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A Littoral Frustration

The Union Navy and the Siege of Charleston, 1863–1865

Robert J. Schneller, Jr.

ON 7 APRIL 1863 NINE UNION IRONCLADS in line-ahead formation, under the command of Rear Admiral Samuel Francis Du Pont, stood into the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. Du Pont, one of the Union navy's leading officers, had already won fame by capturing Port Royal, South Carolina, in November 1861. Now commanding the Union's most technologically advanced ships—seven *Passaic*-class monitors, the broadside ironclad *New Ironsides*, and the lightly armored *Keokuk*—he was setting his sights on “the cradle of the rebellion.”

The idea of attacking Charleston with the ironclad fleet was the brainchild of Gustavus Vasa Fox, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Fox had spent the morning of 9 March 1862 in a tugboat off Norfolk, Virginia, with a ringside seat for the historic encounter between the USS *Monitor* and the CSS *Virginia*. He boarded the *Monitor* after the four-hour duel, which he considered to be the greatest naval battle ever fought. Viewing the outcome as a clear-cut victory for the Union, Fox was convinced that no enemy cannon could stop the Yankee ship; ten days after the battle of Hampton Roads, he told a congressional committee that the Navy would have “no hesitation in taking the *Monitor* right

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into Charleston."¹ Fox likened the fall of that city to "the fall of Satan's kingdom";² Northern newspaper editors reviled Charleston as "that viper's nest and breeding place of rebellion," the "hot-bed of secession";³ and Fox's superior, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, wrote that "there is no place that the American people would so delight to see captured as Charleston."⁴

Welles knew that the North badly needed such a victory. The winter of 1862–1863 had been the darkest period in the war for the Union. Major General Ambrose E. Burnside's Fredericksburg campaign had just been added to the list of Union disasters; no progress had been made on the inland waters since the capture of Memphis the previous summer; and the initial operations at Vicksburg had failed. A victory at Charleston in the spring of 1863 would reap vast moral and political dividends.

Fox (a former naval officer turned businessman) became obsessed with the idea that the Navy should take this prize without help from the Army. Jealousy had much to do with his reasoning, for he believed that the Navy never received due credit for its achievements in joint operations. "I feel my duty is two-fold," Fox wrote to one naval officer, "first to beat our Southern friends; second to beat the Army."⁵ Charleston fallen to the guns of technologically advanced Federal warships would be an unparalleled propaganda coup for the Navy.

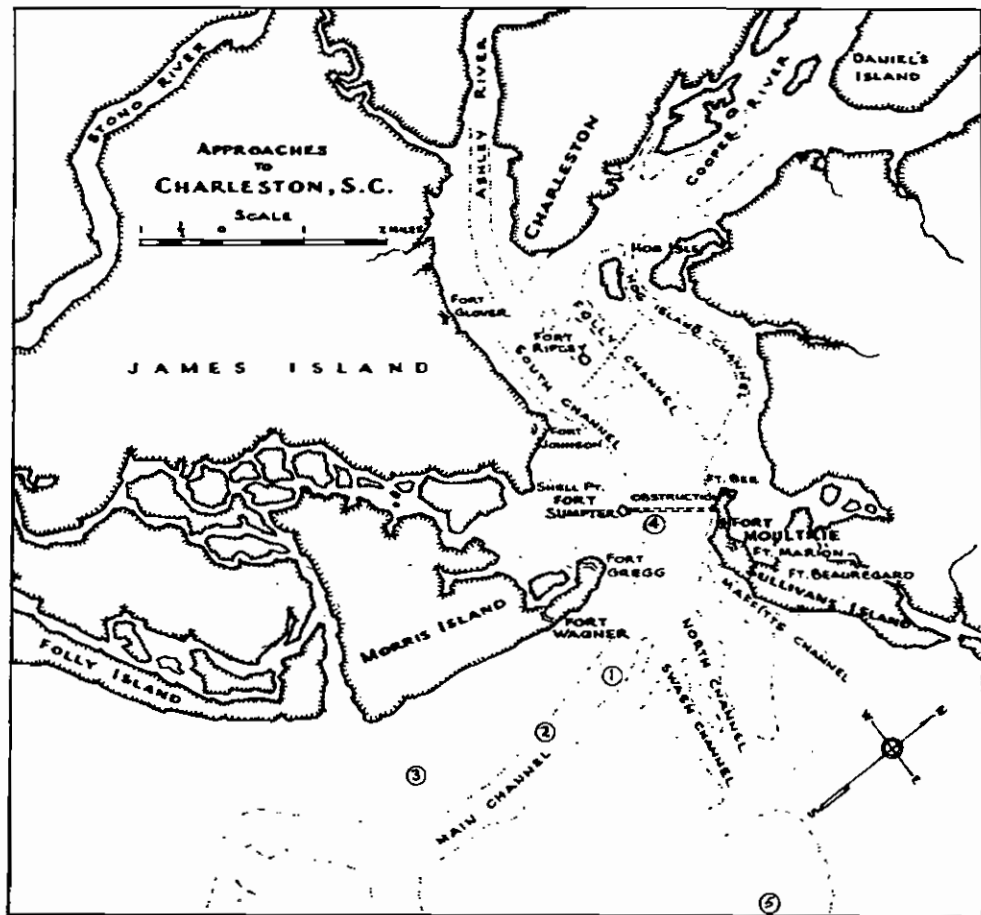
At their desks in Washington, the Secretary and his assistant imagined that Du Pont's ironclad fleet could steam right past the Confederate fortifications guarding the entrance to Charleston Harbor and, once inside, compel the city to surrender by threat of bombardment. Welles and Fox were confident of victory, for they believed that the monitors were invulnerable.⁶

However, Admiral Du Pont, commander of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, knew better. Charleston was the most heavily fortified port in the Confederacy. British officers who had visited the place reported that its defenses were stronger than those of Sevastopol during the Crimean War. The city itself lay five miles beyond the harbor entrance, at the extremity of a peninsula formed by the Ashley and Cooper rivers (see the map); numerous narrow but deep rivers and creeks divided the surrounding terrain into a patchwork of islands, which the Confederates had fortified against a land attack. In command was General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, one of the Confederacy's finest military engineers, who exercised operational control of Confederate naval as well as army forces in South Carolina and Georgia, his area of responsibility. Charleston Harbor was a cul-de-sac; Beauregard's engineers had ringed its perimeter with fortifications and batteries, the most prominent being Battery Wagner on Morris Island, on the southern side of the harbor entrance, and Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island, on the northern side. Fort Sumter, almost midway between James and Sullivan's islands, covered the surrounding batteries, and the island batteries could in turn cover Sumter. Beauregard had placed buoys in the harbor

The Siege of Charleston, South Carolina, 1863–1865.

A 1902 chart of Charleston Harbor and its approaches, showing the position of major features, fortifications, and wrecks of U.S. naval vessels. *Housatonic* (#5) has, for clarity, been moved up (i.e., northwest) approximately a quarter-mile. The wharves where the Union commanders at first confidently expected to demand the surrender of the city were (and are) located on the Cooper River side of the Charleston peninsula, generally opposite "Hog Isle." The city's battery (today a park) was at the southern tip of the peninsula, where, local tradition has it, the Cooper and Ashley rivers join to form the Atlantic Ocean.

Adapted from Richard Rush et al., eds., *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, series I, vol. 14, courtesy Naval Historical Center (NH 42916).



NOTES

- ① Ironsides over this torpedo two hours - April 7-1863
- ② Wreck of "Weehauken"
- ③ Wreck of "Keokuk"
- ④ Wreck of "Palapco"
- ⑤ Wreck of "Housatonic"

to give his gunners the exact ranges to attacking ships. As E.B. Potter and Chester W. Nimitz noted a century later, "All things considered, the path of an attacking column of ships would lead directly through the most devastating heavy artillery fire that could then be concentrated anywhere on earth."⁷

A tiny Confederate fleet complemented the fortifications. In addition to a few small wooden gunboats, Charleston's naval force eventually included the *Palmetto State*, the *Chicora*, and two other ironclads. Slow, difficult to handle, mechanically unreliable, and unseaworthy, these examples of Confederate high technology had earlier damaged two blockading vessels but posed no great threat to attacking Union ironclads.

