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The memorial of Lieut. Colonel J.M.

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FROM

Capt. Charles H. Davis, U.S.A.



B.

THE
MEMORIAL
OF
LIEUT. COLONEL J. M. GAMBLE,
OF THE
UNITED STATES' MARINE CORPS,
TO
CONGRESS, 1828.

NEW-YORK:
PRINTED BY GEO. F. HOPKINS & SON,
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MEMORIAL.

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.

THE Memorial of Brevet Lieut. Col. JOHN M. GAMBLE, of the Marine Corps, respectfully sheweth—

That in the late war with Great Britain, your Memorialist was appointed to the command of an armed ship in the South Seas; and on the 13th of July, 1813, fell in with, and after a contest, (the particulars of which have been furnished the Government by Commodore Porter,) captured a ship called the *SERINGAPATAM*, much superior in force to the *Greenwich*, the ship your Memorialist commanded—That the taking of the *Seringapatam* was of importance to American citizens engaged in commerce in those seas, inasmuch as she had captured the ship “*Edward*” from Nantucket, and had aided a Spanish privateer in the capture of two other American South Seamen—That she was, when captured by your Memorialist, cruising in search of other American vessels, engaged in their lawful pursuits—That the *Seringapatam* proved to be a heavy armed ship, fitted out at great expense, and when captured, abundantly supplied with naval stores and provisions—That a large quantity of powder and other articles were taken out of this ship for the use of the United States’ frigate *Essex*—That her cargo was worth upwards of thirty thousand dollars—That the *Seringapatam*, after her capture by your Memorialist, was taken into the United States’ service by Commodore Porter, as an auxiliary to his armed force in the South Seas—That she was, in September, 1814, recaptured; on which occasion your Memorialist was severely wounded, and put in an open boat at sea—That the day following, your Memorialist was attacked by the savages of *Nooaheevah*, and had, out of eleven men, four killed and one dangerously wounded—And finally, that your Memorialist has not been compensated, either for the capture of the *Seringapatam*, or for the property taken out of her, for the use of the United States.

Your Memorialist therefore respectfully petitions Congress to allow a reasonable compensation for the Seringapatam, captured by a very inferior force, and recaptured after having been taken into the service of the United States, as will appear by Commodore Porter's Journal, page 205.

Your Memorialist respectfully begs a reference to the accompanying documents.

Extract of a letter from Commodore David Porter to Lieutenant John M. Gamble, commanding the prize ship Greenwich, dated "On board the United States' frigate Essex, at sea, July 14th, 1813."

"Allow me to return you my thanks for your handsome conduct in bringing the Seringapatam to action. Be assured, sir, that I shall make a suitable representation of the affair to the Honorable Secretary of the Navy."

Extract of a letter from Doctor Montgomery, dated "United States' frigate Essex, off Albemarle Isle, July 15th, 1813."

"Allow me to congratulate you on your splendid victory of yesterday over so superior a force. One of our officers, who has been on board of your prize, says she mounts 16 guns, and had more than three times your crew. I most heartily wish I had been on board as your surgeon, to share the prize money as well as honor with you, for I am told she is a very valuable ship. After we had captured the New-Zealander and Charlton, and found out from the prisoners that it was Stivers you were engaged with, Captain Porter became extremely anxious. At one time, when the Seringapatam tacked, Captain P. became more anxious than ever, fearful that you would tack at the same time and receive a raking shot. He exclaimed, "Now Mr. Gamble, if you will only stand on five minutes, and *then* tack, I will make you a prince." You stood on awhile, when he exclaimed, "Now is your time." Just then we observed your ship in stays, which gave the enemy a raking shot that did him so much injury. The Captain was much pleased, put the spy-glass under his arm, walked aft, and appeared to think all safe."

Extract of a letter from Commodore David Porter to the Secretary of the Navy, dated "United States' frigate Essex, at sea, Pacific Ocean, July 23d, 1813."

