

Small Arms Deliveries Through Wilmington, NC In 1863

The Impact on Confederate Ordnance Policy

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When the American Civil War began in April of 1861, the states that would eventually join the Confederate States of America had in their possession conservatively between 285,000 and 300,000 small arms, mainly infantry arms. This total had accrued from four sources: 1) the manufacture of arms in the South under state auspices between 1800 and 1852, 2) the acquisition of “modern” arms for the states’ militias in accordance with the 1808 Militia Act during the period 1850–1860, 3) the transfer arms to and storage of arms in Southern federal arsenals and the subsequent seizure thereof in 1860–1861, and 4) the purchase of arms in the North during the months between the secessions of the states in the deep South and the firing upon Fort Sumter in April of 1861.

Weapons numbering 300,000 small arms would seem to be sizable. However, during 1861, the 11 seceded Southern states and the 3 border states (Missouri, Kentucky, and Maryland) raised no fewer than 325 regiments of infantry and 35 regiments of cavalry for the Southern cause. At approximately 1,000 small arms per regiment, the available supply of arms was quickly exhausted. By September of 1861, small arms were in such short supply that the arms of soldiers hospitalized or furloughed were collected for reissue to newly organized units. And, although local arms production began in New Orleans in September and in Richmond a month later, the initial output of the private and Confederate Ordnance Department facilities was utterly inadequate to the needs of the Confederate War Department.

Fortunately, in April of 1861, the War Department had sent to Europe a purchasing agent, Captain Caleb Huse (followed by Major Edward C. Anderson), to secure large quantities of foreign made arms for the Confederacy. Although initially frustrated by lack of financial credit and competition from New England purchasing agents also seeking technologically superior ordnance, Huse and Anderson were able to contract for significant numbers of English and Austrian small arms. The first significant shipment of small arms imported on Confederate account arrived via the steamer *Fingal* into Savannah in November of 1861 with 9,620 Enfield rifle-muskets, 7,520 of which were owned by the Confederate War Department. (It should be noted that an earlier shipment of 3,500 arms had also arrived in Savannah



aboard the *Bermuda* in mid-September 1861, but 1,800 of these arms had been imported on private rather than government account.) Deciding not to risk the loss of a major steamer laden with arms, in January of 1862 (and continuing through March), a new policy was adopted. Large steamers under English registry would transport Confederate shipments of arms to the port of Nassau in the British Bahamas. There the cargoes would be unloaded and then reloaded to smaller, privately owned ships for running into New Smyrna, a small port on Florida’s Atlantic coast.¹ Although Fort Pulaski, the main guard to the Savannah River would fall to Union forces in April of 1862, at least one other successful attempt would land arms in Savannah in June of 1862.

However, after the *Economist*, a large English steamer, successfully ran into Charleston in March of 1862, that South Carolina city became an alternate focus of private shippers seeking to run the still loose Union blockade. After the repulse of the Union incursion on Sullivan’s Island in June of 1862, Charleston became the main focus of the shipments of arms from Nassau. Charleston, a mere 515 miles from Nassau, and with four channels for access, would continue to be the primary destination for blockade runners. Not surprising, this was particularly so for the ships of John Fraser & Co. of Charleston (initially the *Cecile* and the *Kate*) or its Liverpool based affiliate, Fraser, Trenholm & Co. (whose fleet included the *Minho*, the *Herald* (I), and the *Leopard*). The arrival of the Union naval expedition off Charleston in the Spring of 1863 inhibited the ability of ships to run into

and out of Charleston, but it is significant to note that even after Wilmington offered a safer (if longer) voyage, during 1863, the number of arrivals in Charleston exceeded those entering Wilmington by a ration of 3 to 1.

On 3 February 1863, Colonel Josiah Gorgas, Confederate Chief of Ordnance, reported quantities of small arms that had successfully run the blockade since November of 1861. Most of the arms were of English origin and included 70,980 "Enfield" P-1853 rifle-muskets, 9,715 P-1856, 1860, or 1861 Sergeants or Navy rifles, 21,400 P-1839 and P-1842 muskets or P-1851 rifle-muskets, 2,020 "Brunswick" rifles, and 20 "small bore" rifles (probably Kerr's or Whitworth's patent rifles). In addition to 16,178 sabers, arms suitable for cavalry included a paltry 354 "carbines" (either the P1853 artillery or cavalry carbines, probably the former).

