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Of the comparative powers and expence of ships of war, gun boats, & fortifications.

The natural defence by men is common to all nations; but artificial defence as an auxiliary to human strength must be adapted to the local condition and circumstances of a country. What may be suitable to one country, or in one state of circumstances, may not be so in another.

The U. States have a long line of coast of more than two thousand miles, every part of which requires defence, because every part is approachable by water.

The right principle for the U. S. to go upon as a water defence for the coast is that of combining the greatest practical power with the least possible bulk, that the whole quantity of power may be better distributed through the several parts of such an extensive coast.

The power of a ship of war is altogether in the number and size of the guns she carries, for the ship, of itself, has no power. Ships cannot struggle with each other like animals—and besides this, as half her guns are on one side the ship and half on the other, and as she can use only the guns on one side at a time, her real power is only equal to half her number of guns. A 74 can use only 37 guns. She must tack about to bring the other half into action, and while she is doing this she is defenceless and exposed.

As this is the case with ships of war, a question naturally arises therefrom, which is, whether 74 guns, or any other number, cannot be more effectually employed, and that with much less expence, than by putting them all into one ship of such enormous bulk that it cannot approach a shore either so defend it or attack it—and though the ship can change its place, the whole number of guns can be only in one place at a time, and only half that number can be used at a time.

This is a true statement of the case between ships of war and gun boats for the defence of a coast and of towns situated near a coast. But the case often is, that men are led away by the greatness of an idea and not by the justness of it. This is always the case with those who are advocates for navies and large ships.

A gun boat carrying as heavy metal as a ship of one hundred guns can carry, is a *one gun ship of the line*; and 74 of them which would cost much less than a 74 gun ship would cost, would be able to blow a 74 gun ship out of the water. They have, in the use of their guns, double the power of the ship, that is, they have the use of their whole number of 74 to 37.

Having thus stated the general outline of the subject I come to particulars.

That I might have correct data to go upon with respect to the expense of ships and gun boats, I wrote to the head of one of the departments at Washington for information on that subject.

The following is the answer I received:

"Calculating the cost of a 74 or 100 gun ship, from the actual cost of the ship U. States of 44 guns, built at Philadelphia between the years 1795 and 1798, which amounted to 300,000 dollars, it may be presumed that a 74 gun ship would cost 500,000 dollars, and a 100 gun ship 700 000 dolls.

"Gun boats calculated merely for the defence of harbors and rivers will, on an average, cost about 4000 dollars each when fit to receive the crew and provisions."

On the data here given I proceed to state comparative calculations respecting ships and gun boats.

The ship U. S. cost 300,000 dollars—Gun boats cost 4000 dollars each, consequently the 300,000 dollars expended on the ship for the purpose of getting the use of 44 guns, and those not heavy metal, would have built 75 gun boats, each carrying a cannon of the same weight of metal that a ship of an 100 guns can carry. The difference therefore is, that the gun boats give the use of 31 guns heavy metal, more than can be obtained by the ship and the expenses in both cases equal.

A 74 gun ship cost 500,000 dollars.—This same money will build 125 gun boats. The gain by gun boats is the use of 51 guns more than can be obtained by expending the money on a ship of 74 guns.

The cost of an 100 gun ship is 700,000 dollars. This money will build 175 gun boats. The gain, therefore, by the boats is the use of 75 guns more than by the ship.

Though I had a general impression, ever since I had knowledge of gun boats, that any given sum of money would go farther in building gun boats than in building ships of war, and that gun boats were preferable to ships for home defence, I did not suppose the difference was so great as the calculations above given prove them to be, for it is almost double in favor of gun boats. It is as 175 to 100. The cause of this difference is easily explained.

The fact is, that all that part of the expense in building a ship from the deck upward, including mast, yards, sails, & rigging is saved by building gun boats which are moved by oars, or a light sail occasionally.

The difference also in point of repairs between ships of war and gun boats is not only great but is greater in proportion than in their first cost. The repairs of ships of war is annually from 1-14 to 1-10 of their first cost. The annual expense of the repairs of a ship that cost 300,000 dollars will be above 21,000 dollars—the greatest part of this expense is in her sails and rigging which gun boats are free from.

