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"On the second of June the British 74-gun ship Royal Oak, Rear-Admiral Pulteney Malcolm, Captain Edward Dix, accompanied by three frigates, three sloops, two bomb-vessels, five ships armed en flûte, and three transports having on board a body of troops under Major-General Ross, sailed from Verdon road at the mouth of the Gironde. On the twenty-fourth of July the squadron arrived at Bermuda, and there joined me, in the 80-gun ship Tonnant. On the second of August, having received on board the Tonnant Major-General Ross and his staff, I sailed, in company with the 36-gun frigate Euryalus, Captain Charles Napier, for Chesapeake Bay; and on the fourteenth of August arrived, and joined the Albion, under my command, off the mouth of the Potomac. On the next day Major-General Ross, accompanied by me, went on shore to reconnoitre.

My knowledge of the country, as well as the plan adopted to prevent surprise, enabled us to penetrate further than would otherwise have been prudent. In my frequent walks through the country he invariably moved forward between two parties of marines, occupying in open order the woods by the roadside. Each marine carried a bugle, to be used as a signal, in case of casual separation, or the appearance of an enemy. It was during the excursion with General Ross, that I suggested the facility of an attack upon the City of Washington; and General Ross determined, as soon as the troops should arrive from Bermuda, to make the attempt.

On the seventeenth of August, Rear-Admiral Malcolm arrived with the troops, and joined me off the mouth of the Potomac; and the whole proceeded to the Patuxent, situated about twenty miles further up the bay. In the meantime Captain James Alexander Gordon, of the 38-gun frigate Seshorse, with

some vessels of the squadron, had been detached up the Potomac, to bombard Fort Washington, situated on the left bank of that river, about fourteen miles below the federal city; and Captain Sir Peter Parker, with the 38-gun frigate Menelaus, had been sent up the Chesapeake, above Baltimore, to create a diversion in that quarter. The direct route to Washington, from the mouth of the Potomac, was up that river, about fifty miles to Port Tobacco; thence, overland by the village of Piscataway, thirty-two miles, to the lower bridge across the eastern branch of the Potomac; but, as no doubt could be entertained that this bridge, which was half a mile long, and had a draw at the west end, would be defended as well by a body of troops, as by a heavy sloop-of-war and an armed schooner, known to be in the river, a preference was given to the route up the Patuxent, and by Bladensburg; where the eastern branch, in case of the bridge at that spot being destroyed, could be easily forded.

Commodore Barney's gun-boats were still lying in the Patuxent. An immediate attempt against this flotilla offered two advantages; one, in its capture or destruction; the other, as a pretext for ascending the Patuxent, with the troops destined for the attack of the federal city. Part of the ships, having advanced as high up the river as the depth of the water would allow, disembarked the troops, about four thousand in number, on the 19th and 20th of August, at Benedict, a small town about fifty miles southeast of Washington. On the 20th, in the evening, Admiral Cockburn, taking with him the armed boats and tenders of the fleet, having on board the marines under Major Robyns, and the marine-artillery under Captain James H. Harrison, proceeded up the river, to attack Commodore Barney's flotilla; and to supply with provisions, and, if necessary, afford protection to the army as it ascended the right bank. The boats and tenders were separated into three divisions. The first division was commanded by Captains Thomas Bell Sullivan

and William Stanhope Badcock, the second, by Captains Rowland Money and James Somervell, and the third, by Captain Robert Ramsay; and the whole was under the superintendence and immediate management of Captain John Wainwright, of the Tonnant. The frigates Severn and Hebrus, Captains Joseph Nourse and Edmund Palmer, accompanied by the brig-sloop Nerby, Captain Vincent Newton, had been also directed to follow the boats up the river as far as might be practicable.

On opening the reach about Pig Point, I, who had just before been joined by Captains Nourse and Palmer with the boats of their two frigates, which they could get no higher than Benedict, discovered Commodore Barney's broad pennant in the headmost vessel, a large sloop, and the remainder of the flotilla extending in a long line astern of her. The British boats now advanced as rapidly as possible, but on nearing the flotilla, the sloop bearing the broad pennant was observed to be on fire, and soon afterwards blew up; as did fifteen out of the sixteen remaining gun-boats."

