

NEW COMMANDING OFFICERS.

IMPORTANT CHANGES.

Col. Joshua B. Howell, 85th P. V., who has for the past three months efficiently commanded the District of Hilton Head, was on Tuesday relieved by Col. W. W. H. Davis, of the 104th P. V. The latter has announced the following officers upon his staff: Major E. S. Rogers, 104th P. V., Acting Assistant Adjutant General; 1st Lieut. John McCoy, 104th P. V., Acting Aide-de-Camp.

Col. Redfield Duryee, 6th C. V., has been succeeded in command of the post at Hilton Head by Col. Henry M. Hoyt, of the 52d P. V., who announces the following as his staff: 1st Lieut. James G. Stevens, 52d P. V., Post Adjutant; 1st Lieut. Edwin Fretz, 104th P. V., Acting Aide-de-Camp.

Col. Howell leaves a position which he has long filled most acceptably, with the best wishes of hosts of friends, won by his uniform courtesy, efficiency as an officer, and all the sterling qualities of a true gentleman and a soldier. We believe every person acquainted with Col. Howell's administration of affairs during the time he has commanded the District, will testify to his faithfulness and efficiency.

Col. Duryee, as Post Commander, has also won much well-deserved praise by the manner in which he has filled that responsible and perplexing office, and many friends will regret his retirement from it.

Col. Davis, the new Commander of the District, and Col. Hoyt, Post Commandant, both come well qualified for their positions, having seen much service, and being familiar with their duties. While we regret the retirement of Cols. Howell and Duryee, we congratulate the troops on the tried ability of their successors.

ARRIVALS FROM THE NORTH—LATE AND IMPORTANT NEWS.

Brilliant Federal Victory in Louisiana—Three Rebel Generals Killed—The Enemy Completely Routed—The Massacre at Fort Pillow—&c., &c., &c.

By the arrival of the Arago, Captain Gadsden, on the 24th, we received New York dates to the 20th, and by the Continental, on Wednesday, Philadelphia news to the 22d. We are indebted to Purser Fred. W. Ely, of the Arago, and Purser S. Lathbury, of the Continental, for files of papers and other favors. We condense from the late papers the important intelligence.

The most interesting news relates to a great battle between Gen. Banks and Gen. Kirby Smith, on the Red River, in which the enemy suffered a total defeat. The papers of the 20th had a report of a defeat on the 8th, much exaggerated, in which Gen. Ransom, commanding the cavalry was wounded, our forces routed, and our loss over 2,000. The rebel reports put our loss at 14,000. The Philadelphia papers of the 22d, however, contained the following:—

CAIRO, April 21.—Advices from Grand Ecore, Red river, to the morning of the 15th, have been received. The battle on the 8th was fought at the Sabine Cross Roads. The rebels were commanded by Generals Magruder, Holmes and Taylor—all under General Kirby Smith.

The rebel loss in the first day's fight is placed at 1,500.

The second day's fight was at Pleasant Hill, where the enemy was most gloriously routed, and driven from the field by our forces under General A. J. Smith, General Banks commanding in chief.

The enemy's loss is heavy, and at least two to our one. Among their killed were Generals Norion and Parsons.

After the first day's fight, Gen. Banks, being short of rations, sent word to the Admiral to return with the fleet, which had advanced to within eighty miles of Shreveport, and was preparing to blow up the steamboat New Falls City, which the rebels had sunk in the channel. On the reception of General Banks' dispatch the fleet turned back, and on the way down was attacked by large numbers of the enemy on both sides of the river, who attempted to capture the transports.

A fight ensued between the gunboats and the rebels, in which the latter were splendidly repulsed, with 500 or 600 killed, and a large number wounded, while none of our gunboats were injured.

General Greene, commanding the rebels in this action, had his head blown off by a shell.

Mr. DeB. Randolph Keim, Special correspondent of the New York Herald at Cairo, describes the massacre at Fort Pillow as follows:

"On April 13th, at daylight, the enemy, numbering six thousand, under the immediate command of Forrest, made his appearance in the vicinity of Fort Pillow, a fortified post on the Tennessee side of the Mississippi river, about two hundred miles below this point. At six in the morning the enemy commenced the attack, in the most vigorous manner, opening with two pieces of artillery. The garrison in the fort consisted of the First Alabama negro regiment and a regiment of Tennessee cavalry, all under command of Major Booth. A spirited reply was immediately made by the garrison. The enemy commenced deploying his columns until the entire fort was invested from river to river. In the course of several hours a charge was made upon the fort, but was gallantly repulsed. After repeated attacks, the garrison was finally overwhelmed and obliged to surrender. The fight lasted from six A. M. until three P. M. In the legitimate engagement our loss was about fifty killed and wounded. The enemy lost about a hundred, possibly more; for his charges were made mainly through open fields.

