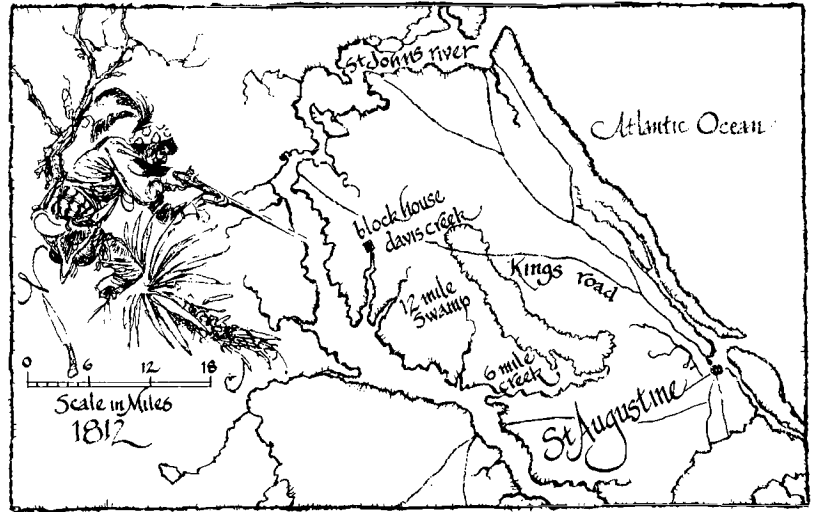




Swamp Ambush

St. Augustine

11 September 1812



Twelve-Mile Swamp, named for its approximate distance from St. Augustine, Florida, is even now a forbidding area of cypress bogs and palmetto thickets. Through this heavily wooded wilderness on the evening of 11 September 1812, passed a ragged column of 20 Marines and Georgia militiamen, led by Marine Captain John Williams, a sensitive, 47-year-old Virginian. His mission was to escort a pair of supply wagons from the main camp of the Patriot Army near St. Augustine to the blockhouse on Davis Creek, about 22 miles to the northwest. Williams and his detachment had come to East Florida to join an expedition intent on annexing the Spanish province, out of fears that the British would use Florida as an advance base for an invasion, and that escaped slaves would inspire insurrection in the southern states.

The Marines, half-starved, ill with fever, their dress uniforms tattered from months of frustrating shore duty with the Army, were more than a little uneasy as they eyed the surrounding thickets. They were well aware that bands of armed Seminole Indians and runaway slaves were active in the area. Anxious to reach the safety of Davis Creek before sunset, they hurried the blue military supply wagons through the gloomy swamp as twilight deepened.

Suddenly, the woods along the trail erupt with a blaze of musket fire as a large band of Indians and blacks fires a pointblank volley into the column. Williams, his sergeant, and the lead team of horses are downed by the first shots. The wounded captain is quickly assisted off the trail by one of his men. His uniform is that prescribed in the 1810 regulations—navy blue coat faced with red, buttoned and laced in front with a gold epaulet on the right shoulder and counterstrap on the left; white vest and pantaloons with a scarlet sash; black knee-high boots; and, at his side, a sword and cocked hat with cockade and plume.

Distinguishable in their blue coats, white pantaloons, and high crowned hats, Williams' Marines took up defen-

sive positions along the trail and returned fire with their standard-issue 1808 smoothbore, muzzle-loading flintlock muskets. The badly wounded Captain Williams watched as Captain Tomlinson Fort, his militia counterpart from Milledgeville, Georgia, took over command, exhorting the troops to continue the fight until the last cartridge. At length, he too was wounded and ordered a retreat further into the swamp. As the fighting ended, the enemy band destroyed one wagon and drove the other off with their own wounded inside.

During the night, part of the detachment made its way to the blockhouse, while Williams, too severely wounded to be moved, hid himself among the palmetto thickets. The next morning, a rescue force found the Marine captain—his left arm and right leg broken, and his right arm, left leg, and abdomen pierced by musket fire. Searching further, they found six more wounded in the brush, in addition to Williams' sergeant, stripped and scalped.