The difference also in point of duration is great. Gun boats, when not in use, can be put under shelter and preserved from the weather, but ships cannot—or the boats can be sunk in the water or the mud. This is the way the nuts of cider mills for grinding apples are preserved. Were they to be exposed to the dry and hot air after coming wet from the mill they would crack and split and be good for nothing. But timber under water will continue sound several hundred years, provided there be no worms.

Another advantage in favor of gun boats is the expedition with which a great number of them can be built at once. An hundred may be built as soon as one if there are hands enough to set about them separately. They do not require the preparations for building them that ships require, nor deep water to launch them in. They can be built on the shore or shallow water—or they might be framed in the woods or forests and the parts brought separately down and put together on the shore. But ships take up a long time building. The ship U. S. took up two whole years 96 and 97, and part of the years 95 and 98, and all this for the purpose of getting the use of 44 guns, and those not heavy metal. This foolish affair was not in the days of the present administration.

Ships and gun boats are for different services. Ships are for distant expeditions—gun boats for home defence. The one for the ocean—the other for the shore.

Gun boats being moved by oars cannot be deprived of motion by calms, for the calmer the weather the better for the boat. But a hostile ship becalmed in any of our waters, can be taken by gun boats moved by oars, let the rate of the ship be what it may. A 100 gun man of war becalmed, is like a giant in a dead palsy. Every little fellow can kick him.

The U. S. ought to have 500 gun boats stationed in different parts of the coast, each carrying a 32 or 36 pounder. Hostile ships would not then venture to lye within our waters, were it only for the certainty of being sometimes becalmed. They would then become prises, and the insulting bullies on the ocean become prisoners in our own waters.

Having thus stated the comparative powers and expense of ships of war & gun boats, I come to speak of fortifications.

Fortifications may be comprehended under two general heads.

First, fortified towns—that is, towns enclosed within a fortified polygon, of which there are many on the continent of Europe, but not any in England.

Secondly, simple forts and batteries. These are not formed on the regular principles of fortification, that is, they are not formed for the purpose of standing a siege as a fortified polygon is. They are for the purpose of obstructing or annoying the progress of an enemy by land or water.

Batteries are formidable in defending narrow passes by land; such as the passage of a bridge, or of a road cut through a rough and craggy mountain that cannot be passed any where else. But they are not formidable in defending water passes, because a ship with a brisk wind, and tide running at the rate of ten miles an hour will be out of the reach of the fire of the battery in fifteen or twenty minutes, and being a swift moving object all the time, it would be a mere chance that any shot struck her.

When the object of a ship is that of passing a battery for the purpose of attaining or attacking some other object it is not customary with the ship to fire at the battery lest it should disturb her course. Three or four men are kept on deck to attend the helm, and the rest, having nothing to do, go below. Duckworth in passing the Dardanelles up to Constantinople did not fire at the batteries.

When batteries for the defence of water passes can be erected without any great expence, and the men not exposed to capture, it may be very proper to have them. They may keep off small piratical vessels, but they are not to be trusted to for defence.

Fortifications give, in general, a delusive idea of protection. All our principal losses in the revolutionary war were occasioned by trusting to fortifications. Fort Washington with a garrison of 2,500 men was taken in less than four hours and the men prisoners of war. The same fate had befallen Fort Lee on the opposite shore, if gen Lee had not moved hastily off and gained Hackensack bridge. Gen. Lincoln fortified Charleston S. C. and himself and his army were made prisoners of war. Gen. Washington began fortifying New York in '76, Gen. Howe passed up the East River, landed his army at Frog's Point about 20 miles above the city and marched down upon it, and had not Gen. Washington silently and suddenly off on the north side of York Island, himself and his army had also been prisoners. Trust not to fortifications, otherwise than as batteries that can be abandoned at discretion.