From the continent, Gorgas indicated that there had been imported 27,000 Austrian rifle-muskets. Another 23,000 arms remained at Nassau awaiting shipment through the blockade; these were most likely also Austrian rifle-muskets. A further 30,000 Austrian rifle-muskets lay in Vienna awaiting payment.² Cash and credit problems hampered the shipment of the arms at Vienna, but the limitations on available cargo space from the private shippers inhibited the arrival of arms already paid for but sitting in warehouses in Nassau. In Autumn of 1862, Colonel Gorgas authorized Captain Huse to obtain for the Ordnance Department several ships for the exclusive use of the Confederate Ordnance Department.

In England, Huse initially purchased three steamers, the *Cornubia* (formerly the *Columbia* and often later called the "Lady Davis"), the *Eugenie*, and the *Merrimac*. The last would only make a single run through the blockade in April of 1863, delivering three large Blakely cannon. Unfortunately, salt water contaminated the *Merrimac's* boilers during the run and fouled them so badly that she was sold at Wilmington to a representative of Joseph R. Anderson's Tredgar Iron Works in July of 1863. To replace her, that same month, Ordnance Department purchased from Fraser, Trenholm & Co., the steamship *Phantom*, and the *Merrimac's* captain, S.G. Porter, took command of her for the Ordnance Department.

The fourth ship acquired by the Ordnance Department in 1862 was the former mail steamer, *Giraffe*. This steamer had been purchased by the Confederate Treasury Department in mid-1862 to run lithographers, printing plates and associated items into the Confederacy. After running into Wilmington with her cargo in December of 1862, the Ordnance Department took her over as its fourth blockade runner and renamed her the *Robert E. Lee*.³

While the expense of the steamers was certainly a prohibiting factor, the Ordnance Department may well have taken into consideration another factor when purchasing

only four blockade runners for its use. Instead of Nassau, Colonel Gorgas had decided to utilize St. George, a small port in Bermuda as the trans-shipping point for the English steamers and his four blockade runners. St. George, for all practical matters, could only accommodate four blockade runners at any given time. On 10 September 1863, Major Smith Stansbury, Ordnance Department agent at St. George, related the problem:⁴

"We have four Warehouses—Penno's, Musson's, Doctor Hunter's, and Mrs. Todd's; attached to each Warehouse is a Wharf. . . . Only one Steamer can occupy a Wharf at a time.— Only four vessels, whether public or private, can be discharged or loaded at the same time for reason that a Custom House officer is required for each vessel, and there are only four 'Custom H.' Officers. Several detentions have occurred from this cause since I have been upon the Island."

In concluding, Major Stansbury further complained about the problems that confronted him:

"We cannot open boxes of Arms, and clean and oil them, etc., or do any work of the kind. No room—no workmen—no tools—no conveniences. This is not a city nor a town, but a village."

These would not be the only problem in the choice of St. George as the transfer point on the England to the Confederacy arms channel.

In comparison with Nassau, St. George had the disadvantage of being situated at best two days further from any of the ports of entry on the Confederacy's Atlantic coast. From Nassau to Savannah, Florida was a trip of 420 miles; from Bermuda to Savannah was 884 miles. From Nassau to Charleston was a trip of 515 miles, while from Bermuda to Charleston was 772 miles. And from Nassau to Wilmington was 570 miles, 102 miles shorter than the 674 miles from Bermuda to Wilmington. Those two extra days of travel not only cost time, but the extra coal for the boilers, with a corresponding loss of cargo weight.

What made Bermuda Colonel Gorgas' choice for his four new blockade runners was defensive. The Union Navy maintained a coaling station at Key West, Florida, which was only a day's steaming from the main trade route from Nassau to any of the South's Atlantic coastal ports. This permitted the Union Navy to maintain an almost constant vigil on the route. Bermuda, located due east of the North Carolina coast offered no comparable replenishment station for the Union Navy. St. George may have been further to Wilmington than Nassau, but it was far safer to reach. Moreover, Wilmington offered good railroad service to both theaters of the War, north to Petersburg and Richmond by the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad, or west and south by the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad. Finally, in the Winter of 1862-1863,

Wilmington was as of yet, virtually undiscovered as a blockade runner's destination.

The first blockade runner to enter the Cape Fear River was the side-wheeler, *Kate*, the ubiquitous blockade runner for Charleston's John Fraser & Co, that had led that company's efforts at New Smyrna and Charleston. On 6 August 1862, she arrived from Nassau with what is presumed to have been military stores. It is her arrival that probably gave Gorgas the impetus to chose Wilmington as his point of entry for the Ordnance Department's four blockade runners.