"You may expect," Williams wrote to Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Franklin Wharton four days later, "that I am in a dreadful situation, tho' I yet hope I shall recover in a few months." Despite being moved to the relative comfort of a nearby plantation house, Williams died on 29 September. The ambush in Twelve-Mile Swamp and Marine Captain John Williams' subsequent death proved to be the catalyst which brought an end to an ill-conceived and diplomatically embarrassing American scheme to annex Spanish East Florida by force.

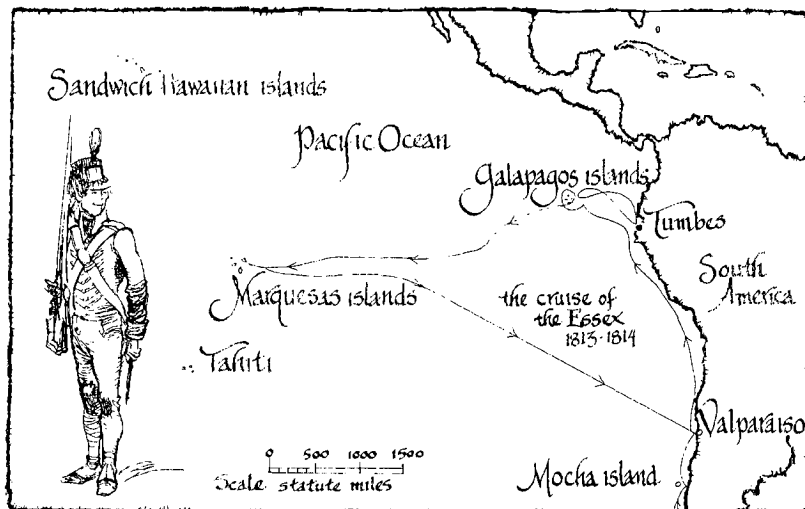
Among the source materials used in the preparation of the painting and plate description were: sketches and photographs made by the artist on a visit to Twelve-Mile Swamp; Captain John Williams ltr to Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Franklin Wharton, dtd 15Sep1812 (Commandant's Letters Received, RG 127, National Archives, Washington, D.C.); J. H. Alexander, "The Ambush of Captain John Williams, U.S.M.C.: Failure of the East Florida Invasion, 1812-1813," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 56 (Jan1978), pp. 280-296.



Parley at Nukuhiva

Marquesas Islands

8 January 1814



In early December 1813, the American frigate *Essex*, commanded by Captain David Porter, and a prize ship, renamed the *Essex Junior*, sailed eastward from the island of Nukuhiva toward the South American coast. Seven weeks before, Porter and five prizes had come to the Marquesas Islands to make repairs and to find “some relaxation and amusement” after five long months of raiding the British whale fishery in the Pacific. He and his crew, in addition to enjoying themselves, found time to erect a small hilltop fort and to put an end to an ongoing civil war between the coastal natives and hill people. Despite the pleasures the island afforded and the crew’s desire to remain, Porter finally decided it was time to leave and on 13 December the two ships weighed anchor. He left behind four prize ships with Marine Lieutenant John M. Gamble, 22 sailors and Marines, and six British prisoners, under orders to remain until May the following year. If no word had come they were to abandon the island.

With Porter gone, Lieutenant Gamble, an energetic New Yorker, endeavored to carry on the policy, laid down by his commander, of maintaining peace on the island. On 8 January 1814, after several days of torrential rains, Gamble and a few of his men gather on the shore of Taiohae Bay to hear a courier from a nearby coastal village. Wearing comfortable, but non-regulation dress—summer service Navy trousers, shirt, unbuttoned summer enlisted coat with captain’s rank attached, sword belt, sash, and chapeau—Gamble listens as a young tattooed Nukuhivan tells him that a tribe in the next bay is again at war. Behind the lieutenant stands a Marine in a tattered uniform, a sailor, and an assortment of natives. Three drunk and surly British prisoners watch from a distance.

Eager to keep the peace, not only for his own safety, but for “the harmony and advantage of the natives themselves,” Gamble later set out for the village with two boats and 12 armed men. On landing, the Marine lieute-

nant demanded to know the reason for the conflict. He reminded the villagers of the promise they had made to Captain Porter to live in peace, and endeavored again to convince them of the disadvantages of war. The village chiefs answered that while they were averse to war, the life of an innocent man had been taken. Gamble quickly put an end to the quarrel by demanding that the man’s killer be brought to him within two days, or the villages would be faced with an attack by his whole force.

