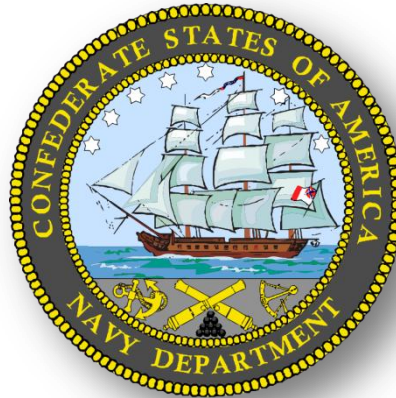


Tucker's Naval Brigade



Original History

Commander John R. Tucker resigned from the U.S. Navy when Virginia seceded from the Union on 18 April 1861, becoming a Commander in the Virginia Navy and, in June, the Confederate States Navy. In 1861-62, he was commanding officer of CSS *Patrick Henry* armed with 12 guns and manned by 150 officers and sailors, participating with her in several combat actions, including the Battle of Hampton Roads – the first clash in history between ironclads. During the Federal Navy's attack on the Drewry's Bluff fortifications, just below Richmond on the James River, in May 1862, he commanded one of the defending batteries in the Battle of Drewry's Bluff.

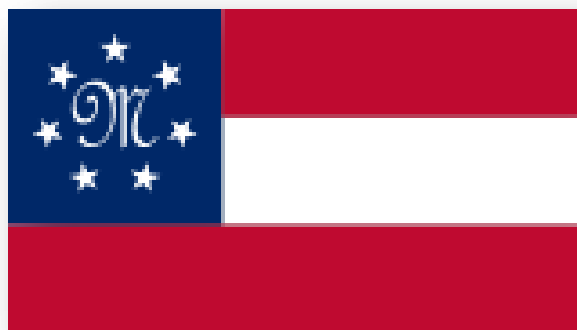


In July 1862, Tucker was ordered to Charleston, South Carolina, where he took command of the ironclad CSS *Chicora*. The following 31 January he led his ship in a successful attack on Union warships off that port engaging several Federal ships, including the USS *Keystone State*, in a gun battle. He became commander of the Confederate warships at Charleston in March 1863, remaining in that post until the city fell in February 1865. During that time, he was promoted to

Captain and aggressively pursued spar-torpedo warfare against U.S. warships. He was ordered to scuttle his vessels and retreat to Wilmington, North Carolina after General William T. Sherman's army came to Charleston. Tucker formed a naval force from ship's crews and marines which became known as Tucker's Naval Brigade.

The **Confederate States Marine Corps (CSMC)** was a branch of the Confederate States' armed forces during the War for Southern Independence. It was established by an act of the Confederate Congress on 16 March 1861. The organization of the corps began at Montgomery, Alabama, and was completed at Richmond, Virginia, when the capital of the Confederate States of America was moved to that city. The CSMC headquarters and main training facilities remained in Richmond, Virginia throughout the war, located at Camp Beall on Drewry's Bluff and at the Gosport Shipyard in Portsmouth, Virginia. The CSMC was modeled after the United States Marine Corps, but there were some differences: the Confederates organized themselves into permanent companies, replaced the fife with the light infantry bugle, and wore uniforms similar to those of British Royal Marines. Like the USMC, when ashore they provided guard detachments for Confederate naval stations at:

- Richmond, Virginia
- Camp Beall, located near Fort Darling at Drewry's Bluff, Virginia
- Wilmington, North Carolina – Fort Fisher
- Charlotte, North Carolina
- Charleston, South Carolina
- Hilton Head Island, South Carolina
- Savannah, Georgia
- Pensacola, Florida – (manned naval shore batteries)
- Mobile, Alabama



- Flag of the Confederate States Marine Corps

Seagoing detachments served aboard the various warships and even on commerce destroyers.

Confederate Marines saw their first naval action aboard the CSS *Virginia* off Hampton Roads, Virginia, 8-9 March 1862. Marine sea-based amphibious operations included the "Old" CSS *Savannah* shore party at Fort Beauregard, Phillips Island, SC, to evacuate the garrison under attack. Marines under the command of Commodore Josiah Tattnall were used to construct and man shore batteries which turned back Union gunboats and monitors both at Richmond and at Savannah.

During the last weeks of the War for Southern Independence, now Commodore Tucker served with his men in the defenses of Richmond, manning Fort Darling on Drewry's Bluff on the James River while the Army of Northern Virginia was facing Grant's legions during the Siege of Petersburg. When the Confederate line was finally penetrated, General Robert E. Lee ordered Richmond to be abandoned, and the Army started a general retreat toward Danville, Virginia, in order to link up with General Johnston's Army of Tennessee, moving up from the South in front of Major General W.T. Sherman.

Commodore Tucker gathered the remaining elements of Navy and Marine Corps units into a Naval Brigade and moved out with the rest of the Army serving as Lieutenant General Richard S. Ewell's II Corps rear guard. A fierce battle was fought near Saylor's Creek, southwest of Petersburg, on 6 April 1865; and despite being outnumbered 10:1, Tucker's Naval Brigade fought so hard that the Union division opposing them, thought they were facing a division. At the end of the day, however, Commodore Tucker was forced to surrender to the Union's overwhelming numbers, and he surrendered his sword to the Union commander: Brigadier General J. Warren Keifer, commanding the 2nd Brigade, 3rd Division, VI Army Corp.

Commodore Tucker remained a prisoner of war until 24 July. After his release, he returned to the South to work as an agent of the Southern Express Company of Raleigh, North Carolina.

N-SSA History



Tucker's Naval Brigade was constituted on 22 May 1982 as a member unit of the North-South Skirmish Association (N-SSA) to commemorate the history and traditions of the C.S. Naval Brigade commanded by Captain (Flag Officer) John R. Tucker, C.S. Navy in the War for Southern Independence. It is assigned to the Tidewater Region with a seniority number of 206.

The Brigade consists of both sailors and marines, just as did Commodore Tucker's Brigade in 1865. The choice is up to the recruit.



While many members are former Marines or Navy men, many are not; and both groups operate in harmony and cooperation. A spirit of camaraderie is prevalent throughout the Brigade and can be observed in the way the members work together to host skirmishes, whether their own, the Regional Cure for Cancer Skirmish, or the Nationals. If something must get done, someone always steps up to see that it is, whether it was his/her responsibility or not. Further, there is always someone ready to help a team member with shooting tips or technical problems with firearms or ammunition.

So, if you like black powder shooting against breakable targets as a team and want to belong to a great team of comrades, give one of the officers below a call, and they can get you started on your way to becoming part of the Marine-Navy Team.

Commander: Sergeant Major Tomlin R. Cobb, CSMC, trcobb54@gmail.com

Adjutant: First Sergeant Dina Clapper, CSMC, dinaclapper@gmail.com

Gunnery Sergeant: Sergeant William Hunnicutt, Jr., CSMC, rosebud239@msn.com

Paymaster: Sergeant Gary Clapper, CSMC, enfield_1853@yahoo.com