According to Colonel Gorgas, the result was propitious. On the 15th of November, 1863, Gorgas summarized the accomplishments of his bureau:⁵

"The Bureau has purchased through its agents abroad under your orders four steamers, the *Columbia* [sic- renamed *Cornubia*], *R.E. Lee*, *Merrimac*, and *Eugenie*, and at home the steamer *Phantom*, which have been industriously engaged in carrying out cotton and bringing in supplies. The particulars of this duty will be detailed to you by Maj. T.L. Bayne, charged specially with the conduct of these steamers and with that of others partially owned by the War Department. Without these important adjuncts, the first of which was purchased by Maj. Caleb Huse at his own instance, this department could not have attained its present ability to respond to all calls made upon it The number of small-arms imported through these steamers from September 30, 1862, to September 30, 1863, is 113,504."

A careless reading of the above quote might suggest that all 113,504 of the small arms imported in the fiscal year cited were brought in on the five ships alluded to in the report. A careful examination of the actual cargoes that can be documented from these five ships shows otherwise.

While much of the documentation concerning the importation of arms is sketchy or lost entirely, we are fortunate to have three sources that combine to clarify the muddled picture of imports of small arms into Wilmington in 1863 and 1864. In his 1988 study, *Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running During the Civil War*, published by the University of South Carolina Press, its author, Stephen R. Wise, through a search of Confederate Treasury Department records, was able to compile a tentative list of ships arriving at and departing from Southern ports for the entire War. Appendix 5 (pages 233 through 241) lists the names, approximate arrival dates, and points of origins for those ships entering North Carolina ports (i.e. Wilmington) from December of 1861 until December of 1864, and includes the various entries of the five War Department owned blockade runners. Appendix 6 (pages 242-250) lists the outgoing vessels, dates of departure and destinations. Of these, the former is the more important.

Wise's lists of arrivals and departures, provide raw data about activities of the Ordnance Department ships, but provide no information about their cargoes. Fortunately, the Confederate agent at Bermuda (whence most of the Ordnance Department ships departed for their runs into Wilmington), Major Smith Stansbury, maintained a log of the cargos that were loaded aboard ships bound for the Confederacy from September of 1862 through April of 1865, and Professor Frank Vandiver, in his 1947 landmark compilation, *Confederate Blockade Running through Bermuda*, incorporated in printed form the cargo manifests on pages 109 through 148 of that regrettably now out-of-print book.

The cargo manifests, while valuable in identifying the warehouses whence the arms were taken for trans-shipment and the English "bottom" that had transported the arms from England or the Continent, required a degree of circumspection on Stansbury's part. To avoid the appearance of English collusion with the Confederate shipments, the destinations usually assigned to the manifests indicated that they were intended for shipment to Nassau and that the arms were actually "cases of hardware." As a result, while we can quantify the number of arms based on the probable type (20 per case for English longarms; 24 per case for Austrian longarms), the identity of the type of arms must be primarily based on the source of the English "bottom" aboard which the arms were initially brought to Bermuda. Fortunately correspondence also printed in Vandiver's compilation fairly well identifies the type of arms brought in by the English steamers. Most significantly, this correspondence identifies the *Miriam* as the source of most (if not all) of the Austrian arms. Complaining to Colonel Gorgas not long after his arrival, Major Smith Stansbury noted the source of and his opinion about the Austrian arms in a letter dated 25 July 1863:⁶

"Colonel: I enclose a copy of bill of lading Steamer 'Miriam,' which arrived A.M. from Plymouth; This is the only document connected with the ship's cargo which has been received We have on hand here (as previously advised), about Sixty-thousand Austrian Muskets, which, judging from the Samples I have seen, are also condemned Arms, and to us utterly worthless."

"I am afraid that the Cargo of the 'Miriam' consists of a number, or similar lot of trash."

(This will serve to confirm what many of my friends who know that I collect Austrian import arms have long suspected—that I am a "trash collector")

While the cargo manifests have proven a beneficial source of information about arms shipments to Wilmington, the lack of specificity of the contents of the "cases of hardware" and the absence of similar reports for the other main transfer point, Nassau, inhibit the conclusions that might be

drawn from the manifest lists. However, we are fortunate in the survival of another key document that reflects on the arms shipments for the Confederacy that were processed through Wilmington.