By August twenty-fourth, the British forces under Ross and Cockburn had moved up the Patuxent, had forced Barney to burn his flotilla, and had advanced toward the capital. On the afternoon of that day they defeated the Americans under General Winder and Commodore Barney at Bladensburg, and in the evening entered Washington. Twenty-four hours later, having burnt the Capitol, the Executive Mansion, and the department buildings, they withdrew from the city and returned to the Patuxent. On the twenty-fourth soon after the Americans were defeated at Bladensburg, President Madison, Secretary of the Navy Jones, and several other leading officials of the government fled up the Potomac and for several days remained in hiding.

While Jones was seeking his safety in the countryside, Rodgers, who was temporarily left without orders, found employment in Baltimore, where he arrived on the twenty-fifth. The Baltimoreans were panic stricken, believing that their city was doomed to suffer the fate that had befallen Washington. The opportune arrival of the commodore incited their courage, and the energetic measures of defense that he at once took restored their confidence. Rodgers united his command with Porter's and with that of a small flotilla on the Patapsco, and organized the combined forces, consisting of upwards of a thousand sailors and marines, into a brigade, which he divided into two regiments, placing one under Commodore Porter and the other under Commodore O. H. Perry (the latter being stationed at Baltimore to superintend the construction of the frigate "Java"). He also conferred with General Winder and planned to cooperate with him in defending the city. The commodore's work at Baltimore was his first experience in soldiering. Its comical aspect did not escape him. "If you were to see what a figure I cut with spurs on," he wrote to Mrs. Rodgers, "accompanied by my aides

and gig-men on horseback, you'd split your sides a laughing."

Soon after the return of the secretary of the navy to Washington, the enemy gave the capital a second scare, this time approaching it by way of the Potomac. On August twenty-seventh, a small British squadron, consisting of two frigates and five smaller vessels, under the command of Captain James A. Gordon, reached Fort Washington, a defense twelve miles below the capital on the Potomac. The officer in command of the fort abandoned it without making any resistance, and Gordon proceeded to Alexandria (seven miles from the seat of government), which place, together with twenty-one vessels and a large quantity of stores, fell into his hands on August twenty-ninth. Gordon remained here three days loading his ships with the captured booty. On receiving orders to join his admiral, he set sail down the river, but was detained by adverse winds near Fort Washington.

Gordon's movements greatly alarmed the secretary of the navy, and caused him to take measures for the defense of the capital, fearing that the enemy again had designs on it. On August twenty-ninth, he ordered Rodgers to proceed to Bladensburg from Baltimore with six hundred fifty picked seamen and marines. Already, on the day previous, the commodore had ordered Porter to march to Washington with one hundred seamen, "more with a view to guard the executive than any thing else." Porter arrived at the capital on the thirtieth; and Rodgers, accompanied by Perry, at Bladensburg on the next day. On the afternoon of the thirty-first, the commodore and the secretary of the navy conferred together and agreed on a plan for harassing the retreating enemy. Each of the three commodores was assigned special duties. Porter was to dispute Gordon's

passage by means of some batteries which he was ordered to erect a few miles below Mount Vernon, on the Virginia side of the Potomac, at a place called White House; Perry was to operate against the enemy from Indian Head, Maryland, some ten miles below White House; and Rodgers was to annoy the retreating fleet in the rear with fire-ships.