"Low technology," in the form of underwater defenses, was a much greater problem. The Confederate government actively funded underwater warfare and had established a "torpedo station" in Charleston. That city's underwater defenses consisted of mines (called "torpedoes" in those days), heavily constructed rope and log booms stretched across the channel to prevent ships from passing or to entangle their propellers, and pilings arranged to keep attacking ships in the main channel, under the guns of the shore batteries. Shortages of materials and strong winds and tides made these obstructions difficult to maintain, but they were cheap and effective. As one historian put it, "The harbor's organic defensive system was the strongest in North America."⁸

The main attacking force was to be Du Pont's ironclads. His seven *Passaic*-class monitors, which were larger, improved versions of the original *Monitor*, were radical ships, quite different from the stately sailing vessels in which he and other naval officers of his generation had come of age. Atop the centerline of the *Passaic*'s low hull sat an armored, revolving turret, giving the vessel the appearance of (as had been said of the *Monitor*) a "cheesebox on a raft." Living conditions were wretched onboard these damp, smelly, dirty, cramped, dark, and poorly ventilated craft. A hot sun beating down on the iron deck turned a monitor into a veritable oven; temperatures in the engine room reached as high as 130°F. The air in the living quarters was an almost unbreathable thick fog. Everything was wet, from both condensation and innumerable leaks. With only about two feet of freeboard, the deck of a monitor underway in anything but a flat calm was awash, forcing the crew to remain below with hatches battened down.

Even the monitors' designer, John Ericsson, thought that a purely naval attack on Charleston would not succeed. Although perfectly confident that his weird ships could destroy enemy vessels, he believed that they could not by themselves overcome well sited fortifications.⁹ The inventor of the cannon that armed the monitors, Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren, also thought that a strictly naval attack against Charleston stood little chance of victory. He felt that an offensive should be a joint operation involving 50,000 troops.¹⁰ Although Du Pont's

42 Naval War College Review

success with wooden ships at Port Royal led some to believe that, in principle, ships could successfully attack forts, the ironclad fleet would be badly outgunned at Charleston. Each monitor carried only two Dahlgren guns, one eleven and one fifteen-inch smooth-bore;¹¹ Fort Sumter and the batteries on Morris and Sullivan's islands alone mounted over seventy guns. Furthermore, though the fifteen-incher was the Union navy's heaviest piece of ordnance, it was a new weapon, with a low rate of fire, and Dahlgren was unsure that it would endure protracted use.¹²

Du Pont had tested the mettle of the ironclads, and the results increased his doubts that they could overcome Charleston's defenses. On 27 January 1863 he had sent the *Montauk* up the Ogeechee River, just south of the Georgia line, to attack Fort McAllister, a modest nine-gun sand fort in Savannah's ring of defenses. The *Montauk* had bombarded the fort for four hours but failed to silence its guns. Other attacks had produced similar dismal results. Du Pont had concluded that the monitors' big guns were ineffective against forts; the ironclad fleet simply could not produce the volume of fire necessary to destroy an enemy fort in a single attack. He had reported this view to Welles and had argued that troops would be necessary to take Charleston.¹³ Accordingly, in February the Union government had dispatched Major General John G. Foster's XVIII Corps to Port Royal to join forces with Major General David Hunter's X Corps, but wrangling between Hunter and Foster over the plan of attack and chain of command, as well as the administration's insistence on attacking immediately, left the Navy to attack the city by itself.

Du Pont devised a plan for a reconnaissance in force. His fleet would steam into the harbor and reduce the fortifications in turn, with Sumter as the initial target. If the Rebel forts proved too strong, he would withdraw; if not, he would press the attack. Although Du Pont did not believe this plan would force the city to surrender, he determined to try, fearing that a lesser commander would suffer a rout.¹⁴

At the head of Du Pont's column, now coming within range of the Confederate batteries, steamed the monitor *Weehawken*, pushing a fifty-foot-long raft designed by John Ericsson to clear mines and obstructions. Union commanders hoped that Ericsson's "torpedo rake" would enable the *Weehawken* to sweep a lane into Charleston Harbor for the rest of the column. The contraption succeeded in detonating a mine without damaging the ship, but it made the already unwieldy monitor almost impossible to steer, and as a result the *Weehawken's* captain, John Rodgers, had to cast it loose.¹⁵

The ironclads bombarded Fort Sumter for almost two hours, and every Confederate gun in range fired furiously into the attackers. Ninety rounds of shot and shell perforated the *Keokuk*, which later sank, and five monitors suffered

extensive damage. The *Weehawken* fired twenty-six rounds and received fifty-three hits, which fragmented her side armor in places and snapped off thirty-six of the cast-iron bolts that held together her turret armor. The *Passaic* fired thirteen shells and received thirty-five hits; a shot striking the base of her turret jammed together the rails of a gun carriage, putting half of her two-gun battery out of action. Broken bolt-heads flew like bullets inside the *Nahant's* pilothouse, one of them fatally wounding the helmsman. It was the same all down the line. The disparity of fire was tremendous: where Fort Sumter alone expended over two thousand rounds, the entire ironclad squadron managed only 139, its inherently low volume of fire further restricted by shot striking the monitors' turret bases and gunport covers, putting cannon out of action. With Sumter damaged but far from destroyed, Du Pont withdrew. The monitors had proved difficult to maneuver and their complicated machinery vulnerable to concentrated gunfire.¹⁶

"I feel our duty is two-fold,' [the Assistant Secretary of the Navy] wrote to one naval officer, 'first to beat our Southern friends; second to beat the Army.'"

Du Pont was furious that his superiors in Washington, by ignoring his warnings that the striking power of the monitors was inadequate for strictly naval operations against forts, had brought about this repulse. He reasoned that renewing the attack without the cooperation of a land force could cost half his command; to attack again, he told his wife, would be "sheer folly." With the agreement of his captains, Du Pont decided against a second effort; all felt that it would have been "madness."¹⁷

Welles, who had staked on the monitor program not only his own reputation but those of the Navy Department and the Lincoln administration, could not accept this decision. The monitors, on which Welles's department had expended enormous amounts of money, had already proved useless for operations on the open sea. Barely able to remain afloat outside protected coastal waters, they could neither pursue enemy commerce raiders nor escort cargo vessels, such as those carrying gold from California. Only by taking the remaining Confederate seaports, or at least by occupying their harbors, could more seaworthy blockaders be released for such duties—and the monitor program be vindicated. Since Charleston and Wilmington, North Carolina, tied up the most blockading ships, Welles accorded their capture the highest priority.¹⁸ After all the preparation and expense, he was distressed that Du Pont apparently intended to abandon the offensive after a two-hour fight and the loss of one man. He ordered two separate investigations, both of which understated the damage that the monitors had sustained. The newspapers inferred that the admiral was to blame for the failure

44 Naval War College Review

to capture Charleston and venomously denounced him. Du Pont, bristling at their accusations of incompetence and cowardice, demanded permission to publish his own account of what had happened. Welles refused, unable to afford political backlash from assertions that the monitors were flawed; in any case, publishing the truth about the ironclads would provide valuable information to the enemy.¹⁹

Du Pont continued to refuse to renew the attack, so Welles considered sacking him. It was a difficult decision, because, as the Secretary realized, doing so would be tantamount to blaming the admiral for the failure; Du Pont, who had friends in Congress and a reputation as a "shrewd intriguer," would defend himself by blaming the monitors. It all would boil down to a showdown between Du Pont, his command abilities, and his powerful friends on the one hand, and Welles, the monitors, the Navy Department, and the policy of the Lincoln administration on the other. Eventually Welles decided to accept the risk, and he relieved Du Pont on 3 June.²⁰

Even so, the Secretary had come to accept Du Pont's contention that the "cradle of the rebellion" would not fall to a naval force alone; there would have to be a joint operation. Although Welles would have now preferred sending the ironclads to Rear Admiral David G. Farragut for an attack on Mobile, Alabama, Charleston remained important from a political standpoint. To capture the city would not only redeem the Navy's honor in the wake of Du Pont's failure but would also boost Union morale, which was sagging under the weight of financial difficulties, the draft, and, on 2–4 May, a new disaster at Chancellorsville, Virginia—Robert E. Lee's greatest victory. The Secretary chose Rear Admiral Dahlgren to succeed Du Pont in command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

John Adolphus Bernard Dahlgren was intelligent, meticulous, honest, and, more than anything else, ambitious. He wanted power, glory, promotion to high rank, and an immortal reputation as a naval hero, and he shamelessly used his friendship with President Abraham Lincoln to further his ambition. In the decade prior to the war he had won international recognition as an expert in naval ordnance, a reputation unparalleled by any other American naval officer. Despite his stature, however, the Navy Department had consistently resisted his projects. It had taken him years to convince the Navy to adopt his nine and eleven-inch guns. Even when these weapons earned a reputation as the world's most powerful and reliable naval artillery, the Department refused to organize the Ordnance Bureau as he wished and delayed for three years his development of rifled cannon. Assistant Secretary Fox's insistence on developing a fifteen-incher against his wishes proved the last straw.

