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On Saturday, August the 20th, about 1 o'clock P.M., I received by express letter No. 1, directing me to move down with my whole force for Washington.

By this morning's regimental reports, the force of my brigade, then in camp, appeared as follows:

The first regiment, under Lieutenant-colonel Ragan, officers included, 550; second regiment, under Lieutenant-colonel Shutz, officers also included, fit for duty, 803.

I immediately issued orders for wagons to be procured, provisions served out, tents struck, and every thing prepared to march that evening. But the difficulty of obtaining wagons to transport tents and camp equipage prevented my moving more than that part of the brigade this evening. The residue followed on the morning of the 21st. The advance party encamped at the Stag tavern; the rear three miles short of it, on the evening of the 21st.

About 10 o'clock P.M. I received from General Winder, by express, letter No. 2, dated the 21st, directing me to halt until further orders. August 22d, at 10 o'clock A.M., received from General Winder letter No. 3, dated at the Wood Yard the 21st, 10 o'clock P.M., directing me to advance with all speed to Bladensburg. In consequence thereof, the line of march was taken up immediately, and at 7 o'clock P.M. we arrived at Bladensburg. The first regiment encamped on the hill southeast, the second on the northwest of the town; and on Tuesday morning, the 23d, joined the first regiment on Lowndes' Hill, near Bladensburg. About 10 o'clock A.M. received from General Winder letter No. 4, dated at Headquarters, Battalion Old Fields, August 22d, containing orders to march my brigade (with the troops under Colonel Sterett, if they had joined me) slowly toward Marlborough, and take a position on the road not far from that place, and that he would join me some time that day.

The troops under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Sterett had not joined me, nor was I certain at that time they would arrive. The brigade was instantly put in motion, and the march commenced toward Marlborough, with a view of complying with General Winder's orders. I immediately dispatched my aid-de-camp, Major Woodyear, to General Winder, to communicate all the information which he might require as to my force; to receive particular orders as to the position I should take in the vicinity of Marlborough; and to obtain a knowledge of the country, and of the situation of the enemy. After proceeding about one mile on the road to Marlborough, I met Captain Moses Tabbs riding express to inform me that the enemy, with their whole force, had left Marlborough, and were on their march toward me, distant about six miles. This information made me determine to avail myself of the high grounds I occupied in the morning, to which I immediately returned, and made the necessary preparations to receive the enemy. I directed Captain Tabbs to return and reconnoitre the enemy, and give me every information. About 4 o'clock P.M. he returned, and informed me that the enemy, on leaving Marlborough, had taken a different route. Soon after, my aid-de-camp, Major Woodyear, returned from General Winder, and informed me that the intelligence I had received of the movement of the enemy were in part incorrect, and that General Winder wished me to encamp on the direct road from Bladensburg to Marlborough, at about seven miles distant from the latter place. The assistant adjutant-general, Major Hite, accompanied Major Woodyear.

By letter No. 4 I was first informed that Lieutenant-colonel Sterett's detachment, consisting of the fifth regiment, about five hundred strong; Major Pinkney's rifle battalion, about one hundred and fifty; and Captains Myer's and Magruder's companies of artillery, about one hundred and fifty, were attached to my command. These troops had not joined me, but were on their march. I dispatched an express with this letter to Lieutenant-colonel Sterett as soon as received, requesting him to move on with all possible expedition.

About sunset on the 23d he arrived with his command, and encamped near my brigade. The fatigued situation of his troops induced me to halt for the night on the hill near Bladensburg, with the intention of moving toward Marlborough at reveille on the 24th. At about 8 o'clock P.M., a militia captain, who resided near Bladensburg, came into camp, attended by one of my sentinels, and informed me he was from General Winder's camp at the Battalion Old Fields; that General Winder was not in camp when he left it, and that it was apprehended he had been taken prisoner, as he had gone out to reconnoitre the enemy and had not returned; that a detachment from the army had skirmished that day with the British; and that Brigadier-general Smith, of the District of Columbia, had taken command of the army, and would certainly join me in the course of the night. After 11 o'clock P.M., the Secretary of State, Colonel Monroe, with several gentlemen, came to my tent; and, as well as I can recollect, Colonel Monroe observed that he was from Washington; that he had been at, or heard from the camp of General Winder; that there was an alarming silence with respect to General Winder, who had gone out to reconnoitre the enemy and had not been heard of, and it was feared he was taken; that General Smith had, by persuasion, taken the command, and that they would move toward and join me before morning, he expected, from the Battalion Old Fields, and advised vigilance to prevent surprise. Soon after the departure of Colonel Monroe, the advance pickets, on the road by which we expected the enemy, and which was the direct one from Marlborough, fired, and in a few moments my whole command were under arms and prepared for action. The cavalry, under Colonel Tilghman, who had come into town a little after dark for refreshments, were ordered down the Marlborough road, except Captain Herbert, with his troop, who was directed to push down the road toward the Battalion Old Fields until he should fall in with General Winder's army, which I was confident would join me that night.

The troops were under arms until after 2 o'clock A.M. of the 24th, when, being advised by the cavalry that the enemy were not near, I ordered them to retire to their tents, but to be ready to

turn out at a moment's warning; and strong picket guards were placed on the road in every direction. Supposing my right and rear covered by General Winder's force, I felt no apprehensions of surprise there, and no expectation that the enemy, without first beating General Winder, could approach me either by the Battalion or river road. But about half after 2 o'clock A.M., Major Bates, Assistant Adjutant-general of Militia, came to me from Washington with a message from General Winder informing me that General Winder had retreated from Battalion Old Fields into the City of Washington across the bridge, which he had ordered to be burned; and that the general expected I would resist the enemy as long as possible should he move against me in that direction. Thus was my expectation of security from the Battalion and river roads cut off, my right flank and rear uncovered, and liable to be attacked and turned, without the possibility of securing it in the position I then lay.

I instantly sent for Lieutenant-colonel Sterett of the 5th, Major Pinkney of the rifle corps, and Lieutenant-colonel Ragan, Lieutenant-colonel Shutz being present, officers in whom I placed the highest confidence, and stated to them the information and orders I had just received from General Winder, and our situation with respect to the enemy. They were unanimous in opinion that our situation on that hill could not be defended with the force then under my command, worn down by hunger and fatigue as they were, and that it was indispensably necessary for the security of the army that we should immediately retire across the bridge of Bladensburg, and take a position on the road between Bladensburg and the city which we could defend. Colonel Tilghman, of the cavalry, observed he thought we had no time to lose. In this opinion I perfectly coincided. Orders were instantly given to strike tents and prepare to march, and in about thirty minutes, without noise or confusion, the whole were in motion, and about half past three o'clock in the morning passed the bridge at Bladensburg leading to the City of Washington. Securing our rear from surprise, we halted in the road until the approach of day,

with a view of finding some place where water could be had, in order that the men might cook their provisions and refresh themselves for a few moments. The provisions consisted of salt beef of inferior quality, the flour old and musty. At daylight I moved on to the foot of a hill near a brick-yard, and there ordered the troops to refresh themselves. This was about one and a half miles from Bladensburg.

Early in the morning, I had dispatched Major Woodyear to Washington to inform General Winder of my movements and situation, of the exhausted state of the troops, and the impracticability of their meeting the enemy, in their present fatigued state, with any prospect of success, unless re-enforced. I rode to the top of the hill to examine the country. On my descending it again, a note was presented to me by an express from General Winder, dated at Washington (written, I presume, without a knowledge of my movements), directing me to oppose the enemy as long as I could should he attempt a passage by the way of Bladensburg. This note I have mislaid. I called a council of war, consisting of Lieutenant-colonel Sterett, Lieutenant-colonel Ragan, and Major Pinkney. I had the letter before them. Colonel Sterett observed that he marched from Baltimore with a determination to defend the city; that his men, the day before, by a forced march from the Buck tavern, or Snowden's, reached Bladensburg without halting to cook; that they had been under arms nearly the whole of the night, without any sleep or food; that Major Pinkney's riflemen, and the two companies of artillery, were in the same situation; and that they were so completely worn down and exhausted that he should consider it a sacrifice of both officers and men to seek the enemy at any considerable distance from General Winder's force, as no good could result therefrom. Major Pinkney and Colonel Ragan expressed themselves to the same effect, and, with Colonel Sterett, urged the propriety of moving farther on the road toward the city, with a view of taking a stand on some more favorable ground for defence, with a better prospect of being joined

by the forces under General Winder, and expressed their willingness to give their opinions in writing. I could not but admit the correctness of their views, and ordered the wagons to move on slowly toward the city, intending to follow on with the troops.

At this moment Major Woodyear returned from Washington, with positive orders from General Winder to give the enemy battle at Bladensburg, should he move that way, and that he would join me if necessary.

I immediately ordered the troops to retrace their steps to Bladensburg, determined to maintain, if possible, the ground at all hazards.