It should be said by way of explanation that fire-ships were made by loading old hulls with inflammables, and were designed to set fire to vessels by direct contact with them. Rodgers improvised his means of destruction at the Washington navy-yard. On the morning of September third he proceeded down the Potomac in his gig, closely followed by his miniature fleet consisting of three fire-ships and four barges. The latter were manned by about sixty seamen, armed with muskets. The principal officers accompanying the expedition were Lieutenants Newcomb and Forrest, Sailing-master Ramage, and Master's Mate Stockton. At Alexandria, finding no colors displayed, with the exception of a Swedish ensign on board a schooner, Rodgers ordered the American flag to be hoisted. When within half a mile of the enemy, who was discovered at anchor near Fort Washington, the fire-ships were ignited and set adrift. They floated down stream towards the British fleet. But owing to the failure of the wind and the prompt efforts of the enemy's rowboats, which met the fire-ships and towed them away from the fleet, they did no damage. Several of the rowboats pursued Rodgers's barges and forced them to retreat up the Potomac. On reaching Alexandria, the commodore took possession of the town, and made preparations for its defense by mounting some cannon on the wharf and by organizing a company composed of his sailors and a detachment of Virginia militia. As Gordon had left behind him a considerable quantity of stores ready to be shipped, it was feared that he might return

to the city.

On the fourth, Rodgers ordered Lieutenant Newcomb to proceed down the river with a flotilla, consisting of four barges and a lighter, and attack a bomb-ship of the enemy that lay near Fort Washington. On approaching the bomb-ship, Newcomb discovered that a British frigate was anchored close by, and he was compelled to abandon the expedition. After reconnoitering the British vessels for some time, he took a position on the Maryland side of the river, hauled the barges on shore, anchored the lighter, and stationed the bargemen on a high cliff. At 11 p.m., he was attacked by several of the enemy's boats, and after engaging them for about twenty minutes forced them to retire. On the morning of the fifth the barges again approached the British fleet, which was then retreating down the river, and set adrift another fire-ship; but, as on the previous occasion, the enemy was not harmed and his boats forced the barges to retreat. This incident ended the commodore's operations on the Potomac.

Porter's forces comprised a detachment of sailors and marines and some volunteer companies of militia. For several days his batteries exchanged shots with some of the vessels of the enemy that were in advance of the main fleet. On September fifth, when Gordon, taking advantage of a favorable wind, ran past White House, Porter engaged the enemy for more than an hour before the heavy guns of the two British frigates compelled him to abandon his batteries. Porter lost twenty-nine men, killed or wounded; the loss of Gordon was probably about the same. On the evening of the fifth, Commodore Perry at Indian Head engaged the British ships for an hour, at the end of which time he retired, having one man wounded. The total loss of the enemy during his movement down the Potomac was seven

killed and thirty-five wounded.

While these events were taking place on the Potomac, the fleet under Cochrane was preparing to move up the Chesapeake and attack Baltimore. On September third, Secretary Jones, becoming anxious for the safety of that city, ordered Rodgers to return to it at once, since his immediate presence there was necessary to forward the preparations for its defense and animate its citizens, "who," Jones wrote, "rely with perfect confidence upon the efficiency of your force and upon your individual influence, skill, and industry." A division of the commodore's command left straightway for the Patapsco, and it was soon followed by the remaining divisions and by the detachments of Porter and Perry. The following note taken from the National Intelligencer describes the departure of Porter and his men from the capital on the evening of September sixth: "Fourteen wagons-full of our noble seamen, the first surmounted with the well-known standard of 'Free Trade and Sailors' Rights,' the whole preceded by the Hero of Valparaiso and cheered by their boatswain's whistle, passed through this city on their way to Baltimore Tuesday evening."

On Rodgers's arrival at Baltimore he again assumed command of the seamen and marines that were assembled for the defense of the city, cooperating with General Samuel Smith, the commander of the militia, Mayor George Armistead, the commander of Fort Mchenry, and the Baltimore Committee of Vigilance and Safety. Through the commodore's efforts the channel of the Patapsco on both sides of Fort Mchenry was obstructed by the sinking of old hulks. For a week before the arrival of the British he worked indefatigably, building breastworks, planting batteries,

and drilling seamen. He spent much time on horseback visiting his widely separated commands. His aides were Master's Mate R.F. Stockton, who later became distinguished for his operations on the California coast in the war with Mexico, and a Mr. Allen, a brother of Captain W. H. Allen who was killed in the action between the "Argus" and "Pelican"; and his principal officers were Master-commandant Robert T. Spence, Lieutenants Thomas Gamble, Solomon Rutter, Henry S. Newcomb, Solomon Frazier, and Joseph L. Kuhn (of the marines), and Sailing-masters Webster and Rodman. Porter returned to New York soon after his arrival in Baltimore, and Perry owing to illness did not receive a command.