Although he had never been in battle, Dahlgren decided to abandon his ordnance career in favor of a fighting command, as the true path to everlasting

naval fame. He had early caught wind of the planned naval attack on Charleston and in October 1862 had asked Welles to be chosen to lead it. Turned down, he went over the Secretary's head, to Lincoln; Secretary Welles, however, convinced the president that Dahlgren belonged in ordnance, and there he remained for the time being. As a consolation, Lincoln supported Dahlgren's promotion to rear admiral over Welles's objections. When Dahlgren learned of the Secretary's desire to replace Du Pont, he again went after the command, and this time he got it. Welles had originally picked Rear Admiral Andrew Hull Foote, but Foote had become terminally ill. Reluctantly, and at Lincoln's prodding, Welles gave Dahlgren command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.²¹

None of this endeared Dahlgren to his fellow officers, but he did have certain qualifications for his new job. To take Charleston he would have to conduct four distinct types of operations: amphibious assault, support of ground troops, naval bombardment of land fortifications, and underwater warfare. In the 1850s, while developing bronze boat guns, Dahlgren had devised tactics for amphibious and naval gunfire support operations. In *Shells and Shell Guns*, his 1856 magnum opus on ordnance, he had discussed the actions of allied fleets against Russian shore batteries during the Crimean War, particularly the French use of armored floating batteries against Russian forts at Kinburn. On the other hand, like all naval officers of his day, he had nothing in his background to prepare him for underwater warfare.²²

Dahlgren's counterpart in the Union army would be Brigadier General Quincy A. Gillmore, commanding X Corps. One of the Army's best engineers, Gillmore had already compiled an impressive war record: he had served as chief engineer on the Port Royal expedition, reduced Fort Pulaski at the mouth of the Savannah River in April 1862, won a victory at Somerset, Kentucky, the next month, and had been twice brevetted for gallantry and meritorious service. Unfortunately, however, Gillmore understood almost nothing about naval operations. He was also a vain and egotistical man who posed for photographs with a hand inside his coat in emulation of Napoleon. (Upon his promotion in the summer of 1863 to major general of volunteers, the rank commensurate with his position, he was to have a military band follow him around for a day or so, playing loudly all the while.) His concern for his reputation outmatched even Dahlgren's, and, as time would tell, he would stoop to almost anything to protect it.²³

In late May, Gillmore held a series of conferences with Fox, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, and Major General Henry W. Halleck, General in Chief of the United States Army. He proposed a broad plan for joint operations against Charleston, comprising four distinct steps. The Army would, first, make an amphibious landing on Morris Island; second, capture Battery Wagner; and

46 Naval War College Review

third, knock Fort Sumter to pieces. The Navy would then, fourth, clear the harbor obstructions and steam past the remaining enemy batteries to the wharves and demand the surrender of the city. Welles, Fox, and Stanton approved of the plan; even Halleck, who generally disapproved of joint operations, seemed to like it. On 12 June 1863 Gillmore formally took command of the Department of the South, the Army counterpart to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.²⁴

Dahlgren arrived at Port Royal on 4 July and took over the squadron two days later. Welles gave him only one specific instruction: "Please afford [Gillmore] all the aid and assistance in your power in conducting his operations."²⁵ Other than that, the admiral was "to consider himself clothed with full powers" in planning and executing his own operations.²⁶

Dahlgren and Gillmore met on 4 and 5 July. The general laid out a plan for operations against Morris Island and insisted that the attack commence as soon as possible, because the enemy was strengthening his defenses there. The admiral agreed to support the assault. A month earlier Dahlgren had considered a purely naval attack against Charleston but thought one feasible only if the Navy Department gave him six or seven more monitors in addition to the seven already under his command. Since Welles had told him that no new monitors would be ready before October, Dahlgren considered his primary role to be supporting army operations ashore. Gillmore did not mention his grand four-phase plan, and Dahlgren came away from the meeting believing that Morris Island itself was the sole objective. Although Dahlgren clearly understood that a naval assault into the harbor was in the offing, he believed it would come later rather than sooner. Gillmore, however, understood his own goal to be to prepare the way into the harbor for the Navy.²⁷

This misunderstanding was not the worst of it. There was no overall Union commander at Charleston; Dahlgren had the naval forces, Gillmore the army, and neither had authority over the other. The naval chain of command ran upward from Dahlgren to Fox and Welles, to Lincoln. Similarly, the army chain went from Gillmore to Halleck, to Stanton, to Lincoln. For their parts, Welles and Halleck, like Dahlgren and Gillmore, had differing ideas about the campaign: Welles had begun to entertain doubts that an attack on Charleston would succeed (but failed to convey his misgivings to anyone), while Halleck remained confident that the city could be taken—yet seemed ready to withdraw the land forces there and dispatch them to Vicksburg.

There were other problems as well. Fox's dislike for joint operations stemmed from Halleck's claiming for the Army exclusive credit for the February 1862 victories (won jointly by Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant and then-Captain Andrew Foote) at forts Henry and Donelson on the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers. Furthermore, no written plans for a joint attack on Charleston existed

when Gillmore and Dahlgren assumed their respective commands. Success, therefore, would depend on Dahlgren's and Gillmore's ability to cooperate and solve problems themselves.²⁸

Four days after Dahlgren assumed command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, the Federal forces attacked. At 5:00 in the morning of 10 July, 2,500 Union troops landed on the southern end of Morris Island and began moving north. The monitors *Nahant*, *Montauk*, *Weehawken*, and *Catskill*, in which Dahlgren flew his flag, opened fire at 6:15 to cover the advance. Small craft armed with Dahlgren boat guns provided close-in support, and with well aimed fire drove the Confederates from their positions. Shell and canister inflicted heavy casualties on the defenders as they retreated towards Fort Wagner. By nine o'clock the Federals had occupied three-fourths of the island, with skirmishers in range of the fort; the troops, exhausted by the heat and four hours of combat, went no further. The monitors moved up to bombard Wagner and maintained a steady fire until 6:00 that evening.²⁹

"[General Gillmore's] easy manner allayed Dahlgren's suspicions—how could someone he got along with so well in person be condemning him behind his back? But Gillmore was doing exactly that."