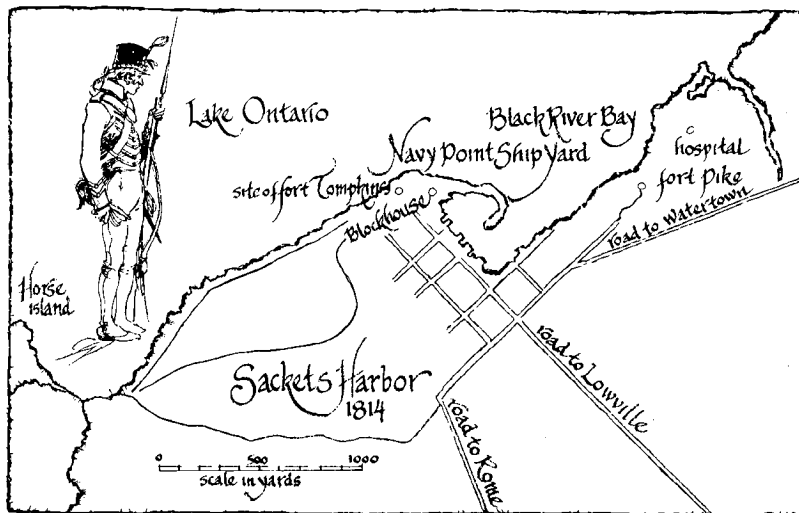
While his peacemaking efforts succeeded among the natives, Gamble’s efforts at maintaining a semblance of discipline among his men began to fail. Sparked by petty jealousies, a desire to return home, and numerous provocations by the English prisoners, desertions increased and the garrison became mutinous. On 7 May, rebellion flared as English-led mutineers took one of the prize ships and put to sea. With his position on the island precarious, Gamble and the few loyal men remaining decided to make a run for it. Raising sail in the *Sir Andrew Hammond*, he and six crewman drifted northeastward without charts or navigational instruments. Fifteen days later they reached Oahu, where they were received warmly by the Hawaiians and American traders. To repay the Hawaiians’ kindness, Gamble agreed to take several chiefs to a nearby island, but while enroute they were captured by HMS *Cherub* and subsequently taken to Rio de Janeiro. Paroled in November 1814, Gamble, broken in health, finally reached the United States in August 1815.

Among the source materials used in the preparation of the painting and plate description were: David Porter, *Journal of a Cruise made to the Pacific Ocean, by Captain David Porter, in the United States Frigate Essex, in the Years 1812, 1813, and 1814*, 2d ed. (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1822); George H. Von Langsdorff, *Voyages and Travels in Various Parts of the World, during the Years 1803, 1804, 1805, 1806, and 1807* (London: Henry Colburn, 1813); Edwin H. Simmons, “The First Island Commander,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, Mar48, pp. iv cover.



Shipbuilding at Sackets Harbor New York

11 January 1814



Ten days before leaving Sackets Harbor, New York, for Washington in late December 1813, Commodore Isaac Chauncey wrote to the Secretary of the Navy that deaths among his men and those of the Army were rising at an alarming rate. "It is really disheartening," he sadly reported, "to see so many fine fellows sinking under disease with scarcely a possibility for saving them." The cold wintry weather was taking a toll. Of the 215 Marines under Captain Richard Smith stationed at Sackets Harbor, 32 were in the hospital, suffering from various illnesses ranging from frostbite to pneumonia. Despite all that the place could afford to make them comfortable, and the best medical assistance available, most would be dead within two to three days. Yet work on three vessels continued.

With the small squadron laid up and Lake Ontario frozen for the winter, the keels of two brigs and a frigate were laid in late December in an effort to maintain control of the lake and halt an expected British advance. Working feverishly despite the cold wind off the lake, civilian shipwrights, under the leadership of Henry Eckford, had nearly finished planking one of the two smaller vessels and were beginning to caulk by mid-January. At the same time, the inexperienced seamen and Marines from the fleet altered the blockhouse and increased its armament, while constructing bastions, platforms, messrooms, pickets, and a magazine for Fort Tompkins, should the British again attempt to attack and destroy the garrison as they had done in the spring of 1813.

