

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF NORTH CAROLINA,
Hatteras Inlet, January 29, 1862.

Major General GEORGE B. McCLELLAN,

Commanding U. S. Army, Washington:

GENERAL: Since my last report on the 26th instant we have been incessantly engaged in getting our vessels over the bar into the sound. They have all had to be lightened of their cargo in order to bring them to the necessary draught for crossing. This has necessarily consumed much time, owing to the limited means for towing and discharging. We have, however, at anchor in the sound this morning transportation for twelve regiments.

All the necessary arrangements for a considerable movement having been made, I shall, in conjunction with Commodore Goldsborough, at once make an advance upon Roanoke Island. These arrangements have all been made in the best spirit and we have received much valuable assistance from the commodore's vessel. Of the eight tug boats ordered from Baltimore only one has arrived; the other seven are still at Old Point Comfort, afraid to go out to sea. The want of these boats has been a most serious hindrance to our progress. I have never undertaken a work that has presented so many obstacles.

Since our last dispatch four water schooners have come in, affording us much relief. We look for others daily. The inclosed list of vessels will show you our strength now at anchor in the sound.

The health of the troops has been and still is very good, considering their long confinement on shipboard, and the men are all eager for a forward movement, I have landed at this point, and shall leave in charge of General Williams the Eighty-ninth New York, Sixth New Hampshire, **Eleventh Connecticut** Regiments, with the Rhode Island Battery. I find I cannot use so many men to advantage upon the island, and these regiments, under the care of General Williams, will be ready and accessible at all times.

In my last I made mention of Colonel Hawkins in a way that may convey to you a wrong impression.

The pilots were engaged for service in the harbor and in the sound, but failed to fulfill their contract, either from unwillingness or incompetency, and we have suffered much for want of experienced men in towing the vessels.

I neglected to mention in my last dispatch a painful occurrence that happened on the 15th during a heavy blow. A boat containing Colonel Allen and Surgeon Weller, of the Ninth New Jersey Regiment, with a boat's crew, was upset in the breakers while returning from this ship to his own vessel, he having come on board to report the arrival of his command. The colonel and surgeon were both drowned. Their bodies were recovered and will be sent home by the Suwanee to-day.

The bark John Trucks, with Fifty-third Regiment New York Volunteers, Colonel L. J. D'Epineuil, arrived here after a long passage, but owing to the great draught of the vessel

and the consequent impossibility to bring her over the bar and the difficulty of landing her troops she was ordered back to Fort Monroe on the 26th to report to General Wool.

The brigadier-generals have all been incessant in their labors, and the best of feeling pervades the whole command, both among officers and men. The weather for the last two or three days has been bright and clear, and everything evinces a much more cheerful aspect than at the time of my last dispatch.

FRIDAY, January 31.

Yesterday afternoon five of the tug-boats from Baltimore came in and anchored inside the bar. We immediately put them to work in towing over the remainder of the vessels, and with their assistance we now have at anchor in deep water all the vessels we intend to take up the sound. Having had to lighten these vessels of their troops and of everything that could be taken from them, some time will be required to re-embark the troops and reload them. We are busily engaged now in this work and in supplying them with water and provisions, ready for a forward movement, and hope very soon to be under way. The Eastern State returned from Fort Monroe last evening, bringing a large mail. Owing to her drawing so much water we shall not attempt to take her over the bulkhead, but leave her for other purposes in the harbor.

Early this morning a sail was seen approaching as from the opposite side of the sound. One of the picket gunboats was sent out to meet her and soon brought her in. She proved to be a small schooner from Middletown, a point nearly opposite where we are now lying. She was laden with pine wood and had on board 5 men, deserters from the camp at Middletown. They report about 600 men at Middletown under arms. These are all poorly equipped and armed with smooth-bore flint-lock muskets, and not at all inclined to resist the landing of the Federal forces. The men have been detained and are now on board this vessel.

I have the honor, General, to be your obedient servant,

A. E. BURNSIDE,

Brigadier-General.