At dawn the next day, Gillmore's troops assaulted the fort. The attack failed, because the Federal column barely outnumbered the defenders; the Confederates beat them back, inflicting 339 casualties. Dahlgren had first learned of the movement at 6:00 A.M. Three hours later, Gillmore asked him for gunfire support; the admiral sent four monitors, but by then it was already too late. Nevertheless, in an after-action report to Welles, Dahlgren praised both the monitors and Gillmore's effort. Welles thought that Gillmore had attacked prematurely and with insufficient forces.³⁰

Dahlgren and Gillmore decided to soften up Fort Wagner with a heavy bombardment before launching another attack. For a week Dahlgren's ironclads kept up a steady fire while Federal troops constructed batteries on Morris Island. On the 18th, Federal naval and land forces bombarded Fort Wagner for eleven hours; Rebel commanders later estimated that the Yankees fired nine thousand shells, at the rate of about fourteen per minute. The fort remained almost silent throughout the bombardment. Late in the afternoon Gillmore signaled that he intended to storm the fort at sunset, when the dim light would make it difficult for Confederate gunners on the islands across the harbor to see their targets. The Federal cannonade ceased at dusk, and six thousand troops moved forward in a dense column. The 1,300 defenders in Fort Wagner and the nearby batteries poured a withering fire into the attackers. At the climax of the battle, soldiers of

48 Naval War College Review

the 54th Massachusetts, the most famous black regiment of the war, made it to the top of the parapet, where most of them fell. The attackers retreated after a fierce fight, leaving behind 1,500 casualties; the rebels lost only 188 men. In his report to Welles Dahlgren attributed the failure to "a manifest lack of force."³¹

Gillmore settled down to siege operations. His engineers constructed a series of zig-zag trenches approaching Fort Wagner, while his gunners bombarded it day and night. Nearly every morning the fleet would close in and pound the fort with heavy ordnance, firing all day (aside from a pause for lunch). The naval gunners became expert, placing rounds almost anywhere they wanted; they even devised a way to reach the center of the fort by ricocheting shells off the water. No doubt having the United States Navy's principal ordnance expert as their commanding officer had something to do with their performance.³²

By 8 August the Federals had opened a parallel trench five hundred yards from Wagner, bringing the sappers within range of Fort Sumter's barbette guns, whose projectiles now arced over Wagner and fell almost vertically into the Union position. Federal progress stopped cold. Unless Sumter's barbette batteries were silenced, Wagner might hold out until disease and attrition compelled a Federal withdrawal from Morris Island.³³ On 17 August, therefore, a week-long bombardment began from the ironclads and the Union batteries erected on Morris Island. Gillmore requested support from the Navy almost daily. Dahlgren cooperated fully but warned the general that the monitors' cannon were wearing out. Gillmore agreed that the guns should not be used up against Wagner and Sumter "but kept for the interior defenses of Charleston."³⁴ The bombardment of Sumter climaxed on 23 August. That day Gillmore wrote Dahlgren, "I consider the offensive power of Sumter entirely destroyed from to-day's firing. I do not believe they can serve a single gun."³⁵ Yankee engineers could now press closer to Wagner. The general later recalled that Sumter was "reduced to the condition of a mere infantry outpost, alike incapable of annoying our approaches to Fort Wagner, or of inflicting injury upon the iron-clads." He believed that Dahlgren was free to launch an attack into the harbor and fully expected him to do so. As he saw it, the Army had eliminated the threat to the fleet; it was now up to the Navy to deliver the city.³⁶

But the general had overlooked three important developments. First, the condition of the fleet had deteriorated. For the attack of the 23rd Dahlgren could muster only five of his seven monitors and the broadside ironclad *New Ironsides*. One of the two unavailable monitors was on station in Wassau Sound, keeping an eye on a rebel ram building in Savannah, Georgia; the other was having her pilothouse repaired at Port Royal. All had been in service for six to seven months and were the worse for wear—in the actions off Morris Island the monitors had fired approximately eight thousand rounds and received 882 hits. Their fifteen-inch guns were fast approaching the limit of their service life, which was only

one-third that of the eleven-inchers, and only eleven-inchers were available as replacements. Enemy shot had bent many armor plates, loosened turret packing, and sheared off dozens of nuts and bolts. Lying close inshore during often foul weather had strained their hulls, causing some to leak badly. Their bottoms had become fouled with barnacles and grass, reducing their speed to between three and three and a half knots. The second development was that during the two weeks after 23 August 1863 the Confederates removed all the serviceable heavy cannon from Sumter, which was still in their hands, and systematically distributed them among the James Island batteries, Fort Moultrie, and the city of Charleston. This made the inner defenses more formidable than the outer wall of fire that had wrought such havoc on the ironclads during Du Pont's attack of 7 April. Finally, and most importantly, while Union cannon had been pounding Fort Sumter to rubble, the Confederates had been strengthening their underwater defenses. In sum, the defenses of Charleston had grown stronger and the ironclad fleet weaker since the Union's original attempt.³⁷

Nevertheless, Dahlgren intended to launch a naval attack into the harbor to probe the enemy's defenses. Early in the morning of 26 August, he assembled the captains of the ironclads to explain his plan: small boats and a steam tug would clear a lane through the obstructions, whereupon the monitors would pass the forts and attack into the harbor. The ironclads got underway at nine o'clock but had difficulty making headway against a strong flood tide. After about two hours the weather took a turn for the worse, and Dahlgren called off the attack.³⁸ He intended to try again on the 29th but cancelled the operation because of reports of gunfire from Sumter. The success of the naval attack, he reasoned, depended upon the fort being absolutely silent; even musket fire would hinder efforts to clear the obstructions, and he considered it impossible to enter the harbor while those remained in place. Dahlgren still regarded Sumter as a considerable threat.³⁹

Meanwhile, Gillmore's sappers had pushed their siege lines to within 150 yards of Fort Wagner, and the general decided that the time had come for the final assault. At dawn on 5 September, Gillmore's artillery and Dahlgren's ships opened up a forty-two-hour bombardment of the fort. When the shells began falling, the Confederates on Morris Island numbered nine hundred men; the firing reduced the defenders to four hundred effectives. Gillmore scheduled the final assault for the morning of 7 September, but the Confederates evacuated Morris Island the night before.⁴⁰ At about 5:10 on the morning of the 7th, Gillmore signalled Dahlgren, "The whole island is ours, but the enemy have escaped us."⁴¹

In an attempt to exploit any ensuing confusion or loss of morale in the Confederate ranks, Dahlgren demanded the immediate surrender of Fort Sumter. "Come and take it," the Rebels replied.⁴² The admiral intended to do exactly that with an amphibious assault; "There is nothing but a corporal's guard at the

50 Naval War College Review

fort," he told the commander of the landing force, "and all we have to do is go in and take possession." On the 8th Dahlgren signalled Gillmore of his intention to attack that night. The general replied that he was planning the same thing and proposed that Dahlgren place his force under army command to coordinate the effort and prevent mistakes. Dahlgren flatly turned down the suggestion; he did not want to share the glory.⁴³

In fact, Dahlgren's plan was foredoomed. In April the Confederates had recovered a code book from the wreck of the *Keokuk*, sunk in Du Pont's attack, enabling them to read the signals exchanged between the flagship and Gillmore's headquarters. Intercepting the admiral's signal on the afternoon of the 8th, the Confederates prepared a hot reception.⁴⁴

Before sunrise on the 9th, small boats carrying five hundred sailors and Marines rowed toward Fort Sumter, unaware that the defenders knew they were coming. The fort's walls were near the water's edge, and when the boats drew to within a few yards of them the Rebels fired a devastating volley. Union sailors who struggled ashore met a deluge of hand grenades and musketry. The Confederate ironclad *Chicora* now opened fire on them, as well as artillery from across the harbor. Unable to scale the walls, the Yankees sheltered in the recesses, realizing that they had fallen into a trap. Those who could, surrendered; the rest withdrew, leaving behind 127 sailors and Marines. The Confederates lost not a man. As for Gillmore, his assault never got started. His men had rendezvoused in a creek west of Morris Island, but when the general realized that the sailors had failed he cancelled the attack.⁴⁵

Despite this failure, Dahlgren retained his zeal for a naval offensive against Charleston; he had, however, no desire to attack with his current force. With several more monitors, he told Welles, "there would be every reason to look for success."⁴⁶ The Secretary promised to send new monitors as soon as they were completed but discouraged Dahlgren from attacking before they arrived; Welles did not want to risk losing the nation's only ironclad fleet while there was a possibility of other operations along the Southern coast, not to mention the political backlash. Dahlgren inferred that the Secretary did not want him to launch an attack unless guaranteed of success, whereas Welles considered the final decision to attack to be up to the admiral. Dahlgren held a council of war on 22 October to discuss the question; the majority of his ironclad captains expressed the view that an attack should be postponed until the new monitors arrived. Dahlgren concurred.⁴⁷

The decision to postpone offensive operations angered Gillmore. He had fully expected the Navy to enter Charleston Harbor and attack the city soon after 23 August; now, the general reasoned, because Fort Sumter no longer mounted heavy cannon, it no longer posed a threat to the ironclads. The longer Dahlgren delayed the final attack, the more impatient Gillmore became.⁴⁸ The press,

meanwhile, had perceived that the monitors had suffered little damage and were criticizing the Navy for not attacking. Dahlgren could not admit the truth about the monitors' condition without politically damaging the administration and providing useful information to the enemy. Many of the newspaper accounts seemed to originate from Gillmore's headquarters, and Dahlgren began to suspect that the general was behind them. He confronted Gillmore, who denied any role in the matter, attributing it to sensational journalism and disgruntled officers. His easy manner allayed Dahlgren's suspicions—how could someone he got along with so well in person be condemning him behind his back?⁴⁹

