops and batteries at Freestone Point. After the retreat from northern Virginia he resigned his commission and returned to politics. He represented Texas in the Confederate Senate, as he had in the U.S. Senate, before being expelled for his secessionism. After his resignation following the withdrawal from northern Virginia he argued in the Confederate Senate, at length successfully, for removing Jefferson Davis from an active role in military matters.<sup>119</sup> Appropriately, a northern Virginia resident, Gen. Robert E. Lee (Figure 36) would later lead the South’s military strategy.

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## **F. Associated Property Types**

### **Name of property type: FORTIFICATIONS AND ENTRENCHMENTS**

#### **Subtype: batteries**

Batteries refer to relatively permanent positions for large guns mounted within protective earthworks, and generally included magazines and bunkers for protecting ammunition and personnel. Batteries are eligible under Criterion A if their position and operation affected strategy or actions during the campaign. In order to be eligible under Criterion D, there must be sufficient integrity to the site for artifacts and features to be related to the structural configuration, operation, manning (unit identity), or attacks upon the site; evidence from artifacts and features for the nutrition and material culture of the gun crews is also of significance under Criterion D. Batteries could be considered eligible under Criterion C if the installation has retained sufficient integrity to be an outstanding example of military engineering of the time, although it is unlikely that any have survived with architectural integrity.

#### **Subtype: field entrenchments**

Examples of field entrenchments include trenches for infantry, redoubts for field artillery, and rifle pits for pickets. Field entrenchments are eligible under Criterion A if their position affected strategy or actions during the campaign. Field entrenchments could be considered eligible under Criterion C if the installation has retained sufficient integrity to be an outstanding example of military engineering of the time, although it is unlikely that any have survived with architectural integrity. In order to be eligible under Criterion D, there must be sufficient integrity to the site for artifacts and features to be related to the structural configuration, operation, manning (unit identity), or attacks upon the site; evidence from artifacts and features for the nutrition and material culture of the troops is also of significance under Criterion D.

### **Name of Property type: CAMPS, DEPOTS, AND SUPPORT FACILITIES FOR UNION AND CONFEDERATE CAMPAIGNS**

In order to be qualified for listing the site must have been used by military forces or civilians associated with strategies and actions of the campaigns.

#### **Subtype: winter military camps**

Winter military camps were typically comprised of makeshift huts, often partially subterranean, "dug-out" configurations. Some camps were organized according to formal military procedure, and may contain hundreds of huts. Other landscape and functional features within camp sites include parade grounds, latrines, target ranges, sutler's tents or cabins, and guard points or pickets. Such camps were intended to be occupied for several months, and often were. Winter military camps are eligible under Criterion A if their occupation directly supported offensive or defensive positions engaged in the strategy or actions of the campaign, or were directly attacked. Although it has been suggested that some military camps of this period may be eligible under Criterion C for the cadastration of regimental camps and remnants of dugout hut features, these elements are insufficient for eligibility under Criterion C due to the survival of only parts of the structures. In order to be

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eligible under Criterion D, there must be sufficient integrity to the site for artifacts and features to be related to the structural configuration, period of occupation, identity of occupants, or attacks upon the site. Evidence from artifacts and features for the nutrition and material culture of the troops occupying the site would also support eligibility under Criterion D.

**Subtype: summer or temporary military camps**

Summer or temporary military camps were typically comprised of tents, sometimes with 'platforms' leveled and trenches dug for comfort and drainage. Some camps were organized according to formal military procedure, and may contain hundreds of huts. Such camps were intended to be occupied for several months, and often were. Summer or temporary military camps are eligible under Criterion A if their occupation directly supported offensive or defensive positions engaged in the strategy or actions of the campaign, or were directly attacked. In order to be eligible under Criterion D, there must be sufficient integrity to the site for artifacts and features to be related to the structural configuration, period of occupation, identity of occupants, or attacks upon the site. Evidence from artifacts and features for the nutrition and material culture of the troops occupying the site would also support eligibility under Criterion D.

**Subtype: depots and support facilities**

Depots and support facilities are locations where materials, supplies, vehicles, animals, or ammunition were stockpiled or weapons, vessels, or wagons were repaired. This category may also include headquarters or command posts and hospitals or infirmaries if separate from camps or fortifications. Depots and support facilities are eligible under Criterion A if their occupation directly supported offensive or defensive positions engaged in the strategy or actions of the campaign, or were directly attacked. A property of this type may be eligible under Criterion C if the building or structure has retained integrity and is exemplary of its type, or the work of a master. In order to be eligible under Criterion D, there must be sufficient integrity to the site for artifacts and features to be related to the function, period of operation, and association with the campaigns.

**Name of Property type: ORDNANCE**

Ordnance is a category which includes shells, torpedoes, and guns that may be eligible as objects. Certain items of this category may be significant under Criteria A, C, or D. Generally, ordnance would not be considered individually eligible as objects if they have remained a part of a site where they were deployed.

**Subtype: big guns**

Heavy artillery was a focus of action during the campaigns. Certain guns were key in influencing strategies and actions. In order to be eligible under Criterion A, the gun must have been deployed in such a way as to affect the strategy or actions of the campaign. In order to be eligible under Criterion C, a gun must be of sufficient integrity for its design and manufacture to be identifiable, and represent an exceptional design in military engineering for its time of manufacture. Guns may be significant under Criterion D if information about their manufacture, origin, deployment, use, and subsequent transport can inform the study of history.