On arriving in the orchard near the mill, I directed the artillery to post themselves behind a small breastwork of dirt that lately had been thrown up by Colonel Wadsworth. This battery commanded the pass into Bladensburg and the bridge southwesterly of the town. Our artillery consisted of six six-pounders; Major Pinkney's battalion of riflemen on their right, under cover of the town and bushes, also commanding the pass by the bridge; two companies from Lieutenant-colonel Shutz's regiment, under the command of Captains Ducker and Gorsuch, acting as riflemen, although principally armed with muskets, on the left of the artillery, near, and protected by, the barn, intended to defend the road leading by the mill, on the left of the battery, into the field; Colonel Sterett's regiment was halted in the orchard, on the right and in the rear, and the regiments of Colonels Ragan and Shutz were also halted in the orchard, in the rear and on the left flank, near the creek. My intentions were that they should remain here to refresh themselves as long as possible, and, as soon as the enemy appeared, to form Colonel Sterett's regiment (in whom I placed great confidence) on the right, their left resting on and supporting the right of Major Pinkney's riflemen, in view of the bridge and fronting the road, along which ran a fence, and act as occasion should require. Colonels Ragan's and Shutz's

regiments were to be drawn up in echelon, their right resting on the left of Captains Ducker's and Gorsuch's rifle companies, in order to prevent the enemy from pressing and turning our left, hoping that General Winder would join me before the battle would commence, and occupy the ground in my rear as a second line. About 11 o'clock A.M. I was informed by a dragoon from Lieutenant-colonel Beall that he was on the road from Annapolis to Bladensburg, with about eight hundred men, distant from me about five miles, and wished to know the distance and situation of the enemy. I directed the dragoon to return and inform him that I had that moment received information that the British, with their whole force, were approaching Bladensburg by the river road, and that they were only three and a half miles distant, and advised the colonel to file off to his right and cross above Bladensburg, to fall into an old road which I understood led to our left toward Washington, and take a position on the high grounds north and northwest of Bladensburg, which would completely protect my left by preventing the enemy from outflanking us that way, and force their main body across the bridge, in the face of my artillery and riflemen on the main road, and expose them to the fire of the 5th regiment under Colonel Sterett, who would be protected by the fence.

This advice it appeared Colonel Beall only took in part, I presume from an anxious wish to place himself between the enemy and the city. He sent his baggage off to the right, and with his troops passed the bridge at Bladensburg about thirty minutes before the enemy appeared on Mr. Lowndes' hill, and took his station on the hill, as I was informed, near the brick-kiln where we halted in the morning, about one and a half miles in my rear, and on the left of the road leading to the city. About meridian the enemy could clearly be seen making toward us by the river road.

While I was giving some directions to the artillery, I found Lieutenant-colonels Ragan's and Shutz's regiments had been moved

from the place where I had stationed them, and marched out of the orchard up the hill, and formed in order of battle about two hundred and fifty yards above the orchard, and upward of five hundred yards in the rear of the artillery and riflemen. Thus uncovered by the trees of the orchard, their situation and numbers were clearly seen by the enemy from Lowndes' Hill, and the flanks of the artillery and riflemen unprotected, and laid liable to be turned, our main body being placed too far off to render them any aid. On riding up the hill to know who had ordered this movement, I was informed that General Winder was on the ground. At this time I met with Brigadier-general Smith, of the District of Columbia, and some conversation took place between us respecting the order of battle and seniority; the particulars I do not recollect. I immediately rode to the mill, where I understood General Winder was, and found him reconnoitring the position of the enemy. While in conversation with him, the 5th regiment was taken out of the orchard, marched up the hill, and stationed on the left of Colonel Shutz's regiment, that of Colonel Ragan being on the right, its right resting on the main road; but, as I before observed, the whole at so great a distance from the artillery and riflemen that they had to contend with the whole British force, and so much exposed that it has been a cause of astonishment they preserved their ground so long, and ultimately succeeded in retreating. Whose plan this was I know not; it was not mine, nor did it meet with my approbation; but, finding a superior officer on the ground, I concluded he had ordered it, consequently did not interfere. General Winder asked me where I meant to take my station. I answered, about the centre of my brigade. He said he would take his on the left of the 5th regiment. General Winder was extremely active in giving directions and encouraging the men. I took my station in the centre of Colonels Ragan's and Shutz's regiments, but occasionally rode along the line, encouraging the men, and giving orders to the officers. Major Woodyear I directed to keep with the left of Colonel Shutz's regiment, to cheer up the men and assist the officers. Major Randall rode with me. Soon after, the action commenced by the artillery and riflemen at the battery. The fire of the artillery had great effect, and evidently produced

.confusion in the ranks of the enemy, who took shelter behind a warehouse, from whence they fired rockets; but a few well-directed shots drove them from this position. A flanking party, concealed by the banks and bushes, pushed up the river to turn our left, while a strong force attempted the bridge; but the incessant and well-directed fire from our artillery and riflemen at the battery occasioned evident confusion among their ranks, so much so that their officers could be seen actively engaged preventing their retreating, and pushing them on to the bridge; and here I think the enemy suffered considerably. At length they succeeded in passing the bridge in small parties at full speed, which formed after crossing. I had ordered forty horsemen with axes to cut away this bridge before the near approach of the enemy, and saw them with their axes. Why this order was not executed I never could learn. It is certain the enemy could have forded the stream above; but I considered it would, in some degree, impede their progress, and give our artillery and riflemen more time and opportunity to act with effect against them.

The artillery, under the command of Captains Myer and Magruder, and the riflemen, the whole under the command of Major Pinkney, behaved in the most gallant manner (this gallant officer in the course of the action was severely wounded), but the superior force of the enemy, and the rapidity with which he moved compelled them to retire; but one of the pieces was lost, and this was rendered harmless before it was abandoned.

The enemy took every advantage of the cover afforded them by the trees of the orchard, and their light troops from thence kept up a galling fire upon our line. On this party, when advanced nearer, the 5th regiment, under Colonel Sterett, opened a steady and well-directed fire, which was followed by the fire from the right, and ultimately from our centre, when the firing on both sides became general. After a few rounds, the troops on the right began

to break. I rode along the line, and gave orders to the officers to cut down those who attempted to fly, and suffer no man to leave the lines. On arriving at the left of the centre regiment, I found Lieutenant-colonel Shutz's men giving way, and that brave officer, with Major Kemp, aided by my aid-de-camp, Major Wood-year, exerting themselves in rallying and forming them again. Captain Gallaway's company and part of Captains Shower's and Randall's companies were rallied and formed again, and behaved gallantly. The rest of Colonels Shutz's and Ragan's regiments fled in disorder, notwithstanding the extraordinary exertions of their officers to prevent it. On the left I soon after discovered a part of the 5th regiment giving way, and that excellent officer, Lieutenant-colonel Sterett, with those under him, most actively engaged forming them again. Soon after the retreat became general, and all attempts to rally them, and make a second stand, were fruitless. With a body of United States cavalry, I endeavored to protect the rear and right of the retreating men, so as to prevent their falling into the enemy's possession.

The men under my command were worn down and nearly exhausted from long and forced marches, want of food, and watching. They had been, with very little intermission, under arms and marching from the time of their departure from Baltimore, with but little sleep, bad provisions, and but little opportunity to cook. They certainly were not in a condition to go into battle; but my orders were positive, and I was determined to obey them.

Before and during the action, I did not see any of the force I was led to expect would support me. I understood since that they were on their way to my assistance, and I presume exertions were made to bring them up.

Before and during the retreat I heard the thunder of Commodore Barney's artillery, but till then I did not know he was near. I believe there were few, if any other, troops in the field when

the action commenced than the three regiments of infantry under Lieutenant-colonels Sterett, Ragan, and Shutz, Major Pinkney's battalion of riflemen, Captains Myer's and Magruder's companies of artillery, amounting to about 2150 men, exclusive of two regiments of cavalry, who did not act.

General Winder, on the field of battle, displayed all possible zeal, activity, and personal bravery in encouraging the men to fight, and after they broke, in his exertions to rally them.

I saw the President and some of the heads of departments in the field, but did not perceive that any of them took any part in the arrangements made for battle. Colonel Monroe, the then Secretary of State, appeared extremely active in his efforts to aid the officers in the discharge of their duties, and exposed himself to much danger.

To my aid-de-camp, Major Edward G. Woodyear, and my acting Brigade-major, Major Beall Randall, I am much indebted for their unremitting exertions in encouraging the men before and during the action, and the zeal displayed by them in their attempts to keep the ranks unbroken and to rally the men, in which they in some degree succeeded; for the company of Captain Galloway, and part of Shower's and Randall's were rallied, and were among the last troops who left the field, and did not retreat until directed; some of them were killed, and several severely wounded.

On arriving at the city, with part of Colonel Laval's United States cavalry covering the retreat, and collecting the rear of our scattered troops, I found General Winder's command had passed through it toward Georgetown. I proceeded there, and then followed to a village a few miles beyond it, where I overtook him with troops collecting under his command, and some of those of my brigade. The army thence proceeded to Montgomery Court House on the 25th of August, where it was hourly re-enforced by

those who fled from the field.

As there had been no place assigned by the commanding general previous to the action to which the men should retreat in case of a defeat, many of those under my immediate command had fled from the field toward Baltimore.

On the 25th I directed my aid, Major Woodyear, to push on from Montgomery Court House to that place, organize the drafted men, and bring them on to any point that General Winder should direct.

On Friday, August 26, at about 10 o'clock A.M., we took up the line of march from Montgomery Court House on the road leading to Baltimore, with the United States infantry under Lieutenant-colonel Scott; Major Peter's corps of artillery; General Smith's brigade of District troops; the regiment of militia from Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, commanded by Lieutenant-colonels Beall and Hood; some riflemen from Frederick, Alleghany, and other places; a large body of cavalry, and part of my brigade of drafted militia---a force respectable as to numbers and appearance; and that night encamped about half way between Montgomery Court House and Ellicott's upper mills. General Winder, having received some information respecting the enemy indicating intentions of moving against Baltimore, concluded his presence there was indispensable. He set out for that place, leaving me in command of the army, with directions to follow him in the morning. Colonel Monroe was with us.