But Gillmore was doing exactly that. Not wishing to be blamed for the lack of progress at Charleston, he was seeking to focus the newspapers' criticism on Dahlgren and the Navy. On 24 October two of his subordinates visited Welles to denounce Dahlgren as totally unfit for command and even called him an imbecile. Welles, who was certain that Gillmore had sent the officers, reported the matter to Lincoln.⁵⁰ Upon hearing the suggestion that Dahlgren be relieved, the president was said to have exclaimed that he would "be damned if he would do anything to discredit or disgrace John A. Dahlgren."⁵¹ Lincoln, Welles, and even Fox believed that the admiral had done all that could be done with the forces available to him; the president censured Gillmore for his behind-the-scenes insinuations.⁵²

By January 1864, Dahlgren himself began to suspect that Gillmore had in fact condoned the press attacks on the Navy. His suspicions were to be confirmed in May when, after the War Department transferred Gillmore, two of the general's former subordinates told Dahlgren that Gillmore had been trying to set him up as a scapegoat for the failure to capture Charleston. For a campaign then still in progress, whose final success depended upon cooperation between the Army and Navy, it was a bad omen.⁵³

On the night of 5 October 1863, the Confederate torpedo boat *David*, a steam-powered, cigar-shaped vessel about fifty feet long and six in diameter, had attacked the 3,486-ton *New Ironsides* with a spar torpedo, a contact mine affixed to a ten-foot-long pole projecting from the bow. The *New Ironsides* sustained damage but remained in action. Now, on the night of 17 February 1864, the Confederate human-powered submersible *Hunley*—delivered by rail from Mobile, Alabama—drove a spar torpedo against the *Housatonic*, a wooden steamer. The ensuing explosion sent the *Housatonic* to the bottom.

As a result of these attacks, Dahlgren implemented countermeasures against torpedo boats (see the plate). Every evening Union sailors set up nets and log booms around their ships; ships not so protected remained constantly underway. Throughout the hours of darkness small boats, operating in the eerie glow of calcium searchlights, patrolled the waters around the fleet's major units. For the

ORDER, No. 20.

Flag Steamer Philadelphia,
PORT ROYAL HARBOR, S. C., Feb. 19, 1864.

The *Housatonic* has just been Torpedoed by a Rebel *David*, and sunk almost instantly.

It was at night and the water smooth.

The success of this undertaking will, no doubt, lead to similar attempts along the whole line of blockade.

If Vessels on blockade are at anchor, they are not safe, particularly in smooth water, without outriggers and hawsers stretched around with rope netting dropped in the water.

Vessels on inside blockade had better take post outside at night and keep underweigh, until these preparations are completed.

All the Boats must be on the patrol, when the vessel is not in movement.

The Commanders of Vessels are required to use their utmost vigilance—nothing less will serve.

I intend to recommend to the Navy Department the assignment of a large reward as prize money to crews of boats or vessels who shall capture or beyond doubt destroy, one of these Torpedo boats.

JOHN A. DAHLGREN,

*Rear Admiral, Commanding
South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.*

Rear Admiral Dahlgren's response to the "torpedo" threat. From George W. Emory, ed., *Historical Monographs in the Navy Department Library: A Catalog*, Naval History Bibliographies no. 3 (Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1994), p. 14.

rest of the war, Union sailors at Charleston would stand to their guns by night and sleep by day. These countermeasures prevented further successful torpedo boats attacks but ceded control of the inner harbor at night to the Rebels, enabling them to strengthen their fortifications and underwater defenses.⁵⁴

Dahlgren believed that the loss of the *Housatonic* would force Union authorities finally to take underwater warfare seriously. "Torpedoes have been laughed at," he wrote in his diary, "but this disaster ends that."⁵⁵ Dahlgren told

Welles that torpedoes constituted "the most formidable of the difficulties in the way to Charleston."⁵⁶ The Secretary, however, proved reluctant to fund counter-torpedo research. As a result, Union naval commanders developed their own ad hoc countermeasures.⁵⁷

Dahlgren devoted substantial effort to the problem. To gather intelligence on the enemy's underwater defenses he used both active and passive measures, sending vessels to reconnoiter the harbor, interrogating deserters, and examining obstructions washed away by heavy weather. He learned that the enemy's underwater defenses included various kinds of mines, nets, rafts, wooden booms, and even railroad iron. The mines could be detonated electrically from shore or by contact with ships, and they ranged in size from metal cylinders filled with about forty pounds of gunpowder to steam boilers filled with from one to two thousand pounds of powder. To counter these defenses Dahlgren entertained various proposals from private inventors for mine and obstruction-clearing contraptions, but apparently none of them worked out. He also devised tactics involving formations of boats and tugs equipped with grapnels and other equipment to clear paths through the obstructions. On one such mission, the monitor *Patapsco*, sent to cover the small craft and rigged with a variation of Ericsson's torpedo rake, struck a mine and went down with sixty-two officers and men. Dahlgren was never to find an effective counter to Confederate underwater defenses.⁵⁸

Nevertheless, he remained eager to mount an offensive. In meetings at the Navy Department in March and April 1864, however, Fox told him that an attack was now out of the question unless he was certain of success. The Assistant Secretary declared that a defeat would hurt the government, the Navy Department, and Dahlgren's reputation. In view of Farragut's impending attack on Mobile and Grant's requests for naval aid on the James River to support the Richmond campaign, Fox added, Dahlgren could not hope for early reinforcements. Furthermore, Welles no longer regarded capturing the city as essential, although it would certainly yield political dividends; strategically, blockade was sufficient. In any case, months before, by the end of 1863, the War Department had abandoned hope of capturing the city by amphibious operations.⁵⁹ Stephen B. Luce, who commanded the monitor *Nantucket* during the siege, put it this way: "The government's policy was to keep only just enough troops in and about that district to occupy the attention of the Confederate authorities and prevent them from sending the troops for the defense of Charleston, to re-enforce the army under Lee."⁶⁰

Dahlgren decided that there was no glory in presiding over a stalemate; on 5 March and again on 14 May 1864 he asked Welles to relieve him of command of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron. These requests stunned the Secretary; Dahlgren had pulled a great many strings to get the post, and although

54 Naval War College Review

Welles had originally opposed it he was now perfectly satisfied with the job Dahlgren was doing and doubted that even Farragut could have done better. The Secretary did not permit the admiral to step down.⁶¹

Dahlgren endured the humdrum of blockade and the ignominy of stalemate until Thanksgiving, when he received word that Major General William T. Sherman and fifty thousand troops, who had made the famous march through Georgia, had left Atlanta and were marching on Savannah. The approaching juggernaut promised to break the impasse; Welles ordered Dahlgren to render any assistance he could.⁶² Sherman made contact with the squadron on 12 December. Thereafter, while the Army invested Savannah on the land side, the Navy maintained a presence on the rivers, creeks, and sounds. Nevertheless, Confederate forces successfully evacuated the city during the night of 20–21 December, escaping across the Savannah River on a makeshift bridge.⁶³

Dahlgren spent the next few weeks examining the conquered city's defenses and discussing future operations with Sherman. From Savannah the general intended to march inland through South Carolina and then North Carolina, eventually linking up with Grant's army. He did not intend to march on Charleston, for he believed that the city itself had little military value. Besides, he felt there was no need to in any case. As he put it to Luce, "You navy fellows have been hammering away at Charleston for the past three years. But just wait till I get into South Carolina; I will cut her communications and Charleston will fall into your hands like a ripe pear."⁶⁴ Sherman asked Dahlgren to make demonstrations up the Edisto and Stono rivers to pin down Charleston's defenders and divert enemy attention from his march. Dahlgren proposed a naval attack against the forts on Sullivan's Island; the general, unimpressed by the prospects of another frontal fleet assault on Charleston's defenses, persuaded Dahlgren to support instead a feint at Bull's Bay, roughly twenty-two miles up the coast. Sherman's army left Savannah on 24 January, Dahlgren's ships operating in the rivers nearby to cover it and compel the Confederates to spread out their forces.⁶⁵