In mid-1863, a Confederate Ordnance Department officer named Captain John M. Payne arrived at Wilmington to assist the Ordnance Department efforts at Wilmington. From 17 July 1863 until 12 January 1865, Captain Payne kept a set of books that detailed the arrival and distribution of “all military stores by the C.S. Ordnance Department and Niter & Mining Bureau” These two volumes, the first listing the arrival date, the blockade runner, and the detailed contents of each shipment of ordnance, and the second, listing the destinations and dates of departures of these shipments, were donated to the Museum of the Confederacy and form a part of the collections of the Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library of that institution. The ordnance imported in these two volumes was published in 1999; unfortunately several of the incoming shipments were omitted and the interpretation of others is open to question.⁷ Based on the original manuscript entries, we can get a fairly clear appraisal of the quantity, type, and destination of the arms shipments into Wilmington in at least the second half of 1863.

Let us first look at the dates of arrival and the cargos of the five ships operating under the direct control of the Ordnance Department for the period of Colonel Gorgas’ report.

Of the five Ordnance Department blockade runners, two would play only a small role in the blockade running into Wilmington. One of the ships, the Merrimac, had been loaded with Confederate ordnance while under the ownership of Z.C. Pearson & Company. While its cargo successfully arrived at St. George’s in Bermuda on 5 September 1862, shortly after its arrival it was impounded. Z.C. Pearson & Company had declared bankruptcy after the ship departed, and both the ship and its cargo were subject to the judgment of the courts. After expending 7,000 Pounds-Sterling, Huse acquired the ship in December of 1862. However, the Merrimac would not make a run through the blockade until four months later. Departing from Bermuda on 17 April 1863, the manifest of the Merrimac indicated she was loaded with (among other things) 232 “cases of manufactured merchandise, in store at Penno’s warehouse from the Gladiator, and 6 cases of “hardware” from Musson’s warehouse that had been trans-shipped from the Miriam. The former probably represented Enfield rifle muskets (at 20 per case), totaling 4,680 small arms, while the latter were undoubtedly Austrian rifle muskets (at 24 per case) numbering 134 arms.⁸ The destination of these small arms was not recorded, as Captain Bayne had not yet reported to Wilmington. The Merrimac is also reported to have had on board three large bore Armstrong guns, two of which was relegated to the defenses of

Wilmington while the other was sent to Vicksburg. While still in port at Wilmington, the Merrimac was sold by the Ordnance Department to representatives of Joseph Anderson of the Tredgar Iron Works in Richmond. The Merrimac would be captured attempting to depart via New Inlet of the Cape Fear River on 24 July 1863 by the U.S.S. Magnolia.⁹

To replace the Merrimac as part of the Ordnance Department’s blockade running fleet, in July of 1863, the steamer Phantom was purchased by the Ordnance Department from Fraser, Trenholm & Company. Under that company’s registry, the Phantom may have made a run from Bermuda to Wilmington in mid-July 1863 and returning to Bermuda in the first week of August.¹⁰ If so, no Ordnance Department property appears to have been aboard on the incoming run.

The Phantom’s second run into Wilmington commenced on 19 August 1863. Cargo manifests indicate that she took aboard from Musson’s warehouse, “97 cases rifles” which had been trans-shipped from the Miriam.¹¹ That these were Austrian rifles is confirmed in Captain Payne’s ledgers. On 30 August 1863, Payne recorded the receipt per the Phantom of “97 cases Austrian rifles”, a total of 2,308 rifles. On the next day, 85 of these cases (1,640 rifles) were sent to Colonel Rains at the Augusta Arsenal. The balance of the shipment was divided up for the defense of North Carolina, with four cases being sent to R.L. Page at Charlotte and eight cases sent to Col. J.N. Whitford.¹²

The Phantom left Wilmington again about 11 September 1863 for Bermuda. At St. George’s, she was loaded with 2 Blakely Guns and “50 cases Austrian rifles”, a total of 1,200 small arms, and departed for Wilmington on 19 September 1863.¹³ In this, her second attempt to run the blockade, the Phantom ran into trouble. As she hugged the coast on 23 September 1863, off New Inlet of the Cape Fear, she was sighted by the U.S.S. Connecticut. Her Captain, S.G. Porter, deliberately ran her aground and set her afire to prevent the ship’s capture.¹⁴ Despite the loss of the ship, many of the small arms aboard were recovered, though in damaged condition. Two cases (48 rifles) of undamaged arms and 985 loose and damaged arms were recovered by 3 October 1863, and on 3rd, 6th, and 7th of October, a total of 998 of these arms were forwarded by Captain Payne to the attention of Major Childs at the Fayetteville Arsenal for refurbishing and repairs¹⁵. For the workmen at Fayetteville, the arrival of these Austrian rifles for repair and refurbishing would come at the time when rifle production at the Fayetteville Armory had come to a standstill for want of gun barrels.¹⁶

September of 1863 would deal a double blow to Ordnance Department’s efforts to rely on its own blockade runners, for on the 7th of September, another of the British made ships would be lost, the Eugenie.