"On the afternoon of the 13th July, at the Gallipagos Islands, abreast of Narborough, having in company with me the prize ships Greenwich and Georgiana, discovered three sail

to leeward, a considerable distance apart, standing on a wind. On approaching them, I gave chase to the centre vessel, which bore up from us; the others standing on different tacks. The in-shore ship, which we were informed was the Seringapatam, pierced for 22 guns, and mounting 14, with a complement of 41 men, now tacked to windward for the purpose of cutting off our prizes, which were a great distance to windward. When Lieutenant Gamble, of the marines, (who was in charge of the Greenwich, with only 14 men,) perceived his intention, he hove to, and took from the Georgiana four men more, making his whole number now 19 men. Lieutenant Gamble then ran gallantly alongside of the Seringapatam, and brought her to action within pistol shot; and after several broadsides were exchanged, the enemy endeavored to make his escape in a crippled state. To Lieutenant Gamble and his gallant crew may be attributed the whole merit of the capture of this ship, which is by far the finest British vessel in these seas. She was built in India, and was formerly one of Tippoo Saib's men of war.

(Signed) "D. PORTER."

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"Navy Commissioners' Office,
"February 10th, 1816.

"Captain John M. Gamble of the marines served with me in the Essex, from the time of my taking command of that vessel, until my departure from Madison's Island; during the whole of which his conduct was such as to entitle him to my respect, as an officer and a gentleman.

"During a great part of my cruise in the South Seas, Captain (then Lieutenant) Gamble continued in command of one of my most valuable prizes; and while in that situation, brought to action with an inferior force, and caused to surrender, an armed vessel of the enemy, which had long been the terror of American ships which had been engaged in commercial and other pursuits in that Ocean.

"Honorable mention was made of this affair to the Secretary of the Navy; but by the capture of the vessel, the account was lost, and of course never reached the United States.

"Captain Gamble at all times greatly distinguished himself, by his activity in every enterprise engaged in by the force under my command; and in many critical encounters by the natives of Madison's Island, rendered essential service; and at all times distinguished himself by his coolness and bravery.

(Signed) "D. PORTER."

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

"Navy Commissioners' Office,
"February 28th, 1816.

"Captain Gamble, of the Marine Corps, has informed me, that he had understood it to be your wish that I should state my opinion, positively, whether I think him entitled to a brevet for the services rendered.

"Making part of the Department, motives of delicacy prevented my doing so before; but I now avail myself of the opportunity of assuring you, that no Marine Officer in the service ever had such strong claims as Captain Gamble; and that none have been placed in such conspicuous and critical situations; and that none could have extricated themselves from them more to their honor.

(Signed) "D. PORTER."

*Extract of a letter from Benjamin Clapp, Esq * to Major John M. Gumble, dated "New-York, 5th April, 1824."*

"I do not recollect the force of the Seringapatam at the time of her capture. That it was formidable and much dreaded on the cruising ground of the whalers, I always understood. One fact in relation to the warlike and formidable appearance of the Seringapatam, which came under my own observation, it may be worth while to state.—When the Albatros (the ship I came to the Islands passenger in) arrived off the harbor, and we saw the fleet anchored inside, all on board supposed that ship to be a frigate. She was certainly a valuable ship, being built entirely of teak wood. We understood she was built for, and owned by, Tippoo Saib, for a vessel of war, being pierced for guns on her gun deck. I further understood that this ship had been sent from India to England with a view of being purchased by the latter government. That there was great merit and much credit due you for capturing the Seringapatam, I presume none ever ventured to question: and had the termination of the Essex's cruise been different, no doubt some such proceedings as are now commenced would long since have been started. The subject having rested thus long, however, is not the less entitled to the attention of Congress: and be assured of my best wishes for the success of your Memorial."

* Now of the firm of Clapp & Ebeninger, fur merchants, of the city of New-York.

Extract of a letter from Dr. Richard K. Hoffman to Major John M. Gumble, dated "New-York, April 15th, 1824."

