



# The Volunteer Review

## AND MILITARY AND NAVAL GAZETTE.

A Journal Devoted to the Interests of the Military and Naval Forces of the Dominion of Canada

VOL. III.

OTTAWA, CANADA, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1869.

No. 5.

### NAVAL OPERATIONS

OF THE  
WAR OF 1812-14.

#### CHAPTER V.

While the Constitution and Hornet were lying at St. Salvador awaiting the arrival of the Essex, an affair happened which has been much misrepresented by American Naval writers. In the middle of November, 1812, the British 20 gun ship Bonne-Citoyenne of eighteen 32 pounders carronades and two long 9 pounders, Capt. P. P. Greene, having while coming from Rio-de-la-plata with £500,000 sterling in specie on board, damaged herself greatly by running on shore, entered the port of St. Salvador to land her cargo, and before dawn, the ship was keel-out when the two American ships arrived in port; and a challenge was sent by Capt. Lawrence of the Hornet to Capt. Greene through the British Consul, in which it was stated that Commodore Bainbridge pledged his honor to be out of the way, or not interfere. As might have been expected Capt. Greene refused a meeting on "terms so manifestly disadvantageous as those proposed"—in fact he could not under any circumstance have accepted the challenge—first, because he was on a special service in which no risks should be incurred; secondly, if he lost his vessel and survived the action he would be disgracefully cashiered the service; thirdly, if he captured the Hornet Commodore Bainbridge in the Constitution would have captured himself and his prize as in duty bound or he would be disgracefully dismissed the American Navy, otherwise the vessels were equally matched. The Hornet mounted eighteen 32 pounder carronades, and two long 12 pounders, with a crew of 171 men and two boys. The Bonne-Citoyenne had 141 men and 9 boys.

On the 6th January, 1813, the Constitution being unable to repair the damages received in action with the Java sailed for Boston, leaving the Hornet to blockade the Bonne-Citoyenne. On the 26th January the British 14 gun ship Montague, Capt. M. H. Dixon, and bearing the flag of Rear Admiral Manly Dixon, chased her, on which she run for the

harbor, but during the night wore and standing to the Southward effected a very clever escape. On the 14th February, cruising off Pernambuco, the Hornet captured an English brig with £23,000 in specie on board, having removed the money and destroyed the prize she cruised off Surinam till the 22nd, and then stood for Demarara river; and on the 24th chased a brig, but was obliged to haul off on account of the shoals at the entrance. Previously to giving up the chase the Hornet discovered a brig of War with English colors flying, at anchor without the bar—this was the brig sloop Espiegle of sixteen 32 pounder carronades, Captain J. Taylor, refitting her rigging. At 3h. 30m. p.m. while beating round Carohand bank to get at the Espiegle the Hornet discovered a sail on her weather quarter bearing down on her. This was the British brig sloop Peacock of sixteen 24 pounder carronades and two sixes, Captain W. Peake, who had only sailed from the Espiegle's anchorage the same day. At 4h. 20m. p.m. the Peacock hoisted her colors, and at 5h. 10m. being kept close to the wind to weather the British brig, the Hornet tacked and hoisted her colors. At 5h. 25m. while passing on opposite tacks within half pistol shot the ship and brig exchanged broadsides. After this the Peacock wore to renew the action on the other tack, but the Hornet quickly bearing up received the other's starboard broadside, and then about 5h. 30m. ran her close on board on the starboard quarter. In this position so heavy and well directed a fire was kept up that at 5h. 50m. having had her commander killed, six feet of water in her hold, hull, masts and rigging cut to pieces, the Peacock hoisted from her fore rigging an ensign, union down, as a signal of distress; immediately afterwards her mainmast went by the board; both vessels were immediately anchored and every attempt was made to save the Peacock by throwing her guns overboard, pumping, bailing and plugging such shot holes as could be got at, but all would not do, in a very few minutes she went down in five and a half fathoms water with 13 of her men four of whom with three men of the Hornet got into the foretop and escaped—the prize crew

with difficulty saved themselves by jumping into a boat lying on the booms, and four of the Peacock's seamen took to her starboard boat which was much damaged by shot, but they arrived in safety at Demerara.

The loss of the Peacock's crew was five killed, including her captain and 33 officers. seamen and marines wounded, out of a crew of 110 men and 12 boys. The Hornet had one man killed and four wounded: her damages were trifling, her ship's complement in action was 162 men and boys. The relative force of the combatants were as follows:—

Peacock—Broadside guns, . . . . .	9
Weight of Broadside, . . . . .	192 lbs.
Crew, men only, . . . . .	110
Tonnage, . . . . .	386
Hornet—Broadside guns, . . . . .	10
Weight of Broadside, . . . . .	297 lbs.
Crew, men only, . . . . .	162
Tonnage, . . . . .	460

Vessels of the class to which the Peacock belonged were mere shells compared with the Hornet, whose scantling was as stout as that of an English 32 gun frigate, and there can be no doubt that the defence of the Peacock displayed both skill and gallantry of no common order.

Early in March 1813 the three American frigates Constitution, President and Congress were lying in the harbor of Boston: a fourth, the Chesapeake, after a lengthened cruise returned to that port on the 18th April.

On the 21st March the Shannon, commanded by Capt. Philip Bowes Vere Broke, and Tenedos, commanded by Capt. Hyde Parker, both 38 guns, 18 pounder Frigates, sailed from Halifax for a cruise in Boston bay. On the 2nd April the two Frigates reconnoitered the Port, saw the President and Congress both nearly ready for sea, and the Constitution undergoing large repairs. Having resolved to bring the two former to action the Shannon and Tenedos took a station to intercept them, but on the 1st of May a dense fog and sudden shift of the wind enabled the American frigates to leave port on a more profitable cruise; this being speedily discovered by the British cruisers occasioned them great dissatisfaction; as the Chesapeake would be ready for sea in a week