On 6 February 1865 a steamer brought an unexpected passenger to the Union forces near Charleston. It was Gillmore, who had returned to resume command of the Department of the South. When the general boarded the flagship to greet Dahlgren officially, the admiral refused to shake his hand.⁶⁶ Dahlgren decided that he could not work with a man who had "harbor[ed] scribblers to lampoon me," as he noted in his diary, "and den[ie]d their assertions to my face."⁶⁷ He again asked Welles to relieve him.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, over the next several days the Navy supported diversionary attacks against Secessionville, James Island, and Bull's Bay, a kind of joint operation Dahlgren had perfected over the previous year. In February 1864 he had supported army operations along the St. John's River near Jacksonville, Florida. In the vicinity of Charleston, he had supported attacks up the Ashepoo

and South Edisto rivers in May of that year, up the Stono in July, and the Broad River in November and December. Most of these operations followed a common pattern: the Army landed, the Confederates repulsed its attack, and the Navy covered its retreat. These defeats disgusted Dahlgren, but his naval gunfire did enable the troops to make clean getaways. The Bull's Bay operation agreed to with Sherman broke the mold, however; the landing force drove the Confederates from their positions and pushed inland. Meanwhile, vessels of the Blockading Squadron covered Sherman's army at various river and stream crossings.⁶⁹

On 13 February 1865, Dahlgren received a communication from Sherman: rain had so muddied the roads that the general thought he might have to turn toward Charleston after all. Dahlgren immediately withdrew his latest request to be relieved of command; the prospect of finally taking the cradle of the rebellion outweighed the indignity of working with Gillmore. "Now I must . . . fight it out with the Rebs. [sic] in front and Gillmore in the rear," he noted in his diary.⁷⁰ In the end, Sherman marched inland, bypassing Charleston as he had originally planned.

The Confederate high command believed that losing Charleston's garrison would be worse than losing the city itself. Accordingly, rebel forces abandoned the city on the night of 17–18 February. As the last Confederate pickets left the city on the morning of the 18th, the magazine at Battery Bee on Sullivan's Island exploded with a deafening roar. Dahlgren's ironclads gingerly approached the entrance of the harbor. The monitor *Canonius* steamed opposite Fort Moultrie and fired two rounds into it; there was no reply. The *Canonius's* crew had fired the last shots of the 587-day siege of Charleston. A detachment from the 21st U.S. Colored Infantry regiment raised the Union flag over Fort Sumter.⁷¹ Later that day, Dahlgren wrote to his sister:

The game is played out—The leaders may struggle on so long as there are fools to follow, but their last die is cast and the end is on them—

It would have been a great satisfaction to me to have entered this harbor amid the smoke of battle—but this was not to be and I must ever bear the disappointment as I can—⁷²

Why did the Union fail to capture Charleston by storm?

Conceptualization and coordination of operational plans are perfectly appropriate activities for the national leadership, exercised in those days (for lack of other mechanisms) by the cabinet. Secretary Welles and Assistant Secretary Fox's objective for the siege—the fall of the symbolic cradle of the rebellion—cannot be faulted at the strategic level. Victory would have provided a tremendous boost to Northern morale and the political fortunes of the Lincoln administration, whenever it might have occurred; it also would have deprived

56 Naval War College Review

the Confederacy of a valuable port and dealt the Rebel cause a stunning psychological blow.

At the operational level, however, the failure of Welles and Fox to understand technology—both Union and Confederate—doomed from the start their concept of a strictly naval assault. The *Monitor-Virginia* duel placed in their minds an alluring vision of invulnerable monitors steaming imperiously past Confederate fortifications and over underwater defenses right up to Charleston's wharves to demand its surrender. In the earliest stages, Ericsson (the ships' designer), Dahlgren (the designer of their guns), and Du Pont (the operational commander) all told them that they were wrong, but Welles and Fox were blinded by glory and by rivalry with the Army. Furthermore, they never mustered sufficient forces for an attack, and they never considered the potential of Confederate underwater warfare to hinder offensive operations. After the war, Admiral David D. Porter observed that "naval success in an attack on Charleston was out of the question. The force supplied the naval commanders-in-chief was so small, and the obstructions, torpedoes and forts so numerous, that it would have been little less than a miracle for a hostile fleet to reach the city."⁷³ The result was Du Pont's failure and political repercussions probably worse than those that may have arisen had the Union navy never attacked.

Given a decision to launch a joint campaign, the principal reason for the Union's failure to capture Charleston was lack of coordination within the high command. The absence of a unified command structure meant that coordination of planning for so large a campaign was a matter for the Navy and War departments jointly, but Welles and Fox never met with their counterparts to do the necessary work. Again, Fox's rivalry with the Army hindered interservice cooperation, as did Halleck's dislike of the very idea of joint operations. In sum, the Union's national leaders failed to reconcile political ends and military means with respect to Charleston.

Farther down the chain of command, success in joint operations often hinges on the ability of the commanders on the scene to cooperate with one another. Admiral Dahlgren proved an excellent team player. It is true that his unwillingness to share with the Army the glory of capturing Fort Sumter helped to botch the September 1863 boat attack; but he answered General Gillmore's every call for naval gunfire during the Morris Island operation, and he provided solid support to General Sherman's forces during their march into South Carolina. One Union officer, Brigadier General Alexander Schimmelfennig, captured the general tone of Army-Navy relations at Charleston in a letter to Dahlgren after the city fell. He expressed high esteem for Dahlgren, thanked him for "the uniform courtesy and invaluable cooperation" the admiral had shown him, and stated that "good feeling and true comradeship" had existed between army and naval officers throughout the campaign.⁷⁴

On the other hand, it is hard to imagine how Quincy Gillmore's behavior could have been worse. His failure during the summer of 1863 to explain his grand four-phase plan to Dahlgren was bad enough. Worse, with regard to the newspaper attacks on the Navy, he lied to his comrade's face while stabbing him in the back. In an era and profession in which honor meant everything, this act could have ruined any subsequent chance for cooperation during the campaign. Fortunately, Dahlgren faulted only Gillmore personally, not the Army as a whole.

Both commanders deserve criticism on other accounts. Dahlgren thrice tried to resign simply because the situation frustrated him. Despite the importance of the government's purpose of pinning Confederate forces on the Carolina coast to keep them from Lee, the glory-hungry admiral did not wish to preside over a stalemate. His frustration at never being in a position to lead a glorious naval charge may have prevented him from devising operations more in line with his superiors' strategy. Dahlgren's principal shortcoming, however—though it may have been a shortcoming of the state of military technology, inasmuch as he did try—was his inability to develop a counter to the enemy's underwater defenses. For his part, Gillmore had a lengthy catalog of errors to answer for. Most prominently, besides his character defects, not only did Gillmore fail to concentrate his forces for the first two assaults on Fort Wagner but he never came to understand the limitations of the monitors, nor did he grasp the necessity of countering the Confederates' underwater defenses. In sum, Gillmore showed little understanding of joint operations.

There was no serious threat to the lines of communication outside Charleston Harbor, and the Union navy maintained sea control throughout the campaign. The few Confederate ironclads and torpedo boats could not prevent Union naval commanders from landing ground troops wherever they wanted. Until Sherman arrived, however, the Rebels managed to counter this advantage with a unified command, interior lines of communication, and an integrated defensive system. For the Union navy, problems arising from inattention to joint and littoral operations—misunderstandings about weapon technology, the absence of high-level coordination, inadequate planning within the theater, personality clashes, mistakes by senior commanders, and a failure to find effective countermeasures to underwater defenses—resulted in its most frustrating campaign of the war.

Notes

1. Quoted in A. James Merrill, "Strategy Makers in the Union Navy Department, 1861–1865," *Mid America*, January 1962, p. 28.

2. Fox to Du Pont, 3 June 1862, *Confidential Correspondence of Gustavus Vasa Fox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy*, ed. Robert M. Thompson and Richard Wainwright (New York: Naval History Society, 1920), vol. 1, pp. 126–8.