"The English ship Seringapatam, commanded by Captain Stivers, was deemed, by the American whalers, their most formidable enemy in the Pacific Ocean. Her size, construction, and armament, better adapted her for hostilities than any ship which we found engaged in the whale fishery. It was known she had taken the ship Edward of Nantucket, and was, when fallen in with, cruising for other American vessels. Her commander was reputed to be a bold and unprincipled adventurer; and had he not been arrested in his course, would, unquestionably, have committed serious depredations on the American property in that Ocean. In company with two other English ships, the Seringapatam was met at sea by the force under Commodore Porter. The prize ship Greenwich, under your immediate command, acted a distinguished part on the 12th or 13th of July, 1813, in capturing the Seringapatam. Her physical force was much superior to that of the Greenwich; and to the better discipline and skill of your crew, which were evinced in the engagement between the two ships, the fortunate result of the contest is to be ascribed. Your engagement with the Seringapatam took place while Commodore Porter was occupied in capturing the other ship. Several broadsides had been exchanged between the Greenwich and Seringapatam, when the latter hauled down her colors, endeavoring at the same time to escape by making sail. Her crippled condition retarded her progress; and the Greenwich gaining on her in the pursuit, and rendering the success of her attempt impracticable, the enemy, after a few more shots from the Greenwich, surrendered. To you, my dear sir, much credit, and even applause, were given for the capture of an enemy's ship so notorious as was the Seringapatam.

(Signed) "RICH'D K. HOFFMAN."

Extract of a letter from Dr. Alexander Montgomery to Major John M. Gumble, dated "Philadelphia, 18th December, 1824."

"It is with much pleasure I hear that you have a prospect of being rewarded by Congress, for your skill and gallantry in capturing the English armed ship Seringapatam in 1813. It affords me a satisfaction to have an opportunity of testifying, that she was vastly superior to your ship, (the Greenwich) in the number, as well as size of her guns, and had about three times as large a crew.

"While you were engaged with the Seringapatam, the

that we could not encounter the surf with our boat. A message was brought off from the king, that he would supply us with such articles as we stood in need of. Feeling anxious to embrace so favorable an opportunity of trading, I concluded to accept his offer to land in the canoe. I took with me a marine, the young chief, the warrior, and an interpreter. On landing I was welcomed by the king, whom I found standing on the beach, surrounded by hundreds of his people. He invited me to his house, where, after sitting a short time, I proposed to commence business, and although pressed to tarry longer, returned to the beach, where I found the savages busily employed in carrying away the produce they had brought down. My suspicion of treachery was confirmed on observing that they had hauled up all their canoes into the bushes, and secreted or carried off their paddles. Soon after, the women and children were seen retiring to the mountains, a certain indication of hostilities; the war yell was heard, and armed groupes of savages seen in all directions. They had, by this time, carried from the beach every thing, with the exception of a pig, and some other articles, presented me by the king on landing. We were cut off from both the ship and the boat; the former having drifted to leeward of the harbor, and out of sight—night was fast approaching, and with it, our fate seemed almost inevitable. Word had been sent to the fishermen not to enter the bay; but, fortunately for us, one of them had gone rather farther from home than usual, and did not receive this message. He returned at the usual time. The moment he landed we took possession of his canoe, and threatened him with instant death if he did not carry us in safety to our boat.

“In this accidental manner we effected our escape, after several hours detention on the island, and at a moment when there were hundreds of armed savages pressing forward, who were only restrained from an open attack by fear of our firearms. From here I went to several other places on the coast of Dominica; and thence to Resolution Bay, at the Island of Christiana, where I anchored the ship, and remained several days. At each place I succeeded in obtaining more or less produce of the islands; so that by the time we returned to Port Anna Maria Bay, on the 17th of February, after an absence of ten days, the ship was pretty well filled with hogs, poultry, fruits, and vegetables. I also went, in open boats, several times to the leeward bays for provisions, when they could not be procured elsewhere. By these exertions, at all times attended with great danger, the men were abundantly supplied with every thing necessary for their health and comfort.

(Signed) “JOHN M. GAMBLE.”

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