"After the troops had surrendered their arms, a preliminary butchery commenced. The negroes, becoming alarmed, fell behind their officers. The enemy immediately fell upon the latter, and, after massacring all, resumed upon the negroes, the murdering now being promiscuous. Persons that were on the field state that no quarter was even shown the wounded, who, already dying from the loss of blood, had but strength enough left to raise their hands in signification of a cry for mercy. Even these touching marks were also disregarded, and the miseries of the unfortunate sufferers ended in cold-blooded murder. Out of six hundred that originally constituted the garrison, but two hundred, and those mostly wounded, are left to tell the tale. But seven negroes are known to have escaped. Major Bradford, one of the escaped prisoners of Streight's command, was in the Fort during the fight, and has not since been heard from."

LATEST FROM FLORIDA.

Gen. Hatch has been relieved from the command of the District of Florida, and is succeeded by Brig. Gen. Wm. Birney. The latter took command on Wednesday of last week, announcing the following as his staff:—

- 1st Lieut. R. M. Hall, 1st U. S. Artillery, A. Asst. Adj't General.
- 1st Lieut. D. V. Purington, 7th U. S. C. T., Chief Quarter Master.
- Captain S. H. Swetland, C. S. Chief Commissary of Subsistence.
- 1st Lieut. T. C. Vidal, Signal Corps, U. S. A., Chief Signal Officer.
- Surgeon S. W. Gross, U. S. V. Medical Director.
- 1st Lieut. Chas. R. Suter, U. S. Engrs; Chief Engineer.

1st Lieut. W. Burns, Jr., 1st N. Y. V. Engrs, Chief of Ordnance.

Lt. Col. U. Doubleday, 3d U. S. C. T., Chief of Artillery.

Capt. Lewis Ledyard Weld, 7th U. S. C. T., Provost Marshal.

2d Lieut. R. H. Waters, 52d Penn. V., Asst. Commissary of Musters.

W. H. Dennis, U. S. Coast Survey, attached as Topographical Engineer.

Capt. P. F. Young, 107th Ohio V., A. Aid-de-Camp.

2d Lieut. Henry E. Burton, 35th U. S. C. T., Aid-de-Camp.

There is nothing of importance to report, either of our own or the enemy's movements, except that the rebels are supposed to be rapidly withdrawing their forces, who are en route to reinforce the rebel army of the Potomac.

IMPORTANT CAPTURE.

We learn that a force of from fifteen to twenty rebels, while scouting in Vincent's Creek, Morris Island, during the night of Friday last, were captured in their boats by our pickets, who were soldiers of the 54th Massachusetts (colored) troops. The prisoners did not seem at all disheartened at their capture, but, while professing loyalty to the rebel cause, openly expressed their satisfaction at being in Union hands, though they evidently did not relish the idea of being taken by negroes. They brought no very important news, but confirmed the reports that the armies for the defence of Richmond are being strengthened at the expense of more southerly points.

NAVAL MATTERS.

We learn that a bold attempt was made on Monday night of last week to destroy the frigate Wabash off Charleston harbor. A low, cigar-shaped steamer, supposed to be one of the newly-invented "Davids," such as blew up the Housatonic, was descried about four hundred yards from the frigate, and heading directly for her. The Wabash instantly slipped her cables and got away—not, however, without firing a section from her broadside guns. The strange craft was seen no more, and it is presumed that she was sunk.

The steam sloop-of-war Pocohontas, Lieut.-Com. M. Patterson Jones, arrived at this post a few days since to coal. She is bound for the West Gulf Squadron.

Commander Aaron H. Hughes has been detached from the Cimerone, and ordered North. He is relieved by Lieut. Com. John H. Russell.

Capt. Thomas T. Craven has been confirmed as Commodore, dating from 1862.