The *Eugenie* had been purchased by Major Huse in England during the Winter of 1861-1862. Her first attempt to run the blockade began in St. George's on 13 May 1863, departing with "154 cases of hardware".¹⁷ Since these had been trans-shipped from the *Miriam*, they were undoubtedly Austrian rifles packed 24 to a case, or a total of 3,676 small arms. After successfully running into Wilmington, the ship departed with a load of cotton about 25 May for St. George's. There, this time with a cargo listed as "86 cases hardware" that had been trans-shipped from the *Gladiator* to Penno's warehouse. These were most likely Enfield rifle-muskets, packed 20 to a case, and therefore representing 1,720 small arms. Also aboard were "9 cases merchandise" from Musson's warehouse that had arrived aboard the *Miriam*.¹⁸ Whether these were arms, ammunition, or other ordnance stores cannot be determined, as Captain Payne had not yet begun to detail the contents arriving; however, from what is known of the next three shipments, it is likely that the "merchandise" was either arms and/or cartridges.

On 11 July 1863, the *Eugenie* made her third run out of St. George's for Wilmington. Aboard, among other items according to Major Stansbury's manifests, were "326 cases general merchandise"¹⁹ Fortunately, Captain Payne's accounts detail that 300 of these cases consisted of 100 cases of Enfield rifle-muskets and 200 cases of cartridges for the same. All of these were sent to Selma, Alabama to Captain White, probably for rearming Pemberton's surrendered Vicksburg garrison.²⁰

On the *Eugenie*'s fourth run into Wilmington, departing St. George's on 13 August 1863, her manifests identified her cargo including "450 boxes cartridges," and "140 cases rifles (Enfield)"²¹ Captain Payne's records, however, show only 139 cases of Enfield rifles arriving. On 24 August 1863, all 2,780 of these rifle-muskets were forwarded to Richmond to the attention of Captain Broun at the Richmond Armory.²² This would be the last arms brought in aboard the *Eugenie*.

On 4 September 1863, the *Eugenie* entered upon her fifth run into Wilmington from St. George's. Although her cargo included "300 packages of gunpowder" (among other merchandise), no "cases of hardware" were within the cargo.²³ Captain Payne, who did acknowledge the receipt of the "300 barrels of powder" on 10 September 1863 when the *Eugenie* was off-loaded at Wilmington recorded no small arms aboard.²⁴ As the iron frame of the *Eugenie* had been severely damaged by striking a sandbar in crossing into the Cape Fear River on 7 September 1863, she was considered no longer safe for blockade running. Not until the second week of December, 1863 was the *Eugenie* deemed seaworthy again, and after safely venturing the outgoing run to Nassau, she was returned to Liverpool, where she was sold at the conclusion of the War.²⁵ In November of 1863, the

other two Ordnance Department owned steamers, the *Cornubia* and the *R.E. Lee* would both be captured after highly successful year long careers running small arms into Wilmington.