The case however is, that batteries, as a water defence against the passage of ships cannot do much. Were any given number of guns to be put in a battery for that purpose, and an equal number of the same weight of metal put in gun boats for the same purpose, those in the boats would be more effectual than those in the battery. The reason for this is obvious. A battery is stationary. Its fire is limited to about two miles, and there its power ceases. But every gun boat moved by oars is a moveable fortification that can follow up its fire and change its place and its position as circumstances may require. And besides this, *gun boats in calms are the sovereign of ships.*

As this matter interests the public, and most probably will come before Congress at its next meeting, if the printers in any of the states, after publishing it in their newspapers, have a mind to publish it in a pamphlet form, together with my former piece on gun boats, they have my consent freely. I take neither copy-right nor profit for any thing I publish.

COMMON SENSE.

Baltimore, Aug. 3.

COPY.

The deposition of John Callier, Esq. a justice of the peace, and colonel of the militia in the county of Washington and Mississippi Territory, taken before Harry Toulmin, one of the judges of the said Territory, at Washington, in the said county.

"The day after col. Burr was arrested, near Fort Stoddert, Mr. Robert Ashley, who had come to the Tombigbee settlement with colonel Burr, came to my house, accompanied by Mr. Thomas Malone:—I had been just before apprized by a note from Mr. Malone, sent to me at my quarter, that Mr. Burr was come to this country, and was arrested; that Ashley was at my house; but that he knew nothing of the arrest of Col. Burr. On my reaching the house I found that Mr. Ashley was gone to bed; and Mr. Malone acquainted me more fully with the circumstances, but informed me that he could get no disclosure from him of their intention. I mentioned to him that I had known Mr. Ashley several years ago, and that as I was satisfied that his object in coming to see me, was to prevail on me to join in their plans, I should have no difficulty in finding out what they were. The next morning I enquired after Mr. Ashley, about the news, and particularly with respect to col. Burr; and was then informed by him that col. Burr was in this country. After breakfast we rode together to Wakefield; he then informed me that he was in the plans of col. Burr; that he had come to see me, to ascertain if I would join him in the plan; I told him that if it was nothing against government, nor touching on the strings of government, I would do every thing that should tend to relieve us from our oppression. He told me that it was not col. Burr's plan to touch on the strings of government; that gen. Wilkinson had deceived him; that they were to have met at such a time at Baton Rouge; that Burr was to be the first in command; general Wilkinson to be second; that he was to have joined him (Burr) with the federal army; that the soldiers were to have double pay, and that some of the officers of the army, but very few of them, were in the plan; that some small censure having taken place with respect to gen. Wilkinson, was the reason that he had shifted his coat, and made all that great bustle; that the object of the plan was to take Baton Rouge in the first place, and from thence to proceed to Mobile, Pensacola and Augustine; reduce the posts there, and form a republican government; that he had already prepared the laws: that they were so simple and excellent that they would suit from a ten year old boy to an old man; and that like the laws of the Medes and Persians, they would be unalterable; that the people of the U. S. from the Alleghany westward, and down to the sea, would be invited to come into the new republic; and that the ports of this republic would be opened free to all the world; that he had got in with England, so that she would furnish a fleet of 12 sail, which would join him as soon as he had got possession of the Floridas, and be commanded by captain Truxton; that as soon as he had got the country out of the power of Spain, a negociation was to be opened with England, and England was to acknowledge their independence; that after he had done this, he was to go to Mexico, where the co-operation of the Spanish officers had been secured, who were tired of their own government, and ripe for a revolution; that the Spanish minister Yrujo; and that the Spanish officers in Florida were likewise concerned; and that Mr. Burr had frequent long conversations with Yrujo upon the subject; that general Wilkinson had so much disappointed him, that he had turned his attention entirely to this quarter; that we were so much oppressed by the Spaniards, and so utterly neglected by our own government, that he knew we must be disposed to vindicate our own rights by an attack on the Spanish possessions; and that if I and major Hinson, and major Buford, would join in supporting him, that he, (Ashley) would immediately set off and procure seventeen hundred men, and march them into this country, where they would be met by col. Burr, who was then on his way to the Federal City, but would return without delay; that the 1700 men were actually engaged and ready to start when called upon—but were scattered in different settlements from the Natchez upwards, and that twelve thousand more were ready engaged. On reaching Wakefield, I arrested the said Ashley, believing that I had got every thing out of him that I could. He continued in custody three or four days, and then escaped.