During this night several expresses arrived from the City of Washington, by whom I was informed of the retreat of the enemy, said to be in such haste and confusion that many of their soldiers were straggling about in every direction; that the main army, after reaching Bladensburg, had taken the road to Marlborough, leaving their wounded. I ordered the cavalry to follow

them, harass their rear, and pick up the stragglers. Reports from Georgetown and the city reached me that the arms of many of the enemy had fallen into the hands of the blacks, and it was apprehended that they would take advantage of the absence of the men to insult the females, and complete the work of destruction commenced by the enemy; and at the earnest solicitation of Brigadier-general Smith and Major Peter, who expressed much anxiety respecting their families, and considering it all-important to prevent further injury to the city, I ordered the troops of the District of Columbia to move thither for its protection.

Having ascertained that the enemy had retreated to their shipping, I ordered the Prince George's troops down to Bladensburg, and those under the command of Lieutenant-colonels Beall and Hood to remain encamped on the ground then occupied until they had orders from General Winder; and in the morning of the 27th, with the United States infantry, my brigade, and part of Colonel Laval's cavalry, marched for Baltimore in a very heavy rain. On my arrival there in the evening I waited on General Winder, and detailed to him what I had done since he left me, with which he appeared well pleased.

Before I conclude, I must observe that Major Pinkney, with most of his battalion, and part of the two companies of artillery, retired from their advanced position to the left of the 5th regiment, and with that regiment continued to behave with that gallantry which had distinguished them in the onset, and only retired when pressed by superior numbers, and then, as I am informed, by orders from the commanding general.

TOBIAS E. STANSBURY.

Hon. R. M. Johnson, Chairman, &c., &c.

General Winder's Statement

APPENDIX.

NO. 1

NARRATIVE OF GENERAL WINDER, ADDRESSED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF
THE COMMITTEE OF INVESTIGATION.

O'Neale's, Sept. 26, 1814

Sir,---The readiest mode in which I can meet the inquiries which you have made, on behalf of the committee of which you are the chairman, will be to give a narrative of my agency as commander of the 10th Military District, and to accompany it with the correspondence which I have had, by letter, with the general and state governments, and their respective officers, while in that command.

Within the few last days of June, and before it was known that my exchange was perfect, although intelligence to that effect was momentarily expected, I was at the City of Washington, and the Secretary of War informed me that it was in contemplation to create another military district, to embrace the country from Rappahannock northward, to include the State of Maryland, and that the President intended to vest me with the command of it.

On my return to Baltimore I addressed to the Secretary of War copies of the letters herewith transmitted, marked 1A, 2A.

About the 4th or 5th of July I received a letter, a copy of which, marked 1B, accompanies this, which inclosed an order constituting the 10th Military District, a copy of which is annexed to the letter above referred to.

In obedience to the requisition of the letter, I immediately went to Washington and waited on the Secretary of War. He stated to me that, in addition to the garrisons of the several forts within my district, and the detachments of the 36th and 38th infantry then at Benedict, it was contemplated to order a detachment of cavalry, then at Carlisle, under orders to be mounted,

amounting to about one hundred and fifty, a company of the 12th, and from one to two companies of the 10th regular infantry, which would be ordered to be collected from their several recruiting rendez-vous, and to march to the City of Washington, and that the whole regular force thus to be collected might amount to one thousand or twelve hundred, and that the balance of my command would be composed of militia; that a requisition was about to be made upon certain states for upward of ninety thousand militia, intended for the defence of the maritime frontier of the country, and showed me a blank circular which had been printed, but not filled up, nor sent to the respective governors of the states.

I took the liberty of suggesting to the Secretary of War at that time my idea of the propriety of calling immediately into the field at least a portion of the militia intended for my district, and encamping them in the best position for protecting the probable points at which the enemy would strike if he should invade the district of my command. The secretary was of opinion that the most advantageous mode of using militia was upon the spur of the occasion, and to bring them to fight as soon as called out. I returned within a day or two to Baltimore to prepare myself for visiting the different parts of my district, and to explore it generally, and particularly those parts of it which might be considered as the approaches to the three principal points of it, to wit, Washington, Baltimore, and Annapolis.

My impressions of the necessity of having a respectable force immediately called into the field were strengthened instead of diminished by subsequent reflection, and I, in consequence, on the 9th of July, addressed the letter to the Secretary of War, a copy of which is herewith sent, marked 3A.

Agreeably to the suggestion contained in that letter, I proceeded to Annapolis to visit the military posts there, and to be ready on the spot, when the governor should receive the requisition, and myself such instructions as might be thought

proper to be given me, to take the most immediate steps to accomplish them.

The governor received the requisition, and immediately issued the necessary orders to have the quota required drafted.

On the 12th of July the secretary addressed to me a letter (the copy of which is herewith marked 2B), but which, being directed to Baltimore, did not reach me until after I had been to Upper Marlborough and again returned to Annapolis, where it followed me. I proceeded from Annapolis to Upper Marlborough, and on the 16th addressed two letters to the Secretary of War, of which copies are sent, marked 4A, 5A.

The apprehension that the enemy would proceed up the Patuxent and attack the flotilla at Nottingham, in consequence of the re-enforcement he had just received, gaining strength, I proceeded immediately to Nottingham, instead of going to the Wood Yard as I intended. During the 16th we received no information of a movement of the enemy up the river; but on the 17th, about 9 o'clock, Mr. Fitzhugh arrived express from the mouth of the Patuxent, and stated that about twenty barges, several frigates, and some small armed vessels were proceeding up the river. I, in consequence, wrote a letter to the Secretary of War, a copy of which is herewith sent, marked 6A, and wrote a note to Brigadier-general West, of the Maryland militia, advising him to call out the militia of the county.

I ordered the detachments of the 36th and 38th to hasten from the head of South River, by forced marches, to Nottingham. Three companies of the city militia were promptly dispatched in consequence of my letter of the 17th. But by the time these latter had reached the Wood Yard, and the regulars Marlborough, the enemy had entered Hunting Creek, on the Calvert side of the river, had proceeded to Huntingtown, burned the tobacco warehouse, after having taken off the principal part of the tobac-

co, and were retiring down the river. I halted the city militia at the Wood Yard, and the regulars at Marlborough.

In answer to my letter of the 17th from Nottingham, I received the following answer from the Secretary of War, marked 3B. As soon, therefore, as I ascertained that the enemy had retired to the mouth of the Patuxent, I proceeded to Annapolis to make the requisition upon the governor, as directed by the Secretary of War, and thence to Baltimore, to lend my aid and power to draw out the force authorized there.

While at Annapolis, I addressed to the Secretary of War the letter dated 20th of July, a copy of which is sent, marked 7A, and at the same time made the requisition on the governor, herewith sent, marked 1C. After remaining at Baltimore a day, and leaving orders to Brigadier-general Stansbury, who had been called on to command the militia to be assembled there, relative to their muster and inspection, under the laws of Congress, I returned to Marlborough to fix upon an encampment for the militia I had required from the governor, and to be more at hand to be informed of the enemy's movements. From Upper Marlborough, on the 23d of July; I wrote to the Secretary of War the following letter, marked 9A.

The enemy still remaining inactive, or, rather, confining himself to depredations upon the lower parts of the rivers Patuxent and Potomac, I seized the opportunity of visiting Fort Washington, and on the 25th required from Lieutenant Edwards, the commanding officer, a representation of what he deemed necessary to complete the equipment of the fort, with its then works, and received from him a representation, which I inclosed in a letter to the Secretary of War on the 25th, of which copies are sent, marked 10A. A copy of his answer, marked 4B, is herewith sent.

Learning that some of the enemy's ships were proceeding up the Potomac, I proceeded down to Port Tobacco with a view of ascertaining more precisely his views, and of informing myself of

the country, and on the 26th wrote the Secretary of War the following letter, marked 11A.

Having ascertained the next morning that the enemy's ships had descended the river, I returned to Marlborough, and availed myself of the first opportunity I had to review and inspect the detachment of the 36th and 38th, and thence proceeded to Washington City, where I established permanent headquarters of the District on the 1st of August. I availed myself of a day at this time to review and inspect the two brigades of District militia in Alexandria and this place, and reported the result to Major-general Van Ness, commanding the District militia, in the letter herewith, marked No. 1.

The people of St. Mary's and Charles's had become extremely sore under the harassing service to which they had been subjected, and the devastation and plunder which the enemy had been so long committing on their shores; and the remonstrances of Brigadier-general Stuart, commanding the militia there under the state authority, had become extremely importunate with both the Secretary of War and the President to receive aid and protection from the general government. The danger of throwing a force so far down into that neck of land, which exposed them to the danger of being cut off, besides that they would be lost for the defence of Washington, Baltimore, or Annapolis, had hitherto prevented me from pushing any part of my command so low down; but the President, in conversation, told me that their situation required aid, and directed me to move the detachments of the 36th and 38th down to unite with and aid General Stuart. I accordingly ordered Lieutenant-colonel Scott to move from Marlborough to Piscataway, and I proceeded directly down myself on the 3d. On the morning of the 4th of August I wrote the following letter from Port Tobacco, marked 13A, to the Secretary of War, and, agreeably to the intention therein expressed, proceeded twelve miles below to General Stuart's camp. I there learned beyond doubt that the enemy had returned down the river;

and, after assuring the general of support if they again advanced up the river, I returned back again to the City of Washington, directing Lieutenant-colonel Scott, commanding the regulars, to take up his encampment at a very convenient place two miles from Piscataway, on the road to the Wood Yard and Marlborough.

On my arrival at Washington, I found that the requisition made upon the Governor of Maryland for three thousand men, to be assembled at Bladensburg, had brought to that place only one company; but I learned that other detachments were about marching to that place, and, in order that no delay might occur in organizing and equipping them, I ordered Major Keyser, of the 38th regular infantry, to proceed to Bladensburg, to muster, inspect, and drill the detachments as they came in.