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**Subtype: shells and torpedoes**

Shells and torpedoes used during the campaign were at the cutting edge of military technology of their time. These items may remain in terrestrial or submerged locations where they were originally deployed. In order to be eligible under Criterion A, the item must have been deployed in such a way as to affect the strategy or actions of the campaign. In order to be eligible under Criterion C, the item must be of sufficient integrity for its design and manufacture to be identifiable, and represent an exceptional design in military engineering for its time of manufacture. Guns may be significant under Criterion D if information about their manufacture, origin, deployment, use, and subsequent transport can inform the study of history.

**Name of Property type: SHIPWRECKS**

The campaign for the control of navigation on the lower Potomac River involved vessels interdicted and destroyed by both sides. Retreating Confederate forces scuttled vessels they were forced to leave behind, denying them to the Union. The Union flotilla destroyed many civilian vessels in the enforcement of the blockade against Virginia.

**Subtype: military vessels**

The remains of vessels operated by military forces during the campaign which lie within the geographic bounds of this documentation may be limited to one vessel (CSS George Page), although the remains of many of the vessels of the Union flotilla may lie elsewhere. Shipwrecks can be eligible under Criterion A if the vessel was a direct participant in the actions of the campaign. They are eligible under Criterion D for information on the design, operation, cargoes, armament, and personnel manning them.

**Subtype: civilian vessels**

A number of civilian vessels were captured and subsequently destroyed by both Union and Confederate forces during the campaign. The remains of many of these vessels, ranging from schooners to skiffs, may yet lie at the bottom of the Potomac and its tributaries. A property of this type may have significance under Criterion A if it was directly involved in the strategies and actions of the campaign. The remains of civilian vessels can be eligible under Criterion D if information of their design, operation, and cargoes contributes significantly to knowledge of history.

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**G. Geographical Data**

The geographical area for this multiple property documentation includes portions of King George, Prince William, and Stafford Counties, Virginia, Charles County, Maryland, and the District of Columbia, bordering and including the Potomac River and its tributaries. The area may extend several miles inland to include encampments, avenues of approach, field entrenchments, and support facilities directly associated with the campaigns.

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## H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Although the Union 'Blockade of the Chesapeake Bay' (May-June 1861) and the Confederate 'Blockade of the Potomac' (1861-1862) have been recognized as campaigns, there was a continued Union blockade of the Potomac and Chesapeake Bay before, during, and after the Confederate land-based blockade from October 15, 1861 to March 8, 1862. The multiple listing theme has, therefore, been constructed broadly, to tie all of the sites that played a role in this struggle for control of the Potomac River.

Thirty-four known, or potential archaeological sites associated with the battle of the Potomac are tentatively mapped either from existing site inventories, or from inference from historical sources. Information for these locations is derived from recorded properties in both archaeological and architectural data bases in the Virginia Department of Historic Resources Data Sharing System, and from consultation with the Maryland Historical Trust. Other locations have been projected from Civil War era maps and accounts, primarily in the Official Records. Sites on Marine Corps Base Quantico have been documented in Phase I and Phase II identification surveys undertaken for compliance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Phase I surveys have been conducted at Civil War sites by the William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research, Gray and Pape Incorporated, and the Louis Berger Group at sites 44PW0917, 44PW1412, and 44ST0302. John Milner Associates has conducted Phase II investigations at 44PW0917.

A chronology was developed using the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies; as well as the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies. The Cornell University Library web site "Making of America" (<http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/moa/>) was instrumental in searching these and other documents related to this historical event. Considerable information on vessels and their histories was obtained from the Naval Historical Center through its web site (<http://www.history.navy.mil>), particularly the electronic version of the Dictionary of Naval Fighting Ships. Accounts and engravings of actions of the campaign were also obtained from scanned images of Harper's Weekly magazine on the Son of the South web site (<http://www.sonofthesouth.net/leefoundation/civil-war>). Information regarding artillery and the ranges of guns was obtained from the Civil War Artillery web site <http://www.civilwarartillery.com/default.htm> and the United States Army Combined Arms Research Library (<http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/gabel5/gabel5.asp>).

Information on sites, landscapes, ordnance, and vessels was categorized according to "KOCO A" analysis for the following sketch maps and table. When developing information for land management plans at Gettysburg National Battlefield, a team of researchers working for the National Park Service tore a page from military training manuals, and appropriately applied basic military field strategy in evaluating the battlefield. KOCO A is an acronym derived from: K) Key Terrain, O) Obstacles, C) Cover and Concealment, O) Observation Points, and A) Avenues of Approach. The approach was presented in a workshop by the American Battlefield Protection Program and Virginia Department of Historic Resources in Fredericksburg in December 2006. Known and projected campsites, batteries, roads, channels, and fields of fire have been entered in ArcView feature classes available for research on this documentation. By combining georeferenced historic maps with

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descriptions of ordnance in the Official Records, and firing tables from artillery manuals, firing fans for the Civil War guns have been projected in this coverage. With the advantages of a GIS data base, this effort makes spatial relations of historical information and archaeological finds evident immediately as they accumulate. Key terrain polygons are labeled with numbers corresponding to table entries in the first table. Avenues of approach polylines are labeled in the map with the name of the feature. This utility has, and should be in the future, an aid to establishing the location and significance of properties associated with the campaign for control of navigation on the Potomac River in the American Civil War.

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