The Robert E. Lee, formerly the Clyde River side-wheeler, *Giraffe*, had initially been purchased by the Confederate Treasury Department in 1862. Sent with its cargo of Treasury Department lithographic equipment and operatives to Nassau, the *Giraffe* on 27 December 1862 first attempted to run into Charleston. When heavy weather prevented an approach to Charleston, the *Giraffe*'s captain, Lieutenant John Wilkinson, changed course and arrived safely at Wilmington with his Treasury Department cargo on 29 December 1863.²⁶ After its arrival at Wilmington, various claims were put forth for the ownership of the vessel, which had been contracted for the Treasury Department mission through the firm of Alexander Collie & Company. The War Department was successful in this contest and purchased the *Giraffe* and renamed it the Robert E. Lee. Although custom records seem to indicate that the Robert E. Lee successfully negotiated the run from Bermuda to Wilmington on or about the 11th of February 1863 and the 19th of March, the first recorded shipment of Ordnance Department supplies was recorded by Major Smith Stansbury in the manifest for the R.E. Lee's departure of 24 April 1863. On board on that occasion were "300 cases hardware" that had been trans-shipped to Bermuda aboard the *Harriet Pinckney* another "89 cases hardware" that had been brought to St. George's aboard the *Gladiator*, in all probably representing 7,780 English rifle-muskets.²⁷ On her second run for the Ordnance Department, which departed from St. George's on 5 June 1863, her cargo consisted of "389 boxes hardware" that had been imported on the *Harriet Pinckney* and the *Merrimac*, and another "65 cases hardware" from the *Justicia*; these 454 probable cases of arms most likely represented a total of 9,080 English rifle-muskets.²⁸ On her third run, Major Stansbury stealthfully recorded on 22 July 1863 that the cargo included "329 cases" from the *Harriet Pinckney* and "28 cases" from the *Gladiator*.²⁹ Fortunately, by the arrival of this cargo in Wilmington on 1 August 1863 detailed the shipment to have included 200 cases of English rifle-muskets and 1 case containing 20 English smoothbore muskets. Half of the Enfield rifle-muskets were sent to Richmond to the attention of Major Downer at the Richmond Armory on 6 August 1863. The single case of smoothbores and 80 cases of Enfields were sent to Colonel Raines at Augusta during the same month, while 20 cases (400 rifle-muskets) were retained in Wilmington to re-arm the forces holding the forts on the Cape Fear River.³⁰

The fourth run of the R.E. Lee commenced with the ship's departure from St. George's on 4 September 1863. In

addition to 300 barrels of gunpowder (which had arrived at Bermuda aboard the Merrimac), the R.E. Lee's manifest showed "178 cases hardware", and "20 cases hardware", whose source was unclear.³¹ Captain Payne noted the successful arrival of the R.E. Lee at Wilmington on the 12th of September. On board were 178 cases of Austrian rifle-muskets (totaling 4,272 arms), which Payne forwarded to Colonel Raines at Augusta on 26 September, and 20 cases (or 400 arms) of Enfield rifle-muskets, which he directed to Major Downer at Richmond on 23 September.³²

The Robert E. Lee completed the loading for what was to be her fifth attempt to run into Wilmington on 4 November 1863. According to Major Stansbury's accounts, loaded aboard her were "145 cases arms" that had been stored in Musson's warehouse since their arrival in Bermuda. As cargo trans-shipped from the Miriam, these were most likely Austrian rifle-muskets, packed 24 to a case, numbering 2,030 small arms.³³ Captain Payne would not confirm these contents. On the morning of 9 November 1863, while attempting to negotiate the channel near Bogue Inlet of the Cape Fear River, the R.E. Lee was sighted by the U.S.S. James Adger.³⁴ Hours later, the same James Adger would capture the last of the Ordnance Department's blockade running fleet, the Cornubia.

The Cornubia, initially christened the "Columbia" and occasionally called the "Lady Davis", was the longest in service and most successful of all of the Ordnance Department blockade runners. Between 12 December 1862 and 8 November 1863, the Cornubia made nine successful runs from St. George's to Wilmington.³⁵ The first two of these runs, those which left St. George's on 12 December 1862 and 26 January 1863, but Major Stansbury's accounts probably did not carry small arms, although the latter's manifest does include a nebulous "260 cases" that had been brought to Bermuda by the steamer Justicia, possibly indicating as many as 5,200 Enfield rifle-muskets. The third run, which left Bermuda on 25 February 1863 contained "111 cases hardware" which had been trans-shipped on the Gladiator; these almost certainly accounted for 2,220 Enfield rifle-muskets. Likewise, the fourth run, which departed St. George's on 27 March 1863 included "122 cases manufactured merchandise" that had arrived in Bermuda aboard the Justicia. If rifle-muskets, these 122 cases were another 2,440 Enfields. Yet another 4,000 Enfields were shipped from St. George's aboard the Cornubia on 8 May 1863, represented as "200 cases hardware" that had been imported into Bermuda aboard the British steamer Gladiator. Another "44 cases merchandise" from the Justicia were also aboard, but it is uncertain if their contents were small arms.

The Cornubia's sixth successful run from St. George's to Wilmington departed the former on 5 June 1863. Aboard

according to Major Stansbury's manifest were "99 cases hardware" trans-shipped from the Miriam. These were Austrian rifle-muskets, numbering 2,376 arms. On 9 July 1863, the Cornubia began her seventh run. Major Stansbury nebulously listed her cargo as including "500 cases" that had been trans-shipped to Penno's warehouse from the steamer Harriet Pinckney. Happily, when this shipment arrived in Wilmington on 19 July 1863, Captain Payne was now at Wilmington to greet it and record its cargo.