I thence proceeded to Baltimore to ascertain more precisely the effect of the requisition made on Major-general Smith for two thousand from his division; when arrived, I found about one thousand two hundred only assembled. I reviewed and inspected them, and gave Brigadier-general Stansbury orders to endeavor, by the most speedy means, to get in the delinquents and absentees.

I had just learned by a letter from the Governor of Maryland, and also from General Smith, that, upon General Smith's application to the Secretary of War, he had determined that the two thousand men now called to Baltimore, and which had been detached under a requisition of the Secretary of War directly on General Smith of the 20th of April, were to be considered as part of the quota of Maryland under the requisition of the 4th of July. I had drawn a different conclusion, and had so informed both the governor and General Smith in the visits I made to Annapolis and Baltimore about the 20th of July, immediately after receiving the letter from the Secretary of War of the 17th July, above exhibited. In order to supply the deficit in my calculation upon this force, I addressed the letter of the 13th of August to the Secretary of War, of which a copy, marked 14A, is here presented;

proceeded the same or the following day to Washington by the way of Annapolis, and on the 17th, at Washington, the day following my arrival, received the letter from the Secretary of War, of which a copy, marked 5B, is sent.

I should have stated that, two days after my return to the City of Washington, about the 6th of August, I received two letters from the Secretary of War, the one dated the 15th, the other the 17th of July, which, having been addressed to me at Baltimore, had followed me backward and forward from place to place, and, unfortunately, only reached me at this late period; copies of these are herewith sent, marked 6B and 7B.

I had, in the mean time, addressed the letter of the 6th of August to the Governor of Pennsylvania, a copy of which is sent, marked 1D, and upon the 8th, on the receiving of the letter of the Secretary of War of the 15th, I wrote another letter to the Governor of Pennsylvania, of which, from haste or much occupation, I did not take a copy, or have mislaid it; it substantially, however, informed him of the number of militia I was authorized to call from him, requesting him to hasten their drafting and organization, and to transmit a list of the officers, from brigadiers down, who would command. Should this letter be deemed material, a copy can be obtained from the governor, and I have written to procure it.

I addressed on the 16th also a similar letter to the Governor of Virginia. On the 16th or 17th of August I received from the Secretary of State of Pennsylvania an answer, dated the 11th, of which a copy, marked 2D, is herewith sent; and from the Adjutant-general of Virginia the answer and inclosures herewith sent, marked E.

On the morning of Thursday, the 18th, intelligence was received from the Observatory on Point Look-out that on the morning of the 17th the enemy's fleet off that place had been re-enforced

by a formidable squadron of ships and vessels of various sizes.

I immediately made requisitions upon the Governors of Maryland and Pennsylvania, and to various militia officers, copies of which are herewith sent, marked as follows: to the Governor of Pennsylvania, 3D; to the Governor of Maryland, 2C; to Major-general Smith, of Baltimore, 1F; to Brigadier-general West, of Prince George's, Maryland, No. 18; to Major-general Van Ness, No. 4; to Brigadier-general Hungerford, Virginia, No. 14; to Brigadier-general Douglas and Colonel Chilton, of Virginia, and Brigadier-generals Ringgold, Swearingen, Barrack, and Foreman, of Maryland, No. 5

Besides the letters and correspondence here referred to particularly, a mass of correspondence occurred with various persons relative to my command, and which, as far as I suppose they can have any influence on the investigation, are herewith sent.

That with the Governor of Maryland will be found in bundle C, and numbered, in addition to those already mentioned, from 3C to 11C, both inclusive. That with General Smith in bundle F; and that with other persons, not before referred to, with the numbers before referred to, are exhibited from No. 1 to No. 53 inclusive. Much other correspondence necessary to be carried on, and which occupied much time, took place, which, however, is not sent, as I deemed them not calculated to illustrate the inquiry, and only calculated uselessly to encumber and embarrass the inquiry. They will be furnished if thought requisite.

I will state as nearly as possible the forces which were in the field under these various demands and requisitions, the time of their assembling, their condition, and subsequent movements.

The returns first made, when I came into command, gave me,
 Fort M'Henry, under the command of Major Armistead,
 non-commissioned officers, musicians, and privates,
 for duty.....194
 At Annapolis, in Forts Severn and Madison under

| | |
|---|-----|
| Lieutenant Fay..... | 39 |
| At Fort Washington, under Lieutenant Edwards... | 49 |
| The detachments of the 36th and 38th, and a small detachment of artillery under Lieutenant-colonel Scott..... | 330 |

 612

These corps received no addition, but were gradually diminished by the ordinary causes which always operate to this effect.

The two thousand Maryland militia who were ordered to assemble at Baltimore had been drafted in pursuance of a requisition made by the Secretary of War on General Smith of the 20th of April, and as full time had been allowed to make the draft deliberately, they were, as far as practicable, ready to come without delay; notwithstanding, Brigadier-general Stansbury was unable to bring to Bladensburg more than one thousand four hundred, including officers, and arrived at Bladensburg on the evening of the 22d of August.

From General Stricker's brigade in the city of Baltimore, which had been called out en masse, I required a regiment of infantry, the battalion of riflemen, and two companies of artillery--- not deeming it practicable to reconcile the people of Baltimore to march a greater number, and leave it without any force, and being strongly persuaded that the exigency would have drawn in time a greater force from the adjacent country. The detachment from Stricker's brigade, under Colonel Sterett, arrived at Bladensburg in the night of the 23d of August, and the total amount was nine hundred and fifty-six.

The detachment which had been stationed at Annapolis, under Colonel Hood, and which had been at the moment transferred by the Governor of Maryland to my command, arrived at the bridge at Bladensburg about fifteen minutes before the enemy appeared, and I suppose were from six to seven hundred strong. I have never had any return of it.

The brigade of General Smith, consisting of the militia of the District of Columbia on this side the Potomac, were called out on Thursday, the 18th of August, on Friday were assembled, and on Saturday, the 20th, they crossed the Eastern Branch Bridge, and advanced about five miles toward the Wood Yard. They amounted, I suppose, to about twelve hundred; a return was never had before they separated from my command, as there was not an interval of sufficient rest to have obtained one.

General Young's brigade, from Alexandria, between five and six hundred strong, crossed the Potomac Saturday or Sunday, the 19th or 20th, and took post near Piscataway.

The call for three thousand militia, under the requisition of the 4th of July, had produced only two hundred and fifty men at the moment the enemy landed at Benedict. In addition to the causes herein beforementioned, the inefficacy of this call is to be attributed to the incredulity of the people on the danger of invasion; the perplexed, broken, and harassed state of the militia in St. Mary's, Calvert, Charles's, Prince George's, and a part of Anne Arundel counties, which had rendered it impossible to make the draft in some of them, or to call them from those exposed situations where they had been on duty two months, under the local calls for Maryland.

Several other small detachments of Maryland militia, either as volunteers, or under the calls on the brigadiers, joined about the day before the action, whose numbers or commanding officers I did not know. They may have amounted to some four or five hundred.

Lieutenant-colonel Tilghman, of the Maryland cavalry, under an order of the Governor of Maryland, with about eighty dragoons, arrived at the City of Washington on the 16th of August, on his way to join General Stuart, in the lower part of Charles or St. Mary's County.

Under the permission I just then received to accept all the militia then in the field under the State of Maryland, I informed Colonel Tilghman that I had no doubt of the governor's sanction, for which I had applied, and recommended him to halt here. He agreed not only to this, but, by the consent of General Stuart, who happened then to be in the city sick, agreed to take my orders.

Lieutenant-colonel Laval, of the United States Light Dragoons, with a small squadron of about one hundred and twenty, who had been mounted at Carlisle the preceding Monday, arrived at Montgomery Court House on the evening of the 19th of August, reported himself to the war office, and received orders to report to me. He moved on the next morning, and crossed the Eastern Branch.

Captain Morgan, with a company of about eighty of the 12th United States Infantry, joined at the Long Old Fields on the evening of the 22d.

Captain Minor, from Virginia, arrived at the city on the evening of the 23d with about five hundred men, wholly unarmed, and without equipments. Under the direction of Colonel Carberry, who had been charged with this subject, they received arms, ammunition, &c., next morning, but not until after the action at Bladensburg.

No part of the 10th had yet arrived.

There had been no adjutant or inspector general attached to my command from its commencement. Major Hite, Assistant Adjutant-general, joined me on the 16th of August at Washington, and Major Smith, Assistant Inspector-general,

on the 19th.

This was the situation, condition, and amount of my force and command.

It will be observed that this detail is continued up to the moment of the battle of Bladensburg; but, as the time at which the different corps respectively joined is stated, it will be readily seen what troops were concerned in the different movements which will now be detailed.

The innumerably multiplied orders, letters, consultations, and demands which crowded upon me at the moment of such an alarm, can more easily be conceived than described, and occupied me nearly day and night from Thursday, the 18th of August, till Sunday, the 21st, and had nearly broken down myself and assistants in preparing, dispensing, and attending to them.

On Thursday evening Colonel Monroe proposed, if I would detach a troop of cavalry with him, to proceed in the most probable direction to find the enemy and reconnoitre him. Captain Thornton's troop from Alexandria was detailed on this service, and on Friday morning the colonel departed with them. At this time it was supposed the enemy intended (coming up) the Bay, as one of his ships was already in view from Annapolis, and his boats were sounding South River. It was Colonel Monroe's intention to have proceeded direct to Annapolis; but, before he had got without the city, he received intelligence that the enemy had proceeded up the Patuxent, and were debarking at Benedict. He therefore bent his course to that place. By his first letter on Saturday, which reached the President that evening, he was unable to give any precise intelligence, except that the enemy were at Benedict in force.