On 11 January, following his return from New York with a load of supplies, Henry Eckford, with naval Master Commandant William Crane and Marine Captain Richard Smith, survey the final planking of the brig *Jefferson*; on either side stand the keels of the brig *Jones* and frigate *Superior*. As teams of oxen bring in the last loads of timber, under the shadow of the yet to be completed Fort Tompkins blockhouse, the three men discuss the progress

of construction and news received earlier in the morning from an American spy. The British at Kingston were preparing to attack, having requisitioned all sleighs in the Canadian province of Ontario for the purpose. The decision is made to continue work on the three vessels and build yet another fort at the main crossroads, a short distance inland. "You may rest assured," Crane writes Chauncey later in the day, "that we will not yield up the ships whilst men are left to man the guns."

The British attack never materialized, and upon the Commodore's return in late February, the three ships, as he reported to the Secretary of the Navy, were "in a great state of forwardness," and were expected to be launched about the first of May. This success was tempered, however, by the continued state of his men. "They suffer," he reported, "much beyond what anyone can form an idea of, unless they witness it . . . we have buried seven Marines out of a Corps of 180 and have this day on the sick report of the same corps 40 and our seamen in nearly the same proportion."

With the spring thaw and warmer weather, the winter illnesses slowly disappeared and work on the three vessels quickened. During the first week of April, the *Jefferson* and then the *Jones* were launched. Within a month the frigate *Superior* was also launched, and by late summer all three vessels joined the lake squadron in blockading British bases at Kingston and Niagara.

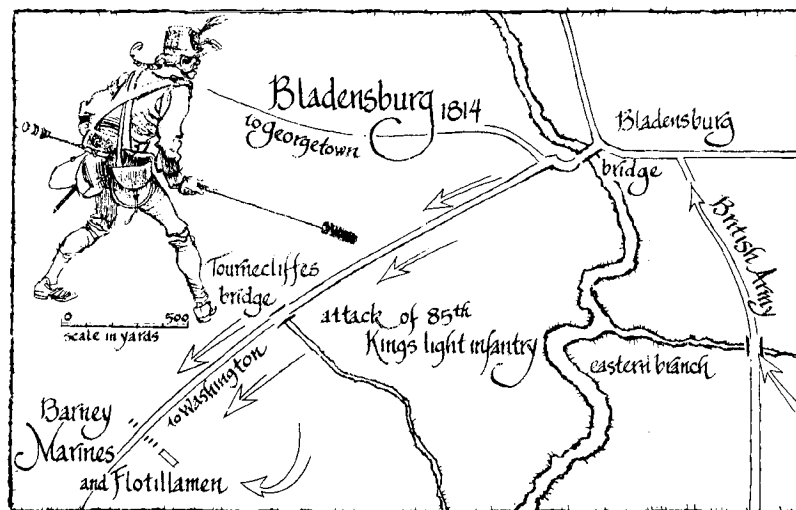
The following were among the sources used in the preparation of the painting and plate description: on-site sketches and photographs made by the artist; Commodore Isaac Chauncey ltrs to the Secretary of the Navy, dtd 19Dec1813, 20Dec1813, 24Feb1814, and 6Mar1814, (Captain's Letters, RG 45, National Archives, Washington, D.C.); Master Commandant William Crane ltrs to Commodore Isaac Chauncey, dtd 11Jan1814 and 1Feb1814 (Master Commandant's Letters, RG 45, National Archives, Washington, D.C.).



The Final Stand at Bladensburg

Maryland

24 August 1814



The battle had already been lost on the afternoon of 24 August: the “Bladensburg Races” were being run. Brigadier General William H. Winder’s 6,000 militiamen, facing British Major General Robert Ross’ regulars, had melted away, making retreat towards the capital as had President James Madison and his cabinet; only Commodore Joshua Barney’s stranded flotillamen and Captain Samuel Miller’s 103 Marines remained. Dust and smoke covered much of the action on the right flank where the Marines manned two of the three 12-pound “Gribeauval” field guns, hauled five miles from the Washington barracks to the little Maryland town that morning. The civilian drivers, in panic, had also departed with the ammunition wagons, leaving the guns with only enough charge and shot for two or three more rounds.

