a twelve pounder rifle and a 100 pounder rifle and had proved a match for

the best gunboats in the Confederate

"mosquito fleet" by running down and sinking its flagship, the Sea Bird, in

battle in February, 1863. Flusser took

The object of Confederate enterprise south of James river in the spring of

1863 was to recover all that had been

lost the year before. Plymouth, on

Roanoke river; Washington, on Tar river, and Newbern, on the Neuse,

were the principal port towns inviting

recapture. Washington lies about thir-

ty miles south of Plymouth, with no

water connection except by circuitous

route through two rivers and Pamlico

and Albemarle sounds. New Berne is thirty-six miles south of Washington,

but has shorter water connection with

The Federals controlled the waters

in the spring of 1863, but the Confed-

erates controlled railroads running

from the great military centers of

both Virginia and North Carolina to

within reasonable marching distance

Longstreet's Big Enterprise.

two principal armies contending for

the mastery in Virginia had never met

without General James Longstreet's

presence on the Confederate side.

From Bull Run to Fredericksburg

Longstreet's brigade or divisions or

corps had given hard blows to some

opposing unit in the Army of the Po-

tomac. In February, 1863, two divi-

sions of the corps which he then com-

manded disappeared from Lee's win-

Rumors spread throughout the north

placed Longstreet at various points

other than where he was. Kentucky

and Tennessee were said to be in dan-

ger of invasion by his renowned legions. Not until he was heard from

south of James river in March could

it be supposed that Lee had spared his "old warhouse" for any project not

bearing directly on his own campaign

The fact was that Lee supposed that

Hooker would transfer his army from

the Rappahannock to the James river and try to attack Richmond on the 'south side" route. He sent Long-

street to Petersburg to prepare to meet such move. When Longstreet learned

that the region to the south of him was fat in army supplies he ordered the troops to make a general advance and

Siege of Washington, N. C.

A division of Confederates led by

General J. J. Pettigrew had attacked

Newbern on March 14 without suc-

cess. The move appeared to be a feint to cover a more formidable operation

against Washington, conducted by Gen-

eral D. H. Hill. Pettigrew marched from Newbern to Washington, which

was garrisoned by only 1,200 Federals.

The troops for this campaign had marched from Goldsborough, fifty-sev-

The Federal commander of the de-

partment, General J. G. Foster, kept

his headquarers at Newbern. Hearing of the Confederate move on Washington, he started by water to re-en-

force the slender garrison and direct

the defense. His vessel ran aground

through the blockade of batteries, and

in northern Virginia.

get possession of them.

en miles distant.

ter quarters on the Rappahannock.

Up to this date fifty years ago the

that point than has Plymouth.

her for his flagship.

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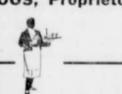


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## The War Fifty Years Ago

Confederate Activities South of James River --- General James Longstreet Sent to Petersburg by General Lee. Confederate Attempt to Recover Suffolk, Va., and Plymouth, Washington and Newbern, N. C .--- Lieutenant W. B. Cushing's Early Boat Adventures --- The Confederates Building Ironclads In North Carolina. Attack on Newbern and Siege of Washington --- A Ferryboat Serving as a Federal Warship.

8 midwinter 1863 a revival of long dormant activities by the Confederates in the coast region south of the lower James river indicated a new policy. From the time of the withdrawal of the Federal army the Potomac and General A. E. Burnside's North Carolina forces to northern Virginia in the summer of 1862 there had been no formidable armies of either side in the whole dis-

Before abandoning the pennisula in August, 1862, General McClellan detucked one division from the Fourth corps of the Army of the Potomac and sent it to southeastern Virginia. Its commander, General John J. Peck, was soon placed at the head of the district around Suffolk, with headquarters at that port on the river Nansemond. General Peck's force numbered about

At that date the Confederates had a

By Caprain GEO, L. KILMER, Late U. 5. V. | by Federals, prevented the completion of the vessels, but the same firms secretly made contracts to build warships in the interior, upon the shores of navigable streams

#### A Second Merrimac Ram.

This time fifty years ago one of the of all three places, most formidable of these ships was under construction at a point near Edward's Ferry, on the Roanoke river. She was later known as the ram Albemarle. The iron for the machinery and armor of the ram was picked up at shops and farms all over the country between Wilmington and Richmond. The project was looked upon as a chimera in the brain of Commander J. W. Cooke, whose zeal in her construction under great difficulties was almost fanatical.

In spite of the secrecy with which the work was carried on by Cooke's assistants, the Federals soon learned of the second Merrimac which was to be.