Rodgers's sailors, though fearless, and eager for a fight, were rather awkward on their land-legs. Each day they were put through a series of military maneuvers, an exercise whose humorous incidents they greatly enjoyed. An observer of one of their drills relates that the commanding officer had much difficulty in preventing his ranks from crinkling into half-moons. In conformity with sea practice, the sailors would reply audibly to their orders. "Attention!" the officer would exclaim. "Aye, aye, sir," came from every man. That the order "to charge" might be understood by his sailors, the officer explained that it was the same as "to board." "Here they were at home. Their eyes glistened. Every fellow gathered up his sinews to his utmost strength and waited with profound silence for the word. It was given, and on they came with fearful impetuosity, every one striving to get foremost. It happened that a horse and cart was in the way. Several of the spectators had retreated behind it. But the sailors came jumping over it like squirrels, and dashing among them, made them fly off at full speed to the great delight of the seamen and amidst peals of laughter from all that were looking on. Never, perhaps, since time began was there a

more efficient body of men than the crew, as seamen. Nor did it appear possible that as sailors they could be better drilled to the business of a ship. But as soldiers, except in courage that knew no fear and a zeal that anticipated no check, they were the queerest and most odd set of fellows that ever were collected together."

Baltimore is most accessible from the Chesapeake by way of either Patapsco Neck or the Patapsco River. Patapsco Neck is a narrow body of land, about fifteen miles long, lying between the Patapsco and Back Rivers. The Patapsco River lies to the southward of the neck, and extends from the city upward the bay in an east-southeasterly direction. The upper part of the river consists of a northern and a southern arm, called, respectively, the Basin and the Ferry Branch. They unite about two miles and a half from the center of the city. On the apex of land formed by their confluence is situated Fort Mcllenry, the chief defense of the harbor. In September, 1814, the fort was occupied by about one thousand men, under the command of Major George Armistead, of the United States Artillery. The city of Baltimore lay at the head of the Basin. The principal land defenses, consisting of intrenchments, redoubts, and batteries, were hastily constructed on the hills about a mile to the eastward of the city, and were designed to stop the enemy advancing by way of Patapsco Neck.

The major part of Rodgers's force was stationed on the Patapsco. A fleet of twelve small naval craft, manned by about three hundred sixty men and commanded by Lieutenant Rutter, guarded the entrance to the Basin. East of Fort Mcllenry, on the opposite side of the Basin, at a place called the Lazaretto, there was a battery in charge of Lieutenant Frazier.

The water battery of the fort was commanded by Sailing-master Rodman. A mile to the rear of the fort, at the head of the Ferry Branch, were Forts Covington and Babcock, which formed the second line of defense for the harbor. They were commanded, respectively, by Lieutenant Newcomb and Sailing-master Webster. The minor part of Rodgers's force, consisting of about two hundred seamen and marines, manned several batteries on Hampstead or Loudenslager's Hill, to the eastward of the city. It was here that Rodgers had his headquarters. The principal battery, known as Rodgers's Bastion, was in charge of Lieutenant Gamble. Its site is now an historic spot in Patterson Park, Baltimore. The old earthworks are still well preserved, and in recent years they have been given a warlike appearance by mounting on them some ancient cannon.

On September eleventh, the British fleet arrived at the mouth of the Patapsco; and on the morning of the twelfth its commander, Admiral Cochrane, having planned to attack the city simultaneously by land and water, disembarked some four thousand men, under General Ross, at North Point on Patapsco Neck, about fourteen miles from Baltimore. Having advanced about five miles, Ross encountered a division of the American army, numbering some thirty-two hundred men and commanded by General Stricker. A spirited action now took place, which resulted in the defeat of the Americans, though they suffered less than the British. General Ross was killed. His successor, Colonel Arthur Brooke, camped for the night on the battlefield, and on the morning of the thirteenth resumed the march toward Baltimore. Owing to the obstructions placed in the way of the British army by the retreating Americans, it did not come in sight of the city until evening. Forcibly impressed by the formidable defenses that met his view, Brooke decided not to advance until he re-

ceived news from the fleet, which was to support him.