On Saturday, Lieutenant-colonel Tilghman, with his squadron

of dragoons, was dispatched by way of the Wood Yard to fall down upon the enemy, to annoy, harass, and impede their march by every possible means, to remove or destroy forage and provision from before the enemy, and gain intelligence. Captain Caldwell, with his troop of city cavalry, was dispatched with the same views toward Benedict by Piscataway, it being wholly uncertain what route the enemy would take if it was his intention to come to Washington.

On Sunday I crossed the Eastern Branch, and joined Brigadier-general Smith at the Wood Yard, where Lieutenant-colonel Scott with the 36th and 38th, and Lieutenant-colonel Kramer with the militia from Bladensburg, had arrived by previous orders. On the road to the Wood Yard I received a letter from Colonel Monroe, of which a copy is sent, marked ---, and at about eight o'clock in the evening I received another letter from him, of which a copy is sent, marked ---, and in a very short time after he arrived himself, and immediately after Colonel Beall, who had seen a body of the enemy, which he estimated at four thousand (without supposing he had seen the whole), enter Nottingham on Sunday evening. Colonel Monroe, being much exhausted, retired to rest. I gave Colonel Beall, on account of his experience, orders to proceed and join Colonel Hood on his march from Annapolis, and take command of the detachment. I occupied the night in writing letters and orders to various officers and persons, and at daylight ordered a light detachment from General Smith's brigade under Major Peter, the regulars under Lieutenant-colonel Scott, and Laval's cavalry, to proceed immediately toward Nottingham to meet the enemy.

I proceeded immediately in advance myself, accompanied by Colonel Monroe and the gentlemen of my staff. I had learned that Colonel Tilghman, with his cavalry, on the advance of the enemy, had fallen back upon Marlborough the evening before, and had, during the night, sent him an order to proceed upon the road from Marlborough to Nottingham, and meet at the Chapel. Hav-

ing got considerably in advance of Lieutenant-colonel Scott's and Major Peter's detachment, and also to obtain intelligence, I halted at Mr. Oden's, within half a mile of the junction of the roads from Marlborough and the Wood Yard to Nottingham, directing Laval to gain the Marlborough road, post himself at the Chapel, and push forward patrols upon all the roads toward Nottingham. In less than half an hour, and before the detachments of Scott and Peter had come up, intelligence was brought that the enemy was moving on from Nottingham in force toward the Chapel. I immediately proceeded, with the gentlemen who were with me, to gain an observation of the enemy, and came within view of the enemy's advance about two miles below the Chapel. The observation was continued until the enemy reached the Chapel, and Scott and Peter being then near two miles distant from that point, and it being therefore impossible for them to reach the junction of the Marlborough and Wood Yard road before the enemy, I sent orders for them to post themselves in the most advantageous position, and wait for me with the body of the cavalry. I turned into the road to the Wood Yard, and detached a small party, under Adjutant-general Hite, on the Marlborough road, to watch the enemy's movements on that road and give information. Upon arriving at Oden's, himself or some other person of the neighborhood whom I knew, and on whom I could rely, informed me that there was a more direct road, but not so much frequented, leading from Nottingham to the Wood Yard, and joining that on which I then was, and two miles nearer the Wood Yard.

A doubt at that time was not entertained by any body of the intention of the enemy to proceed direct to Washington, and the advantage of dividing their force, and proceeding on two roads, running so near each other to the same point, so obvious, that I gave orders to Scott and Peter to retire, and occupy the first eligible position between the junction of that road and the one we were on and the Wood Yard; dispatched a patrol of cavalry to observe that road, and give the earliest notice of any advance of the enemy upon it. I still continued the observation of the enemy my-

self, and he turned a part of his column into the road to the Wood Yard, and penetrated a skirt of wood which hid the junction of the Marlborough and Wood Yard road from view, and there halted it, within a quarter of a mile of Oden's house. I hesitated for some time whether to attribute his delay to a view which he may have had of Scott's and Peter's detachments, or to a design to conceal his movement toward Marlborough, the road to that place being concealed by woods from any point of observation which could be gained.

It appeared afterward that his whole force halted there for an hour or upward, and thus continued in an uncertainty as to his intended route. I had, in the mean time, rode back and assisted Peter and Scott to post their detachments in a favorable position, from whence I entertained a hope to have given the enemy a serious check, without much risk to this detachment. Orders had been previously sent to General Smith to post his whole detachment in conjunction with Commodore Barney, who had by this time joined him from Marlborough with about four hundred sailors and marines, and had taken also command of the marines under Captain Miller, who had arrived from the city the night before. I presumed, from the appearance of this force, it was about one hundred or one hundred and twenty. As soon as I had satisfied myself as to the position and disposition of Scott's and Peter's detachments, I advanced again toward the enemy to ascertain his situation and intentions. It had now become certain that he had taken the road to Marlborough, and Colonel Monroe crossed over to that place to join Lieutenant-colonel Tilghman, and observe his movements.

I sent an order immediately to Scott and Peter to retire back to General Smith, and the latter to take post at the point where the roads from Washington City and the Wood Yard to Marlborough unite. This order was incorrectly delivered or misunderstood,

and he took post instead at the point where the roads from the Wood Yard and Marlborough to the City of Washington unite. The mistake, however, produced no inconvenience, but, on the contrary, was perhaps better than the position to which I had directed, because it threw my force more between Marlborough and Bladensburg, and also in command of the road by which the enemy did finally advance, which the other position would not have done. Its inconvenience was that it left open the road to Fort Washington, and rendered General Young's junction, if it should become proper to advance him, hazardous on that road. It further became necessary to retire still further back, and the only position where the troops could be tolerably accommodated, or posted to advantage, was at Dunlap's, or, as it is generally called, the Long or Battalion Old Fields.

General Smith was therefore ordered to retire to that point with the whole of the troops except the cavalry. Lieutenant-colonel Tilghman and Captain Herbert were charged with hovering upon the enemy on all the roads leading from Bladensburg, from the north, and from Annapolis, to Marlborough. With Laval's cavalry I advanced to the nearest and most convenient positions between the Wood Yard and Marlborough, and found the enemy quietly halted at Marlborough. Tilghman's cavalry picked up one or two prisoners who had straggled beyond the enemy's pickets, and my examination of them confirmed me that the enemy did not contemplate leaving Marlborough that day.

After remaining near Marlborough in observation till toward the latter part of the afternoon, I returned to General Smith, where I arrived toward the close of the day. About dark I learned that the President and heads of departments had arrived at a house about a mile in the rear of the camp. I detached a captain's guard to his quarters, advanced the cavalry of Laval on the roads toward Marlborough, with orders to patrol as close upon the enemy as possible during the course of the night; and, after having

waded through the infinite applications, consultations, and calls necessarily arising from a body of two thousand five hundred men, not three days from their homes, without organization or any practical knowledge of service on the part of their officers, and being obliged to listen to the officious but well-intended information and advice of the crowd, who, at such a time, would be full of both, I lay down to snatch a moment of rest.

A causeless alarm from one of the sentinels placed the whole force under arms about three o'clock in the morning. A short time after sunrise I rode over to the quarters of the President to inform him and the Secretary of War of the state of things. Upon my return, rumors prevailed that the enemy had taken the road to Queen Anne, which was directly leading to Annapolis. I could not, however, suppose that Lieutenant-colonel Tilghman and Captain Herbert would fail to advise me if the fact were so. The rumor, however, gained ground, and just at this time Mr. Luffborough, of this city, with some fifteen or twenty mounted men, offered himself ready to perform any duties on which I could employ them. I immediately dispatched him to ascertain the truth of this report, by penetrating to that road, and also to obtain whatever information he could relative to the enemy. About twelve o'clock he sent me decisive information that the enemy were not on the Annapolis road.

I received constant intelligence that the enemy still remained in Marlborough, and therefore, felt no doubt that, if he intended to take the road to Annapolis, any movement upon that road was only an advance party for observation, and preparatory to a general movement; and as the morning advanced, and the information brought still confirmed the impression that the enemy intended no movement from Upper Marlborough, I resolved to endeavor to concentrate the force (which, I hoped, had now considerably accumulated within my reach) down upon the enemy's lines near Marlborough.

I accordingly ordered a light detachment to be sent forward by General Smith, under Major Peter; and having also learned by

Major Woodyear, of General Stansbury's staff, that he had arrived the evening before at Bladensburg, I sent orders to him to advance toward Marlborough, and to take post at the point where the Old Fields to Queen Anne crosses the road from Bladensburg to Marlborough, which brought him within four miles of the Old Fields, and within from six to eight of the enemy. I was anxiously waiting to hear of Lieutenant-colonel Beall's progress with the detachment for Annapolis, and of Lieutenant-colonel Sterett's from Baltimore.

The President and heads of departments had been on the field since about eight o'clock. I communicated my views and intentions as above detailed, and informed them that I proposed myself to pass over the road from Bladensburg to Marlborough, to meet General Stansbury, to make closer observations upon the road direct from the enemy to Bladensburg, and to establish more thoroughly a concert between Stansbury and Smith's command; to be also nearer to Beall, to give him also a direction toward the enemy on the road leading into Marlborough from the north, if my intelligence should continue to justify it, and to draw down Lieutenant-colonel Sterett, with his force, as soon as I should ascertain where he was. I accordingly, with a troop of Laval's cavalry, proceeded about twelve o'clock. Upon arriving at the Bladensburg road, I halted, and pushed a patrol of cavalry down toward Marlborough.