JNO CALLIER.

Sworn to and subscribed the 9th of May, 1807.

HARRY TOULMIN.

TRIAL OF A. BURR

(continued by adjournment and held at the Capitol in the Hall of the House of Delegates,) for High treason against the U. States.

AUGUST 3d, 1807.

Present—JOHN MARSHALL, Chief Justice of the U. S.

The court assembled at 12 o'clock.—An immense concourse of citizens attended to witness the proceedings of this important trial.

A few minutes after A. Burr entered attended by Messrs. Wickham, Martin, Botts and Baker, and Mr. Alston of South Carolina. Mr. E. Randolph entered soon afterwards.

Messrs. Hay, Wirt, and McRae attended as counsel for the prosecution.

Mr. Hay observed that he could take no steps in this business, until he had ascertained whether the witnesses summoned on the part of the U. S. were present; he therefore requested, that their names might be called over.

Their names were accordingly called in the following order:

*Thomas Truxton, *Stephen Decatur, *Benjamin Stoddert, *William Eaton, **Wm. Duane* *Erick Bollman, **Peter Taylor*, *Jacob Albright, *Charles Willie, *John Graham, *Samuel Swartwout, *Julien Dupestre, *P. H. M. Prevost, Israel Miller, *Samuel Skonten, *George Morgan, *John Morgan, **Thomas Morgan*, **Nicholas Perkins*, **Robert Spence*, **George Harris*, *Cyrus Jones, *Thomas Peterkin, Elias Glover, *Simeon Poole, *Dudley Woodbridge, *David C. Wallace, **Edmund B. Dana*, James Reid, *John G. Henderson, **Alexander Henderson*, **Hugh Phelps*, *Jacob Dunbaugh, **Chandler Lindsley*, **John Mulholland*, *James Knox, **William Love*. *David Fisk*, *Thomas Hartley, **Stephen S. Welch*, **James Kinney*, *Samuel Moxley, *Edmund P. Gaines, *Ambrose D. Smith, *George Peters*, *Abner L. Duncan*, Lewis Kerr, John A. Fort, *Benjamin H. Latrobe, Cowles Meade, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Thomas Butler, Robert A. New, Thomas T. Davis, Sylas Dinsmore, Owen Alston, William Davis, E. Kibby, Theodore Brightwell, John Callier, Dr. Bennett, Earl Sproat, Robert Wallace, Walter Putnam, John Dana, Alexander Ralston, Mrs. Vanhorne, Henry Jacobs, Ransome Peale, Hamlin Hicks, Phelow Wooster, John Blair, *James Mc Dowell*, Samuel N. Luckett, Stockley D. Hayes, Samuel W. Butler, Walter C. Davidson, John Barry, Thomas H. Cushing, Nathaniel Evans, Jacob Jackson, William Platt, William White, Jarard Brooke, *Morgan Nevill*, Thos. Callis, Mr. Peterson, Lieut. Swearingen, Mr. Weaver, Col. Osmund, Major M. Porter, J. B. Walback, Mr. Vanhorne, Dr. Charmichael, Dr. Alston, col. P. Read, John Wilkins, Stephen Woolberton, David McKey, Hugh Allen, William Davis.

Those were present, whose names are printed in *Italics*. The rest were absent. Such as have a * prefixed to their names, were recognised at the former meeting of the court. The rest were not. Of course, most or all of those, whose names are placed after that of H. Latrobe, have been subpoenaed since the adjournment of the court.

Mr. Hay begged leave to mention, that he had nothing more to submit to the court, this day. It was his duty to furnish the accused with a list of the jurors, with their places of residence; and also of the witnesses. But there were many of the witnesses, whose places of residence he was completely ignorant; several had not appeared; many had been merely pointed out to him by the attorney general for the U. S. It was clearly impossible for him to make out those lists, before the day after to morrow.