Soon after landing the troops on the morning of the twelfth, Admiral Cochrane sailed up the Patapsco River. At daybreak of the thirteenth, five bomb-ships and a rocket-ship began to bombard Fort MclHenry, having approached about two miles from the fort, and being supported by several frigates and sloops placed in their rear. Armistead and Frazier immediately opened fire upon the enemy; but, finding that their cannon balls fell short, soon ceased firing. In the afternoon four of the bomb-ships came within range, and the Americans resumed their fire and forced them to retire, slightly injuring two of the vessels. All day and all night Cochrane kept up an almost incessant bombardment. He was unable, however, to do much damage to the fort, which lost only twenty-eight men.

At 1 a.m. on the fourteenth the British sent twenty armed boats up the Ferry Branch. As the night was exceedingly dark, about half of them lost their way and had to return. The rest passed by Fort MclHenry without being seen. On nearing the head of the branch, their advance was arrested by Rodgers's sailors at Forts Covington and Babcock. When the enemy's headmost vessel began firing, Lieutenant Newcomb, the commander of Fort Covington, returned the fire, and was soon joined by Fort Babcock. "The darkness prevented our distinguishing his force," Newcomb wrote in his official report of the engagement. (see next page for entire quote)

"The darkness prevented our distinguishing his forces," Newcomb wrote in his official report of the engagement. "One bomb-vessel was this side the Point, a schooner about half-way between her and Fort Covington, and the barges (number unknown, throwing twelve, eighteen and twenty-four pound shot) abreast of us. Our fire was directed at the head-most. A few broadsides checked their advance, when they concentrated nearly abreast of us and continued their attack on the batteries. The decided superiority of our fire compelled them to retreat, when they were met by a fire from Fort MclHenry, which, however, from the darkness of the night was soon discontinued."

(Lieutenant Newcomb, commander of Fort
Covington)

One of the enemy's barges was sunk, and several men were killed.

That same morning, the British vessels, having made no impression upon Fort Mchenry and the supporting batteries, discontinued the bombardment, weighed anchor, and stood down the river. On the previous night Cochrane had communicated to Brooke the failure of the fleet and the impossibility of its aiding the army, and the two commanders decided that under these circumstances an attack on the land defenses was not feasible. Brooke therefore returned to North Point with his troops and embarked them on board the vessels of the fleet. In accounting for the failure of his expedition, Cochrane laid much stress upon the barrier of vessels sunk by Rodgers at the mouth of the Basin, saying that, had it not been for these obstructions, he would not have let go an anchor until he had attempted to pass Fort Mchenry and enter the harbor.

During the advance of the enemy, Rodgers, it would seem, remained at Hampstead Hill in close proximity to his batteries there. By means of his aides he communicated with his detachments on the Patapsco. For a time he practically directed the first regiment of Maryland militia, which was formed in column in the rear of his batteries on the hill; and a battalion of Pennsylvania riflemen, under Major Randall, which he ordered on the night of the thirteenth to march to the Lazaretto and dislodge a party of the enemy. Stockton, who accompanied the battalion, reported that the major and his men displayed great zeal and gallantry in the performance of their duties. The commodore in his official letter to the secretary of the navy describing his work at Baltimore wrote in complimentary terms of all his commanding officers, praising especially Newcomb, Webster, Frazier, Rutter, Rodman, and Stockton. He said that Commodore Perry, although indisposed and worn with fatigue, came to the defenses at Hampstead Hill when the British were approaching and offered

to render every assistance in his power.