Copyright by the Review of Reviews Company. GENERAL J. G. FOSTER, U. S. A., AND GENERAL D. H. HILL, C. S. A.,

OPPOSING COMMANDERS AT WASHINGTON, N. C.

ter which would float an ironclad, plies from the region for their army around Richmond and moved troops back and forth, now to defend Richmond and again to operate in North

#### Lieutenant Cushing Wins His Spurs.

The Federal naval operations in North Carolina waters in the winter of 1862 had destroyed all the naval power of the Confederates. Boats not captured or destroyed in battle had been driven to refuge in small streams. Federal vessels of all kinds, but of limited size, patrolled the waters. They belonged to the north Atlantic squadron, which extended its activities to the Virginia waters contiguous. Thus the same force-that is, the same ships and officers-operated on both sides of

Into this field, ripe for adventure, the daring sailor, Lieutenant William B. Cushing, had been sent in the fall of 1862. His first exploits were around Wilmington, N. C., and on the Nansemond. This time fifty years ago be commanded a flotilla comprising four small gunboats, which was hastily dispatched to the Nansemond river by Admiral S. P. Lee, commanding the north Atlantic squadron. The boats were sent to aid General Peck in checking a movement of Confederates from the line of the Blackwater

against Suffolk. Cushing and his colleague in the work, Lieutenant R. H. Lamson, had to contend with Confederates no whit less daring and resourceful than themselves. Among these were Lieutenant John Taylor Wood and John Y. Beall. Both of these sailors later gave startling accounts of themselves, Beall losing his life in the prosecution of a

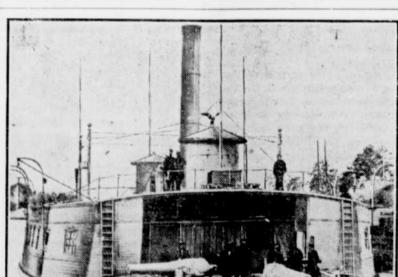
partisan warfare, Although Confederate enterprise was held in check by superior power, it was not stifled. Before General Burnside's forces captured Newbern and Atlantic coast ports. Being of light Elizabeth City in 1862 North Carolina draft, she could steam up the shallow stege of Washington anyway within shipbuilders at these points had made inlets and rivers of North Carolina. contracts to construct three gunboats | The old ferryboat could fight as well and ironclads for the Confederate as skim the water. She was armed navy. The occupation of the region with four nine-inch smoothbore guns, to Tar river.

west of Suffolk and emptying into Al- caused Lieutenant Commander C. W. bemarle sound. General J. J. Petti- Flusser to investigate the demand for the Blackwater, and his opponents be oke river. Flusser was at least an until it was too late to forestall Hill. Hered that he could muster 15,000 men. other Cushing. He was senior officer Hill's force surrounded the town on Suffolk is less than twenty miles from on Albermarle sound in Admiral Lee's March 30 and during the next three North Carolina, and south of the state squadron and was to be among the days planted batteries on the river line the Confederates were in almost first victims of the future ram. Flus- bank at different points to repel the undisputed control of inland territory ser, learned that the new ram was pat- advance of Federal gunboats. With the which included streams navigable for terned after the old Merrimac and aid of gunboat fire Foster's ship got

As is often the case, Flusser's infor-The Confederates had the advantage mation was not promptly acted upon strong defense. of holding interior lines and connect or the monster would have been de-

old iron bolts and bars along the Roan- in Tar river and delayed the expedition small gunboats and some bodies of wa- might prove as formidable.

the general was able to prepare a General Hill was not enthuaistic in tions direct from Petersburg, on James stroyed before completion. When at this particular crisis. He delayed atriver, and Richmond. They drew sup- last this was thought of the water was tack until the Federal position was



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THE U. S. S. COMMODORE PERRY, ARMORED FERRYBOAT, CON-SPICUOUS IN NORTH CAROLINA.

task could not ascend Roanoke river far enough to reach her.

#### An Armored Ferryboat.

One of the vessels used by Lieutenant Flusser for daring scouting excursions in shallow North Carolina waters was the converted ferryboat Commodore Perry. This vessel had been bought by the Federal government in New York to serve in blockading the

low, and the gunboats equal to the too strong to be carried by assault. Some of Foster's warships and troops had been sent to the Georgia coast just before the Confederates began their activities, and these were recalled, Lieutenent Flusser also sent some of his best gunboats from Albemarle sound fato Tar river.

General Hill kept General Longstreet informed of the situation at Washington, and his chief finally recalled him to aid in a siege of Suffolk. Hill would have been compelled to abandon the a few days. Foster planned an attack on the rear of the besieging lines simultaneous with a gunboat advance

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