3. Quoted in E. Milby Burton, *The Siege of Charleston, 1861–1865* (Columbia, S.C.: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1970), p. 99; and in Rowena Reed, *Combined Operations in the Civil War* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1978), p. 268.

58 Naval War College Review

4. Quoted in Stephen B. Luce, "Naval Administration, III," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* [hereafter *Proceedings*], December 1903, p. 817.
5. Fox to Du Pont, 3 June 1862.
6. Other sources for Charleston, Fox, Welles, and monitors are: K. Jack Bauer, "Samuel Francis DuPont: Aristocratic Professional," *Captains of the Old Steam Navy: Makers of the American Naval Tradition*, ed. James C. Bradford (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1986), pp. 153-4; Burton, p. 135; Eugene B. Canfield, *Civil War Naval Ordnance* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1969), pp. 8-10; John D. Hayes, "Captain Fox—He Is the Navy Department," *Proceedings*, September 1965, pp. 67-8; Gerald Henig, "Admiral Samuel F. Du Pont, the Navy Department, and the Attack on Charleston, April 1863," *Naval War College Review*, February 1979, p. 69; Reed, pp. 263-9, 280-93; and Richard S. West, Jr., *Gideon Welles, Lincoln's Navy Department* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1943), pp. 218-20.
7. E.B. Potter and C.W. Nimitz, eds., *Sea Power: A Naval History* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960), p. 313.
8. Bauer, p. 154; Burton, pp. 132-6, 268-75; Samuel Jones, *The Siege of Charleston and the Operations on the South Atlantic Coast in the War among the States* (New York: Neale Publishing Co., 1911), pp. 198-9; Tamara Moser Mella, "Damn the Torpedoes": *A Short History of U.S. Naval Mine Countermeasures, 1777-1991* (Washington: Naval Historical Center, 1991), pp. 9-10; Milton F. Perry, *Infernal Machines: The Story of Confederate Submarine and Mine Warfare* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 49-62; Reed, pp. 289-91, 319; and William N. Still, Jr., *Iron Afloat: The Story of the Confederate Ironclads* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 112-27, 219, 228.
9. Ericson to Fox, 10 April 1863, box 6, Ericson Papers, American Swedish Historical Museum; Robert B. Ely, "This Filthy Ironpot: Ironclads in the Battle of Mobile Bay," *American Heritage*, February 1968, pp. 46-7; and William N. Still, Jr., "The Common Sailor, Part I: Yankee Blue Jackets," *Civil War Times Illustrated*, February 1985, p. 39.
10. Du Pont to Sophie Du Pont, 11 February 1863, *Samuel Francis DuPont: A Selection from his Civil War Letters* [hereafter *DuPont*], ed. John D. Hayes (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1969), vol. 2, p. 430.
11. The *Palapso*, the exception, carried one fifteen-inch Dahlgren smoothbore and one 150-pounder Parrott rifle.
12. For more on this point, see Robert J. Schneller, Jr., *A Quest for Glory: A Biography of Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1995).
13. Bauer, pp. 155-6; Shelby Foote, "DuPont Storms Charleston," *American Heritage*, June 1963, p. 34; Henig, p. 71; Du Pont to Fox, 7 March 1863, *Correspondence of Gustavus Vasa Fox*, vol. 1, pp. 190-1; and Reed, p. 267.
14. Reed, pp. 267-93.
15. Alvah Folsom Hunter, *A Year on a Monitor and the Destruction of Fort Sumter*, ed. with an introduction by Craig L. Symonds (Columbia, S.C.: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1987), pp. 49-59; and Reed, p. 292.
16. Reed, pp. 293-4; and Richard S. West, Jr., *Mr. Lincoln's Navy* (New York: Longman's Green, 1957), pp. 233-7.
17. Du Pont to Sophie Du Pont, 8 April 1863, *DuPont*, ed. Hayes, vol. 3, pp. 3-4; Ammen to Du Pont, 14 April 1863; *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy 1863*, pp. 208-9; and DuPont to McKean, c. 29 April 1863, *Du Pont*, vol. 3, p. 66.
18. Reed, pp. 295-8.
19. Bauer, pp. 156-7; Burton, pp. 142-3; Robert MacBride, *Civil War Ironclads: The Dawn of Naval Armor* (Philadelphia: Chilton Books, 1962), pp. 31-2; West, *Gideon Welles*, pp. 233-7; West, *Mr. Lincoln's Navy*, pp. 237-9; Howard K. Beale, ed., *The Diary of Gideon Welles* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1960), vol. 1, pp. 273-7; and U.S. Navy Department, *Report of the Secretary of the Navy in Relation to Armored Vessels* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1864), pp. 80-1, 83-5.
20. *Diary of Gideon Welles*, vol. 1, pp. 311-2; and *Armored Vessels*, p. 112.
21. For more on this point, see Schneller, *A Quest for Glory*.
22. John A. Dahlgren, "Trial of Boat Howitzer Carriage (No. 2)," 4 December 1848, box 1, John A. Dahlgren Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. [hereafter DLC]; Dahlgren, miscellaneous notes on boat guns, 1849 folder, box 21, DLC; and John A. Dahlgren, *Shells and Shell Guns* (Philadelphia: King and Baird, 1856).
23. Allen Johnson, Allen and Dumas Malone, eds., *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928-1937) [hereafter DAB], s.v. "Gillmore, Quincy Adams"; John A. Dahlgren Diaries, John A. Dahlgren Papers (New York: Syracuse Univ. Library) [hereafter Dahlgren Diary], 8 October 1863 entry.
- Gillmore, at this point a brigadier general of volunteers, was at the same time a brevet (i.e., temporary) colonel in the regular Army—a situation typical of many who had held prewar commissions.
24. Reed, p. xix; Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War: Being for the Most Part Contributions by Union and Confederate Officers* (Secaucus, N.J.: Castle Books,

1984 [1887]), vol. 4, pp. 54–5; Quincy Adams Gillmore, *Engineer and Artillery Operations against the Defences of Charleston Harbor in 1863; Comprising the Descent upon Morris Island, the Demolition of Fort Sumter, the Reduction of Forts Wagner and Gregg. With Observations on Heavy Ordnance, Fortifications, Etc.* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1865), pp. 12–8; and Gillmore to Cullum, 28 February 1864, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1880–1901) [hereafter ORA, and cited as follows: series, volume, part, and page], I: 28: 1: 5.

25. Welles to Du Pont, 6 June 1863, Richard Rush et al., eds., *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, 31 vols. and index (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1894–1922) [hereafter ORN, and cited as follows: series, volume, and page], I: 14, 241; Du Pont to Welles, 11 April 1864, ORN I: 14, 242; Welles to Dahlgren, 15 July 1863, ORN, I: 14, 343; and Dahlgren to Welles, 16 October 1865, ORN, I: 16, 443.

26. *Diary of Gideon Welles*, vol. 1, p. 338.

27. Dahlgren Diary, 4 and 5 July 1863 entries; Dahlgren to Welles, 6 July 1863, ORN, I: 14, 311; and Dahlgren to Welles, 16 October 1865, ORN, I: 16, 442–3.

28. Reed, p. 89; Dahlgren to Welles, 16 October 1865, ORN, I: 16, 442–4; *Diary of Gideon Welles*, vol. I, pp. 309, 313–4, 324, 330–1; and Gillmore to Cullum, 28 February 1864, ORA, I: 28: 1: 7.

29. U.S. Navy Department, Naval History Division, *Civil War Naval Chronology, 1861–1865* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off. 1971), pp. III-112, III-113; Dahlgren, diary extract, 10 July 1863, ORN, I: 14, 325–6; and Gillmore, pp. 26–31.

30. Burton, p. 158; Jones, p. 220; Dahlgren Diary, 11 July 1863 entry; Gillmore, p. 32; Dahlgren to Gillmore, 11 July 1863, ORN, I: 14, 319; Dahlgren to Welles, 12 July 1863, ORN, I: 14, 319–21; and *Diary of Gideon Welles*, vol. 1, pp. 380–1.

31. Burton, pp. 161–71; Gillmore, pp. 34–42; Reed, 307; Dahlgren Diary, 18 July 1863 entry; and Dahlgren to Welles, 19 July 1863, ORN, I: 14, 359–60. It was this attack that was reenacted in the well known motion picture *Glory* (Tri-Star, December 1989).