In a few minutes after, three of Captain Herbert's troop, who were observing down the same road, arrived with two prisoners, whom they had just seized in a very bold and dexterous manner. The information of these prisoners confirmed the impression that the enemy did not intend to move from Marlborough that day; and, as it was now one o'clock, I felt little doubt of it. After remaining some time for intelligence from the United States dragoons that I had sent down with orders to press down as closely as possible upon the enemy, a slight firing was heard in the direc-

tion of the enemy, which I concluded was from the enemy's picket upon this party. A few minutes confirmed this conjecture by the return of a dragoon with this intelligence. A more considerable firing was then, however, heard, which I concluded to be a skirmishing by Peter's detachment with the enemy, put upon the alert and advance by the firing at the dragoons.

The firing soon after ceased, and after having sent for the purpose of ascertaining the fact, with directions to follow with intelligence on toward Bladensburg, in which direction I proceeded; with the expectation of meeting General Stansbury, and with the intention to halt him until my intelligence should decide my further proceedings.

I had proceeded within four or five miles of Bladensburg without meeting General Stansbury, when I was overtaken by Major M'Kenney, a volunteer aid with General Smith, who informed me that Peter had skirmished with the advancing enemy, who had driven him back on General Smith, and that the enemy had halted within three miles of the Old Fields; that, agreeably to my direction upon the probability of an attack, General Smith had sent off the baggage across the Eastern Branch, and that himself and Commodore Barney had drawn up the forces ready to receive the enemy, should he advance. On my way toward Bladensburg I had left orders with Lieutenant-colonel Tilghman's cavalry to continue their observation on the Bladensburg and Marlborough roads, and in case the enemy should move on that road, to give General Stansbury immediate notice and fall back on him. In proceeding to the Old Fields, I met Lieutenant-colonel Tilghman himself, and renewed these directions. Captain Herbert was also between General Stansbury and the enemy with the same instructions.

When Major M'Kenney gave me the intelligence of the advance of the enemy, I dispatched an aid to General Stansbury with directions to him to fall back and take the best position in advance of Bladensburg, and unite Lieutenant-colonel Sterett with him should

he arrive at Bladensburg, as I expected, that evening; and should he be attacked, to resist as long as possible, and if obliged to retire, to retreat toward the city.

I reached the Old Fields about five o'clock in the afternoon, and found General Smith and Commodore Barney had judiciously posted their men in expectation of the enemy, and were expecting his approach. The head of the enemy's column was about three miles from our position, and five miles from Marlborough. He must have reached that point by or before three o'clock, and his halt there at that period of the day, so short a distance from Marlborough, and apparently only drawn out by my parties pressing upon him, and at a point from whence he could take the road to Bladensburg, to the Eastern Branch Bridge, or Fort Washington indifferently, or it might be to cover his march upon Annapolis, to which place he had strong temptations to proceed. His force was very imperfectly known, the opinions and representations varying from four to twelve thousand; the better opinion fixed it from five to seven thousand. If he supposed his force insufficient to proceed to Washington, and further re-enforcements were expected, which all information concurred to state, the natural conclusion was that he would seek some place where he could in security refresh his men, and place them in comfortable quarters near a convenient port for his ships, and whence, upon receiving re-enforcements, he would be ready to act against the important points of the country. Having, therefore, already accomplished one great object of the expedition ---the destruction of Commodore Barney's flotilla---if he was not in a condition to proceed further into the country, Annapolis offered him a place in all respects such as he would desire. It brought him to a fine port, where his ships could lie in safety; it afforded abundant and comfortable quarters for his men; magazines and store-houses for all his stores and munitions of every description; was capable, with very little labor, of being rendered impregnable by land, and he commanded the water; it was the nearest point of debarkation to the City of Wash-

ington, without entering a narrow river liable to great uncertainty in its navigation from adverse winds, and was at hand to Baltimore; equally threatening these two great points, and rendering it absolutely necessary to keep a force doubly sufficient to resist him---one for the protection of Washington, the other for Baltimore. The squadron which was ascending the Potomac, and had now passed the Kettle Bottoms, the only obstruction in the navigation of the river, might be only a feint, the more effectually to conceal their intentions against Annapolis, or, what was more probable, was intended to unite with the land force and co-operate in a joint attack on Washington. It was therefore strongly believed that the land force was destined to proceed and take Fort Washington in the rear, where it was wholly defenceless, while it was capable of offering very formidable resistance to the ascent of ships up the river, and, imperfect as it was, perhaps capable of repulsing them altogether. And it was therefore that I sent to General Young, when the force of General Smith fell back to the Old Fields, to take a position so as to protect Fort Washington, and avoid being taken in the rear by the enemy.

If the object of the enemy was to proceed direct to Washington, the road by Bladensburg offered fewer obstructions than that over the Eastern Branch Bridge, although it was six miles further; and yet, if I had retired toward Bladensburg, I should have been removed so much further from annoying or impeding the enemy, if he proceeded to Fort Washington, and I should have left the road to Washington City, by the Eastern Branch Bridge, open to him, which, although I had, as I supposed, left a secure arrangement for its destruction, yet the importance of leaving that bridge as long as possible on account of its great value to us, and the danger that, in the multitude of business which was accumulated on every person during such an alarm, confusion and disorder arising at such a moment, with such raw, undisciplined, inexperienced, and unknown officers and men, rendered it hazardous to trust this direct and important pass unguarded.

It was under all these circumstances that, after waiting for the enemy at the Old Fields till sundown, I determined to retire over the Eastern Branch Bridge, in which Commodore Barney concurred, and his force, with mine, proceeded accordingly.

My reasons for not remaining at the Old Fields during the night was that, if an attack should be made in the night, our own superiority, which lay in artillery, was lost, and the inexperience of the troops would subject them to certain, infallible, and irremediable disorder, and probably destruction, and thereby occasion the loss of a full half of the force which I could hope to oppose, under more favorable circumstances, to the enemy.

The reasons for retiring by the Eastern Branch Bridge were the absolute security it gave to that pass, the greater facility of joining General Young and aiding in the protection of Fort Washington, the greater facility of pursuing the enemy should he recede and proceed to Annapolis, and the certainty that I could draw General Stansbury and Lieutenant-colonel Sterett to me if the enemy advanced too rapidly for me to advance, and unite to support them.

Under the harassing and perplexing embarrassments arising from having a mass of men suddenly assembled, without organization, discipline, or officers of any, the least, knowledge of service, except in the case of Major Peter, or, if possessing it, unknown to me as such, and the wearied and exhausted state in which incessant application and exertion for nearly five uninterrupted days and nights had left me, these views offered themselves to my mind, and determined me to fall back, on Tuesday evening, to the bridge instead of Bladensburg. Since the event has passed, and if a movement to Bladensburg, had it been made, would not have induced the enemy to pursue another course, it is easy to determine that a retreat to Bladensburg might have been better; but those who undertake to pass a judgment should place themselves back to the moment and situation I was in when I formed the resolu-

tion, and it will be very difficult to find it an error; or if one, it is of that sort which is supported, when viewed in perspective, by stronger reasons than those which oppose it, and is only found to be an error by experience, which so often confounds all reason and calculation.

Upon arriving at the bridge, about eight o'clock, I directed General Smith to halt his men in the most convenient position near the bridge on this side, and I passed over and rode directly to the President's, and informed him of the then state of things. I had expected I should probably have found the Secretary of War and other heads of departments there; but they had respectively retired to their homes. I returned toward the bridge, leaving at M'Keowin's hotel the borrowed horse on which I rode. Both those I had with me being exhausted and worn down, and as I knew no one who had a horse in a different situation, I proceeded to the camp on foot. General Smith was not, at the moment, there.

I proceeded on to the bridge, where I found about thirty men with axes, for the purpose of cutting the bridge down, and no other preparation for destroying it made. I proceeded again to the camp, detached a party of volunteers to burn the upper bridge at once, detached a party of regular infantry across the bridge, in advance toward the enemy about half a mile, to prevent him from seizing it by surprise, and posted Burch's artillery to command the pass of the bridge on this side. I learned at the bridge that some persons from the navy-yard had been to the bridge to take some steps for destroying it; and knowing that this was the nearest, and the only place, indeed, from whence I could draw the powder, boats, and combustibles for the purpose of rendering its destruction sure at any moment, I proceeded, accompanied by Major Cox, of Georgetown, to ascertain what preparations had been made. I arrived there about twelve or one o'clock, saw Colonel Wharton, who referred me to Commodore Tingey, to whom I then proceeded, and aroused him from bed. He informed me that several casks of powder were ready

in boats to be sent from the navy-yard to blow up the bridge when necessary. I begged him to increase the quantity of powder, to furnish a quantity of combustibles, also, to be laid upon the bridge, that its destruction, when necessary, in one way or other might be put beyond doubt. Commodore Tingey undertook to have what I requested provided sent without delay to the bridge. I returned to the bridge to see that the different detachments which I had stationed there were upon the alert, and understood the objects for which they were detached; and I thence returned to the camp between three and four o'clock, much exhausted, and considerably hurt in the right arm and ankle from a severe fall which I had into a gully or ditch on my way to the navy-yard. I snatched about an hour or two of sleep, rose, and proceeded to gather my attendants and horses, much exhausted and worn down by the incessant action of the three preceding days, and proceeded to establish my head-quarters at a house near the bridge.