Payne noted that the shipment included "47 cases art. carbines" and "12 cases cav. carbines". The 940 artillery carbines were sent to the Selma Arsenal in Alabama under the command of Captain White, while the 240 cavalry carbines were sent to Major Downer at Richmond, the former on 20 July and the latter on 29 July 1863.³⁶

Captain Payne would also be present to clarify the eighth and ninth successful runs of the Cornubia. The former departed St. George's on 13 August 1863, with "226 cases rifles", and "2 cases gun fittings" aboard from Hunter's warehouse but trans-shipped from the Harriet Pinckney. However, upon its arrival on 22 August 1863, Payne would record (in addition to the 2 cases of gun fittings), 228 cases of Austrian rifle-muskets. All 5,472 arms would be shipped to Colonel Raines at Augusta on 22 August. A similar overage was reported by Captain Payne when the Cornubia completed its ninth successful voyage for the Ordnance Department on 25 September 1863. According to Payne's accounts, 201 cases of Austrian rifle-muskets were aboard the Cornubia when she landed. Major Smith Stansbury, however, had recorded only "200 cases rifles", which had been transferred from the ship "Ella and Annie".

These 4,824 rifle-muskets had been intended to be shipped to Texas in a shipment that was to have included 12,000 Austrian rifle-muskets. Loading of these arms commenced at St. George's on 1 September 1863. The departure of these arms aboard the "Ella and Annie" was delayed, at first ostensibly for coaling, but later it was determined that the captain, Frank N. Bonneau, was enthralled in the arms of his paramour in Hamilton, and it was not until 9 September that the "Ella and Annie" set forth for the Texas coast. Initially Bonneau turned back when a Union blockader spotted the ship. Two days later, Bonneau ran into a major storm that tore away his paddle boxes, and only on the 14th was the "Ella and Annie" able to reach St. George's. There the most water damaged of the cargo was transferred to the Cornubia so that they could be refurbished in Confederacy, since St. George's had no facilities for repair or examination of cargos.³⁷ Of the 201 cases of Austrian rifles brought into Wilmington aboard the Cornubia on 25 September, 193 cases were sent to Major Cuyler at Macon, where they pre-

sumably could be refurbished, while four cases each were sent to Captain Millet at Raleigh and Captain J.C. Little at Fort Fisher for its garrison.³⁸

The final run of the Cornubia began at St. George's on 4 November 1863. Small arms aboard according to Major Stansbury's inventory included "64 cases rifles" from Musson's warehouse, that had arrived in Bermuda aboard the Miriam. These were undoubtedly Austrian rifle-muskets, numbering 24 to a case and thereby totaling 1,536 small arms.³⁹ Shortly after midnight on 8 November 1863, as the Cornubia sought to enter New Inlet of the Cape Fear River she was sighted by the James Adger, who signaled the Nippon to watch for her. Trapped between the two union blockaders, the Cornubia was run aground by her captain and crew; however, before they could make their escape, the pair closed in and captured the vessel, cargo, and crew. The James Adger then attached a hawser to the Cornubia and towed her out to sea as a prize.⁴⁰ Thus ended the careers of the Confederate Ordnance Department blockade running fleet.

What did the five vessels of the Confederate Ordnance Department fleet accomplish? First and foremost they demonstrated that blockade running could successfully be carried out between the relatively obscure ports of St. George's and Wilmington. Secondly, although the fleet was not responsible for all of 113,000 small arms imported into the Confederacy during the second fiscal year of the Confederacy's existence, its ships did contribute heavily to those importations. So much so, in fact that it was possible to re-fit Lee's Army with new English rifle-muskets after its retreat from Gettysburg. The balance of those English arms not sent to Lee's Army were sent to Bragg's Army of Tennessee. During the Winter of 1863-1864, the balance of the English small arms, and most of the Austrian longarms that had come through Wilmington re-equipped the Army of Tennessee with for the first time, a majority of rifled arms in lieu of the smoothbore weaponry with which most of the infantry had been armed since 1861.

