

U. S. Iron Clad Passaic
Ogeechee river March 4 1863

Sir

I wrote a short report last evening after my return from the attack on fort Mc Callister, and will now make one more in detail, a list of the ammunition expended, of the injuries to the vessel and an extract from the log I enclose, with this, from which latter you will perceive, that my vessel was under fire just eight hours, I was directly in front of the fort, the guns being as we looked at them, in the centre between high traverses of earth, which were on each side, these however as we were placed, had no effect in protecting either guns or men. The latter never exposed themselves to our fire, usually discharging their pieces either while we were loading, or just as our ports came in line, and before the guns were quite ready, the turret being painted black not deceiving them any more than a different color had done in the first attack of the Montauk, I was as close to the fort, as the Pilot who is the best on the river, (as was proved in this case, by my being the only one whose vessel was not aground when the tide fell.)

would take me, and as high as the *Montauk* had been, except on her second attack, but only for an hour, when being in twelve feet as I understand, Captain *Worden* was obliged to drop down to a position below where I was yesterday, a rather risky operation too, in so narrow a channel, where had the vessel grounded, she must have been exposed below the side armor. This being the case, I am satisfied that twelve feet cannot be carried when a vessel is to anchor, above where I was. The channel is close to the marsh opposite to the fort, and as the piles were only about four hundred yards beyond where I was lying, I don't see how more than two hundred yards can be gained nearer to the fort, by being against them, as the river can't be crossed, and is very wide, certainly after discussing the matter with the Pilot on the spot, I don't think being able to get nearer than a thousand yards, without going above ^{the piles} where the channel crosses over. My distance I judged to be twelve hundred yards, from the following data, the XI inch gun was very carefully elevated by a spirit level, to a little less than six degrees. This is by Ordnance Manual fifteen hundred yards, axis of bore

ten feet above the water, mine was not four, which requires a deduction of 130 yards, then the parapet of the fort was at least twenty feet above the water, which requiring about half a degree more, will bring the distance about what I have stated it. These shots were always less than five seconds in reaching me from the flash, generally four, which would considering their greater initial velocity about agree with my calculation, my five second fuses however usually burst just before reaching, the seven after striking. The Pilot called the distance a thousand yards.

The fort is very solidly built with high traverses between the guns, and raised at least twenty feet above the river, and contained seven guns and an eleven inch mortar; one of these guns was I think destroyed, the others used until we were out of range. immense holes were cut into the earth, the traverses and face much cut away, but still no injury done, which I think a good night's work would not repair. and I do not believe that it can be made untenable by any number of Iron Clads, which the shallow water and narrow channel will permit to be brought in position against it. The guns are one ten inch, a shot

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from which lodged on the top of our turret, one heavy rifle about a hundred pounds, and the remainder I should judge thirty two, with a light gun throwing bolts, which would be aimed at any one showing themselves on the deck. These with the mortar were however nothing as a defence to the river, comparable to the shallow water and piles, as was proved by my being exposed to their fire for eight hours without serious injury, but they answer the purpose, which is simply to prevent the Channel being cleared of obstructions, but three Mortar Schooners kept up a fire during the day, from about four thousand yards distance, but so far as I could observe, without the least effect. The shells generally falling short.

The firing from this vessel was quite good, and I think very few shots missed striking about the parapet, after the first hour, as I had carefully corrected each one up to that time from outside of the turret on deck, where the effect could be well followed. although the attack was an unsuccessful one it was certainly not owing to any want of zeal and attention to duty, on the part of either officers or men, and I am greatly indebted to Lieut Commr

I A Miller the executive officer, as well as to Actg Master S, Fuse, who attended under him to the management and pointing of the guns, and whose energy and zeal was very marked on this occasion, as it has been on several others.

I feel very much of course the failure to a certain extent of the attack, which you had entrusted to my direction, but am satisfied that the natural obstacles are such, as to render another just as little likely to succeed, the experience obtained is worth something in future operations. I only withdrew when all my shell with fuses long enough to reach, (or over five seconds) had been expended, and when the crew were almost beyond further work, having been occupied for eight hours at the guns without even an intermission to eat. and then I should have remained, had I seen the least sign of faltering or slackness of fire on the part of the enemy, but on the contrary, I think that it was if anything more rapid towards the last.

The Gunboats Seneca Lieut Commr Gibson, Hesseck =
= com Lieut Commr Davis, and Dawn Lieut Barnes, were anchored near the Mortar Schooners in signal distance of us, and prepared to give assistance

had any been required.

Every thing about the guns and carriages worked to my satisfaction, except that the boy moved the xv inch gun on examination was found to be almost detached from the side, owing to the breaking of the bolts which secure it to the turret, from its appearance this morning, I should think that it could scarcely stand a dozen more shots. My deck having been very badly injured, will require some repairs before I could I think safely go outside. The mortar shell which fell on deck over the head room would undoubtedly have gone through had it not struck on a beam, as it was it has completely crushed in the flanking at the side of the beam, opening quite a hole through, and had it been loaded with powder instead of sand, might have set the vessel on fire. I have measured a piece of it and it does not seem to have been larger than a terr. inch. This certainly does not say much for the strength of the deck, the injury to which has been so much more serious than to that of the Montauk, that I must attribute it to a worse class of iron, unless heavier guns have been mounted since the

attack made by Commander Norden.

I have gone into greater length than perhaps would be required, were it not that ill success always needs much explanation, and that things which relate to the iron clad possess from their want of precedents, an interest not otherwise belonging to them.

On the night previous to the attack, Lieut Commr Gibson with his boats, swept for torpedoes in the neighbourhood of the one which exploded under the Montauk, but did not meet with any.

I have omitted to mention that my pilot was the same one who had charge of the Montauk in her various operations in this river, and I have to thank Commrs Ammen and Downes for the hearty support which they gave me.

I am very Respy

Your obt servant

B Drayton Captain

Senior Offr present

I send also the reports of Commrs Ammen & Downes.

Rear Admiral S. F. Du Pont

Comdg. A. A. B. Squadron

Port Royal Harbor

Flag Ship Wabash