My patrols and vedettes not having yet brought me any intelligence of a movement of the enemy, and being still doubtful whether he might not move upon Annapolis, Fort Warburton, or toward the bridge rather than Bladensburg, I held the position near the bridge as that which, under all circumstances, would enable me best to act against the enemy in any alternative. I learned about this time, with considerable mortification, that General Stansbury, from misunderstanding or some other cause, instead of holding a position during the night in advance of Bladensburg, had taken one about a mile in its rear, and that his men, from a causeless alarm, had been under arms the greater part of the night, and moved once or twice, and that he was at that moment on his march into the city. I instantly sent him an order to resume his position at Bladensburg; to post himself to the best advantage; make the utmost resistance, and to rely upon my supporting him if the enemy should move upon that road. I had, at a very early hour in the morning, detached Captain Graham, with his troops of Virginia cavalry, to proceed by Bladensburg down upon the road

toward the enemy, and insure, by that means, timely notice to General Stansbury and myself, should the enemy turn that way. With this addition to the cavalry already on those roads, it became impossible for the enemy to take any steps unobserved. Additional cavalry patrols and vedettes were also detached upon all the roads across the bridge, to insure the certainty of intelligence, let the enemy move as he might.

Colonel Minor had also arrived in the city the evening before, with five or six hundred militia from Virginia, but they were without arms, accoutrements, or ammunition. I urged him to hasten his equipment, which I learned was delayed by some difficulty in finding Colonel Carberry, charged with that business; and he had not received his arms, &c., when, about ten o'clock, I received intelligence that the enemy had turned the head of his column toward Bladensburg. Commodore Barney had, upon my suggestion, posted his artillery to command the bridge early in the morning.

As soon as I learned the enemy were moving toward Bladensburg, I ordered General Smith, with the whole of the troops, to move immediately to that point.

The necessary detention arising from orders to issue, interrogations and applications to be answered from all points being past, I proceeded on to Bladensburg, leaving the President and some of the heads of departments at my quarters, where they had been for an hour or more.

I arrived at the bridge at Bladensburg about twelve o'clock, where I found Lieutenant-colonel Beall had that moment passed with his command, having just arrived from Annapolis. I had passed the line of Stansbury's brigade, formed in the field upon the left of the road, at about a quarter of a mile in the rear of the bridge; and on the road, a short distance in the rear of Stansbury's line, I met several gentlemen, and among the others, I think, Mr. Francis Key, of Georgetown, who informed me that he had thought that the

troops coming from the city could be most advantageously posted on the right and left of the road near that point. General Smith being present, Mr. Key undertook, I believe, being sent for that purpose, to show the positions proposed. I left General Smith to make a disposition of these troops, and proceeded to the bridge, where I found Lieutenant-colonel Beall, as before stated.* I inquired whether he had any directions as to his position; he replied that he had been shown a high hill upon the right of the road, ranging with the proposed second line. It being a commanding position, and necessary to be occupied by some corps, I directed him to proceed agreeably to the instructions he had received. I then rode up to a battery which had been thrown up to command the street which entered Bladensburg from the side of the enemy and the bridge, where I found the Baltimore artillery posted, and the Baltimore riflemen to support them. Upon inquiry, I learned that General Stansbury was on a rising ground upon the left of his line. I rode immediately thither, and found him and Colonel Monroe together. The latter gentleman informed me that he had been aiding General Stansbury to post his command, and wished me to proceed to examine it with them, to see how far I approved of it. We were just proceeding with this view, when some person rode up and stated that the news had just been received of a signal victory obtained by General Izard over the enemy, in which one thousand of the enemy were slain, and many prisoners taken. I ordered the news to be immediately communicated to the troops, for the purpose of giving additional impulse to their spirits and courage. The column of the enemy at this moment appeared in sight, moving up the Eastern Branch parallel to our position.

* Since writing the above, I have seen General Smith, who informs me that Mr. Key had been examining the grounds with him, and that it was his views that Mr. Key had been stating. He came up at the moment Mr. Key had given me the information. I have been under the impression, till thus corrected, that it was the suggestion of Colonel Monroe and General Stansbury that had suggested that position. The circumstance is immaterial except for the purpose of literal accuracy when necessary.

From the left, where I was, I perceived that if the position of the advanced artillery were forced, two or three pieces upon the left of Stansbury would be necessary to scour an orchard which lay between his line and his artillery, and for another rifle company to increase the support of this artillery.

These were promptly sent forward by General Smith, and posted as hastily as possible, and it was barely accomplished before I was obliged to give orders to the advanced artillery to open upon the enemy, who was descending the street toward the bridge. All farther examination or movement was now impossible, and the position where I then was, immediately in the rear of the left of Stansbury's line, being the most advanced position from which I could have any commanding view, I remained there. The fire of our advanced artillery occasioned the enemy, who were advancing, and who were light troops, to leave the street, and they crept down under the cover of houses and trees, in loose order, so as not to expose them to risk from the shot; it was therefore only occasionally that an object presented at which the artillery could fire.

In this sort of suspension, the enemy began to throw his rockets, and his light troops began to accumulate down in the lower parts of the town and near the bridge, but principally covered from view by the houses. Their light troops, however, soon began to issue out and press across the creek, which was every where fordable, and in most places lined with bushes or trees, which were sufficient, however, to conceal the movements of light troops, who act, in the manner of theirs, singly. The advanced riflemen now began to fire, and continued it for half a dozen rounds, when I observed them to run back to the skirts of the orchard on the left, where they became visible, the boughs of the orchard trees concealing their original position, as also that of the artillery from view. A retreat of twenty or thirty yards from their original position toward the left brought them in view on the edge of the orchard. They halted there, and seemed for a moment returning to

their position; but in a few minutes entirely broke, and retired to the left of Stansbury's line. I immediately ordered the 5th Baltimore regiment, Lieutenant-colonel Steret, (sic) being the left of Stansbury's line, to advance and sustain the artillery. They promptly commenced this movement; but the rockets, which had for the first three or four passed very high above the heads of the line, now received a more horizontal direction, and passed very close above the heads of Shutz's and Ragan's regiments, composing the centre and left of Stansbury's line. A universal flight of these regiments was the consequence. This leaving the right of the 5th wholly unsupported, I ordered it to halt, rode swiftly across the field toward those who had so shamefully fled, and exerted my voice to the utmost to arrest them. They halted, began to collect, and seemed to be returning to their places. An ill-founded reliance that their officers would succeed in rallying them, when I had thus succeeded in stopping the greatest part of them, induced me immediately to return to the 5th, the situation of which was likely to become very critical, and that position gave me the best command of view. To my astonishment and mortification, however, when I had regained my position, I found the whole of these regiments (except thirty or forty of Ragan's, rallied by himself, and as many, perhaps, of Shutz's, rallied, I learn by Captain Shower and Captain _____, whose name I do not recollect) were flying in the utmost precipitation and disorder.

The advanced artillery had immediately followed the riflemen, and retired by the left of the 5th. I directed them to take post on a rising ground which I pointed out in the rear. The 5th, and the artillery on its left, still remained, and I hoped that their fire, notwithstanding the obstruction of the boughs of the orchard, which, being below, covered the enemy, would have been enabled to scour this approach and prevent his advance. The enemy's light troops, by single men, showed themselves on the lower edge of the left of the orchard, and received the fire of this artillery and the 5th, which made them draw back. The cover to them was, however, so complete, that they were enabled to advance singly,

and take positions from which their fire annoyed the 5th considerably, without either that regiment or the artillery being able to return the fire with any probability of effect. In this situation I had actually given an order to the 5th and the artillery to retire up to the hill, toward a wood more to the left and a little in the rear, for the purpose of drawing them farther from the orchard, and out of reach of the enemy's fire while he was sheltered by the orchard. An aversion, however, to retire before the necessity became stronger, and the hope that the enemy would issue in a body from the left of the orchard and enable us to act upon him on terms of equality, and the fear that a movement of retreat might in raw troops produce some confusion and lose us this chance, induced me instantly to countermand the order, and direct the artillery to fire into a wooden barn on the lower end of the orchard, behind which I supposed the enemy might be sheltered in considerable numbers. The fire of the enemy now began, however, to annoy the 5th still more in wounding several of them, and a strong column of the enemy having passed up the road as high as the right of the 5th, and beginning to deploy into the field to take them in flank, I directed the artillery to retire to the hill to which I had directed the Baltimore artillery to proceed and halt, and ordered the 8th regiment also to retire. This corps, which had heretofore acted so firmly, evinced the usual incapacity of raw troops to make orderly movements in the face of the enemy, and their retreat in a very few moments became a flight of absolute and total disorder.

The direct line of retreat to the whole of this first line being to the hill on which I had directed the artillery to halt, and immediately in connection with the positions of General Smith's corps, which were not arrayed in line, but posted on advantageous positions in connection with and supporting each other, according as the nature of the ground admitted and required, I had not for a moment, dispersed and disordered as was the whole of Stansbury's command, supposed that their retreat would have taken a different direction. But it soon became apparent that the whole mass were throwing themselves off to the right on the

retreat toward Montgomery Court House, and flying wide of this point; the whole of the cavalry, probably from the pressure of the infantry that way, were also thrown wide of the line of retreat toward the right.

After making every effort to turn the current more toward General Smith's command and the city in vain, and finding that it was impossible to collect any force to support the artillery, which I had directed to halt, and finding also that the enemy's light troops were extending themselves in that direction, and pressing the pursuit, I directed the artillery to continue their retreat on the road they then were toward the Capitol, it being impossible for them to get across to the turnpike road or unite with General Smith's brigade.

The hope of again forming the first line at this point, and there renewing the retreat, or, at all events, of being able to rally them between the Capitol and that point and renewing the contest, induced me, at the moment I directed the 5th regiment to retreat, to request Mr. Riggs, of Georgetown, to proceed to the President and inform him that we had been driven back, but that it was my hope and intention to form and renew the contest between that place and the Capitol.