32. Burton, pp. 171–8.

33. Reed, p. 308; and Jones, p. 264.

34. For Army-Navy cooperation, see Dahlgren Diary extracts, log extracts, and reports, 17–23 August 1863, ORN, I: 14, 472–509, and correspondence between Dahlgren and Gillmore, 19–22 August 1863, ORA, I: 28: 2: 48–56; Dahlgren to Gillmore, 22 August 1863, ORA, I: 28: 2: 54–5; and Gillmore to Dahlgren, 23 August 1863, ORA, I: 28: 2: 56.

35. Gillmore to Dahlgren, 23 August 1863, ORA, I: 28: 2: 56.

36. Gillmore, pp. 63–7, 324–5.

37. Perry, pp. 61–2; Reed, pp. 310–2; Dahlgren to Welles, 28 January 1864, ORN, I: 14, 590–601; and Dahlgren to Welles, 16 October 1865, ORN, I: 16, 430–4.

38. Dahlgren, “Order No. 34,” 26 August 1863, Orders to South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Penna.; Dahlgren Diary, 26 August 1863 entry; and Dahlgren to Gillmore, 27 August 1863, ORN, I: 14, 520.

39. Dahlgren to Gillmore, 29 August 1863, ORN I: 14, 524–5; and Dahlgren to Gillmore, 29 September 1863 ORN, I: 14, 682–3.

40. Burton, pp. 178–80; Jones, pp. 268–73; and *Battles and Leaders* vol. 4, pp. 63–4.

41. Gillmore to Dahlgren, 7 September 1863, 5:10 A.M., ORA, I: 28: 2: 86.

42. Dahlgren Diary, 7 September 1863 entry.

43. Burton, pp. 194–8; Reed, pp. 312–4; communications between Dahlgren and Gillmore, 8 September 1863, ORN, I: 14, 608–10; and Dahlgren Diary, 8 September 1863 entry.

44. Reed, pp. 312–3.

45. Burton, pp. 195–7; Dahlgren to Welles, 11 September 1863, ORN, I: 14, 610–1; and Gillmore to Cullum, 28 February 1864, ORN, I: 14, 636.

46. Dahlgren to Welles, 29 September 1863, ORN, I: 14, 680–1; and Dahlgren to Welles, 18 October 1863, ORN, I: 15, 52–3.

47. Welles to Dahlgren, 2 November 1863, ORN, I: 15, 96–7; Dahlgren Diary, 8 November 1863 and 22 October 1863 entries; unsigned document, 22 October 1863, box 6, DLC; and Dahlgren to Welles, 18 February 1864, box 6, DLC.

48. *Battles and Leaders*, vol. 4, pp. 62–8; Gillmore to Dahlgren, 27 September 1863, ORN, I: 14, 674–6.

49. Du Pont to [Senator James W.] Grimes [R., Iowa, chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, 1865–1869], 11 September 1863, *DuPont*, vol. 3, pp. 235–6; Dahlgren to Wise, 18 October 1863, Henry A. Wise Papers, New-York Historical Society; Dahlgren Diary, 11, 19 October 1863 entries; Dahlgren to Ulric Dahlgren, 19 October 1863, box 19, DLC; and Dahlgren to Welles, 20 October 1863, ORN, I: 15, 63.

50. *Diary of Gideon Welles*, vol. 1, pp. 474–5.

60 Naval War College Review

51. George E. Belknap, "Reminiscent of the Siege of Charleston," *Naval Actions and History, 1798-1898*, vol. 12 of the *Papers of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts* (Boston: Griffith-Stillings Press, 1902).
52. Lincoln to Stanton, 21 December 1863, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy P. Basler (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1953), vol. 7, p. 84; and Wise to Dahlgren, 23 December 1863, John A. Dahlgren Papers, Syracuse Univ. Library, Syracuse, N.Y.
53. Dahlgren Diary, 14 and 18 January 1864 entries; *Diary of Gideon Welles*, vol. 1, p. 547; and Dahlgren Diary, 3-4 May 1864 entries.
- Gillmore had been transferred at his own request because he did not think that Dahlgren intended to attack. Major General John G. Foster, who succeeded Gillmore, did worse; hence Gillmore's return.
54. Perry, p. 86; David P. Werlich, *Admiral of the Amazon: John Randolph Tucker, His Confederate Colleagues, and Peru* (Charlottesville, Va.: Univ. of Virginia Press, 1990), p. 57.
55. Dahlgren Diary, 20 February 1864 entry.
56. Dahlgren to Welles, 19 February 1864, ORN, I: 15, 329-30.
57. Melia, p. 9.
58. Perry, p. 168; Dahlgren, "Order No. 45," 7 September 1863, Orders to SAB5 [South Atlantic Blockading Squadron], Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Penna.; Dahlgren to Fox, 24 September 1863, ORN, I: 14, 671-2; Dahlgren to Welles, 21 December 1863, ORN, I: 15, 185; Johnson to Dahlgren, 1 February 1864, box 6, DLC; Dahlgren to Welles, 18 February 1864, box 6, DLC; Dahlgren to Dichman, 21 May 1864, ORN, I: 15, 437; Dahlgren to Welles, 19 October 1864, ORN, I: 16, 19-25; Dahlgren Diary, 15 December 1864 entry; Dahlgren to Welles, 16 January 1865, ORN, I: 16, 171-5; and Dahlgren to Welles, 1 June 1865, ORN, I: 16, 380-9. The *Patuxco* incident occurred on 15 January 1865.
59. Reed, pp. 314-6; Dahlgren, journal note, 16 January 1864, box 27, DLC; Dahlgren Diary, 4 and 29 March and 18-24 April 1864 entries.
60. Luce, p. 816.
61. Dahlgren Diary, 5 March 1864 entry; Dahlgren, "Memorandum," [?] March 1864, box 27, DLC; Dahlgren to Welles, 14 May 1864, ORN, I: 15, 430-2; and *Diary of Gideon Welles*, vol. 1, p. 520 and vol. 2, pp. 128-9, 147.
62. Welles to Dahlgren, 22 November 1864, ORN, I: 16, 57.
63. Dahlgren Diary, 12-21 December 1864 entries.
64. Luce, p. 820. This remark was auspicious for the future Naval War College; see "President's Notes" (quoting Frank Uhlig, Jr.), *Naval War College Review*, Spring 1994, esp. p. 5.
65. Burton, p. 313; *Civil War Naval Chronology*, pp. V-18, V-27; Burke Davis, *Sherman's March* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), p. 139; Dahlgren Diary, 2-24 January 1865 entries; Dahlgren to Welles, 4 January 1865, ORN I: 16, 156-8; Dahlgren, general instructions, 15 January 1865, ORN, I: 16, 169; Sherman to [Dahlgren], undated, 1865 folder, box 6, DLC; and Dahlgren to Welles, 22 January 1865, ORN, I: 16, 185.
66. Dahlgren Diary, 11 February 1865 entry.
67. Dahlgren Diary, 6 February 1865 entry.
68. Dahlgren Diary, 7 February 1865 entry; and Dahlgren to Welles, 7 February 1865, ORN, I: 16, 221.
69. Burton, pp. 314-7; *Civil War Naval Chronology*, pp. IV-14, IV-62, IV-63, IV-138, IV-142, IV-150, V-6, V-11, V-37, V-39, V-40; and Dahlgren Diary, 1-11 July 1864 entries.
70. Dahlgren Diary, 11-15 February 1865 entries; and Dahlgren to Welles, 14 February 1865, ORN, I: 16, 243-4.
71. "Monthly Record of Current Events," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, April 1865, p. 668; and Burton, pp. 317-20.
72. Dahlgren to Patty Dahlgren, 18 February 1865, John Adolphus Bernard Dahlgren Papers, Newberry Library, Chicago, Ill.
73. David D. Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War*, reprint ed. (Secaucus, N.J.: Castle Books, 1984), p. 769.
74. Schimmelfennig to Dahlgren, 10 April 1865, Schoff Civil War Collection, Manuscripts Department, William L. Clements Library, Univ. of Michigan.