With the red jackets of the attacking 85th Foot barely visible through the smoke, Captain Miller, in uniform little changed since 1810, stands between two of the guns, guarded by Marine Sergeant Hilliday. A sore-footed sailor and a wounded Marine lay amid uniform coats, equipment, and weapons discarded in the heat of action. To the captain’s left, a bareheaded Marine rams a shot home, as another, still wearing his knapsack and priming horn, readies the vent; and two others, their shakos covered with soot, shift the gun with a handspike. The Marine crew of the other field gun, whose load of grape shot has just ripped through Ross’ lines, let out a cheer. Young T. P. Andrews, an adventuresome Washington schoolboy, bending over an ammunition box, readies another charge. On the crest of the hill and beyond, the row of Marine sharpshooters and flotillamen, including Commodore Barney’s black cook, Charles Ball, lay down a blanket of fire with their standard 1808 muskets.

A short time later, as Captain Miller’s 12-pounders again roared into action, Commodore Barney ordered a charge. In a hesitant surge, the line swept forward, forc-

ing the British light infantry to falter momentarily. But the Americans did not press the advantage; instead they returned to the guns. Eventually, the 85th gained the high ground on the right and poured musket fire on Miller’s gun crews as their marksmen crept closer. All at once, Captain Miller found himself locked in a duel with a British infantryman. Each fired and missed. Both reloaded, but while Miller was setting his flint, the Englishman fired again, shattering the captain’s left arm.

Deserted by their militia compatriots, flanked on the right, and with no ammunition, Commodore Barney, wounded in the thigh, ordered the guns spiked and his men to retreat. As they scattered, Barney, supported by his own lieutenants and accompanied by Miller and two other Marines—Captain Alexander Sevier, slightly wounded in the neck, and Lieutenant Benjamin Richardson—staggered a few yards and collapsed. Ordering his friends make their escape, Barney waited as the British overran the last American defense before Washington.

General Ross, with a force of 2,600 crack Peninsular veterans, had routed a raw American army of 6,000. Yet the triumph had its price. The British general lost over 250 killed and wounded, including 18 junior officers, most of whom had faced the defiant Marines and flotillamen under Commodore Joshua Barney and Marine Captain Samuel Miller.

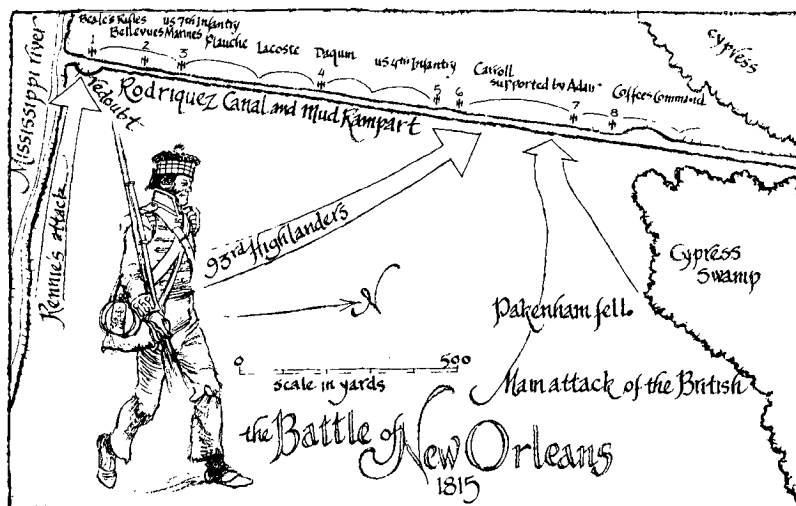
Among the sources used in the preparation of the painting and plate description were: Major Edwin N. McClellan, *History of the United States Marine Corps*, 2 vols (Washington: HQMC Historical Section, 1925-1932); U.S. Congress, House, Special Committee, *Documents Accompanying the Report of the Committee Appointed on the Twenty-Third of September last, to Inquire into the Causes and Particulars of the Invasion of the City of Washington by the British Forces in the Month of August, 1814*. 13th Cong., 3d sess., Doc. No. 24, 1814; Walter Lord, *The Dawn’s Early Light* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1972); H. L. Peterson, *Encyclopaedia of Firearms* (New York: Dutton, 1964).