Although all of the Ordnance Department blockade runners were either out of commission or captured by November of 1863, arms shipments through Wilmington did not cease by any means. As the ledgers of Captain Payne too amply demonstrate, small arms shipments continued in significant numbers through 1864. The ability of privately owned contract blockade runners to successfully negotiate the blockade into Wilmington allowed the Ordnance Department in 1864 to import another 6,000 carbines and more than 1,000 revolvers through Wilmington in 1864. The arrival of these arms permitted the re-equipping of the cavalry with arms comparable to the Richmond muzzle-loading carbines and the retirement of the ineffectual Robinson

Sharps carbines. This in turn permitted the Ordnance Department to shift the carbine machinery from the Robinson plant to Tallassee, Alabama, where it could be remodeled to produce a Confederate copy of the English cavalry carbine that had been approved by Stuart in 1863. Wilmington, clearly was (at least for the Ordnance Department) the "lifeline of the Confederacy."

NOTES

1. For more details on the shipments aboard the Bermuda and the Fingal and the subsequent utilization of the Florida Coast as a destination, see Wiley Sword, *Firepower From Abroad: The Confederate Enfield and LeMat Revolver* (Lincoln, R.I.: Mowbray Publishers, 1986). 13-22.

2. U.S. War Department (comp.), *The War of the Rebellion: The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series IV, Vol. 2, 382-384. Note: Hereafter citations to this series will be simply cited as O.R., followed by series, volume and page numbers.

3. The purchase of these ships and their histories are covered in Stephen R. Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running During the Civil War* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988, 1991), 96-100. Hereafter this source will be cited simply as "Wise, Blockade Running During the Civil War."

4. Quoted in Frank Vandiver (ed.), *Blockade Running Through Bermuda, 1861-1865: Letter and Cargo Manifests* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1947), 93-94. Hereafter this source will be simply cited as "Vandiver, Blockade Running Through Bermuda."

5. Report of Colonel J. Gorgas, Chief of Ordnance, 15 November 1863, quoted from O.R., Series IV, Vol. 2, 955-956.

6. Frank Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, p. 76; see also pp. 77 and 84. In the former letter (3 August 1863), Stanbury indicated that the Miriam had arrived at Plymouth as a "courtesy" visit after originally departing from Hamburg.

7. David Noe, Larry W. Yantz, and James B. Whisker, *Firearms from Europe* (Rochester, N.Y.: Roe Publications, 1999), 142-153. Among the arrivals missing from the lists published therein are those of the Banshee and Eugenie, respectively of 14 and 18 August 1863. The list also misidentifies the 11 December 1863 arrival as being the R.E. Lee (which had captured on 9 November 1863), when it was actually the Dec. Aside from those two major omissions/commissions, the published lists are relatively accurate.

8. Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, 111-112.

9. Wise, *Blockade Running During the Civil War*, 97, 243, and 312.

10. Wise, *Blockade Running During the Civil War*, 235 and 243. No record of the Phantom's visit to Bermuda appears in Major Stanbury's manifests.

11. Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, 117.

12. Payne Ledgers, *Museum of the Confederacy*; hereafter simply cited as "Payne Ledgers."

13. Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, 118.

14. Wise, *Blockade Running During the Civil War*, 138 and 316.

15. Payne Ledgers.

16. For details on Fayetteville production delays, see Dr. John M. Murphy and Howard Michael Madaus, *Confederate Rifles & Muskets* (Newport Beach, CA.: Graphic Publishers, 1996), 201-222, esp. 214.

17. Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, 113.

18. Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, 114.

19. Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, 114.

20. Payne Ledgers.

21. Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, 116.

22. Payne Ledgers.

23. Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, 117.
24. Payne Ledgers.
25. Wise, *Blockade Running During the Civil War*, 138, 245, and 298.
26. Wise, *Blockade Running During the Civil War*, 99-100.
27. Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, 112.
28. Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, 113.
29. Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, 115.
30. Payne Ledgers.
31. Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, 117.
32. Payne Ledgers.
33. Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, 121-122.
34. Wise, *Blockade Running During the Civil War*, 139-140 and 318.
35. Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, pp. 110 (1st, 2nd, and 3rd runs), 111 (4th run), 112 (5th run), 113 (6th run), 114 (7th run- as "Lady Davis"), 116 (8th run), 118 (9th run). For the unsuccessful 10th run, see p. 121.
36. Payne Ledgers.
37. The "unofficial" account of Bonneau's "adventures" is told in Wise, *Blockade Running During the Civil War*, pp. 135-136; the official correspondence relating to the cargo appears in Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, 91 and 95. Captain Bonneau would attempt to redeem his reputation by endeavoring to ram the Union blockader, U.S.S. Nipon while attempting to run the blockade into Wilmington on 8 November 1863, see Wise, p. 140.
38. Payne Ledgers.
39. Vandiver, *Blockade Running Through Bermuda*, 121.
40. For details of the capture, see Wise, *Blockade Running During the Civil War*, 139-140.