Rodgers's services to Baltimore during those anxious days when the city was menaced with destruction were long held in grateful remembrance by her citizens, some of whom were wont to ascribe the preservation of their lives and homes largely to his efforts. More than once General Samuel Smith expressed his appreciation of the important services rendered by the commodore and his seamen. In his general orders to his army, Smith said,

(General Samuel Smith in his general orders):

"It is with peculiar satisfaction that the commanding general seizes this opportunity of acknowledging the very great assistance he has received from the counsel and active services of Commodore Rodgers. His exertions and those of his brave officers and seamen have contributed in a very eminent degree to the safety of the city and should be remembered with lively emotions by every citizen."

After the close of the war, the council of Baltimore tendered the commodore a vote of thanks. Editor Hezekiah Niles presented him with a complete set of Niles's Weekly Register, "fancifully bound in the very best and most substantial manner." The leading citizens of Baltimore expressed their appreciation of the services of their fellow Marylander by giving him a handsome silver service of plate, consisting of fifty-two pieces and costing four thousand dollars. The service was made in Philadelphia and was "splendidly ornamented with borderings and embossed figures after the manner of the Egyptian and Grecian sculpturings." Each piece bore the inscription, "Presented by the citizens of Baltimore to Com. Rodgers in testimony of their high sense of the important aid afforded by him in the defense of Baltimore on the 12th and 13th of September, 1814." It was presented to him on the third anniversary of the bombardment of Fort Mclenry and the battle of North Point. A brigade paraded on Hampstead Hill, and a dinner, attended by Rodgers and Armistead, was given at the fort. The commodore wrote Ex-secretary of the Navy Robert Smith, who was chairman of the committee charged with the purchase of the gift, a modest and grateful letter of acknowledgement, from which the following paragraphs have been extracted:

"The elegant service of plate with which the citizens of Baltimore have been pleased through their committees this day to authorize you to present to me in testimony of the estimation with which their kindness has led them to view my feeble services in the defense of their city on the 12th and 13th of September, 1814, in repelling the combined attack of a powerful British fleet and formidable British army, is flattering to my feelings beyond my powers of language to express.

"That the brave officers, seamen, and marines whom I had the honor to command on that occasion did every thing in their power for the defense of your city which the peculiar nature of the service and their limited means would allow, is most true; and that their hearty cooperation and best feelings were united in its cause to those of your own gallant militia is equally certain. But, in receiving so flattering a testimonial of individual respect, I am constrained, by a sense of justice and a recollection of the prompt and judicious preparations of Major-General Smith, on whom the chief command devolved, and of the gallant conduct of the Baltimore militia forming the brigade of General Stricker which met the enemy in advance, added to the laudable zeal and determined perseverance of all others with whom I had the good fortune to be associated, to acknowledge that I ought to attribute this particular mark of the favor of the citizens of Baltimore rather to that patriotism and those general feelings for which they have always been conspicuous than to any positive claim which the occasion gives me to so distinguished a token of their kindness."

Soon after the British retreated from Baltimore, Rodgers, acting under the orders of General Smith, assumed command of Fort Mifflin, as Major Armstrong was too sick to remain longer at his post. The commodore was in charge of the fort for only a few days----long enough, however, to perform one interesting duty, the ordering of a salute to be fired in honor of Commodore Macdonough's victory on Lake Champlain. On September nineteenth, Secretary Jones, fearing that the British would next move on Philadelphia, directed Rodgers to return at once with his seamen and marines to the Delaware. On the next day he collected his men and began his march northward. He arrived at Newcastle on the twenty-third, after an absence from his station of one month.

During the rest of the fall and early winter the commodore was employed in equipping the "Guerrière" and superintending the work of the Delaware flotilla. In December he purchased the brig "Prometheus," which was to serve as a tender to his ship. In January, 1815, he relinquished the command of the flotilla, and visited his family at Havre de Grace, expecting soon to go to sea. The ice in the Delaware, however, delayed his sailing. Early in February news of the signing of the treaty of Ghent arrived in the United States, and the war was at an end. Already the secretary of the navy had the commodore in mind for an important administrative office in Washington, but that is another story and belongs to the succeeding chapter.