The gunboat South Carolina, Lieut. Kennison commander, remains at her station in Tybee Roads, with the mortar schooner Ward, doing blockading duty. The South Carolina captured, the other day, the Anglo-Rebel steamer Alliance, with a valuable cargo, and sent her to this port preparatory to being sent north for adjudication before the Admiralty Court. The South Carolina has rendered very efficient service in the squadron for more than two years past, and is now doing most valuable duty before Savannah. The following is a list of her officers:—Wm. W. Kennison, A. V. Lieut. commanding; Frederic F. Baury, Acting Master and Ex. Officer; Chas. F. Taylor, Act. Ensign; John Gunn, Act. Ensign; Samuel W. Tanner, Act. Asst. Paymaster; Hiram C. Vaughan, Act. Asst. Surgeon; Felix Collins, Paymaster's Clerk; John H. Rowe, Act. 2nd Asst. Engineer, in charge; Henry Gormley, Act. 2nd Asst. Engineer; F. W. H. Whitaker, Act. 2nd Asst. Engineer; Daniel Gorman, Act. 3rd Asst. Engineer; Montgomery

West, Act. 3rd Asst. Engineer; Ansel S. Hitch, Act. Master's Mate; Eliphalet Holbrook, Act. Master's Mate; Samuel S. Withington, Act. Master's Mate; Augustus Sedcraft, Pilot.

TO BE OFFICERS OF COLORED TROOPS.—Major General Gillmore, by authority of the President of the United States, has commissioned the following parties as officers of Colored Troops. Each has satisfactorily sustained a most rigid examination as to military ability and moral standing:

Private Joseph W. Dickinson, 39th Illinois Volunteers, to be a captain in the 21st U. S. C. T.

Quartermaster Sergeant Adriaan Jansen, 1st N. Y. Volunteer Engineers, to be a 1st Lieutenant in the 21st U. S. C. T.

Private Henry M. Jones, Co. M., 1st U. S. Artillery, to be a 2d Lieutenant in the 21st U. S. C. T.

Sergeant Henry W. Cass, 115th N. Y. Volunteers, to be a 1st Lieutenant in the 34th U. S. C. T.

Peter Meagher, Civilian, to be a 2d Lieutenant in the 21st U. S. C. T.

1st Lieut. Abraham W. Jackson, 33d U. S. C. T., to be a Captain in the same Regiment, vice Randolph, resigned.

2d Lieut. Henry A. Beach, 33d U. S. C. T., to be a 1st Lieutenant in the same Regiment, vice Jackson, promoted.

2d Lieut. Enoch W. Robbins, 33d U. S. C. T., to be a 1st Lieutenant in the same Regiment, vice Beach, promoted.

2d Lieut. Robert W. Perry, 34th U. S. C. T., to be Adjutant of the same Regiment, vice Charles, dismissed.

Sergeant Richard Gowers, Co. E, 1st N. Y. Vol. Engineers, to be a 1st Lieut. in the 21st U. S. C. T., to fill an original vacancy.

2d Lieut. Charles S. Allen, 21st U. S. C. T., to be a 1st Lieutenant in the same Regiment, to fill an original vacancy.

2d Lieut. James S. Dungan, 21st U. S. C. T., to be a 1st Lieutenant in the same Regiment, to fill an original vacancy.

BADGE OF THE TENTH ARMY CORPS.—The system of Army Corps badges, first introduced by the lamented Gen. Kearney, has now been extended to nearly every corps or department. By the simple device of flannel which the soldier wears upon his cap, his place may at once be known. If he is found away from his regiment or brigade, he may be returned to it "and no question asked." Hence the Army Corps badge serves to prevent straggling on the march, as well as to bind together by the closest ties those who wear it. Recently a badge has been adopted for the Tenth Corps, under Major General Gillmore. Its design is most appropriate, being an outline representation of a square fort, with bastions. The badge is punched with a matrix, from red, white and blue flannel, the first division wearing the red, the second the white, and the third the blue. Inasmuch as the Tenth Corps has won its reputation in the performance of siege duty, at the reduction of Fort Pulaski, the destruction of Fort Sumter, and the capture of Forts Wagner and Gregg, we think no more fitting design could have been selected as a distinctive badge.

PERSONAL.—Lt.-Col. William Ames, of the 3d Rhode Island Artillery, recently promoted from Major, arrived here from the North on Tuesday, and is stopping at the Port Royal House. His many friends will be glad to learn of his return to the Department.

Sergeant B. F. Weeks, 1st Conn. Artillery, has been confirmed by the Senate as a Commissary of Subsistence.