The Chief Justice enquired then to what day it would be proper to adjourn the court.

Mr. Hay could not positively state, by what day, he should be able to prepare his lists.

Mr. Burr observed, that it was not very probable, he should avail himself of any privileges which he might derive from any delay which had occurred in the furnishing him with the list of the jurors; and therefore the court might adjourn itself to any day, which was convenient to the attorney for the U. S. Neither was it probable that he should avail himself of any objections which might be made to the correctness of the names of the jurors or their places of residence, as stated in the list; unless certain circumstances might occur after the production of the list, on which he ought to found objections to it.

A short conversation then ensued upon the day of adjournment, when Mr. *Burr* observed that as such a measure would seem in some measure to depend upon his own consent, he should not hesitate to consent to an adjournment, provided it did not extend farther than Wednesday.

Mr. Hay had no objection to that day.

Mr. Hay observed that it might be proper to have the names of the jury also called over, though not to impannel them at present. It would be premature now to impannel them as the opposite counsel had not yet possessed a sufficient time to examine the list, and as the witnesses for the U. S. were not present.

The names of the jurors were accordingly called.

The names of the jurors summoned from Wood County to appear before the judges of the court of the U. S. for the fifth circuit in the Virginia District, on the 3d day of August, 1807, for the trial of Col. A. Burr.

Hezekiah Bucky,
James G. Laidley,
James Henderson,
James Compton,
Hamilton Morrison,
Yates S. Conwell,
Jacob Beeson,
William Prince,
Nimrod Saunders,
Thomas Creel,
Anthony Buckner,
David Creel.

Wood County, District of Virginia,
JOSEPH SCOTT, *Marshal.*

List of Petit Jurors for May Circuit Term, 1807—Continued.

Names of the jurors summoned from the body of the District of Virginia, for the trial of Col. A. Burr.

John Horace Upshaw, Essex. Wm. Pope, Powhatan. Peyton Randolph, Richmond City. John Bowe, Hanover. John Roberts, Culpepper. Joshua Chaffin, Amelia. Jarvis Storrs, Henrico. Miles Selden, do. Lewis Truehart, Hanover. Wm. Yancey, Pittsylvania. Thomas Prosser, Henrico. John Staples, Albemarle. Edward C. Stanard, do. Richard B. Goode, Chesterfield. Nathaniel Selden, Henrico. Esme Smock do. Wm. Wardlaw, Richmond City. Richard E. Parker, Westmoreland.—John W. Ellis, Hanover. Thomas Stark, do. Wm. White, do. Wm. B. Chamberlaine, Henrico. David Lambert, Richmond City. Randolph Harrison, Cumberland. Wm. Hoomes, Caroline. Overton Anderson, Richmond City. Hugh Mercer, Spottsylvania. David Bullock, Richmond City. Jerman Baker, Cumberland. * Edward Carrington, City Richmond. Robert Haskins, Chesterfield. Wm. R. Fleming, Goochland. George W. Smith, Richmond City. Armistead T. Mason, Loudon. Dabney Minor, Albemarle, Wm. M'Daniel, Stafford.

JOSEPH SCOTT,
Marshal V. D.

Those whose names are marked with a (*) were absent; all the rest were present. Of course two only, were absent, out of the whole *venire*.

Mr. Hay then requested the marshal to deliver as soon as possible, a correct copy of this list to the opposite counsel.

Mr. Peyton Randolph enquired whether this was a proper opportunity for any man on that pannel, to state his objections to this service.

The *Chief Justice* replied, that it would be better to wave any objections, until the jury were about to be impannelled.

Mr. Hay wished such of the witnesses as had appeared before, to be recognised as the others had been. And accordingly Messrs. Duncan, Nevill, McDowell and Peters were recognised by the clerk.

The deputy marshal was then about to adjourn the court, when Mr. *Burr* recalled to the recollection of the court the motion which he had made on a former occasion for a *subpoena duces tecum* addressed to the President of the U. S. That motion had been partly