Repulse of the Highlanders

New Orleans

8 January 1815



Major General Andrew Jackson and his 4,000 troops were ready. There was no hope of a British surprise on that cold, drizzly Sunday morning, five miles downriver from New Orleans. The Americans had Lieutenant General Sir Edward Pakenham's British camp, with its 5,000 troops, under observation. Jackson, outmatched in numbers by Pakenham, chose a position which left his enemy no choice but to advance some 2,000 yards across open ground under fire, while his own troops were sheltered by a mud rampart between 14 and 20 feet thick.

As light streamed across the fog-shrouded battlefield, the 56-man Marine detachment under the command of Lieutenants Francis de Bellevue and Philip de Grandpre scrambled into position next to Captain Thomas Beale's New Orleans Rifles. They were within the lines of the 7th U.S. Infantry, not far from the Mississippi. Their wait was short, as Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Robert Rennie's three light infantry companies of the 21st (Royal North British Fusiliers) Regiment, 43d (Monmouth) Regiment, and the 93d (Sutherland Highland) Regiment, in an effort to draw fire away from the main attack, stormed the artillery redoubt in front of their position.

Pressing his advantage, Rennie and the 93d Highlanders leap into the ditch separating the redoubt from the main breastwork and attempt to claw their way to the top without the aid of fascines and scaling ladders. Atop the breastwork, the Marines, dressed in the prescribed uniform for 1810, fire into the advancing attackers, bringing down two of every three.

Below, the Highlanders continued to push forward. Their dress for the campaign was unusual for a Scottish regiment. The headgear was not the typical Kilmarnock bonnet, but the Highland regiment's fatigue cap, the "hummell" bonnet. It had a high band of red and white dicing, and a small dark-blue crown with a small "tourie"—green for the light infantry. At the back were

two black ribbons tied in a "beau" knot.

The jacket was the regular infantry style of scarlet for the officers and brick red for the rank and file. The facing color for the ranks was lemon yellow, with the regimental braid of white with yellow worm, turnbacks of white, and flat pewter buttons, with a crowned "93." The trousers were tartan, but it is assumed that large numbers wore blue-gray pantaloons, with a red side-seam for the officers, as they were a part of the uniform from the winter of 1806 until the regiment's departure for America. Field officers of the flank companies normally wore buff or white britches and Hessian boots, and carried a regular infantry saber when not wearing a kilt.

Despite their attempt, the Highlanders failed to breach the breastwork; Lieutenant Colonel Rennie was killed by one of Beale's riflemen. In the end, their numbers became too few without the reinforcement, and the Scots retired from the ditch and redoubt. The light companies had lost two-thirds of their officers and men; Lieutenants de Bellevue and de Grandpre's Marines lost not a single man.

The main charge against the center of Jackson's line was met with tremendous, incessant musket fire, compelling the two British columns to retreat after an action of less than an hour. Jackson's casualties were negligible, yet the battlefield was heaped with British dead and wounded. With the retreat and acceptance of defeat, the British in the days following began withdrawing their forces.

Among the sources used in the preparation of the painting and plate description were: Wilburt S. Brown, *The Amphibious Campaign for West Florida and Louisiana, 1814-1815: A Critical Review of Strategy and Tactics at New Orleans* (University of Alabama Press, 1969); R. J. Marrion, "93rd Highland Regiment, 1814-1815" (Plate no. 332), *Military Collector & Historian*, Winter 1969, pp. 126-128; Brigadier General A. E. J. Cavendish, C. M. G., *An Reismeid Chataich: The 93rd Sutherland Highlanders Now 2nd. Bn. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Princess Louise's), 1799-1927* (Privately Printed, 1928).