As soon as I found it vain longer to endeavor to turn the tide of retreat toward the left, I turned toward the positions occupied by Lieutenant-colonel Beall, Commodore Barney, and General Smith. By this time the enemy had advanced up the road, had driven back Lieutenant-colonel Kramer's command, posted on the right of the road, and in advance of Commodore Barney, after having well maintained his position and much hurt the enemy, and also continued to fire during his retreat. He had come under the destructive fire of Commodore Barney, which had turned him up the hill toward Lieutenant-colonel Beall, whose detachment gave one or two ineffective fires and fled. Their position was known to me, was very con-

spicuous, and the extreme right. The enemy, therefore, had gained this commanding position, and was passing our right flank; his force pursuing on the left had also advanced to a line with our left, and there was nothing there to oppose him. To preserve Smith's command from being pressed in front by fresh troops of the enemy, who were coming on at the same time, while they were under the certainty of being assailed on both flanks and the rear by the enemy, who respectively gained them, in which circumstances their destruction or surrender would have been inevitable, I sent (my horse being unable to move with the rapidity I wished) to General Smith to retreat. I am not acquainted with the relative position of the different corps composing his command, and can not, therefore, determine who of them engaged, the enemy, nor could I see how they acted; but when I arrived in succession at his different corps, which I did as soon as practicable, I do not recollect to have found any of them that were not in order, and retreating with as little confusion as could have been expected. When I reached the road I found Commodore Barney's men also retiring on the road, he having been overpowered by those who drove off Beall's regiment about the time I sent the order to retreat.

I still had no doubt but that Stansbury's command and the cavalry would have fallen down upon the Capitol by the roads which enter that part of the city from the north, and still solaced myself with the persuasion that I should be able there to rally them upon the city and Georgetown troops, who were retiring in order, and make another effort in advance of the Capitol to repulse the enemy.

After accompanying the retreating army within two miles of the Capitol, I rode forward for the purpose of selecting a position, and endeavoring to collect those who I supposed, from the rapidity of their flight, might have reached that point. A half a mile in advance of the Capitol I met Colonel Minor with his detachment, and directed him to form his men, wait until the

retreating army passed, and protect them, if necessary. When I arrived at the Capitol I found not a man had passed that way, and, notwithstanding the commanding view which is there afforded to the north, I could see no appearance of the troops. I dispatched an order to call in the cavalry to me there.

In a few moments the Secretary of State and the Secretary of War joined me, besides that they had been witnesses to the dispersion of the troops and the exhaustion of those just halted by me. I stated the diminution of my force, and the extent of the positions, which rendered it impossible to place the force I then had in such a position as to prevent the enemy from taking me on the flank as well as front, and that no reasonable hope could be entertained that we had any troops that could be relied on to make a resistance as desperate as necessary, in an isolated building which could not be supported by a sufficiency of troops without; indeed, it would have taken nearly the whole of the troops to have sufficiently filled the two wings, which would have left the enemy masters of every other part of the city, and given him the opportunity, without risk, in twenty-four hours, to have starved them into a surrender. The same objection equally applied to the occupation of any part of the city.

Both these gentlemen concurred that it would subject my force to certain capture or destruction; and in its reduced and exhausted condition, it was wise and proper to retire through Georgetown, and take post in the rear of it, on the heights, to collect my force. I accordingly pursued this course, and halted at Tenleytown two miles from Georgetown, on the Frederick road. Here was evinced one of the great defects of all undisciplined and unorganized troops; no effort could rouse officers and men to the exertion necessary to place themselves in such a state of comfort and security as it attainable even under very disadvantageous circumstances. Such of them as could be halted, instead of making those efforts, gave themselves up to the uncontrolled feelings

which fatigue, exhaustion, and privation produced, and many hundreds, in spite of all precautions and efforts, passed on and pursued their way, either toward home, or in search of refreshments and quarters. After waiting in this position until I supposed I collected all the force that could be gathered, I proceeded about five miles further on the river road, which leads a little wide to the left of Montgomery Court House, and in the morning gave orders for the whole to assemble at Montgomery Court House.

This position promised us shelter from the rain that began to fall an hour before day; was the most probable place for the supply of provisions, which the troops very much needed, and was a position from which we could best interpose between the enemy and Baltimore, and to which place, at that time, nobody doubted he intended to go by land from Washington.

In pursuance of this view, among the first acts after my arrival at Montgomery Court House was to direct a letter to General Stricker, who commanded at Baltimore, informing him that it was my intention to gather my force together there, receive what re-enforcements I could, show myself to the enemy as strong as possible, hang on his flank should he move to Baltimore, intimidate and harass him as much as possible in his movements, and endeavor always to preserve the power of interposing between him and Baltimore; directing him to re-establish the dispersed command of Lieutenant-colonel Sterett, multiply his means as much as possible, stop all re-enforcements of militia from Maryland, Pennsylvania, or elsewhere, and present himself to the enemy at the crossing of the Patapsco in as imposing a form as possible.

This letter I sent by Captain Aisquith, whom I found at Montgomery with fifteen or twenty others, the only part of the Baltimore detachment which had not returned home.

The first object was, in the absence of quarter-master and contractor, to make efforts to provide quarters and refreshments for

my men; a few provisions were found there belonging to the contractor, and a person temporarily appointed to issue, and the most active men of the place called upon and authorized to get in provisions.

The next object was to obtain a return of the different corps, which, from causes that can easily be understood among undisciplined men and unskilful officers, proved abortive before we moved next day. The arrival of several detachments of re-enforcements, the reports of officers bringing on detachments, who wanted orders and instructions, and the multiplied complaints of men and officers crowded together in small quarters, or entirely out of doors in a rainy, tempestuous day, the calculations and arrangements necessary for ulterior operations, and to meet the demands and wants of the great force which my calls were likely to produce, may be supposed to have been as much as could be borne by the efforts and attention of one man, which he was obliged to encounter for the want of a skilful, or even organized staff of any kind.

No regular details for service of any kind could be performed, and all the duties of this description were necessarily performed by the voluntary zeal of those corps who could not be borne down or discouraged by difficulties. My efforts were devoted to endeavor to prepare the detachment to move down toward the city, and hang upon and strike at the enemy whenever an opportunity occurred. The next morning, however, before a return of the corps could be had, and their situation known, I received intelligence that the enemy had moved from Washington the preceding night, and was in full march for Baltimore. I instantly put my command under arms, multiplied and strengthened my patrols to gain intelligence, and advanced as rapidly as was practicable to Baltimore. When the forces arrived at Snell's Bridge, on the upper branch of the Patuxent, I had concluded that, if the enemy was, as we had still reason to believe, proceeding to Baltimore, it would be most advisable for me to proceed directly thither, to lend the whole force of my power, as commander of the district,

to call out and bring into activity the resources of the place, and also because it was likely to become the most important station of the command. I accordingly left the command with General Stansbury, senior brigadier, and proceeded that night to Baltimore. On the road I met an express from Major-general S. Smith, who delivered me a letter, in which he informed me that he had been called out into service, and had assumed the command according to his rank; and by the time I reached Baltimore, I also learned that the enemy was proceeding to Marlborough, and not toward Baltimore.

If I had had longer time, or to repeat the action of Bladensburg, I could correct several errors, which might materially have affected the issue of that battle. The advanced force ought to have been nearer to the creek, along the edge of the low ground, where they would have been skirted with bushes, and have avoided the inconvenience of the cover which the orchard afforded the enemy. The edge of the low grounds on the right of the road ought to have been lined with musketry, and a battery of cannon also planted in the field on the right of the road, directly fronting the bridge; and if Commodore Barney's heavy artillery, with his more expert artillerists, had occupied the position which the advanced artillerists did, and these posts been obstinately defended, the enemy would not have crossed the river at that point, but would have been obliged to have made a circuit around to his right, and have crossed above and at the upper end of the town; or, if the whole force had been posted at the position of the second line, with all the advantage which it afforded, and had acted with tolerable courage and firmness, the event might have been different; but no advantage of position is proof against groundless panic, and a total want of discipline, skill, and experience.

On the night of my retreat to the city, I sent Assistant-adjutant-general Hite down to General Young to inform him of the movement, and to direct him to take the best position to secure

Fort Washington and his junction with me; or, in case the enemy should interpose between him and me, to have his boats ready to transport his men across the river; or, if he could not do that, to fall down the river and unite with General Stuart, and harass the enemy in the rear; and, above all, to be alert, and keep a vigilant guard upon every avenue of approach, to prevent a surprise. I also sent by Major Hite directions to the commanding officer of Fort Washington to advance a guard up to the main road upon all the roads leading to the fort, and in the event of his being taken in the rear of the fort by the enemy, to blow up the fort and retire across the river.

The distance of General Young, and the necessity of retaining a position near the fort as long as the designs of the enemy remained uncertain, rendered it impossible to have the assistance of his force at Bladensburg.

There was not a bridge on the road which the enemy pursued from his debarkation to Washington the destruction of which would have retarded his advance ten minutes. I believe, in fact, that the bridge at Bladensburg is the only one, and the facility with which that stream is every where fordable above the bridge, rendered useless the destroying it. Indeed, I believe that, had artillery been posted as advantageously as it might have been, and well served, the bridge would have acted as a decoy to the enemy to lead him into danger, and have been useful to us.

Those who have that happy intrepidity of assurance in their own capacity to see with certainty, in all cases, the means by which they could have avoided the errors of others, and by which past calamities might always have been averted, will find my condemnation easy. Those who are disposed to measure difficulties by the limits of human capacity, and who will impartially place themselves in my situation, will find it difficult to decide that any errors have been committed which might not have been equaled

or surpassed by any other commander, or that the calamities which have followed could have been averted or mitigated.