

HEAD QUARTERS,
Department of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida.

Charleston, S. C. Sept 22^d 1864.

General:

In reply to your letter of the 6th inst. I have the honor to submit the following report.

There are now in Charleston Harbor and under my control the following Steamboats: viz:
Celt. Built in Charleston Harbor and recently fitted up as a Blockade Runner. It was loaded and ready to sail when I ordered it to be impressed for the use of the Government. In good condition and capable of carrying fifteen hundred (1500) men at a trip.

Randolph A good boat, but wanting a boiler now undergoing repairs. Capacity 500 men.

Mary Francis Doing duty but wants a new steam drum. Capacity 500 men.

Boston Wants a new Boiler. Capacity 1000 men.

De Kalb In wretched condition thought it is nearly worthless. Capacity 600 men.

Rebel In good order Capacity 350 men.

Caldwell Small boat undergoing repairs. Capacity 250 men.

Chesterfield Undergoing repairs. will be fit for service in two or three weeks. Capacity 1200 men.

Coffee Taken to pieces for the purpose. I believe of being fitted up as a blockade runner. cannot be

HEAD GUARDS

ready for service in less than four months. Capacity 600 men.

Torch Will be ready for service in about three weeks. Capacity 500 men.

Hibber In good order capacity 400 men.

Cluck Was discharged on account of being sunk in harbor, has been raised by her owner Mr W McCormick and is now undergoing repairs. The owner desired to run the Blockade with this vessel, and proposed to replace her with a new transport with good machinery in every way suited for harbor transportation. She will be ready for service in about one month.

Capacity 1000 men. I shall not permit the Cluck to run the Blockade unless overruled by higher authority. If, when completed, it is needed for harbor transportation.

The Capacity of the different Steamers here given is what is reported to me as their registered maximum capacity. For actual service practically a deduction of at least one third should be made.

When the Randolph and Mary Francis are repaired, no further transportation will be needed for Fort Sumter.

There are in the Eng: Dept here 500 pontoons 22 by 8 feet, with oars, which may be used for transporting troops and material.

When the other boats here named are thoroughly repaired they will suffice for ordinary harbor

2
transportation. But nearly all of them are now and have for sometime been in such wretched condition, that they could not be relied on. In my opinion, the efficient defensive operations here demand that there should be five or six thoroughly good and reliable steam boats, capable of transporting from seven hundred to a thousand men in addition to those now here. I have made no mention of a few small boats and barges employed in the harbor.

I will add, that blockade steamers are frequently in this harbor, and in a pressing emergency I am sure the owners of any that may be here, would not hesitate to permit me to use them. If they should refuse I would not hesitate to impress them.

I know of no means in the harbor "belonging to the Departments" which might be made available for harbor transportation. I suggest that the Navy Dept be asked to give information on that point. Nor, do I know of any means which may have existed here for that purpose that have been diverted by running the Blockade. I know of no boat used as a Govt transport in this Harbor that has been allowed to run the Blockade.

Our serious obstacle in the way of the efficient working of the transportation Dept. results from the fact, that the steamers used are owned and run by private parties, who from cupidity and timidity

are reluctant to carry them when they are exposed to fire.

The transports now in use are generally so defective, that an Engineer or any employee who knows anything of machinery may damage, and it is believed frequently have damaged, the boiler or machinery just enough to prevent the use of the boat when most needed.

This may be remedied by placing qualified men under competent officers to work the boats. Many such men were taken from that duty here and sent to Va. with their Regts in May last which seriously embarrassed the transportation service. I have asked that they be returned but my application has not been granted.

In reply to the last inquiry of your letter I cannot give the specific information which I understand you to desire. It is unquestionably true that rumors have to a very great extent attributed to officers in position here an interest incompatible with their official positions, in speculations connected with blockade running. These rumors have been recently investigated by Lt Col. McLean on Special Inspection duty for the Gr. Mr. Dept, so far as that Dept is concerned, aided by the Inspector Genl of this Department and all papers in my office for which he thought proper to call. I refer you

to his report for information on that point.

Respectfully

Wm. D. Smith
Saml. Jones
Wm. G. Conroy

Genl B. S. Bragg
Richmond

W.

R B 1947

Sam'l Jones,
Maj Genl

Charleston, Sep 23/64

In relation to
Harbor transportation,
giving list of boats
&c.

Rec'd Hd Qrs A.C. Sep 27/64